

The Two Covenants

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Lectures

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Dedication

The vast majority of those who read this book will have never heard of Joe Crockett. He is not a famous author or well-known gospel preacher. However, if it were not for Joe Crockett, there would be fewer gospel preachers in the world today. He doesn't personally stand in the pulpit and preach each Sunday, but if it were not for him, literally thousands of sermons delivered over the years on Sunday would never have been delivered. I am not aware of any articles that he has ever had published in any of our brotherhood papers, but I know of dozens and dozens of articles published in these papers which would never have been written, if not for him. His health will not permit him to go out and conduct home Bible studies, but countless home Bible studies have been and will be conducted because of Joe's influence.

In fact, if it were not for Joe Crockett, this very page you are reading would be absent from this book. You see, Joe Crockett is the man who gave me a Christian father. When my father was sin-sick and in despair, a teenager named Joe Crockett pointed him to the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29). The detailed story of how this transpired is recorded for your reading in **Appendix B**, at the close of this book. This appendix is actually a reprint of an article written by my father for the Fulton County Gospel News, of which he is the editor. I am confident that you will be encouraged to be more evangelistic and outspoken for the cause of Christ after reading this article.

The story of Joe Crockett and my father's conversion is ample evidence of the truth that "a word fitly spoken is like apples of silver in pictures of gold" (Prov. 25:11). Joe's words to my father were words "fitly spoken." If not for

these words, I do not know where I would be today.

Tribute is also due to Joe's godly parents, Aubrey and Audie, without whom Joe would never have learned the things he knew to tell my father. I am so thankful that they raised up their boy in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). They took the things which had been committed unto them, and committed them into their son so that he would be able to teach others also (2 Tim. 2:2). If this book helps you in any way to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, then say a prayer and thank God for Aubrey, Audie, and Joe Crockett. Without them, this book, in this form, would have never come into being.



Aubrey, Audie and Joe Crockett (seated)

Acknowledgements

I have an increased appreciation for the time-worn illustration about the probability of evolution being comparable to the chances of the New York telephone directory coming into existence as the result of an explosion in a print shop. Though it may not always evidence such, this book is no accident. It is the product of many people, from many different quarters, who sacrificed their time, energy and toil so that the gospel message might be spread far and wide.

Thanks to my father, Ted Clarke, for taking the time to write down over one hundred potential topics for study concerning the Two Covenants. His list largely matched my own, but also reminded me of the need to cover some areas that might be otherwise overlooked.

Gratitude is expressed to our speakers who submitted manuscripts for publication. Special thanks to brother Thomas B. Warren, who, although his health would not permit him to be with us in person to speak, gave of his time and wisdom to produce [Appendix A](#). As usual, brother Warren hits the nail on the head with reference to the kind of unity God desires. It would be interesting to know just how many combined hours of study were involved in the research and writing of the material compiled in this book. If the pen is mightier than the sword, then this book is powerful indeed, because the product of these men's pens is based upon the "sword of the Spirit which is the word of God" (Eph. 6:17).

Bouquets of thanksgiving are also in order to the many members of the Southaven church of Christ who assisted in typesetting, proofreading, and preparing the book for publication. Geraldine Chaney rendered her usual efficient secretarial service and wore many hats during

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Bill and Jon worked many hours and late nights editing, and double-checking manuscripts to try to make them as accurate as possible. Certainly, the mistakes which may have found their way to the printing press didn't make it for lack of trying on the part of the proofreaders.

A great debt of gratitude is also due to Paul Sain and Sain Publications. Paul worked around a busy schedule to teach me some of the "ins" and "outs" of desktop publishing so that we could present the book "camera-ready" for printing. He and his staff have been a pleasure to work with in this project.

The elders of this congregation most definitely deserve acknowledgement for their overall vision and quest to spread God's Truth to a world in error. They are good examples of "overseers" who "shepherd" the flock which is among them. With the support of their godly wives, they continue to guide and guard the flock.

Last of all, but not least of all, pardon me the personal indulgence of thanking my treasured wife Tish, and our three wonderful children, Daniel, Holly and Michael. On many nights during the past few weeks they have patiently waited for me to come home. It is my prayer that this book will help them and many others to find their way to their heavenly home.

--B. J. Clarke
Editor

Foreword

Confusion abounds concerning the relationship between the Two Covenants. This confusion has existed in the denominational world for many years, as evidenced by (1) appeals to the Old Testament for the authority to use instrumental music in New Testament worship; (2) appeals to the thief on the cross as a model of how to be saved; (3) the idea that we are under the Ten Commandments today; (4) the misguided notion that fleshly Israel of the Old Testament is still awaiting the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3); (5) the application of Old Testament prophecies which have already been fulfilled to the "end-time."

Sadly, this confusion concerning the covenants is steadily finding its way into the hearts of more and more members of the Lord's church. We can not and must not **assume** that the average member in the pew understands the distinctions between the Old and New Covenants, and the implications of such distinctions. What's more, we can no longer even assume that the men occupying the pulpits of the Lord's church comprehend and appreciate these differences! Some of our own preaching brethren are making statements which betray their ignorance of the relationship of the Old and New Covenants. Some would suggest that there is no grace in the Old Covenant and no law in the New Covenant. Others argue that Matthew, Mark, Luke and John contain no New Testament doctrine whatsoever! Among them is Dan Billingsly, who confines all New Testament doctrine to Acts 2-Revelation 22 (Fundamental Bible Studies 4). In fact, Billingsly writes:

“Traditionalists” believe that Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are New Testament books that describe Christ revealing new covenant doctrine, and that all men in this New Testament age are accountable all teaching (sic) in these four Old Testament books (Fundamental Bible Studies 12).

It appears that brother Billingsly could certainly use some “fundamental” Bible studies. His fundamental error concerning what constitutes New Testament teaching is the very crux of his false position that the teaching of Jesus on marriage, divorce and remarriage in Matthew 19 is not New Testament doctrine, and therefore, not binding upon us today. Brother Billingsly is neither the first, nor the most formidable advocate of this doctrine. But no man has ever been formidable enough to prove that Matthew 19:9 is not New Testament doctrine

Another evidence of the existence of confusion within the Lord’s body concerning the covenants, is seen in the strange and bizarre interpretation of the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 advanced by Max King and other proponents of Realized Eschatology. Whereas Jesus did teach that the destruction of Jerusalem was a decisive and significant event (Matt. 24:1-34), he never came close to teaching the outrageous and egregious theories promoted today by the “Max Kingites.”

It is our prayer that this book will both teach the truth concerning the covenants and their relationship to one another, while also equipping the reader with the ability to discern and defeat the errors concerning the covenants advanced by so many today. In short, we hope this volume will assist the reader in “handling aright the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15)

--B. J. Clarke, Editor

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Chapter 1

An Overview Of Bible Covenants

Edwin S. Jones

The practice of overview is of the highest value in gaining an understanding of any Bible teaching. Our brotherhood was once characterized by preaching that comfortably ranged across the length and width of the complete Bible story. The study of Bible covenants helps to illustrate the need for such preaching today. Unless the study of covenants is governed by insights gained from a “big picture” perspective, errors are bound to abound.

An overview of Bible covenants is one of the most important studies a dedicated Bible student can undertake. It is within the context of covenant that the Scriptures reveal the delicate balance between God’s justice and His love. Through covenant principles the relationship between grace, faith, law, and works is given a correct understanding. Additionally, God’s unchanging nature is reinforced and explained through the Bible’s teachings about covenant relationship and provisions.

With such important teachings finding close associations with the concept of covenant, what is a covenant? There are various ways to answer this question,

each of which contributes vital information to a comprehensive understanding of the subject. From a technical point of view, the words used for covenant provide a starting point for understanding. In the Old Covenant the word is *berit*. The word's basic definition is: "to bind or to fetter, to obligate through formal procedures." The New Covenant word is *diatheke*, meaning: "a disposition or agreement that can be accepted or rejected, but not altered."

In a practical sense, the idea of covenant is seen in the nature of the relationship that is created by covenant. Covenant deals with the legality of a relationship. It assures that a relationship will have stability. Covenant promotes trust and faith. And further, a covenant relationship has the characteristic of exclusivity. Obligations and blessings weave their way through the exclusive covenant relationship in ways that define what is at the heart of such a special arrangement.

To sum up the preceding information, we can say of covenants that they:

1. bind
2. obligate
3. establish non-negotiable terms
4. determine what is lawful
5. stabilize
6. elicit trust
7. bless

And in a more subtle sense, covenants can be said to:

1. give insight into God's nature
2. define the proper principle of serving law (merit or faith)
3. balance justice and mercy
4. ultimately provide the basis for grace

5. explain how sinful, frail humanity can have a secure hope.

Our overview of Bible covenants will unite the above mentioned conclusions into a cohesive unit of understanding. Genesis will start us on this extremely important study.

While the word “covenant” is not actually used in the narrative about Adam and Eve, there is a clearly implied covenant relationship in this account (Gen. 2-3). Adam and Eve enjoyed a relationship with God. All was well in this arrangement until the original couple failed to keep the provisions of their covenant agreement with God. The blessings Adam and Eve lost were directly related to their sin, or violation of covenant, against God.

Justice, the need for law to be served, immediately came into the picture as Adam and Eve were punished. But immediately after justice was served, a hope of future redemption accentuated the place of mercy (Gen. 3:15). The partnership between justice and mercy here established would continue to characterize covenant arrangements.

There is, however, one aspect of the covenant relationship between God and Adam and Eve that was not like future covenants. In the Garden of Eden the covenant agreement was one of “works,” not “faith.” With one sin, Adam and Eve forfeited the blessings of Eden once and for all. No amount of faithful living would ever have allowed a return to the garden (Gen. 3:22-24).

Every salvation covenant that God would establish after the Garden of Eden would be a covenant based on faithful rather than meritorious performance. This realization is crucial to understanding the way covenants have functioned from the time of expulsion from Eden.

Unfortunately, many have concluded that only the covenant established by Christ was a covenant of faith. Often the Law of Moses is seen as though it were simply a covenant of works. However, this view of the Law of Moses cannot be correct.

Consider the implications of Moses' covenant being of law and Christ's covenant being of faith. For one thing, the eleventh chapter of Hebrews would make no sense. How could faith have brought grace to people who lived under law?

Additionally, when Israel sinned, why were they not expelled from the Promised Land on the spot and never allowed to return? Or how could David have ever had any hope of returning to God's good graces after he sinned? What sense can be made of Psalm 32 or Psalm 51 if law alone and justice alone were the only basis of covenant fellowship between God and man? Why would inspiration have allowed Habakkuk to say "But the just shall live by his faith" if there were no faith in the Jewish covenant relationship with God? And before Sinai, would Genesis 15:6 have been possible if law alone ruled after Eden?

But some will ask how faith could have been part of covenant relationships before Christ came since there are verses that seem to say otherwise. Consider the following passages:

For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ (John 1:17).

But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident for the just shall live by faith. Yet the law is not of faith, but

The man who does them shall live by them
(Gal. 3:11-12).

But before faith came, we were kept under
guard by the law,...” (Gal. 3:23).

Was there no faith in the Law of Moses? Jesus said that faith was one of the “weightier matters of the law” (Matt. 23:23). Did people under the Law of Moses have to wait for Christ before they could have faith? Remember Hebrews 11. How did those people have faith? Was there no truth or grace under the Law of Moses? Romans 5:20 says that grace actually “abounded much more” when the Law of Moses went into effect.

We cannot hope to solve this apparent problem unless we take into account all the pertinent evidence. When the subject is seen in overview, the seeming contradictions disappear.

There are two ways to look at God’s law. Law can either be served by a principle of works (merit) or faith (trust in another). “Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith” (Rom. 3:27). The Jews stumbled by choosing to serve law out of works rather than out of faith (Rom. 9:30-33). When anyone serves law (God’s rules and regulations) from the perspective of works (merit), faith is stripped from the system and one must then keep every law if he is to be saved. Law alone becomes that person’s only hope (cf. Jas. 2:10).

However, when a person serves law from the perspective of faith (trust in another), the purpose God has for law in a salvation covenant (the guide for faith) is then established. “Do we then make void the law through

faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law” (Rom. 3:31).

There is also no problem concerning the phrase “before faith came” in Galatians 3:23. It should be noted that the Greek text has “before **‘the’** faith came.” The argument deals with the change from the Law of Moses to the Law of Christ (the faith), not the change from the absence of faith to the presence of faith (cf. Jude 3).

Additionally, the thought expressed in John 1:17 can easily be harmonized with the bigger Bible picture. The idea of this verse is that through Christ the concepts of grace and truth found their ultimate realization (see NASB translation). The grace and truth that we find in the Law of Moses were always based on the coming of Christ.

Thus, after Adam and Eve failed in the covenant of works, all following salvation covenants included grace, faith, law, and works, not just law and works. It is in these post-garden covenants that we come to understand how God deals with humanity today.

Be we are not ready to leave Adam and Eve just yet. The consequences of their sin defined the specific areas of reconciliation that God’s plan of salvation would continually address. With sin, alienation came between God and man (Gen. 3:8), between a man and himself (Gen. 3:10), between man and his fellowman (Gen. 3:12), and between man and the material world (Gen. 3:16-19). Each of these areas would need to find resolution. Through faith, they would begin to be addressed immediately. In Christ, men would see the basis for ultimate resolution and receive a greater measure of blessing. In heaven, the results of sin would be fully reversed.

The covenant story would come to be identified with the reversal of the consequences of sin. Since our salvation

depends on entering into the benefits of redemption, we would do well to learn the story as it is developed through covenants.

Abraham becomes the first major figure in the development of God's plan through covenants. Abraham marks, in principle, the beginning of the Hebrew people. The descendants of Abraham would be the people with whom God would work in a special way to accomplish His plan.

Genesis 12:1-3 begins the covenant process with Abraham. God made a fourfold promise to Abraham in these verses. There would be a land given, a nation formed, protection afforded, and blessings for all the families of the earth. The first three of these promises would deal with the outward, temporal methodology through which God would work. The Jewish nation, her law, and her institutions would be the earthly vehicle that God would use to bring about the fourth promise.

It is the fourth promise that would be paramount. Everything else was incidental. The Jews generally missed this point and came to trust in their heritage rather than in the Christ (John 8:33; Matt. 3:9). It was for universal blessings that God called Abraham, not for Jewish exclusivity.

Through Abraham, God would emphasize and illustrate the idea of faith. Abraham has come to be known as the "father of the faithful" to believers (Rom. 4:11,16). God's use of Abraham to develop the concept of faith would be a major contribution toward understanding how covenant relationships work.

Genesis 15 builds upon the promises made in Genesis 12:1-3. It is here that one of the key verses in all the Bible is found. "And he believed in the Lord, and He accounted

it to him for righteousness” (Gen. 15:6).

This verse will be quoted in the three most significant chapters in the New Covenant that deal with the subject of justification through faith (Rom. 4:3,9,22; Gal. 3:6; Jas. 2:23). The idea is simple, and yet amazingly profound. We cannot be saved by our own goodness; we must put our trust in God.

In a salvation covenant, our works allow; they do not merit. Works are necessary in a secondary sense; Christ is necessary in the primary sense. For instance, baptism saves (1 Pet. 3:21a), but if there had been no resurrection, there would be no salvation in baptism (1 Pet. 3:21b).

This principle is vital. Some of the most fundamental errors in the religious world come from a misunderstanding of the relationship between faith and works. Even among brethren we find errors of imbalance. Some among us have fallen into a Calvinistic Lutheran extreme of faith alone. Others have suggested a legalistic, semi-Catholic extreme by thinking that Christ’s goodness somehow supplies only what is lacking to our goodness. In truth, however, our deeds are in a completely different category from those of Jesus. Ours allow, Christ’s merit.

The relationship can be expressed in this way. Suppose you are in a room at midday. The only light for the room is provided by windows, and each window is covered by a pulled-down shade. To get light, someone must do a “work.” Someone must raise the shade. When a shade is raised, it might be truthfully said of that person that he brought light into the room.

Now let us go to the same room and change the time of day to midnight. The same person raises the shade just as he had done at midday. But the room remains

dark. His “works” brought no light.

The explanation for the difference is obvious. The source of the light was the sun. The raising of the shade when the sun was present only allowed the already existing light to enter the room. It was necessary to raise the shade to allow the light in, but when there was no sun, there was no light to enter.

Our obedience of faith only allows the blood of Christ to do its work in our lives. If the deeds were to be done in the absence of a Savior, we would still be lost.

With this in mind, consider again the statement, “And he believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness” (Gen. 15:6). Just how are we to understand this verse? What was required of Abraham to raise the shade?

The answer to this question becomes evident when James’ use of the passage is considered. In Genesis 15 the context is that of Abraham accepting that he would be the father of a child from whom would come the promises (Gen. 15:4-6). James, however, relates the quotation to the time when Abraham offered Isaac up as a sacrifice (Jas. 2:21-24).

The point made by James is exceedingly valuable in the understanding of covenant relationships. Genesis 15 and Genesis 22 are related in theme. Genesis 15 deals with the son of promise as does Genesis 22. But consider how far Abraham had progressed in his faith between the two chapters. In chapter 15, Abraham wonders if a servant might be his heir. In chapter 22, he is willing to slay his only son of promise.

We learn some very useful lessons here. For one, Abraham’s faith was not faith only; he had to act on what God said and he had to grow in his faith. Genesis 15 stands

at a midpoint in the progress of Abraham's faith. It is a continuation of the journey that began in Genesis 12:1-3 and its principles continue to be developed up to Genesis 22. Obedience of faith was necessary from Abraham's initial call as well as in his covenant formalization and then on to his offering up of Isaac. In none of these things did Abraham earn a relationship with God (Rom. 4:1-2), but in all of these things, Abraham's obedience of faith was required.

But there is even more that is of fundamental importance in Genesis 15. In the ancient covenant "cutting" procedure of the chapter, God reveals something about Himself and the way He works in covenant relationships that is short of amazing.

The covenant procedure that was practiced in Abraham's historical setting involved the cutting asunder of animals (Gen. 15:8-10). The parts of the animals were divided to form a pathway through which the two covenant partners would walk. In doing this the partners were saying that if they did not keep their part of the bargain, they should suffer the fate of the parted animals.

There was, however, something different in this account. God walked through the animal carcasses alone (Gen. 15:12-18). The promise of a land and of a nation would be met. In these things, Jehovah obligated Himself in the most dramatic way imaginable to assure Abraham that the promises would be kept. God wants man to know that He can be trusted in every way. God wants man to know that He will obligate Himself to deliver a promise even if men are unfaithful (cf. Rom. 3:3-4).

Abraham learned this lesson of God's trustworthiness well. In Genesis 22 this point comes to the forefront. Verse 5 testifies to the trust that Abraham

had in God's fidelity to His word. When Abraham left his traveling party to go to the mountain to offer up Isaac, he told them "...the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and **we** will come back to you."

The Hebrew's writer explains the fullness of Abraham's faith:

By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, 'In Isaac your seed shall be called,' accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense (Heb. 11:17-19).

Certainly, Abraham teaches us much about the place of faith in covenant relationships. The promises made to Abraham provided the basis for the development of the nation of Israel with the Law of Moses and national institutions pointing to Jesus.

This relationship between Abraham and Moses is another important concept in studying Bible covenants. There is a very real sense in which the Mosaic covenant is the means of carrying the promises made to Abraham forward to the time of Christ (Gal. 3:15-18). Paul makes it very plain that the covenant of promise made to Abraham was not replaced by the Law of Moses. The Law of Moses became necessary to govern the nation God had promised to make of Abraham's descendants. Additionally, it introduced especially developed institutions such as the temple and priesthood that would foreshadow the mission of Christ (Heb. 10:1-4; 8:5-6).

Therefore, to understand the Law of Moses, a person

must recognize its relationship to the promises God made to Abraham. The Law of Moses was not contrary or “against the promises of God” (Gal. 3:21). Faith was still at the heart of a relationship with God (Hab. 2:4). Personal, meritorious righteousness was not at the core of the Law of Moses (Isa. 50:10). Those Jews who sought to approach God by trusting in their own righteousness made a terrible mistake; God did not want the Law of Moses to be served in that way (Rom. 10:1-3; Phil. 3:8-9).

Nevertheless, the covenant God made with Israel through Moses was a covenant of great importance. Its framework guided God’s plan to the fullness of time and the coming of Christ (Gal. 3:23-4:5). The Law of Moses stands as the longest and most detailed covenant document in the Bible. The provisions of that covenant were in force until it was fulfilled in Christ (Matt. 5:17-18; Eph. 2:15; John 19:30).

At this point we need to pause and consider the two basic kinds of law that are part of God’s covenant dealings. Otherwise, we are apt to become confused about how covenants relate to each other. First, there is absolute law. This is law that is based on the nature of God. It is eternal and is part of all covenant relationships because God is present in all such relationships. Therefore, it has always been wrong to lie, because lying violates God’s nature (Heb. 6:18).

Secondly, there are laws in covenant relationships that are part of a given system, yet not eternal in nature. Passover observations were peculiar to Judaism; they were not eternal. They could be left behind, and they were. Baptism into Christ is not an eternal provision; it is peculiar to the Christian age. Jews did not have to be baptized under Moses, and Christians do not have to

observe the Passover. On the other hand, neither Jews nor Christians were permitted to lie or steal.

This twofold understanding helps us to deal with some things that are often not well understood. How was it that Old Testament passages could be quoted in the New Testament epistles in a way that seems to be authoritative (i.e., Eph. 6:1-3; 1 Cor. 6:17-18; 1 Cor. 1:31; Rom. 12: 19-20)? Christians are not under Moses, but under Christ.

When we understand that eternal principles are part of any covenant relationship with God, we can see why such principles might be cited from a previous covenant expression. They are served within the prevailing covenant arrangement that a person is under, but they have a longer life than do such things as dietary laws or festivals. Their authority is eternal because they reflect God's nature. God could not logically allow anything that goes against His nature to be considered acceptable. Lying or stealing could never be considered right in any covenant relationship. Sabbath keeping, incense burning, and partaking of the Lord's Supper, however, were not features of every salvation covenant.

This understanding will help us to clarify an aspect of Jesus' mission relating to His relationship to the Law of Moses. The Sermon on the Mount illustrates this relationship well. Many have assumed that Matthew 5:12-48 has to do with Jesus superseding the Law of Moses with a law that He would command for the Christian Age. However, Jesus denies this very assumption in the introductory comments to this section (Matthew 5:17:20).

Jesus did not come to destroy the Law or the Prophets; He came to fulfill. Not so much a tiny part of a letter of the Law could be changed until all was fulfilled.

Anyone who taught against even one of the least commandments of Moses would be least in the kingdom.

In Matthew 5:21-48, Jesus is filling Moses full of meaning. The Law of Moses was very concerned with the heart. It was not merely outward while Christ's law was to be inward (cf. Deut. 6:4-5; Isa. 29:13). Jesus was contrasting His rich and heartfelt interpretation of Moses with the Pharisees' narrow, outward interpretation (Matt. 5:20). The Pharisees were not right in the way they served Moses (cf. Matt. 23). The Prophets, Psalms, Proverbs, and especially the book of Deuteronomy repeatedly show that God would not accept mere outward service under the Law of Moses. In this we see a continuity in the basic principles of all salvation covenants. Full, rich, heartfelt service was expected by God in all such covenants.

With regard to the continuity that is shared between different covenants, it should be noted that both continuity and discontinuity features are an important part of understanding covenants. Unless the differences and similarities between covenants are understood, dangerous doctrines can develop. Dispensational premillennialism results from an overemphasis on discontinuity. Sabbatarianism comes from an imbalance in the direction of continuity. Some provisions are of necessity a part of all salvation convenience; other features are present only for a time.

Another aspect of covenant relationships that also deserves careful consideration is the place of conditional and unconditional features. In this area, the covenant God made with Noah and the one He made with David make important contributions to our understanding.

The Noahic covenant found in Genesis 9:1-13 is a classic example of an unconditional covenant. God

promised never to destroy the earth with water. Nothing was required of man; God would do this no matter what man did or did not do.

This same unconditional feature is a common element in matters relating to God's development of the plan of salvation. God promised to establish a nation in Canaan. He promised to provide a Savior. These things would come to pass whether or not men cooperated with God. Other features, such as whether a king from David's line would be sitting on a throne, were conditional (1 Kings 2:1-4). And of special significance, in the area of an individual's personal salvation, there were always conditions present (i.e., Acts 2:38; 1 John 1:7).

The Davidic covenant of 2 Samuel 7:8-17 contains both conditional and unconditional provisions. It offers a sharpening of focus in God's development of His plan to provide a Redeemer. The promise of a ruler from Judah had already been given (Gen. 49:10). David, from the tribe of Judah, would occupy a special place in the fulfillment of the regal promise.

The promise to David is interesting because it has elements that would find an immediate fulfillment in Solomon, but an ultimate fulfillment in Christ. Solomon would build a house (1 Kings 8:1-66), but Christ would fulfill the concept of the temple (God with the people; Isa. 7:14; John 2:19-22). Solomon would reign (1 Kings 1:32-54), but Jesus' reign would far surpass Solomon's (Eph. 1:19-23). David's house would have to remain faithful if kings were to continue to sit on the throne (1 Kings 2:1-4), but whether or not the line of David remained faithful, the Messiah would come from David's line.

When Jesus came, the Jews were told of His importance by linking Him with Abraham (the blessings

for all nations) and with David (the King to rule over all nations). The covenants God made with David and Abraham show how elements in one covenant would find their fulfillment in another covenant. These kinds of development features provide threads to tie Bible covenants one to another.

All the threads of covenant head in one direction: to Christ and the New Covenant. The New Covenant is the fullest, clearest, best and most faith inspiring covenant of the Bible. It is the document that is suited to this, “the age of the ages” (Eph. 1:10; 3:11, 21; see Greek).

The New Covenant puts into perspective how God can forgive sinners and remain just (Rom. 3:25-26). It fulfills all the promises, types, and shadows of the Old Covenant (2 Cor. 1:20; Heb. 8:5; 10:1-4). It gives us the clearest picture of God as He is revealed in the Son (John 1:18; 14:8-9). Its promises are consistently heavenly and thus superior (John 14:1-6; 1 Cor. 15:50-58). It contains the basis of forgiveness that all previous forgiveness had been based upon (Rom. 3:25-26).

The New Covenant brought forward a variety of weighty concerns that had been important parts of previous salvation convenience. It magnified the importance of faith (Rom. 1-8). It reinforced the need for heartfelt obedience (Matt. 15:1-9). It continued the line of people who were forgiven of sins by God (Acts 2:38; cf. Psm. 32:1-2). All these things had been present in previous convenience, but they were given their full and true meaning through Jesus.

The shadowy hope of Genesis 3:15 is realized in the virgin-born Christ of the New Covenant (Matt. 2:22-23). The seed of Abraham who was the true son of promise is seen to be the Savior who received all the spiritual

promises made to Abraham (Gal. 3:16).

The New Covenant is a resolution document. It reveals mysteries and explains God's plan of salvation (Col. 1:24-29). It shows how Satan's doom is sealed (Rom. 8:31-39). It shows how through Christ alienation from God finds its solution (Rom. 5:1-2). With the great separation between God and man resolved, the New Covenant addresses personal wholeness (Phil 4:7), brotherhood (1 Cor. 12:12-27), and the pilgrim nature of our material existence (1 Pet. 2:11). And in all these things the New Testament points up to heaven as the complete payment of what is now just a down payment (Eph. 1:14; Rom. 8:18-25) as we go to be with the Father in heaven (Rev. 21-22). The New Covenant allows us to view the beginning from the perspective of the end. Through Christ and His New Covenant, we have the last and best chance to find salvation.

We now have a sense of perspective that has come from our overview of Bible covenants. In this there are two primary objectives of a covenant relationship with God that can be readily seen. God wants to save men from sin. God wants men to share in His holiness by living in keeping with His nature. Bible convenience in general and the New Covenant in particular were used to facilitate these two purposes.

The New Covenant explains our need for a Redeemer and shows how Jesus gave His life that we might be rescued from destruction (Rom. 6:1-11). It then shows that salvation is the means to the end of fellowship with God (Rom. 6:12-23). In the fellowship of a covenant relationship, the New Testament holds up Jesus as the model for our new life (Rom. 8:29; 2 Cor. 3:18; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 4:11-16; Phil. 2:5; Col. 1:24-29). This covenant

provides a non-negotiable relationship that obligates and binds us in love to the lawful provisions of a stable, trust inspiring life of incomprehensible blessings. Within the covenant relationship we come to see God, serve Him in faith, respect His justice, appreciate His mercy and grace, and see how through Jesus a frail, sinful individual can find security and hope.

In all the journey through Bible covenants, we see the consistency of God's unchanging character blended with the changing patterns of an evolving, progressive plan that comes to its goal in Christ.

Chapter 2

The Value Of The Old Covenant

B. J. Clarke

Just how valuable is the Old Testament? Can such an ancient document possess any worth and relevance for a society rapidly approaching the 21st century? In his book, *Two Testaments, One Bible*, David Baker addresses this very issue:

One of the most fundamental questions which has faced theology and the church in every age and still demands an answer today is whether or not Christianity also needs an *Old Testament*. Is the Old Testament to be thrown away as obsolete, or preserved as a relic from days of yore, or treasured as a classic and read by scholars, or used occasionally as a change from the New Testament, or kept in a box in case it should be needed some day?¹

A Variety Of Views

The view of Marcion. Not long after the church was established, a man by the name of Marcion “took out his penknife” (Cf. Jer. 36:21-23) and began to argue for the exclusion of certain inspired books from the accepted

canon of Holy Scripture. Remarkably, Marcion insisted that the entire Old Testament be eliminated from the realm of Holy Scripture due to what he considered irreconcilable differences between the God of the Old Testament and the God of the New Testament. His views were rejected by almost everyone, and the Old Testament continued to occupy a general place of esteem and acceptance among the religious people of the day.²

The View Of Augustine. Far from attempting to excise the Old Testament from the Scriptures, Augustine desired instead to interpret the Old Testament as one continuous allegory. In fact, Augustine is credited with the following famous words concerning the relationship between the Two Covenants:

To the Old Testament belongs more fear,
just as to the New Testament more delight;
nevertheless in the Old Testament
the New lies hid, and in the New Testament
the Old is exposed.³

The View Of The Reformers. Martin Luther believed that the Old Testament was “to be highly regarded.” He asked, “What is the New Testament but a public preaching and proclamation of Christ, set forth through the sayings of the Old Testament and fulfilled through Christ?”⁴ Luther’s sentiment was shared by John Calvin and other reformers as well.

The View Of The 17th-19th Centuries. As man became more “enlightened,” he became more apt to dismiss the sections of the Bible with which he took exception. This became particularly true of the Old Testament. Leading the way was the brash, and irreverent, Freidrich

Schleiermacher, who lived from 1768-1834). Whereas Schleiermacher did not demean the Old Testament with as much vigor as Marcion of the 2nd century, neither did he mince words concerning his attitude toward the 39 books. He dismissed them as the product of heathenism, arguing that the Old Testament scriptures do not “share the normative dignity or the inspiration of the New.”⁵ He even went so far as to suggest that the Old and New Testaments be reversed in their appearance in the Bible, with the New Testament appearing first, and the Old Testament retained as an appendix.⁶

The View Of The 20th Century. A quote from the early 20th century is still quite shocking, though decades have passed since its first publication. An author by the name of Adolf von Harnack declared:

To reject the Old Testament in the second century was a mistake which the Church rightly rejected; to keep it in the sixteenth century was a fate which the Reformation could not yet avoid; but to retain it after the nineteenth century as a canonical document in Protestantism results from paralysis of religion and the Church.⁷

Before the shock of such a statement wears off, some of us would do well to ask ourselves whether we are guilty of a similar blasphemy in our neglect of the Old Covenant. Baker observes:

...There is in the church a habit of simply ignoring the Old Testament. It is thought to be difficult to understand or irrelevant to modern life and therefore it is rarely read and

expounded...In many churches, relatively few sermons are preached on the Old Testament and Bible study groups spend relatively little time on Old Testament passages. It is clear therefore that the modern church, in spite of its official rejection of Marcionism and neo-Marcionism, has often allowed implicit Marcionism in practice.⁸

The View Of Holy Scripture

We have looked at many of the prevailing attitudes toward the Old Testament throughout history, but “what saith the Scripture”? Does the Word of God ascribe value to the Old Covenant? We would expect for the Old Testament to affirm its value, but what about the New Testament view of the Old Testament? How did Jesus and the apostles view the Old Covenant? Some of these questions are answered in more detail in other chapters in the book, but we will introduce our analysis of these questions with two familiar New Testament texts:

For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope (Rom. 15:4).

Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come (1 Cor. 10:11).

The apostle Paul affirms the value of the Old Covenant in both of these passages. The “things that were written aforetime” would be the things found in the Old Testament,

the oracles of God committed unto the Jews (Rom. 3:2), the scriptures (John 5:39). Paul believed that these oracles of scripture still had something to offer to New Testament Christians. It is important to point out that at the time Paul wrote Romans 15:4 and 1 Corinthians 10:1-12, the Old Law had been nailed to the cross and taken out of the way (Col. 2:14-17). Yet, Paul still regarded these inspired documents as worthy of investigation and believed that such investigation would yield the blessings of patience, comfort and hope.

Though some see a contradiction in saying that we are no longer under the Old Covenant on the one hand, and saying that we ought to closely study it on the other hand, there is no contradiction in fact. Paul **did not say** that whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our *Law*; he did affirm that these things were written for our **learning**. Hence, an obvious question arises: what can we learn from the Old Testament that makes it worth our study? Since the value of the Old Covenant is demonstrated by what we can learn from it, let us proceed to examine it to capture some of the lessons from it which make it so valuable to us today. The Old Testament is valuable because it is a:

Verbal Revelation From God

It may sound simplistic, but the primary reason the Old Testament is valuable is due to the fact that it is a verbal revelation from God to man. When God talks, we should listen, and He has talked to us through the pages of the Old Testament. Such being the case, it behooves us to give proper investigation to the Truth that He has revealed therein. The Old Testament is certainly included in Paul's affirmation of the inspiration of the

scriptures in 2 Timothy 3:16-17:

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.

The fact of the matter is that at the time Paul wrote these words, the New Testament books were not even all recorded. Hence, the scriptures which were most familiar to Timothy and others at the time of Paul's writing would have been the Old Testament writings. Paul emphatically affirmed that these Old Testament scriptures, (along with any New Testament books already in existence) were inspired, i.e., breathed out by God. This fact alone makes the Old Testament valuable.

Like Paul, the apostle Peter did not ignore the writings of the Old Testament, but rather declared that "the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1:20-21). At various times and in different ways God spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets (Heb. 1:1). His revelation to these prophets was verbal. In other words, God didn't just give a thought to the prophets and then set them free to merely use their natural faculties to communicate it. Rather, He supernaturally revealed Himself and His Will in words which the speakers and writers of Scripture faithfully declared and recorded. David declared, "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and **his word** (emphasis mine-BJC) was in my tongue" (2 Sam. 23:2). Jeremiah revealed that God touched his tongue and said, "Behold, I have put **my**

words (emphasis mine-BJC) in thy mouth” (Jer. 1:9). If God cared enough to reveal His will to the prophets of old, and if God cared enough to providentially preserve these inspired writings for the successive generations to come, shouldn't we care enough to read His verbal communication. Can you imagine receiving a letter from a loved one and never taking the time to read it? To ignore the 39 books of the Old Testament is to ignore communication from the One who ought to be our most precious loved one.

The Old Testament is also valuable because it evidences the:

Vastness Of God's Power

While there are New Testament passages and events which vividly demonstrate the power of God, a knowledge of the Old Testament enhances our appreciation thereof. For example, the New Testament speaks of the creation of the world by God. Consider the following texts:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made (John 1:1-3)

For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: (Col. 1:15).

As marvelous as these passages are, they fall short of giving the detailed, day by day chronology of creation as

provided in Genesis 1. Eliminate the Old Testament and you have eliminated the only definitive explanation of the origin of the universe. Even the New Testament does not grant us the detailed insight concerning how God exercised His awesome power to create the world. One will never find in the New Testament, that which God reveals about His work in creation, as recorded in Job chapters 38-40. This is not to suggest that the New Testament is inferior to the Old Testament. Rather, it is to suggest that we recognize that the Old Testament possesses valuable information which is available to us nowhere else.

The vastness of God's power is not only evidenced in the Old Testament in the act of creation. Think of how He preserved Noah and his family from the worldwide flood (Gen. 6-9). This Old Testament story teaches us that God's power was used both to **vindicate** the righteous and wreak **vengeance** on the wicked. This pattern is repeated again and again throughout the pages of the Old Covenant: (1) The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and the preservation of Lot (Gen. 18-19); (2) the defeat of the Egyptian armies and the deliverance of His chosen people through the avenue of the 10 plagues (Exod. 5-15); (3) the fall of Jericho and the victory of reaching the promised land (Josh. 6); (4) the defeat of the five kings of the Amorites while the sun stood still (Josh. 10:12-15); (5) David's defeat of Goliath and the Philistine armies (1 Sam. 17); (6) the humiliating failure of the prophets of Baal, their "god," and the awesome display of power sent from heaven; (7) the massacre of 185,000 Assyrian soldiers while God's people were preserved without firing a shot (2 Kings 19:35-36); (8) the slaying of the men throwing Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego into the fire while they escaped unharmed and burn free (Dan. 3); and

(9) the accusers of Daniel having their bones crushed and devoured by the lions before they ever hit the floor of the den, while Daniel escaped unscathed and unharmed, though spending an entire night with the lions (Dan. 6). Add to these examples such marvels as the resurrection of the widow's son in 1 Kings 17:17-24, and the cleansing of Naaman the leper in 2 Kings 5, and it is abundantly clear that our God is an awesome God. If it were not for our acquaintance with these stories of the Old Testament, our knowledge of the vastness of God's power would be greatly diminished.

A third reason that the Old Covenant is so valuable is because it:

Validates God's Faithfulness

The writer of Hebrews, speaking of God, declared that "he is faithful that promised" (Heb. 10:23). A study of the Old Testament and its relationship to the New Testament establishes the veracity of this claim. Where is the promise made by God in the Old Testament which has failed to come to pass? There is not one promise of God that has ever failed, no, not one. He is faithful to keep His word. Two passages from the Old Testament demonstrate the importance of God being able to keep His promises:

But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken?

When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, **if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken**, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him (Deut. 18:20-22).

Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God. And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people? and **the things that are coming, and shall come, let them shew unto them. Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it?** ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any (Isa. 44:6-8).

Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: **who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the LORD?** and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me (Isa. 45:21).

God stakes His very integrity upon His ability to see the future, predict the future, and bring to pass what He predicted. This is precisely what He did. Let us remember that the events of the New Testament are made all the more impressive when we consider the fact that God foretold that these events would occur hundreds of years in advance of the time that they actually transpired. Thus,

the Old Covenant is valuable in that it affords us the opportunity to see that what God promised in the Old Testament, He delivered in the New Testament. The significance of this is seen by merely noting the number of times a New Testament writer wrote that a particular event occurred “that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet.” Hence, a knowledge of the prophecies God made in the Old Testament, and the recognition of the fulfillment of these prophecies in the New Testament, validates the faithfulness of God in the mind of the reader.

But yet a further proof of the value of the Old Covenant is seen in its:

Vivid Examples

Who among us has not been inspired to loftier heights of service by reading the description of the great men and women of faith described for us in Hebrews 11? Yet, all of the personalities mentioned in this great passage lived prior to the establishment of the New Covenant! Therefore, to eliminate the Old Testament would be to eliminate the very stories of courage referred to by the writer of Hebrews!

But wasn't the writer of Hebrews afraid that reference to these men and women of the Old Testament could be misconstrued by his readers to mean that the Old Testament was still in force? Certainly not! In fact, the very aim of the Hebrews writer was to encourage his readers not to go back to the Old Testament, because to do so would eliminate any sacrifice for their sin (Heb. 8-10). Why, then, did he focus upon Old Testament characters in Hebrews 11? He did so in order to demonstrate the principle and quality of a faith that endures. This is clearly evidenced by taking the time to

consider the context leading up to Hebrews chapter 11:

Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul (Hebrews 10:35-39).

The book of Hebrews was written to implore Christians not to leave Christianity to return again to Judaism and its ordinances. Thus, the writer of Hebrews would never have sought to leave the impression that the ordinances of Old Covenant were somehow still binding upon Christians under the New Covenant. But neither would the writer of Hebrews “throw the baby out with the bath water” and avoid referring to the Old Testament altogether.

Therefore, it is not at all out of place for gospel preachers today to preach on one hand that we are no longer under the Law of Moses, while on the other hand occasionally appealing to the Law of Moses for a vivid and valid principle from which we can learn. The same apostle Paul who acknowledged that the Law had been nailed to the cross (Col. 2:14), and had been done away (2 Cor. 3:7-11), also referred to an event recorded in the Law as a means of teaching the Corinthians a valuable lesson about the danger and consequences of lust (1 Cor. 10:1-13).

Please read the following passage and observe how an inspired apostle, living under the New Covenant, handled the Old Covenant. Speaking of the children of Israel, Paul wrote:

But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall (1 Cor. 10:5-12).

Can Old Testament examples be used to teach New Covenant people? Obviously so, for Paul does that very thing in 1 Corinthians 10! Yet, some would ridicule preachers for appealing to the account of the sinful worship of Nadab and Abihu in Leviticus 10 and making application of the story to worship under the New Covenant. It is one thing to insist that Leviticus 10:1-2 authorizes us to offer fire in worship to God and quite

another to argue that the principle of Leviticus 10 still has application to folks living under the New Covenant today. It would be entirely unacceptable for a preacher to appeal to Leviticus 10 for authority to offer sacrifices of fire to God in New Testament worship today. On the other hand, it is wholly acceptable for a gospel preacher to utilize Leviticus 10 in a sermon to demonstrate the principle that it matters to God as to how we worship Him, and whether we follow the specified pattern He has put in place. Hence, the value of the Old Testament is seen in the vivid examples of the Old Covenant which show us the vanity of disobedience (1 Cor. 10) and the rewards of faithful endurance (Heb. 11).

Finally, the value of the Old Covenant is seen when we recognize that it is the:

Vehicle Which Brings Us To Christ

More than once in this book, the Old Covenant is compared to a school bus which drives us to Christ. Paul's language is a bit more familiar:

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

The central theme of Old Testament scripture focuses upon how God's plan of redemption was accomplished. The Old Testament is God's invitation to hear the story of how He accomplished His eternal purpose to save man (Eph. 3:10-11; Rev. 13:8; 1 Pet. 1:18-20).

But before man could be saved, he would first have to be convinced that he was lost. The Old Testament law served as a vehicle to drive men to this realization. Men and women soon learned that they would be cursed if they violated the Law in even one point and continued not in all things written in the book of the law to do them (Jas. 2:10-11; Gal. 3:10). They also learned that the blood of bulls and goats was not sufficient to remove their guilt (Heb. 9:11-14; 10:1-4). The Old Testament was designed by God to create within man a recognition of the fact that he was lost and needed a Savior.

Someone has written that the predominant theme of the Old Testament is: "He is coming." Though they did not always grasp the full meaning and significance of what they were writing, the Old Testament prophets gave witness to the fact that one was coming:

Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent

down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into (1 Pet 1:10-12).

The New Testament repeatedly emphasizes the connection between these prophecies and Jesus of Nazareth. The first four chapters of the book of Matthew demonstrate the close relationship of the message of the Old Testament to that of the New Testament. In fact, the very first verse of the book of Matthew presupposes a knowledge of the Old Testament, “The book of the generation of the Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham” (Matt. 1:1). Without the Old Testament, the very first verse of the New Testament would make no sense. On the other hand, prior knowledge of the Abrahamic covenant (Gen. 12:1-3) and God’s promises to David (2 Sam. 7:12-13) prepare us for Matthew’s account. Familiarity with Isaiah’s prediction of the virgin birth of Immanuel also gives us a grasp of Matthew 1:18-25. In short, the very first chapter of the New Testament is predicated upon the teaching and prophecies of the Old Testament (Matt. 1:22). Just five verses into Matthew chapter 2, we are confronted with another Old Testament prophecy concerning the birthplace of Christ. In Matthew 3:3, we find a quotation from Isaiah chapter 40 concerning the work of John the Immerser. In chapter 4, Jesus conquers the devil by repeatedly quoting Old Testament scripture. Furthermore, his departure from Nazareth into Capernaum is said by Matthew to be in harmony with the prophecy of Isaiah (Matt. 4:13-17). In chapter 5, Jesus said that He did not come to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfill them (Matt. 5:17-20). In chapter 6 He refers to the Old Testament character Solomon (Matt. 6:29) In chapter 7, He speaks of the law

and the prophets (Matt. 7:12). In fact, every one of the first 13 chapters of the book of Matthew either mentions directly, or alludes to, the Old Testament. Excluding chapter 14, almost every other chapter in the book contains some allusion to the Old Covenant. Mark, Luke and John also give similar emphasis to the first covenant in their writings.

Jesus Himself employed the writings of the Old Testament as a vehicle to lead men unto Him. On the road to Emmaus he said:

Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself...And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures? (Luke 24:25-27; Luke 24:32).

The inspired preachers and apostles of the first century church also saw the value of using the Old Covenant as a vehicle to lead men and women to Jesus. Consider the following examples:

But those things, which **God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets**, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your

sins may be forgiven... For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you ...Yea, and **all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.** Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed (Acts 3:18,19, 22-25).

The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. Then Philip opened his mouth, and **began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus** (Acts 8:32-35).

To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins (Acts 10:43).

Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent. For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the

voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him. And though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain. And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre. But God raised him from the dead: (Acts 13:26-30).

And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days **reasoned with them out of the scriptures**, *Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ* (Acts 17:2-3).

Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, **saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead**, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles (Acts 26:22-23).

And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, **persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets**, from morning till evening (Acts 28:23).

The point of the foregoing passages is to demonstrate that preachers and members of the Lord's church in the first century did not abandon the Old Covenant simply because a better covenant with better promises had been established. Rather, they viewed it as the natural means and vehicle by which to lead people to the Christ of the New Covenant. For example, Stephen's sermon in Acts 7 evidences a masterful use of the Old Testament as a vehicle to lead men to Christ.

Conclusion

We have observed that the Old Covenant is valuable because (1) it is the **verbal** revelation of God to man; (2) it exhibits the **vastness** of God's power; (3) it **validates** God's faithfulness by predicting in advance the events of the future; (4) it provides **vivid** examples of both obedience and disobedience whereby we may learn; and (5) it is a **vehicle** to lead men unto Christ. As we live under the authority of the New Covenant, let us ever be mindful of the continuing value of the Old Testament and the principles which can be learned therefrom.

Endnotes

- 1 David L. Baker, **Two Testaments, One Bible** (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1991), 19.
- 2 Ibid., 35.
- 3 Ibid., 36.
- 4 Ibid., 37.
- 5 Ibid., 41.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid., 49.
8. Ibid., 51-2.

Chapter 3

The Who, What, When, Where, And Why Of The Old Covenant

Darrell Beard

Introduction

There is a general failure in the religious world to recognize the fact of two covenants or systems of divine government called the “old” testament and the “new” testament.¹ The Bible is often abused by the use of Scripture without regard to the covenant in effect at the time a passage was written. It is our task to show that such a thing as “The Old Testament” existed, considering the features of it and the reasons for it.

Rudyard Kipling once wrote:

I keep six honest serving-men
(They taught me all I knew);
Their names are What and Why and When
And How and Where and Who.²

When a thing is studied in light of Kipling’s “honest serving-men,” we can arrive at an accurate and full understanding of revealed truth regarding any matter, so long as we ask the right questions and answer them

correctly. Our text is taken from Deuteronomy 5:1-15. We will divide it into three sections and discuss “The Who, What, When, Where and Why” of them. Following that, we will look at some other “serving-men” questions regarding the Old Covenant.

The Who, What, When, Where, And Why Of Deuteronomy 5:1-5

And Moses called all Israel, and said unto them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep, and do them. The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day. The Lord talked with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire, (I stood between the Lord and you at that time, to shew you the word of the Lord: for ye were afraid by reason of the fire, and went not up into the mount;) saying,

The following questions should be considered as we look at this passage: What is the historical background of this reading? Who are the parties involved in this covenant? What terms are used here and elsewhere to describe this “covenant” and what is meant by these terms? Where and when was the covenant originally made? With whom was the covenant made — who are the people amenable to the covenant? With whom was the covenant not made? What shows the divine origin of this covenant?

At the time of our text, Israel was nearing the end of

a period of wanderings in the wilderness, and Moses was nearing the end of his life. Forty years before, God had delivered them from bondage in Egypt, and soon thereafter had given Israel the Law through Moses on Mount Sinai.³ Now, Moses calls together the second generation of Israelites in a solemn meeting to remind them of their covenant with God and to impress upon their minds the necessity of learning, keeping, and doing the commandments thereof. Earlier, Moses had gloried:

What nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day? (Deut. 4:7-8).

Moses told the assembled Israelites that the covenant was not made with “our fathers” (Deut. 5:3). This expression cannot refer to their immediate fathers, the previous generation of Israelites, because it was to those very people that the covenant was originally given forty years before (Exodus 20). The “fathers” evidently referred to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the “founding fathers” of their nation. Shortly before, Moses had said, “And because he (God) loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them, and brought thee out in his sight with his mighty power out of Egypt” (Deut. 4:37). This is clearly a reference to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Compare Galatians 3:16-18 on this point. This covenant was with the Israelite nation, from the time Moses went up to meet God in Mount Sinai. It was not made with Adam and Eve, Noah, or anyone else before this occasion.

The covenant was made, Moses said, “with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day” (Deut. 5:3).

The generation, it is true, with which God made the covenant at Horeb, had all died out by that time, with the exception of Moses, Joshua, and Caleb, and only lived in the children, who, though in part born in Egypt, were all under twenty years of age at the conclusion of the covenant at Sinai, and therefore were not among the persons with whom the Lord concluded the covenant. But the covenant was made not with the particular individuals then alive, but rather with the nation as an organic whole. Hence Moses could with perfect justice identify those who constituted the nation at that time, with those who had entered into the covenant with the Lord at Sinai.⁴

From the time the covenant was given on Mount Sinai, all generations of Israelites were amenable to the Law, so long as it was in effect. Over four hundred years from the time of our text, David was to say to young Solomon, “Then shalt thou prosper, if thou takest heed to fulfil the statutes and judgments which the Lord charged Moses with concerning Israel” (1 Chron. 22:13). Thus, only the nation of Israel was intended as the people of the covenant. They were accountable to God to keep it until He made a new covenant not like this one (Jer. 31:31-34).

That which God established between Himself and Israel is described as a **covenant**. As presently understood, the general significance of a covenant is that of an agreement, contract, or pact made between two

parties:

It may however be very difficult at this time to ascertain what has really been the first origin of the word and its application, which is to be sought for in the very earliest testimonies and customs of the people of God rather than of other nations.⁵

The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia added: “The Old Testament term came to mean that which bound two parties together.”⁶

The expression “statutes and judgments” (Deut. 5:1) was often used in the Old Testament as a synonym of the word “covenant.” In fact, it is thus used in fifty-four verses from Leviticus through Malachi. **Statutes** comes from a Hebrew word meaning “something decreed, prescribed; usually applied to the positive statutes appointed by Moses.”⁷ **Judgments** is understood as: “to bring matters to the rule of right.”⁸

Other terms referring to this covenant are the following: (1) **Law** (Deut. 4:44), meaning, “mandate of a king, edict, decree, law, statute.”⁹ (2) **Testimonies** (Deut. 4:45). This word signifies, “to say again and again; hence to affirm.”¹⁰ (3) **Commandments** (Deut. 5:10), meaning, “to set up, ... ; to constitute, appoint; ... to charge ... that which one commands to be done.”¹¹ (4) Deuteronomy 5:5 also describes this covenant as “the Word of God.”

Sometimes the word “covenant” referred specifically to the Ten Commandments (as in Deut. 4:13), while at other times to all the statutes of the Law (as in Exod. 24:7; 34:10). The Ten Commandments and the other ordinances of the Law were variously spoken of as “the

law of Moses” (as in Neh. 8:1) or “the law of God” (as in Neh. 8:8). More will be said about this later.

The Who, What, When, Where, And Why Of Deuteronomy 5:6-11

I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. Thou shalt have none other gods before me. Thou shalt not make thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters beneath the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

“Serving-men” questions such as the following should be asked in consideration of the above passage: What had God done for His covenant people? What is the first of the covenant’s requirements? What is the second commandment of the covenant? What is God’s attitude toward disobedience? What does God do to the disobedient? What did God do for those who lovingly obey His commandments? How is the third command stated? Who will the Lord hold or count as guilty?

Notice the special relationship between the Lord and

the people of this covenant. “I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage” (Deut. 5:6). God had chosen Israel to be a special people unto Himself, and had set His love upon them (Deut. 7:6-8). He made this covenant with them, speaking to them “face to face” through Moses (Deut. 5:4). God had chosen them above all nations of the world. In turn, the covenant people were to have no other gods before Him. They were not to follow the nations in using images or other things to worship. Since God demands to be first, He will not tolerate idolatry or the taking of His name in a light or thoughtless manner.

This section emphasizes the necessity of obedience to the covenant’s commandments, and the requirement of faithful service to God. He threatened to punish the iniquity of those who hate God, and promised to show mercy upon those who love Him and keep His commandments (Deut. 5:9-10).

While we do not live under the terms of this covenant, the principle applies today. Obedience to whatever covenant under which one may live has always been required and rewarded. Disobedience has always stirred the righteous wrath of God. Another important principle of obedience is stated in Deuteronomy 4:2:

Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.

Keil and Delitzsch make these comments:

The divine manifestation of grace laid Israel

under the obligation to a conscientious observance of the Law, that they might continue to enjoy the blessings of the covenant. The exhortation commences with the appeal, to hear and keep the commandments and rights from the Lord, without adding to them or taking from them; . . . The observation of the Law, however, required that it should be kept as given, that nothing should be added to it or taken from it, but that men should submit to it as to the inviolable word of God. Not by omissions only, but by additions also, was the commandment weakened, and the word of God turned into ordinances of men, as Pharisaism sufficiently proved.¹²

In the New Testament, we are warned not to go beyond the “doctrine of Christ” (the doctrine Christ authorized; His covenant) or else we would not have God (2 John 9-11, ASV). Some of the final words of the New Testament are these:

For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things that are written in this book.

The Who, What, When, Where, And Why Of Deuteronomy 5:12-15

Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it, as the Lord thy God commanded thee. Six days thou shalt labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou. And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day.

Again, some questions come to mind regarding this section. What is the fourth commandment of the covenant? When did the Lord previously give this commandment? When and how was the Sabbath sanctified? To whom was the Sabbath command given? How was it to be carried out? Why was the commandment given? Upon what former condition of the covenant people was this commandment given?

The first time anyone was commanded to keep the Sabbath is found in the events of Exodus 16. The Israelites were in the wilderness and had complained because of a lack of food. God told Moses that He was going to rain down bread from heaven and use this as a test to see whether or not they would walk in His Law (verse 4). On

the sixth day, the people were to bring in twice the daily portion.

The bread appeared in the morning as “a small round thing” (verse 14). They were commanded to gather just enough for the day and not to lay any up overnight. However, some disobeyed these instructions and found that the manna they stored overnight had become infested with worms and stank. When the sixth day came, they were told to gather twice the normal daily portion, and save half of it for the seventh day. That which was saved for the seventh day did not spoil (verse 24).

At this point, Moses told them to eat that portion on the seventh day. It was a Sabbath (rest) unto the Lord. They were not to gather the manna on that day because it was a Sabbath. Besides, there would be none to gather. Again, some ignored Moses’ instructions from God and found that there was no bread to gather (verses 25-26). At this, Exodus 16:28-30 records:

And the Lord said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? See, for that the Lord hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. So the people rested on the seventh day.

The basic idea of sabbath is “rest.” In the account of the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20:11, the Lord declared that because He created heaven and earth in six days and rested on the seventh day, He blessed and hallowed it. When was the Sabbath hallowed and bound

upon any man? It was in anticipation of the covenant made with the Israelites in Horeb. Our text of Deuteronomy 5:15 points out that the Israelites were to keep the Sabbath, remembering that the Lord had brought them out of bondage and had given them rest. Ezekiel records these words of God:

Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them” (Ezek. 20:12).

Thus, the Sabbath had a special significance with the Jews that it could never have with any other people. God “rested” on the seventh day, and the Israelites “rested” from bondage when delivered from Egypt by the mighty hand of God.

Some, nevertheless, have made the contention that the Sabbath is a permanent covenant, not limited to the Ten Commandments. Ellen G. White of the Seventh Day Adventists claimed that she was taken up into heaven. Describing what she supposedly saw there, she wrote:

In the holiest I saw an ark . . . in the ark was the golden pot of manna, Aaron’s rod that budded, and the tables of stone which folded together like a book. Jesus opened them and I saw the ten commandments written on them with the finger of God . . . the holy sabbath looked glorious—a halo of glory was all around it. I saw that the sabbath was not nailed to the cross.”¹³

Mrs. White put herself in direct contradiction with Paul who wrote:

[Christ] blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; . . . Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days” (Col. 2:14,16).

She says the Sabbath was not nailed to the cross; Paul says that Christ blotted out, took out of the way, and nailed to the cross the ordinances, including the Sabbath.

Other Questions About The Old Testament

We cannot close these comments without bringing up two final “serving-men” questions about the old covenant:

What Was The Purpose Of The Law?

Why was the Law given? Paul gives some explanation of this in Galatians 3:13-29. First, “It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made...” (verse 19). In view of God’s promise to Abraham that all nations of the earth would be blessed in Him (Gen. 12:1-2), it was necessary to make of Abraham a great nation. The “seed” through whom the promise was to be fulfilled was Christ, not the nation of Israel. However, Israel was important in that God would establish a people having identity as descendants of Abraham with a covenant thorough which to serve God. The Law was given to keep faith with the

promise God gave to Abraham. Having the Law, this people would be able to know about sin and to realize its destructive nature (Rom. 7:7).

Second, the Law was added, “till the seed (Christ) should come to whom the promise was made” (Gal. 3:19). Paul continues, “Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Gal. 3:24). The Law pointed to Christ by means of its promises and prophecies. One with a good knowledge of the Law of Moses should be brought to an awareness that Jesus Christ is the seed of Abraham, the Messiah, and the King of the Jews. Jesus said concerning the Old Testament:

Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me (John 5:39)... For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me (John 5:46).

Although we do not live under the Law, it serves us well today. The Old Testament gave us a vocabulary and spiritual concepts by which we can better understand the New Testament. An old saying has it: “The Old Testament is the New Testament concealed, and the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed.” Furthermore, the Old Covenant contained many abiding principles by which God has always dealt with man. There are many things the Christian can learn from Old Testament people, events, things, and laws. “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope” (Rom. 15:4).

What Was Included In The Covenant That Was Taken Away?

How was God's law for the Israelites described? Did it consist of a temporary part which would be nailed to the cross and a permanent part that would continue into the New Covenant? Such has been the contention of some. They have spoken of the laws regarding sacrifices, clean and unclean foods, etc., as "the Ceremonial law" or "the Law of Moses." To them, this is the Law that was "nailed to the cross." The Ten Commandments have been labeled "the moral Law" or "the Law of God." They contend that this moral code was not nailed to the cross and that people today must live by it.

A survey of relevant Bible texts will show this to be utterly false. The Word of God makes no such distinction in so far as identifying a code that will be taken away and one which will continue as binding Law. The whole or any part of it could be called "the Law of Moses" because it was given through Moses. Any part or the entirety of the Law could be called "the Law of God" because it came from God. He gave all the commandments and precepts of the covenant. Both of these elements could be brought together as it is described as "the law of Moses, which the Lord God of Israel had given" (Ezra 7:6), or "the law of the Lord given by Moses" (2 Chron. 34:14).

Sometimes those things in the Law that involved the "ceremonial" matters were described as the Law of God, rather than the Law of Moses. The context of Second Chronicles 31 discusses some reforms by King Hezekiah of Judah. It mentions the restoration of priestly services in the various sacrifices for the sabbaths, new moons, and other feast days "as it is written in the Law of the Lord" (verse 3). If the theory were correct, these things would

have been described as the Law of Moses.

After the birth of Jesus, Mary observed the instructions of the Law involving her ceremonial purification. In Luke 2:22, it is said that this was “according to the law of Moses,” but the very next verse explains that what she did was “as it is written in the law of the Lord.” Further, her sacrifice was “according to that which is said in the law of the Lord” (Luke 2:24). If the sabbatarians are correct, Luke made a mistake by not making a distinction between the Law of Moses and the Law of the Lord. In the reading of the book of the law to Israel, it is described as “the book of the law of Moses” (Neh. 8:1), while verse 8 says it was “the book in the law of God.”

The Law that was taken away clearly included the Ten Commandments. Although this may be covered more fully in the next lecture, please note the following: (1) The Law from which we are delivered in order to be “married” to Christ is the Law which included the command “Thou shalt not covet” (Rom. 7:7), one of the Ten Commandments. (2) The “Old Testament” which was done away was that which was “written and engraven in stones” (2 Cor. 3:7), a clear reference to the Decalogue. (3) The Law that was taken out of the way and nailed to the cross was the Law which included the Sabbath as well as various “ceremonial” observances (Col. 2:14-17).

Conclusion

In order to “rightly divide” (2 Tim. 2:15) the Bible, we must study the Old Testament, appreciating its part in God’s unfolding plan of salvation. Of course, we are not amenable to its Laws, even though many have been repeated (Rom. 13:9) and amplified (Matt. 5:27-30) in the

New Testament. In fact, the New Testament itself urges and commends a study of the Old Covenant. “Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the [Old Testament, D.E.B.] scriptures might have hope” (Rom. 15:4).

There is much benefit in studying “The Who, What, When, Where and Why of the Old Covenant.” We hope this particular study has been profitable.

Endnotes

1 The Greek word *diathaka* is used in the King James Version of the Old Testament to translate the Hebrew word berith, “covenant.” It is translated “testament” 13 times and “covenant” 20 times in the KJV of the New Testament.

2 Rudyard Kipling, “The Elephant’s Child,” **Just So Stories**, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company), 85.

3 “Horeb” and “Sinai” are both names attached to the mountain where Moses received the Law from God. The name “Horeb” is most commonly used in Deuteronomy, while “Sinai” occurs more frequently in Exodus.

4 Keil-Delitzsch, **Commentary on the Old Testament**, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdsman Publishing Company), 1991, Vol. I, 319.

5 William Wilson, **Wilson’s Old Testament Word Studies**, (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers), 99.

6. Geoffrey W. Bromley (ed.), **The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia**, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdsman Publishing Company), 1979, Vol. I, 417.

7 Wilson, **Wilson’s Old Testament Word Studies**, 790.

8 Wilson, **Wilson’s Old Testament Word Studies**, 235.

9 Wilson, **Wilson’s Old Testament Word Studies**, 244.

10 Wilson, **Wilson’s Old Testament Word Studies**, 442.

11 Wilson, **Wilson's Old Testament Word Studies**, 87.

12 Keil-Delitzsch, **Commentary on the Old Testament, Vol. I**, 308, 309.

13 Ellen G. White, **The Early Writings of Mrs. White**, 26, quoted in Foy E. Wallace, Jr., **God's Prophetic Word**, (Oklahoma City: Foy E. Wallace, Jr. Publications), 310.

Chapter 4

The Who, What, When, Where, And Why Of The New Covenant

Garland Elkins

Before we discuss the New Covenant in some detail, and contrast it with the Law of Moses, we shall devote some time to the importance of the various covenants, their purpose, and duration.

It is of absolute necessity for one to understand his duty to God, but no one can know and understand his duty without knowing to what law he is amenable. God made a covenant with Noah, and told him to build an ark. However, God does not require me to build an ark.

We must remember that each covenant that God has made with a man and/or men is always for the man, or the men to whom it was given. For example, God made a covenant with Abel, and as a part of that covenant He required him to offer a sacrifice by faith (Heb. 11:4). However, it does not follow that I go to a flock, and prepare an offering, and then come and burn it with fire. If I were to offer such a sacrifice unto God it could not be “by faith;” therefore, it would be sinful. During the Patriarchy Age God commanded Abraham to go into the country of Moriah, and offer up his son, Isaac, on an altar. If a man today were to regard that as instruction to him, and he attempted to carry out that direction to Abraham, he would be

charged as a murderer.

We do not live under patriarchy, and God has never told anyone under the Law which we now live to offer up his son upon an altar. Even though the present law, the New Covenant contains some things that are to be found in the Old Testament, one obeys these demands not because they are found in the Old Testament, but because they are found in the New Testament, the Law under which he lives.

Each covenant that God has made with men may have many things in common with other covenants, yet it is distinct. Under all forms of divine law men have been required to worship God with a whole heart. The Law of Moses was given by Moses (John 1:17), and it was intended to serve as a school master, or a leader of children till the Christ should come and establish the faith by which men should be saved (Gal. 3:23-25). The Law of Moses was a great law for the purpose that God intended. "And what great nation is there, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?" (Deut. 4:8). We have a record of the covenant made with Abraham. Abraham's part of the covenant was that he must be obedient.

The Covenant with Noah before the flood (Gen. 6:13-22). The ark was to be built of the timber prescribed, and according to the manner indicated in the contract; the animals were to be gathered as God had ordained. However, still more than this was implied. Noah had been selected from the world as the only man righteous in his generation (2 Pet. 2:5), and whose sons were also free from polygamy, which was then the curse of the earth. The sons of God had gone and taken wives of the daughters of men, thus mingling with the wicked, and becoming as

corrupt as the rest of the world (Gen. 6:1-5). Noah was righteous and obedient, therefore God saved him (Gen. 6:8,22; 2 Pet. 2:5; 1 Pet. 3:20,21).

The covenant with Noah after the flood (Gen. 9:8-17). The human side of this covenant can be seen by reading Genesis 8:20-22. This covenant is made with all flesh since it concerns all flesh. God's promises will not fail, except by the failure of man, in violating the terms.

The covenant made with Abram concerning Christ (Gen. 12:1-3). In one form or another this covenant was renewed many times. Making of Abram a great nation was necessary in order to the coming of the Christ and the preaching of that truth by which the world should be saved. That nation (Israel) was to be a receptacle of His truth-a nation that would guard it, keep it, and give it to the world. They were to be separate from the rest of the world, that Christ might be given to the world. The following Scriptures contain references to this covenant: Gen. 18:8; 22:18; 26:4; Gal. 3:8,16; Acts 3:25; Heb. 11:8,17,18.

Who Is Amenable To The New Covenant Of Jesus Christ?

Is it just the Jews? Is it just the Gentiles? Are non-Christians in any sense of the term accountable to the New Covenant?

All accountable people are amenable to the New Covenant of Jesus Christ: Jews, Gentiles, non-Christians, and Christians. Please note the following:

1. All men who obey the Law of Christ in becoming children of God are men who are accountable. (Mark.16:15,16).

2. The Law of Christ, the gospel, is a law which is

addressed to all men (Matt. 28:18-20).

3. The conclusion is that the Law of Christ, the gospel, is a law to which all men are accountable.

Further we observe:

1. All men who obey the Law of Christ in becoming children of God are men who are accountable to the Law of Christ (Mark 16:15,16).

2. Men in the world (those out of the church) are men who obey the Law of Christ in becoming children of God (and are thus set free from their sins) (Rom. 8:1,2).

3. Conclusion: men in the world (all out of the church) are men who are accountable to the Law of Christ.

Also, please note:

1. All men who must repent in order to gain remission of sins in the name of Christ are men who are accountable to the Law of Christ (Mark 16:15,16; Acts 17:30).

2. All nations (every responsible person in every nation) are men who must repent in order to gain remission of sins in the name of Christ (Luke 24:47).

3. Conclusion: All nations (every person in every nation) are men who are accountable to the Law of Christ.

What Is The Content Of The New Covenant?

Is it just the death, burial and resurrection of Christ? Is it what Jesus Christ taught with His own lips? Is it what the apostles taught? OR IS IT ALL OF THE ABOVE?

About the time that I began to preach, two erring brethren, W. Carl Ketcherside and Leroy Garrett, were creating many problems and causing much trouble among brethren by seeking to make a radical difference between **gospel** and **doctrine**. They insisted that the gospel is

preached to convert alien sinners to Christ and that doctrine is to be taught only to saints.

It would be easy to multiply scriptures to refute their false doctrine on this matter, i.e., their imagined distinction between **gospel** and **doctrine**, but I mention only a few. Their contention that the gospel is only to be preached to the alien sinner is false to the core. Ketcherside and Garrett contended that the gospel cannot be preached to the church, but Paul said that he was ready to do that very thing to the church in Rome. Hear him. “So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you also that are in Rome” (Rom. 1:15). He informed the church at Galatia that if anything other than the gospel was preached to them they would be accursed! Hear him.

But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed (Gal. 1:8-9).

It is certain that Paul the apostle is right and that Ketcherside and Garrett are false teachers!

Having taken their argument of **gospel** from them, let us examine their contention on **doctrine**. They argue that doctrine is to be taught **only** to saints, Christians. They are as wrong as wrong can be, for Paul taught doctrine, the doctrine of Christ, to an alien sinner! Hear the inspired writer as he informs us of doctrine being taught to an alien sinner! “Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine

of the Lord” (Acts 13:12). Therefore, we have shown that Ketcherside and Garrett are wrong per their contention that **doctrine** cannot be taught to an alien sinner. Again I point out that, since Paul the apostle, who taught doctrine to an alien sinner, was inspired (1 Cor. 2:13), and since the writer of the book of Acts was a holy man moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:21), and since all scripture is given by the inspiration of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17), and since the words of scripture are not “the words of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God” (1 Thess. 2:13), it, therefore, follows just as certainly as night follows day, that Carl Ketcherside and Leroy Garrett **are false teachers, and, therefore, cannot be fellowshiped by faithful brethren but rather must be reproved and exposed** (Eph. 5:11).

Brother G. K. Wallace did a masterful job in exposing W. Carl Ketcherside’s false doctrine, i.e., Ketcherside’s efforts to distinguish between “**gospel**” and “**doctrine.**” Note the following statements from brother G. K. Wallace:

Brother Ketcherside regards himself as maker of history. I now read from the *Mission Messenger*, Vol. 25, No. 5, May 1963, page 1, where he says, “**It is our personal conviction that history is being made among the heirs of the restoration movement in these days. To this spirit of unity, we have been devoting our feeble talents and dedicating our meager efforts.**” This is the same plea that he made when he was riding the anti-orphan home hobby. At that time, he claimed to be a Moses to lead us out of the wilderness. Alexander Campbell says in the *Christian*

System, a copy which I have here, **“It is curious to observe how extremes beget extremes in every step of the reformation cause to the dawn of the present century.”** Brother Ketcherside has gone from one extreme to another.

But we admit that he and his fellow travelers are making history. They are making history in the use of authorities and the writings of both the living and the dead. Never in my life have I observed, and I have taken time to check, such misuse of quotations from the past—using them in a sense entirely different from what the reformers had to say.

In the *Mission Messenger*, Vol. 25, No. 8, page 122, brother Ketcherside said, **“There is no indication that the apostolic doctrine was to be taught to every creature on earth.”** In other words, he is saying that it is not necessary for us to remain pure in doctrine. When he makes this statement, he gives a quotation from Thomas Campbell and says that Thomas Campbell, who wrote the declaration and address, taught the same thing. Thomas Campbell never said anything of the kind. This is a rank misrepresentation of Thomas Campbell. Thomas Campbell, in the quotation cited by brother Ketcherside, was teaching the difference between **inference** and a **revealed truth** and/or the difference between a plain command and inferential truth.

One of these nights I shall have some charts here and talk to you about commands, examples,

and a necessary inference. Thomas Campbell was saying that we should be careful to make a distinction between plain, positive commands and an inference, and he had no reference to what brother Ketcherside attributes to him. Yes, these brethren are making history in their use of authorities.

Brother Ketcherside tries to make brethren believe that Alexander Campbell taught what he is teaching today. When I had debates with him in Paragould, Arkansas, and in your city, he said that Alexander Campbell, Thomas Campbell, David Lipscomb, Sewell and all those brethren stood exactly with him at that time. In those debates he affirmed what he now says was extreme and now admits was entirely wrong; yet he said, **“The pioneers are with me.”** He admits he changed, and I do not think a dead man can change. He quotes them on both sides and misrepresented them both times.

Today, brother Ketcherside maintains that the only basis for unity and fellowship is simply belief in the person of Christ. The **“fraternal hand”** is extended to all who accept the deity of Christ. He says that if a man believes that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, has been baptized for the remission of sins, then all else is of naught. Then he says that is what Alexander Campbell taught. I hold in my hand a copy of the *Christian System*, a book which sets forth the principles of the Restoration Movement. From it I read what Alexander Campbell said about the **person** of Christ. On page 300 he said, **“It is a**

high crime and a misdemeanor in any man, professing to have received the Messiah in his proper person, character, and office, to refuse allegiance to him in anything; and to substitute inventions and traditions in lieu of the ordinances and statutes of the Prince Emmanuel.” Alexander Campbell said that if a man taught the basis of unity rested solely upon the deity of Christ, he was guilty of a misdemeanor and high crime. He taught that we could not accept Christ without accepting allegiance to Him in everything, including the **ordinances and statutes** of Prince Emmanuel. Now, if that is not history making, I have never seen it. Most people, when they see Ketcherside’s statements, do not have access to the books that are quoted or do not take time to check. Alexander Campbell has been misrepresented.¹

To illustrate what I mean, they will take the word “**gospel,**” and so define it as to exclude preaching the “**whole gospel**” or a part of it to the church. He says in the *Mission Messenger*, Vol. 25, Aug 1, 1964, page 122, “**There is no indication the apostolic doctrine was to be taught to every creature on earth.**” Can you imagine anything farther from the truth? Jesus said, “**Go teach all nations, baptizing them, teaching them**” yet brother Ketcherside says there is no indication we need to preach it to everybody. You just could not hear anything more rank than this. Imagine brethren

apologizing for such. But now here is the catch—they say “**gospel**” does not include the doctrine or teaching. They are like Mary Baker Eddy. They will define the word to suit them, having defined “**gospel**” and “**doctrine**” and say it does not include the teachings of Jesus Christ. The word translated “**gospel**” in the New Testament is defined by Thayer; (page 256) “**used specially for the glad tidings of the coming kingdom of God, and the salvation to be obtained and it through Christ, and what relates to that salvation.**” The gospel includes not only the death, burial and resurrection of Christ; it includes everything that even relates to our salvation. Why would they define a word to cut out that which God put in it? I say they are making history in the use of dictionaries. However, Jehovah’s Witnesses and Christian Scientists have already beaten them to it.

Thayer then says on the next page, “**After the death of Christ, the term to evangelize (to evaggelion the gospel) comprises also the preaching of (concerning) Jesus Christ as having suffered death on the cross to procure eternal salvation for men in the kingdom of God, but as restored to life and exalted to the right hand of God in heaven, thence to return in majesty to consummate the kingdom of God; so that it may be more briefly defined as the glad tidings of salvation through Jesus Christ; the proclamation of the grace of God manifested and pledged in Christ; the**

gospel.” (*Thayer*, page 257). Let me ask, could you have any more to preach than the death, burial, resurrection, exaltation, ascension, the return of Christ, and the consummation and the grace of God? The gospel includes the grace of God. Brethren, history is being made by these men in the use of dictionaries.

There is also another word concerning which they are making history. That is the word, fellowship. Fellowship is defined by them simply as a state. Monday night I shall have a large chart here so I can get further before you; but today, I want to show you history making in the use of dictionaries. They say fellowship simply means a state and has nothing to do with our relations. They will say a son cannot sonship his father, a man cannot companionship his wife, and a citizen cannot citizenship his government. The son may not sonship his father, but he can fellowship him. A man may not companionship his wife, but he can communicate with her and associate with her. And tomorrow I will show you how that a word is used in the verbal sense, both by brother Ketcherside and by the Bible.

Now however, I just want to show you how they misuse a word and spin a theory. Thayer says on page 351 that *Koinoneo* (this is the verb) means “**to come into communion or fellowship, to become a sharer, be made a partaker,**” and he cites Hebrews 2:14 where *Koinoneo* (fellowship) is used as a verb—to enter into fellowship, to join oneself as an associate, to make one’s self a sharer, or partner. Thayer

says of the noun *Koinonia*, **“fellowship, association, communicating, joint participation, intercourse. The sharing which one has in anything, intimacy, the right hand is the sign and pledge.”** Then he says in 1 John 1:3-6, **“which fellowship according to John’s teaching, consists in the fact that Christians are partakers in common of the same mind.”** Paul wrote to the church at Corinth and told the brethren to be of the same mind and the same judgment.

Brother Ketcherside’s statement that there is **“no indication that the apostolic doctrine is to be taught to every creature on earth,”** is to be read with shame. Can you imagine one who claims to lead people in the path of righteousness standing up and saying, **“Brethren, there is no indication that God wants his doctrine taught to every creature on earth.”** No special definition of **“doctrine”** could erase this ingenious blunder. Mr. Thayer, on page 144, from which the term **“Teaching”** is translated (*didaze*) says, **“teaching—that which is taught—the doctrine which has God for its author, its supporter—the teaching in religious assemblies of Christians.”** Doctrine is to be taught in religious assemblies, Brother Ketcherside to the contrary notwithstanding.²

Brother William Woodson presented an exhaustive study of the New Unity Movement during the 1974 Freed-Hardeman College Lectures. Under the heading *“The*

Distinctions And Premises Of The New Unity Movement Will Not Stand The Test Of Bible Truth,” he was right on target when he wrote:

A. The three most basic positions of the movement are that “gospel” and “doctrine” are so radically distinguished that fellowship is based on “gospel” but not on “doctrine,” fellowship is always used of a state or relationship and has nothing to do with what one does in that state, and fellowship does not entail agreement prior to fellowship. These positions underlie the proposals and, though not fully stated in all articles, are implicit in the program advocated.

B. These positions cannot be sustained as the unity proposals make necessary. The various speakers on the lectureship have called attention to some facts which indicate the weaknesses of the program, and the following goes further in the same direction. The writer has called attention to these positions in articles in the *Gospel Advocate*, January 11, January 18, March 15, May 10 and May 24, 1973. A summary of this material is all that space allows.

1. The distinction between “gospel” and “doctrine” is not made in the New Testament as the new unity movement alleges. (A) The terms “doctrine,” “faith,” “gospel,” “truth,” and “word” are used inter-changeably, as different ways of referring to the same body of truth. “Doctrine,” “faith,” “gospel,” “truth,” and “word” were to be preached and obeyed in order to become children

of God. This being true, the distinction cannot be sustained. (b) Doctrine was to be obeyed in becoming a Christian (Rom. 6:17,18) and was preached to those who were not Christians (Acts 13:5, 7, 10, 12). (c) Gospel was to be preached to the church at Rome (Rom. 1:15). (d) The Galatian churches were to continue in the truth of the gospel (Gal. 2:5; 5:1). (e) Hypocrisy on the part of a Christian was contrary to the gospel (Gal. 2:11-14). From these verses it is clear that gospel and doctrine are not to be distinguished as the new unity movement necessitates.

2. The argument concerning fellowship, noun and verb, has been discussed by the author in two articles in the *Gospel Advocate*, May 10 and May 24, 1973. Attention is called to the fact that the New Testament uses the word *Koinoneo* in numerous places in the New Testament. These include Hebrews 2:14; Romans 15:27; I Peter 4:13; I Timothy 5:22; 2 John 11; Galatians 6:6; Ephesians 5:11; Philippians 4:14; and Revelation 18:4. It is interesting that these verbs are used with nouns of "the thing," referring to the "thing" with which the fellowship was conducted. It is also true that the noun "fellowship" is a "verbal noun" and implies a verbal action in exercising and expressions to translate the noun *Koinonia*. The King James does this in Hebrews 13:16 and other translations do the same in numerous passages as the article on May 24, 1973 indicated. The argument that "fellowship" indicates only a state or relationship cannot be sustained.

3. In response to the idea that fellowship is not predicated on agreement, one notes fellowship was preceded by agreement in Acts 9:26-28 and Galatians 2:1-10. In the former verses Barnabas vouched for Paul prior to his acceptance by the church in Jerusalem, although he was a baptized believer; and in the latter verses the right hand of fellowship was given only after it was perceived that the gospel was committed to Paul and the grace of God had been received. Further, the new unity movement has a prior agreement as to “gospel” before fellowship and has grounds of excommunication—moral turpitude, denial of deity of Jesus, and heresy. These facts indicate that, according to the movement, agreement as to “gospel” is necessary to being in fellowship and, at least in the three areas designated, is necessary to sustain fellowship. An interesting illustration of the impossibility of “fellowship” without prior agreement is presented by an article in *Mission Messenger* (May, 1972), pp. 69, 70. W. Carl Ketcherside lists the characteristics he regards as necessary for a genuine revolutionary movement. Six of these are set forth. The third of these is: “There must be an acceptance of the idea that the cause is more valuable than any person engaged in its prosecution and that to die for it is heroic and constitutes actual gain.” This means one could not engage in the revolutionary program advocated by W. Carl Ketcherside without previously accepting the six “indispensable

requirements” in general and the third indispensable requirement in particular. It shows that one must accept these indispensable requirements not **after** he has become a revolutionary but prior and in order to become a revolutionary. Would W. Carl Ketcherside “have fellowship” with one in his revolutionary program who would omit the six “indispensable requirements” and “absolute essentials to the revolutionary stance”?

2 John 9-11

This passage is crucial to the subject of fellowship because it plainly teaches that all who do not abide in the doctrine of Christ have not God. Certainly one could not and would not continue in fellowship with a person who is not in proper relation to God. The issue turns then on the meaning of the expression “the doctrine of Christ,” and one must consider this expression in some detail. Attention is called to this expression by brother G. K. Wallace in another lecture, and the present treatment only seeks to add more along the same line.

A. The new unity movement contends the expression “the doctrine of Christ” refers **only** to the **doctrine about Christ** and not to the doctrine given by Christ. Thus, the “doctrine of (about) Christ” is a part of the “gospel” as the movement redefines “gospel” and consequently has to do with fellowship. But “doctrine” concerning other aspects of the message of Jesus, being part of “doctrine” as contradistinguished

from “gospel,” does not have anything to do with fellowship. It constitutes allegedly a perversion of the meaning of the expression “doctrine of Christ” to apply it to the teaching given by Christ. Also, to use this “perversion” to oppose unity with Christian churches which will not give up the use of musical instruments in worship is to become guilty of heresy and should result, if unwilling to repent, in exclusion from fellowship. Central to this new unity scheme is the idea that “the doctrine of Christ” in 2 John 9 refers only to the doctrine about Christ and must never be interpreted as meaning the doctrine given by Christ.

B. It is interesting to note that scattered here and there in the writings of new unity advocates one finds statements about “doctrine” which show the exact opposite of usage from the position indicated above. Note carefully these quotations: Concerning **the doctrine of Christ**, W. Carl Ketcherside stated, “It is true that I have learned a lot of other things which commend themselves to me as **the doctrine of Christ** but I do not intend to create a party to defend or denounce them [*Mission Messenger* (March, 1965), p 38.] Again, “If Brother Loney writes about the person and attributes of Jesus, and I write about **the doctrine of Jesus**, the paper will be better balanced than if all of us wrote the same thing” [*Mission Messenger* (November, 1958), pp. 8-9.] Further, “I believe God has made baptism a condition of salvation from our past life of sin, otherwise the words of Jesus in the

apostolic commission would be meaningless”
[*Mission Messenger* (December, 1964) p. 182.]
Last, “Jesus prayed for all those who believe in
him through **the testimony of the apostles**”
[*Mission Messenger* (October, 1964), p. 148.]

Note from these quotations the following principles: (1) “The doctrine of Christ,” “the doctrine of Jesus,” “the words of Jesus,” and “the testimony of the apostles,” can only be understood in these sentences as meaning the “doctrine,” “words,” and “testimony” given by Christ and the apostles respectively. It would be impossible to have the expressions mean only the doctrine, etc., **about** (not given by) Christ and the apostles respectively. (2) The 1958 quote clearly indicates the “person and attributes of Jesus” and “the doctrine of Jesus” are not absolutely “the same thing.” (3) It is clear that the expression “doctrine of Christ” or similar statements are not used by new unity advocates in the exclusive way they insist must be the case in 2 John 9. One can see the inconsistency.

C. At issue is the type of “genitive” relation present in the “of Christ” aspect of the verse. Does the genitive refer to what Jesus taught (**subjective genitive** since Jesus is the originator of “subject” contemplated) or does it refer exclusively to the teaching about Christ (**objective genitive** since Jesus is the one spoken about or is the “object” contemplated in “doctrine”)? Remember it is not enough to have the genitive to be objective; it must be exclusively objective for the new unity movement claim to

be true. Thus, one is concerned with the question whether “of Christ” in “the doctrine of Christ” is subjective or objective genitive.

D. Many New Testament passages make it clear that the subjective genitive occurs with “doctrine” or words equivalent to “doctrine.” (1) “Preaching” (*Kerygma*) occurs with the subjective genitive as shown by: “the preaching of Jonas” (Matt. 12:41), “my gospel” or literally the gospel of me (Rom. 16:25; I Cor. 2:4) and “our preaching” or literally, the preaching of us (I Cor. 15:14). (2) “Doctrine” from *didaskalia*, occurs with the subjective genitive as shown by: “doctrines of men” (Col. 2:22), “doctrines of devils” (I Tim. 4:1), “my doctrine” (2 Tim. 3:10) and, likely, “doctrine of God our Savior” (Titus 3:10). (3) The term doctrine, from *didache* as in 2 John 9, occurs with the subjective genitive in many verses in the New Testament as is shown by: “his doctrine” (Matt. 7:28;22:32; Mark 1:22; 4:2; 11:18; 12:38; Luke. 4:32; John 18:19), “doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees” (Matt. 16:12), “My doctrine” (John 7:16), “the apostles’ doctrine” (Acts 2:42), “your doctrine” (Acts 5:28), “the doctrine of the Lord” (Acts 13:12), “the doctrine of Balaam” (Rev. 2:14), and “the doctrine of the Nicolaitans” (Rev. 2:15). (4) One would be hard pressed indeed to admit the usage of the subjective genitive—meaning the doctrine, teaching, or preaching of which Jesus was the giver or of which the apostles, Jonah, etc., were the proclaimers—in these verses and deny absolutely and completely that a parallel

statement could not in any sense of the term be the same, i.e., “the doctrine of Christ” in 2 John 9 could not in any way be the doctrine taught by Christ.

E. Numerous scholars indicate the expression “the doctrine of Christ” (2 John 9) refers to the doctrine of which Christ is the author. A. E. Cooke, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Johannine Epistles* states concerning 2 John 9: “There is nothing in the context or the usage of the New Testament to suggest that *to christou* should be regarded as an objective genitive, the writer meaning by the phrase ‘the apostolic teaching about Christ.’ Such an interpretation would seem to be the outcome of pre-conceived notions of what the author **ought** to have meant rather than of what his words indicate. Cf. John 18:19; 7:16; Matt. 7:28; Mic. 4:2; Luke 4:32; Acts 2:42; Rev. 2:14,15. The ‘teaching’ no doubt includes the continuation of Christ’s work by His apostles, but it begins in the work of Christ Himself.” John Peter Lange, *Commentary of the Holy Scriptures*, on the same verse states: “...the genitive is subjective. Agreeably to constant usage, it cannot be the genitive of the object. It is the doctrine which Christ Himself brought and taught and caused to be propagated by His apostles. But, of course, the principal part of its contents is Christology.” Plummer, *The Epistles of St. John*, states: “The doctrine which He taught, rather than the doctrine which teaches about Him.” J. R. W. Stott, *The Epistles of John*: “The Christian seeks

to abide not only in Christ but **in the doctrine of Christ**. At first sight that phrase, literally 'the doctrine of the Christ' (N.E.B.) might be taken as meaning 'the teaching which recognizes Jesus as the Christ' (Smith), and this would suit the context well. But the 'usage of the New Testament' (Westcott, Brooke) requires that the genitive be interpreted not as objective, 'the teaching about Christ' but as subjective, "Christ's teaching." This no doubt includes what Christ continued to teach through the apostles (Cf. Acts 1:1; Col. 3:16; Heb. 2:3). Such authoritative apostolic doctrine is equivalent to what in his first epistle John called 'what you heard from the beginning' (2:24 RSV; Cf. 2:7; 3:11; John 8:31; 2 Tim. 3:14 and 2 John 5:2). The Christian's development is not progress beyond Christ's teaching, whether direct or through the apostles as recorded in the New Testament, but a progressive understanding of it. F. B. Westcott, The Second Epistle of St. John paraphrases 2 John 9 by saying: "Everyone that advances in bold confidence beyond the limits set to the Christian faith." Rengstorf, in discussing the word *didache*, suggests New Testament usage indicates the *didache* of Jesus refers to His whole teaching, His proclamation of the will of God as regards both form and content. This is true of the expression *didache* in the Synoptic Gospels and in John. He illustrates by showing Matthew 16:12 "has in view the whole of what the Pharisees and Sadducees teach," and Acts 2:42 which refers to "the whole of what the apostles

were teaching.” The usage of Paul is of the same nature in Romans 6:17; 16:17; I Corinthians 14:6 and 26. He then states: “The same is true of the Johannine literature...” and cites 2 John 9ff as an example. (*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. II, p. 164). Freidrich on *Kerygma*, preaching, says concerning the “preaching of Jesus Christ” in Romans 16:25 that the reference is to that which Jesus proclaimed. His conclusion is, “Hence the preaching of Jesus Christ can only mean the message which Jesus Christ proclaimed.” (*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. III, p. 716). It seems clear, therefore, that “the doctrine of Christ” is a subjective genitive and refers to what Christ began to teach and empowered his apostles and others to teach in obedience to Him.

W. Carl Ketcherside admitted as much, implicitly, in an article several years back. This article also bears on the concept of love as related to doctrine. Ketcherside says: “I am not opposed to writing about our blessed Lord, or emphasizing His glory, majesty, mercy of grace. But our good brother implies that one cannot devote his time to **the doctrine of the Lord** and still love the Lord as he ought (page 8)...Other people love Jesus also, as much as we do, but **false concepts** and human frailties in reasoning keep us apart. We dare not assume that we are the only ones who regard Jesus as a compassionate Savior. But we may write about **the love and mercy of Jesus and not solve our problems**. (Emphasis mine, W. W.) It is

not a discussion of the character of Jesus, but the **correct application of his doctrine**, (emphasis his, W.W.) which is needed (p. 9). If Brother Loney writes about the person and attributes of Jesus, and I write about the doctrine of Jesus, the paper will be better balanced than if all of us wrote the same thing” (p. 19). One notes that not only “love” but “the correct application of his doctrine” are needed; that “the character of Jesus” is distinguished from “his doctrine,” and though others “love Jesus also” the “false concepts” they hold “keep us apart.” The problems for the unity advocates are apparent.

F. The new unity movement must argue that the doctrine of Christ in 2 John 9 refers exclusively to the doctrine concerning Christ and must not in any way be understood as the doctrine given by Christ. This can only be sustained by the assumption that the verse authorizes only what it specifies. Since it, according to the argument, “specifies” the doctrine about Christ, it is a perversion of the Bible and adequate to strain, if not destroy, fellowship to interpret the passage to mean the doctrine given by Christ. Hence, according to the argument, one adds to what God has authorized by putting into the verse what is not specified therein and to do this is to pervert the Bible and becomes the ground of the severing of fellowship. If this same type of reasoning is employed with reference to instrumental music in such passages as Ephesians 5:19 and

Colossians 3:16, it will become apparent that the use of instrumental music in worship is a perversion of what God has authorized and one is not at liberty to engage in fellowship because of this perversion. Thus Ketcherside on the basis of the of the argument he makes on 2 John 9 is logically required to make the same argument on Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16. If he does so, he will refuse fellowship with those incorporating instrumental music in worship. If he does not, he must give up his argument on the new unity movement on such passages as Romans 16:17,18; 2 Thess. 3:6, etc.

Attention has been called to a general overview of the new unity movement and a general response has been offered. Each of the areas of response can be expanded and other lines of objection can be expressed. To oppose this new movement one must know relevant Bible teaching, the peculiar positions of the spokesmen, and force attention upon the inconsistencies and perversions of the movement. The desire and ideal of unity must be cherished, but the method proposed by the new unity movement is one of compromise and inadequacy.³

On October 12, 1985, brethren William Woodson, Monroe Hawley, Alan Highers, and Rubel Shelly participated in a “*Preachers and Church Leaders’ Forum*” at Freed-Hardeman College in Henderson, Tennessee. During that forum both brethren Hawley and Shelly took the same erroneous position regarding 2 John 9 as does

W. Carl Ketcherside. Brother Hawley said:

I would like to address myself to the comment regarding 2 John 9: “Anyone who does, anyone who goes ahead and does not abide in the doctrine has both the Father and the Son.” Grammatically speaking, this expression can be understood either as the body of teaching of Christ or as that relating to the nature of Christ. Biblical exegetes have differed over this interpretation. My personal conviction is that the passage relates to the doctrine about the deity of Jesus Christ, and I base that on the fact that as we read I, 2, and 3 John, and John speaks about the Antichrist, that this is what he is talking about in this particular passage of Scripture. I am aware that among us the other interpretation has probably been used more commonly.

Brother Shelly stated:

I once held because I was taught that 2 John 7 and 9 refers to everything Christ taught or everything that was relevant to Him. I no longer believe that because I’ve now done exegesis of the Johannine epistles.

Brother Highers commented:

Brother Shelly has sought to escape his dilemma by proposing what he calls different levels of fellowship or what has been called the “big F” and “little f” fellowship. In essence, what this

involves is a continuation of the upper level of “big F” fellowship with those who are in error but withholding of the lower level, or “little f,” fellowship with respect to those matters in which we disagree. It is that position that leads brother Shelly to recommend that we have joint worship with the Independent Christian Church. He maintains that we could be in fellowship with them, cooperate in many areas, exchange pulpits, send out missionaries, but when they use the instrument, we would withhold our fellowship on that lower level, or “little f,” while continuing to extend fellowship on the upper level, or “big F.”

Brother Woodson said:

Now we had something to say earlier about consistency. Some years ago, Carl Ketcherside spoke on consistency. He said a man can be wrong and be consistent, but he cannot be inconsistent and be right. We are wanting to know when brother Shelly was right. Was it 1972? Was it August 14, 1985? Just when was it?

Something was said about 2 John 9. Here is a quotation that brother Hawley gave on page 191 of his book: “Bible scholars are divided over whether the doctrine of Christ is the doctrine about Christ or the body of Christian teaching taken as a whole.” Now he has decided that it is the “doctrine about Christ.” The original Greek allows **either** interpretation—not to him, not

brother Shelly. And the meaning must be determined by the context. The latter view which surely includes the former as well. In any event, the passage states that false teachers should be opposed and rejected. Brother Shelly tells us that he has come to an exegetical conclusion.

Well, let us see some of the sources against which he stands in opposition to his view of 2 John 9. I read now from Westcott, in his *Commentary on the Epistles of John*, on 2 John 9: 'Every one that goeth forward and abideth not...' every one that advances in bold confidence [watch this] beyond the limit set to the Christian Faith. [Again]... "in the doctrine of Christ," the doctrine which Christ brought, and which He brought first in His own person, and then through His followers...This sense seems better than "the doctrine of (concerning) the Christ," and the usage of the N. T. In uniformly in favor of it; Revelation 2:14,15; John 18:19; Acts 2:42. In Phillips translation, "The man who is so 'advanced' that he is not content with what Christ taught has, in fact, no God" (Thayer, p. 194). "...The doctrine of God, the doctrine of the Lord, of Christ, the doctrine which has God, Christ, the Lord, for its author and supporter" (Thayer, p. 144).

Then I refer to A. E. Cooke, *A Critical Exegetical Commentary of the Johannine Epistles*: "There is nothing in the context [now brother Hawley says it has to be settled by the context] or the usage of the New Testament to

suggest that *To Christou* should be regarded as an objective genitive, the writer meaning by the phrase ‘the apostolic teaching about Christ.’ Such an interpretation would seem to be the outcome of preconceived notions of what the writer **ought** to have meant, rather than what his words indicate.”

John Peter Lange, in his *Commentary on the Holy Scripture*, says, “...the genitive is subjective. Agreeably to constant usage, it cannot be genitive of the object. It is the doctrine which Christ himself brought and taught and caused to be propagated by his apostles.” Again, Rengstorf, in the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, discusses *didache*. He suggests that New Testament usage indicates the *didache* of Jesus refers to his whole teaching, his proclamation of the will of God as regards both form and content. This is true of the expression *didache* in the synoptic Gospels and in John. He illustrates by showing Matthew 16:12, Acts 2:42, and then has this to say: “The same is true of the Johannine literature,” and cites 2 John 9 as an example (*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 2, p. 164). Freidrich, on the *Kerygma*, concerning preaching, says, “...the preaching of Jesus Christ” (Romans 16:25); the reference is to that which Jesus proclaimed. He concludes, “Hence the preaching of Jesus Christ can only mean the message which Christ proclaimed” (*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 3, p. 716).

Brother Highers, in his excellent book entitled, *How Do You Spell (F) (f)ellowship?*, wrote under the heading “*Shall We Have Unity At The Sacrifice Of Truth?*” He says:

Some have felt that there is no danger of compromise because churches of Christ still have not accepted instrumental music in worship, even following a series of “unity meetings” with preachers from the Christian church. This attitude misapprehends the nature of the problem and utterly misconceives the aim of those who use instrumental music in worship. **It is not the aim of Christian Church preachers to induce us to use instrumental music, but rather it is their aim to induce us to treat the use of an instrument as a matter of opinion to be decided by each local body.**

With regard to the unity meetings of the 1930's, Foy E. Wallace, Jr., wrote, “The evident purpose of these meetings is to minimize the issues and to build up the idea gradually among weak members of the church that instrumental music is not a test of fellowship, James D. Murch...doesn't have a gnat's idea of surrendering their innovations but is using the Unity Meeting to justify them and to induce churches of Christ to tolerate and fellowship them, without debating the issue” (*Bible Banner*, May 1940).

Fellowship with those who use the instrument might be had on one of three basis: (1) They could renounce the instrument; (2) we could accept the instrument, or (3) we could compromise our convictions and have fellowship with them in spite of the use of the instrument. The modern unity movement, like its predecessor of fifty years ago, has opted for the third alternative.

I. Fellowship Through Compromise

At a Christian Church encampment conducted at Hillsboro, Ohio, on August 14, 1985, Rubel Shelly made the following statement, "I don't draw the line at the instrument. I don't think the Lord died over that. I'm not going to make that a test of my fellowship with you in Christ...If I were in a congregation where the will of that congregation, the decision of the elders, was that the instrument was going to be used next week, I wouldn't mount the pulpit and condemn them and divide the church. I'd have a conscience question whether I could stay and worship with that church, but I would not stand up and say, Let the faithful of God step across the line and stand with me."

The foregoing statement is incredible for several reasons:

(1) It suggests that the one opposing the instrument would be guilty of causing the division, not the one introducing the unauthorized practice.

(2) It is a stain on the memory of faithful brethren of the past who opposed instrumental

music, often at great personal loss, because of division caused by the forcible introduction of the instrument over the conscience of sincere brethren.

(3) It represents surrender of principle for one to proclaim boldly that he would not oppose an unauthorized, unscriptural innovation in the worship **if the congregation wanted it**, even though he concedes it would be wrong.

(4) It manifests a sad state of compromise by one who once said, “Yes, instrumental music in worship is sinful and serves as a valid test of Christian fellowship. One cannot ‘walk in the light’ of truth while refusing to respect Scriptural authority on this matter and therefore cannot be in fellowship with God or his faithful people in using instrumental music in worship (Rubel Shelly, *Liberalism’s Threat to the Faith*, page 64).”

(5) It asserts that the Lord did not die over the kind of worship which has been ordained for his servants and followers, notwithstanding the fact that the New Covenant has been dedicated by his blood and has been sealed and ratified by his death upon the cross. (Heb. 9:16-18; 10:10; 28-29). David Lipscomb said, “It seems there cannot be a doubt that the use of instrumental music in connection with the worship of God, whether used as a part of the worship or as an attractive accompaniment, is unauthorized by God and violates the oft-repeated prohibition to add nothing to, take nothing from, the commandments of the Lord. It destroys the

difference between the clean and the unclean, the holy and the unholy, counts the blood of the Son of God unclean, and tramples under foot the authority of the Son of God. **They have not been authorized by God or sanctified with the blood of his Son”** (*Queries and Answers*, page 227, emphasis supplied).

II. The Unity Proposal

In his book entitled, *I Just Want to be a Christian*, Rubel Shelly has set forth his proposal for unity. In order for us to see exactly what it is that he advocates, let us take note of the following statements: “We must not narrow the base of fellowship beyond those fundamental teachings of the Word of God. Beyond the foundation matters which will be identified later in this volume from Ephesians 4, there is a broad ground where we can be charitable as brethren and hold our differing views without feeling a compulsion to coerce others to hold the same view. Hold to your opinion in good conscience, and explain or defend it when called upon to do so. Convince others of its truthfulness if you can, but **don’t force it upon others or make it a test of your fellowship with that person** (pp. 48-49).

...if one’s unfaithfulness relates to difficult ethical issues, church government, or worship (while not denying one of the foundational doctrines of Christianity), fellowship may be maintained indefinitely for the sake of exhorting

and encouraging in the truth (p. 65).

My suggestion is that only such items as pertain directly to the seven ones of Ephesians 4:4-6 are of such a nature as to qualify as issues of faith (i.e., doctrinal tests of fellowship) (p. 91).

...whatever else one can say about pianos and organs in worship, he cannot find their explicit condemnation in the Bible. Acceptance of their use certainly does not repudiate any one of the seven essential items of Christian faith identified in Ephesians 4:4-6" (p. 113).

The implications of the foregoing statements seem clear:

(1) If it does not violate Ephesians 4, one may hold to his opinion in good conscience, he may "explain or defend it" when called upon to do so, but he cannot force it upon others or make it a test of fellowship with others.

(2) Fellowship may be maintained indefinitely so long as one does not deny any of the foundational matters in Ephesians 4:4-6.

(3) Only such items as pertain to the seven ones in Ephesians 4:4-6 can qualify as doctrinal test of fellowship.

(4) Acceptance of the use of instrumental music does not conflict with the essential items identified in Ephesians 4:4-6.

Brethren who have not yet seen the dangers which emanate from the current unity

movement need to ponder very well the conclusion which follow from the foregoing premises. The matter may be illustrated in the following manner:

Shelly's Premises

Major Premise: Only such an item as violates Ephesians 4 is a doctrinal test of fellowship.

Minor Premise: Use of instrumental music is not such an item as violates Ephesians 4.

CONCLUSION: Use of instrumental music is not a doctrinal test of fellowship.

It would be naive, if not irresponsible, to ignore the significance and meaning of these premises as not advocated. Brother Shelly's position not only mandates fellowship with those who use instrumental music in worship, but it also permits one who holds that view to "explain or defend it when called upon to do so." In other words, one may not only hold to and practice the erroneous conduct, but he may also teach it and advocate it in the congregation! Elders, according to this theory, are powerless to put a stop to this false teaching so long as the individual holds to his opinion in good conscience and does not force it upon others. (Remember the statement made by Ketcherside? "NO honest opinion arrived at from personal study of the sacred volume, and held in good conscience, can ever be made a test of fellowship..." These sentiments should begin to sound familiar by now).

Thus, if one accepts the Shelly position, it would follow: (1) that we could maintain fellowship indefinitely with one who both advocates and uses instrumental music in worship, (2) that such an individual would have the right to “explain or defend” his position to others within the congregation, and thereby to teach false doctrine, and (3) that we could not withdraw fellowship from such an individual because his teaching is not in violation of any of the seven ones of Ephesians 4:4-6! (The principles would apparently also apply to the practice of “social drinking,” according to pages 113-114 of Shelly’s book).

Suppose that the false teacher advocates his doctrine within the congregation, yet he does it in good conscience and without forcing his views upon others. As time goes by, he convinces one, then another, and finally a majority of the congregation. At that point, the majority of the church decides to use instrumental music. What is left to be done? Brother Shelly says that he would not oppose the decision and cause division; he does not believe there has been any violation of Ephesians 4:4-6, therefore, there can be no withdrawal of fellowship; the only thing left is what he earlier suggested, namely, he would leave the congregation, turn over the building to the digressives, and attempt to start over somewhere else! Can anyone believe that God has given the church no more protection than this from false teachers and false doctrine?⁴

When Was The New Covenant Established?

The Law of Moses was abolished at the cross (Col. 2:14-16; 2 Cor. 3:7, 11, 13, 14). The law of Christ became operative on the first Pentecost following the resurrection of Christ from the dead, the record of which we have in Acts chapter 2. It was on that day the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ were preached, and men were offered remission of sins in the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:22-41). It was on that day about three thousand obeyed the gospel of Christ (Acts 2:41), and from that day forward all who obeyed the gospel of Christ were added by the Lord to His church (Acts 2:47).

In Acts 15:5 we have the record of the Pharisees who had accepted the faith of Christians, that unless the Gentiles would be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses, they could not be saved. On that occasion the brethren who were assembled heard from Paul and Barnabas and Simon Peter as to what God had done by them, and then from James, as to his view of the evidence so far presented, and that it agreed with the word of the Lord which already had been revealed. The conclusion of the whole matter was that they were not under the Law of Moses, and therefore they should not require the Gentiles to observe any such regulations (Acts 15:20-29).

There are many fundamental differences between the covenant made with Israel, and the covenant made by Christ. We simply list a few of those differences. (1) The change in priesthood (Heb. 7:12; 8:4). (2) There was a change in atonement (Heb. 10:4). (3) The Ten Commandment law was limited to the Jews (Deut. 5:1-5), but the New Covenant of Christ was intended from the very inception of it to be universal. The first feature of the commission is, "Go into all the world, and preach the

gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). All of its ordinances are arranged with reference to the universality of its principles. It is intended not for a given period, but for all time; not for a portion of the race, but for all the human family. It was not to put any difference between Jew and Greek, barbarian, Scythian, bond, or free, for all should be in Christ Jesus, the Lord of all who would obey Him.

Into the Old Covenant they were born by a birth of their parents, but into the New, they enter by a new birth “of water and the Spirit” (Heb. 8:8-13; John 3:3-5).

They also differ in respect to form and place of worship (John 4:23,24). Jesus made that very clear in His discussion with the Samaritan woman.

There are a number of things which should be pointed out in this connection:

1. The New Covenant would be unlike the Old one (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:6-13).

2. It should go forth from Jerusalem (Isa. 2:1-4; Micah 1; Luke 24).

3. All nations should be represented there at that time (Isaiah, Micah, Luke, Acts 2:5).

4. The Holy Spirit should be present at that time, and give them supernatural power (Joel, John, Luke).

5. The Holy Spirit and the apostles should bear witness at that time (John and the Acts).

6. The demonstration should be at the beginning of the gospel plan of saving men (Luke 24: 44-49; Acts 2:4; 11:15).

From that time the world was not under the Law of Moses, but under the law of Christ (1 Cor. 9:21). Some one may object and say that the early Christians did not have the New Testament, and therefore were without the

Law necessary to perfect Christians. But they had the apostles and direct inspiration and that was all that they needed. The Lord's will was the same then that it is now, and it was revealed to them then as they needed the knowledge.

Where Was The New Covenant Established And How Does It Fit Into The Rest Of Scripture?

Pentecost was an annual Jewish feast day that came fifty days after the sabbath of the passover week (Lev. 23:15,16). On the first Pentecost following the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the New Covenant became operative in the city of Jerusalem, and at that time the church of our Lord was established.

Prophecy pointed to that day as the day the New Covenant would become operative, and the church of our Lord would be established. Isaiah said:

And it shall come to pas in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his ways: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isa. 2:3,4).

A number of things were predicted by the prophet: (1) The mountain of the Lord's house—also called the house of Jacob—was to be established. (2) It was to be

in the last days. (3) When established “all nations” were to flow unto it. (4) The word of the Lord would go forth from Jerusalem.

All of this was fulfilled on that day of Pentecost in Acts Chapter 2. (1) Peter referred to that day as “the last days” (Acts 2:16,17). (2) The commission that embraced “all nations” and therefore, the New Covenant became operative (Mt. 28:19; Lk. 24:47,49). (3) The Word of the Lord went forth from Jerusalem, i.e., they began in Jerusalem that day (Acts 2:16-42).

Why Was The New Covenant Established?

The New Covenant was given because apart from Christ’s blood there is no remission of sin (Heb. 9:22). The new covenant was established because without it no one could be saved (Jno. 14:6; Acts 4:12; Eph. 2:12; Heb. 7:12). It is through the coming of Christ, and our obedience to the gospel that salvation is made possible for us. Paul affirmed of Christ “- -who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2 Tim. 1:10). The only power Christ uses to save the lost is the gospel. Paul wrote, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek”(Rom. 1:16).

Since Christ uses **the** gospel as **the** only power to save the lost note the following observations:

1. **The gospel is power.** There are different kinds of power. There is a muscular power and the power of ideas, and there is a spiritual power, a power that works on the conscience, and the power that works on the mind of man is the power that moves the world. The gospel of Christ works on the intellect, emotions, and will of man.

2. **The gospel is divine power. It is “the power of God.”** The power of Rome was in the sword, of Greece, in her culture, of Jerusalem, in her religious traditions, of Satan, in sin. But the power of God to save the souls of people is in the gospel.

3. **The gospel of Christ is a benevolent power; it is “unto salvation.”** Some powers are destructive, but the gospel of Christ is a constructive power. The gospel liberates, elevates, and enables man to bear fruit (Rom. 6:17,18; Rom. 6:1-4; Rom. 6:22).

4. **The gospel is a universal power.** It saves without racial or social standing. It is “to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.” God created all. All have sinned (Rom. 3:23). Now the gospel is for all (Mark 16:15-16). The gospel saves man on the simplest conditions--”to every one that believeth.” The word “believeth” implies a continued obedience. To be saved one must hear, believe, and do the will of the Lord. Jesus said:

Not everyone that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 7:21).

Endnotes

1 G.K. Wallace, **A Critical Review Of A New (Old) Modernism And A Plea For Unity--A Review of W. Carl Ketcherside** (Killen, AL, Gospel Defender Publications) 10-12.

2 Ibid., 14-16.

3 **The Church And Fellowship--Freed-Hardeman College 1974 Lectures** (Henderson, Freed-Hardeman College) 51-57.

4 Alan Highers, **How Do You Spell (F) (f)ellowship?** (Henderson, Alan Highers) 9-13.

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First Century Teaching Concerning The Covenants

- Chapter 5** How Jesus Viewed The Old Covenant
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Chapter 5

How Jesus Viewed The Old Covenant

Jim Laws

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 5:17-20).

By reading this passage of Scripture, one will come to realize that this is a very important section of God's Word.¹ Such is the case because in this paragraph we have Christ explaining His relationship with the Old Testament law of God. Before one goes into such a discussion, though, it will be helpful to first give some preliminary considerations to what the Bible teaches about the term

“covenant.” By doing so, the discussion of Jesus (Matt. 5:17-20) will then have greater meaning.

In the broad sense of the term the word covenant was simply an agreement between two people or two groups that involved promises on the part of each to the other. For instance, Abraham and Abimelech made a covenant with each other (Gen. 21:32). David made a covenant with Jonathan because of their brotherly love for each other. This agreement bound each of them to certain responsibilities (1 Sam. 18:3). A covenant was an agreement. In a more specific sense the covenants found in the Bible between God and individuals as well as His people Israel involved much more than a contract or simple agreement. It involved their total being. The word itself, “covenant” (*berit* - to cut, to compact, confederacy), gives insight into its meaning. God had made a covenant with his people. At Sinai God’s people committed themselves to perform “all the words which the Lord said” (Exod. 24:3). When the children of Israel violated God’s law, the conditions of the covenant, they were urged by God’s prophets to return and follow God’s laws and renew their promise to God (2 Kings 23:3).

All the commandments...shall ye observe to do,
that ye may live, and multiply, and go in and
possess the land which the Lord sware unto your
fathers (Deut. 8:1).

Man’s response, then, in keeping the law contributed to or brought about covenant fulfillment. This does not mean that Israel proposed terms for a basis of fellowship with God but rather that Israel responded appropriately to God’s covenant for His people.²

Coming from this passage (Matt. 5:17-20), there are three important elements to keep in mind. First, Jesus viewed the Old Testament as God's divine law to the people, and He himself was its fulfillment. Second, Christ taught that all of God's law was to be respected due to its divine nature. A failure to do so would adversely affect one's relationship to God in the kingdom. Third, Jesus strongly condemned the oral traditions or the Scribal Laws of his day as law which had come from the traditions of the Rabbis and not from God.

“Think Not That I Am Come To Destroy The Law...” (vv. 17-18)

Jesus considered His coming into the world to be most significant; in fact, it is the pivotal point of history. This can be seen both by what Jesus says and how He says it and in a number of different instances in the New Testament. In this section of Scripture for instance (Matt. 5:17-20) notice the use of certain phrases which Jesus uses, “I am come” (v. 17), or “I am come...to fulfill” (v. 17), or “I say unto you, until heaven and earth pass...” (v. 18), or “Till all be fulfilled” (v. 18). He speaks as one whose entrance into the world held great meaning for the world. This says a great deal. It says, in fact, “Hear ye Him” (Matt. 17:5). In other words, whatever He says is authoritative; it is binding, having divine authority behind it (Matt. 28:18-20). Therefore, Jesus was not coming to contradict or to destroy the Law God had given in the Old Testament, nor was He standing in any way against it.

In making this point, Jesus is responding to what might have been an accusation accusing Jesus of destroying the law of God. Here, Jesus states, “Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets” (v. 17).

So much of what Jesus had said had most likely caused some to formulate opinions about Him and what He was saying regarding the Law. After all, much of what Jesus came to say would contradict and refute the religious error that had built up through the years by the teaching of the rabbinical leaders of the day. Jesus does not in any instance criticize the Law of Moses; He does, however, distinguish it from the oral traditions of the rabbis which had come to be mistakenly viewed by the people as the Law of God. He uses such phrases as “ye have heard that it was said by them of old time” (5:21), “Ye have heard that it hath been said” (5:27, 33, 38, 43), and “It hath been said” (5:31). The interpretation and rabbinic traditions through the years had minimized God’s word or at other times had contradicted God’s law. In other instances the intent of God had been changed by the traditions which had come down through the years to the people of Jesus’ day. Naturally, Jesus was at odds with each and every false notion. He set himself to the task of correcting the crooked thinking of the Scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees. He proclaimed the word of God truthfully, pointing out their errors and setting matters straight again. In line with this, Jesus wanted to dispel any false idea that they might have regarding what He is saying and the Old Law. His teaching is different from that of the Rabbis. He is not accepting the recognized authorities of the religious community. Remember the charge that was made against Stephen (Acts 6:14). He is repudiating any false notions about what He has said and is about to say.

McGarvey touched upon this idea by saying that Jesus is preventing any kind of misconception for what is about to follow with such a statement.³ This is an important point to consider as it reflects the attitude Jesus

possessed toward the Old Law. He is, therefore, setting the record straight that He is neither destroying the Law or in any way minimizing God's law. In fact, Jesus pulls no punches when it comes to reverence and respect for the Old Law, the Law which they were living under at the time. He says,

Think not that I am come to destroy the law...
(v. 17), whosoever therefore shall break one of
these least commandments... (v. 19), except your
righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of
the Scribes and Pharisees...(v. 20).

Therefore, the Law's clear restrictions and obligations and its demand for obedience are not minimized. Jesus knew that the Old Law was divine in nature (Psm. 19:7-11; 119). He knew that the Old Law was "holy, and just, and good" (Rom. 7:12). He knew that the Old Testament Scriptures would continue to serve New Testament Christians in future generations by teaching and encouraging them and by giving them hope (Rom. 14:5). He knew that everything in the Scriptures was God's Word and that it was useful for teaching and helping people with their lives as well as for correcting them and showing them how to live (2 Tim. 3:16).

His relationship to the Old Law is, therefore, a positive one and not a negative one. What He teaches neither contradicts the Old Law, nor does it destroy (*katalusai* - to do way with, abolish, annul, make invalid, or to repeal the Law, *Arndt-Gingrich* p. 415) the Old Law, nor does it stand against the Old Law. He did not come to destroy "the law or the prophets;"⁴ He came to "fulfill" (*plarow* - to make full, *Arndt-Gingrich*, p. 677) or to bring

to its completed end. Jesus is completing the Law, that is, He is bringing about its full and completed purpose to reality. Therefore, His relationship to the Old Testament law was not one of opposition but rather fulfillment. Jesus, His life and work, was the divine goal of the Old Law (Rom. 10:4). To do this meant that the Old Testament legislation would soon be complete and obsolete as a means of man approaching God (Heb. 8:13; 10:9). He does not wish to leave the impression that He somehow possesses a negative attitude toward the Law. Jesus' statement in the next verse (v. 18) makes clear that the Law would remain intact and fully functional until Jesus fulfilled its purpose by offering himself as the sacrifice for the sins of the world. He teaches that even the smallest stroke and the smallest letter would be fulfilled. When this great work would be accomplished, then the purpose of the Old Law would have been completed. It would be "wiped away" (Col. 2:14) and rendered inactive and inoperative (Eph. 2:15). It would no longer function as the means by which sinful man and righteous God would be able to come back into fellowship with each other. This would be accomplished by a new law, the law of Christ (Gal. 6:2), the law of faith (Rom. 3:27), the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:2), the perfect law of liberty (James 1:25; 2:12), the gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16).

**“Whosoever Therefore Shall Break One Of
These Least Commandments...” (v. 19)**

Jesus now comes to an all important point, that being, submission and obedience to the Law of God. All of the commandments of God are important, so much so that one who breaks even one of the least commandments and teaches others to do so will be deemed least in the kingdom

of God. The Jewish rabbis of Jesus day were reckless, inconsistent, and even disobedient with many aspects of God's law. Jesus knew that in the New Testament dispensation there would be the human tendency to do the same. However, in the kingdom, He says, one cannot do such and at the same time be pleasing in the sight of God. In other words, every word of God is to be respected and obeyed. For one to do so and to teach others to do the same would cause one to be considered "least" (*elachistos* - very small, quite unimportant, insignificant, *Arndt-Gingrich*, p. 248) in the kingdom of heaven. While on the other hand for one to respect and humbly submit to all of the commandments of God will cause one to be considered "great" (*meegas* - prominent, *Arndt-Gingrich*, p. 499) in the kingdom of God.

The teaching of Christ regarding respect for and submission to the Law of God is desperately needed today just as it was then. There are those, even among us, who are deceived about the importance of the New Law and our responsibility to keep it. For instance, the teaching today that says that we are under grace and not under law fails to recognize the importance of the Law of Christ. It fails to give it the respect that it is due by denying that there is a law for Christians to follow. To say that we are not under law today is false and will cause men and women to lose their souls (2 John 7-9). Then, there is the idea that says that we do have a law today but that we should not be overly concerned with keeping it; do not worry about it. After all, no one can keep the Law perfectly; that is why we have grace to begin with. Such a view flies in the face of the very point about respect and submission that Jesus is teaching in this passage. All of God's law is to be respected. There is the individual who may admit that

there is a law from God to be followed when pressed about the matter, but he is too preoccupied with worldly affairs to place much importance in the Law. He obviously has not been taught the importance of keeping God's law. Then, there are others who fear the restrictions the Law will place upon their lives and behavior. They do not want to live as the Law says, so they deliberately neglect it.

Christ is teaching his hearers about the respect which He has for the Old Law and the respect we should have for all of the Law of God. This is a lesson that is greatly needed in every generation. We live in a day when the Law of God is either not respected or is minimized to the point that it is really meaningless. The disciples of the New Testament respected the divine authority of Christ. The apostles taught God's commands in the temple (Acts 5:18-28). They were told by Jewish leaders not to speak in the name of Christ (Acts 5:28), yet they had such high regard for the authority of Christ that they responded by saying, "We must obey God rather than man" (Acts 5:29).

Obedience to the will of God is required if we are to "abide for ever." 1 John 2:17 states, "And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." John compares and contrasts the transitoriness of the world with the permanence of the one doing the will of God. Since God is eternal, then those who do His will will share in His eternal nature. However, this is conditioned on doing the will of God.

Take for instance Matthew 7:21, which states,

Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord,
shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he

that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

The Lord's reference to "doeth the will" is but a reference to our Lord's expectation of our ability to obey and to comply daily with His conditions for our lives. Therefore, obedience to the will of God is expected if we are to enter the kingdom of heaven. Humble and submissive obedience is required of us all, and if we refuse, then we have no right to call Jesus our Lord (Luke 6:46).

**“Except Your Righteousness Shall Exceed
The Righteousness Of The Scribes And
Pharisees...” (v. 20)**

By this time (Matt. 5:20) Jesus has reached the main point of the paragraph, that being, that the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, that is, their beliefs and practices, were not pleasing in the sight of God. It was true that they were a very religious people; being filled with evangelistic zeal (Matt. 23:15), they prayed regularly (Luke 18:10); they met regularly for worship (Luke 4:16); they searched the scriptures (John 5:39); and they were very enthusiastic (Rom. 10:2). However, they were also impenitent (Matt. 3:7); they refused to submit to baptism (Luke 7:30; Matt. 3:15); they were covetous (Luke 16:14); they were hypocritical (Matt. 23:13, 14, 23, 25, 26, 29); and they loved to be seen and heard by men (Matt. 6:1-9). That is why Jesus said:

Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven (v. 20).

They were religious but not righteous, for they were not right. To be right, the Scribes and Pharisees, along with everyone else who would be acceptable in the sight of God, must have an inward as well as an outward righteousness about them, that is, to study the Word of God, accept it for what it is, the Word of God, and live it daily. A consistent profession and practice of faith is essential to living life in the kingdom. One must stand for the right whether one is seen of men and rewarded or not. One must come to trust in God rather than in self (Titus 3:5). One must hunger and thirst after righteousness (Matt. 5:6) as well as seek the kingdom of God first (Matt. 6:33). This strong teaching coming from Christ was so different from what they had been hearing. It was a teaching which included both a positive aspect regarding what life would be like in the kingdom as well as a negative one about what it would not be like. Jesus makes it clear that this does not contradict the Old Law as some might suppose but in reality fulfills it. Jesus straightens out the crooked thinking of His day, the predominate view of the religious leaders, the Scribes and Pharisees.

Matthew 12 and the Sabbath

From the foregoing discussion one can conclude first, that Jesus viewed the Old Testament Law of God as divine in nature viewing Himself as its fulfillment. Naturally, this would mean that His attitude toward the Law was a positive one rather than a negative one. Second, Jesus taught that all of God's law was to be respected due to its divine nature. Jesus respected its authority by obeying it completely without fail in any respect (1 Peter 2:21-22). Third, Jesus strongly condemned the traditions of the religious leaders of His day who had elevated their

opinions to divine status, minimizing and in some cases contradicting God's law (Matt. 15:7-9).

An interesting instance takes place in the life of Jesus found in Matthew 12.⁵ Jesus and His disciples on the Sabbath day are walking through some grain fields (ASV), and His disciples are hungry and begin picking and eating the grain. Some of the Pharisees noticed this, pointing out to Jesus that to do so was unlawful. The accusation is serious. These Pharisees accuse the disciples of sin; they had violated the Law, so they claimed.⁶ Jesus defends His disciples, however, stating that they are not guilty (v. 7).

A variety of interpretations has arisen from this passage, perhaps the most popular being that Jesus excuses His disciples by appealing to a higher law. Since the situation warranted such, His disciples being hungry, Jesus was right to set aside the Law in order to preserve their lives out of love and mercy. In the case of David, they claim, human need takes precedence over divine law; therefore, David is not guilty for eating the bread.⁷ However, to reason in such a way makes Jesus to be a situation ethicist. To set aside the Law in a given situation for what one perceives to be a higher good puts one above the Law. One in reality is saying by such an action that Jesus respected the Law but, at times, if the occasion warranted it, could violate the Law. If taken to its logical conclusion, one could reason that one could step around all suffering and hardship due to living the Christian life by violating the Law of Christ because the needs of the individual take precedence over the divine law to be faithful unto death (Rev. 2:10). However, such is false and cannot be harmonized with the Scripture. God has never taught that the needs of the individual take precedent over the Law. One is not at liberty to violate

the Law just because He perceives it to be the “right” thing to do at the time.

Jesus makes clear that his disciples are guiltless (v. 7), a fact many expositors forget in discussing this passage. He also makes clear that David was guilty in eating the bread, another fact many expositors forget (v. 4). Jesus says that his disciples have not violated the Old Law. To prove this He offers three lines of reasoning. First, He refers to the Old Testament incident of David eating the shew bread (1 Sam. 21:1-6). At the time David was a fugitive being persecuted by Saul. David along with his men, hungry from persecution, ate the holy bread which, as Christ says, “was not lawful for him to eat” (v. 4). David was in violation of the Law. Yet the Pharisees did not consider David guilty of doing such. They were, therefore, inconsistent, claiming that David was innocent when He was really guilty and claiming that the disciples of Christ were guilty when they were really innocent.

Second, Jesus refers them to the work of the priests on the Sabbath day. The Law did allow for certain work to be done by the priests in the temple such as offering sacrifices, trimming the lamps, and the burning of incense. Jesus goes on to make an analogy between Himself and the temple. Just as the priests served the temple, which the Jews accepted as being legitimate, so His disciples may serve Him, the Greater Temple, without being guilty. Such actions, then, did not put them in violation of the Sabbath. His reference to Hosea 6:6 reflects the corrupted heart and mind of the Pharisees. If their attitude had been right, then such a trumped-up charge as they were offering would never have come up to begin with (v. 7). The real problem was not with Christ and his apostles but with the Pharisees themselves. If the priests are

justified in serving in the temple on the Sabbath, so are the disciples in their service unto the Lord.

Third, Jesus refers to the fact of who He really is; He is Lord of the Sabbath. To refer to Himself as such is to assert His authority and conduct as being above criticism, making Himself a guide to understanding the Sabbath rather than being merely subject to it as other mere mortals were at that time. Therefore, in the final analysis His disciples need nothing other than His divine command in order to do whatever the Lord of the Sabbath permits. Christ is greater than the Sabbath just as the builder of the house is greater and deserves more honor than the house He builds (Heb. 3:3). Neither Christ nor His disciples are guilty of breaking the Old Law as the Pharisees claimed. By silencing these objectors as He did, one sees the effective way Christ answered the charges of the Pharisees. He did not contend for a violation of the Law, which shows His abiding respect for the Law and perfect compliance with it, but rather a rejection of the opinions and views of His day which were holding men in darkness.

Conclusion

The overall purpose of this research has been to discover from the Scriptures the attitude Jesus had toward the Old Covenant. It has shown from the Scriptures that Jesus viewed the Old Testament Scriptures with respect and humble submission, realizing that they were divine in their nature as they had come from God. He taught the people of his day that He was the divine fulfillment of the Old Testament, bringing about God's divine purpose of salvation. This research has also given a brief discussion regarding a key text in this matter, that being Matthew

5:17-20. This research has also considered Matthew 12:1-8 and the significant role it has in understanding the view of Jesus about the Old Law. In connection with this it has shown how Matthew 12 has been fallaciously used and at the same time has explained Matthew 12 to show its true meaning in the total context of the present discussion.

From this the reader can learn just how much Jesus loved the Law of God. He obeyed it, taught it, defended it and expected His disciples to do the same. Today, as this paper has alluded to, we are under the New Law of Christ, and the attitude which Jesus has given to the old He gives to the new and expects us to do the same if we are to be pleasing in his sight.

Endnotes

1 Of course, all of God's Word is important. All of it is the inspired Word of God, which is free from error. However, there are some passages that are very succinct in their discussion of life and Godliness as this particular passage is (Matt. 5:17-20).

2 The Septuagint uses the Greek word *diatheke* to translate the Hebrew word *berit*. A *diatheke* is a will that distributes one's property after death according to the owner's wishes. In the New Testament, *diatheke* occurs 33 times and is translated in the KJV 20 times as "covenant" and 13 times as "testament." In the RSV and the NASB, only "covenant" is used. The use of "Old Testament" and "New Testament" as the names for the two sections of the Bible indicates that God's covenant is the central focus of the Bible, that being, the glorification of God and the salvation of man through Jesus Christ.

3 J.W. McGarvey, **The New Testament Commentary**. Vol. I Matthew and Mark. (Delight, Arkansas: Gospel Light

Publishing Company, n.d.), 52.

4 The phrase “the law and the prophets” is sometimes used to refer to the whole Old Testament Scriptures. For instance, please see Matt. 7:12; John 1:45; Rom. 3:21. It is clear that the Lord means the same thing here. Perhaps one will notice that the Old Testament books of poetry are omitted in the phrase in question. However, this could be due to the fact that sometimes they were included in a practical way as can be seen in Acts 2:30.

5 This incident is found in Matthew 12:1-8 with parallel accounts found in Mark 2:23-28 and Luke 6:1-5.

6 The accusation is not that the disciples were guilty of stealing the grain, as such was allowed by the law (Deut. 23:25) for the traveler that was passing. The crime they thought they saw was working on the Sabbath. Sabbath violation was certainly a serious matter under the Old Law.

7 For example, compare the comments given in the Pulpit Commentary series on this given paragraph (Matt. 12:1-8). **Matthew, The Pulpit Commentary**, ed. by H. D. M. Spence and Joseph S. Exell, (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1978) vol. 15, 483-485.

Chapter 6

How The Apostle Paul Viewed The Law (Romans 7:1 - 8:4)

Bill Bryant

I have searched deeply for the words that would convey the measure of gratitude that lives within me for the privilege and honor of working with this fine congregation as one of its preachers. I have not found them. My family and I give thanks to God continually for this congregation's godly and capable eldership, for the love and support of the truth manifested daily in its members, and for the deep friendship that inspires us daily in B. J. Clarke and his lovely wife, Tish. We are blessed indeed! I am also appreciative of the opportunity to be associated with this year's lectureship and its marvelous theme, "The Two Covenants." It thrills me to see the broad range of topics related to the theme covered in such depth and detail by so many great men of faith and wisdom. Our brotherhood has long needed such a book. This book will go far in combating the false doctrine propagated by so many today who fail to rightly divide the covenants. I, along with so many of you, commend the Southaven elders and brother B. J. Clarke, the lectureship director, for challenging us with such a vital theme.

It is my responsibility in this lesson to demonstrate the apostle Paul's view toward the Law of Moses. We will

attempt to accomplish such by considering several important questions that Paul answers in the assigned text, Romans 7:1-8:4. Did the apostle Paul believe that he and the Roman Christians were still under the Law of Moses? Did Paul see anything commendable in the Law? Did Paul see any liability in the Law? Does Paul associate law at all with the New Covenant? We will then conclude by showing how Christians today are obligated and privileged to serve the Lord under the New Covenant.

Christians Are No Longer Under The Law Of Moses (Rom. 7:1-4)

The first four verses of Romans 7 is a divine commentary on a statement penned earlier by Paul in Romans 6:14, “For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.” The problem that Paul confronts here, the strong attachment of many Jewish Christians to the Law of Moses, was one of the greatest problems of the early church. Many desired a form of Christianized Judaism. They appreciated certain aspects of Christianity, but were stubborn and unwilling to walk away from Judaism completely. They have their counterparts today. A.P. Gibbs describes well the false worship found today in many denominational churches:

Much of the so-called “public worship” in Christendom, is merely a form of Christianized Judaism, and, in some cases, thinly veiled paganism...In Judaism there was a separate priestly caste who alone could conduct the worship of Israel. In Christendom a man-made priesthood called “the clergy,” is essential to its

worship, in spite of the plain teaching of the New Testament that all believers are priests. These priests of Judaism wore a distinctive dress, as also does the clergy. Judaism emphasized an earthly sanctuary, or building. In like manner, Christendom makes much of its consecrated “places of worship,” and miscalls the edifice “a church,” and refers to it as “the house of God.” Jewish priests had an altar on which were offered sacrifices to God. Christendom has erected “altars” in these ornate buildings, before which candles burn and incense is offered and, in many cases, on which a wafer is kept, which is looked upon as the body of Christ! It is hardly necessary to say that all this copying of Judaism is absolutely foreign to the teaching of the New Testament.

Thus Christendom has initiated its own specially educated and ordained priesthood, whose presence is indispensable to “administer the sacraments.” These men, robed in gorgeous vestments, from within a roped off “sanctuary,” stand before a bloodless “altar,” with a background of burning candles, crosses and smoking incense, and “conduct the worship” for the laity. With the use of an elaborate prepared ritual, with stereotyped prayers, and responses from the audience, the whole service proceeds smoothly and with mechanical precision. It is a marvel of human invention and ingenuity, with an undoubted appeal to the esthetic; but a tragic and sorry substitute for the spiritual worship which our Lord declared that His Father sought

from His redeemed children. ¹

To such a mindset Paul flatly declared, “we are not under the law, but under grace” (Rom. 6:14). A few verses later he provides an illustration to drive the point home:

Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God (Rom. 7:1-4).

The apostle Paul is writing to people who were very familiar with law. The point should have been obvious. God’s plan has always been for the married couple to remain faithful to each other until death. The Jewish nation was likewise to be faithful to God through obedience to the Law of Moses. But the Law of Moses had ended! It was fulfilled by Christ (Matt. 5:17) and nailed to the cross (Col. 2:14). It was to last until the blessed seed should come who would take away the curse of the law (Gal. 3:18-19). A new law had come with a better mediator (Heb.

8:6-13) who took away the first that He might establish the second (Heb. 10:9). It would be a new and living way (Heb. 10:20). Therefore, when the Law of Moses died every Jew was freed from his responsibility to it. They now had the responsibility and the privilege to become married to Christ and bring forth fruit unto God through Him.

Paul wanted his readers to know that to try to cling to both the Law of Moses and the Law of Christ would be spiritual adultery! They would have had two living husbands at the same time. This forceful illustration should help any sincere seeker of truth to conclude that to seek justification in the Law of Moses for any departure from God's perfect pattern of faith and practice places one in a state of spiritual peril. It makes them a debtor to do the whole law (Gal. 5:3). Galatians 5:4 should awaken all to the danger, "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace."

The Purpose Of The Law Of Moses (Romans 7:5-13)

Paul continues his extensive treatment of the Law of Moses in Romans 7 with two important verses:

For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter (Romans 7:5-6).

Roy Deaver, in his excellent commentary on Romans,

wrote of these verses:

It was these two verses which called forth the statements in the remaining part of chapter 7 (verses 7-25), and of chapter 8. Verse 5 is exactly the same as what we have in verses 7-25; verse 6 is exactly what we have in chapter 8. Verse 5 deals with the purpose of the law, the results of the law, the condition of those under the law. This is also what we have in verses 7-25. Verse 6 deals with the obligation to serve in newness of spirit. This is the theme of chapter 8.²

With brother Deaver's overview of the remaining verses of Romans 7 in mind, we will focus on the commendable purpose of the Law of Moses and then its liabilities.

The Law of Moses was given by an omniscient God to accomplish a great purpose, to produce a knowledge of sin in His people. The Law was not sin in itself. How could a law be sin whose author was God? The Law was given to identify sin, to call attention to it. Paul had written earlier, "for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:20). Paul wrote to the Galatian Christians, "Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions" (Gal. 3:19). Once again we emphasize a key point, the Law did not cause the transgression, it only gave emphasis to them. Until something is defined as sin by law, no man can know that what he has done or failed to do is sin. William Barclay in his commentary on Romans wrote concerning this passage:

We might find a kind of remote analogy in any game, say tennis. A man might allow the ball to

bounce more than once before he returned it over the net; so long as there were no rules he could not be accused of any fault. But then the rules are made, and it is laid down that the ball must be struck over the net after only one bounce and that to allow it to bounce twice is a fault. The rules define what a fault is, and that which was allowable before they were made, now becomes a fault. So the Law defines sin.³

The purpose of the Law was not to make sinners. It was intended to reveal right from wrong, to define and condemn sin. It made the sinner aware of his sinfulness.

The apostle Paul then uses himself as an example to represent those who had been under the Law of Moses:

What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me (Rom. 7:7-11).

The tenth commandment, “Thou shalt not covet...” (Exod. 20:17), is mentioned specifically by Paul as an example of how the Law of Moses revealed the knowledge of sin. Paul

would have never known coveting to be wrong and harmful except through the Law. Man would have remained silent as to its evil, but God called attention in the Law to the fact that certain desires are evil. The Law did not produce the evil desires, but brought about the knowledge of them. We can see the same principle today in our land when laws are broken by people who have little or no respect for life or property. Most of these laws are good. Whose fault is it when they are broken, the criminal or the Law itself? It is the criminal, not the Law, that is responsible. Who among us would condemn a law against murder if a cold-blooded killer murdered one of our children? Our anger would be against the one who took the life, not against the one who made the Law. Laws do not produce lawbreakers, they expose the lawless and the seriousness of their crimes. The Law of Moses, likewise, was not to be blamed for the disobedience of anyone. People were sinful and did not know it. The Law made clear their sin and brought about the realization of guilt and condemnation.

Paul then proceeds with his discussion of the Law of Moses by considering the results of the Law. When he became accountable to the Law, "sin revived." A good translation would be that sin "came very much alive."⁴ It resulted in a spiritual state deserving death. The Law was intended to make known the way of life, but Paul's failure to measure up to it left him condemned. Paul was certainly not alone! No one could measure up to the Law's requirements and, therefore, all stood under the sentence of death. The Law of Moses could never produce the life it was meant to produce because no one could adhere to it perfectly.

Such is the nature of sin. It is the great deceiver. It promises pleasure and adventure, but the consequences

can and will be eternal for most people. Someone has said of sin:

Sin will teach you more than you want to know.
Sin will take you further than you want to go.
Sin will keep you longer than you want to stay.
Sin will make you pay more than you want to pay.⁵

The Law of Moses revealed this to the Jewish nation. They needed to know and understand their true condition before God, that sin brings about death and destruction to the transgressor.

Paul had raised the question in Rom. 7:7, "Is the law sin?" Romans 7:12-13 records Paul's conclusion to the question:

Wherefore, the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.

The Law was not sin. In fact, the opposite was true. It was holy, just, and good. Howard Winters wrote in his commentary, "the law is holy in its origin and authority, just and right in its requirements, and good in its aims and results."⁶ The Psalmist, in glowing words of praise, said of the Law:

The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the

soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward (Psalm 19:7-11).

The Law indeed served a great purpose for a period of time. It accomplished all that God intended for it to accomplish. It provided a foundation on which lives could be built and preparation made for the important issues of life. It showed the Jewish nation how to be righteous. But it also showed them how unrighteous they were. It produced a knowledge of sin in the people and helped them to see how utterly detestable their sins were when measured against the Law. The Law was good, but they could never live up to it. The Law exposed their inability to be good enough to justify themselves. Now they stood condemned, deserving spiritual death. The Law did not place them in such a perilous state, their sins did. What could be done about it? Could they find redemption in the Law?

The Liability Of The Law Of Moses (Romans 7:14-25)

The Bible tells us in several places that there is none righteous before God (Rom. 3:10; Psalm 14:3; Psalm 53:3; Eccl. 7:20). This brought a great curse upon those who

could not keep the Law perfectly, "...cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Gal. 3:10). All the good deeds that an individual could do would not blot out the guilt of one sin under the Law. It required perfect obedience.

How were sins then dealt with under the Law? God provided a system of animal sacrifices to be made each year. Their sins would be, in a sense, "rolled forward" for one year at a time until Christ would come and complete the plan of redemption providing actual forgiveness. The Hebrew writer pointed out, however, that the Law could not provide actual justification:

For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? Because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins (Heb. 10:1-4).

God would never consider the blood of bulls and goats enough to remove the curse of the Law. It took the Christ Himself. Paul wrote in Gal. 3:13, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us..." He also wrote of the Redeemer, "For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did, by the which we draw nigh unto God" (Heb. 7:19). Although the

Law of Moses was holy, just, good, and spiritual, and intended to lead into the right way of life, it could not give life (Gal. 3:21). It left its adherents under the bondage of sin and helpless, without the help of one like unto Christ, in the battle of desires that raged within. Paul, in our assigned text in Romans 7, describes the woeful condition of those in the bondage of sin under the Law:

For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would do I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin (Rom. 7:14-25).

It needs to be remembered that Paul is considering in Romans 7 the purpose of the Law, the results of the Law, and the condition of those under the Law. Paul now uses himself to represent the condition of those who were under the Law.

It seems that a number of people have interpreted this text as a description of the inner conflict within the Christian, but this goes against the theme of Romans 7 which discusses the relationship of the Law to sin. Howard Winters presents an excellent overview of this passage in his commentary on Romans:

Paul is not considering his state of mind as a Christian. Rather he is describing his state of mind as a sinner under the law. His description is of a man (himself or any other man who sincerely seeks to serve God under law) living under a law when he knows that he has violated that law. He has sinned and stands condemned by the very law he loves and longs to keep. His sin has produced alienation from the law, the vehicle by which he serves God. To be justified by the law, and thus to be able to enjoy full fellowship with God, he must either pay the penalty (which is death) or be forgiven. But the law, which condemned him as a sinner, provided no means of forgiveness (no means of justification apart from the penalty), except to promise that a redeemer was coming. He longs to be just in the sight of the law but there was no way he could be except to pay the penalty in full. This is thus a description of one who lived under the law after he had violated it. He

desired to do right but the law, because he had violated it, bound the penalty upon him. On one hand he yearned to serve God by obeying the law, but on the other he was condemned by the very law he yearned to serve. How could one be delivered from such a wretched conflict of mind? He could not under the law (and this is precisely Paul's point), but he could be (and Paul was) by Christ.⁷

It would be hard for a Christian to read this passage and grasp its central meaning without developing a great sense of gratitude for the deliverance made possible through Christ Jesus. This is precisely the point of Romans 7.

Those under the law were condemned slaves of sin. The Law had given them the knowledge of their utter sinfulness and guilt. The Law appealed to their minds to do what was right and good. They desired to comply but the carnal desires within them were so great that they consented to evil. They did the things they knew to be wrong. They failed to do the things they knew to be right. Sin was in control and enslaved them. They stood condemned and without hope for no one could be saved by the Law. They were dead in sin (vs. 9), sold under sin (vs. 14), and held captive by sin (vs. 23). What "wretched men" they were! But the good news of the gospel is that Christ could accomplish what the Law could not.

Serving Christ In Newness Of Spirit (Rom. 8:1-4)

Romans 8 is one of the most thrilling chapters in the New Testament. It proclaims deliverance from the sentence of death and condemnation for those in Christ.

Paul writes:

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit; For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit (Rom. 8:1-4).

Paul had spent the better part of Romans 7 using himself as an example to represent those who were condemned under the Law. He now returns to his standing in the Lord as a Christian, justified in the eyes of God. He now could tell of true forgiveness of sins and the wonderful blessings available in Christ Jesus (Eph. 1:3). He could tell of the Savior who was “the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises” (Heb. 8:6). He could sing the praises of his high priest, Jesus, who could understand his infirmities (Heb. 4:15). His conscience had truly been purged “from dead works to serve the living God” by the blood of Christ (Heb. 9:14). But with these abundant blessings and privileges come responsibilities and obligations. The Lord expects His standards, purposes, and desires to become ours. The fleshly appetites which lead to sin are to give way to a life directed by the Spirit through the inspired Word. Paul had already reminded the Roman Christians, “Being then made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness”

(Rom. 6:17).

In verse 2 Paul refers to the “law of the Spirit of life.” We live in a day and age when the word “law” is becoming highly unpopular in religion. The number of “grace only” proponents, even among members of the church, is growing at an alarming rate. Romans 6:14 has become a popular battle-cry, “...for ye are not under the law, but under grace.” Many interpret this to mean that we are not under any law at all. It shows, first of all, their lack of understanding of this passage, not knowing that “law” in this verse refers to the Law of Moses. It also shows their quest to run unbridled through life indulging any and every fleshly desire. But this attitude goes completely against the reason for which we have been set at liberty from our sins. Paul wrote to the Galatian Christians, “...use not your liberty for an occasion to the flesh” (Gal. 5:13). Peter warned all Christians in 1 Pet. 2:16 not to use “your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.”

To those who cling to Romans 6:14 (not under law, but under grace) for their cloak of freedom, Paul says that it is “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus that frees us from the law of sin and death” (Rom. 8:2). Paul also referred to the New Covenant as “the law of faith” (Rom. 3:27) and “the law of Christ” (1 Cor. 9:21; Gal. 6:2). The writer James referred to it as “the perfect law of liberty” (James 1:25) and “the royal law” (James 2:8). Why should anyone be surprised by such terminology for God said in the long ago, “I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts” (Jer. 31:33). Guy Woods explains our concerns well when he wrote:

Law is “a rule of action,” and grace is unmerited

favor. It involves grievous error to assume, as many today do, that all there was of the Old Testament order was law, and all there is of the New Testament system is grace. Paul's purpose was to show the origin of law and of grace, and not to limit their operations. It was the unmerited favor of God which allowed sinful man to approach Him through Jewish modes of worship and it is by means of "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" that we are made free from the Law of sin and death in this, the Christian age. ⁸

The grace system is indeed a wonderful part of God's plan of redemption. May the words of Paul concerning grace found in his letter to Titus go far and wide to those who think that grace gives license to enjoy the popular sinful pleasures of the day:

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Titus 2:11-12).

Paul wrote in Romans 8:2, "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." What is this "law of sin and death?" Some think it refers to the Law of Moses, but it seems more probable that James Boyd's explanation in his commentary on Romans is right:

The law of sin and death declares, "You sin; you

die.” One might consider Romans 6:23 and James 1:15 as he defines the law of sin and death. The law of sin and death is not the law of Moses as some have presumed. If that were the case, then Paul would be saying the law of Moses could not deliver us from the law of Moses, which makes no sense. The teaching is that the law of the Spirit of life releases one from the spiritual death of the law of sin and death. ⁹

From the beginning of man’s existence on earth it has been true that “the soul that sinneth, it shall die” (Ezek. 18:4). Sin separates one from God (Isa. 59:1-2) and makes one deserving of death (Rom. 6:23). Man can never do enough on his own to atone for them (Eph. 2:8-9). This has been true in every dispensation. In the Patriarchal and Mosaical dispensations God allowed animal sacrifices to be offered for sins, but this never completely removed them for they were remembered again each year by God (Heb. 10:1-4). However, in the Christian dispensation “there is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus...for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made us free from the law of sin and death” (Rom. 8:1-2). Once again, this is something the Law of Moses could not do, and this is Paul’s precise point in verse 3 because it was “weak through the flesh.” The Law was not the weak point. Man was the weak point because he could never keep the Law perfectly, thus placing himself under condemnation. God sent His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to condemn sin in the flesh that deliverance might be possible through His sacrifice. Christ became the means of righteousness to those who would submit to His will in humble obedience. He was the gift of righteousness that

all needed (Rom. 5:17).

We also need to point out the danger of the phrase “sinful nature” which the NIV uses regularly in Romans 7 and 8 (Rom. 7:17, 25; Rom. 8:3,4 in our text). The KJV and ASV translate the word “flesh.” Translating the word as “sinful nature” compounds the grave problem of Calvinism that serves as the foundation for many of the false doctrines commonly held today. Calvinism teaches that we have inherited a sinful nature from Adam. This makes it easier to convince the uninformed of the need to have the Holy Spirit directly operate on one’s soul in conversion to regenerate him that sin might be removed. It is but a small step from this falsehood to conclude that we have been placed in a position of so much favor and security that we could never fall from grace. So, there is great danger in allowing such a mistranslation as “sinful nature” to be given such freedom of expression.

There is no truth at all in Calvinism that states that we have inherited a sinful nature from Adam. Graham Cain wrote on the subject:

What is our nature? What does it entail and from whence cometh it? Our nature is anything but sinful. Our nature is obtained from God. He is “the Father of our Spirit” (Heb. 12:9). Thus, our nature is not in any way sinful. Not at conception; not at birth; not at any time prior to our personal, free will transgression of God’s will. The reason we transgress God’s will is due to the motions of the flesh which began when Adam acquired the terrible insight of knowing evil. ¹⁰

We might also point out, as we have seen in our text, God gave the Law to contain these lusts. Many prohibitions are given indicating that we do have the power to curb them. The divine directive has always been to the sinner, “go, and sin no more” (John 8:11). We are told that the child of God does not make sin a practice (1 John 3:9) We are encouraged to “bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor. 10:5). We need not wait for the Holy Spirit to miraculously intercede as Calvinism suggests. We must look constantly to Jesus. His fleshly body possessed the possibility of sin, yet He perfectly controlled it by his fervent desire to do the will of the Father. So must we!

In conclusion, much of the error taught in and out of the church today is rooted in the failure to adhere to Paul’s admonition in 2 Timothy 2:15, “to rightly divide the word of truth,” especially as it pertains to the Old and New covenants. The New Testament is full of examples of the problems created by this failure in the first century church. People continue, in principle, in the same error. The major problem continues to be the fleshly, carnal mind. Paul referred to this problem in Phil. 3:3 when he wrote, “For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.” He then proceeds to list those impressive credentials of his Jewish past that any “fleshly minded” Jew would covet. He then went on to say how they meant nothing to him anymore. The noble priority that became his very life and passion was the striving

for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ and
to be found in him, NOT HAVING MINE OWN
RIGHTEOUSNESS, WHICH IS OF THE LAW

(emphasis mine BB), but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith (Phil. 3:8-9).

Paul had learned the purpose of the Law of Moses and the condition of those who tried to live under it. He made known far and wide the truth of Romans 7:6:

but now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

It is still true today, but so very few know it! May our prayer for the church today be the same prayer as that expressed by Paul in the Colossian letter, that we “might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing...” (Col. 1:9-10).

Endnotes

1 A.P. Gibbs, **Worship** (Kansas City: Walterick, n.d.) 97-98.

2 Roy Deaver, **Romans: God’s Plan For Man’s Righteousness** (Austin, TX: Biblical Notes Publications, 1992) 229.

3 William Barclay, **The Letter To The Romans** (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1995) 95.

4 Garland Elkins and Thomas Warren, **The Book Of Romans** (Jonesboro, AR: National Christian Press, 1983) 115.

5 Thomas Holland, **The Way Of Wanderers** (Brentwood, TN: Penmann Press, 1990) 56-57.

6 Howard Winters, **Commentary On Romans**

(Greenville, S.C.: Carolina Christian, 1985) 82.

7 Ibid., 80.

8 Guy N. Woods, "Grace And Law," **God's Amazing Grace**, ed. Jim Laws (Pulaski, TN: Sain Publications, 1995) 386.

9 James William Boyd, **System Of Salvation: Commentary on Romans** (Nashville, TN: Williams Printing Company, 1990) 106.

10 Graham Cain, "What About Our Sinful Nature?" **Vigil** Vol. 24 (Feb., 1996) 14.

Chapter 7

How The First Century Church Handled The Transition From The Old Covenant To The New Covenant

Paul Sain

Words fail to adequately express my appreciation for this good church. A great church is comprised of faithful, hard-working, devoted elders and supported by loyal, dedicated deacons and members, all of whom are in love with God and His inspired Word. Your light shines throughout the land of this wonderful country and on foreign soil as well. May God continue to bless you in His work is the prayer of many of us. A special word of thanks for the **POWER** publication. When it is received in the mail, almost always it is not laid down until it is read from front to back. It is truly excellent material that teaches, encourages, and gives future reference material to many.

The Two Covenants ~ Man's History

From the creation of man, God has always given mankind adequate instruction concerning what he must do to be acceptable in His sight. The word “*covenant*” is

appropriate when we speak of God's dealings with His people. At various times in mankind's history God has had a "covenant" with His people. The Old Testament or New Testament could likewise be referred to as The Old Covenant or The New Covenant. To illustrate this thought, we note Moses took the book of the covenant and read to those in the audience (Exod. 24:7).

God gave Adam and Eve specific instruction pertaining to the garden and what they could and could not do. Noah was given details by Jehovah God (in reference to materials, size, etc.) in connection to the construction of the ark in which he and his family would be saved from the flood. Moses was told by our heavenly Father exactly what to do in securing the release of the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage. Concerning the construction of the tabernacle, the people of God were given very specific details by the Creator. The people of God today have likewise been given specific instruction concerning what we are to do and not do in our lives. It is just as imperative that we follow such instruction today as it was for Noah, Moses, Abraham, Adam and Eve, etc.

In the inspired Holy Bible we learn of three dispensations of time: the Patriarchal dispensation (which spanned 2,500 years) and Mosaical dispensation (which lasted approximately 1,500 years) which have gone before. And finally, the Christian (church) age, the time in which we live today. A brief overview concerning these preceding ages is mentioned in Scripture:

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, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds (Heb. 1:1-2).

In recent centuries, a few countries have changed from one form of government to another form of government. Laws naturally changed also at that time. The transitions for these countries often were met with strong opposition, especially from those who had the most to lose (power, authority, etc.) with the passing of the old form of government.

Consider this additional example: Texas was under the rule of Mexico for years. We remember the history making fight at the Alamo. It was the battle of San Jacinto which finally won its freedom. At that time Texas (as we know it) was no longer amenable to the laws of Mexico. There had been a change in laws which governed them. It is relatively easy for us to see this change in government. Yet, there were great problems which faced them.

We shall see the difficulties in such similar transitions when the New Covenant of Jesus Christ replaced the Old Covenant.

The New Covenant Established

Let us be ever so thankful for the New Covenant of Christ, and our relationship to Him and the eternal hope we have as a result of the Savior's shed blood and this relationship.

The Lord Jesus Christ willingly came to earth to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10; Matt. 1:21). He came to put an end to the Mosaic system. The Old Law would remain in force until all would be accomplished (Matt. 5:18). He offered Himself as a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, purchasing the church (Acts 20:28). When He died upon the cross the last sacrifice was finished (John 12:27-28) and the Old Law (covenant) ended.

No doubt we remember and should emphasize the

words of the great soldier Paul to the Colossians concerning the Old Law. Notice especially the terms he used to describe the Old Law's status: blotted out, taken away, nailed to the cross:

Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and **took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;** And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it (Col. 2:14-15).

All of the demands and ordinances of the Law were nailed to the cross, thereby setting all free from that which was contrary to us, thus making it possible for all to enjoy the perfect law of liberty (James 1:25).

One covenant (the Law of Moses) was taken away to make room for another covenant (the perfect law of liberty), as clearly defined in Scripture:

Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He **taketh away the first**, that he may **establish the second**. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all (Heb. 10:9-10).

At the transfiguration of Jesus (Matt. 17), we recall Moses (the lawgiver) was present at His side. Also present was Elijah (one of the great old prophets). God said "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye him." God clearly taught we are to listen to His Son, Jesus Christ. We can learn from the great life of Moses, but he is not our Saviour. He is not the one to whom we are to

listen and heed his instruction. It was likewise not Elijah they were to hear and heed. It was the precious Son of God!

The New Covenant Disturbed Some In The First Century

A significant portion of the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ was in laying the foundation for changes that were to come, the transition from the Old Covenant (law) to the New Covenant (law). He declared His authority (Matt. 28:18) from the heavenly Father. He had the right to do whatever He wanted. He had the right to make the rules, the Law.

Change is most often difficult. Accepting change, even when the Son of God is the One bringing it about, has always been slow, tedious, and usually resisted. So it was in the first century.

Many who held positions of authority, who enjoyed the prestige, power or popularity under the Old Covenant were threatened by this “*new*” movement. They were content and satisfied with the covenant as it had been for generations. They saw no reason to change anything. They just wanted it left alone.

Some Strongly Wanted To Cling To The Old Covenant

The Scriptures reflect the efforts of some who strongly held to the Old Covenant and were unwilling to accept the New Law. The Judaizing teachers could not see the inferiority of the Old Covenant. They could not see the need for its repeal. These false teachers did not realize the Law of Moses had served the purpose God intended for it, when Christ died on the cross for our sins

(or they just refused to accept this fact). They were upset when they heard the Old Law was against them, and contrary to their best interest. They did not agree.

We should be able to understand their feelings if we will think of the generations which had passed during the time they had followed this “way of doing things.” Their fathers, and their fathers fathers, had believed in and followed the Law of Moses. No doubt they could have reasoned, “if it was good enough for them, it is good enough for me.” Or they might have considered, “if I change to something else, will I be condemning them, because they followed another way?” Regardless of the exact considerations or feelings, many did not want to change from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant!

Let’s notice one specific example of those who sought to remain under the Old Law: Acts 15. The spiritual door had been opened to the Gentiles (Acts 14:27). Paul and Barnabas had reported the things that God had done for the Gentiles. Men came from Judaea (Jerusalem). They claimed they had been sent by the apostles who were at Jerusalem. They taught (and claimed that the church at Jerusalem authorized them to so teach) the Gentile Christians would not be saved without circumcision (according to the custom of Moses), thus making the Jewish rite a condition of Gentile salvation. The confrontation of these false teachers found the apostles speaking plainly, boldly, and concisely about this matter. They argued that God had not made a mistake (in opening the door to the Gentiles); God had broken down the wall between the Jew and Gentile demonstrating this by giving the Gentiles the Holy Spirit; and that the Jews had no right to put on the Gentiles this “yoke” which God had not put on them. A little later (v. 24) it is made clear that the

Judaizing teachers were NOT at that place teaching with the authority of God or the church at Jerusalem. They were making false claims, in an effort to substantiate their beliefs.

After the New Law was in effect, there were many false teachers who sought to go back to the Old Law for justification. This had been their mindset for so long, and they rejected the new way and sought to keep the old way of thinking.

Let's note Paul's argument to the brethren at Galatia, Ephesus and Colossae concerning these efforts of the first century Judaizing teachers:

Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made ... Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith (Gal. 3:19, 24).

But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby (Eph. 2:13-16).

Paul further made this argument, asking the question:

And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why

do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased (Gal. 5:11).

Then Paul adds this thought:

As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ (Gal. 6:12).

He knew their desire for the things of the Old Law was inconsistent with that which was demanded and desired from the New Law.

Paul told, by the inspiration of God, the Galatians that it was not possible to be justified under the Old Law. He then warned them of their serious spiritual condition:

Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace (Gal. 5:4).

Others are warned:

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift ... If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame (Heb. 6:4-6).

To draw this conclusion even more clearly, the inspired record adds further thoughts as recorded in Hebrews 9:15-17:

And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called

might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.

Paul strongly argued against those at Rome who sought to hold to the Old Law (Rom. 2:19-25), showing their reasoning to be flawed.

Let us note additional warnings of the apostle Paul to the brethren at various localities concerning all false teachers, those who were a threat to their (the individual child of God as well as the collective body) spiritual welfare. We will again be impressed with the seriousness of these actions.

And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words ... Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ ... Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind (Col. 2:4,8,18).

(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things) (Phil. 3:18-19).

Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved (2 Thess. 2:9-10).

And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith (2 Thess. 3:2).

Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us ... And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed (2 Thess. 3:6,14).

The list could continue with dozens of additional warnings concerning Satan and his servants who teach damnable doctrines. The Judaizing teachers were rebellious and refused to accept the way of God. False teachers today are rebellious and refuse to accept the way of God.

Problems And Solutions As A Result Of The Introduction Of The New Covenant

The problems facing ones who lived in the first century as a result of the introduction of the New Covenant were many – from those without and within. The church of our Lord exists today (as we believe in and follow the same Lord, and His inspired Word as Christians of the first century) and she likewise faces many similar

problems – from those without and within. Note a few of the problems they faced in the first century that we also face today:

1. Rejection of the way that God demands.

Regardless of the miracles, signs and wonders performed which should have proven beyond doubt that Jesus Christ was the Messiah, God's only Son (John 20:30-31), still many refused to believe and accept Him as the Redeemer. Because of personal, cultural, social or other so-called reasons, they rejected the way of salvation. ***So it is today!*** As the disciples of Christ did in the first century, we must do today. They declared the truth, persuaded and convinced as many as they could, as best they could, with the powerful gospel, convicting and pricking the hearts of all who would hear, spreading the truth to the uttermost parts of the earth. We must remember our work is to preach and teach (Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47). While we desire to see everyone obey the gospel, we must realize this is not necessary for us to fulfill our responsibility. Thus if not all do obey, we have not failed to do our work. We must teach – teach the truth – teach the truth in love – teach the truth in love fervently – and pray our precious listeners will humbly submit to the Creator of the world and never reject Him and His way.

2. First century folks wanted to “do things their way.” It did not matter to some people what Jehovah wanted. They wanted to continue in the way of their fathers, the way they enjoyed. They wanted to “do their own thing.” Obedience to God involves doing what He says, as He says it, when He says it, at the time He says it! Partial obedience is nothing less than disobedience. Many in the first century were unwilling to submit to God's will. ***So it is today!*** Book, chapter and verse can be given to

prove (beyond doubt) the will of the Father, and many will not listen and obey. As one said to me a few years past, *“I don’t care what the Bible says, I’m gonna do what I want to do in religion!”* Jehovah God is our heavenly Father. He has the power and authority over all. He has the right to stipulate what we must do or not do. While man has the power of choice, we must clearly understand that if we *choose* to disobey, there will be serious and eternal consequences, or if we *choose* to obey, we shall be blessed throughout eternity in heaven!

3. Traditions of men were more important than the will of God. Even after the perfect law (the New Covenant) was in effect, some in the first century sought to go back to the Old Law. Their tradition-bound mindset prevented them from accepting the will of God. They were more interested in what their fathers had followed and obeyed for centuries, than they were the instruction of the heavenly Father! ***So it is today!*** How utterly foolish it is to reject Almighty God in preference to the ways of man! Can you imagine standing before Jehovah in judgment and attempting to explain why such a course of action has been taken?

An additional note: those of us who are second or third generation Christians (our parents and/or grandparents were children of God) should likewise be cautious and concerned that we NOT follow a course of action merely because *“we have always done it this way”* or *“our parents did it that way all their lives.”* Let us likewise *“prove all things”* (1 Thess. 5:21). Let us *“try the spirits”* (1 John 4:1). Let us *“search the scriptures”* and make certain of what we believe and practice (Acts 17:10-11). We must have biblical authority for ALL we do!

4. False teachers existed then – but they were

aggressively confronted and exposed. The Judaizing teachers taught, sounded persuasive, appeared righteous, and thus convinced many. They were false teachers, who taught doctrines that, if believed, would destroy the souls of its believers. They would convince people to think evil of the people of God (Acts 14:1) and cause everyone to polarize to one side or the other (Acts 14:4). They would speak “*good words*” and “*fair speeches*” (Rom. 16:18) and appear as ministers of righteousness (2 Cor. 11:13-15). They would deceive and lie (2 Cor. 11:3; John 8:44). ***So it is today!*** The devil is still alive and active today. He has servants who are militant and aggressive in teaching damnable doctrines. They sound good, quite convincing at times. Often they do not tell the whole truth, or especially they will not reveal the consequences of believing their doctrines. They quote so-called scholars (past or present), give highly intelligent (?) arguments, refer to just enough Scriptures that will make their doctrines sound as if any who would reject them would be a rebellious rejector of God. They know the right key phrases or words that zero in on the hearts of the baby-boomers and baby-busters or the “*intellectuals.*” The majority of “*change agents*” ridicule the old paths (Jer. 6:16) as being outdated and archaic. They speak disparagingly concerning the pioneer preachers of years gone by. They mockingly speak of the “*five-steppers*” and often refuse to give the specifics of the plan of salvation at the conclusion of a sermon.

In other words, they know what to say to demand the following of many of the world today. They are as Pied Pipers leading the masses to the slaughter, while making them “*feel good about themselves*” and *believe* that all is well in Zion.

5. Change is often difficult – sometimes good – sometimes bad. The transition from the Old Law to the New Law was a journey into the unknown for the folks in the first century. The people knew what they had been doing as they followed the Old Law, and likely felt “*safe*” following this known course. But, Jehovah knew what the sinful world needed. He knew that in the “*fulness of time*” (Gal. 4:4) what was in store for them. The Saviour came to make it all possible. The disciples spoke and taught (by inspiration) about what was to happen. But the hearers had difficulty grasping the whole picture. Even the disciples of our Lord at times could not fully understand what Jesus told them would happen.

Change of any kind is often hard to accept, even when the changes would actually help or bring about good. There are those things that must never change the truth about God, Jesus Christ, His inspired Word and the basic fundamentals that reflect complete and total obedience to the will of the Father.

Changes are being urged upon the church today by those known as “**change agents.**” Tragically, such changes will restructure or destroy the church (locally or universally). Changes that must be resisted are those that: involve the worship offered to our heavenly Father, changing that which He has authorized; set aside God-given specifications concerning the role of women; destroy the instruction of the Lord concerning the Lord’s Supper (partaking on a day other than the first day of the week); introduce unauthorized practices (baby dedications, religious holidays, etc.); disregard the music authorized by Jehovah (singing and making melody in our hearts to the Lord) and replace it with “*special*” music (solos, quartets, choirs, etc.); introduction of unauthorized

practices such as lifting up holy hands, handclapping, etc.; extend fellowship to religious groups who are not “*in Christ*” but are man-made denominations; seek to destroy the authority of elders; accept evil, sinful actions (homosexuality, abortion, lottery, etc.); and many similar areas. We MUST stand strong for what is right! We MUST stand strong against what is wrong!

6. The faith was defended. Faithful proclaimers of the gospel of Christ were willing to speak out for the way of God, and willing to speak out against those who taught that which was contrary to God’s way. Courage was required. They knew they possibly would pay with their lives, but that did not deter them from speaking what needed to be spoken! They stood, even if they stood by themselves. They sought the approval of Jehovah God, not man.

Conclusion

The transition from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant involved troublesome times, but how thankful we should be as we realize God was with His people, and blessed them richly, enabling them to be His children. We can be God’s children today, heirs of God (Rom. 8:16f).

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Chapter 8

How Did God Reveal Himself And His Will In The Two Covenants?

Glenn Colley

Introduction

Our text for this marvelous study is Hebrews 1:1,2. The companion passage is Matthew 17:1-5 where we read these words:

And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.

What is the meaning of this amazing comparison between the Christ and the great leaders of the Old Testament? The answer is in our lesson text, Hebrews 1:1,2:

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, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.

With these few words the book of Hebrews is ranked among the books of most impressive beginnings. It is similar in grandeur with “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth, (Gen. 1:1),” and, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1).

Now to our text.

God Spake

The reality of God’s speaking to man is too important to pass without note. Ponder the significance of this: “God spake.” There is power in that voice! In Genesis one, “And God said” is found ten times. It is found 582 times in the entire Bible. Although subtracting from the Bible those 582 verses might reduce the size of the book only a little, subtracting the reality of God speaking through the Bible would reduce the Bible to nothing more than any other book written by man. It is what it is because God spake.

There is power in His voice. God spoke words to bring about creation, and when He spoke the inanimate molecules of space snapped to attention. “Let there be

light!” and there was light. “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding out! (Rom. 11:33).”

While holding that thought, now consider that God has spoken to man and told him how to live and how to be saved from sin. He gave us law, and has never left us without a law. Romans 3:23 says that all have sinned. Sin is transgression of the law (1 John 3:4); therefore, all have been under His law. Humans are the only part of creation which has a choice about submitting to the voice of God. Surely we can learn obedience and respect for “Thus saith the Lord” through His word and through nature about us.

How God Spoke In The Past

Our text says, “sundry times.” This is a Greek word meaning “By many portions.” The idea is simply that God’s plan of mercy which came through Jesus Christ was revealed to the ancients gradually and in fragments. To grandmother Eve it was revealed that through her seed the old Serpent would one day be crushed (Gen. 3:15). To our grandfather Abraham (Gal. 3:29), was revealed that through his seed all nations of the earth should be blessed (Gen. 12:1-3). To Judah revelation came that Shiloh should come before the scepter should depart from him (Gen. 49:10). To Israel it was revealed that God would raise up to them, from among themselves, a Prophet like unto Moses (Deut. 18:18). David, in Psalm 22 speaks of the suffering Messiah. In another Psalm (16:7-11) he speaks of Christ’s resurrection. In Psalm 110 David discusses our Lord’s priesthood, reign, and triumphs.

All of this occurred in “time past,” a phrase referring

to the period beginning with Adam and ending with Malachi, a period of more than 3,500 years. From Malachi to the time of the Savior there were no recorded divine communications.

We usually think of a prophet as one who predicts, with divine help, what the future will hold. Yet in our passage today, “by the prophets” clearly has reference to those who communicate the divine will on any subject. God spoke through them.

By what criteria did God determine when and how to speak? We would never belittle our view of Him by ascribing to Him useless chatter. Unlike some people, God speaks only with purpose and resolve. When God spoke He had communication in mind. How is it that we often talk without communicating? Well, either we are speaking when the other person isn’t really listening, or we use words they don’t clearly understand. God is not willing that any should perish (2 Pet. 3:9), and therefore wanted not just to speak to man, but really to communicate with man. Some today suggest to us that we have trouble hearing God because He talks in “God-talk” and we in “man-talk.” Wait a minute; God made man, and made man’s voice box, larynx, and tongue. Is God capable of understanding man when man uses these things? He made man’s mind and the capability to understand words. Is God capable of communicating in words man can understand? How can we believe that God has trouble communicating in words which we will understand? What difference would it make that “God spoke” if we couldn’t understand Him anyway?

Of course to say that God can clearly communicate with man does not imply that we can know all that God knows or that we can fully comprehend His vastness. If

God could be completely fathomed by man, He should not be God, because of what the very name “God” suggests to humanity. Nevertheless, we can certainly acquire a somewhat satisfying and practical working knowledge of God and His will.

God spoke in “divers manners.” Using your imagination, walk through the various rooms and gardens and hearts in which God spoke. Ponder the significance. Be awed by the power and kindness of One so divine and so kind.

He spoke to Elijah in a still, small voice. “And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice...” (1 Kings 19:12).

He spoke to Moses through a burning bush:

And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I, (Exod. 3:24).

The Bible says that God spoke to Moses “mouth to mouth.” This was special. God singled out Moses and communicated through him in a way different and exclusive. Not even Moses’ brother or sister had any claim to this communication with God:

And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a

prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the LORD shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses? (Num. 12:6-8).

He spoke to Jacob through a dream. This dream state, unlike our dreams today, must have been similar to what Peter experienced in Acts 10 when God communicated through a “vision.” Consider the dream of the patriarch Jacob:

And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed... (Gen. 28:11,12).

Although it seems unprovable by the text, some even suggest that God revealed his will through the urim and thummim, stones kept in a pouch on the high-priest's breastplate.

Surely it is true that in time past God revealed Himself and spake in divers manners.

These Latter Days

The ASV phrases this “last days,” and it has reference to the final dispensation. It is transparently obvious that the last days referred to in this and like passages does not suggest that the world was soon to come to an end, but rather that this was the last dispensation, the last period of the world. After all, many generations have passed since this time, and the end of time hasn’t come yet.

The only three dispensations which will be occupied in the story of man will be the Patriarchal Dispensation, the Mosaic Dispensation, and the Christian Dispensation. Although the Christian Dispensation has already spanned almost 2000 years, it is nonetheless called “the last days” (Isaiah 2:2). Isaiah looks into the future and says:

And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD’S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

The beginning of the “last days” was the beginning of the church in Acts chapter two:

And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions,

and your old men shall dream dreams (Acts 2:17).

He Hath Spoken Unto Us By His Son

The supreme worth and dignity of Christ is expressed in the word Son. The prophets had been sometimes weak and sinful men with neither the authority nor the power of the Son. Furthermore, the messages of the prophets, even at best, had neither the excellency nor the saving power of the Gospel.

In our remarkable text it is impressive to see how the description of Jesus grows. Our Savior is a son, one born of woman, made under the law (vs. 2). But that isn't all; He is an heir of all things (vs. 2). We stand amazed as we learn that He is the Creator of all worlds (vs. 2). We see the brightness of the divine glory (vs. 3). We see the image of His person, the character of the divine substance (vs. 3). Our Lord is the sustainer of our vast universe (vs. 3). He, our Master and Savior, is the one who made atonement for the sin of the world (vs. 3). And finally, Jesus Christ is the One on the right hand of God (vs. 3).

Others pointed to Him, but there cannot be any going beyond Him. They have all served and ended their function in pointing to Him who now fulfils all. As the poet said, "The sun has risen; the stars retire." Ephesians 1:22 says that God "hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church...."

Keep in mind that the key word of Hebrews is "better." Christ and the Christian system is better than anything before. Consider these comparisons:

1. Christ is far above angels (Heb. 1,2). He is the Son. They are only servants. He is the Creator. They are

simply the creatures. He is the Sovereign. They are only subjects. He is the glorified who is both God and man, who is not only Himself above angels, but who also brings many sons into glory, lifting them also above the angels.

2. Christ is above Moses (Heb. 3). Moses was the human agent of the old economy; Christ is the Divine Founder of the new. Moses was faithful as a steward of God's house. Christ is faithful as the *Son* over His house. Moses was a witness to something better to come. Christ Jesus is the One who fulfills those promises and dreams.

3. Christ is better than Joshua (Heb. 4). How great was Joshua! He was the captain of Israel's conquest. Joshua led the people into the earthly Canaan, but he was limited. He could not lead them into the true rest. Only Christ Jesus brings us into the true rest to live with God.

4. Christ is better than Aaron (Heb. 4-7). Aaron was Israel's representative high priest. But Christ ministers a better sanctuary, heaven. Christ maintains a better priesthood, after the order of Melchizedek. Christ is of better qualifications because He is sinless; He is never-dying; He is perfect. Christ offers a better offering because He offers Himself instead of the animal sacrifices of Aaron's time. The sacrifice of Christ will never have to be repeated.

Christ is better:

While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him (Matthew 17:5).

Remember the prophetic eye reflected in Deuteronomy 18:15-18:

The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; According to all that thou desirest of the LORD thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And the LORD said unto me, They have well *spoken that* which they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.

Acts 3:22 reads:

For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.

Let's now ask two pressing questions. "How does Jesus speak to us today?" and "Why does Jesus speak to us today?"

Jesus speaks to us through the four Gospel accounts. In John 12:48 Jesus said:

He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."

Remember also the parable of the wise and foolish builder, Matthew 7:24-27:

Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

We are responsible to know and obey what Jesus has said to us in the words of the New Testament.

Jesus speaks through all the inspired writers of the New Testament. In giving the great commission Jesus included what the Apostles were to teach: "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you..." (Matt. 28:19-20). Our Lord had promised the Apostles that the Holy Spirit would guide them into all the truth. Since Jesus is the truth, John 14:6, what the Holy Spirit guided the writers to write was equal to the word of Christ. Consider John 16:13:

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

Now to the next question. Why did Jesus speak to us? Why did he not speak through some other means of

communication? Consider please that God spoke to us through Christ using words. Because He has spoken, and spoken in words, we have an objective standard rather than a subjective standard. So many religions today have been reduced to exalting subjectivism above what Jesus actually revealed. Many have said, “I wouldn’t trade the feeling in my heart for a whole stack of Bibles!” The fact is that subjectivism proves Buddhism and Hinduism and Catholicism just as well, just as effectively as it does New Testament Christianity. But always remember that subjective proof of your faith is no proof at all. God SPAKE to us through His Son.

All matters which are true and factual are such separate and apart from man’s opinions and feelings. A man, for example, may in his subjective prejudices reject the equation $2+2=4$. That feeling doesn’t alter the truthfulness of the equation at all. So it is with the will of Christ revealed to us.

Some today are clamoring for a new hermeneutics. People need to be thoroughly cautioned about this dangerous movement. The “new” hermeneutics is filled with subjectivism. Next time someone makes an argument which in some way indicates a “doctrines and details don’t really matter; I’m just about Jesus” style attitude, remind them of what our Master said to the devil in Matthew 4:4: “Man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth from the mouth of God.” Jesus respected the scriptures as God’s word. They actually proceed from His mouth. How much is important? Should we study the details of scripture? Jesus says that we should study “every word.”

Our remarkable text in this chapter is Hebrews 1:1,2 which says:

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, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.

May we ever remember that Jesus is the “heir of all things,” of this life and of that which is to come.

Chapter 9

Did Grace Exist In The Old Covenant?; Is The New Covenant A Covenant Of Grace And No Law?

Ted J. Clarke

Introduction

By Silvanus, our faithful brother, as I account him, I have written unto you briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God: stand ye fast therein (1 Peter 5:12, ASV)

What a privilege it is to speak on this fine lectureship and to deal with the much misunderstood general theme of “The Two Covenants.” In responding to my son B. J.’s kind request to contribute to the initial planning of possible topics for this year’s lectureship, I easily wrote down over one hundred topics, questions, and Scriptures for consideration, and he proposed many more. One could quickly plan another complete lectureship on the theme of the covenants without much duplication. I am thankful for the elders of the Southaven congregation, Bill Pierce

and Coleman Simpson, for their oversight, foresight, and leadership in continuing the Power Lectures, and I am very proud of the excellent manner in which B.J. directed last year's lectureship and selected the topics for this present one.

One might not think that we would have to be teaching our own brethren again about the differences between the covenants, but much of the false teaching going on among us involves our relationship with the Two Covenants.¹ Perhaps part of the reason for this confusion and lack of knowledge is that we have neglected to preach on the covenants as we should. Our lack of emphasis on soul winning in years past may have opened the door for the false teachings of the Crossroads/Boston movement. Many have failed in more recent years to emphasize the exclusive nature of the Lord's church and how the Scriptures authorize. In many congregations where this teaching was lacking the brethren have embraced ecumenism and a new hermeneutic which allows almost anything. Now we have men among us who contend the Old Testament (OT) has not been done away in any sense, and that the New Testament (NT) is a covenant of all grace and no law.²

My assignment in this lectureship is to discuss whether or not "grace" existed under the OT covenant(s) and if the NT covenant of grace in Christ excludes all "law." Many excellent books and lectures already exist on the grace and law issues. I have listed several of these in the endnotes.³ Accordingly, I will endeavor to discuss the two major passages assigned to me for this lesson (John 1:17 & Gal. 2:16-21), and also attempt to provide some fresh material for the audience and readers to consider. By "fresh" I do not presume that these ideas are original with

me, but that most of the discussions on grace and law do not contain a consideration of some of the material I have included. The sections on raw law, Moses' law, royal law, and an analysis of grace in First Peter may help some of you to understand more easily how grace and law combine in Christ's New Covenant.

Is Grace A Part Of The Old Covenant?

For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ (John 1:17, ASV).

The question of "grace" in relationship to the covenants which God has made with man has several important facets. It deals with the very nature of God and how He has dealt with mankind throughout history. Romans 15:4, referring to the OT writings, states that those "things which were written aforetime were written for our present day learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." First Corinthians 10:1-15 (especially verses 6,11) makes a similar claim regarding OT events. Additionally, understanding the different emphases on law and grace in the covenants will aid us in seeing why the "old" was done away in favor of the "new," exalting the superiority and finality of the latter over the former as God's completed revelation.

"Grace" is almost universally defined as "unmerited favor." For the purpose of our lesson we refer to grace as God's gifts to mankind which bless us and bring salvation to us which we do not and could not merit on our own. God's grace toward us began at creation and reached the

ultimate expression in the gift of His Son, Jesus Christ (John 3:16; 2 Cor. 9:15; Rom. 6:23).

Creation And The Flood

The creation itself must be considered as an act of God's gracious love, as He made humankind in His own image and bestowed upon us all of the necessary provisions for our well-being and happiness (Gen. 1 & 2). Even after the Fall in Genesis 3 God graciously extended the lives of Adam and Eve, clothing them with "coats of [animal] skins," which required the shedding of innocent blood (verse 21). In verse 15 of that same chapter God hinted at the highest manifestation of His grace to come, promising that one would come from the seed of woman to bruise the head of the serpent, Satan (cf. Rev. 12:9; Heb. 2:14-15).

Through the observance of worship, which also included animal sacrifice, God enabled us to approach Him, extending His grace to cover man's sins (Gen. 4:1-7; cf. Heb. 11:4; Rom. 10:17). Sadly, while the population of humans multiplied, it grew disproportionately sinful. Yet, among the sinful census of man "Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD" (Gen. 6:8). Through the provision of God's grace Noah built an ark and did "according to all that God commanded him, so did he" (Gen. 6:22; 7:5, 9, 16). By His grace God established a covenant with Noah, and as Noah accepted that grace and obeyed God's instructions he and his family were saved, preserving the human race (Gen. 6:8, 18, 22; Heb. 11:7).

Abraham And Israel

God's covenant with Abraham was also one of undeserved favor, which was later extended to Isaac and Jacob (Gen. 12:1-3; 26:4; 28:14). By His grace God determined that the promise of blessing "all the families

of the earth” would come through Isaac over Ishmael and Jacob over Esau (Gen. 16-17; 21-22; 27-28; cf. Rom 9:7-16). There was nothing about the lives of these individuals which merited God’s favor upon them, but in His promise to Abraham God graciously brought into being the nation of Israel through the sons of Jacob, ultimately delivering them from cruel bondage in Egypt and bring them into the promised land of Canaan. The Lord reminded Israel that her deliverance from Egypt and her inheritance of Canaan was not because of her great numbers nor her righteousness, but because of His gracious oath to their “fathers” (Deut. 7:7-9; 8:14-18; 9:4-5).

Following the salvation of Israel from Egypt, Moses sang of God’s “mercy,” which was simply a manifestation of His grace. “Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation” (Exod. 15:13). When Moses received the Ten Commandments, Scripture notes that

the LORD descended in the cloud [probably the angel of the LORD], and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, **The LORD, the LORD God, is merciful and gracious**, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin...(Exod. 34:6-7).

Who can deny the place of grace in these OT covenants, including the Law of Moses?

More evidence of OT grace abounds throughout the

Mosaic period. When Israel sinned in the wilderness near Mount Hor, God sent fiery serpents whose bite was fatal among them. Moses prayed for the people and God graciously provided a means of healing. When they looked upon a brass serpent raised on a pole, they would be healed (Num. 21:4-9). God's grace provided the means; each individual had to obey the required action or suffer the penalty. Jesus compared Himself to this grace-filled act of God when He said, "even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:14-15). Obviously, in Christ God's grace extends to a greater number [whosoever of all the world], and also provides a greater healing [resulting in eternal life] (John 3:16).

The cities of Jericho and Ai provide instructive illustrations of God's grace and man's weakness in trying to provide what only God can give. Through His grace God promised Israel the fortified city of Jericho, conditioning His promise upon Israel's obedience to do what He told them to do. When Israel marched about Jericho and blew the horns and shouted as God had instructed, the walls of the city fell flat and the city was overtaken by Israel (Josh. 6:1-20). In contrast, as Israel went up against the much smaller city of Ai, which they thought would be easy, they were routed in their attempt because of sin in their midst (Josh. 7). Without God's grace we are helpless, no matter how hard we try to believe otherwise!

Of all of the other examples of God's grace in the OT, perhaps Psalm 103 will serve as a magnificent expression of His grace and mercy for any who might question whether the OT exhibits those qualities.

Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; Who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; Who satisfieth the mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's. The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed. He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel. **The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.** He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger forever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust. As for man, his days are as grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more. but the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; to such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them. (Psalm 103:1-18)

The whole section of the Psalm glows with grace which God showed to Israel. Other Psalms likewise extol the grace of God, but in briefer fashion (Psm. 84:11; 86:15; 111:4; 112:4; 116:5; 145:8). The OT prophets also tell of God's "gracious and merciful" character to those under the older covenant (Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2; Neh. 9:17, 31; Mal. 1:9).

No one can successfully deny that God's grace was both amazing and great as manifested in His OT covenant with Israel. What then can John 1:17 mean when it contrasts the Two Covenants, saying, "For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ"?

Law, Grace, And Truth In John 1:17

The comparison which the apostle John intends between the Law of Moses and the grace and truth which came through Jesus Christ **cannot be** that there was no grace in the OT system. We have shown above that such cannot be true. Furthermore, if one denied that there was grace in the OT law, one will also have to deny that there was "truth" therein, since John mentions both grace and truth in his contrast. If the OT did not have grace, neither did it have truth. But to say such would be absurd! God is a God of truth (Psm. 31:5); in Him "mercy and truth are met together" (Psm. 85:10—"mercy" in this passage is the same word translated "favour" in Job 10:12); and the Scriptures say of His OT law, "thy law is the truth" (Psm. 119:142). It must appear obvious that John was not trying to say that there was **no** grace and truth in the law Moses gave. What then?

The point John was making is the same emphasis made throughout the NT. That is, **in Jesus Christ the**

grace of God and God's revealed truth find their highest form of expression possible! One sees repeated claims and examples of this in the Gospels, Romans, Galatians, Hebrews, 2 Corinthians 3, Colossians 2, et al. Christ's life of service to mankind, His sacrifice on the cross for our sins, and His resurrection from the dead combine as the ultimate act of God's grace and the most complete revelation of God's truth in love (Rom. 3:23-26; 5:1-21). This can be seen clearly by considering the text of John 1:14-18. The Word which became flesh, Jesus, is "**full of grace and truth**" (verse 14). It is "**of his fulness we have all received**" (verse 16). The phrase "grace for grace" in verse 16 has reference either to the idea that however much grace was in the OT, it has superseded by the fullness of the grace of Christ; or, it may refer to the concept that the grace in Jesus is so rich that it keeps on flowing, grace upon grace, like the incessant waves of the sea keep rolling, one after another, so that we never run out of grace in the Lord. In regard to the former idea, Paul used a similar thought with the word "glory" when he contrasted the Law of Moses with the ministration of Christ. "For if the ministration of condemnation be glory [Moses' law], much more doth the ministration of righteousness **exceed in glory**" [Christ's covenant] (2 Cor. 3:9). The latter of the two possibilities mentioned above is also illustrated by Paul in Romans 5:20-21, where he states, "But where sin abounded, **grace did much more abound**. . . .that. . . grace might reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." Brother Guy N. Woods has written, "The supply of grace actually increases as we appropriate it and its blessings are proportionate to the use we make of it."⁴ Paul, in the verses immediately following those just quoted, warns

against purposefully continuing in sin just because the supply of grace to cover our sins is inexhaustible (Rom. 6:1-2). The apostle John also wrote of this continuing grace for Christians who sin, but noted that we must “walk in the light,” confessing our sins and turning from them in order to appropriate this grace (1 John 1:7-10).

Jesus claimed to be the epitome of truth, saying, “I am. . . **the truth**” (John 14:6). His words are truth and the standard by which we will be judged (John 8:31-32; 12:48-50). Christ’s words are final. No one will come with any newer covenant to supersede His truth (Rev. 1:8). Jesus said, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words [of truth] shall not pass away” (Matt. 24:35).

While Christ is the ultimate expression of God’s grace, the basic manner in which we access that grace has not changed. In the OT examples of the grace of God, man’s acceptance of that grace was by faith and obedience (works). Noah found grace in God’s sight (Gen. 6:8), believed God, and by faith he obeyed, working the plan that God gave him by grace (Heb. 11:7; Gen. 6:14-22; 7:5). This same outline can be applied to every case of God’s grace in the OT, and is the same that Paul gave in Ephesians 2:8-10 of how God’s grace through Christ saves. We are saved by grace through faith, not by any of our own boastful works, but by good works “which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2:10). The OT examples of the Exodus, the brass serpent, Jericho and others were all examples of people obeying in ways that were possible for them to perform in response to God’s grace. The NT examples of God’s grace also include one’s acceptance of God’s grace **in the manner He requires!** The difference is that in Christ we experience the fullness of God’s grace and truth, the results and extent of that

grace being absolute and unsurpassed by anything past or that ever will be.

Also, since we know that John was not trying to exclude the elements of grace and truth from the OT covenant (just because he emphasized the “fulness” of them to be in Christ), we also know that **John cannot be trying to exclude “law” from being a part of Christ’s covenant** (just because it was an important emphasis in the OT). In fact, we have shown clearly that God’s truth, of which Jesus is the fullest expression, includes law and commandments to be obeyed (Psm. 119:142; John 14:15; 17:17; 1 Cor. 9:21; et al.).

Is The New Covenant Without Law?

... for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified (Gal. 2:16).

We have already seen that the statement in John 1:17 does not mean that God’s covenant with OT Israel was all law, without any grace and truth. Neither does it mean that God’s NT covenant in Christ is comprised only of grace and truth to the exclusion of all law! There was great emphasis in the OT on law, for Paul says “by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Rom. 3:20). Peter acknowledged that the Law of Moses was “a yoke. . . which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear” (Acts 15:10). The OT law made mankind painfully aware of **our inability** to satisfactorily keep the Law; it made sin “known,” defined it, and condemned those who succumbed to it, showing one’s violation of the commandments to be “exceedingly sinful” (Rom. 7:7, 13). The works of the OT law condemned all who did not perfectly keep them, for

Paul says, “For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, **Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them**” (Gal. 3:10). However, by God’s grace in the NT system “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us” as He bore our sins in His own body on the cross (Gal. 3:13).

Gal. 2:16-21 And Judaizing Christians

The first fifteen verses of this chapter set the context for the types of “works of the law” Paul is discussing. These were works of the Law of Moses, identified as circumcision and laws regarding things unclean, such as eating unclean foods or eating in the company of Gentiles (verses 11-15). To take the statement in *verse 16*, “for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified,” to mean that there are no laws in the NT covenant of Christ to which we must be obedient is to violate the context which Paul has created by inspiration. There are many NT passages which show we are subject to obey Christ’s laws and that great blessings derive from so doing!

For example, Paul notes in Romans 3:26-27 that we are justified by a “law of faith.” Faith, according to Paul, includes being baptized into Christ (Gal. 3:26-27). Therefore, contrary to what denominationalists and some of our own brethren are saying, baptism is not a work of merit or boasting, but is obedience to Christ’s “law of faith.” Again, Paul wrote, “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.” What the OT law of sin and death could not do, “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” does in making us “free.” Still, freedom from the OT law and sin means obligation under Christ’s NT law. It must be obvious that while

Paul discounts the need for being under Moses' law, he still insists that we are today "under law to Christ" (1 Cor. 9:21; Gal. 6:2).

Raw Law, Moses' Law, And Royal Law

Those who consider Paul's statement in Galatians 2:16 to exclude the need for law under Christ struggle against the idea that grace and law could be combined in any way in His New Covenant. One brother has written, "Any retreat to law is a denial of grace. The Law principle cannot house the grace principle. **Grace and law are mutually exclusive**"⁵(emphasis added-tjc). It seems to me that this brother is confused on several points. First, one does not have to "retreat to law" if law is a part of God's gracious plan. Second, one does not deny God's grace when one does what God said to do. Did Noah "retreat to law" and deny God's grace when he built an ark; when he did "according to all that God commanded him" (Gen. 6:22)? Third, who is saying that "the law principle" ever housed "the grace principle"? It is the other way around. The grace of God (gospel of grace) embraces and incorporates the Law of Christ into the New Covenant system. Consider the following quote from R. L. Whiteside's commentary on Romans.

Grace provided the plan by which sinners are saved, or made righteous, and grace tells us how to come into possession of salvation. If people would quit arraying the **commands of God** against the **grace of God**, they would have a clearer vision of the scheme of redemption. God's grace is in every command he gives. The sinner was lost; God prepared a way by which he could

get out of that lost state. That was grace. But that was not enough. He [man] needed to know how to find that way, and how to walk in it. It is as much a matter of grace to tell him how to find that way, and how to walk in it as it is to provide the way. But when the way is fully prepared, and full directions given as to how to find the way, and how to walk in it, the next move is man's. The whole matter is strikingly illustrated by the events of Pentecost [Acts 2:1-47]. The way had been prepared and revealed to the people; and then, in response to their question, Peter told them how to get in that way [Acts 2:37-40]. That was all a matter of grace. Then Peter exhorted them to save themselves. Many did what was commanded and were saved [Acts 2:41-47; all Scripture references added-tjc].⁶

Fourth, to say that “grace and law are mutually exclusive,” meaning all law, is to make God contradict Himself; for Paul said by inspiration that he was under both grace and law (Rom. 5:1; 1 Cor. 9:21). If one does not discern the differences in the Laws mentioned in the Scriptures, one will convict God and the Bible of contradiction. Shortly before Paul wrote that we are set free by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:2), he said that those Christians were “not under the law, but under grace” (Rom. 6:14). Was Paul contradicting himself? Was he insane? Or did he realize that it was possible for grace to embrace the Law of Christ? Unless we recognize this latter point we will be in opposition to God's way.

Raw Law — Paul wrote, “for if there had been a

law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law” (Gal. 3:21). No system of rigid law will produce a life of righteousness. “Raw” law is simply a code of conduct of positive requirements and negative restrictions set forth for men to follow completely, with appropriate punishment for violators. The raw law says that when one violates the Law he/she is guilty and must suffer the punishment due. Otherwise, the Law would have no force or meaning behind it. When civil laws are allowed to go unenforced or penalties are not carried out, people mock the Law and do not uphold it. Solomon remarked, “Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil” (Eccl. 8:11). Human codes of raw law attempt to measure out punishment fit for the Law which was broken. One who speeds ten miles an hour over the limit is not hanged, but usually given a fine. Supposedly, the greater the crime, the more serious the punishment.

Almighty God is so holy and righteous, and His laws are so just and good, that there is but one ultimate penalty set forth in Scripture which one deserves for violating His law— that is spiritual death, separation from God for eternity (Gen. 3:16-17; Rom. 3:23; 6:23; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Rev. 20:11-15). Raw law does not provide for someone other than the guilty party bearing the penalty prescribed by that law. The guilty one is to suffer the consequences. Law by itself saves no one who violates it. None of us have kept God’s law perfectly. We have sinned, and broken law demands punishment of the guilty. If Paul were speaking of raw law in Galatians 2:16-21, his point would be that the Law itself did not have saving power for those who are guilty.

Moses' law— Since raw law cannot save or justify guilty people, could the sacrificial law under Moses save? Paul said that “cursed is everyone that **continueth not in all things** which are written in the book of the law to do them” (Gal. 3:10). But no one kept “all things” which were written in Moses' law, and each one having sinned in violating the Law came under its curse. That curse doomed everyone to the penalty of eternal separation from God. The sacrificial law of Moses made provision for animal blood to atone for such sins (cf. Lev. 4-5, 16, et al.). By His grace God said, “I have given you [Israel] animal blood “to make an atonement for your souls” (Lev. 17:11). However, we learn that this grace was limited (unlike the grace that is in Christ), for:

those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually [could never] make the comers thereunto perfect. . . But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year.
For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins (Heb. 10:1, 2, 4).

Paul reminds us that God was “forbearing” in “passing over of the sins done aforetime (Rom. 3:25, ASV; cf. Heb. 9:15), but it cannot be that forgiveness of sins under Moses' law was absolute. The gracious provisions of animal life and blood could not justify wholly anyone who lived under that law, even if a person offered every proper sacrifice for every infraction committed. Something was lacking which man needed but could not provide. Moses' law was a great law and its commandments were “holy, just, and good” (Rom. 7:12), but it also pointed to a greater law with

a perfect sacrifice which would “save to the uttermost” (Heb. 7:25).

Therefore, no one could be saved or justified completely by the Law God gave through Moses, neither by the sacrifices of animals, nor by the acts of circumcision and keeping oneself from unclean people or foods (cf. Gal. 2:1-15). It was of these situations Paul spoke in verse 16 when he stated “for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.” Although the definite article which would specify a particular law is not before law in the Greek text, in verse 14 Paul had just rebuked Peter for his bad example which would compel “the Gentiles to live as do the Jews.” This is an obvious reference to Moses’ law, by which the Jews in general and some Jewish Christians considered themselves to be saved. Some of those Jewish Christians wanted to bind the Law of Moses upon the Gentiles who obeyed the gospel, but Paul says in effect, “It couldn’t even save you who are Jews. Why do you want to bind it on the Gentile Christians?” [See Acts 15 for the inspired decision of the apostles and early church on this matter.] The whole context of Galatians 2, 3, 4 deals with the Law of Moses, so there is no profit in arguing against Paul that the works of the Law that cannot justify refers specifically to the Law of Moses. This passage does not teach that law is excluded from Christ’s covenant.

Christ’s Royal Law of Liberty— Paul denied that he was promoting sin by ceasing adherence to Mosaic Law and seeking justification in Christ (Gal. 2:17). He refused to perpetuate the Law of Moses by promoting justification by its works, insisting that to die to that law was in fact coming to be alive unto God (verses 18-19). For Paul, his death to the Law came at the point of his acceptance of Christ and His New Covenant. Paul contended that Christ

lived in him and controlled his life through the faith which Paul placed in Him, because, Paul said, Jesus “loved me, and gave himself for me” (verse 20). Paul did not believe that his rejection of justification by the works of the Law of Moses served to “frustrate [make void, ASV] the grace of God” (verse 21). Rather, he saw himself as glorifying God’s grace in Christ, “for if righteousness came by the Law, then Christ died in vain.” Paul’s denial of the continuing validity of Moses’ law continues in Galatians 3 as he develops the priority of the Abrahamic covenant promises over the Law of Moses and points out the superior blessings in Christ compared to a law that “we are no longer under” (Gal. 3:25). In Paul’s view, Jesus is God’s grace and the fulfillment of the Abrahamic promise that “in thee shall all nations be blessed” (Gal. 3:8).

Because Christ went to the cross in our place and suffered the penalty due to us for our sins, we can be saved absolutely only by Him through His new covenant (Rom. 5:8-9; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 7:25; 8:8-13). “In Christ” Paul can talk about a new law, different than raw law or the Law of Moses. He can joyfully write:

There is therefore **now** no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. **For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death**” (Rom. 8:1-2).

This law, instead of condemning and bringing death, is a law of the Spirit of **life**, and makes **free** rather than holding us in sin!

Christ’s covenant is a blend of grace and law that no

other covenant could possibly have. That statement may gall the “grace only through faith only” crowd, whether denominational or our erring brethren who are promoting denominational type changes, but the Scriptures teach it. James 1:25 calls it “the perfect law of liberty” and in 2:8 he styles it as the “**royal law**,” meaning that it issues forth from a king.⁷ Jesus is “the prince of the kings of the earth (the King of kings- Rev. 19:16). . . and hath made us to be a kingdom” by the blood of His cross (Rev. 1:5-6). His “royal law” can do what no other could.

Raw law cannot save because straight law makes no such provisions. It seeks to protect the innocent and to hold guilty and punish the law breaker. The Law of Moses could not save absolutely, because, while it made provision for blood atonement, the substitutionary blood of bulls and goats was not sufficient to pay the full penalty for even one sin. However, the Law of Christ does save us; not because we can keep it perfectly, but due to the provisions made in it by our King and Savior Jesus Christ. Since He paid the price which could not be paid in any other way, the provisions He included in His law for our forgiveness are a “perfect law of liberty” (James 1:25).

Jesus sacrificed His own life to bring in this “royal law.” His “travail. . . satisfied” the demands of God for our sins (Isa. 53:11). His blood fully atones for our sins (Heb. 9:23-28; Eph. 1:7). Accordingly, **there is no flaw in Christ’s law**. When we violate His law, we can appropriate God’s forgiving and saving grace by obeying the simple and plain stipulations He has given to us. Although Christ’s commands for our initial forgiveness of sins and our forgiveness as Christians are all easily obeyed, our faith is not in our ability to do these things, but in the blood of Christ. “Being justified freely by his grace through

the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood. . . (Rom. 3:24-25).

A Law of Forgiveness— One cannot become a Christian without obeying Christ’s law. He is said to be “the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him” (Heb. 5:9). No such promise is made to those who do not obey Him. How ridiculous to even entertain such a thought. Why pretend to honor Jesus as “Lord” if one does not do what He requires (Luke 6:46)? Not even all who call Him “Lord” will be saved; only those who obey and do God’s will (Matt. 7:21). Jesus does not require what is impossible for us to do. To be saved from past sins and to become a Christian all can have faith in Jesus (John 3:16; 8:24); all can repent of their sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30-31); all can confess Him as Lord and Christ (Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:9-10); and all can be baptized (immersed in water) for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21). Because of His sacrifice on our behalf, and only because He gave Himself, we can comply with these elements of His law of pardon and He will save us eternally.

While we will still sin as Christians, for none of us will keep God’s law perfectly, we have the promise of Jesus that even though we transgress His law (1 John 3:4), if we confess our sins and turn from them, praying for pardon as a child of God, He will continue to cleanse us through His blood (Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:7-10). Everyone in the entire world who wants to be saved can be saved! There has never been a law so gracious and so great as that which is “in Christ.” It is a perfect, royal law which stands alone. Outside of His law there is no hope. To be under Christ’s law is to be blessed with commandments and counsel

which operate under the umbrella of God's love and grace and truth, making certain our eternal salvation.

Grace In First Peter

. . . I have written unto you briefly, exhorting, and testifying **that this is the true grace of God: stand ye fast therein (1 Pet. 5:12, ASV).**

While First Peter does not use the word “law,” he does treat the matter of “grace” in a way that proves fatal to the “salvation by grace alone through faith alone” advocates. Several years ago while I was helping B. J. prepare for a debate with a dispensational Baptist, it occurred to me that when one puts together the passages in this epistle on grace, obedience, and baptism, it becomes a powerful refutation of the “grace alone” and “faith alone” doctrines on salvation. This is especially emphatic when one notices that Peter says that what he has written somewhat briefly in this letter represents **“the true grace of God” (5:12).**

We can “receive” God's grace only as we accept the conditions which God attaches to it, as we have previously shown in this lecture (2 Cor. 6:1). Peter shows that, contrary to the contentions of many, our obedience to the things which God has commanded in Christ's law does not nullify His grace. Instead, Peter demonstrates the necessity of our obedience in receiving “the true grace of God.”

Peter, Primary Proclaimer Of Grace

If one accepts Peter as being “an apostle of Jesus Christ” (1:1), and one who “preached the gospel. . . with

the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven” (1:12), then one must believe Peter when he testifies as to what comprises “the true grace of God” (5:12). [Note: all Scripture references are from 1 Peter unless otherwise noted.]

The Lord promised to give Peter the keys to the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 16:18-19). Keys symbolize power to open or close. Peter’s “keys” were the things he preached to open heaven to those seeking salvation. He used these keys beginning in Acts, chapter two, when he preached faith, repentance, and baptism in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:36-41). However, on this Pentecost day only the Jews received the gospel message. Peter used these keys again in opening the kingdom of heaven to those of all nations (Gentiles) in Acts 10 and 11. If you will study the entire account you will see that Peter preached faith, repentance, and baptism in water, all in the name of Jesus Christ, just as he had in Acts 2 (cf. Acts 10:43; 11:18; 10:47-48).

Sometimes it is stated that Peter did not understand the role of grace in salvation. Since he was a “works-oriented” Jew, we are told, he preached a different gospel than Paul’s gospel of grace (Acts 20:24, 32). However, First Peter reveals that both apostles taught the same gospel. Did Peter teach that we are saved by grace through faith, as Paul did in Ephesians 2:8-10 and Romans 5:1-2? Indeed, he did! Peter wrote:

Receiving the end of your **faith**, even the **salvation** of your souls. Of which **salvation** the Prophets have inquired diligently, who prophesied of the **grace** that should come to you (1:9-10).

Note that in Peter's statements both grace and faith are tied to salvation, exactly as with Paul.

Peter connects the salvation of our souls with the grace of God which came through Christ in His sufferings on the cross and subsequent glorification in His resurrection (1:11-12). This also harmonizes with what he had previously preached when he said that forgiveness is possible because of Christ's death and His resurrection to glory (Acts 2:23-24, 31-39).

Many commentators believe that the "grace that is to be brought to you" (1:13) refers to the culmination of God's grace in our salvation in heaven when Jesus returns. One problem with this view is that the Greek word translated "to be brought" is in the present tense and literally means "is being brought to you."⁸ The phrase "the revelation of Jesus Christ" then does not have to refer to His second coming. In this context "the grace that is being brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" is God's saving grace which is being brought to us **now**, as we see and accept Christ as He is revealed to us in the gospel preached by those inspired by the Holy Spirit (1:12-13). In other words, the grace which had been prophesied to come (1:10), had come and was presently being brought to Peter's readers (1:13) and to all men everywhere. This grace was rooted and centered in Christ.

Two Apostles, One Gospel

Some dispensational Baptists agree that Peter preached baptism as necessary for the forgiveness of sins on Pentecost, about A.D. 33, but that he later learned better and preached the gospel of grace only, as Paul supposedly did.⁹ One may wonder how long it will be before some of our "change agent" brethren try to take up this

same idea in order to deny the validity of baptism. But the argument will not work, for Peter and Paul preached the same gospel of grace.

Those to whom Peter wrote in his first letter (1:1) also received a second from him (2 Pet. 3:1). In that second epistle Peter referred to Paul as “our beloved brother” (2 Pet. 3:15). Peter also mentioned that Paul had written to the same audience in more than one letter (2 Pet. 3:15-16). Peter recognized that he and Paul were brothers in Christ and, while he admitted that some of Paul’s letters contained material **“hard to be understood,”** he also said that it was the **“unlearned and unstable”** who caused the problems by twisting the Scriptures. Never did Peter disagree with anything Paul wrote. In fact, Peter used the same prophecies from Hosea 1:9-10; 2:23 to apply to his readers as Paul did to his readers in Romans 9:25-26 (cf. 1 Pet. 2:10). Since the verses Paul used in Romans 9:24-26 obviously apply to the Gentiles, Peter’s audience must have included Gentiles too. This should be no surprise, for Peter had taught long ago that both Jews and Gentiles were to be saved in the same manner (Acts 15:7-11). There was not one gospel of law and works for the Jews and a different gospel of grace and faith for the Gentiles. The same grace that saves “hath appeared to all men” (Tit. 2:11). This is in harmony with what Peter said in Acts 10:34-35, that God is no respecter of persons and that men of all nations must work righteousness to be accepted by God.

Grace And Obedience

One major problem in the religious world is the denial that we must obey God in order to be saved.¹⁰ Do Peter’s comments on “the true grace of God” which is in

Christ exclude obedience? Not at all! It is out of regard for that grace (1:10, 13) that Peter calls for his readers to be “obedient children. . . holy in all manner of living. . . .Be ye holy; for I am holy (1:14-16, ASV). Some might protest that obedience should be our natural response to grace, but that our obedience does not in any way secure or maintain our salvation through Jesus Christ. While it is true that our obedience should be a natural response to God’s grace, it is **not true** that our salvation has nothing to do with our obedience. Peter plainly says, “ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth” (1:22). This obedience is a part of God’s grace and part of the new birth of which our Lord spoke in John 3:3-5. In our obedience we are “born again. . . by the word of God. . . which by the gospel is preached unto you” (1:23-25). The same gospel which teaches we are saved by being born again teaches that we are saved in our obedience (cf. Luke 6:46; Heb. 5:9). If one will believe what Peter has written here, obedience to God’s will is a part of “the true grace of God.”

God’s Grace In Baptism

In broad terms Peter connects our obedience in general to the grace of God. He also specifically connects one act of obedience which many deny has anything to do with God’s grace in saving us; namely, baptism in water. Remember that First Peter 1:10 connected being saved with God’s grace through our faith. In the verses below he connects our salvation with baptism in water.

Which sometime were disobedient, when once
the longsuffering of God waited in the days of
Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein

few, that is, **eight souls were saved by water**. The like figure whereunto even **baptism doth also now save us** (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ (3:20-21).

Note that Peter contrasts the **disobedient** in the world with the **obedient** Noah and his family (Gen. 6:22; 7:5). Why did Noah find God's grace and the others did not? Because he was obedient and walked with God while he preached for others to do the same (Gen. 6:8-9; 2 Pet. 2:5). The rest of the world did not trust and obey, being "disobedient," and thus were lost. One simply cannot separate God's grace from man's obedience, because God made one's obedience a requirement for receiving His grace!

Noah was saved by water, in the ark which he built in faith and obedience to God (Heb. 11:7). The mentioning of that fact led Peter to state that in a like figure, or antitype, "baptism doth also now save us" (3:21). Peter does not say that baptism alone saves us, but he does state that it is a part of what saves us! Baptism is as much a part of God's saving grace to us as the Flood was a part of God's saving grace to Noah and his family. In the ark the waters bore Noah safely from the Flood as the waters cleansed a sin filled world. Baptism in water saves us and cleanses our sin-stained souls because it is a part of what God has commanded us to do. Baptism is a spiritual act, even though it is a literal immersion in water (Rom. 6:1-5). It is not a washing of physical dirt from the body. In that action we imitate the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord. We do not "earn" salvation just

because we are baptized; but we are saved by baptism, according to Peter, because we are submitting to the requirements to receive God's grace (cf. Luke 17:10; 1 Pet. 3:21). **Since we are unquestionably saved by grace, when Peter connected baptism with salvation, he automatically connected it to God's grace!** According to Peter, baptism is a part of "the true grace of God." Whenever someone wants to contend with you that our obedience in general or specifically baptism is not any part of God's saving grace, bring them to the apostle who used the keys Christ gave him to open the kingdom of heaven to both Jews and Gentiles. Show them the elements Peter mentions as being involved in "**the true grace of God**" (5:12).

Conclusion

Standing In God's Grace

Peter evidently knew that the disciples would be severely tested for their faith. The fact that he wrote so much about suffering in First Peter testifies to his concerns for them to know the true grace of God, prompting his admonition to them to "stand ye fast therein." Brethren, we must take a stand today for the true grace of God and "stand fast" for the total teaching of the Scriptures on grace (cf. Psm 119:160). When people isolate passages like John 1:17 and Galatians 2:16 and ignore the contextual setting of these verses, they may seem to teach what they do not actually say. If we abandon the true grace of God for the man-made doctrines which pervert that grace, we cannot teach anyone how to be saved and we also will be lost.

We may lose a large segment of the Lord's body to

the present threat of apostasy. Even if we do, we must believe that God's grace will continue with us, enabling us to endure every trial, being thankful that God's grace for us includes strength beyond our own. Paul experienced God's grace in ways he did not desire and grew stronger thereby (2 Cor. 12:7-10). May we pray for wisdom and strength to always stand **for** and **in** God's true grace.

That true grace includes a perfect, royal law of liberty which sets free those who come to God through His Son and our Savior and King. Those who think that they are exalting Christ when they cry out "grace alone. . .faith alone. . .we do not contribute one whit to our salvation by anything we do"—these people are not elevating Christ, for they are ignoring His New Testament "royal law," which works within the bounds of God's grace. Brethren, friends, "**this is the true grace of God: stand ye fast therein**"!

Endnotes

1 In a sermon which Rubel Shelly preached at his Ashwood church of Christ in Nashville, TN, he stated, "**I'm not sure there is any sense in which the law of Moses is abrogated**" (Feb. 7, 1988). Two years later, Steve Flatt, whose voice and messages sound remarkably like Rubel Shelly, spoke at his Madison church of Christ in Madison, TN, saying, "**As a matter of fact, the law of Moses hasn't been done away. As a matter of fact, the basic law of Moses wasn't the initiation of anything drastically new**" (Feb. 4, 1990). Col. 2:14 notes that the "handwriting of ordinances which was against us, which was contrary to us, [Christ] took it out of the way, nailing it to the cross." It is amazing that some of our most "scholarly" men deny that this is a reference to Moses' law. Consider the context. In vv. 11-12 Paul contrasts the old circumcision of the law with

the “circumcision made without hands,” as God operates on us in baptism to put away our body of sins. Verse 16 speaks of special diets of food, feast days, and sabbath days, all of which are remarkably like Numbers 28 & 29, a part of Moses’ law. Verse 17 calls these things Christ nailed to the cross a “shadow” of the things which were to come through Christ. Heb. 8:5 and 10:1, referring to the things of the Law of Moses, calls them “shadows” compared to the real substance of things in Christ. What would it take to convince these men that Moses’ law was nailed to the cross? Granting that Col. 2 also has elements of proto-gnostic teaching, the immediate context of 2:14 points to the Law of Moses as that which was nailed (put to death) to the cross.

As for Flatt’s second comment that the “basic law of Moses wasn’t anything drastically new,” one Scripture pretty well flattens that folly. Moses himself asks Israel, “And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?” (Deut. 4:8). What would Steve Flatt have said to Moses’ question? Could he have given Moses a list of other nations which did have “statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law”? I do not think so! The whole tenor of the Law was unique for its time and uniquely given to Israel as God’s special covenant with them. It wouldn’t be very special if all other nations had the same laws. Deut. 5:1-3 shows that the Law of Moses was not a covenant that God had previously made with anyone!

2 While the previous note answers this point, it is well to note that in reality our “change agent” brethren are scared to death of the OT. Because it is God’s Word, it can be used to falsify the error these men make in their use of the OT. Rom. 15:4 & 1 Cor. 10:6, 11 authorize Christians to use OT examples to avoid making and to correct the same kinds of errors which Israel made. However, if we use passages like Gen. 4:1-7; Lev.

10:1-4; 1 Sam 15 and others to show that God will accept only authorized worship revealed in His Word, the liberal brethren who want to be like Cain, Nadab and Abihu, and Saul, yelp like a hit hound. These examples expose their errors. Use them and rebuke the opposition with them. See B. J. Clarke's lecture elsewhere in this book on the value and use of the OT.

3 The following books, just to name a few, cover in detail some of the matters involved in this lecture such as grace, faith, law, works. See them for additional arguments which are not possible to cover in this one lecture. **God's Amazing Grace**, Jim Laws, ed. 20th Spiritual Sword Lectureship (Memphis: Getwell Church of Christ, 1995); **Studies In Galatians**, Dub McClish, ed. 5th Denton Lectures (Denton, TX: Pearl Street Church of Christ, 1986); **Studies In Hebrews**, Dub McClish, ed. 2nd Denton Lectures (Denton, TX: Pearl Street Church of Christ, 1983); **The Book Of Romans**, Garland Elkins & Thomas B. Warren, eds. 8th Spiritual Sword Lectureship (Jonesboro, AR: National Christian Press, 1983); **Grace, Law, Faith, Works, Love**, V. E. Howard (West Monroe, LA: Central Printers & Pubs., 1977).

4 Guy N. Woods, **A Commentary of the Gospel According to John** (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., 1981), 34.

5 Charles B. Hodge, **Amazing Grace** (Nashville: 20th Century Christian, 1984), 97.

6 Robertson L. Whiteside, **A New Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Saints at Rome** (Denton, TX: Ms. Inys Whiteside, 1945), 97.

7 Celas Spicq, **Theological Lexicon of the New Testament**, trans. and ed. by James D. Ernest (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Pub. , 1994), 1:261.

8 **American Standard Version of the Bible** (Nashville: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1901, 1929). Footnote # 7 for this verse

simply reads, “Gr. is being brought”; also Guy N. Woods, **A Commentary on the New Testament Epistles of Peter, John, and Jude** (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., 1966).

9 Debate between B. J. Clarke (Christian) and James McCarroll (Baptist) in Lenoir City, TN, October 19-20 & 26-27, 1987. This debate was basically over the same propositions which Bill Rogers (Christian) and B. A. Baker (Berean Bible Church) debated in 1953. **The Rogers-Baker Debate on Dispensationalism** was originally published by L. D. Willis of Tupelo, MS, but has long been out of print. It is worth having if you can find a copy, as are the debate tapes and charts B. J. used in his debate.

10 A recent book by R. C. Sproul, **Faith Alone: The Evangelical Doctrine of Justification** (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995), illustrates the depth of which this permeates the religion of the Protestant community. Sproul rejects our need to respond in any way in order to be saved. Such a requirement on our part, says Sproul, would nullify the doctrine of “grace alone by faith alone through Christ alone.” Sproul holds fast to what he identifies as the Reformed faith of Calvin and Luther, contending that any church which does not hold to the “faith alone” doctrine, as defined by these Reformers, cannot be a true church teaching the true gospel. The implication of this is that all such people who do not teach faith alone as taught in the Reformed faith are lost, but Sproul has a difficult time saying so clearly and boldly. His general thrust is against the teaching of the Roman Catholic church and all evangelicals who are currently in dialog with them looking for a broader basis of unity. Churches of Christ are not the only ones having trouble with those who could be identified as “change agents.”

Chapter 10

Are We Under The Ten Commandments Today?

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

Introduction

It is a real joy and deep delight to appear on this great lectureship here at Southaven. Genuine gratitude is hereby expressed to B. J. Clarke, the elders and all this congregation for the invitation to participate.

The topic this year is exceedingly timely. There is so much misunderstanding in the religious world relative to the two major covenants of the Bible and all the misconceptions are not outside us. That some among us are very hazy in their thinking relative to which covenant we are under or whether we are under both simultaneously is amazingly amazing in view of all the basic teaching we have done in this regard. Such is sad, inexpressibly so!

Are We Under The Decalogue Today?

The Decalogue is but another designation for the Ten Commandments. The view is widespread indeed that this Mosaic System is still binding. To question, even remotely, this popular view raises eyebrows promptly among the religious people of our day. Through the years Billy Graham, perhaps the most widely known preacher of the

twentieth century, has taken this very view. I heard him take this very view in a public interview when he was in a Nashville, Tennessee, crusade during the 1950's. One of the crusade services fell at the very time of the Old Testament Sabbath observance which had a travel limitation. Yet the famed preacher went from his downtown hotel to the football stadium on the campus of Vanderbilt University to speak, a distance considerably more than the allowed fractional part of a mile. What about the many, many times he has traveled hundreds or even thousands of mile on the seventh day of the week, the Jewish Sabbath, to a distant crusade ready to begin the next day? Some years back he wrote in his syndicated newspaper column, "The Ten Commandments give a concise statement of God's moral laws and they have never been set aside." If they have never been set aside, then they are still binding; penalties for their violations are still binding; the Sabbath, with all its many restrictions, is still binding. If the case with the Sabbath is really so, we need to offer prompt apologies to every Sabbatarian on earth for ever calling his Sabbath stance in question a single time. If the Ten Commandments are still binding, then Moses is still a lawgiver. If Christ has a law binding on us, then He is a lawgiver. This would make us under two lawgivers and thus married both to Moses and the Messiah. Yet James says there is ONE lawgiver (James 4:12). Paul teaches we are married to Christ (Rom. 7:4). If married both to Moses and the Messiah, we are strictly in the straits of spiritual adultery. If not, why not?

Far more amazing than all this with Graham is the contention by some of the change agents among us that we are still under the first covenant. One of their main leaders says he cannot think of any sense in which we

have been delivered from that law. The consequences of such a view are staggering indeed. Who will represent this “change agent” at a tabernacle or temple altar? There are no Levitical priests around anymore. Where will he find a tabernacle or temple such as that covenant demanded? Will he travel to Jerusalem thrice yearly at Passover, Pentecost and the Feast of Tabernacles? If he has a brother to die minus a child, will he take his widowed sister-in-law and impregnate her with a child as per the teaching in Deuteronomy 25? What might his wife think of this? There would be instant war in the camp! Who will enforce Decalogue obedience and who will be authorized to put to death its violators? Please keep in mind that the death penalty was attached to the Decalogue as I shall prove clearly later in this study. Where will animal blood come in for its demanded part? It was part and parcel of the Mosaic System. What will then happen to all the New Testament verses teaching that the blood of Christ is alone efficacious in remitting sins? Again, what will happen to all the New Testament verses teaching that Christ set aside the Mosaic Covenant, **all** of it, in order to establish His own covenant? What will such a person do with the entire book of Hebrews? Such a person will have to say the Judaizers were right in Acts 15 and Galatians 2 and Paul, the other apostles and the elders there in Jerusalem were in error. Oh, what a tangled web we weave when we decide to deceive others relative to religious matters. Without question or quibble to the contrary the change agents are majoring in deceptive work among churches of Christ.

To Whom Were The Ten Commandments Given?

Moses was in perfect position to know the answer to

this vital query. God called him to the summit of Sinai to receive these which were written on two tables of stone. Furthermore, Moses wrote both Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5, the two Old Testament chapters, wherein we read of these Ten Commandments. Exodus 20 is when they were given initially; Deuteronomy 5 is when Moses rehearsed them for the sake of the new generation soon to inherit Canaan's promised land. In Deuteronomy 5:2,3 Moses prefaced the stating of the Decalogue again by writing:

The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day.

One of the Ten Commandments touched the reverential keeping of the Sabbath day (Deut. 5:14). Graham makes it now apply to Sunday or the first day of the week. His application is in gross error; this is a classic case of dealing deceitfully with the Scriptures, an area in which Graham is especially proficient! To whom did God give the Sabbath? The whole of humanity, many would affirm! But did He? In the latter part of Exodus 31 God said the Sabbath was a sign between Him and the children of Israel (v. 13). Teeth were put into this seventh day precept (v. 14). The children of Israel were the authorized ones to keep the Sabbath (v. 16). Verse 17 states, "It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever..." Incidentally, the forever or perpetual part means as long as the covenant of which it was a part lasted. The burning of incense and the Levitical priesthood were to be perpetual as per Exodus 30:8 and 29:9 and yet neither

of these has any divine authorization from our one lawgiver, the Christ, for the Christian age. If one of these Ten Commandments, the Sabbath day, was for the children of Israel, the other nine likewise were. If not, why not?

The Ten Commandments were not all-sufficient even under Moses and the prophets. Bible students tell us that to these Ten Commandments were added some six hundred and three other directives making a grand total of six hundred thirteen precepts composing the Mosaic Economy. The next segment of our study will develop another critical area of our assigned topic.

Deficiencies In The Decalogue

Religious people, en masse, feel deeply that if they just keep the Decalogue, all will be well with the soul now and in yonder's world as well. The Decalogue was perfect and complete in accomplishing Jehovah's purpose for it. However, He never intended it to be eternal in duration or capable of performing only what Christianity later would do. Jeremiah 31:31-34 predicted that the Mosaic Covenant, inclusive of the Decalogue or Ten Commandments, would be superseded by a better law. Paul tells us why that better law was needed (Gal. 3:21-25). That we now have that better covenant—better mediator, better blood, better promises, etc.,—is affirmed again and again in the treatise of truth we know as Hebrews.

1. The Blood of Christ is not mentioned in the Ten Commandments. There is no remission of sins minus blood shedding (Heb. 9:22). Animal blood is not efficacious in sin's pardon (Heb. 10:4). We are redeemed by Christ's blood (1 Pet. 1:18,19). By His blood we are

forgiven, drawn nigh, reconciled and enjoy peace with God (Eph. 1:7; 2:13-16). Christ's blood makes possible constant cleansing as we walk in the light (truth) (1 John 1:7). His blood purchased the church (Acts 20:28). His blood is linked with His Supper (1 Cor. 11:22-34; Matt. 26:28). The Decalogue does not mention His blood, how we contact it initially and how we stay under its continuing power. The faithful under Patriarchy and the Mosaic Age will be saved by Christ's blood as per Hebrews 9:15.

2. The Decalogue does not mention the gospel plan of salvation. We do not learn about the new birth from the Decalogue but from John 3:1-7. Nicodemus knew about the Decalogue and possibly could quote verbatim all ten of these commandments. Yet he could not learn about the new birth from reading Exodus 20 or Deuteronomy 5. Peter, in Acts 2, and Philip, in Acts 8, did not point Jews, Samaritans and the eunuch respectively, to Exodus 20 or Deuteronomy 5. We do not learn of the essentiality of hearing Christ, forming faith in Him, repenting of sins, confessing Christ's Deity or being immersed in water for or unto the remission of sins from contemplating these Ten Commandments given on the summit of Sinai. There is not a drop of water in the Decalogue. Of course this does not bother Graham and men like him for he has NO water in his crusade invitations. His is a strictly dry-cleaning type of conversion approach. A decision for Christ, the Billy Graham way, is as waterless as the barren Sahara!

3. Jesus Christ and His church are not mentioned in the Decalogue. Many in our day are saying, "Give me the Ten Commandments; that is all the religion I want." It may be all they **want**, but it is not all they **need** if Heaven's door is to stand ajar for them in the

next world. If redemption could be found in the Decalogue, there would have been no need for Christ, Calvary, the gospel or the church. His birth, life, teachings, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, establishment of His church in Acts 2, the life He demands for His people, their worship, etc., are NOT mentioned at all in the Decalogue. These foregoing imperatives are set forth in the New Testament—not in the Ten Commandments of Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5. Those who think they can find salvation in the Mosaic Decalogue are seeking to lie down on a bed too short; they are attempting to wrap themselves in covering that is totally insufficient (Isa. 28:20).

4. The Great Commission is not mentioned in the Decalogue. We have to turn to such passages as Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15,16; Luke 24:47; John 20:22,23 and Acts 1:8 to read about the great commission—the militant, marching orders of our Commander-in-Chief on holy high. In vain do we look for its inclusion or stipulations in Exodus 20 or Deuteronomy 5.

5. Christian Worship is not mentioned in the Decalogue. How long would we have to read and study Exodus 20 or Deuteronomy 5 before we could find instructions relative to singing, prayer, communion, the contribution and the preaching that is to be done under Christ and Christianity? We **never** would find them there. We would be as helpless, hopeless or hapless as the man who claimed he had found the plan of salvation in Job. In John 4 Jesus met the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. In teaching her about the worship soon to characterize the people of God, He did not direct her to Exodus 20 or Deuteronomy 5. She and her Samaritan peers accepted that part of the Old Testament that contained the Decalogue though they rejected most of the Old Testament.

Incidentally, they rejected the part of the Old Testament that would have taught them that Jerusalem was the place where worship was to occur prior to Christ and Christianity. Yet from the Pentateuch and its Decalogue she and her Samaritan peers could not learn about worshiping God in spirit and in truth under coming Christianity. In fact, from just the Decalogue the Samaritans could not learn that Jerusalem was the right place for that dispensation. Subsequent Scriptures in the Old Testament pinpointed that!

6. The work of the church is not mentioned in the Decalogue. Christ's mission is delineated in Luke 19:10—to seek and save that which is lost. The mission of His church is an extension of such. The Decalogue does not enjoin preaching the gospel to the world. From a mountain in Galilee—not an Arabian mount—came the marching, militant Commission of the Christ. The Decalogue does not offer the curriculum we need for edification and Christian benevolence—the other two great works of Christ's church. The New Testament, in magnificent, marvelous fashion, does offer that heavenly-derived curriculum.

7. Some key Bible words are missing from the Decalogue. Grace is not mentioned per se; faith and hope are not mentioned per se. Conversion and sanctification are not mentioned per se. Christ and the church are not mentioned. Regeneration, redemption and reconciliation are not mentioned. Pardon or forgiveness is not mentioned. Resurrection and final judgment are not mentioned. If we had nothing to furnish us religious information except Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5, we would know nothing about the horrors of hell or the happiness of Jehovah's Heavenly Eden. If the Ten

Commandments were all man needed in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 we would know nothing about the horrors of hell or the happiness of Jehovah's Heavenly Eden. If the Ten Commandments were all man needed in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5, why did Deity even bother about giving the other eleven hundred eighty-seven chapters of Holy Writ?

All-sufficiency for us in religious matters does not rest in what God inscribed on tables of Sinaitic stone some thirty-five hundred years ago to the shepherd from Midian.

Some Consequences That Surely Follow An Affirmative Answer To Our Question

From surface heads some glibly say a quick yes to the question of our title. Have they thought through what they have carelessly affirmed? Not in the least!

If we are under the Ten Commandments today, then this enjoins Sabbath day observance on us. How much of it? ALL of it! This would entail a travel limitation upon us. On numerous Saturdays I have boarded planes and traveled hundreds if not thousands of miles to preach in a distant place beginning the next Sunday. So has Graham; so have numerous other preachers. Graham pays no attention at all to Sabbath day travel limitations. Neither does Shelly who travels extensively on Saturdays though he claims we are still under this covenant. Remember he cannot think of any sense in which that law has been set aside. When I lived in Mt. Juliet, Tennessee, during the 1950's, there was an Adventist group who came to our area, set up a tent, and had a Sabbath-oriented crusade. On Saturday during their crusade they traveled all over west Wilson County passing out Sabbath-keeping tracts. They came by my house where I was doing yard work and

handed me some. Incidentally, they did not brand me as worthy of death because I was picking up some sticks in my yard which usually accompanies yard work. Apparently, it never dawned on them that they violated their own cherished doctrine—Sabbath day keeping.

A man in the Old Testament was put to death for picking up sticks on the Sabbath as per Numbers 15:32-36. Do Graham and Shelly contend such should be done in 1996? If not, why not? It was part and parcel of the Mosaic Sabbath. Furthermore, if Sabbath day violators should be stoned today, who is to execute said punishment? Under the Mosaic System God had a theocracy in Israel—civil and religious government combined. Provisions were built into that system for capital punishment executioners. Sabbath-day workers, those mentioned in Exodus 31:12-16, were to be put to death. Such was a violation of the Old Testament Sabbath. They were forbidden to kindling a fire on the Sabbath day (Exod. 35:3). If we are under the Sabbath day of the Decalogue, a woman could not even turn on her gas range to cook breakfast, prepare lunch, or bake a cake on Saturday for Sunday morning. The man of the household could not turn up his gas furnace on a cold Saturday morning without violating the Sabbath. I wonder if Graham ever turns up the heat on Saturday for his North Carolina home. I have preached enough in that state to know that it does get cold there even on Saturdays.

There was a death penalty linked with the violation of **every** commandment of the Decalogue. The first two touched idolatry. Idolatry called for capital punishment (Deut. 13:6-11). Number three touched taking the Lord's name in vain or cursing His noble name. It called for capital punishment. (Lev. 24:10-15). Sabbath-violators, number four, were punished with death (Num. 15:32-36).

Number five enjoins parental honor and obedience. Parental disobedience demanded capital punishment (Exod. 21:17; Lev. 20:9; Deut. 21:18-21). Number six forbade murder. Its violation called for capital punishment (Exod. 21:12). Number seven dealt with adultery. It called for the death penalty as per Leviticus 20:10. Incidentally, homosexuality demanded the death penalty (Lev. 20:13). Numbers eight and ten touched theft and coveting. Covetous Achan who stole while Jericho was being taken was executed for these crimes in Joshua 7. Number nine dealt with bearing false witness against one's neighbor. Hananiah lied or bore false witness to his Jewish peers in Jeremiah 28 and died for his sin. Who is authorized currently to put all these violators to death?

Paul laid down a principle in Galatians 5:3 that an acceptance of one part of the Mosaic system, such as circumcision, obligated one to keep its whole. Those who bind the Ten Commandments on people today are obligated to bind the whole of Mosaic mandate on mankind. If not, why not?

The Ten Commandment Law Has Been Removed

A devilish device is sometimes resorted to by those who want to keep intact part of the Mosaic System with the remnant abrogated or abolished. They seek to make a distinction between the Law of God and the Law of Moses or between the moral law that God gave and the ceremonial law given by Moses. It all came wrapped up in the same package. It, at times, is called Moses' law; he received it at Sinai. It, at times, is called the Law of God because He gave it at Sinai. The two are used interchangeably. In Nehemiah 7 Ezra was requested "to

bring the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded to Israel” (Neh. 8:1). But “they read in the book in the law of God...” (Neh. 8:8). In Luke 2:22-24 the beloved physician called the Mosaic covenant “the law of Moses” in verse 22 and the “law of the Lord” in verses 23,24. If any part of it was removed, then ALL of it was removed.

1. Jeremiah said it would be removed. He predicted such in Jeremiah 31:31-34. Jehovah fully intended to establish a new covenant; it would not be like the covenant, inclusive of the Decalogue, made with Israel just subsequent to their mighty deliverance from Egyptian tyranny. Hebrews 8:8-12 informs us to the precise fulfillment of these matters. Shall we believe modern preachers who contend this law is still in effect or shall we believe Jeremiah who prophesied the end of the one and the sure beginning of the other? My allegiance is to Jeremiah—not to Graham, Shelly and others who contend the Ten Commandments have never been repealed or set aside. Those who experience difficulty deciding who is telling the truth and who are falsifying have some serious problems indeed. It is amazingly amazing that people will not accept what the Old Testament says of itself—that it was to be a temporary covenant and would be superseded by a far greater covenant—that of the Christ.

2. What the Godhead said about the matter. Moses, Elijah and the Christ were all present on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17:1-13; Mark 9:2-10; Luke 9:28-36; 2 Pet. 1:16-18). Peter, James and John were also present. Impetuous Peter proposed building three tabernacles—one for Moses, one for Elijah, and one for Christ. Ill-advisedly, he placed all three on the same level. This was bringing Christ down and lifting too highly Moses

and Elijah. One was Deity; the other two were men only. At this juncture of events transpiring on this awe-inspiring occasion the Father confessed the deity of the Son—not the other two—and enjoined “The Inner Three” to hear His Son—not Moses and Christ—but Christ alone. Moses, as lawgiver, has had his day to be heard and heeded. Elijah, as prophet, has had his day to be heard and heeded. Now Jesus Christ has to be heard and heeded as lawgiver and deliverer.

In Matthew 28:18 Jesus laid claim to all authority as per the ASV. If Moses and his Decalogue are still in effect, they are minus any authority at all. Imagine a lawgiver with no power. Imagine a law system void of any and all authority. The truth of the matter is that this system was repealed or set aside nearly two thousand years ago. When Jesus announced the wonderful words, of Matthew 28:18, He had already nailed ALL the Mosaic System, inclusive of the Ten Commandments, to Calvary as per Colossians 2:14-17.

Jesus made clear in Matthew 5:17 that it was NOT His intention to break, destroy, or shatter the law and the prophets but to fill them full and then remove them as Heaven’s law on earth. This He did in regal fashion.

The Holy Spirit inspired all the foregoing. This means that all The Timeless Trinity have spoken relative to this momentous matter. Shall we listen to God or Graham about this matter? Shall we listen to the Saviour and the Spirit of Truth or Shelly relative to whether the Ten Commandments are still in effect today. They are NOT!

3. Paul said the Decalogue has ended. Paul told the Romans that they had become dead to the law by the body of Christ in order that they might be married to

another (Rom. 7:4). Dead to it does not sound like it is still operative today in any sense of the term!

Christ was the very end (purpose) of the Law of Moses as per Romans 10:4. He was its design and intent. Their Mosaic Law looked to His coming. It prepared for such. But it was not designed to continue subsequent to His coming and returning to Heaven.

In 2 Corinthians 3 Paul talks about the Two Covenants and draws some clear contrasts between that which originated at Sinai and that which began with marvel and majesty on Pentecost in Acts 2 with Jesus Christ. The covenant from Sinai was the ministration of death or of condemnation. The other, the covenant of Christ, was the ministration of glory. We do not have to be in doubt about which is which. The ministration of death or condemnation “was written and engraven in stones” (2 Cor. 3:7). We read in Deuteronomy 5 how God wrote the Ten Commandments on tables of stone. Concerning that law written in stones Paul affirmed that it “is done away” and is “abolished” (vs. 11,13). Could language be clearer or more forceful? If so, how? Paul said the Decalogue was not binding; Graham says it is. Paul said the Decalogue is abolished; Graham says it is not abolished. One of the two has to be wrong. The one in error is NOT Paul.

Graham would have people keep the Ten Commandments. Paul said a return to ANY part of that system obligated one to return to its whole. Yet an attempt to be justified by the Mosaic System means one has fallen from grace (Gal. 5:4). The ASV says one is “fallen away from grace.” Graham and many modern preachers, even some of ours, would have people keep a law that would surely imperil their very souls.

In some key verses in Galatians 3 Paul deals with the Law of Moses and the gospel of Christ. The Law was a schoolmaster or tutor designed to bring men to Christ. When this was accomplished, as indeed it was, Paul said, “we are no longer under a schoolmaster” (the Mosaic law with its Decalogue) (Gal. 3:25). How much clearer could Paul have been in this momentous matter?

In Ephesians 2:14 Paul affirmed the breaking down of the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile. Mosaic law, with its Decalogue, constituted that wall. Paul said it was broken down; Graham denies it has been broken down. Graham needs to go to school to Professor Paul; the curriculum needs to be the very passages under current consideration.

In Colossians 2:14-17 Paul affirmed:

Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.

Paul affirms as nailed to the cross that which Graham still has binding. Paul has it taken out of the way; Graham says it has not been taken out of the way. What Paul called a shadow in verse 17 Graham projects as the real substance. It is clearly a case—a very decisive one at that—of Graham verses Paul.

4. The book of Hebrews is decisive in this

matter. If Graham is right in his Decalogue contention, Hebrews should have never been penned. Its very thesis deals with people on the threshold of returning to abolished Judaism with its Decalogue, temple worship, Levitical priesthood administrations, relics, and other ceremonies. If the Law of Moses with its Decalogue were still in effect, they had done wrong in leaving such when they first converted to Christ and Christianity. Yet Paul, if he be the scribe of Hebrews, as I have long believed he was, wrote from the inspired stance that a return to Moses was tantamount to rejecting Christ and Christianity. Such would amount to apostasy. Paul knew something Graham does not know. Paul knew one could not be married to Moses and Christ simultaneously. One cannot be subservient to the Decalogue and Deity at the same time this side of Calvary. Attempts to do such amount to spiritual adultery. The entire book of Hebrews exhibits Christ's superiority over Moses as lawgiver, Aaron as high priest, and the angels who played a role in giving the Mosaic System, inclusive of the Decalogue. Hebrews 10:9 settles the matter once and for all time to every Biblical believer, "He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second." How much of the first did He take away? ALL of it!

Refuting A Common Quibble

Present the cogent case from the Bible that we are not under the Ten Commandments today and the response usually goes something like this, "Then are you not saying we can worship idols, profane God's name, dishonor parents, murder, commit adultery, steal, bear false witness against others and covet?" Such does not follow either Scripturally or logically at all. Why do people conclude so

glibly that Moses is the only moral power that ever lived? Do they know so little of the Christ as to conclude that He is absolutely impotent in this realm and thus was incapable of placing any moral guidelines into His new covenant? Do they have such little regard for Jesus that they think Moses can only motivate morality and encourage ethics? This commonly held idea raises Moses above the Messiah. If it does not, why does it not? What Peter proposed on the Mount of Transfiguration was mild in comparison to this gigantic put-down of the Christ. If not, why not?

Let us now look at the Decalogue and then notice what Christ and His apostles taught relative to these points. Throughout this section of study I shall be interested in determining the WHY of moral behavior. Is it because Moses inculcated such or attributed to the fact that these moral mandates are right in and of themselves and have been intensely enacted into the Christian covenant? That the latter is true beyond all questioning or quibbling to the contrary will become obvious to all, hopefully, as this segment of our study develops.

Commandments one and two prohibited having any other gods save the one true and living God and refraining from any and all forms of idolatry (Exod. 20:3-6; Deut. 5:7-10). Jesus commanded worship and service to God only. (Matt. 4:10). Peter forbade a man to worship him (Acts 10:25,26). Angelic worship is wrong (Col. 2:18; Rev. 19:10; 22:9). Paul forbade idolatry (1 Cor. 6:9,10; 10:7,14; Gal. 5:20). So did John (Rev. 21:8; 22:15). Why do we worship and serve God and refrain from all forms of idolatry? Not because of what Moses taught, but due to what our lawgiver, the Christ, has inculcated.

Commandment three forbade taking God's name in

vain (Exod. 20:7; Deut. 5:11). Jesus taught that God's name is to be hallowed (Matt. 6:9). James warns against the wrong kind of language (Jas. 3:1-12). Paul does more of the same (Eph. 4:29; Col. 4:6). We respect God's name because of what Christ placed into His covenant—not because of what Moses taught from Sinai. Jesus Christ is our lawgiver—not Moses.

Commandment four commands Sabbath day keeping and reverence (Exod. 20:8-11; Deut. 5:12-15). This referred to Saturday as the day to be kept—not Sunday. The Sabbath was given as a sign between Jehovah and Israel. It was NEVER binding on Gentiles unless they proselyted to the Jewish religion. Neither Christ nor any of His apostles enjoined Sabbath keeping on us. If they did, where is book, chapter and verse proof? If the Ten Commandments are still binding, we are under Moses and thus obligated to keep the Sabbath day holy. What about the Sabbath year? It was also part and parcel of the Mosaic system (Lev. 25:2ff). What Sabbatarian farmer ever observes such? I have never heard of that first one in our day. Why is it not given any emphasis by Sabbath day proponents? I wonder if Shelly thinks this part of the Mosaic covenant has been abrogated. Does he counsel farmers in rural areas and garden growers in cities to allow their land to lie idle every seventh year? If he has never done this, why has he failed to do such? But if Christ is our lawgiver and His covenant our law, as manifestly they are, then we are Scripturally authorized to keep another day—the first day of the week—not the old Jewish Sabbath. Christ is our lawgiver—not Moses.

Commandment five in Exodus 20:12 and Deuteronomy 5:16 inculcates parental respect, honor and obedience. Paul wrote:

Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honor thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth (Eph. 6:1-3).

Parental honor, respect and obedience are demanded by Christ and His apostles. This is why such is to be obeyed today. Christ, not Moses, is our lawgiver.

Commandments six through ten legislated against murder, adultery, theft, lying, or bearing false witness and covetousness (Exod. 20:13-17; Deut. 5:17-21). Did Christ and the New Testament scribes say anything relative to these moral prohibitions? Indeed they did. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus cut off murder and adultery at their infamous roots—a murderous disposition and a lustful heart (mind) (Matt. 5:21,22, 27-30). A heart free of lust would nip much of the divorce and remarriage problems in their budding stages (Matt. 5:31,32). Courageously and comprehensively Paul wrote:

For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself (Rom. 13:9).

Paul told the Ephesians who had stolen to steal no more but engage in honorable toil (Eph. 4:28). Covetousness is equal to idolatry and closes Heaven's door to its habitual practitioner (Eph. 5:5; Col. 3:5). The apostle Peter legislated against all these evils both in heart and

in overt actions (1 Pet. 2:11; 4:15). The apostle John delineated the destiny of murderers, fornicators, and liars in Revelation 21:8 and 22:15. His final admonition in 1 John 4:21 stated, “Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.”

Why are we not free to murder, fornicate, steal, lie and covet? Because Christ prohibits all these acts of moral evil in their thinking planning and overt stages of execution. Under Christianity these crimson crimes are attacked at the point of origins—hard hearts, sensual spirits, and malicious minds. We respect these moral prohibitions because of what Christ inculcated—not because of what Moses inculcated in his covenant that came from the summit of Sinai. James says there is ONE lawgiver (James 4:12). That is Christ—not Moses. Our law is Christianity—not the Decalogue or the Ten Commandments.

Conclusion

We are under the Law of Christ that began at Pentecost—not the Ten Commandments originating from Horeb some thirty-five centuries ago. **NO, WE ARE NOT UNDER THE TEN COMMANDMENTS TODAY** regardless of what Graham, Shelly and a host of other misguided preachers say to the contrary.

Endnote

1 Billy Graham, **The Commercial Appeal**, Memphis, Tennessee, October 24, 1972.

Chapter 11

Is There A Christian Sabbath Day?

Wayne Cox

It was the actress Celeste Holm who said, “We live by encouragement and we die without it - slowly, sadly, and angrily.”¹ How true this is with regards to God’s people! It is essential that we are built up in Christ (Rom. 14:19), and lectureships like these serve this vital purpose. What a high honor it is to be asked to participate in this great endeavor and to be associated with brethren of kindred spirit. We trust what is both said and written will serve to encourage us in some way, and will give us that needed spiritual “shot in the arm” to boost our morale and deepen our resolve that God’s truth must be extended and defended at all costs.

The topic of this particular lecture is a question - and a good one: “**Is There A Christian Sabbath Day?**” Indeed, there is much confusion in the religious world regarding the Sabbath. Sabbatarians² are persistent in their claims that the fourth commandment of the ten, “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy” (Exod. 20:8), is still binding today. One lists seven churches who hold to this idea;³ some of that persuasion are willing to discuss this matter in public debate.⁴ Even among Sabbatarians there is disagreement as to whether the Sabbath should

be celebrated on the seventh day of the week or on the first day. This is one of the many dilemmas that have divided Adventists into the major groups present today.⁵

The answer to any religious question and the solution to any religious controversy must be a “thus saith the Lord” - nothing else will suffice for those determined to “speak as the oracles of God” (1 Pet. 4:11). To answer our question “Is there a Christian Sabbath Day?” we note the following questions which will serve as the lesson objectives for this lecture:

What Is The Sabbath?

Observations regarding the term “sabbath” are appropriate for our study:

Sabbaton...or sabbata: the latter, the plural form, was transliterated from the Aramaic word, which was mistaken for a plural; hence the singular, sabbaton, was formed from it. The root means to cease, desist...the doubled “b” has an intensive force, implying a complete cessation or a making to cease, probably the former. The idea is not that of relaxation or refreshment, but cessation from activity.⁶

Spence and Excell make these remarks relative to the root (“rest” - Gen. 2:2,3) from which “Sabbath” is derived:

Shavath, the primary idea of which is to sit still, depicts Elohim as desisting from his creative labours and assuming a posture of quiescent repose... “He who fainteth not, neither is weary”

(Isa. 40:28), can be conceived of neither as resting nor as needing rest through exhaustion or fatigue. Cessation from previous occupation is all that is implied in the figure.⁷

Several Sabbaths are noted in Scripture. The day of atonement was called a Sabbath (Lev. 16:29-31), as was the seventh year (Lev. 25:2-4), the year of jubilee (Lev. 25:8), and the seventy years of Judah's bondage (2 Chron. 36:21). The eternal rest that awaits the faithful Christian is referred to as a "Sabbath of rest" (Heb. 4:9 ASV). The seventh day of the week was called a Sabbath: "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy" (Exod. 20:8). As Guy N. Woods observed:

The word 'Sabbath', from the Hebrew *sabbat*, and the Greek *sabbaton*, is the transliteration of these words in the Old and New Testaments, respectively, and means the seventh day.⁸

The seventh day Sabbath is what is the center of controversy, and thus, is also what is under consideration at this point of our lecture.

When Did God Establish The Sabbath? *Not At Creation*

Seventh Day Adventists aver:

that the Sabbath was instituted at Eden before sin entered, that it was honored by God, set aside by divine appointment, and given to mankind as the perpetual memorial of a finished creation.⁹

Supposed Scriptural evidence for this claim is Gen. 2:1-3:

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

Hearn succinctly summarizes Sabbatarian reasoning as follows:

God rested from all His works and gave the Sabbath at creation; therefore, man must keep it forever, for it still belongs to God. God is no respecter of persons (Rom. 2:11), and God changes not (Mal. 3:6), and Jesus said that the Sabbath was made for man (Mark 2:27-28); therefore, the Sabbath is for all men in all ages. God gave laws, statutes, and judgments before Mt. Sinai; therefore, the Sabbath was bound from the beginning.¹⁰

Does the text of Genesis chapter two support the Sabbatarian claim? Hardly. This passage ascribes four acts to God: (1) He “finished” His creative work, (2) He “rested” (ceased) from His creative work, (3) He “blessed” the seventh day, and (4) He “sanctified” (set apart, consecrated) it. As Winkler observes, two time frames are apparent in this passage:

In the first, God completed and ceased from his creative work. The prepositions ‘on’ and ‘in’ pinpoint this time frame as the seventh day. In the second, God consecrated the Sabbath. The absence of any preposition for this time frame is noteworthy apparent. When was the Sabbath consecrated? The text does not say...¹¹

Indeed, God consecrated, sanctified the seventh day, but when? Genesis 2:1-3 is a statement of fact, not a command, and was recorded by Moses 2500 years after creation. Nowhere is the Sabbath mentioned in Genesis, and nowhere do we read of any of the patriarchs observing the Sabbath.¹² The grammar of this passage likewise needs to be noted:

Note, grammatically, that God sanctified (simple past tense) the seventh day, because in it He had rested (past perfect tense). Exodus 16:22-23 is the first mention of the Sabbath; therefore, the simple past tense indicates that God sanctified the Sabbath on Mt. Sinai (Exod. 20), because at a previous time (2,500 years before) he **had** rested. *Prolepsis* is a figure of speech that joins together in a statement two events widely separated in time.¹³

The Sabbath Was Established At Mt. Sinai

The first mention of the Sabbath in Scripture is shortly before Israel came to Mount Sinai; here it was given as a preview testing for Israel in the wilderness: “Tomorrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord...” (Exod. 16:23). The situation reveals they were

unfamiliar with the Sabbath up to this time. Moses had to tell them it was coming and what to do when it came (Exod. 16:25, 26). Had the Sabbath been binding from creation, then Moses would have known what to do with Sabbath violators, but he did not prior to Sinai (Num. 15:32-36).

The Sabbath was formally incorporated into the Law of Moses at Sinai (1491 B.C.):

Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments: And madest known unto them thy holy sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant (Neh. 9:13-14).

For those who accept Scripture as authority, this is conclusive evidence that forever settles the matter as to when the Sabbath both was and was not established.

To Whom Was The Sabbath Given?

The Sabbath command was given exclusively to Israel. Shortly before God's people crossed the Jordan and entered Canaan, Moses stood before them and said,

The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day...And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm:

therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day (Deut. 5:3,15).

No Gentile (or Christian, for that matter) was ever in Egyptian bondage, therefore, the Sabbath command was only for the Jews. The Sabbath was a sign between God and Israel, not God and the world, for as Jackson correctly remarks:

...just as circumcision was a 'token' or sign between God and Abraham, along with his descendants (Gen. 17:11), so the Sabbath was a 'sign' between Jehovah and Israel (Exod. 31:13, 17; Ezek. 20:12). How could the Sabbath function as a 'sign' between the Lord and Israel if that ordinance had been given to every other nation as well?¹⁴

Is The Sabbath Binding Today Under The Christian System?

Some Say "Yes"

As noted earlier, certain religious groups maintain the perpetuity of the Sabbath command to include Christians today. Perhaps the most noted proponent of this claim is Ellen G. White, founder of the Seventh Day Adventist cult. Hear her words concerning her supposed vision of 1846:

Elder Bates was resting upon Saturday, the seventh day of the week, and he urged it upon our attention as the true Sabbath. I did not feel its importance, and thought that he erred in

dwelling upon the fourth commandment more than upon the other nine. But the Lord gave me a view of the heavenly sanctuary. The temple of God was open in heaven, and I was shown the ark of God covered with the mercy seat. Two angels stood one at either end of the ark, with their wings spread over the mercy seat, and their faces turned toward it. This, my accompanying angel informed me, represented all the heavenly host looking with reverential awe toward the law of God, which had been written by the finger of God. Jesus raised the cover of the ark, and I beheld the tables of stone on which the Ten Commandments were written. I was amazed as I saw the fourth commandment in the very center of the ten precepts, with a soft halo of light encircling it. Said the angel, 'It is the only one of the ten which defines the living God who created the heavens and the earth and all things that are therein.'¹⁵

The following year, April 3, 1847, White had another purported vision. At the home of one brother Stockbridge Howland, White says:

...we felt an unusual spirit of prayer. And as we prayed, the Holy Ghost fell upon us. We were very happy. Soon I was lost to earthly things, and was wrapped in a vision of God's glory... In the holiest I saw an ark; on the top and sides of it was purest gold... In the ark was the golden pot of manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the

tables of stone, which folded together like a book. Jesus opened them, and I saw the Ten Commandments written on them with the finger of God. On one table were four, and on the other six. The four on the first table shone brighter than the other six. But the fourth, the Sabbath commandment, shone above them all; for the Sabbath was set apart to be kept in honor of God's holy name. The holy Sabbath looked glorious - a halo of glory was all around it. I saw that the Sabbath commandment was not nailed to the cross. If it was, the other nine commandments were; and we are at liberty to break them all, as well as to break the fourth. I saw that God had not changed the Sabbath, for He never changes.¹⁶

White went on to assert: "Sunday-keeping is the mark of the beast...At the coming of Jesus, which is just at hand, every soul found keeping Sunday will be lost."¹⁷

That White is highly regarded by adherents of Adventism as an inspired prophetess is seen from the following:

In the Adventist book, *Questions on Doctrine*, page 92, we read, "Seventh-Day Adventists regard her writings as containing inspired counsel and instruction...Under the same inspiration she also wrote much in the great field of sacred history." A publication entitled "A Prophet Speaks to America" verifies that she is considered a prophet of God as does the *Seventh-Day Adventist Church Manual*, 1963, page 18.¹⁸

One who bases a theological belief on dreams of others places himself in a precarious position at best! Why follow Mrs. White's dreams? Why not Joseph Smith's? Mary Baker Eddy's? Muhammad's? Mine? Yours?

Since the apostles were guided into all truth (John 16:13), and since the faith has been once for all delivered (Jude 3), this left not the slightest particle of truth to be revealed centuries later to anyone, including Ellen G. White.

White claimed the Roman Catholic Church changed the Sabbath "from the seventh to the first day of the week; for he [the pope] was to change times and laws."¹⁹ D. M. Canright²⁰ stresses the importance of this allegation:

My experience is that a belief of this as a fact induces more persons to give up Sunday for Saturday than all other arguments made by the seventh-day people. Convince a man that Sunday-keeping is only a Catholic institution, a rival to the Lord's Sabbath and hateful to God, and of course, if he has any conscience, he will keep it no longer. Everyone of them accepts this as a historical fact in fulfillment of Daniel 7:25. Indeed, this is the one main pillar in their whole system, upon which all the rest depends. If their position upon this point is false, then their whole system is also false, as they will readily admit.²¹

Further, Adventist theologians assert that the documents of church history afford "striking evidence that the seventh-day Sabbath was widely observed in the

Christian church for centuries.”²² However, none of the documents they refer to are from a date earlier than the middle of the fourth century A.D., long after the death of the last apostle. Those patristic writings nearest to the New Testament time itself refute the aforementioned Adventist allegations. Note the following quotations:

Incense is a vain abomination unto me, and your new moons and Sabbaths I cannot endure. He has, therefore, abolished these things... Wherefore, also, we keep the eighth day with joyfulness, the day, also, on which Jesus rose again from the dead (*Barnabas* - 120 A.D.)

But every Lord's day do ye gather yourselves together, and break bread, and give thanksgiving (*Didache* - 125 A.D.)

And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place...But Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly... (*Justin Martyr* - 140 A.D.)

We passed this holy Lord's day, in which we read your letter, from the constant reading of which we shall be able to draw admonition (*Dionysius* - 170 A.D.)

On one day, the first day of the week, we assemble ourselves together, and on the days of the readings we abstain from sustenance (*Bardesanes of Syria* - 180 A.D.)

He, in fulfillment of the precept, keeps the Lord's day...glorifying the Lord's resurrection in himself (*Clement of Alexandria* - 194 A.D.). The Old Law is demonstrated as having been consummated at its specific times, so also the observance of the Sabbath is demonstrated to have been temporary...We neither accord with the Jews in their peculiarities in regard to food, nor in their sacred days (*Tertullian* - 200 A.D.)

If it be objected to us on this subject that we ourselves are accustomed to observe certain days, as, for example, the Lord's Day...(*Origin* - 225 A.D.)

The solemn festival of the resurrection of the Lord can be celebrated only on the Lord's Day...Our regard for the Lord's resurrection which took place on the Lord's Day will lead us to celebrate it on the same principle (*Anatolius* - 270 A.D.)

Lest we should appear to observe any Sabbath with the Jews which Christ...in his body abolished (*Victorinus* - 300 A.D.)

But the Lord's day we celebrate as a day of joy, because on it He rose again, on which day we have received it for a custom not even to bow the knee (*Peter of Alexandria* - 306 A.D.)

They (the patriarchs prior to the flood) did not, therefore, regard circumcision, nor observe the Sabbath, neither do we...because such things as

these do not belong to Christians (*Eusebius* - 324 A.D.)²³

The above testimony from history is clear - Christians worshiped God on the first day of the week long before there ever was a pope or a Roman Catholic Church!

But, Sabbatarians will contend that since the Sabbath is described as a sign “**forever**” (*Exod. 31:17*), then we are under obligation to observe it today. However, as Winkler states:

The Sabbath is described as a sign for ever (*olam*, “long duration”). *Olam* carries the idea of that which lasts its allotted amount of time. The same term is used in reference to circumcision (*Gen. 17:13*), the Passover (*Exod. 12:14*), the burnt-offering (*Exod. 29:42*), the incense burned by Aaron (*Exod. 30:8*), and the Jews’ meal-offering (*Lev. 23:14*). Thus, the Sabbath, like these other ordinances, was limited in its duration (*Hos. 2:11*).²⁴

Several more arguments have been set forth by Sabbatarians to defend their position, and yet these also have been ably answered and refuted in debate by use of the Sword of the Spirit.

On an encouraging note, we would be greatly remiss if we failed to commend the Worldwide Church of God, which, for years, under the leadership of Herbert W. Armstrong and his son Garner Ted Armstrong, taught that the Sabbath is bound on all today, but which now, under the direction of “Pastor” General Joseph W. Tkach Sr., has surrendered that position:

Later last year, the Worldwide Church of God, sponsor of *The Plain Truth*, changed its historical position as a strict seventh-day (Saturday) Sabbath-keeping fellowship. Although the church will continue to hold its traditional worship service on Saturdays, it no longer holds to the doctrine that the Old Covenant Sabbath commandment is binding on Christians.

The Church's new doctrinal position resulted from a careful, prayerful and honest study of the scriptural teaching about the meaning and implications of the coming of Jesus Christ as the prophesied Messiah and Savior of the world, and the Christian's relationship with the Old Covenant law, including the letter of the Ten Commandments. At the heart of the change is the central message of Scripture--salvation by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ. The Worldwide Church of God has come to understand that the New Testament affirms that the law (all the law, not selected parts of it), on the one hand, is valid and plays a dynamic role in the lives of Christians (Galatians 3:19-25; I Timothy 1:8-11; Romans 7:12-14), yet, on the other hand, that none of it is valid and binding for Christians **apart from** its fulfillment in Christ (Philippians 3:8-9; Galatians 2:15-16, 21; 3:10-14; Romans 10:3-13). In other words, the key to interpreting the validity of Old Testament laws for Christians is understanding how they are fulfilled in Christ...²⁵

Tkach's attitude, at least with regards to this particular matter, is commendable:

I too used to teach things that Christ has now shown me are not accurate....for that I apologize to all, not only for myself, but also on behalf of the entire church. I thank and praise our Lord and Savior for changing, delivering, and forgiving us all.²⁶

It would be wonderful if all allowed Scripture to be the sole standard for any and every religious belief, and that all would conform to the ways and will of God.

Now, back to our question, "Is the Sabbath binding today under the Christian system?"

Scripture Says "No"

The observance of the Sabbath day as a holy, set-apart, non-working day of worship to God would and did end at the cross:

Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace (Eph. 2:15).

Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to the cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let no man therefore judge you in

meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ (Col. 2:14-17).

Though Sabbatarians attempt to make a distinction between moral law and ceremonial law, and thus conclude the above texts to refer only to ceremonial law, Scripture makes no such distinction! What Paul says is precise: (1) the Law of Moses was removed at the cross; (2) observance of the Sabbath was part of the Law of Moses; therefore, (3) observance of the Sabbath was removed at the cross. This is why we can work on Saturday; this is why we do not stone to death those who do!

In the Christian age, the special significant day of worship is the first day of the week, also termed the “Lord’s day” (Rev. 1:10), and called “Sunday” on our calendars. It was on this day that Jesus arose from the grave: “Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb” (Matt. 28:1, NKJV). As Canright so eloquently states:

Around this day cluster all the hopes of a lost but redeemed world. Jesus might have suffered and died, and still men would have been lost. It was the resurrection that brought life. Memorable day; one that should stir the heart of every Christian, and move sinners to repentance, as indeed it has done every week from that day on!²⁷

It was on this day the first gospel sermon was

preached and three thousand souls responded to it, thus establishing the church: “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come...” (Acts 2:1). Pentecost was always on the first day of the week because under the Old Covenant it was to be observed on the morrow after the seventh sabbath after the feast of the Passover (Lev. 23:15, 16).²⁸

As Camp further elaborates:

Pentecost was the one feast day that always came on the same day of the week. Other feast days might come on different days of the week. For example, the Passover started the fourteenth day of the month. The fourteenth day of the month did not always come on the same day of the week, like the fourth of July. The fourth of July does not come on the same day of the week every year, nor any other holiday that is determined by the day of the month. But, the feast of the Pentecost was determined by counting seven Sabbaths plus one day, which means that Pentecost always came on the first day of the week.²⁹

It is on the first day of the week that Jesus is remembered in the Lord’s Supper:

And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight” (Acts 20:7).³⁰

On the Lord’s Day the collection is taken up:

Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come" (1 Cor. 16:2).

In no sense is Sunday the "Christian Sabbath," nor is there any connection between the two. Travel and work restrictions pertaining to the Sabbath are not applicable to the Lord's day. The first day of the week is not a day of rest, but a day of worship and great religious activity. It is a time to serve Jehovah, assemble with the saints in edification, and commemorate the Lord's death. No wonder the writer of Hebrews admonishes us not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together (Heb. 10:25)!

What "Sabbath" Awaits Us?

A Sabbath rest does await the people of God, and that rest is heaven. The writer of the book of Hebrews develops this theme at length in his fourth chapter, but before noticing that text, consider a brief background to the letter itself.

The main emphasis in Hebrews is to prevent apostasy. The letter was written to Jewish Christians in danger of abandoning Christianity; they were pressured into reverting back to the obsolete system of Judaism. "Better" is the key word of the book;³¹ the writer lists a series of comparisons to indicate the superiority of Christianity over Judaism: Christ is superior in Person (chapters 1-4), superior as our Priest (chapters 5-10), and superior in the Principles by which He guides us (chapters 11-13). Since Christ is supreme, it would be utter folly to renounce Him for any reason!

With that in mind, the writer warns against

apostasy by reminding his readers what had happened to Israel when they rebelled: “So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief” (Heb. 3:19). So close was Israel to the land of Canaan, yet so far; she forfeited entering the promised land due to a lack of faith. It is on the basis of this graphic picture that the writer admonishes: “Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it” (Heb. 4:1). He continues: “There remaineth therefore a rest (sabbath rest - ASV) to the people of God” (Heb. 4:9).

God also promised a land of rest (Deut. 3:20; 12:9) to the children of Israel, as well as the Sabbath command of rest. This land of rest is connected to the Sabbath in Hebrews chapter 4. Those believers who have not hardened their hearts and who persevere to the end will enter into God’s sabbath or rest. That rest (sabbath) is described as heaven.

And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them” (Rev. 14:13).³²

It is in this sense - and only in this sense - that we have a sabbath - that eternal rest that lies beyond the earth. Heaven will surely be worth it all!

Endnotes

1 Celeste Holm, **Reader’s Digest Treasury of Modern Quotations** (New York, NY: Reader’s Digest Press, 1975), 484.

2 The term “Sabbatarian” is not used in a degrading manner in the least; it simply designates those who so tenaciously cling to the abolished fourth commandment.

3 The seven churches are: Seventh-Day Adventist, Advent Christian Church, Church of God (Abrahamic Faith), Life and Advent Union, Seventh-Day Baptists, and Seventh-Day Church of God. “Their views are similar in that they are premillennial, hold to soul-sleeping, believe that the Decalogue is God’s moral law binding upon all in every age, and especially observe the seventh day of the week.” Roy J. Hearn, “Remember The Sabbath Day, To Keep It Holy” in **The Book of Exodus**, ed. by Curtis Cates (Austin, TX: Firm Foundation Publishing House, Inc., 1987), 119.

4 Stephen Wiggins and John Lewis both have scheduled debates with Sabbatarians later this year. See Bill Lockwood’s article, “Anvil Sparks” in **Hammer & Tongs**, Vol. 5 No. 1 (Burkburnett, Texas: Burkburnett Church of Christ), 7.

5 Frank S. Mead, **Handbook of Denominations in the United States** (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1985), 20.

6 W.E. Vine, **An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words** (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1966), 311.

7 H.D.M. Spence and Joseph S. Excell, **The Pulpit Commentary** Vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.), 35.

8 Guy N. Woods, “The Seventh Day”, in **Gospel Advocate** (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., May 11, 1967), 298.

9 **Seventh Day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine** (Washington: Review and Herald Publishing Assoc., 1957), 149, as quoted by James Meadows, “Questions And Answers About the Sabbath” in **Jesus Christ, The Son of God**, 1973 Freed-Hardeman College Lectureship (Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate Co., 1973), 332

10 Hearn, **The Book of Exodus**, 119-120. Roy J. Hearn Debated W. W. McMicken, Seventh Day Church of God preacher, in Crossville, Tennessee, six days in 1951. Brother Hearn's excellent debate notes are available through the Memphis School of Preaching, 4400 Knight Arnold Road, Memphis, TN, 38118

11 Dan Winkler, "Difficult Texts From Genesis" in **Difficult Texts Of The Old Testament Explained** 1982, Fort Worth Lectures (Montgomery, AL: Winkler Publications), 196.

12 Spence and Excell make this rather puzzling statement: "There are also indications that sabbatic observance was not unknown to the patriarchs (ch. xxix, 27,28). to the antediluvians (ch. viii, 6-12), and to Cain and Abel (ch. iv, 3)," **The Pulpit Commentary**, 36. However, careful examination of these passages does not warrant the conclusion they have drawn!

13 Hearn, **The Book of Exodus**, 120.

14 Wayne Jackson, "The Early Church and the Sabbath Day," in **The Restorer**, (Nov./Dec., 1992, 8-9), as quoted in **The Knight Arnold News**, Vol. 20 No. 22 (Memphis, TN: Knight Arnold church of Christ), 2.

15 Ellen G. White, **Life and Teachings of Ellen G. White**, (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing association, 1933), 56-57.

16 White, **Life and Teachings of Ellen G. White**, 59. This would not be the last of her visions; in fact, over a period of seventy years between 1844 and 1915 she would experience 2000 prophetic visions and dreams by which the "light of God" came to her. See **Is The Seventh Day Adventist Church the Church of the Bible?**, Bob Danklefsen (West Monroe, LA, 1977)

17 D. M. Canright, **Seventh-Day Adventism Refuted In A Nutshell** (Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate Co. 1970) 61.

18 As quoted by Danklefsen, **Is The Seventh Day Adventist Church the Church of The Bible?**

19 White, **Life and Teachings of Ellen G. White**, 59.

20 Canright served as a prominent minister and writer of the Seventh-Day Adventist movement for twenty-eight years, but later renounced that belief and lived to be one of its most vocal and effective opponents.

21 D. M. Canright, *Seventh-Day Adventist Renounced*, 211, as quoted by Wayne Kilpatrick in “Did the Catholic Church Change the Sabbath to Sunday?” in **Jesus Christ, The Son of God**, 1973 Freed-Hardeman College Lectureship (Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate Co., 1973), 340.

22 Jackson, **The Restorer**, 8-9.

23 Jackson, **The Restorer**, 8-9

24 Winkler, **Difficult Texts of the Old Testament Explained**, 197.

25 Joseph W. Tkach, **The Plain Truth**, August 1995, as quoted by Garland Elkins in **Yokefellow**, Vol. 22 No. 11 (Memphis, TN: Memphis School of Preaching), 2. This would not be the only change in this denomination, as tithing and observance of the Old Testament dietary laws, also once mandatory, are now optional; the church also dropped its Anglo-Israelite views. These changes proved costly: in the first two months of 1995 the church lost 30% of its income, half the circulation of **The Plain Truth**, and had to lay off 180 employees. Its Ambassador University has also been adversely affected. Two splinter groups, the Church of God, International and the Global Church of God, still hold to the old views and expect to gain members as a result of the doctrinal shift of the Worldwide Church of God. Mark A. Kellner, **Christianity Today**, Vol. 39 No. 5, April 25, 1995 (Carol Stream, IL: Christianity Today, Inc.), 53.

26 Kellner, **Christianity Today**, 53.

27 Canright, **Seventh-Day Adventism Refuted In A Nutshell**, 46.

28 See F.F. Bruce, ed., **Commentary on the Book of Acts**, *The New International Commentary on the New*

Testament series (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1954), 53-54.

29 Franklin Camp, “Acts on the Warpath - Its Refutation of Sabbatarianism” in **The Book of Acts - I**, 1984 Memphis School of Preaching Lectureship, ed. by Curtis Cates (Austin, TX: Firm Foundation Publishing House, Inc. 1986), 64.

30 No doubt Sabbatarians appreciate the erroneous rendering of this passage by **Today’s English Version and The New English Bible**. Instead of “the first day of the week,” it is “Saturday evening” (TEV) and “Saturday night” (NEB).

31 Used thirteen times in Hebrews.

32 Michael Hatcher, “Remember the Sabbath Day: Work, Rest, and Worship,” in **Biblical Ethics**, Sixth Annual Shenandoah Lectures, ed. by Terry Hightower (Pensacola, FL: Austin McGary and Company, 1991), 232.

Chapter 12

What Was Nailed To The Cross In Colossians 2?; Did Paul Regard The Old Law To Still Be In Effect Years After The Cross?

Billy Bland

Nothing is any more basic in understanding the Bible than recognizing the distinction between the Two Covenants. Misunderstandings and divisions occur due to not “rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15). Jesus noted a difference in the testaments when he stated; “For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Matthew 26:28). Since Jesus shed his blood for the New Covenant, one should see there is a distinct difference between the New Covenant and the Old Covenant.

I appreciate the elders, deacons, preachers, and all the members of the Southaven congregation for hosting this much-needed lectureship on the subject of “The Two Covenants.” My particular lecture naturally divided itself into the two questions listed above as my subject. While there may be a lot of agreement with the first two questions, the third question is admittedly a difficult text

and it may be that not all will agree with the answer given. I ask of you to weigh the evidence carefully and accept only the conclusion drawn from the truth. I have found by reading various ones that there are several views regarding Paul's vow and his "keeping the law." I remind the reader, however, that truth is not determined by counting those who favor a particular view, but by the word of God (John 17:17). It is with this confidence, we study the above questions.

What Was Nailed To The Cross In Colossians Chapter 2?

And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ (Colossians 2:13-17)

The above passage refers to the Mosaic Law, given on Mount Sinai. It should be observed that the only "handwriting of ordinances" given was the Old Law known as the Law of Moses. The word "ordinances" comes from the Greek word *Dogmatizo*, which carries the meaning of

doctrine, decree, or ordinance¹ (see Luke 2:1; Ephesians 2:15). That which was nailed to the cross was the handwritten doctrine or decree of Moses.

A companion passage to Colossians 2:14 is Ephesians 2:13-17. Here Paul discusses the unity of the Jews and Gentiles in the body of Christ since Christ has “broken down the middle wall of partition”:

But now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometime were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which are afar off, and to them that were nigh (Ephesians 2:13-17).

Attention is called to the fact that Paul (an inspired apostle), says Christ has “abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances” (verse 15). In Colossians he calls this “the handwriting of ordinances” whereas in Ephesians it is termed as “the law of commandments contained in ordinances.” That which served as a middle wall of petition between Jew and Gentile, the Law of Moses, has been removed and now Jews and Gentiles are reconciled unto God in one body by the cross.

How “Against Us?”

The Law of Moses was “against us” and was “contrary to us” in the sense that it--by God’s design--could not offer man complete redemption. Actually it showed the Jew that he was a sinner and in desperate need of a Savior. To the Romans, Paul said; “That sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful” (Romans 7:13). The Law of Moses pointed out man’s sin and did not provide sacrifices adequate to “take away sins” (Hebrews 10:4). It was “our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Galatians 5:24). It was a “yoke of bondage” (Galatians 5:1). This law (of Moses) could not free one from “the law of sin and death,” whereas the “law of the Spirit” does (Romans 8:1-3).

How Much Of Mosaic Law Taken Away?

In order to keep some Old Testament practice or explain some difficult practice, some have argued that not all the Mosaic Law ceased at the cross. The Sabbatarians have tried to make a distinction between the Law of Moses and the Law of the Lord. It is argued that the Mosaic Law was the “ceremonial” law while the Ten Commandments is the Law of the Lord. Then it is stated that the Law of Moses--the ceremonial law--was taken away at the cross, but the Law of the Lord, the Ten Commandments, is still in effect. With such “reasoning,” it was argued that the Sabbath day is still binding on Christians today!

This argument is easily answered by showing that the Law of Moses is the Law of God and that the New Testament specially teaches that we are not under the Law of Moses, including the Ten Commandments. Nehemiah speaks of “the law of Moses, which the Lord

had commanded to Israel” (Nehemiah 8:1). Later in the same chapter, he calls the Law, “the law which the Lord had commanded by Moses” and “the book of the law of God” (Nehemiah 8:14, 18). Please observe that the Law is called (1) “the law of Moses” (2) “the law which the Lord commanded by Moses,” and (3) “the book of the law of God.” They are the one and the same.

Paul, in Romans 7, says we are dead to the Law and then quotes one of the Ten Commandments as Ten Commandments, which of course includes the sabbath (Romans 7:4, 7).

Others believe, that at least for the Jew, the Law of Moses continued (with God’s approval) until A. D. 70. It is even argued by some that in A. D. 70 Christ returned (spiritually) and that there is not a promise of His coming again. This false doctrine is known as “Realized Eschatology.”² Others who do not believe in “Realized Eschatology” teach that some ceremonial aspect of the Law of Moses continued (with God’s approval), until A. D. 70, at which time the temple of Jerusalem was destroyed.

Does the Bible teach that certain aspects of the Law of Moses continued, with God’s approval, until A. D. 70? Was just a part of the Law of Moses nailed to the cross?

The Bible teaches that the Law of Moses--all the Law--was taken away by the cross! God blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us which was contrary to us **and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross**. This event took place in A. D. 33 , not in A. D. 70.

If certain aspects of the Law of Moses continued for the Jew to A. D. 70 then the middle wall of partition was not removed, while the Bible declares it was removed--“For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath

broken down the middle wall of partition between us” (Ephesians 2:14).

Christ died on the cross, nailed the handwriting of ordinances to it, “and having spoiled principalities and powers he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it,” (Colossians 2:15).

Did Paul Regard The Old Law To Still Be In Effect Years After The Cross?

Paul did not regard the Old Law to be in effect after the cross (of course, after his conversion). No one wrote more on the Law being abolished and fought harder against Judaizers than did the Apostle Paul. One only needs to read the following chart, with points taken from Paul’s writings, to see his attitude regarding the Old Law.

THE COVENANTS CONTRASTED

The Old

1. The first (Hebrews 10:9)
2. The old (Hebrews 8:13)
3. Taketh away (Hebrews 10:9)
4. Faulty (Hebrews 8:7)
5. Glorious (2 Corinthians 3:9-10)
6. Blood of animals (Hebrews 9:24)
7. Continuous sacrifices (Hebrews 10:1-4)
8. Ministration of condemnation (2 Corinthians 3:9)
9. Priest died (Hebrews 7:23)
10. Sins remembered (Hebrews 10:1-4)
11. Killeth (2 Corinthians 3:6)
12. Ministration of death (2 Cor.3:7)
13. Shadow (Hebrews 10:1)
14. Bondwoman (Galatians 4:30-31)

The New

1. The second (Hebrews 10:9)
2. The new (Hebrews 8:13)
3. Establish (Hebrews 10:9)
4. Better (Hebrews 8:6)
5. Exceeds in glory (2 Cor. 3:10-11)
6. Christ's blood (Hebrews 9:12)
7. Christ sacrificed once (Hebrews 9:28)
8. Ministration of righteousness (2 Cor. 3:9)
9. Endless life (Hebrews 7:16)
10. Sins taken away (Hebrews 10:17)
11. Giveth life (2 Corinthians 3:6)
12. Ministration of the spirit (2 Cor. 3:8)
13. Substance (Hebrews 10:1)
14. Free woman (Galatians 4:30-31)

In addition to the above contrast, Paul's epistles clearly reveal that the Law ended at the cross, not some 37 years later in A. D. 70.

In Romans 7 Paul gives the analogy of a marriage and the Law of Moses. A woman is bound by the Law to her husband as long as he lives. If she marries another man while her first husband lives, she is called an adulteress. If he is dead, however, she is free to marry again without being called an adulteress. Paul then states:

Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God (Romans 7:4).

Just as a woman could not be married to two men at the same time, likewise a person cannot be under the Law

of Moses and the Law of Christ at the same time! In fact, Paul plainly declares “ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another.” If one isn’t dead to the Law, he cannot be married to Christ. If he is married to Christ, he is dead to the Law. He cannot be married to the Law in certain aspects and married to Christ at the same time. Before a woman may take a second husband (per Romans 7), her first husband must be all the way dead--not just in the process of dying!

Later in writing to the Jewish Christians, Paul will tell them that they are not under the Old Covenant, but the New Covenant. In quoting Psalms 40:6, Paul observes, “Then said he, Lo I come to do thy will O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Hebrews 10:9-10).

The obvious meaning of this passage is that the first (Old Law) had to be taken away before the second (the New Law) could be established. Notice the word “that” in verse 10. The purpose of taking away the first is so **that** he may establish the second. As long as the first was in effect, the second could not be established. If the second (new law) was established by the time Paul wrote Hebrews (and it was), then the first (Old Law) was taken away. He expressly states that the second (new law) is the will by which we “**are sanctified** through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (verse 10). The people to whom Paul wrote had already been sanctified by the “will” of Christ. This establishes that the first had already been taken away. I remind the reader this is written before A. D. 70 and to the Jewish Christians evidently in Palestine!

The churches of Christ in Galatia certainly would

not have thought that Paul regarded part of the Law of Moses was still binding on the Jews. He informs the readers of this epistle that he publicly rebuked Peter for making a distinction between Jews and Gentiles (Galatians 2:11-21). He calls the Galatians “foolish” for trying to go back to the Law of Moses” (Galatians 3:1). He says that the Law was our “schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith: But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster” (Galatians 3:24-25). He says that if one is circumcised, then he is debtor to do the whole law (Galatians 5:3). Likewise, he wrote that “Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law, ye are fallen from grace” (Galatians 5:4).

There is no way that the recipients of the Galatian epistle would have thought that Paul thought he (and others) was (were) under some certain aspects of the Law of Moses.

Why Did Paul Act As He Did In Acts 21:17-26?

Acts 21 records that Paul goes to Jerusalem and has a meeting with James and the elders. He declares to them “What things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry.” They were very glad of this and “glorified the Lord.” They remind Paul of how many thousands of Jews there are which believe and are “zealous of the law.” These Jews, says James and the elders, are informed of Paul that he taught all Jews among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs.

In order to overcome this “dilemma,” they suggest that Paul be at charges with four men that have a vow upon them and purify himself. By so doing, the Jews would

know that the charges against Paul are “nothing, but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law.”

Verse 26 declares:

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.

It is immediately observed that it is easier to state “**what**” Paul did, then “**why**” he did it. What did Paul do? He took a vow, purified himself, and entered into the temple until an offering should be offered for every one of them.

Why did Paul do this? Several explanations have been given to this question. It has been suggested that he did not yet understand the subject correctly. Peter is given as an example of one who does not understand a Biblical truth correctly. He had not been carrying the Gospel to the Gentiles, but when he realized he was wrong in the matter, he corrected such (Acts 10). Likewise, when Paul learned that he was wrong regarding the Nazarite vow, he changed.³

It has been argued that Paul did not do wrong, but as a matter of expediency in this matter he became all things to all people that he might win some.⁴ The following verses are used to support this claim:

For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are

under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak become I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some (1 Corinthians 9:19-22).

It is further argued that the Old Law did end at the cross, but there was a period of grace that lasted down to the destruction of Jerusalem, during which time the Jews, who were originally amenable to the Old Law could keep certain requirements of it, including animal sacrifices. Matthew chapter 24 is used as a reference to support such. Here Jesus spoke relative to the destruction of the temple. This position uses verse 14 to say the Bible teaches this “grace period:” “And this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” From this passage it argued “the end” has reference to the Jewish system. So it is affirmed by this particular position that the Law of Moses was abrogated at the cross but the grace period for the Jews continue to the destruction of Jerusalem in A. D. 70. It is then affirmed that, therefore, Paul did no wrong by acting as he did in Acts 21:17-26.⁵

Another position taken is that Paul was in a “no win” situation. He would be in trouble with some no matter what he did. If he did do wrong, then it was committed in sincerity in a “no win” situation.⁶

The last position to be noted is that some say Paul simply did wrong. He went too far and thus sinned.⁷

Did Paul do right or wrong in this situation? Let us review some objections to some of the above solutions.

One, it cannot be successfully maintained that Paul did not fully understand the matter relative to animal sacrifices, the Nazarite vow, etc.

Two, it cannot be a simple matter of innocent expediency. Today, can a Jewish Christian take the Nazarite vow and offer the Jewish sacrifices as prescribed in Numbers 6:10-14? To do so would be sinful.

Third, there was not a “grace period” for the Jews to continue in certain Jewish aspects of the Law of Moses, including animal sacrifices, until A. D. 70. It has already been proven in this chapter that Romans 7:1-4 teaches that the law--all of it--ended at the cross. The Law had already ended when Paul penned Ephesians 2:15:

Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace.

The next verse affirms that he accomplished this “by the cross” not “by the destruction of Jerusalem” in A. D. 70.

It is my studied opinion that the following is the key to help understand why Paul acted the way that he did on this occasion.

Paul had labored very hard to take a collection to the poor saints in Jerusalem. He had encouraged the Macedonians, the Corinthians, and others to help in this matter. Yet, he had more in mind than just relieving the physical burdens produced by poverty. He had a strong desire that his Jewish brethren be saved. “For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my

brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh” (Romans 9:3). “Brethren my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved” (Romans 10:1).

Paul comes to Jerusalem and has an opportunity to teach the Jews. However, the Jerusalem church and James must have still been practicing some of the Jewish law. Remember it was James from whom the Jews came to Peter that cause Peter to sin as recorded in Galatians chapter two. Paul evidently was not going to get a fair audience with the Jews because of what they believed about him. James and the elders advised him to act as he did in Acts 21:17-ff. In accordance with this advice, Paul did so.

Question--could one do so today with God’s approval? Can one keep the Law today as was suggested to Paul? It is my studied opinion that this great apostle and soldier of the cross went too far on this occasion. While it is not a sin to observe certain customs (which in themselves are right), it cannot be right to observe animal sacrifices and to keep the Law of Moses. Paul was a great apostle, dedicated to the cause of Christ. Other than Jesus Christ it would be hard to find a man that has done more for the cause than Paul. However, all men have feet of clay. And while this may have been done from a proper motive, the action of animal sacrifices and keeping the law cannot be right.⁸

This is the most logical answer to the question raised regarding Paul’s actions in Acts 17. All must remember that it is not right to do wrong, even if the motive is good.

Conclusion

What was nailed to the cross in Colossians 2? The Law of Moses. Did Paul regard the Law to be in effect

after the cross? No. Why did Paul act as he did in Acts 21:17-ff? While his motive was good, his actions were wrong.

To understand the Word of God, one must rightly divide or handle aright the Word of God (2 Timothy 2:15). One must recognize the difference in the Two Covenants. May all of us appreciate the New Covenant under which we are sanctified and by which we draw nigh unto God through the blood of Christ.

Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end, Amen (Ephesians 3:20-21).

Endnotes

1 W. E. Vines, **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words**; (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1966), 282.

2 For a refutation of this false doctrine see the book **The A.D. 70 Theology** by Curtis A. Cates.

3 J. W. McGarvey, **Original Commentary on Acts**, (Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate Co., N. D.), 260.

4 Bobby Duncan, **The Book of Acts-II**, (Lebanon, TN: Sain Publications, 1985), 296.

5 H. A. (Buster) Dobbs, **Studies in Acts**, (Denton, TX: Pearl Street Church of Christ, 1985), 428-429.

6 James Burton Coffman, **Commentary on Acts**; (Austin, TX: Firm Foundation Publishing House, 1976), 408-409.

7 Duncan, 296-299.

8 Ibid.

Chapter 13

Why Is The New Covenant A Better Covenant?

John Curtis

It is new and improved. How often have you heard that phrase? It is stronger, bolder, heavier duty, or just plain better. It may be bar soap, dish soap, laundry detergent, oil, gasoline, or almost anything else. Just this week, I heard the phrase “It’s new and improved” in reference to a Spiral CT Scanner. But, whatever the product, the idea is that it is new and, therefore, better. Do you ever wonder if it is really better, or just new? I have seen some older things that I thought worked, and often I liked, much better than the newer ones. Does the fact something is new necessarily make it better than the old? Of course not. And just because something is said to be improved, does that mean it necessarily is better than its predecessor? Again, the answer is no.

The covenant of which we can be participants with God today is new and improved. It really is. It is not just our perception, or the analysis of an independent researcher. It is God’s description. God has given us a new and improved covenant. But, He has not just declared it to be new and improved, He has told us why and how;

and that is the subject of our lesson, *Why Is The New Covenant A Better Covenant?*

The New Covenant, naturally, is not better just because it is new. The term “new” simply means it is more recent than the previous one, which God never intended to be everlasting. As long ago as the days of Jeremiah, God made it clear that a new covenant was on its way out. In Jeremiah 31:31-34, the prophet declared:

Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

The Hebrew writer, in his description of the superiority of Christianity over Judaism, stated that this prophecy was fulfilled in the second covenant which is between God and Christians.

For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah (Heb.8:7-8).

This may also be as good a place as any to point out that the words “better covenant” do not indicate that the Old was bad. God did not create a “bad” covenant. The first simply had a different partner, purpose, and designated duration. It was a covenant between God and Israel (Deut. 5:1-33). It was an agreement, a law, for a theocratic nation. And, once it had served its purpose, it was taken away to make room for the New (Heb. 8:10-13; 10:9). There was nothing wrong with the quality of the first covenant, as the psalmist expressed in Psalm 19:7-11:

The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.

Paul also wrote about the positive attributes of the Old

Covenant when he, through inspiration, wrote, “Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good (Romans 7:12). In 2 Corinthians 3:11, while extolling the glory of the second covenant, he also mentioned the glory of the first. “For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.” God knew exactly what he was doing in creating the first covenant and there is no indication that He was disappointed with that purpose.

But some would say, what about the faults of the first? After all, Hebrews 8:7-8 states:

For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.

The thought that it was not faultless does not imply mistakes in the covenant. The fault came in Israel’s unwillingness to fulfill it (Jer. 31:32; Rom. 8:3) and its inability to fulfill God’s ultimate purpose regarding man’s salvation. Did you notice the beginning of verse 8 of Hebrews 8? The inspired writer stated the Lord found fault with “them,” not the covenant. Listen to words of the godly prophet, Jeremiah, who pointed out Israel’s disregard for the Law of old and just one of the many occasions where they failed to follow God’s will:

But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I

have commanded you, that it may be well unto you. But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward. Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day I have even sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them: Yet they hearkened not unto me, nor inclined their ear, but hardened their neck: they did worse than their father (Jeremiah 7:23-26).

But the greatest deficiency in the Old Covenant related to God's ultimate purpose for man's justification, for which the Old was not created. (More will be said about that later.)

The terms "fault" and "faultless," which are used in the chapter we are now considering, do not imply that the Law of Moses had mistakes in it; and that is not the idea which Paul meant to convey. The Law was faulty in that it was not sufficient to accomplish God's ultimate purpose regarding the human race. This same idea is set forth in Heb. 7:11. The Law of Moses was never intended to be the instrument of man's final salvation. . . The Jews made the mistake of regarding the Old Law as being sufficient to save Israel according to the flesh.

The Old Covenant, which God established with Israel, served at least three purposes: 1) It provided her, a theocratic nation, with guidance (Exod. 19:3-6; Deut. 5-6); 2) It taught her what was sin (Rom. 7:1-7; Gal. 3:16-19); and 3) It prepared her for the coming of the Messiah, the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:19-26). Once

these purposes were fulfilled, the Old was taken away to make way for the New (Heb. 8:10-13; 10:9), which could fulfill God's ultimate plan for man's salvation through Jesus, who not only fulfilled the Law (Matt. 5:17; Luke 24:44), but also established the New Covenant through His death on the cross (Matt. 26:28; Eph. 2:14-15; Col. 2:14; Heb. 7:11-12; 9:16-17; 10:9-10).

The primary purpose of this lesson is to show how the New Covenant is better than the Old. That also was the theme of the book of Hebrews. The author argued that Christianity was superior to Judaism; therefore, why would anyone want to return to Judaism? Notice the comparison of the covenants given by Neil Lightfoot in his commentary introduction to the book of Hebrews:

Two terms in Hebrews, however, are especially important and show that the religion of the new covenant far excels that described in the books of Moses. The terms are "better" and "eternal". Hebrews speaks of "eternal salvation" (5:9), "eternal judgment" (6:2), "eternal redemption" (9:12), "the eternal Spirit" (9:14), "the promised eternal inheritance" (9:15), and the "the eternal covenant" (13:20). The author's tone is absolute and final. And this is the case with his word "better." Jesus is represented as being "so much better than the angels" (1:4); He is the mediator and guarantee of a "better covenant" which offers "better promises" and a "better hope" (7:19, 22; 8:6). Not only so, but inherent in the better covenant are "better sacrifices" (9:23), a "better possession" (10:34), a "better country" (11:16), a "better life" (11:35), and the blood of

Jesus that has “better things to tell than the blood of Abel” (12:24). With such precisely chosen terms the author argues that Christianity is better than anything that had previously been made known to man.

Tommy J. Hicks also superbly pointed out the superiority of Christ in an introductory lesson on the Book of Hebrews. He wrote:

Paul wrote a Hebrew *midrash*, an exposition of the Old Testament Scriptures themselves. He used the Old Testament to prove the superiority of the New Testament and to show how much greater Christianity is than Judaism ever was. A basic outline of Paul’s arguments is as follows:

- I. Christ is superior to the angels (Heb. 1:1-2:18).
- II. Christ is superior to Moses, the Lawgiver (Heb. 3:1-4:13).
- III. Christ is superior to the priests of the Tribe of Levi (Heb. 4:14-7:10).
- IV. The New Covenant is superior to the Old Covenant (Heb. 7:11-8:13).
- V. Christ is a superior sacrifice, greater than animal sacrifices (Heb. 9:1-10:39).
- VI. The blessings of Christianity are superior to the blessings of Judaism (Heb. 11:1-40).
- VII. Christian faithfulness should be superior to faith under the law (Heb. 12:1-13:25).

The New Is Better Because:

Now let's turn our attention to a more detailed observation of why the New Covenant is better than the Old. What are some of the better promises referred to in Hebrews 8:6, and what are some of the factors that exalt Christianity? Consider these reasons:

1. The New Covenant Can Sanctify And Justify

Remember, the Old Covenant was removed because it could not provide the ultimate purpose of God for man. That ultimate purpose is salvation, forgiveness of sin, sanctification, and justification. The following passages of Scripture point out the inability of the Old to provide such, and the ability of the New to make it possible and available. (For sake of emphasis, I have marked certain statements in bold print. JC):

And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for **I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more** (Jeremiah 31:34).

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 (Romans 3:20).

But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: How shall

not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the **ministration of righteousness** exceed in glory (2 Corinthians 3:7-9).

I do not frustrate the grace of God: for **if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain** (Gal. 2:21).

For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For **the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God** (Heb. 7:18-19).

For the Law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, **can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect**. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But **in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year** (Heb. 10:1-3).

Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish **the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all** (Heb. 10:9-10).

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the Law of sin and death. **For what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:** That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit (Romans 8:1-4).

Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And **by him all that believe are justified** from all things, from which **ye could not be justified by the law of Moses** (Acts 13:38-39).

I am grateful for the New Covenant because it can provide for me exactly what I need.

2. The New Covenant Is Universal

The Old Covenant was an agreement between God and the nation of Israel. But, the New Covenant is for all people, not just the Jews. It is for people in any place, of any age, and of any social status. No one is excluded. Whosoever will may come (Rev. 22:17). This is in fulfillment to a pre-Old Covenant promise. In Genesis 12:3, God told Abraham, “in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.” That was not fulfilled by a covenant with one nation, but through the sending of His dear Son, Jesus, who died on the cross for all mankind.

The Old Covenant was a covenant of flesh, in that it was made with those who were fleshly related through one people (Genesis 17:13; Exod. 19:3-6; Exod. 34:27; Deut. 5-6.) “Under the old covenant, people were born into covenant-relationship with God, and had to be taught regarding him as they were able to learn; but in the case of the new it is different; those who come to the Lord must be taught first.” In John 6:44-45, Jesus declared:

No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

When He gave the disciples the Great Commission, He again emphasized the universality of the New Covenant:

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned (Mark 16:15-16).

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen (Matthew 28:19-20).

And, shortly before His ascension into heaven, Jesus once again commanded His disciples to go beyond the Jewish people with the message.

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth (Acts 1:8).

The New Covenant is available to all, and I, not being a Jew, am very thankful that God has made it available to me.

3. The New Covenant Is Eternal

The Old Covenant was given for a specific time. Paul pointed out in Galatians 3:16-19, that the time came to an end with Jesus:

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise. Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.

The New, on the other hand, was given as an everlasting covenant, which it is called in Hebrews 13:20. We do not have to worry whether or not He will remove it, or change it during our lifetimes. This covenant will not be replaced. It will be in effect when the Lord returns to claim those that are His.

4. The New Covenant Has A Better Mediator

A mediator is one who intervenes or goes between two parties as an interpreter, an intercessor, or a reconciler. Some times, he is one who is neutral. He is not for either side. He is just trying to facilitate a fair settlement. In the case of the New Covenant, the mediator is not neutral, not for one side or the other, but on the side of both parties. He is on God's side and on man's side. He is not just trying to seek a fair deal, but one of love and mercy. He does so by reconciling man to God.

If you needed a mediator, would you want one inadequate or one of ultimate talent? Jesus has the ability, connections, power, wisdom, character, etc., to negotiate the best deal for us. He is the only mediator between us and God and the only one capable of reconciling us to God.

For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 2:5).

And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18-19).

And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth. Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood. For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people (Hebrews 9:15-19).

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, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high (Hebrews 1:1-3).

But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises (Hebrews 8:6).

And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant,
and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh
better things than that of Abel (Hebrews 12:24).

Jesus is the ultimate mediator and He is in heaven
today pleading our cause.

5. The New Covenant Has A Better Priesthood

When the New Covenant was established, there
was also a change of the priesthood. No longer is it
necessary to turn to the tribe of Levi for priests. All
Christians are priests. We all have access to the Father.
Look, for example, at the scene in Acts 7:54-60, where
Stephen met his death while preaching the truth to the
Jews:

When they heard these things, they were cut to
the heart, and they gnashed on him with their
teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Ghost,
looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the
glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right
hand of God, And said, Behold, I see the heavens
opened, and the Son of man standing on the right
hand of God. Then they cried out with a loud
voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him
with one accord, And cast him out of the city,
and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down
their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name
was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon
God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.
And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud
voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And
when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Later, Peter described the priestly position of Christians in these words:

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light (1 Pet. 2:9).

And, in the apocalyptic letter of Revelation, the beloved Apostle John stated that Jesus “hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen” (Rev. 1:6).

The priest under the Mosaical Law held a very special position, and the High Priest an even a higher one. He could enter the most holy area, but only once per year. “Moses was the mediator of the old covenant (Exod. 20:19-21; Gal. 3:19-20), and it appears that he was succeeded in this position by the high priest. But under the terms of the New Covenant Christ, as we gather from Heb. 3:1, did the work of both Moses and the high priest.” Jesus, however, is not just another high priest. He possesses several unique qualities. Look at how the Hebrew writer portrays the excellent qualifications of Jesus as our High Priest:

For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin (Hebrews 4:15).

But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is

able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore (Hebrews 7:24-28).

Paul also appropriately pictured the greatness of this high priest in his position at the right hand of God in the heavens when he wrote:

he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come (Eph.1:20-21).

This is confirmed when the author of Hebrews wrote:

But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; . . . For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself,

now to appear in the presence of God for us
(Hebrews 9:11,24).

The effectiveness of Jesus' service as High Priest is seen in Hebrews 7:22 where it states that "Jesus made a surety of a better testament." "The writer "chose the word (surety) because his purpose was not to exhibit Jesus as negotiating the covenant, but especially as securing that it should achieve its end. . . the covenant based upon this priesthood was secured against all failure of any of the ends for which it was established." I do not have to worry about this Covenant failing, I have the greatest of High Priest interceding for me before God Almighty.

6. *The New Covenant Has An All Sufficient Sacrifice*

Under the Old Covenant, sacrifices of various kinds were made on a regular basis. The New Covenant, however, is based on a more than sufficient one time sacrifice:

Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood. For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the Law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, Saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the Law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these;

but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others (Hebrews 9:18-25).

For the Law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. . . By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. . . Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin (Hebrews 10:1-4, 10,18).

The fact that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is all sufficient and offered once and for all means that I don't have to worry if I have enough to pay, or if enough can be paid, or if I can sacrifice often enough to satisfy God. The price has been paid and redemption has been provided.

7. The New Covenant Offers A Better Inheritance

An earthly inheritance was promised in the Old Covenant to the people of Israel. The New Covenant,

however, is eternal and heavenly (Heb. 9:15; 10:34; 11:16), and, therefore, more precious in nature and longer lasting. Now, which would you rather have, the promise of a land here on earth or the promise of an everlasting abode in the presence of Almighty God?

Conclusion

The word “covenant” means an agreement between two or more parties. Without a doubt, God has provided us with a better covenant and has fulfilled His part of the agreement, and always will. So, the question now is will we do our part? May we live with the attitude of the psalmist who wrote, “What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefit toward me” (Psm. 116:12)?

Chapter 14

Are The Gospel Accounts A Part Of Christ's New Testament Law?; Under What Covenant Was The Thief On The Cross Saved?

Les Bonnett

In our day the winds of doctrinal change are blowing stronger than ever against the house of the Lord (Eph. 4:14; 1 Tim. 3:15). As each issue arises God's people must utilize the energy and ability they have to combat the error and defend the truth. One simply cannot love God and do otherwise (Psm. 119:104; Prov.8:13).

At least some of the controversy in the brotherhood today regards whether the Gospel accounts (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) are New Covenant legislation. If they are part of the New Law then such material is binding upon all individuals today. If such is not, however, then each of these accounts should be considered and treated as all other Old Testament legislation (Rom.15:4). In hopes of shedding some light on this issue, there are several questions which must be addressed.

These areas of concern are as follows: (1) *Are the Gospel accounts part of Christ's New Testament Law?*, (2) *Do these accounts contain anticipatory material?*, and (3)

Under what covenant was the thief saved? Because of the pivotal nature of this topic, the posture one takes in regard to these questions will effect not only his understanding of the Lord's teachings, but also his own destiny.

Are The Gospel Accounts New Testament Law?

The first question under consideration concerns whether the four Gospel account (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) are New Testament Law. These accounts are either part of the New Testament legislation and consequently binding all men today, or they are not.

Since these accounts contain the history as well as the teaching of Jesus while He lived under the Mosaic Law (Gal. 4:4), and since that Law was not deemed inoperable until the cross (Col. 2:14), some have affirmed that Christ's directives were strictly part of the Old Covenant.

One must realize that if Jesus' teachings were solely Old Law legislation, then everything He taught must be assessed in light of that fact. *If Christ did not **contradict** the Old Law on occasion, all of His teachings must be interpreted and applied strictly as a **clarification** of that Law.* In affirming the above, one must also maintain that Jesus never provided any new material which was intended to be applicable after the cross or in the kingdom.

The Crux Of The Matter

Mac Deaver aptly pointed out in his debate with Dan Billingsly the crux of the issue at hand. In order for one to understand the relationship between the Two Covenants, one must be able to identify and comprehend the keen distinction between: (a) *that which is*

accomplished in history (under the Law), and (b) *the record of that history which was later written by the authority of Christ*.¹

Though Christ's ministry for the most part took place before the cross and though He did on occasion clarify the Law, *it does not follow that everything Jesus taught was Old Testament legislation. The period wherein a given instruction is revealed does not necessarily determine, nor does it limit, the duration of the material's application.*

There is substantial evidence to establish that Christ's teaching is New Covenant legislation and is applicable today; however, before such is examined, the Law's need of clarification needs to be considered.

The Law's Need Of Clarification

One of the underlying assertions of some is that the Old Law was so tainted with tradition that it was incapable of being correctly interpreted. Because the Jewish teachers were so distorted by rabbinical tradition, it is maintained that the Law could not be understood and Moses could not be obeyed without his teaching first being clarified. Hence, Christ's mission, according to this position, was not to deliver a new message of His own, but rather to bring to light the directives of Moses.

Though in Jesus' day there was a problem with human traditions (Matt.15:9) as well as hypocrisy (Matt.23:23), the Bible teaches that *there were teachers to whom individuals could have gone for accurate spiritual direction*. Jesus said:

The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat:
all things therefore whatsoever they bid you,
these do and observe: but do not ye after their

works; for they say, and do not (Matt. 23:3).
[All Scripture references are from the ASV.]

Not only did Jesus acknowledge **accuracy**, he commanded **obedience**. Individuals could have *understood* and *obeyed* the Law's requirements, or else Jesus would not have told the disciples to obey "**whatsoever they bid you.**"

Another item which needs to be noted is the fact that *even if there had been such a desperate need for clarification, that point alone would not limit Christ's role to clarification exclusively.* Certainly it is not unreasonable to suggest that the Son of God could have contradicted the Law at one point while clarifying it at another. This is precisely what Jesus did.

The following section is devoted to an evaluation of several texts which clearly substantiate the claim that the four Gospel accounts are New Testament legislation. Though these passages are recorded within a historical narrative of Christ's life under the Old Law, the thrust of each text indisputably establishes that His words are part of the New Covenant.

The Command To Hearken Unto The Son

Consider the transfiguration (Matt. 17:1-5). In this account there is insight given into the import of Christ's message. One day Peter, James and John beheld Christ in a glorified state (Luke 9:29) speaking with **Moses** (representative of the Law) and **Elijah** (representative of the prophets) about His forth coming departure (Luke 9:31). Peter, having witnessed this event, offered to erect a tabernacle for each of the prophets, making no distinction between the three. A voice, however, thundered

from heaven and said: “. . .**this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him**” (Matt. 17:5).

Though much can be said about this scene, the one thing which this text clearly establishes is Christ's authority over Moses and Elijah. If all Christ did were clarify the Old Law, why the great distinction? Should not God have said: “**hear ye them**”? Without a doubt, God expects Peter as well as individuals today to hearken to the Lord's message.

The Promise To Recall Christ's Words

Though the account of the transfiguration adequately establishes this writer's point, there is another text which sheds tremendous light on the whether Christ's message has application after the cross. Consider the passage wherein the Lord promised to send the Comforter. Jesus told the disciples:

But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you (John 14:26).

Now why was the Comforter sent? Such could not be clearer. His mission was to reveal the teachings of Christ (John 16:13). **Question:** *If Christ's message was strictly a part of the Mosaic Law and had absolutely no New Testament application — **Why would the Holy Spirit recall His words?*** It seems such would be pointless.

The Hebrew writer further establishes this point. In the great text which encourages spiritual vigilance, there is an interesting comment made regarding the words

which the apostles' signs confirmed. Note the text:

Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply we drift away from them. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation? which having at the first been spoken through the Lord, was confirmed unto us by them that heard (Heb. 2:1-3).

Whatever it was that the apostles were confirming, such had previously been **“spoken through the Lord.”** Obviously those spoken words were the teachings of Christ. Is it not ironic that the entire New Testament was written by the authority of Christ (John 14:26; 1 Cor.7:40; 14:37; 1 Thes.4:15), yet the very words which He spoke in the flesh are said to be not binding under His own covenant?

Remember it was Jesus who said:

He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not My sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day (John 12:48).

Obviously, the above passages illustrate the fact that Christ said some things to which individuals today must adhere and by which they will eventually be judged. Since inspiration has clearly established the superiority of both Christ and His message, this writer affirms that the

Gospel accounts are New Covenant legislation.

With this being the case, let it also be understood that proper exegesis must be implemented in order to decipher which directives of Christ were applicable to the Jews living under the Law and which directives were stated with the intent of future adherence. Certainly one must identify the difference between Christ telling the disciples to obey the Jewish teachers (Matt.23:1-3) and His instituting the Lord's Supper (Matt.26:26-28). The two commands, though in the same book, are not of the same authoritative nature. This brings the discussion to the topic of "anticipatory revelation."

Do These Accounts Contain Anticipatory Material?

Just because Christ's teaching occurred while the Old Law was in effect, it does not necessarily follow that the didactic material was automatically restricted to being part of that same law. The principle which accounts for this is "***anticipatory revelation.***" Anticipatory revelation is the revealing of a message whose ultimate application is intended for a future time. Consider the following illustration:

Let's say that the legislature met today and approved a law (such as 75 mph speed limit) which will become effective January 1, 1997. Now while the New Law was being discussed and ratified, the current speed limit was the authoritative standard. Upon the arrival of the specified date, however, the old limit would become obsolete and the new would be implemented. Thus, that legislation was

anticipatory in that it was composed with the understanding that its application would be at some point in the future. At least some of Christ's teaching was of the same anticipatory nature.

It is understood that a mere illustration does not establish that Christ utilized such. Christ's use of anticipatory instruction can only be ascertained from the Scriptures. **Note:** *If Christ gave directives which:* (a) were not applicable during the era of the Law, or (b) had obvious application after the Law was abrogated, *then He had to have implemented "anticipatory revelation."* Now consider some texts which do establish Christ's use of such.

The Lord's Teaching Regarding The New Birth

John records an interesting discussion between Nicodemus and Jesus regarding the entrance terms of the kingdom. The kingdom about which they were speaking was actually the forth coming church (Matt.16:18; Mark 1:9; Acts 2; Col.1:13). Now regarding this kingdom, Jesus told Nicodemus: “. . .**Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God**” (John 3:3).

Christ's point was that in order for one to become a citizen of the kingdom and to consequently view it from within, one must be “**born anew.**” The Lord's statement prompted Nicodemus' question; he asked how one could “**enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?**” (John 3:4). Jesus then defined the new birth and said: “. . .**Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God**” (John 3:5).

Now was the Lord *clarifying anything which Moses said*? Certainly not! Nowhere in the Mosaic Law is there any mention of the new birth to which Jesus was referring. Not only that, *Jesus identified the terms of entrance into a kingdom which* had not even been established. With this being the case, clearly, Christ introduced a message of His own, which message was anticipatory in nature. Though it had an immediate application to Nicodemus, such was anticipatory because its ultimate application was after the kingdom had been established.

The Teaching Regarding The Lord's Supper

Another text which disproves the position that Christ's teaching was strictly Old Covenant legislation is the account of the institution of the Lord's Supper. Jesus one particular evening observed the Passover, washed the disciples' feet, foretold Judas' betrayal as well as Peter's denial, and then instituted His memorial supper (John 13, Matt. 26). The Lord's directives on that evening clearly had future import. Consider His words:

Take, eat; this is my body. And He took a cup, and gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins. But I say unto you, I shall not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom (Matt. 26:26-29).

It is interesting to note that, though Jesus and the disciples observed the supper that evening, such communion would not again take place until the kingdom

was in existence. Since the kingdom refers to the church (Matt.16:18) and since the church was not established until after Christ's ascension (Matt.16:28; Mark 9:1; Acts 2), Christ's directives were once again anticipatory.

Now one could say, in attempt to dodge the above point, that Christ's teaching regarding the Lord's Supper was prophetic. Though this may be true, *the point remains that Christ (while living under and complying with the Old Law) gave New Testament legislation which was to be observed in a kingdom that had not yet been established.*

The Lord's Teaching Regarding Marriage

Next, there is the question concerning whether Christ's teaching on marriage, divorce and remarriage is applicable today. As one considers the Lord's directives on this most controversial topic, he must first determine whether or not Christ was explaining what Moses taught. That is, did Jesus *clarify* the Mosaic Law or did He *contradict* it? *If the Lord's teaching is in obvious conflict with that of Moses, one can rightfully conclude that He introduced His own message rather than clarified the Old Law.*

Matthew records Jesus as having said:

And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery (Matt.19:9).

Certainly the Savior's words were harder than that to which the disciples were accustomed, for they questioned whether it was **“. . .expedient to marry”** (Matt.19:10).

When one compares the Lord's teaching with the expectations of the Law, it is certain that the two are not the same.

There are a number of reasons why Christ could not have been merely clarifying Moses. **Consider:** (1) Moses' legislation was applicable *only to Jews*, while Christ's use of the term "**whosoever**" incorporates *not only the Jews, but the Gentiles as well*. (2) The fornicator under the law of Moses was *to be put to death* (Deut. 22:22), while by contrast, the fornicator under the Law of Christ was *not to remarry*. Christ's prohibition of marriage to the put away individual implies that He did not obligate or anticipate the death of the fornicator as did the Law. (3) Moses allowed one to put away his wife for an "**unseemly**" thing (Deut. 24:1), while Jesus used the more specific term "**fornication.**"

The "unseemly" thing to which Moses referred could not have been of the magnitude of sexual immorality because under the Law the sexually immoral were to be put to death (Deut.22:22; Lev.20:10). While the adulteresses under the Law were to be killed, the woman in Deuteronomy 24 was allowed to live (Deut.24:2). These points show that Jesus was not clarifying Moses, but was rather administering new legislation.

Having established that Christ's teaching on marriage was clearly distinguishable from that of Moses, there is still a remaining question — **When and to whom did Jesus' teaching apply?** It had to apply to someone. Did such apply during the time of Judaism? Did it apply in the transition era only (Luke 16:16)? If such did not apply in either of the above periods, it had to have applied in the era of the church. Hence, such is consequently binding today too.

Those directives of Christ which were clearly Old Covenant commands (Matt.23:3) are said to be abolished at the cross (Col.2:14). Also, through implication, one can determine that the teachings of John had a limited duration as well (John 3:30; Acts 19:1-5). While the teaching of Moses and John were limited, the Scriptures suggest just the opposite in regard to Christ's (John 14:26; 16:13-14).

Consider the following: those teaching of Christ which are clearly distinguishable from Old Testament Law, as well as those permanent principles which He incorporated from the Law, continue to be authoritative because: (1) There is no time limit given regarding the duration of His teachings, as was the case with John (John 3:30; Acts 19:1-5). (2) The Holy Spirit promised to recall the words of Christ to apostles who then recorded them as New Testament teaching binding upon the church (John 14:26; 2 Pet.1:21). (3) The Lord's promise to be with the apostles until the end of the age indicated that the commission was to be applicable until that time (Matt.28:20), and (4) All individuals living the era of the church will be judged by Christ (Acts 17:31; Rom. 2:16) whose words will be the standard (John 12:48). Therefore, Christ's teaching in Matthew 19:9 is applicable today.

Some Pertinent Questions

Consider crucial questions, most of which were raised by Mac Deaver in his discussion with brother Billingsly:

- (1) Why would God opt to reveal additional Mosaic material over fifty years after the Law was inoperative?;
- (2) Why did God want such

clarity just before the Law was to be nailed to the cross?; (3) Why would God choose Luke, who was a Greek and wrote to the Greeks, to transcribe a record of the Jewish law, if it applied strictly to Jews?; (4) How is it that Jesus could speak of the terms of entrance into the kingdom which was established after the cross, but His teachings do not apply after the cross?, and (5) How is it that Jesus could speak of the Lord's Supper which was to be observed in the kingdom, but His teachings do not apply in the same?

These are not just quibbles; these are legitimate concerns for which there is no reasonable answer if one affirms that the Lord's directives are not part of the New Covenant.

Under What Covenant Was The Thief Saved?

The next aspect of this discussion regards the thief on the cross. Much was transpiring during the Lord's final hours. Along with Jesus, the lives of two other individuals (malefactors) were being drastically altered as well. Though both of these men initially railed upon Jesus (Matt. 27:44), one of them had a change of heart. This penitent soul went to be with the Lord in paradise (Luke 23:39-43).

It is interesting that of all the various accounts of redemption, the thief's is the one which seems to be the most well known. His salvation, however, is no different from that of the paralytic man (Mark 2:5) and the sinful woman (Luke 23:39-47). Each of these individuals lived during Christ's ministry before the cross, each of them

conversed with the Lord personally, and each of them obtained forgiveness. For some reason, however, the account of the thief's conversion is virtually always mentioned in attempt to nullify the New Testament's teaching regarding the essentially of water baptism in conversion.

The Assumption Of Some

Many have assumed that since the thief was **“apparently”** saved at the point of faith without water baptism, that individuals today can be saved in the same manner. This, however, is a huge assumption for which there is not Scriptural basis. Though much can be ascertained from the narrative of the thief's conversion and many lessons can be drawn from this account, *one thing which this text does not teach is the method by which individuals are saved today.* **Folks today, though equally plagued with sin, simply are not in the same circumstantial boat.** The following points will show this to be true.

The Question Of Whether The Thief Was Baptized

Initially, let one consider the evidence regarding the assumption that the thief was not baptized. While John had already accomplished much preparatory work before the ministry of Christ, he preached a baptism which was in water (Mark 1:5) and was **“unto the remission of sins”** (Mark 1:4). This baptism also was limited in its duration (Acts 19:1-5). For one to have rejected John's message was equivalent to having rejected the counsel of God (Luke 7:30).

With John's work in mind, it is certainly plausible that the thief could have received John's baptism and then

fell away only to be restored at the cross. Though one certainly should not base his entire case upon this, the point remains that no one can prove that the thief was not baptized. Such can only be asserted.

The Law Under Which The Thief Lived

Another relevant point in this regard concerns the covenant under which the thief was saved. Some apparently assume that since he lived during Christ's earthly sojourn, he was automatically under Christ's Law. Hence, they point to the thief's conversion to justify their own. Though such may be done sincerely, the fact remains that the thief was not under the New Covenant as all are men today. To understand the Bible and the significance of covenants, one must identify the point at which the Old Law ceased to be authoritative.

Paul states that God

having blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us: and he hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross (Col. 2:14).

This bond of written ordinances was the Old Law which became inoperative at cross upon Christ's death.

In this regard, the Hebrew writer then identifies the point at which Christ's Law became effective. The text states:

For where a testament is, there must of necessity be the death of him that made it.

For a testament is of force where there hath been death: for it doth never avail while he that made it liveth (**Heb. 9:16-17**).

Because the thief lived before cross, and because Christ had not yet died, he was clearly subject to the expectations of the Mosaic Law. Hence, he was not amenable to the baptism of the Great Commission as all men are today (Matt.28:19).

The Thief And People Today

Finally, everyone needs to understand that **no one today is in the same situation as was the thief. Not one single person can be saved in the same manner as was the thief on the cross.** He lived under the Old Law, today individuals are under the New Law. He spoke with Christ personally, today Christ reveals His expectations through the written word (Gal. 1:12; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). People today must go to Christ's last will and testament to determine how they too can be freed from sin.

Because all individuals today are living after the cross, the examples of conversion which should be examined and studied in order to determine what one must do to be saved today are those accounts which occurred after the cross and are recorded in the book of Acts. This is where one will find what God expects of him **today.**

Hopefully this study will assist someone in realizing that for one to base his conversion and consequently his salvation upon that of the thief's is to totally disregard the distinction between covenants. ***When one turns to the thief to justify his salvation,*** he has chosen the wrong cross on which to look. **May God help all men to look to Christ.**

Endnotes

1 Audio tape. **Deaver / Billingsly Debate**, Fort Worth, Texas, January 24-25, 1995.

Chapter 15

In What Sense Is Christ The End Of The Law?; Are Fleshly Jews Still God's Elect Nation?

Steve Ellis

Introduction

The writer is grateful for the opportunity to participate in the 1996 POWER Lectureship. The theme for this year's lectureship, "The Two Covenants," is certainly a very worthwhile subject to be studied in this fashion. The failure of so many people to understand the basic differences between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant, and the numerous important ramifications thereof, has contributed greatly to the perpetuation of various misconceptions which have proven harmful in several ways.

This series of lectures is well designed to help correct many of these harmful misconceptions and to increase the understanding of all who truly possess "honest and good hearts" and who genuinely respect God's Word. As part of this overall study of "The Two Covenants," I have been assigned to answer two questions: "In what sense is Christ the end of the law (Rom. 10:4)?" and, "Are fleshly Jews still God's elect nation (Rom. 9-11)?"

In What Sense Is Christ The End Of The Law (Rom. 10:4)?

The reference to Christ as “the end of the law” is found in Romans 10:4 which states, “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” Whenever we study any portion of Romans, we should remind ourselves that the overall theme of this letter is found in verses sixteen and seventeen of chapter one where Paul declared:

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

In these verses Paul emphasized that all men must respond in obedience to the good news of salvation in Christ in order to be made free from the guilt and eternal consequences of their sins. He further explained that the gospel was designed and empowered by God to produce faith in those “honest and good hearts” to whom it is preached by inducing them to believe and obey it (cf. Luke 8:11,15).

Returning our attention to Romans 10:4, we remember it is located in a portion of this letter which describes the condition of those fleshly Jews who had refused to obey the gospel. In so doing they had resisted God’s faith-creating and soul-saving power and rejected God’s only plan for making men righteous. Commenting upon the ironic and tragic behavior of so many fleshly Jews, Paul wrote:

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God (Rom. 10:1-3).

In spite of having been for centuries a very zealous and God-fearing people, a great many fleshly Jews refused to accept the fact that the Law of Moses was always designed by God to be temporary and to become obsolete (cf. Gal. 3:24-29). They further refused to accept the fact that all the predictions pertaining to the Messiah are fulfilled in Jesus Christ, including their rejection and crucifixion of the Son of God (cf. Acts 13:27-37). Instead of submitting themselves unto God's plan for making men righteous, revealed in the gospel, they had vainly attempted "to establish their own righteousness." In their willful ignorance, they sought to merit eternal salvation through compliance with the Law of Moses as well as through observance of humanly originated religious ceremonies and commandments which they often substituted for God's true commands (cf. Matt. 15:1-9).

That freedom from the guilt of sin, that right relationship with God, that righteousness which the Jews vainly sought to achieve and to earn through their misuse and abuse of the Law of Moses can only be realized in obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ! Paul emphasized this fact in Romans 10:4. The Greek word translated "end" in this verse is "*telos*". Although some people think that this verse refers to the abrogation of the Law of Moses

which took place at Christ's crucifixion and is so well-documented elsewhere, we should be aware that one of the definitions of this word is "the aim or purpose of a thing."¹ The context suggests that "end" should be understood to have this meaning in this verse. A very persuasive argument for this usage of the word "end" in this verse was stated by Robertson L. Whiteside as follows:

The law demanded absolute righteousness, but could not free the transgressor of guilt. The law could not make the guilty righteous. It seems to me that commentators usually miss Paul's point. It is true that the law ended at the cross, but it ended at the cross regardless of whether one believes or does not believe. The end of which Paul here speaks is attained by those who believe in Christ. The end, or aim, or the law was righteousness. The believer in Christ is made righteous, and thus the end of the law for righteousness is reached in Christ. When a man's sins are all blotted out, when he is cleansed from all sin, he is righteous; that condition is reached in Christ by those who believe. The end, or purpose, of the law was righteousness; that end is reached in Christ by the believer. It will be noticed that Paul says: "Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness to every one that believeth." The modifying phrase, "to every one that believeth," shows that Paul was not speaking of the abrogation of the law; that is taught abundantly elsewhere. And it was abrogated for all, believers and unbelievers alike.²

Commenting on Jesus' perfect compliance with the Law of Moses, James Burton Coffman wrote:

The mountain fact concerning Christ is that he indeed kept the law perfectly, his faith and obedience reaching a state of absolute perfection for every second of his total life on earth. That is what God requires to save any man. That is the righteousness which alone can save; and it is available to men "in Christ"; the great device of God's redemption plan being not that of transferring righteousness into sinners, but that of transferring sinners into Christ, where the righteousness is.³

Realizing the undeniable fact that all accountable human beings, with the sole exception of Jesus Christ, "have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," how we ought to rejoice to be reminded that Christ has done for us what we could never do for ourselves (cf. Rom. 3:23)! It is truly the best of news to learn that when we accept God's offer to have our sins punished in the suffering of that One "who did no sin," our loving Heavenly Father is willing to treat us as if we had never sinned (cf. 1 Pet. 3:22-24). As Paul expressed it in 2 Corinthians 5:21, "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." It is difficult to understand how anyone can refuse God's gracious offer to forgive our sins, to adopt us into his family and to grant us eternal life in glorified resurrection bodies in those heavenly mansions that Jesus has prepared for the faithful. Such a glorious opportunity would not be possible were it not for the fact that "Christ is the end of

the law for righteousness to every one that believeth” (Rom. 10:4).

Let us now turn our attention to the second question to be answered in this lecture.

Are Fleshly Jews Still God’s Elect Nation (Rom. 9-11)?

At the outset of our consideration of this second question, it behooves us to remind ourselves of the meaning of the word Jew, as well as some related terms. In response to a question relative to the differences in meanings between the words Hebrew, Israelite, and Jew, brother Guy N. Woods wrote:

The word “Hebrew” was first applied to Abraham and his family when they came to Canaan. The origin of the word is obscure; some think it derives from Eber, an ancestor of Abraham (Gen. 10:21; Num. 24:24); others, perhaps with more reason, believe that it is from the Hebrew word *abar*, “to pass over,” *thus, from beyond the river*; and, inasmuch as Abraham and his family first came from distant Ur of the Chaldees, “beyond Jordan,” this fact became a name for them. Abraham, and all of his descendents, are Hebrews.

The term “Israelite,” derives from Israel, the name given to Jacob by the angel at Peniel (Gen. 32:28). It means literally “having power with God.” Jacob and all of his descendents are Israelites. It is the usual name given to the twelve tribes; and, following the division of the kingdom, in the reign of Rehoboam, 975 B.C., it

was applied to the ten tribes who rebelled.

The appellation “Jew,” means a descendent from Judah, one of the sons of Jacob. Later, it came to signify a member of the tribe of Judah; and afterwards, following the division of the kingdom when Judah and Benjamin, the only two tribes of Israel which remained faithful to God, were joined in civil and religious relationships, it designated one from this union — i.e., identified with either of these tribes. Some Levites who refused identity with Jeroboam’s rebellion were likely embraced in the designation along with any others of Israel who chose to remain faithful to God (2 Chron. 11:3). Basically, however, the term signifies only a member of the tribe of Judah or Benjamin.

It will be seen, therefore, that the words, **Hebrew**, **Israelite**, and **Jew**, though related, differ in scope: **Hebrew**, is the most comprehensive of the three, and includes all who are described by the words **Israelite** and **Jew**; the word **Israelite** designates one descended from Jacob; and, the word **Jew** a descendent of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin.

To put the matter in proper perspective, we may look at it this way: All Israelites were Hebrews, because all of them were descended from Abraham; but, not all Hebrews were Israelites. Only those Hebrews which descended from Abraham through Isaac and Jacob are Israelites. Abraham has many other descendents. The Arab world, for example, is descended from Abraham through Ishmael;

hence, the Arabs are Hebrews, though not Israelites, because they are not the progeny of Jacob.

All Jews are Israelites, because all Jews have their ancestry from Jacob (Israel), but not all Israelites are Jews—only those descended from Judah and Benjamin. Paul was a Hebrew because of his ancestry in Abraham; he was of the “stock of Israel”, because he descended from Jacob, and he was a Jew because he was from the tribe of Benjamin (Phil. 3:1-5).⁴

For our purposes we are using the term “fleshly Jews” in a broader sense than that found in the preceding quotation. We are using the term “fleshly Jews” to refer to all fleshly descendents of Jacob, although we are aware that the technical definition of the word is more limited in scope.

In asking the question, “Are fleshly Jews still God’s elect nation?”, we should also specify what we mean by the term “elect nation.” Consistent with Biblical usage, we are using the word “elect” to mean chosen or selected. Moreover, we are using it to mean chosen or selected for special or preferential treatment and the enjoyment of a special status with God. Even more specifically, and contrary to the teaching of the Bible, we are using it to mean the enjoyment of preferential treatment by God in the sense of eternal spiritual salvation, throughout all ages, based solely upon being a fleshly descendent of Abraham through Jacob. Such a status was never enjoyed by the Jews or anyone else and it is certainly not their situation now.

Every Bible student knows that for a significant period of time, from the call of Abraham until Christ’s

death on the cross, Abraham and his Israelite descendents were chosen by God to play a special role in the fulfillment of God's plans for all mankind. God's calling Abraham and making various promises to him is recorded in Genesis 12:1-7 as follows:

Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came. And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land. And the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him.

In this familiar passage, there is a two-fold promise made by God to Abraham. First, God promised that all nations would be blessed spiritually through a descendant

of Abraham, Jesus Christ (cf. Gal. 3:13-17). Second, God promised the land of Canaan would one day be given to the posterity of Abraham. Like all promises made by our omnipotent covenant-keeping God, these promises most certainly were kept!

With regard to the “land promise,” this promise was later repeated by God on several occasions. Some examples of this repetition are Genesis 13:15; 15:18; 17:8; and Exodus 6:4-8. We read of the fulfillment of this oft-repeated promise in Joshua 21:43-45 which states:

And the Lord gave unto Israel all the land which he swore to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein. And the Lord gave them rest round about, according to all that he swore unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the Lord delivered all their enemies into their hand. There failed not aught of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel: all came to pass.

The fact that the Israelites did not possess merely a fraction of the land of Canaan but all of it is further corroborated in passages such as 2 Samuel 8:3, I Kings 4:25 and Nehemiah 9:7-8. Relative to the clear significance of these passages in documenting the fulfillment of the land promise, brother Foy E. Wallace, Jr., wrote:

The man who says that the promise God made to Abraham concerning the land of Canaan has not been fulfilled, denies what Joshua said, that nothing failed; and denies what Nehemiah said,

that God had performed his words; and denies what Stephen said in the seventh chapter of Acts about the time of the promise. Furthermore, Nehemiah said that God **had performed his words** at the time specified **for God is righteous**—the theory that the promise is yet unfulfilled makes God unrighteous.⁵

As a final point in connection with God's land promise to Abraham, it should be remembered that the Israelites' continued possession of Canaan was always contingent upon their continued faithfulness to God. For example, in Deuteronomy 30:15-20, we read that shortly before his death Moses told the Israelites:

See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; In that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it. But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: That thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou

mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.

Sadly, the Israelites did not remain faithful and obedient to God and He eventually punished and dispossessed them in accordance with His warning. Following many years of determined disobedience, the idolatrous northern kingdom of Israel was destroyed by Assyria and Israel's inhabitants were taken captive to other parts of the Assyrian Empire (cf. 2 Kings 17:6-8). Moreover, because the southern kingdom of Judah also persisted in her rebellion against God, she was later destroyed by Babylon and most of her inhabitants were resettled in other parts of the Babylonian Empire (cf. 2 Kings 24-25).

Shifting our attention now to the most significant part of God's two-fold promise to Abraham, we should observe that, in order for God to keep His promise to provide spiritual and eternal blessings to all people through One of Abraham's descendents Who would be the Messiah, it was necessary for God to restore a remnant of the conquered and dispersed Israelites to the land of Canaan. The promise of this restoration and its fulfillment are seen in passages such as Jeremiah 25:11-13, 2 Chronicles 36:20-23 and Ezra 1:1-4. Relative to keeping a nation of Israelites together in Canaan until the coming of the Messiah, we should remember also that God used a very special device to unify and segregate the progeny of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob. This was accomplished through giving the Israelites the Law of Moses subsequent

to delivering them from Egyptian bondage. Alexander Campbell wrote the following pertaining to the effects and purposes of the Old Covenant:

The twelve tribes were brought into the form of one great worshipping family, presenting through the common high priest their united worship to God. This gave rise to the erection of one public house consecrated to the Lord, as the place of meeting in their social and national character. A constitution, political, moral, and religious, was submitted to the people of God. This constitutional kingdom was built upon precepts and promises; and its worship, when fully developed, was little more than the extension of the family worship to one great national family. They had one king, one high priest, one national altar, one great national sacrifice, and one great annual atonement. The nation was a family of families, and what ever pertained to a single family in its family worship was extended and accommodated to this great confederate family. Various mystic and significant institutions distinguished this nation from all others; for it was one principal object of its institution to keep its subjects separate and distinct from all other people till Messiah (the promised seed) should come. Another object was, to picture out in appropriate types the spiritual worship of the kingdom of heaven, and to exhibit the great doctrines of faith, repentance, remission, adoption, and inheritance, by picturesque images, ingeniously devised to adumbrate the

whole doctrine of reconciliation and sanctification to God.

The Jewish institution is not to be regarded only in its political, moral, and religious aspects, but especially in its figurative and prospective character. God so wisely and benevolently contrived it from its origin to its close, that its whole history—the fates and fortunes of its subjects from their descent into Egypt, their travels thence to Canaan and settlement in the land of promise—their fortunes in that land to their final catastrophe—should exactly and impressively shadow forth the new institution with the fates and fortunes of the subjects of this new and more glorious order of things. “All these things happened to them for types” (examples), says Paul, “and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world have come.” The same great commentator on this institution not only presents the history of its subjects as instructive to the citizens of the new institution, but of the tabernacle he says, “It was a figurative representation for the time then present,” and the furniture thereof “the patterns of things in the heavens.” “The law,” he adds, “contained only a shadow of the good things to come.” A shadow, indeed, proceeding from a man, a house, a tree, is not, and can not be, an exact image or representation of them; yet, when explained by a verbal description, it easily facilitates an easy and correct conception of them.⁶

There is abundant evidence in the New Testament that many first century Jews were strongly opposed, and sometimes violently so, to the fact that the Old Covenant and Mosaic system were always designed by God to be temporary and typical and to become obsolete. Almost the entire letters of Hebrews and Galatians, as well as large portions of other New Testament books, are devoted to overcoming Jewish resistance to the God - planned abrogation of the Law of Moses which transpired at Christ's crucifixion (cf. Eph. 2:14-16; Col. 2:13-17).

As mentioned earlier, in Romans 9 - 11 we find an inspired description of the spiritual condition of those fleshly Jews who had rejected Jesus and had refused to obey the gospel. The contents of these chapters were well-summarized by brother Roy Deaver as follows:

CHAPTER NINE: In this chapter Paul begins the discussion regarding the condition of the Jews in view of their rejection of the Christ, the church of the Christ, and the gospel of the Christ. This discussion continues through chapter 11. Paul (1) refers to his own sorrow, in view of their condition (verses 1,2); (2) explains the reason for this sorrow—the terrible condition of the Jews (verse 3); (3) discusses the wonderful blessings peculiar to the Jews (verses 4,5); (4) states that their condition does not mean that God's word has failed in any way (verse 6); (5) explains why this is so (verses 6-13); (6) emphasizes that the condition of fleshly Israel does not mean that God is unrighteous (verses 14-18); (7) stresses that the Jews have no right to question God's dealings (verses 19-24); (8)

explains that even the prophets had talked about the salvation of *Spiritual Israel* (verses 25-29); (9) states the conclusion necessary from these facts, and explains what had happened (verses 30-33).

CHAPTER TEN: Paul continues consideration of the condition of the Jews in view of their rejection of the Christ and His gospel. He emphasizes especially that their condition (1) does not mean that their salvation was impossible, and (2) does not mean that they did not have ample opportunity to obey. Paul—(1) expresses his anxiety with reference to Israel's salvation; (2) makes reference to their particular problem; (3) explains their problem and cites the consequences of it; (4) mentions how the Christ is related to the Law, and to God's Plan for Righteousness; (5) shows that even Moses explained that righteousness by the **law** demanded perfect obedience; (6) discusses God's plan for righteousness—that it is of faith, does not demand the personal presence of the Christ, depends upon the word, is attainable, demands confession of the Christ, demands faith in the Christ; (7) states that this plan for righteousness, based upon faith in Jesus Christ—was foretold by Isaiah the prophet, is for all who believe, because all need it, requires calling upon the name of the Lord; (8) discusses what is involved in **calling** upon the name of the Lord—that the calling precedes and is essential to salvation; that it is preceded by faith; that the faith is

preceded by hearing; that the hearing is preceded by preaching; that the preaching is preceded by sending; that preaching is important and is essential; that the order—therefore—is: sending, preaching, hearing, faith, calling, salvation; (9) states that not all the Israelites obeyed the gospel message; (10) mentions that this failure to obey was foretold by Isaiah; (11) states a necessary conclusion from Isaiah’s statement; (12) emphasizes that Israel heard the gospel message, but failed to understand (to know) the significance of it. They failed to recognize that it was for them as well as for the Gentiles.

CHAPTER ELEVEN: Paul here continues consideration of the condition of the Jews in view of their rejection of the Christ and His gospel. Paul stresses that— (1) Israel’s condition does not mean that God had cast off His people; (2) Israel’s fall does not mean their salvation is impossible; (3) the **“mystery”** of God includes the Jews; and (4) God’s wisdom is magnificent. In this connection, Paul (1) asks the question, **“Did God cast off his people?”** (2) answers the question emphatically; (3) refers to himself as an illustration explanatory of his answer; (4) states the conclusion demanded from the facts given; (5) cites Elijah’s plea and God’s response as an illustration; (6) makes application of the illustration; (7) states how the **“remnant”** was saved; (8) states another conclusion from the facts given; (9) discusses the hardening of Israel;

(10) discusses the fact of Israel's fall, and the significance of it; (11) refers to his relationship to the Gentiles; (12) emphasizes that it is possible for Israel to be saved—that the **“receiving of them”** would be **“life from the dead;”** that Israel is **“holy;”** that Gentiles (who had become Christians) should not glory in their condition; that faith is essential; that it is possible for Gentile Christians to be **“broken off;”** that God is good and that God is severe; that Israel CAN be saved. (13) discusses the **“mystery”** of Israel—that a hardness in part had befallen Israel; **“until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in;”** **“and so all Israel shall be saved”** (14) stresses again that Israel can be saved; (15) emphasizes the magnificent wisdom of God.⁷

Consistent with the rest of God's revealed will, Romans 9-11 makes it unmistakably clear that fleshly Jews cannot rightfully expect preferential spiritual treatment from God based upon their fleshly relationship to Abraham. Although they were privileged to have been used to play a special role in the outworking of God's plan to provide a Savior and a way of salvation for all people, in accordance with that plan they, like every other nationality of people, must obey the gospel in order to be saved (Rom. 1:16-17; 2:1-2; 9:3-5; 11:26). As Paul expressed it in Romans 10:12-13:

For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call

upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

All of every race who will obey the gospel of Christ in His appointed way thereby become children of God and spiritual descendents of Abraham:

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise (Gal. 3:26-29).

As one of Abraham's "spiritual descendents", regardless of one's race or color or sex or social status, one is included in the true "Israel of God" and is a true "spiritual Jew," one of God's chosen people under the universally applicable New Covenant of Jesus Christ (Rom. 2:28-29; Gal 6:16).

Conclusion

May God help all men to realize the fundamental truth that "there is no respect of persons with God," but that He has always required obedience and faithfulness of those who would be pleasing to Him (Rom. 2:6-11; Gen. 18:18-19). And, based upon this realization, may God help us to endeavor to persuade all men to obey the gospel of Christ before it is everlastingly too late.

Endnotes

1 W. E. Vine, **Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words** (McLean, VA: Mac Donald Publishing Co.),

367.

2 Robertson L. Whiteside, **A New Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Saints at Rome** (Fort Worth, TX: The Manney Co., 1976), 214-215.

3 James Burton Coffman, **Commentary on Romans** (Austin, TX: Firm Foundation Publishing House, 1973), 362.

4 Guy N. Woods, **Questions and Answers** (Nashville, TN: Williams, 1976), 269-270.

5. Foy E. Wallace, Jr., **God's Prophetic Word** (Fort Worth, TX Noble Patterson, 1960), 120.

6 Alexander Campbell, **The Christian System** (Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate Co., 1980), 116-117.

7 Roy Deaver, "An Overall Look at the Book of Romans" in **The Book of Romans**, Garland Elkins and Thomas B. Warren, editors (Jonesboro, AR: National Christian Press, Inc., 1983), 14-16.

Chapter 16

**Questions On Hebrews
8:13b; Luke 16:16, And 1
Chronicles 16:17**

Bobby Liddell

Does Hebrews 8:13b Mean the Law of Moses Was Still in Effect at the Time Hebrews Was Written?; Does Luke 16:16 Mean That the Law Ended at the Coming of John the Baptizer?; If the Old Covenant Has Been Taken Out of The Way, Why Was It Called an Everlasting Covenant in 1 Chronicles 16:17 and Other Old Testament Passages?

I thank God for the good brethren who are the Southaven church of Christ. The elders, Bill Pierce and Coleman Simpson, oversee its work in splendid fashion; and B. J. Clarke is an exemplary preacher of the Gospel, faithful to God, preaching the Truth in love. The Southaven congregation's work in this lectureship shall have lasting effect on those blessed to be in attendance, and also on those who shall, through the book and tapes, benefit, for years to come, from their labors.

The many false doctrines, of past and present, concerning the covenants, pervert God's Truth, and

plague men both in and out of the church. The unsuspecting uninstructed often fall as prey to false teachers whose convoluted messages seem too complex to refute, much less to dispute. Thus, the very present danger absolutely necessitates plain and persistent preaching to be done on this subject. However, the scope of the relationship of the Two Covenants is broad, with many facets outside the boundaries of our particular subject. Therefore, the reader should carefully consider all the Bible teaches, and, as an aid to his understanding, the contents of this entire book of the 1996 Power Lectures, profiting from the in-depth studies by faithful brethren. With my desire to preach the Truth, and nothing but the Truth, I am happy to enter into this study, trusting those who enter into it with me are like minded. Our study shall consist of three questions, as listed above, with answers addressed to them, and with discussion, as needed, of side issues which some positions entail.

Hebrews 8:13b

Question: “Does Hebrews 8:13b Mean the Law of Moses Was Still in Effect at the Time Hebrews Was Written?”

Lest the reader wonder, should I not make myself clear in the discussion following, the answer is, “No.” Now, let us consider reasons for this answer, beginning with the text of Hebrews 8:8-13.

For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with

the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away (Heb. 8:8-13).

Very important to our study is this: the Hebrews writer has, by inspiration, looked back to a passage from the book of Jeremiah, and has given the inspired application. The Jeremiah passage follows.

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: But this

shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more (Jer. 31:31-34).

The part of the Hebrews text which shall be the basis for our study in this section, “Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away” (Heb. 8:13b), comes not from the Jeremiah passage, but seems to be an inspired observation based upon it. An immediate question arises, “Who declared the Old Law to be old?” God did, by implication, when, through Jeremiah, He stated: “I will make a new covenant” (Jer. 31:31). The very fact of a new covenant would make the then existing covenant, which preceded the new, old.

Now, listen to Hebrews 8:13a: “In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old.”

“Hath made” is from *pepalaioken*, perfect indicative, “met.” (metaphorically, BL) to treat as antiquated, to abrogate, supersede, Heb. 8:13.¹

The perfect tense indicates an action completed in the past but which has continuing results.

The perfect tense expresses perfective action. Perfective action involves a present state which has resulted from a past action. The present state is a continuing state; the past action is a completed action...the perfect conveys the idea of a present state resulting from a past action.²

“*Decayeth*” and “*waxeth old*” are both present participles.

The present participle expresses continuous or repeated action. It does not in itself indicate the time of the action, but when its relationship to the main verb is temporal, it usually signifies action contemporary with that of the main verb.³

The time element in the participle depends strictly on that of the principal verb in the sentence. The participle is put (I) In the *present*, if the action denoted by it is contemporaneous with that of the principal verb in the sentence (Matt. 24:30). Since the participle has no imperfect, the present is used in its place.⁴

Thus, the condition, of the Old Covenant’s being old, is a condition which existed in the days of Jeremiah, as declared so by God Himself. The decaying and waxing (growing) old also look back to the time of Jeremiah’s day. As well, the vanishing away describes the condition of the Old Law like an ancient aged man tottering at the edge of his grave. As a matter of fact, the Old Law was always only temporary (Gal. 3:19, 16), and began to decay and wax old the day it was given. The statement of Hebrews

8:13b is not a statement of events in the time of its writing, but of an event declared centuries before, which had results continuing to the time of the writing of Hebrews.

God said the Law of Moses was old, and His making the Law old had a continuing action. When did God say the Law was old? About six hundred years before His Son came incarnate as Jesus. Lenski said, "It was old when God spoke centuries ago and certainly has not grown younger during all the following centuries."⁵ Lightfoot put it this way:

And if they (the Mosaic law and Levitical priesthood, BL) were obsolete in Jeremiah's time, how much more so at the time the author writes....Not the destruction of Jerusalem but the inauguration of the new covenant spelled the end to the old.⁶

This is a point the Kingite A.D. 70 folks need to understand.

Please notice, the question under consideration is not "Was the Temple still standing at the time Hebrews was written?"; nor is it "Was worship, in the Temple, still being offered at the time Hebrews was written?"; nor is it "Did the Levitical priesthood still continue in their activities at the time Hebrews was written?"; nor is it "Did Jews still seek to live under the Old Law at the time Hebrews was written?" The question asks, "Was the Law of Moses still in effect at the time Hebrews was written?" That our study centers on the "Law" is an important point which we must neither minimize nor overlook.

When did the Law of Moses cease to be in effect? The first passage which comes to mind is Colossians 2:14,

“Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.” This verse hints at no other possible explanation than that the Old Law was taken out of the way and nailed to the cross of Christ (cf. Heb. 10:9-10; Rom. 7:1-4; Zech. 11:10-13). Not just part of the Old Law, but all, was so taken and nailed. Jesus said:

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled (Matt. 5:17-18; cf. Luke 16:17).

Notice, not one part of the Old Law was to pass until **all** was fulfilled.

And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me (Luke 24:44).

The continuance of observation of the Law of Moses, acceptable before, whether done by many or few, has no bearing on the question before us, no more so than one's determination to observe the Old Law today would reinstate it as a system under which men could please God. “Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace” (Gal. 5:4; cf. Heb. 13:10). If keeping the Law of Moses made it

continue to be in effect, one could also bring it into effect again today by keeping it. If that were the case, one could keep the Old Law, be accepted by God and be saved at last, yet outside of Christ (Acts 4:12), and His church (Acts 2:47), without His redeeming blood (1 Pet. 1:18-19; Heb. 9:22; 10:4), and without the Gospel (Rom. 1:16; 10:13-17). That some continued to teach and practice John's baptism after Pentecost did not make their doing so acceptable to God (Acts 19:4-5). John's baptism had been superseded; thus, it was no longer valid. Just so, the Old Law, superseded by the New, and final, Covenant, was no longer valid after the cross.

The Old Law was tied to the Levitical priesthood. "For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law" (Heb. 7:12). The priesthood *had* changed at the time Hebrews was written. "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We *have* such a high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens" (Heb. 8:1; cf. 3:1; 4:14-15; 6:20; 9:26). The altar of the temple was no longer God's altar (Heb. 13:10). The temple in Jerusalem was no longer God's temple (Heb. 8:2; 9:8-9; 1 Cor. 3:16). Christ could not have been high priest as long as the Law of Moses continued (Heb. 7:14). Not only that, but Christians were priests, and that before A.D. 70 (1 Pet. 2:5, 9). When did Christ become priest? "Even he shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a **priest** upon his **throne**: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both" (Zech. 6:13). When did Christ sit upon His throne? The answer: when there was given Him a kingdom. His kingly coronation followed His resurrection and ascension.

I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed (Dan. 7:13-14; cf. Acts 1:9; Heb. 1:3, 13).

When did the New Law come into effect?

And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth (Heb. 9:15-17).

The New Testament was not in effect while Christ lived. He was born under the Old Law (Gal. 4:4), lived under the Old Law, kept it perfectly (Heb. 4:15), and fulfilled it (Matt. 5:17). Hebrews 9:15-17 shows, without question, the blood of Christ, shed on the cross, was for all sins of all men, whether living before or after the cross, who by faith, obtained, or shall obtain, its blessings, and that from the time of the creation to the last day, the end of the world. After His death, burial and resurrection, He

could say: "...All power (authority, ASV) is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18). Thus, no longer are we to hear Moses and Elias (representatives of the Old Testament law and prophets), but God's Son (Matt. 17:5; Heb. 1:1-3), for by His Word we shall be judged (John 12:48).

If it were God's will to have extended grace to those Jews who continued faithful to the Law of Moses until A.D. 70 (the date of the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple therein), what man could withstand Him in His decision to do so? However, if on Pentecost, a Jew refused the Gospel, could he still live under the Old Law, until A.D. 70, before he would be condemned? If that were the case, the plea for both the preaching of the Gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15), and for obedience to the Gospel would have been stripped of its urgency. Likewise, the order by which the Gospel was carried to men should have been reversed. It should have been to the Gentile first, and then to the Jew (cf. Rom. 1:16; Acts 13:46). Additionally, God would have been a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34-35), rewarding the Jews, who had known the Law, for rejecting, until A.D. 70, Christ, the end of the Law (Rom. 10:4), and punishing the Gentiles, who had not known the Law. If a Jew, any Jew, were accepted by his keeping the Law of Moses after Pentecost, where is the example? Peter should have said, "**Sometime after A.D. 70, you need to** repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38).

We might, by human reasoning, ponder the circumstances, and come to the conclusion the Jews should be excused who kept the Law of Moses, and who died outside Christ--until A.D. 70, but we cannot, with

Biblical authority, make such a declaration. We might, as well, by human reasoning, ponder the eternal condition of the one whose walk to the river, wherein he intended to be baptized into Christ, was ended prematurely by the limb which fell upon his head. If God chose, or chooses, to save such a person, what man could deny Him? We would rejoice with any saved one. However, no man can point to the Scripture which promises salvation to such a person. Nor can one produce the New Testament example, of one after the cross, who was so saved; that is, without the blood of Christ contacted by that one's being baptized for the remission of sins (Rom. 6:3-4; Acts 2:38).

There is a false, perverted, self-contradictory, "mongrel" doctrine of "Kingism" which would have both the Law of Moses and the Law of Christ in effect from Pentecost to the destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 70).⁷ Max King, foremost advocate of this doctrine, in debate, affirmed, "The New Covenant was not completely established until the fall of the Jewish commonwealth in A.D. 70."⁸ In addition, to bolster his shaky system, he perverts the inspired allegory of Galatians 4:21-31, saying:

Fleshly and spiritual Israel co-existed from Pentecost (the time of Isaac's birth) until the destruction of Jerusalem (the time of Ishmael's casting out), and the purpose of Paul was to encourage to faithfulness the offspring of the freewoman, and to warn to repentance the offspring of the bondwoman.⁹

He says the "...time Ishmael would be cast out...was drawing near when the Hebrew letter was written...(Heb.

8:13).”¹⁰ Therefore, King asserts the Jews were subject to the Law of Moses until A.D. 70. If that were the case, they were not subject to the Law of Christ **until after** A.D. 70. If they were subject to the Law of Christ before A.D. 70, they were not subject to the Law of Moses. If they were subject to both, either God was married to both those under the Law of Moses and those under the Law of Christ (polygamy and adultery), or He had illegitimate offspring, or Romans 7:1-6 is a passage without meaning.

The destruction of Jerusalem, A.D. 70, including the destruction of the Temple, though it greatly affected the practice of Judaism, was not the end of the Law of Moses (for it had already ended at the cross), but was divine punishment upon the wicked Jews who had rejected the Christ, the cross and the church (Matt. 23:37-38; 24:2). Even so, the destruction of the Temple did not end all worship offered by the Jews seeking to serve under the former Law, for worship in the synagogues continued as before (Acts 13:14; 14:1; 17:1, 10; 18:4, 19). Orthodox Jews still worship, in a fashion, after the Old Law. “For a time the continuance of the Temple services gave to the Old Order an outward semblance of enduring reality even after it was essentially abrogated by fulfillment.”¹¹As a religious institution, it was, as we have seen, abolished when Christ was crucified. He then took it out of the way, forever abolishing at the same time the whole Tabernacle service in order to stay more effectually the hand of persecution, and correct the extreme Judaizing tendencies that were then threatening to corrupt the simplicity of the Gospel, especially throughout Palestine.¹²

The Old Law was **until** “faith came” (Gal. 3:23). It was “our schoolmaster” to bring man to Christ, and “...after that faith is come, we are **no longer** under a

schoolmaster” (Gal. 3:24-25). In that sense, the Old Law was just a preparatory stage leading to the coming of the New Law (Heb. 10:1).

The great apostle Paul earnestly sought the salvation of the Jews, Israel, his “brethren” and “kinsmen according to the flesh” (Rom. 9:3, 30-33). He knew the salvation of the Jews, any Jew, all Jews, would be obtained in exactly the same way as the salvation of the Gentiles. Salvation for Jew or Gentile was/is only by obedience to the Gospel of Christ (Rom. 10:1-4; 1:16, 5; 16:26; 2 Thess. 1:7-10). Interestingly, the book of Acts which records the cases of conversion, closes with a solemn warning to the Jews, from God, through Paul. In Rome, after calling the chief of the Jews together and preaching to them, some of them believed and some believed not. Thus, Paul said, “Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it” (Acts 28:28). Having rejected the Gospel of Christ, the Jews had **no other hope**.

(b) If the old had not already vanished in fact in God’s plan (even though the physical priesthood of Israel repeated meaningless rituals in physical temples and rooms) but was still in existence though about, nigh, unto vanishing, it means we must revise certain key scriptures. The middle wall of partition was nigh unto being abolished, the one new man was nigh unto being created, and the Gentiles were nigh unto being fellow-citizens with the saints (Eph. 2:14-19), they were nigh unto being built on the new foundation, and nigh unto being a growing holy temple (Eph. 2:20-21), they were nigh unto being circumcised in the circumcision of Christ, the old law was nigh unto being nailed to the cross and taken away, they were nigh unto the time when they were

not to be judged by things because they were in Moses' law (Col. 2:11-16), they were nigh unto the passing of the shadow and the coming of the body which pertains to Christ (Col. 2:17), the purification for sins was nigh unto appearing, the reign at God's right hand was nigh but not here (Heb. 1:3, 13), the great salvation was nigh unto being available (Heb. 2:1-4), the heavenly calling and High priest were nigh (Heb. 3:1; 7:11-14), the throne of grace was nigh but not available (Heb. 4:16), the law was nigh unto being disannulled, the better hope was nigh, the minister of the sanctuary was nigh but had not entered the sanctuary, the true tabernacle was nigh but not in existence, Christ was still not a high priest even though He was in heaven, Christ is **not** mediator of a New Covenant for this covenant is only nigh but not in hand (Heb. 8:1-6), the offering for sins had not been made but was only nigh, there was no remission of sins but a remembrance was still made of sins, and there was no way into the holy place by the blood of Jesus (Heb. 10:1-19), the blood of the **New** Covenant was not present so no one counted it unholy for it was only nigh (Heb. 10:28), righteousness through the gospel instead of through the law was only nigh not yet existing (Rom. 3:21-4:4), and the gospel as God's power unto salvation was nigh unto being preached but not yet preached as a reality (Rom. 1:16-17).

Whatever may be the explanation of Hebrews 8:13, it must not be interpreted to mean that the Law of Moses was still binding on the people of God.¹³

Luke 16:16

Question: "Does Luke 16:16 Mean That the Law Ended at the Coming of John the Baptizer?"

Again, for the sake of clarity, the answer is, “No.”
The text is Luke 16:16:

The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.

The responsibility of John the Immerser was to prepare the way for the Christ who would follow (Isa. 40:3-5; Mark 1:2-3). Thus, his work was a pivotal point between the Old Law and the coming of the New. There had been no word recorded from God since the close of the Old Testament revelation (about 400 years before). Now, with John, came word from God, and the preaching that the kingdom was near, or at hand, began (Matt. 3:2). This same message was also proclaimed by Jesus (Matt. 4:17), the seventy (Luke 10:9), and the twelve (Matt. 10:7). However, the kingdom did not begin with John, nor in the days of John, thus John was not in the kingdom.

Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he (Matt. 11:11).

John was beheaded in prison (Matt. 14:10) before Christ announced the building of His (at the time of the announcement yet future) church/kingdom (Matt. 16:18). During John’s lifetime, the kingdom was in a state of preparation. It had existed in purpose in the mind of God (Eph. 3:11); in promise (Gal. 3:8); in prophecy (1 Pet. 1:10); and, with John, in preparation (Matt. 3). It existed in

perfection when entrance into it was made possible when the keys, to open its doors, were used by Peter, and the other apostles (Matt. 16:18-19), in their preaching of the Gospel on Pentecost (Acts 2).

There is no verb in the first clause of Luke 16:16; that is, the Greek simply says, “The law and the prophets until John,” and the verb must be implied in the main clause, “from then the kingdom of God is being preached.” Thus, the meaning is this: “The law and the prophets **were preached** until John; after that the gospel of the kingdom is preached.”¹⁴ The Law of Moses continued in force until the cross, as discussed under the question concerning Hebrews 8:13b. It pointed men to the coming kingdom of the Messiah, and John was a herald of this coming kingdom.

It is not the case, as some argue, that the word “until” means the Old Law ended when John began to preach the kingdom was near. His message was not contradictory of the Old Law, nor in opposition to it, but, rather, was in fulfillment of it by his preaching the good news of the kingdom foretold by it (Dan. 2:44). The word “until” is also used in Acts 13:20: “And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet.” Obviously, Samuel was a judge (1 Sam. 7:15), and the period of the judges did not continue only up to the time of Samuel, but also included his being a judge. So, the law and the prophets did not continue only up to the time of John the Immerser, to end with the beginning of his ministry, but were in effect until the cross (Col. 2:14).

While the kingdom had not come at the time Jesus spoke the words of Luke 16 (cf. Matt. 6:10), there were those who were said to be pressing into it. If the kingdom

were not in existence, how could they “press” into it? Several explanations have been offered. “The kingdom is such a wonderful abode that souls must make whatever sacrifices necessary to enter into it.”¹⁵ “...Those who accepted the preaching of John did so under the pressure of conscience, and in spite of opposition,”¹⁶ that is, they should be commended who would so zealously seek to enter into the kingdom. Everyone was striving to enter the preparatory state of the kingdom; people were attempting to force their way into the kingdom of God; they did not understand its nature, and were doing violence to the kingdom that Jesus preached by perverting and misapplying his teachings with respect to it.¹⁷

The gates of Christ’s kingdom were not opened till Pentecost (Acts 2); but men hearing it was about to be opened sought to enter it prematurely, not by the gates which God would open when Simon Peter used the keys (Matt. xvi.19), but by such breaches as they themselves sought to make in the walls.¹⁸

The context of Luke 16:16 seems to indicate there were those, especially the Pharisees (v. 15), who were trying to enter the kingdom according to their plans, not according to Christ’s. Certainly, there were those who expected an earthly kingdom with Jesus as the king who would deliver them from the Romans. Some even would have taken “him by force, to make him a king” (John 6:15). Thus, the meaning, according to the context, seems to be that there were those who would force the coming of the kingdom, before the time, and would try to force their way into it, according to their own misconceptions about its nature.

1 Chronicles 16:17

Question: “If the Old Covenant Has Been Taken Out of the Way, Why Was It Called an Everlasting Covenant in 1 Chronicles 16:17 and Other Old Testament Passages?”

Be ye mindful always of his covenant; the word which he commanded to a thousand generations; Even of the covenant which he made with Abraham, and of his oath unto Isaac; And hath confirmed the same to Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant, Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance; When ye were but few, even a few, and strangers in it (1 Chron. 16:15-19).

The above passage refers to the land promise made to Abram and his seed (v. 18; cf. Gen. 15:18; 28:13). It was a promise with conditions; that is, if they would “hearken to these judgments,” God would “keep...the covenant.”

Wherefore it shall come to pass, if ye hearken to these judgments, and keep, and do them, that the Lord thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which he swore unto thy fathers: And he will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee: he will also bless the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy land, thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep, in the land which he swore unto thy fathers to give thee (Deut. 7:12-13).

Several Old Testament passages refer to things which were said to be “everlasting” or “perpetual,” yet which obviously continue no longer. Notice these examples: Exodus 12:14--the Passover, Exodus 29:9; 40:15--the Aaronic priesthood, Exodus 29:42--the burnt offering, Exodus 30:31--the holy anointing oil, Exodus 31:16--the Sabbath observance, Leviticus 6:20--the meat offering, Leviticus 16:34--the yearly atonement, and Numbers 15:38--the fringes in the borders of their garments.

Israel “broke the everlasting covenant” God made with them (Isa. 24:5). As a result, God broke His covenant with them.

And I took my staff, even Beauty, and cut it asunder, that I might break my covenant which I had made with all the people. And it was broken in that day: and so the poor of the flock that waited upon me knew that it was the word of the Lord (Zech. 11:10-11).¹⁹

Conclusion

The Law of Moses was fulfilled by Christ (Matt. 5:17), taken out of the way and nailed to the cross of Christ (Col. 2:14). It did not continue until A.D. 70. It does not continue in force today. Nor did it end in the days of John the Immerser. Israel “broke the everlasting covenant” (Isa. 24:5), and God made a new covenant, unto which all men are amenable today (Heb. 8:8-13). Let us all seek to know God’s will as revealed in the New Covenant, and to live faithfully according to it. Then, and only then, shall His blessings be ours now and eternally.

Endnotes

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- 13 James D. Bales, “Did the Old Covenant Not Vanish Away Until A.D. 70?”, **The Death of King’s A.D. 70 Hypothesis**, (Searcy, AR: unpublished notes, 1991), chap. 20, 2.

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19 For a superb treatment of this aspect of the Old Covenant, see Roy J. Hearn, **Sabbath or Lord's Day**, available through Memphis School of Preaching, 4400 Knight Arnold Road, Memphis, TN 38118. Much material for the discussion of 1 Chronicles 16:17 was taken from brother Hearn's material and his class notes.

Special Studies Concerning The Covenants

- Chapter 17** The Development Of The Abrahamic Promise by Joseph Meador
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Chapter 17

The Development Of The Abrahamic Promise In The Two Covenants (Galatians 3:8-29)

Joseph D. Meador

In the vast literature of the American Restoration Movement, there was manifested a great interest in the remedial aspects of the various covenants which made up the Hebrew Scriptures, the Old Covenant. This interest existed because of the typological relation which the Old Covenant had to the Messianic New Covenant. Indeed, there are treatments of the revelational covenants, i.e., the Old Covenant and New Covenant, in such early papers as **The Christian Baptist** (Alexander Campbell), **Lard's Quarterly** (Moses E. Lard), **The Millennial Harbinger** (Alexander Campbell), **The Christian Messenger** (Barton W. Stone), and **The Evangelist** (Walter Scott). This intense focus upon the redemptive relationship that exists between the Two Covenants is likewise found in the following books published in the early to late nineteenth century: **The Gospel Restored** (Barton W. Stone), **The Christian System** (Alexander Campbell), **The Messiahship** (Walter Scott), **The Remedial System** (H. Christopher), **The Scheme of Redemption** (Robert

Milligan), **The Gospel Preacher** (2 volumes, Benjamin Franklin), **The Gospel Plan of Salvation** (T. W. Brents), **The Witness of the Spirits** (James W. Zachary), and **The Spirit and the Word** (Z.T. Sweeney).

However, it is in the book simply entitled **Johnson's Sermons On the Two Covenants** by Ashley S. Johnson, first published in 1899, that ample and exhaustive coverage was given to this particular subject. In fact, Johnson had engaged in a debate some twenty years before the publication of his text and the topic for this debate was "Moses Or Christ, Which? Or, The Two Covenants."

It is the purpose of this particular study to focus upon the scriptural development of the Abrahamic Covenant in its relation to the Old and New Testaments. Abraham is one of the most illustrious characters presented in the Bible. He is one who is expressly designated "the friend of God " (James 2:23), and from whom Jesus Himself derives one of His Messianic titles, "the Son of Abraham" (Matthew 1:1). Not only was Abraham the physical progenitor of the nation of Israel, but in a spiritual sense he is also described as "the father of all them that believe" (Romans 4:11).

Definition Of Covenant

J. A. Motyer has well written that at the center of the world-view of the Old Testament, and at the center of what God has revealed about Himself, lies an understanding of the idea of "covenant." Indeed, "covenant" is the very heart of the entire Bible, as it is the central essence of what it teaches us about God and the remedial system. The Hebrew term *berith* is translated "covenant" and has various usages which include: "bond,

fetter, agreement, and treaty.” Concerning the usage of *berith* in the Old Testament, a covenant may be made between individuals (Genesis 21:27, 26:28, 1 Samuel 18:3); between husband and wife (Malachi 2:14); between tribes (1 Samuel 11:1, Judges 2:2, Exodus 23:32); between monarchs (1 Kings 20:34); between a king and his people (2 Kings 11:4, 2 Chronicles 23).

In the Old Testament, the word *berith* has an ordinary contextual usage when both parties to the covenant are men, and a distinctive contextual usage when God makes covenant with man. Some have therefore applied the terms *suntheke* (a solemn agreement made by men) and *diatheke* (a solemn agreement made by God and man) as descriptive of the type of covenant in question.

Another insight into the meaning and use of the word “covenant” is that this English term is derived from the Latin *foedus* meaning a treaty. A.H.J. Gunneweg observes that this is not a wholly adequate translation of the Hebrew term *berith*. The Old Testament *berith*, as applied to Jehovah, does not signify so much a lifeless two-sided treaty, as it does rather a testament or union with inherent mutual obligations. As such, a divine treaty differed from a parity treaty or covenant in that it was not to be understood as a cold formal agreement (whether written or oral). Although conditions were set forth in a divine covenant, there was also the intended aspect of a familiar and united relationship with God in such a covenant. This helps one to understand, therefore, why David would not take the life of King Saul, in that the king was uniquely covenanted to God. In this regard, Saul had a covenanted relationship as God’s anointed king, which no man could breach. Indeed, only God Himself could (and did) annul His covenant with Saul (because of Saul’s disobedience, 2

Samuel 2).

The Greek translators of the Septuagint (LXX) translated *berith* as *diatheke* some 300 times. Although the Greek terms *suntheke* and *entolai* are each used one in the LXX in reference to covenant, David Estes explains that: “The choice of this word seems to have been occasioned by a recognition that the covenant which God makes with men is not fully mutual as would be implied in *suntheke*...” Therefore, the Greek word *diatheke* is used to translate the term *berith* in the LXX, and it is likewise the linguistically dominate term in the New Testament text. In the New Testament canon, the Greek word *diatheke* is used some thirty times in a contextual manner, which makes it clear that the idea of “covenant,” or solemn agreement, is intended.

Description Of The Abrahamic Covenant

Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went

forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came. And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land. And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him.” (Genesis 12:1-7).

The Old Testament canon contains a series of covenants and covenant promises which are salvational or redemptive in nature. These covenants include the Adamic Covenant (Genesis 3), the Noahic Covenant (Genesis 9), the Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 12), the Sinaitic Covenant (Exodus 20), and the Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7).

Of particular interest is the covenant which God made with Abram (known later as Abraham, Genesis 17:4,5), as recorded in Genesis 12:1-7. In this covenant there are three distinct blessings promised to Abraham and his progeny who would one day become national Israel. First, there is the **Nation Promise** (Genesis 12:2); second, there is the **Seed Promise** (Genesis 12:3); and third, there is the **Land Promise** (Genesis 12:7).

The Abrahamic Covenant, as a divine covenant form, was certainly conditional in nature. As Oswald T. Allis suggests: “The claim that the Abrahamic Covenant was ‘unconditional’ has dangerous implications; for it suggests an antithesis between *faith* and *obedience* which is not warranted in Scripture.” In this same vein, George Shama notes that: “The promise made to the seed of Abraham...was not unconditional, but clearly revocable.... The promises made to the patriarch could be and

ultimately have been annulled by national apostasy.” In addition, Ronald Youngblood recognized the conditionality of the Abrahamic Covenant and provided a list of Scripture passages to support his conclusion. These Scriptures include Genesis 12:1,7, 14:22-23, 15:9-10, 17:1-2, 17:3-4, 17:9-14, 17:23-27, 18:19, 22:2,16-18, 26:4-5, Deuteronomy 28:15-68, Jeremiah 4:1-2, and Hebrews 11:8.

Therefore, the Abrahamic Covenant, which is mentioned in a prominent fashion in the book of Genesis (cf. 12:2,3,7, 13:14-17, 15:1ff, 17:1ff, 18:1ff, 21:12-13, and 22:9-18) was essentially a covenant of promise which was conditional in nature. The conditional requirement was that Abram must respond in faith and trust to God’s calling. The promissory aspect of the Abrahamic Covenant can be seen in the dual fulfillment of each section.

First, the nation promise (Genesis 12:2) was fulfilled in the primary sense by the formation of the nation of Israel. Yet, in the ultimate sense it was fulfilled in the establishment of the church, the spiritual nation of promise, the new “Israel of God” (1 Peter 2:9; Galatians 6:16).

Second, the seed promise (Genesis 12:3) was fulfilled in the primary sense upon the birth of Isaac. However, in the ultimate sense its fulfillment was occasioned by the birth of Jesus Christ, the spiritual child of promise (Acts 3:25-26, Galatians 3:16).

Third, the land promise (Genesis 12:7) was fulfilled in the primary sense upon the conquest of the land of Canaan (15:18, 17:1-8, Joshua 21:43, 1 Kings 4:21). Yet, the land promise will be fulfilled in the ultimate sense when we reach Heaven, the spiritual land of promise (Revelation 21:1-7). This later promise is commemorated by such hymns as “To Canaan’s Land, I’m On My Way” and “Bound For the Promised Land.”

Design Of The Abrahamic Covenant

And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by

promise. Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one. Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Galatians 3:8-29).

The intended spiritual design of the Abrahamic Covenant is found in Galatians 3:8-29. This passage of Scripture reveals three great designs of the covenant that God made with Abraham. These include the following: 1. The blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant are promised to those who live by an obedient faith in Jesus the Messiah

(3:8-14); 2. The blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant are confirmed in the person of the Messianic seed, Jesus (3:15-22); and, 3. The blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant are bestowed upon the spiritual heirs of Abraham – those who have obeyed the Gospel of Jesus Christ (3:23-29).

1. The Promised Blessings (Galatians 3:8-14)

In this portion of Scripture, the apostle Paul quotes directly from Genesis 12:3 in the Abrahamic Covenant. Paul states that Abraham was familiar with Gospel fundamentals (3:8). We must not think the Gospel was preached to Abraham in the same fullness in which it is preached to us. The Gospel (literally, “good news”) was preached to Abraham by God, and that good news was “In thee shall all nations be blessed.” It is important to note that Abraham heard the Gospel in promise, while today, we hear it in its fullness (or fulfillment) This promise is further repeated in Genesis 18:18, where it is written, “And all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him.”

2. The Blessing Confirmed (Galatians 3:15-22)

In this portion of Scripture, the apostle Paul presents his inspired reasoning that the Abrahamic Covenant was still in force. He based his argument upon the grounds that the Mosaic Law could not annul the earlier Abrahamic Covenant promise. Further, Paul clearly shows that the spiritual blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant were confirmed in the very person of Jesus the Messiah whom Paul describes as the mediator between God and man in the covenant agreement. The confirmation of the covenant was achieved by the incarnation (John 1:1-2, 1:14) of the

Messiah, by His blood atonement upon the cross, by His resurrection, and by His ascension and coronation as “King of Kings and Lord of Lords.”

3. The Blessings Bestowed (Galatians 3:23-29)

In this final portion of Scripture, the apostle Paul presents three truths regarding the Mosaic Law and the Law of Christ, wherein the blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant are bestowed. First, Paul reminds his audience of the **PAST** (3:23). There was a time when the Mosaic Law exercised dominion over the nation of Israel.

Paul then relates the **PURPOSE** (3:24) of the Mosaic Law. In essence, the Law of Moses was designed as a *paidagogos* (literally, an escort or companion of male youth from about age six to sixteen, who acted in a disciplinary capacity as well), or “tutor” whose purpose it was to escort the nation of Israel to the Messianic Age.

Ultimately, Paul describes the **PRESENT** (3:25-29) situation. In the present age, where the Gospel is fully revealed, there is no longer any need for the service of the Law of Moses. It served its purpose by bringing the unwary nation of Israel face-to-face with the promised Messiah – the Savior of the world. It is therefore by spiritual blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant are freely bestowed.

In conclusion, may we learn to study and appreciate the great redemptive covenants contained in the Bible. By so doing our understanding of the New Covenant of Jesus Christ will grow and our overall understanding of the history of redemption will focus more intently upon the Word of Promise.

Chapter 18

A Study Of The Ark Of The Covenant

Allen Webster

Introduction

The Ark of the Covenant is the most famous piece of furniture in the world. It was called the “ark of the covenant” (Num. 10:33; Deut. 31:26; Heb. 9:4) because in it were deposited the two tables of stone, upon which were written the Ten Commandments, the terms of God’s covenant with Israel. It was called “the ark of the testimony” (Exod. 25:16,22), for the commandments were God’s testimony respecting His holiness and man’s sin; “the ark of God” (1 Sam. 3:3; 4:11) and the “ark of the Lord” (Josh. 4:11), because it was the throne of His divine presence; and the “ark of God’s strength” (2 Chron. 6:41), because it was so often used to show His power.

In Genesis, God **walked with** His people (Gen. 3:8; 5:22,24; 6:9; 17:1), but in Exodus, He wanted to **dwell with** His people (Exod. 25:8; 29:46). Therefore He instructed Moses to build the tabernacle. This was the first of several dwellings that God blessed with His glorious presence (Exod. 40:34-38). However, when Israel sinned, the glory departed (1 Sam. 4:21-22). The second place was Solomon’s temple (1 Kings 8:10,11). Ezekiel, because of sin, saw that glory depart also (Ezek. 8:4; 9:3; 10:4,18; 11:23). In the New Testament, God’s glory returned to earth in the Person of His Son, Jesus Christ

(John 1:14, where **dwelt** means “tabernacled”), but men nailed Him to a cross and sent God’s glory back to heaven. God dwells today in His temple. It is unlike those made with men’s hands (Acts 17:24). He constructed it Himself and continues to add to (Acts 2:47). God’s church (Christians) today is His temple, universally (Eph. 2:20-22), locally (1 Cor. 3:16), and individually (1 Cor. 6:19,20). Eventually, God will dwell with His people in the heavenly home the Nazarene Carpenter is presently preparing (John 14:1,2; Rev. 21:22). In the Old Testament tabernacle and temple, God’s presence was usually centered in the ark of the covenant.

The Origin And Description Of The Ark

The Hebrew word for **ark** (*aron*) was the common name for “chest” or “coffer.” In the last verse of Genesis (50:26), it is used for the **coffin** (mummy-case) in which Joseph’s embalmed body was placed after he died in Egypt. God directed Moses to make the ark of the covenant (Exod. 25:10-22; Deut. 10:2-5), after the golden calf was destroyed (Deut. 10:1, “At that time”). Its builder was a man named Bezaleel (Exod. 37:1-5), and it was the first piece of the tabernacle’s furniture for which precise directions were delivered. It was set up first in Moses’ tabernacle and later transferred to Solomon’s temple. It was the only article of furniture in the innermost room, or Holy of Holies, of both places (Exod. 40:20; 1 Kings 8:6).

The ark was an oblong chest of shittim (KJV) or acacia (ASV, NKJV) wood (Exod. 37:1-9), two and a half cubits long by one and a half broad and deep (about 45" x 27" x 27"). Inside and outside gold was overlaid on the wood, and on the upper side, a crown of gold formed an edge which held the lid. The ark was fitted with rings,

one at each of the four corners, and through these were passed staves of the same wood similarly overlaid, by which it was carried by the Kohathites (Num. 7:9; 10:21). These poles were never removed from the rings, apparently to show that the ark was a portable sanctuary. Even when it was placed in Solomon's Temple, the poles stayed in place, and could be seen from a certain point outside the inner sanctuary (1 Kings 8:8). The ark, when transported, was enveloped in the "veil" of the dismantled tabernacle, in the curtain of badgers' skins, and in a blue cloth over all, and was therefore not seen (Num. 4:5,20).

The ark had a gold cover known as the "mercy seat" (Exod. 25:17-22). The mercy seat was a slab of pure gold which fit exactly within the crown of the ark, so the mercy seat could not slide around during transportation. Of one piece with the mercy seat were two angelic statues called "cherubim." They stood at opposite ends of the mercy seat, facing each other with wings outstretched above and their faces bowed toward the mercy seat. They marked the place where the Lord dwelled, as well as the place where the Lord often communicated His will. The phrase "under His wings," usually refers to the wings of these cherubim (though sometimes the wings of the mother hen, Psm. 91:4; cf. Matt. 23:37), carrying the meaning of dwelling in the holy of holies in close communion with God (cf. Psm. 36:7,8; 61:4).

The Purposes Of The Ark

Once a year the high priest entered the Holy of Holies, with sacrificial blood that he sprinkled on the mercy seat for the atonement of sin. So the ark was a place of atonement (Lev. 16:2,14-17). Though Jeremiah prophesied that in time to come the ark will no longer be

of significance for worship (Jer. 3:16), perhaps during the time of Moses' Law this was its most important purpose. Also, the ark was where God chose to meet with Moses (Num. 7:89) and Joshua. After the victory over Ai, at Mt. Ebal, the ark was present for the reading of the Law before all the people (Josh. 8:33). Therefore, it was a place to come to know God's will (Exod. 25:22; 30:6,36) and to make entreaty (Josh. 7:6-15). It was the throne where God's glory rested (Psm. 80:1; 99:1). When its contents are considered, it served as a symbol of God's precepts (the stone tablets), God's provision (golden pot of manna), and God's power (Aaron's rod). It was also seen as a symbol of God's holiness (1 Sam. 6:19; 2 Sam. 6:6,7).

From the vantage point of the New Testament, the ark offers some typical lessons. The mercy seat was a type of Christ (the phrase *mercy seat* also means "propitiation"), and Jesus Christ is the propitiation for us today (Rom. 3:25,26; 1 John 2:2) for we come to God through Him and offer spiritual sacrifices (1 Tim. 2:5; 1 Pet. 2:5,9). Christ is also our ark. In and by Him God manifests His favor and communicates His grace to us, and accepts our adoration and addresses (John 14:6; Eph. 1:3). Hebrews nine uses the tabernacle and its furnishings, including the ark, in explaining by analogy salvation by the high-priesthood of Christ. John used the ark as a symbol of God's blessings in the heavenly temple to come (Rev. 11:19).

The Contents Of The Ark

Before the ark was made, Moses directed that a pot of manna be laid up before the Lord (Exod. 16:32-34). After crossing the Red Sea, Israel had murmured because they had no food, so God gave them quail to eat in the evening

and manna in the morning (Exod. 16:13,14). Manna "...was like coriander seed, white; and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey" (16:31b). It lasted until they came to the Jordan (Exod. 16:35), so they were able to eat it during the entire forty years of wandering. Jesus used manna as a figure of Himself. "For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world...I am the bread of life" (John 6:33-35). When He came, man was again hungry. The Christ-child was born in Bethlehem (which means "house of bread"). The Bread of life was born in the house of bread! He satisfies the soul's hunger (John 6:48,51).

The ark was also made as a container for the two stone tablets containing the Ten Commandments (Exod. 25:16,21; Deut. 10:4). Aaron's Rod that budded was later added (Num. 17:10). While the New Testament states that the ark contained these three items (Heb. 9:4), the ark must have lost two of them through the years (perhaps when taken captive by the Philistines). At the dedication of Solomon's Temple, Aaron's rod and the golden pot of manna were gone. The historian noted, "There was nothing in the ark except the two tablets of stone which Moses put there at Horeb" (1 Kings 8:9).

It is interesting that each of these items is connected with the rebellion of God's people: the tables of Law with the making of the golden calf; Aaron's rod with the rebellion led by Korah; and the manna with Israel's complaining in the wilderness. These items could have brought judgment to Israel were it not for the mercy seat upon the ark, the place where blood was sprinkled each annual Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:14). The shed blood covered their sins so that God saw the blood and not the rebellion.

The History Associated With The Ark

Overview. After the ark and the tabernacle were completed (in the Book of Exodus), and the priests given the laws concerning them (Leviticus-Numbers 7, e.g. Exod. 16:2; Num. 3:31; 4:5), it was time for the ark to take a place in the history of God's people. The ark went before Israel in the wilderness journeys "to search out a resting-place for them" (Num. 10:33). It was carried by the sons of Levi during these wanderings (Deut. 31:9); and, as a symbol of the Lord's presence, it was borne by the priests in advance of the host (Deut. 1:33; Psm. 132:8). During the conquest, it led the children of Israel into battle.

When the tabernacle was set up at Shiloh (Josh. 18), the ark took up residence there. It remained in Shiloh (with one excursion, Judg. 20) until the time of Eli when it was captured by the Philistines and later returned (1 Sam. 4-7). Between the time of Eli and David, its abode seems to have frequently shifted. It sojourned among several families (probably Levitical) in the border villages of eastern Judah (1 Sam. 7:1; 2 Sam. 6:3,11; 1 Chron. 13:13; 15; 24,25). Once during this time, it was on the battlefield with Saul against the Philistines (1 Sam. 14:18).

David brought the ark to Jerusalem, after some misadventures (2 Sam. 6; 1 Chron. 13; 15). It did not take its place in Moses' tabernacle, but dwelt in curtains (2 Sam. 7:2), that is, in a separate tent David pitched for it in Jerusalem (2 Sam. 6:17). Even during David's time it seems to have been the practice to take it from Jerusalem to the battlefield as Uriah makes mention of it being in a tent when David calls him back to Jerusalem (2 Sam. 11:11, "The ark, and Israel, and Judah, abide in tents").¹ At the time of Absalom's rebellion, Zadok and the Levites carried the ark out of Jerusalem, but David had them take

it back (2 Sam. 15:24-29). When Solomon finished the temple, it was brought into the sanctuary (1 Kings 8:1-5). Later, the Levites were directed to restore it to the holy place (2 Chron. 35:3), so it must have been moved to make room for the carved image that Manasseh placed in the house of God (2 Chron. 33:7), or possibly on account of the purification and repairs of the temple by Josiah (2 Chron. 34).

Nothing is known of what became of the ark. It disappeared when Babylon's armies destroyed Jerusalem in 586 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar either took it captive or destroyed it (2 Esdr. 10:21,22). There was no ark in the second (Zerrubabel's) or third (Herod's) temples. In the many synagogues that arose after the Captivity, from our earliest knowledge to the present, a chest or ark containing the Torah (scrolls of the Law) and other sacred books was placed in the side wall toward Jerusalem. This area is shut off from the rest of the building behind a curtain, just as the original ark was placed in the Holy of Holies.

Highlights. We sometimes say, "If only these walls could talk..." In this discussion, we might say, "If only the ark could speak, it would have some interesting stories to tell." Let's look at some of the highlights of the history the ark "saw."

The ark saw God part the water. Moses, the servant of the Lord, died before his people made their way into the Promised Land. The people mourned his death for thirty days (Deut. 34:8), and then the summons came, "Command the children of Israel to prepare food; for in three days ye shall pass over Jordan" (Josh. 1:2,11). At that time, "The Jordan was overflowing all its banks" (3:15), which it always does during harvest season. If someone was going to cross Jordan, he would not want to

when it was flooded! A river which falls as rapidly as the Jordan (falling nearly seven hundred feet in sixty miles) has a rapid current when it is low; but when it is so swollen that it leaves its crooked channel, and rushes in a direct line toward its resting place, it has terrific force. The water tore its way over brush and treetops. It was a fearful sight to look at, and to think of leading women and children over it was unthinkable. Even in more modern times, water has been a force to be reckoned with. During the Civil War, for instance, a little creek in Virginia swelled and stopped the movements of McClelland's one hundred thousand men when they were about to take Richmond.

Nonetheless, Israel crossed the flooded Jordan (3:8,16). When the priests came to the water's edge, they carried the ark right over the bank and at its presence Jordan separated! The waters moved away as the ark advanced until the river bed was empty on one side, and on the other the waters stood in a heap (3:13). It was no easy task even then to get down the steep slope and climb down into the channel of the river. During that day it is estimated that three million Jews passed over, with the priests standing with the ark in the middle of the Jordan on dry ground. The waters remained parted until the ark was carried to the farther shore, and then the mighty river resumed its course (4:7,18).

The lesson to learn is: Challenges and obstacles are nothing to God. God wanted to show the people that He was with Joshua as He had been with Moses (3:7). How could He show, beyond all possibility of doubt, that He was among His people? Only by doing something that none but God can do. Thus He stopped a full river, at flood stage, and allowed them to cross on **dry** ground. If there is a God who created the heaven and the earth, who now rules

over them, and who does His own pleasure among the nations, surely He has sufficient power to stop a little river. We, too, face many “flooded Jordans” in life. There are some great challenges we must overcome in order to enter into the Promised Land.

The challenge of obeying the Gospel (Acts 2:38).

The challenge of remaining faithful (Rev. 2:10).

The challenge of defeating the wiles of the devil (2 Cor. 2:11; 11:14).

The challenge of finding a mate to help us go to heaven (1 Pet. 3:1,2).

The challenge of leading our children to faith and faithful service (Eph. 6:4).

The challenge of saving the lost (Mark 16:15).

The challenge of building up the church (1 Pet. 2:5,9).

The ark saw “the walls come tumbling down.”

The ark was carried around Jericho at the time of its downfall (Josh. 6:4-16). [Note in verse 8 that the ark is taken for a symbol of the divine presence, just as the pillar of cloud had been previously.] Jericho was about six miles from the Jordan River on the western side and about seven miles north of the Dead Sea. Gilgal, Joshua’s headquarters, was about halfway between Jericho and the river. Jericho was about eight hundred feet below sea level and its climate was tropical, with great heat during the summer. Many springs made it a green oasis in the middle of a dry area, so that it later became a winter resort for those who lived in the cold hill country of Judea. Jericho figures in the New Testament in several places. The man in the Parable of the Good Samaritan was going from

Jerusalem to Jericho (Luke 10:30). This was true to life because priests lodged there when they were not serving in the temple in Jerusalem. Zacchaeus lived in Jericho (Luke 19:1-10) and Christ healed blind Bartimaeus there (Mark 10:46-52; Luke 18:35; cf. Matt. 20:30). The New Testament Jericho, though, was not on the site of the Old Testament city, but was a completely new city.

Jericho was a city of great importance in Joshua's time. It was probably at the time the oldest city in the world and was called the "City of Palm Trees" (Deut. 34:3). It was part of Canaan, a land described as "flowing with milk and honey" (Exod. 3:8,17). Archeologists have discovered that it was a surprisingly strong city with a massive wall, mud brick and stone houses, plastered floors with reed mats, and clay figurines of animals and the mother goddess (*Zondervan*). Jericho was not a large city by modern standards. Its wall enclosed about seven acres and served as a fortress for the large population of the area. The fact that Israel's army could go around it seven times in one day indicates that it was not **that** big. Yet it was important to the conquest of Canaan because of its strategic position as the town that controlled the roads to the rest of the area.

God wants His people to follow the directions.

As God brought Israel into Canaan, He wanted them to rely on His strength and not theirs. His plan for taking the first city was not a show of military might. Rather, He gave a plan which included priests, the ark of the covenant, ram's horns, and shouting. No trenches were opened, no battering rams were used, nor any military preparations made. The ark was carried around the city once a day for six days, and seven times the seventh day.

Fortification made direct assault nearly impossible,

and an extended siege would have permitted other Canaanites to mobilize and attack. God's intervention made this strategic victory possible. God's priests, instead of military generals, led this battle. They were appointed to carry the ark and sound the trumpets. This was an honor for the priests, who were not ordinarily sent to war. Normally, they encouraged soldiers by reminding them that God was among them (Deut. 20:2-4). Blowing trumpets was a sign throughout their history that God was going with them into battle (Num. 10:9; 2 Chron. 13:12). The trumpets used this time, though, were not the ordinary silver ones, but were made from hollowed out rams' horns. Likewise, our weapons are spiritual, not showy (2 Cor. 10:4).

Armed men went before the ark to clear the way. If obstacles were in the way, they would remove them; if opposition was made by the enemy, they would deal with it. Thus the priest's march would be safe. Behind the ark, others were allowed to follow. They probably walked far enough from the walls to be out of reach of enemy arrows. No one can take a city alone. Joshua had the loyal cooperation of the priests and people, and together they overcame the enemy. We, too, have to cooperate in the church to defeat the devil and spread the Gospel (cf. 1 Cor. 3:9). Too many churches fuss and feud and leave God's work undone. God's work is more important than personality differences (cf. Gal. 5:14,15).

Sometimes God uses a strange battle plan. What a strange plan for fighting a battle! God's ways are not our ways, and He uses what the world calls "foolish" to confound the mighty (1 Cor. 1:26-31). He appointed this way to exalt His name (Psm. 21:13). When we follow God's methods, He wins the battle and gets the glory. Jehosaphat

said, “We have no might against this great company that cometh against us, neither know we what to do; but our eyes are upon thee” (2 Chron. 20:12). When Nebuchadnezzar exalted himself, he was driven among the beasts to act like them (Dan. 4:33). It is said that Pope John XXI built for himself a noble chamber in the palace of Viterbo, and that he was crushed to death when its roof fell in, while he was vainly admiring it. Dean Milman says of this: “John was contemplating with too great pride the work of his own hands, and burst out into laughter; when, at that instant, the avenging roof came down upon his head.” Our pride has a way of bringing us down as well (Matt. 23:12); therefore, we should humble ourselves before the Lord (Jas. 4:6,10).

This strange plan also tested whether they could patiently bear reproaches while waiting for the Lord to act. We may suppose that this odd march at first amused the city, and by the seventh day, they must have really made fun of the Israelites (cf. Neh. 4:2). It must have been hard to endure a week of laughter (cf. 1 Cor. 1:18). Sometimes Christians face ridicule because they are different from the world. We do not go to the same places, laugh at the same jokes, dress in the same fashions, and do the same things. We have to learn to deal with smart remarks and ridiculing laughs. Like the apostles, we should be glad to “suffer shame for his name” (Acts 5:41).

At first, the army marching around Jericho must have frightened them; but as more days passed without harm, perhaps it lost its effect. They may have even gotten comfortable with that death march around them. On the morning of the seventh day, they may have even said to each other, “This silly ritual doesn’t scare us. You better get a new plan” (cf. 2 Pet. 3:4). Then it happened! So it is

with people today. People have gotten used to the calm before the storm. Christians warn of the coming judgment (2 Cor. 5:11), but sinners have gotten comfortably familiar with that concept. It no longer strikes terror in their hearts. But one day the walls are going to fall! “These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes. Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver” (Psm. 50:21,22).

This strange battle plan also would encourage Israel in future difficulties. The evil spies had said that Canaan could never be conquered because the cities were walled up to heaven (Deut. 1:28). This complaint was forever silenced. The highest walls cannot hold out against Omnipotence; they needed not to fight, and therefore needed not to fear, because God fought for them.

Faith is the Victory that Overcomes the World (1 John 5:4). Jericho was won by faith, not force. God’s people were successful because of their faith. Faith led them to do three things. First, they obeyed their leaders (6:6-9). It did not make much sense to attack a city the way they were told to, but they did what they were told. In the church, we are to follow the elders’ leadership. They are selected because they meet certain qualifications (1 Tim. 3:1-6; Tit. 1) and, thus are wiser than less experienced Christians. We should follow them heartily as they follow Christ (Heb. 13:17; 1 Cor. 11:1).

Second, they trusted God to do the impossible (Josh. 6:15,16). With God, all things are possible (Jer. 33:3; Mark 9:23; 10:27). Unbelief looks at the walls and giants (Num. 13:28ff), but faith looks at the Lord. “Obstacles are those little things we see when we take our eyes off God.”

Third, they obeyed God in every detail (Josh.6:17-25). Faith does what God says, and asks no questions. The city's loot was to be consecrated to God; the animals and citizens were to be slain. Sometimes people obey God before the battle, but disobey Him after the victory (like Achan, ch. 7). This is like a person who obeys God in baptism (battle), but then disobeys Him as a Christian (victory). As we read the Book of Acts, we see how God's "spiritual army" conquered one city after another by faith. Even the mighty city of Rome fell before the Gospel's power (cf. Rom. 1:15,16)! God's people again need to learn how to capture cities with the Gospel, and Joshua teaches us the right way. It is faith, a working faith, that overcomes obstacles (Heb. 11:30; 1 John 5:4).

Did this really happen?² Archaeological findings have confirmed the Biblical account of the fall of Jericho's walls. During the period from 1929 to 1936, Dr. John Garstang, Director of The British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem and the Department of Antiquities of the Palestine Government, excavated Jericho's ruins. He found pottery that proved that the city had been destroyed about 1400 B.C. which coincides with Joshua's time.³

Further, the Bible says that the "wall fell down flat" (literally, "fell down under itself") (Josh. 6:20). The foundations themselves gave way. Jericho's rugged walls featured a stone base eleven feet high, topped by thirty-five feet of smooth stone sloping upward at thirty-five degrees to join the towering main walls. The wall was found to have actually been a double wall, with two walls fifteen feet apart; the outer wall, six feet thick; the inner wall, twelve feet thick. Both were about thirty feet high. When it fell, it probably killed the guards that stood on it and the people who crowded around it to watch. We later

read of thousands killed by a falling wall (1 Kings 20:30). The sudden fall must have put the inhabitants in such a confusion that they could put up little resistance to Joshua's army.

The Bible also says, "They burnt the city with fire" (Josh. 6:24). Dr. Garstang found layers of charcoal, ashes, and wall ruins which had been reddened by fire.⁴ God warned the children of Israel to "keep yourselves from the accursed thing" (6:18). They were not to take anything from the city other than the silver, gold, and vessels of brass and iron which were to be given to the Lord. Dr. Garstang found under the ashes and fallen walls, in the ruins of storerooms, an abundance of food stuffs-wheat, barley, dates, lentils-which had been turned to charcoal by intense heat. They were untouched and uneaten.

The ark saw a time when God did not want to hear prayers. The Bible teaches that prayer is important (Luke 18:1; Rom. 12:12; 1 Thess. 5:17; 1 Tim. 2:1), but there are times when it is inappropriate to pray. When Joshua prayed before the ark after the defeat at Ai (Josh. 7:6,10), God told him to get up, get rid of the sin in the camp, and then pray. The lesson for us is; "Until we repent: of sin, we might as well quit praying." Prayer will not help when it comes from one who has not repented of his sins (e.g., matters of church discipline, Rev. 2,3; divorce/remarriage, Matt. 19:9).

The ark saw God's anger over sexual sin (Judg. 20:27,28). During the time the ark was headquartered at Shiloh (Josh. 18:1), it was taken to Bethel where some in Gibeah had raped and murdered a visitor to their city. These were defended by the tribe of Benjamin and God spoke through the ark to tell the other tribes to go up and attack. Thousands lost their lives as brother went against

brother in battles.

The ark saw God's superstitious people defeated (1 Sam. 4:3-22).⁵ In the days of Eli the ark was in the tabernacle at Shiloh (1 Sam. 3:3). The period of Bible history in which God raised up judges or deliverers to lead His people is recorded in the book of Judges as well as Ruth and the first nine chapters of 1 Samuel (in chapter 10, Saul was anointed king, ushering in the era of the United Kingdom). The judges of 1 Samuel are Eli, Samuel, and Samuel's sons. These were the days of apostasy and treachery when "...every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judg. 17:6; cf. Psm. 78:56-59). A good commentary on God's actions during this time is: "...Them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed" (1 Sam. 2:30).

Eli honored his sons above God (cf. Matt. 10:37). "And the LORD said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end. For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever" (1 Sam. 3:11-14).

God's judgment started when Israel went into battle with the Philistines. Israel was the aggressor in an attempt to throw off the yoke of their oppression. It is computed that this was about the middle of the forty years' dominion that the Philistines had over Israel (Judg. 13:1; cf. 4:9) and soon after the death of Samson. The effort would have succeeded better if they had first repented and reformed.

Sin, the accursed thing, was in the camp, and gave their enemies all the advantage they needed. Of Noah's three sons, the Philistines descended from Ham (1 Chron. 1:8-12) and the Hebrews from Shem (1 Chron. 1:17-28). In about 1200 B.C., these "Sea Peoples" (as ancient Egyptians called them) are believed to have migrated from the Aegean Sea area to settle in the southwest part of what came to be called "Palestine." When Israel conquered Canaan, the Philistines were allowed to remain (Judg. 3:1-4). A seafaring nation, the Philistines grew in power and served as a continual threat to their Hebrew neighbors. At times during this historical period, Israel was even subjected to the Philistines (Judg. 13:1, "... the Lord delivered them into the hand of the Philistines forty years").

Israel Committed a Great Sin (1 Sam. 4:1-5).⁶ First Samuel 4 could be titled, "God's Glory is Departed." In preparation for the battle, the Israelites made camp beside Ebenezer. The Philistines pitched their tents in Aphek. Other locations shared this name (meaning "strength"), but this is probably the Aphek located in the plain of Sharon, about twenty-five miles northwest of Shiloh. In the battle, Israel was defeated, losing four thousand men. A war council was called and the elders asked: "Wherefore hath the Lord smitten us today before the Philistines?" The truth was that they had been defeated because they did not have God's approval ("...because you have forsaken the Lord, he hath also forsaken you," 2 Chron. 24:20; cf. Num. 14:43). "The Lord is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you" (2 Chron. 15:2). When the church today is defeated in its efforts against the wicked one, how often do we look

to external things to remedy the problem (e.g., a more “dynamic” preacher or larger buildings) when the problem is lukewarmness (cf. Mic. 6:6-8; 1 Cor. 13:1)?

They decided the reason they lost was because they did not have God’s “magic box”-the ark of the covenant! They believed in the ark of the Lord rather than the Lord of the ark. Instead of revering the ark as the symbol of God’s presence, they turned it into a religious relic (see Num. 10:35ff). It is common for those who estrange themselves from true spirituality to be fond of religious rituals, for even those that deny the power of godliness admire the form of it. What good then would the ark do them, the shell without the kernel? When they settled in Canaan God wanted His ark to be settled in the place that He chose (Deut. 12:5,11). They were to come to it, not it to them. Instead they sent to get the ark as a good luck charm before they attacked again. Eli had not courage enough to detain it, but sent his ungodly sons, Hophni and Phinehas, along with it, or at least permitted them to go, though he knew that wherever they went a curse went. How could they expect it to bring a blessing when Hophni and Phinehas carried it? They were like those Paul described centuries later, “Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things” (Phil. 3:19).

The ark must have been an object of tremendous beauty. The elders may have remembered how Jordan divided before the ark or how Jericho’s walls crumbled before it. They expected the same victorious results. There was a big difference, however, between those who carried the ark across Jordan and around Jericho and those who took it into battle against the Philistines. The former were faithful and righteous. The latter were not. While Joshua’s

army had the ark **and** the Divine presence it represented, these deluded men had only an empty symbol. Probably influenced by the superstitious heathen around them, the Israelites saw the ark as little more than a talisman or good luck charm. Defeat was inevitable for there was sin in the camp (Josh. 7). As Samson, they went out to battle unaware that the Lord had departed from them (Judg. 16:20).

We have our symbols today also, and how often do we think of them as an end within themselves? The Lord's Supper, for example, is a beautiful memorial designed to symbolize the body and blood of the crucified Lord. It is very meaningful **if** the spirit is there (1 Cor. 11:26-28; cf. John 4:24), but it is only where the blood is remembered, not contacted (Acts 2:38; Heb. 9:22; Rom. 6:3-5; 1 John 1:7). Some Christians walk in darkness, but feel they have access to the blood because they partake of the Supper every Sunday? Some unloving, unforgiving, un-Christlike brethren would never dream of missing the Lord's Supper. Yes, the Christian must partake of the Lord's Supper every Sunday (Acts 20:7), but living a righteous life the rest of the week is just as essential.

The ark came into the camp amid the wild applause of the confused Israelites (1 Sam. 4:5). Now they thought themselves sure of victory, and therefore gave a triumphant shout before the battle, as if they could not lose. The two armies were encamped so closely that the Philistines heard the Israelites' shouts and were terrified. They cried, "God is come into the camp." Israel's God was formidable even to those that worshipped other gods (4:8). Very naturally, the neighboring nations, ignorant of spiritual worship, looked upon the ark as the god of Israel (1 Sam. 4:6,7), a delusion which may have been

strengthened by the figures of the cherubim upon it. As was common to the pagans of old, the Philistines were polytheistic and therefore erroneously referred to the God of Israel as “these mighty gods.” Here they attribute the plagues of Egypt with the ark, though it was not made until after Israel left Egypt.

The Philistines, though up against impossible odds, resolved to “go down fighting” rather than submitting to the Hebrews (4:9). Instead of retreating, or proposing conditions of peace, they stirred up one another to fight. They determined that even if Israel’s God was in the camp, they were going to behave like brave soldiers! The Philistines believed they had God against them, yet resolved to fight valiantly anyway. For a contrast, remember the ten unfaithful spies who claimed to believe that God was with them and yet could not be moved to battle (Num. 13:17-14:10). How often do the ungodly show more courage in their foolish endeavors than the church in performing its Divinely authorized work?

Israel Suffered a Great Slaughter (1 Sam. 4:6-10). Since God had forsaken His people, the Philistines had an easy victory. Psalm 78:56-64 is a vivid description of this tragedy. The Philistines fought and, in “a very great slaughter,” defeated Israel a second time leaving thirty thousand slain soldiers. The army was totally routed, not retiring into the camp, as before when they hoped to rally again (4:2), but returning to their tents, every man shifting for his own safety and making his own way home. A good cause often suffers for the sake of the bad men that undertake it. The ark in the camp will add nothing to its strength when there is an Achan in it.

The ark was captured and, in fulfillment of the prophecy upon Eli’s house (2:34), Hophni and Phinehas

were killed in battle (4:11). Not only did they not win, but the Philistines took that magic box! The ark, rather than being the “good luck charm” they had counted on, brought crushing defeat down upon their heads. God pays no attention to the ark of the covenant when they pay no attention to the covenant. The slaughter of the priests, considering their bad character, was no great loss to Israel, but it was a dreadful judgment upon Eli. If He had done his duty, and put them from the priesthood (Neh. 7:64), they might have lived, though in disgrace. This was a fitting end for men who, through greediness and lust, had brought shame upon their house, nation, and Lord.

Israel Endured a Great Sorrow (1 Sam. 4:11-22). What a blow to the ancient city of Shiloh! A Benjamite soldier ran to Shiloh with torn clothes and dirt upon his head to report the terrible tidings of the day (4:12). (Bad news flies fast.) This quick news of the disaster was possible because the battle occurred only about eighteen miles from Shiloh. These actions were typical of the mourning of the period (cf. Josh. 7:6). At his report, the earlier shouts of triumph turned to cries of anguish. This was a calamity to all Israel, and a particular loss to Shiloh; for though the ark was soon rescued, it never returned to Shiloh—their candlestick was removed out of its place (cf. Rev. 2:5). The tribe of Ephraim, which had been blessed with the ark’s presence for three hundred and forty years, lost the honor (Psm. 78:60,67). Later, it was transferred to Judah. Jeremiah later uses this abandoning of Shiloh as a warning to Jerusalem: “Go see what I did to Shiloh” (7:12).

What a fatal blow this was to old Eli. This ninety-eight-year-old blind priest⁷ was sitting by the wayside waiting for news when the messenger arrived at Shiloh

with the sad report. The messenger must have run past him and announced first to the city. The uproar aroused Eli's curiosity, for no doubt he expected the fulfillment of Samuel's prophecy (3:11-14; 2:34,35). When the messenger came to Eli, his message went from bad to worse: "Israel is fled; many have been slaughtered; your two sons are dead; and the ark has been captured by the enemy." He did not interrupt the narrative with passionate lamentations for his sons, like David did for Absalom, but waited for the end of the story. The report that the army was defeated and soldiers were dead would affect him as a judge. The tidings of the death of his sons who, he had reason to fear, died impenitent, touched him as a father. Yet it was not for these that his heart trembled. There was a greater concern upon his spirit, which swallowed up the others. His "...heart trembled for the ark of God" (4:13). The news that the ark was taken was too much for Eli. All good men lay the interests of the church nearer their hearts than secular concerns, and cannot but be in pain if it is in peril. How can we be easy if the ark be not safe?

If the servant could but have said, "Yet the ark of God is safe, and we are bringing that home," his joy for that might have overcome his grief for the other disasters; but, when the messenger concludes his story with, "The ark of God is taken," he is struck to the heart, his spirits fail, and he fell off his seat. He died immediately, and never spoke another word. Eli maintained his composure when told about his sons' death, but when he learns that the ark has been captured, he falls backward and dies. His heart was broken first, and then his neck. Thus died the man who judged a nation but would not control his own house. So fell the high priest and judge of Israel; so

fell his heavy head when he had lived within two of one hundred years; so fell the crown from his head which he had worn for forty years. Thus did his sun set under a cloud. Eli died the death of the unredeemed ass, whose neck was to be broken (Exod. 13:13). His actions say, "Let me fall with the ark, for what pious Israelite can live with any comfort when God's ordinances are removed?"

What a blow this was to the wife of Phinehas and daughter-in-law of Eli! (Her name is not given.) She was evidently a good woman married to a wicked husband. When she heard the shocking news she went into premature labor (4:19), which often occurs when an expecting mother is frightened, startled, or upset. When she heard of the deaths of her father-in-law, whom she revered, and her husband whom, bad as he was, she loved, but especially of the loss of the ark, she travailed, and her pains came thickly upon her (cf. "Woe to those that are with child, or give suck, in such days...", Matt. 24:19; Luke 23:19). According to Josephus she was only seven months pregnant at the time. The former helped to hasten her travail, but it appears by her dying words that the latter lay nearer her heart (4:22). Her concern for her husband and father-in-law's deaths was evidence of her natural affection; but her greater concern was for the ark, giving evidence of her devout affection for God and sacred things.

After she gave birth to a son, she was ready to give up her own life (4:20-22). She felt she had little reason to live when she had lost the greatest comforts of life. The women that attended her encouraged her (John 16:21), but to no avail. "...As vinegar upon nitre, so is he that singeth songs to an heavy heart" (Prov. 25:20). Childbirth was usually cause for great rejoicing, especially in Biblical

times, but the despondent and dying mother showed little interest. These conditions made her give her child a name which would perpetuate the remembrance of the calamity and her sense of it. She named the child *Ichabod* (“No glory,” “Disgrace,” or “Alas! The glory,”⁸ cf. Exod. 40:34ff). Never let the name of an Israelite, much less a priest, carry glory any more, now that the ark is taken. Her final recorded words are: “The glory is departed from Israel: for the ark of God is taken.” The word **departed** may be translated “gone into exile.” Actually, the glory had departed from Israel long before that fateful day. It left Israel when Israel departed from the path of righteousness.

Of how many individuals and congregations could it be said that the glory has departed? A new convert, at first filled with joy and zeal for the Lord, may capitulate to lukewarm indifference (Rev. 3:15-17). Preachers may trade a dedicated passion for a deadly professionalism (1 Cor. 9:27). Congregations may lose their zeal and have nothing more to identify them as a church of Christ than the sign out front (Rev. 3:1).

The ark saw God’s name defended (1 Sam. 5-6).

In 1 Samuel 5, it is defended before the heathen. God will not reveal His power on behalf of sinning people, but He will not allow His glory to be mocked or His name defiled by a smirking enemy. When He delivered His strength into captivity, and all seemed ruined, “...then the Lord awaked as one out of sleep, and like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine” (Psm. 78:59-65).

God punished Dagon. The Philistines carried the ark to Ashdod, apparently because it had a principal temple of Dagon (5:1,2). They had to bypass Gaza to get to Ashdod, but Samson had destroyed the temple there (Judg.

16). Ashdod was one of the five principal Philistine cities, located thirty-three miles west of Jerusalem, only three miles from the Mediterranean Sea, situated on an elevation overlooking the Philistine plain half way between Gaza and Joppa. It was important because it commanded the high road from Palestine to Egypt. This city is called *Azotus* of the New Testament (Acts 8:40) and, in modern times *Tell Ashdod*. *Ashdod* means “stronghold or fortress,” and the history of the place justified the name. An Egyptian ruler besieged it for 29 years on one occasion (according to Herodotus). The Jews were finally able to destroy it during the times of the Maccabees (1 Macc. 10:84).

Upon arrival, the Philistines placed the ark in Dagon’s temple. This pagan deity was a Semitic god worshipped as early as the mid-third millennium B.C. Scholars give two possible origins of the name: either, *dag*, which means “fish,” or *dagan* which means “corn.” The Philistines, originally from Caphtor (Crete), adopted this grain-god upon arriving in Judea. Dagon was identified as “the father of Baal” in the ancient Ras Shamra tablets. Keil described this old idol as, “A bearded man, wearing the ordinary conical tiara of royalty...and the lower part resembling the body of a fish.” The Philistines were worshipping Dagon when Samson’s final encore performance literally “brought the house down” (Judg. 16).

The ark may have been placed there as a sacred thing; though the nations would not change gods, they would add to them. Or, rather, and more likely, they placed it there as a trophy of victory, in honor of Dagon their god, to whom they intended to offer this great sacrifice. When they killed Saul, they stripped off his armor and deposited it in the temple of Ashtaroth (21:10), and they had acted

similarly when they had taken Samson (Judg. 16:23,24). So now they seem to be boasting that as then they had triumphed over Israel's champion, so now over Israel's God. Shall the ark, the symbol of God's presence, be a prisoner to Dagon, a dunghill deity?

Thus they put Jehovah on the same level as their fish-god Dagon. Dagon stood by the ark, and it is likely stood above it (the ark, as its footstool), yet the next morning, when Dagon's worshippers came to pay devotion to his shrine, they found their idol on its face before the ark (cf. Job 20:5). Great care was taken, in setting up the images of their gods, to fix them (cf. Isa. 46:7), and yet Dagon's fastenings did not hold him up. Thus he lay in his true ugliness. Of course, God stands high above all other gods and considered it a great insult for His ark to be placed next to this monstrosity (Isa. 19:1)! If they intended to do honor to the ark, God showed that He valued not their honor, nor would He accept it. Dagon was now paying homage to Jehovah (the ark stood for God to these pagans). He was put in a posture of adoration and should have shown his worshippers to pay homage to Jehovah, as greater than all gods (Exod. 18:11). Surely this demonstration would provoke them to repent of idolatry and to fall to their knees before the only true and living God (cf. Psm. 78:65).

The priests hastened to set him in his place again before others found out. It was silly to worship a god, which, when it fell down, needed help to get up again! How could they pray to him for help, when he needed their help? How could they attribute victory to Dagon's power when Dagon could not keep his own ground before the ark? Nonetheless, they picked it up off the ground, dusted it off, and set it back beside the ark. The next morning,

Dagon had fallen again (rather, been thrown down). Worse yet, their beloved idol was without hands and head (5:4)! As with the ten plagues of Egypt (Exod. 7-12), God's reminders became stronger when ignored. Nothing remained but the stump, or as the margin reads, "the fishy part" of Dagon. Many conjecture that the upper part of the image was in a human shape, the lower in the shape of a fish, as mermaids are painted. This shows God's sense of humor and revealed to the Philistines that their god was powerless in His presence. Since Dagon lost his head, he had no wisdom, and since he lost his hands, he had no power. He was disabled either to advise or to act for his worshippers.

Since Dagon fell on the threshold, it was soon looked upon as sacred, and not to be trodden on (5:5). Some think that reference is later made to this in Zephaniah 1:9, where God threatens to punish those who, in imitation of them, leaped over the threshold. One would have thought that this incontestable proof of the ark's victory over Dagon would convince the Philistines of their folly in worshipping such a senseless thing, and that henceforward they would pay their homage to his conqueror; but, instead of being reformed, they were hardened in their idolatry and decided never to set foot on that on which Dagon lost his head (cf. 1 Kings 18:21-39; Isa. 44:9-20). Incidentally, even these pagans shame those who **tread under foot the blood of the covenant** and trample on things truly sacred (Heb. 10:29). Interestingly, this piece of superstition would actually help perpetuate the remembrance of Dagon's disgrace; for the reason for the custom would be passed on to their descendants, thus teaching them of God's victory over Dagon.

God punished the Philistines. Not only did God

lay His heavy hand upon Dagon, He also afflicted the citizens of Ashdod, striking them with “emerods” (boils, swellings) (KJV) or “tumors” (NKJV, ASV) (5:6,7) in their secret parts (5:9).⁹ The Psalmist, speaking of this judgment, describes it in these words: “God smote his enemies in the hinder parts and put them to a perpetual reproach” (Psm. 78:66). It was both a painful and shameful disease; a vile disease for vile deserts. By it God humbled their pride and put contempt upon them, as they had done upon His ark. For contempt of God’s ordinances today, “many are weak and sick, and many sleep” (1 Cor. 11:30). Many Philistines died (5:12). We suppose that it was those who had most triumphed in the ark’s capture who were killed. God let them know that though He does not see fit to draw Israel’s sword against them, He had a sword of His own, with which He could make a no less dreadful execution (Deut. 32:41).

Also, their land was struck with pestilence (6:5). Many think this refers to mice which ruined the crops and carried disease to the people. They finally realized that they had a very discontented guest in their midst and knew that it was the hand of Israel’s God (5:7). Thus they were constrained to acknowledge His power and dominion and confess themselves within His jurisdiction. Yet they would not renounce Dagon and submit to Jehovah. How seldom has a nation changed its gods, though they were no gods (Jer. 2:11)? They desired to get clear of it, as the Gadarenes, who, when they had lost their swine, desired Christ to depart out of their coasts (Matt. 8:34). Each of Philistia’s five principal cities (Ashdod, Gaza, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron) had a lord ruling over it (cf. 6:17). These lords assembled to ponder the question: “What shall we do with the ark of the God of

Israel?" The reasonable answer would have been to return it to the Israelites, but instead they resolved to keep it and simply send it to another city, this time to Gath (5:8; cf. 17:4).

As expected, the people of Gath fared no better than their neighbors in Ashdod. Gath was famed as the home of a race of giants, but their stature was no fence against the pestilence and emerods. They were smitten, both great and small (5:9). None were so big as to overcome, none so small as to be overlooked. In this ancient version of "Hot Potato," the ark was again transported, to Ekron this time (5:10). This city was well aware of its countrymen's calamity and were understandably distressed at the prospect of having the ark in their city. Coming by order of council, they could not refuse it, but were exasperated at being sent such a fatal present. Finally, after another meeting, they resolved to send the ark back to the Israelites (5:11). This was not a case of repentance, but self-preservation, for "the hand of God was very heavy there."

In the midst of this extreme suffering, "... the cry of the city went up to heaven" (5:12), that is, it could be heard a great way off, and perhaps, in the extremity of their misery, they cried, not to Dagon, but to the God of heaven. Their triumphs in the captivity of the ark were soon turned into lamentations, and they were as eager to get rid of it as they had been to seize it. Wealth gotten by fraud and injustice, especially that gained by sacrilege and robbing God, though swallowed greedily, and rolled under the tongue as a sweet morsel, must be vomited up again; for, till it is, the sinner shall not feel quietness in his belly (Job 20:15-20). There was plenty of sorrow in Philistia, but it was the sorrow of the world, not godly sorrow which

leads to repentance and salvation (2 Cor. 7:10). Like many in prisons around the world, they cried because they were being punished, not because they had committed a crime.

After seven long and humiliating months, the Philistines inquired of their religious authorities (6:1-3). Sinners lengthen out their own miseries by obstinately refusing to part with sin. Egypt's plagues would have been fewer if Pharaoh's heart had not been hardened. The *priests* were the ones in charge of the ceremonies connected with their worship of Dagon; and the *diviners* were the practitioners of all kinds of superstitious acts that they claimed could tell the future and answer difficult questions. These included (1) shaking arrows, (2) consulting the teraphim, (3) looking at the liver (Ezek. 21:21), (4) watching the cloud's movements and the flight of birds, and (5) consulting the stars. There was also, evidently, some ancient version of the modern superstition of being able to read the future by the disposition of tea leaves in the bottom of a cup. This may be implied in Joseph's silver cup which was used for divining (Gen. 44:5).

The diviners explain that the ark must be sent back. They figured that they must take away the cause to remove the effect. They argue from the example of Pharaoh-the Egyptians were finally forced to let Israel go-so they should return the ark before suffering ten plagues (6:6). Interestingly, notice that they were well acquainted with Mosaic history, and could cite precedents out of it (cf. 4:8; Josh. 2:9-11). The Philistines were wise to benefit from this lesson of the past. It is always cheaper to learn by other's experience than by our own (cf. Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:11). They portrayed God as a strong man laughing and making fun of a weak and bungling enemy. He had made sport of the Egyptians and now He was doing the same

with them.

Their priests advised them to make golden images of those things which afflicted them. These appear to have been talismanic images common among the ancient heathen and believed to have originated due to a misunderstanding of the brazen serpent in the wilderness. It is supposed that since the Israelites were healed of snake bite by looking upon the image of a snake (Num. 21:4-9), the pagans came to believe that there was supernatural power in the replica of any disease. Ancient astrologers believed these representations would call the problem to the attention of the worshiper's gods, thereby effecting a cure.

Other nations knew that Israel's God was a jealous God, and that He was strict in His demands of sin-offerings from His people. (Of course, they were wrong about what to send because Moses' Law said that it was blood, not gold, that atones for the soul.) The golden emerods must be five in number, according to the number of the lords, who, it is likely, were afflicted with them. It was advised that the golden mice should be five too, but, because the whole country was infested, it seems, on second thought, that they sent more (according to the number both of the fenced cities and the country villages, 6:18).

During this time, the ark was "in the country of the Philistines," or literally "in the **field** of the Philistines," from which some gather that, having tried the cities, they sent it into the open fields, where it caused mice to spring up out in great multitudes, and destroyed the corn which was now nearly ripe (6:5). God let them know that wherever they carried the ark, as long as they kept it captive, it would curse them. "Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed in the field" (Deut. 28:16). Almighty God

could chastise and humble them, even in the day of their triumph, with small and despicable animals.

The Philistines decided to return the ark to Israel, but nobody had the courage to undertake the task. They finally decided to put it on a new cart and allow two “milch kine” (“milk cows,” NKJV), which had never been broken to harness (6:7), to walk down the road unassisted. They were to separate the cows from their calves, tie them to the cart, and send them away with the ark. It would be natural for cows to seek out their calves (6:10); so if they headed for Bethshemesh, it would be evidence that God was directing them and therefore that He had sent the plagues. Cows that had never been yoked would not have taken a cart anywhere, much less on a seventeen mile trip down a highway! With the Philistines following, the untrained cows took the cart straight down the unknown road to Bethshemesh (an ancient Canaanite city whose name means *house of the sun god*). It was a Levitical city (Josh. 21:16), located in the valley of Sorek west of Jerusalem. Where should the ark go but to the priests’ city?¹⁰

The cows “lowed” as they went, obviously prodded by an unseen force. All things considered, this was no less than a miracle, that cattle unaccustomed to the yoke should draw so even, so orderly, and still go forward. Without any driver, they went away from home, to which all tame creatures have a natural inclination, and from their calves, to which they had a natural affection. Without any director, they went to Bethshemesh, and never missed the way, never turned into the fields to eat, nor turned back home to let the calves eat. God overruled the strongest instincts of nature. These two cows knew their great Owner (Isa. 1:3), whom Hophni and Phinehas knew not.

This is the first and last instance of divinely guided milk cows!

As God had fetched Israel out of the house of bondage, so now He fetched the ark out of its captivity. When Israel left Egypt, Egypt was glad (Psm. 105:38); similarly, the Philistines were glad to see the ark go. They received no ransom money, though they might have hoped for one even beyond a king's ransom (cf. Isa. 45:13). They even gave jewels of gold, as the Egyptians did to the Israelites, to be rid of it! Thus the ark that was carried into the Philistines' land as a trophy, was carried back with trophies of its own, lasting monuments of the disgrace of the Philistines. It triumphed over the Philistines, and came out of bondage by its own power (like Christ out of the grave).

The invisible hand directed the cows into Joshua's field, of whom we have no more information (we might conjecture that he was a good man since God thus honored him). The men of Bethshemesh were reaping the wheat harvest at the time. They were going on with their normal business, and were not thinking of the ark, and had made no inquiries of what had become of it. Some observe that the returning ark found them, not idling or sporting in the streets, but busy, reaping in the fields. Thus the tidings of Christ's birth was brought to shepherds when they were keeping their flock by night (Luke 2:8). The devil visits idle men with temptation (cf. 2 Sam. 11); God visits industrious men with opportunities (John 9:4; Gal. 6:10). Seven months Israel was punished with the absence of the ark. How bare did the tabernacle look without it! Though they had not zeal and courage enough to attempt to rescue or ransom it, when it did come, they bade it a hearty welcome. The ark had the tables of the law in it; and nothing was more welcome to faithful Israelites than

God's Word. To them it was a savor of life unto life, but to uncircumcised Philistines it was a savor of death unto death (2 Cor. 2:16).

It was a day of joyful sacrifice and thanksgiving. After being employed in the sacred and glorious task of transporting the ark back home, the cows and cart would never again be used in secular work. They offered up the kine for a burnt-offering and made use of the wood of the cart for fuel (6:14). It was by no means fit that they should ever be used for anything else; never shall that cart carry a common thing that had once carried the sacred symbol of the divine presence. (Or, as Coffman looked at it, everything connected with the false method of transporting the ark was destroyed.) They deposited the ark, and the chest of jewels, upon the great stone in the open field, a cold and common lodging for the ark of the Lord; yet far better than Dagon's temple. The five Philistine lords, their curiosity satisfied, and probably with a great sense of relief, returned to Ekron.

The ark saw God punish irreverence (1 Sam. 6:19,20). Here God's name is defended among His own people. The people of Bethshemesh became curious and looked into the ark, and God had to judge them. Every Israelite had heard great talk of the ark. They had been told that it stayed behind the veil, and even the high priest himself could not look at it but once a year, and then through a cloud of incense. Perhaps this made many say (as we are apt to covet the forbidden) what a great deal they would give for a sight of it. Whether it was curiosity that led them to open it and read what was written with the finger of God, or something else, we are not told. Perhaps they looked no further than the golden outside and the cherubim that covered it, like children more

affected with the fine binding of their Bibles than the precious matter contained in them. Or, more likely, they decided to take off the covering (which may have been nailed or screwed on), and look into it, under pretense of seeing whether the Philistines had removed or damaged the tablets, but really to gratify their own sinful curiosity. It is a great affront to God for vain men to meddle with secret things which do not belong to them (Deut. 29:29; Col. 2:18). Those that pry into what is forbidden, and come too near to holy fire, will find it is at their peril.

How jealous was God for His ark's honor! "They shall not go in to look upon the holy things even for a moment, lest they die" (Num. 4:20). He would not suffer it to be profaned. "Be not deceived, God is not mocked..." (Gal. 6:7). We were all ruined by an ambition of forbidden knowledge (Gen. 3). The familiarity they had upon this occasion bred contempt and irreverence. However it unfolded, fifty thousand and seventy people died.¹¹ One dares not look at God's glory (1 Tim. 6:16; Psm. 76:7; 130:3; 143:2). Hophni and Phinehas thought they could win battles by trusting the ark despite wicked lives, and God killed them. Eli did not discipline his sons who were dishonoring the Lord, and he died. The Philistines treated Jehovah like one of their own gods, and they died. The men of Bethshemesh presumptuously looked into the ark, and they were killed. What's the lesson? It does not pay to trifle with God!

Bethshemesh was soon as weary of the ark as the Philistines had been, whereas, if they had treated it with reverence, it might have taken up residence among them and been a blessing to them. They made that a burden which might have been a blessing. Their action illustrates man's desire to free himself from God's presence instead

of seeking to make himself fit for it. They dared not touch it themselves, but stood aloof from the ark as a dangerous thing. Thus do foolish men run from one extreme to the other, from presumptuous boldness to slavish shyness. They sent messengers to the elders of Kirjath-jearim (“city of woods”), a strong city belonging to Judah (Josh. 15:9,60), and begged them to come and get the ark (6:21). Kirjath-jearim lay in the way from Bethshemesh to Shiloh, so they may have intended for the elders of Shiloh to come get it from there (God intended otherwise).

The ark saw God reward reverence (1 Sam. 7:1,2). The men of Kirjath-jearim provided a proper place to receive it. They had no public building for it, but they put it in the house of Abinadab, which stood upon the highest ground. Bethshemesh left it exposed upon a stone in the open field, and, though it was a city of priests, none received it into his house; but the men of Kirjath-jearim, though common Israelites, gave it a house, and no doubt the best-furnished room in the best house in the city. They provided a proper person to attend it. They sanctified Eleazar to keep the ark, not only from being seized by malicious Philistines, but from being touched or looked into by too-curious Israelites. He was to keep the room clean and decent, that, though it was in an obscure place, it might not look like a neglected thing.

What was God doing during this time? He was preparing His servant Samuel to defeat the enemy and establish the kingdom. It was strange that all the time that Samuel governed, the ark was never brought to its place in the holy of holies. Nor could they keep the day of atonement as it should be kept. They were content with the altars without the ark. It was better with the Israelites when they wanted the ark, and were lamenting after it,

than when they had the ark, and were prying into it, or priding themselves in it. Better to see people longing in the scarcity of the means of grace than loathing in the abundance of it. The ark was not returned to Shiloh.¹² It remained at the house of Abinadab for twenty years.

The ark saw God punish the careless (2 Sam. 6:1-23; cf. 1 Chron. 13,15,16). When David took Jerusalem, he made it his capital-and the ark was in Kirjath-jearim, eight miles away. He wanted to move it to Jerusalem because he felt that that was the proper place for it, and apparently it was the place which God had chosen (cf. Deut. 16:16). Psm.132:1-6 tells of David's intense desire to honor the Lord by returning the ark of the covenant to its proper place.

The religious situation in Israel at the time was deplorable. Due to the divided condition of the nation, there were actually two high priests. Abiathar, David's friend, served in that capacity during the seven years at Hebron, and Zadok was the high priest at Gibeon. Saul's murder of the priests of Nob, the capture of the ark by the Philistines, and the indifference of Saul to true religion had left the whole nation in a state of disastrous ignorance of God's Word. The unification of Israel required the concentration of religious authority in one place, the unification of the two rival priesthoods, and the moving of the ark to the nation's capital. We can see that David was not only a great warrior, but also a wise statesman.

David made the motion (1 Chron. 13:1-3), and the heads of the congregation agreed to it (2 Sam. 6:4). Little did they know that it would take more than three months to finish the task (6:11). David prepared a special tent for it in Jerusalem (1 Chron. 15:1) and prepared to get the sacred ark. For nearly twenty years, it had been in Kirjath-

jeirim (Baalath of Judah, 1 Sam. 6:21-7:2; cf. Josh. 15:9,60). It is better to have the ark in a field than captive in Dagon's temple, better in a house than in a field, and better still to have it in a tent pitched on purpose for it.

It is likely that this was done at one of the three great festivals. As secret worship is better the more secret it is, so public worship is better the more public it is. Dr. Lightfoot supposes that David penned Psalm 68 upon this occasion because it begins with Moses' ancient prayer at the removing of the ark, "Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered." Notice is also made of the singers and players on instruments that attended (68:25), and of the princes of several of the tribes (68:27). Perhaps the words in the last verse, "O God, thou art terrible out of thy holy places," were added when Uzzah was killed.

David displeased the Lord (2 Sam. 6:1-11).⁶

Certainly it was a noble desire on David's part to bring the ark to Jerusalem, but it is possible to have "zeal without knowledge" (Rom. 10:2) and do a good work in a wrong way. This shows that the end does not justify the means. To begin with, David did not consult the Lord; he consulted his political leaders (1 Chron. 13:1-4; note 2 Sam 5:19,23). It appears his main motive was to unify the nation under his rule rather than glorify the Lord. David criticizes Saul for neglecting the ark (1 Chron. 13:3), and this statement may have later had something to do with the behavior of Saul's daughter, Michal (6:20ff). All the leaders and all the congregation agreed to David's plan, but this did not make the subsequent actions right.

David's second mistake was to ignore God's Word. Instead of asking the Levites to bear the ark on poles on their shoulders (Exod. 25:12-15; 37:1-5; Num. 3:27-31; 4:15; 10:21), covered with a goatskin (Num. 4), he followed the

worldly example of the Philistines and put the ark on a new cart (1 Sam. 6). In fact, as far as the record reveals, no Levites were even present. From the evidence of archaeology, this was undoubtedly a two-wheeled cart. The Kohathites (who had the charge of the ark) did not even have any wagons assigned to them (Num. 7:9). The ark was not such a heavy burden that they could not carry it as far as Mount Sion upon their shoulders. It had been carried all over the wilderness during the wanderings. It was no excuse that the Philistines had done so and were not punished; they knew no better, nor had they any Levites to carry it. (Better carry it in a cart than have Dagon's priests carry it!) It mattered little that it was a new cart, though this was meant to show respect, as when Jesus rode upon an ass whereupon no man had sat and was buried in the new tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. Old or new, it was not what God had appointed. How many Christians and local churches today "conform to the world" (Rom. 12:2) instead of "following the pattern" given by God from heaven (Exod. 25:40)? All of the people were enthusiastic and joyful, but this did not make their method right in God's eyes.

Uzzah and Ahio, sons of Abinadab, in whose house the ark had been kept, were used to attending to it and were willing to help with its transport. They may have figured this was the last service they were likely to do, for others would be employed when it came to Jerusalem. Ahio went before, to clear the way, and, if need were, to lead the oxen. Uzzah followed close to the side of the cart.

Naturally, the human method of doing God's work eventually failed: the oxen were "restive" and the ark nearly fell. The margin has **stumbled**, some scholars think "kicked," others "stuck in the mire," or perhaps they fought

against the goad with which Uzzah drove them (Henry). This led to the third mistake: a man who was not a priest touched the ark. Uzzah laid hold of it, to save it from falling, no doubt with good intentions. Yet this was his crime, and God struck him dead on the spot. There he sinned, and there he died, by the ark of God; even the mercy-seat could not save him. The law was plain concerning the Kohathites, that, though they were to carry the ark by the staves, yet **they must not touch any holy thing**, lest they die (Num. 4:15). “Hands off” was God’s policy when it came to the ark. Uzzah’s long familiarity with the ark, and his constant attendance to it, might have occasioned his presumption, but it did not excuse it. Perhaps he wanted to show, before this great assembly, how bold he was toward the ark, having been so long acquainted with it. One mistake led to another. How important it is to determine God’s will and then follow God’s way in accomplishing that will.

Some might say that it was a small breach of conduct for such extreme punishment. Why was God so severe? None of God’s commands is trivial; and none may be violated with impunity. We might not like these rules; and, if we don’t, we can move out of this universe into another one! This is God’s universe, and these are His rules. It would be difficult to imagine any smaller “sin” than eating of the forbidden tree; but from that one **little sin** came all the sorrows, wretchedness, bloodshed, and misery of all mankind for millenniums of time. (This is how He might justly have dealt with our first parents, when they had eaten that which was forbidden under the same penalty, **lest you die**, Gen. 3). Perhaps God saw presumption and irreverence in Uzzah’s heart. Perhaps the ark was not covered, as it should have been, with the

covering of badgers' skins (Num. 4:6), and that was a further provocation. God, by this instance of severity, wanted to show that men must respect His law. He wanted to teach them to rejoice with trembling, and always to treat holy things with reverence and fear. Man needed to know that good intentions do not justify bad actions. If the ark was so sacred, and not to be touched irreverently, what about those things sanctified by the blood of Jesus (Heb. 10:29)?

David's reaction to this sudden judgment reveals that his heart was not right with God; for, first he was angry, then he was fearful. He was displeased with God's action (the same word is used for God's displeasure, 6:7). Because God was out of humor, David was out of humor. He acted as if God might not assert honor of His ark, and frown upon one that touched it rudely, without asking David's permission. Shall mortal man pretend to be more just than God, arraign His proceedings, or charge Him with iniquity? It is not for us to be displeased at anything that God does.

David was afraid. He figured that Uzzah died for an error of which they were all guilty, which was carrying the ark in a cart. He said, "the Lord made that breach upon *us*" (1 Chron. 15:13). David may have thought, "God might justly strike me dead as He did Uzzah." Yet, because he was the most presumptuous, Uzzah was singled out to be made an example. This God intends in his judgments, that others may hear and fear. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom..." (Psm. 111:10). "My flesh trembles for fear of thee" (Psm. 119:120).

David took care to perpetuate the remembrance of this stroke by a new name he gave to the place. It had recently been named *Baal-perazim*, which means "a place of breaches," because David had been successful in

breaking down his enemies' defenses there. But here is a breach upon his friend, so he calls it, *Perez-uzzah*, which means "the breach of Uzzah" (6:8). The memorial of this punishment would be a warning to posterity to take heed of all rashness and irreverence in dealing with the holy things. God will be sanctified in those that come nigh unto Him.

David should have humbled himself under God's hand, confessed his error, acknowledged God's righteousness, and then have gone on with the good work he had in hand. Instead of pausing and seeking God's will to discover the reason for judgment, David stopped the procession and quickly disposed of the ark. He decided not to bring the ark into his own city till he was better prepared for its reception (6:10). He asked, "How shall the ark of the Lord come to me?," as if God was so extremely tender of His ark that there was no dealing with it. "Provoke me not and I will do you no hurt," says God (Jer. 25:6).

The house of Obed-edom happened to be near where this disaster happened, so they were given the ark for safekeeping. They belonged to the Levitical family and could safely care for it (1 Chron. 26:1-4). It remained there three months (6:10). Obed-edom cheerfully invited it to his own house. The same hand that punished Uzzah's proud presumption rewarded Obed-edom's humble boldness. Let none think the worse of the Gospel for the judgments inflicted on those that reject it, but set in opposition to them the blessings it brings to those that receive it. None ever had, nor ever shall have, reason to say that it is in vain to serve God. Josephus says that, whereas before Obed-edom was poor, suddenly, in these three months, his estate increased, to the envy of his

neighbors. Piety is the best friend to prosperity. In wisdom's left hand are riches and honor (Prov. 3:16).

David displayed his zeal (2 Sam. 6:11-19; 1 Chron. 15:1-16:3). During the three months' interim, David undoubtedly searched his heart and confessed his sins. He certainly turned to the Law to discover God's instructions for carrying the ark (1 Chron. 15:1,2,12,13). He also prepared a tent and saw that the Levites were prepared for their task. It seems that David was encouraged by the way Obed-edom was blessed for the ark's sake, for when that was told him he hastened to go get it (6:12). God was blessing the house of Obed-edom, and David wanted that blessing for the whole nation. This was evidence that God's anger was turned away. As David could read God's frowns in Uzzah's stroke, so he could read God's favor in Obed-edom's prosperity. The ark was not so burdensome as it was thought to be, but, on the contrary, happy was the man that had it near him. Christ is a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, to those that are disobedient; but to those who believe He is a cornerstone, elect and precious (1 Pet. 2:6-8).

Suppose we wanted to choose the greatest day in David's life. What day would we choose? Would it be the day that Samuel poured the anointing oil on him as a young shepherd boy? How about the day he slew the giant Goliath? Certainly his first romance with Michal, Saul's daughter, who was given to him in marriage, deserves consideration. Perhaps we might choose the day David escaped from Saul. Then again we might choose the day Saul died, because that meant that David would ascend the throne. We might think it was the day that he was made king of all Israel and the crown was placed upon his head. Or perhaps we might choose the day his son Solomon

was anointed king. All of these were great days in the life of a great man. But it might very well be that the day David brought the ark home to Jerusalem was his greatest day. At least eleven of the psalms were composed around the great event of bringing the ark to Jerusalem (e.g., Psm. 24; 105; cf. 1 Chron. 16:7ff).

On this occasion David laid aside his imperial purple, and put on a plain linen ephod (1 Chron. 15:27), which was the humble garment of a Levite. This was “a small apron used on ceremonial occasions ...” by those who were not priests (Samuel wore one, 1 Sam. 2:18). David wore an ephod; he offered sacrifices; he blessed the people. This combination of the functions of the priesthood with the kingship was especially appropriate in David as the type of the Christ (cf. Psm. 110). No other king ever served God’s people in the dual capacity of priest and king.

They learned from their mistake and rectified their error. They did not put the ark in a cart now, but ordered those whose business it was to carry it on their shoulders (implied, 6:13, expressed, 1 Chron. 15:15). We make good use of God’s judgments when we are awakened by them to amend whatever is amiss. The Levites took six paces and then paused, apparently as a test by David to find out if the Lord would allow the ark to proceed. When no judgment came, they offered sacrifices by way of atonement for their former errors and in thankfulness for the blessings bestowed on Obed-edom (6:13). They then proceeded the rest of the way to Jerusalem.

The Bible says that David “danced before the Lord” (6:14). Many have arched their eyebrows at this, but it simply means that he leaped for joy. The word used is found nowhere else in the Bible and seems to mean **whirling** like the devotional dancing of the dervishes.¹³

His dancing was by himself, and was a natural expression of great joy and exultation of mind. It was very much unlike today's sexual dances. While his actions are not given as examples for us to follow, David's "dancing" is in no way an excuse for modern dancing. Nonetheless, we learn a valuable lesson here: David danced **with all his might**. We should perform all religious service with all our might (Eccl. 9:10; Col. 3:23). All our might is little enough to be employed in holy duties. God deserves our all.

They set the ark in the tabernacle (tent) which David had pitched for it, in imitation of Moses's tabernacle. This was not Moses' tabernacle for it was at Gibeon (2 Chron. 1:13). As soon as it arrived, David offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings. He finally sent the people away with a prayer and a generous treat. He gave every one a cake of bread (a spice-cake), a piece of flesh (literally, a handsome decent piece), a part of the peace-offerings, and a flagon (bottle) of wine (6:19). The feast of Purim was observed with sending portions one to another (Esth. 9:22). David was a politician, and knew that everyone is a friend to him that giveth gifts. It seems that he penned Psalm 132 on this occasion.

David disciplined his wife (2 Sam. 6:20-23).

David, having dismissed the congregation with a blessing, returned to bless his household (6:20), that is, to pray with them and for them, and to offer up family thanksgiving for national mercy. Ministers must not think that public performances excuse them from family devotions. This joyful day concluded with some uneasiness occasioned by his wife's pride. When he came home in the very best disposition she upbraided him, and was so full of disdain and indignation that she could not contain till they could talk in private, but went out to meet him with reproaches.

When he was at a distance, she scorned him, and when he came home she scolded him. Even the palace is not exempt from domestic troubles.

David pleased the multitude of Israel, but Michal was not happy with his dancing before the ark. She taunted him (6:20): “How glorious was the king of Israel today!” Her contempt of his devotion began in the heart, and out of its abundance the mouth spoke (Matt. 13:37). She was not displeased at his generosity to the people, nor did she grudge the entertainment he gave them; but she thought he degraded himself in dancing before the ark. It was not her covetousness, but her pride, that made her fret.

She represents his conduct as lewd and immodest and argues that he uncovered himself in the eyes of the maidservants, as only one of the vain fellows that cared not how much he shamed himself would do. We have no reason to think that this was true. David, no doubt, observed decorum, and governed his zeal with discretion. He only “uncovered himself” in the sense that he took off the royal garments which set him apart as the king. She wanted David to display his royal power in great pomp and ceremony; he preferred to take his place with the common people and glorify the Lord. What she really disliked was the lessening of his honor. She looked upon it as unbecoming so great a soldier, statesman, and monarch. In the throne of judgment, and in the field of battle, none would do more to support the grandeur and authority of a prince than David; but in acts of devotion he set aside the thought of majesty, humbled himself to the dust before the Lord, and thinks all this no shame to him. The greatest of men is less than the least of the ordinances of Jesus Christ.

She thought that a king should not appear so

religious himself. Religious exercises appear silly to those that have little or no religion themselves. Michal, Saul's daughter, was never a suitable wife for David. David "won her" by slaying Goliath (1 Sam. 17:25) and by fulfilling Saul's murderous requirements (1 Sam. 18:17-27). He loved her and had shown such affection for her that he would not accept a crown unless he might have her restored to him (ch. 3:13), but she belonged to Saul's family and never really exhibited any faith in God. First Samuel 19:13 indicates that she worshipped idols. Here her actions showed her to have more of Saul's daughter in her than David's wife or Jonathan's sister. Though she had been given as the wife of another man while David was in exile, he did not upbraid her with her treacherous departure from him to embrace the bosom of a stranger (1 Sam. 25:44). He had forgiven, and therefore forgotten it, though, it may be, on this occasion, his conscience upbraided him for receiving her again (for that is said to pollute the land, Jer. 3:1).

It takes little imagination to see why Michal despised her husband. Certainly her sinful attitude had been growing for years. She may have resented being married to her father's armorbearer as the "prize" for victory. She may have resented that David had other wives (see 3:2-5; 5:13-16), all of whom were chosen after her marriage to David. Of course, beneath all these reasons lay the basic reason: she did not understand or appreciate the things of the Lord (1 Cor. 2:14-16).

Her harsh words to David after a time of praise must have cut him deeply. He answers her by saying that if worshipping God made him appear "vile," then "I will be yet more vile." If we appear right in God's eyes, it does not matter what the world thinks of us (cf. Rom. 8:31). He

doubted not but even this would improve his reputation among those whose reproach Michal pretended to fear: “Of the maidservant shall I be had in honour.” The common people would be so far from thinking the worse of him that they would esteem him so much the more (2 Cor. 5:11). It is usually true that Satan has a “Michal” to meet us whenever we are rejoicing in the Lord and seeking to glorify Him. When others criticize us, and we know our hearts and motives are right, we should not get discouraged. Had David been like some, he would have said, “All right, I just won’t serve the Lord anymore! Even my wife doesn’t appreciate it!” No, instead, we find in the next chapter that David planned to do even more and build a temple for the Lord.

David realized that Michal would never help him in the work of the Lord; therefore, he put her away and refused to give her the privileges of marriage. For a Jewish woman to die without children was, of course, a great shame to her. David answered this fool according to her folly (Prov. 26:5). This may not mean that Michal died childless, but merely that she had no child after her return to David.

There is a cursory look at what the Old Testament says about the ark of the covenant. It has quite an interesting story to tell.

Endnotes

1 Some think he merely meant that the ark was in a tent (the tabernacle in Jerusalem) just as the armies of Israel and Judah were in tents on the battlefield, but it seems more likely that the ark was in the field with them.

2 Unbelievers have often attacked this account of what happened at Jericho. They seek to find some natural explanation

for the walls falling so they can deny the miracle here performed. Coffman relates some of their theories:

The Rahab clan in the city would open the gates or find some other way to let the invaders in. A mine (of explosives) was planted under the walls while the men of Jericho were distracted by the Israelites marching around the city. The marchers served to distract the attention of the watchers from Israelite sappers at work undermining the walls! It has been thought that perhaps the resounding shout of the Israelites on the seventh day, operating upon a principle of vibration, such as that by which “an opera singer can break a glass by hitting the right note” could have caused the walls to fall down. Kiel comments: “The different attempts that have been made to explain the miraculous overthrow of the walls of Jericho as a natural occurrence, whether by earthquake, or storming, or mining, for which the inhabitants had been thrown into a false security by the marvelous procession repeated day after day, were quite unprepared, really deserve no serious refutation, being, all of them arbitrarily forced upon the text.”

3 Archeologists since have disagreed on the dating of the ruins of Jericho. Initially Garstang dated the ruins of what is known as City IV, an occupation level that shows destruction due to warfare, at about 1400 B.C., which fits with the Biblical date of the Exodus Later Kathleen Kenyon argued that the data implies a 1250 B.C. date. Most recently, British scholar John J. Bimson has re-examined the data and Kenyon’s arguments, and

shown that a fifteenth century date (1400) actually is indicated. While the date of the Exodus continues to be debated by scholars, the weight of the evidence now firmly supports 1400 B.C. and the internal chronology of Scripture.

4 Archaeological findings from **Hailey's Bible Handbook**.

5 Psalm 78:56-64 offers the following inspired commentary on 1 Samuel 4.

6 These sub-points are taken from Weirsbe (**Expository Outlines**).

7 At the time of Samuel's call, Eli's eyesight was failing. The episode here came when he was totally blind. This is also the first mention that Eli was a judge of Israel.

8 Henry Wallace gave it as INGLORIOUS; the Douay Version footnote defines it as WHERE IS THE GLORY?; Lockyer has THE GLORY IS NOT; the Wycliffe Bible Encyclopedia gives the meaning as NO GLORY. The mother of the baby gave the best explanation of what the name actually means, i.e., THE GLORY HAS DEPARTED (Coffman).

9 The original Hebrew here is difficult, however, and may have reference to a burrowing into the skin rather than an affliction in the genital area (Henry). Coffman argues that this is a case of the bubonic plague:

There is little doubt that it was anything other than an epidemic of the bubonic plague, the black death that wiped out a major fraction of the human race in the mid fourteenth century. A key factor in the evidence is that the disease was likely spread by rats, indicated by the Philistines making golden images of those creatures. (The Hebrews did not distinguish between mice and rats.) Another element in the

deadly triangle was the Cheops flea. The flea-infested rat died of the disease; the flea then bit a man; and he died. The tumors that broke out on the people were often in the armpits and the groins.

10 Why was the ark not taken back to Shiloh? There is archaeological evidence that Shiloh was once burned to the ground, and some believe that the Philistines did this following the capture of the ark. This may have been the case since it appears from Psalm 78, that God “forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh” and “delivered his strength into captivity” at the same time (78:60,61). Also, following the capture of the ark, there appears to have been no central religious sanctuary in Israel. Later in First Samuel, Samuel appears not at Shiloh but at his home town of Ramah (7:17). The next reference to the priestly descendants of Eli places them at Nob (21:1; 22:9,11) which at that time was called the “city of the priests” (22:19). In fact, we do not even read of Shiloh’s being occupied again until 1 Kings 14:2-4. The prophet Jeremiah often reminded his people of Shiloh’s destruction (7:12; cf. 7:14; 26:6,9).

11 The numbers in 6:19 have created a problem, for there were not 50,000 people in that little village. Some suggest that this is a scribal error. In Hebrew, letters are used for numbers, and it is easy for a scribe to miscopy or misread a letter. It could have been, though, that people from all around had come when they heard the ark had returned. Or, more likely the seventy men were the Beth-shemites that were slain for looking into the ark, and the 50,000 were those that were slain by the ark in the land of the Philistines.

12 Some commentators think that the Philistines destroyed Shiloh when they defeated Israel in capturing the ark or soon thereafter (it was close by).

13 Coffman.

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Chapter 19

The Scope Of The Covenants: Is Christ's New Covenant Only For Christians?

Dub McClish

In the early 1950s Carl W. Ketcherside and Leroy Garrett were disturbing churches with their hobby that drew a distinction between “gospel” and “doctrine.” They alleged that only the “gospel” of the New Testament as they defined it (i.e., the plan of salvation) applied to alien sinners, and that the “doctrine” of the New Testament as they defined it (i.e., all of the remainder of the New Testament) applied only to Christians. They made this artificial distinction primarily in an attempt to legitimize their contention that it was sinful for a preacher to serve with a single congregation over an extended period of time (commonly called the “anti-located preacher” hobby). (Of course, they alone were qualified to determine what an “extended period of time” was!) In 1954 the late E. C. Fuqua affirmed in a written debate with Thomas B. Warren that non-Christians are not under Christian law and that the world is in no sense under any law of Christ.¹ In the mid-1970s the late James D. Bales, long-time Bible professor at Harding University, began publicly asserting that only those who are “in the covenant” are accountable

to its precepts (although he admits that he had held this position, at least in some of its parts, as early as the 1940s).³ Since alien sinners are not “in the covenant,” they are not accountable to the Law of Christ, he argued in several books he published, beginning in 1979 and in at least two written debates in the early 1980s. Dan Billingsly, who likewise denies that the alien sinner is accountable to the covenant of Christ, has widely circulated his views through radio programs, periodicals, and several oral debates, since about 1981. Beginning with the contentions of E. C. Fuqua and continuing to the present, the principal application of this novel doctrine has been to Divine Law on marriage, divorce, and remarriage. While the above-named men have not all agreed in every particular and do not use identical terminology, they are in agreement concerning one significant contention: The alien sinner is not accountable to the Law of Christ. They all assert that alien sinners are accountable to one law system, while only saints of God are accountable to the New Testament. This distinction may be charted as follows:²

NAMES OF TEACHERS	DIVISIONS OF LAW	
	SINNERS	SAINTS
Ketcherside, Garrett	Gospel only	Doctrine only
Fuqua	Civil Law	Law of Christ
Bales	Law in the heart, entrance requirements	Covenant law for the church
Billingsly	Great moral law, invited to obey law of salvation	Covenant law of Christ for the NT church

Many dire, drastic, and destructive implications and

consequences inhere in the view that alien sinners are not accountable to the Law of Christ, some of which I will demonstrate and discuss in this chapter. While it is not possible for one human to perfectly judge the motives of another, I strongly suspect that many have found it convenient to deny that alien sinners are accountable to the New Testament because of the implications of this doctrine concerning marriage, divorce, and remarriage. They are seeking a way to relax what they perceive to be the Lord's overly-strict legislation on marriage, divorce, and remarriage. I once was actually told by a fellow-preacher that, due to the large percentage of men and women who are in adulterous marriages, if we did not find some way to "reinterpret" Matthew 19:9 besides the "traditional" interpretation, we would soon run out of anyone whom we could urge to obey the Gospel without their having to dissolve their marriage! Could it be that he was more honest than many others dare to be?

I will begin by setting forth a summary of the major contentions of those who deny that alien sinners are accountable to the New Covenant of Christ, with a brief response to each of them.

Some Basic Assertions Of The "Non-Amenability" Argument

The space limitations of this chapter will not allow a detailed statement of the various arguments that are made in an effort to deny that alien sinners are subject to the Law of Christ. However, the following assertions are perhaps the most common ones and are sufficient for one to grasp the salient points of the contention:

1. The Law of Moses was given only to Israel, was not addressed to the Gentiles, and the Gentiles who lived

during its authority were not subject to it nor will they be judged by it. In like manner, the Law of Christ is addressed only to the church, is not addressed to alien sinners who have lived since the death of Christ, and they are not subject to it nor will they be judged by it.

2. Alien sinners who have lived since the cross are accountable to some God-ordained law, else they could not be sinners (Rom. 4:15; 5:13). They are under “civil law” and/or “ecclesiastical law” (Fuqua), “the law in the heart” (Bales), or “the great moral law” (Billingsly) until they obey the Gospel plan of salvation. Those who die as alien sinners will be judged, not by the Law of Christ (the Gospel), but by one of the aforementioned respective law systems (depending on which teacher one follows).

3. The word “covenant” means a multilateral contract between two or more persons or entities which is binding only on those who agree to its terms. Since alien sinners do not “agree” to keep the covenant of Christ they are therefore not bound by it.

4. That alien sinners are not bound by the Law of Christ is demonstrated in the fact that alien sinners are not commanded to repent and pray for forgiveness of their sins (Acts 8:22), observe the Lord’s supper (Acts 20:7), or give their money into the church treasury (1 Cor. 16:1–2), and such like.

5. God’s laws pertaining to marriage, divorce, and remarriage (Matt. 5:31–32; 19:9; Rom. 7:1–4; 1 Cor. 7:1–40) were addressed only to believers, those who are “in the covenant.” Since neither Christ nor Paul addressed their legislation to alien sinners they are not accountable to those laws.

Response To The Foregoing “Basic Assertions”

So that the reader may follow my responses to the basic assertions listed above, I will discuss them in the order of their appearance:

Is The New Testament Binding Only On The Church?

True, the covenant God gave through Moses (the Law of Moses) was addressed only to Israel (Exod. 25:22). However, it is not Scripturally precise to say that Gentiles were in no way subject to it. The “stranger” (Gentile) that lived in Israel (the domain of God) as a sojourner was most certainly obligated to obey the Law, even though he was not actually a part of God’s nation of Israel (Exod. 12:48–49; 20:10; Num. 9:14; 15:14; et al.). In other words, there was only one law for both Israel and the sojourner within her borders. While the Law of Moses was primarily a national law for Israel alone, the Law of Christ is not merely national, but universal in its scope (Matt. 28:19–20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46–47; Acts 1:8). The **whole world** is the field in which the seed of the kingdom (the Gospel, the Law of Christ) is to be sown (Matt. 13:37) and over which the Christ reigns (Matt. 28:18; 1 Tim. 6:14–16). Thus, all of mankind in the world must be accountable to the Law of Christ, or it would be pointless to take it to them. “But,” someone objects, “if this is so it makes aliens in the world citizens in the kingdom of Christ.” Not so! A Canadian does not become a citizen of the United States by merely crossing the border into the United States, but while he is within the territorial boundaries of the United States he is accountable to United States law. Since the “territory” of the domain of Christ includes the entire

world, all who are in the world are thereby accountable, amenable to His law (Acts 10:34–35; Rom. 9:5; 1 Tim. 6:14–16).

Alien Sinners Under What Law?

If it were true that aliens are not accountable to the Law of Christ, then it would follow that they will not be judged by that law. What Paul stated in Romans 3:19 about the Law of Moses is true in principle concerning any system of law: “Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it speaketh to them that are under the law.” In an effort to be consistent, those who deny that alien sinners are accountable to the Law of Christ must find some other “law system” besides the Law of Christ to which aliens are accountable and by which they will be judged. As already noted, various teachers have suggested various standards, which I will briefly consider in turn.

1. Fuqua actually suggested two standards—“civil law” and “ecclesiastical law.” True, God has ordained civil government and men are obligated to obey civil law as long as it does not conflict with Divine law (Rom. 13:1–7; 1 Pet. 2:13–15; Acts 5:29). Men will therefore be called to account by the Lord in the Judgment if they disobey civil law and do not repent of it, but this is hardly the same as the concept that one will be judged by civil law. Fuqua invented “ecclesiastical law” as a standard of judgment in an effort to cover those who confessed Christ, but who were in religious error.

2. Bales took Paul’s phrase, “the law written in their hearts” (Rom. 2:15) and manufactured an unwritten, instinctive system of moral guidance, which he confuses with conscience.⁴ However, if one

will carefully notice the context of Romans 2:14–15, he will observe two facts, both of which expose the Bales “law in the heart” contention: (1) the Law of Moses was the Law under consideration in these two verses, not some other imaginary unwritten law; it was the **work** of the Law of Moses that was written in the hearts of the Gentiles; (2) the ones under discussion in these verses were Gentiles who lived while the Law of Moses was still in force, **before** Christ died and nailed it to His cross (Col. 2:14); thus Paul’s description of Gentiles in Romans 2:14–15 does not apply to any who have lived since the death of Christ. Bales’ “law in the heart” is unmitigated fantasy (he was challenged for years to produce a copy of it, but never did), but, according to his doctrine, it is by this that the alien sinner who has lived since Pentecost will be judged at last!

3. Billingsly calls his system of law for alien sinners the “great moral law,” which he also identifies with “the law of sin and death” and “the law written in the heart” (ala Bales):

This law of sin and death was revealed to Adam in his transgression. The knowledge of good and evil came to the human race through Adam, and has been passed on to each succeeding generation. This moral law, this knowledge of good and evil, is the Divine law of God, which has ruled over every generation in the absence of covenant law.... Aliens will be accountable for their sins against God as revealed in the law of sin and death.... The only universal law known by all is the moral law of sin and death written

in the heart of all men (Gen. 2; Rom. 1–8).⁵

While God most certainly has a moral law which reflects His perfect moral nature, I deny that it came to man through Adam’s transgression and has since been passed on as some sort of innate guidance system (which Billingsly sometimes identifies with the conscience, per Bales). No man can know how God expects him to behave in either moral or religious matters without God’s revelation of His will (Jer. 10:23). Rather than having some inborn system of moral law as Billingsly alleges, Paul, speaking as a representative of all men, said that he would not have had knowledge of sin apart from God’s revealed law. God’s law for man since the death of Christ has been the universal Law of Christ, which contains all of God’s law for all men, including His moral law. Note also that Billingsly asserts that it is to his mythical innate “moral law” that aliens are accountable, and, by implication, by which they will be judged. Note finally that Billingsly conceives of his “great moral law” (rather than the Law of Christ) as the only universal law, which at least borders on blasphemy against the Gospel and the Christ who died to empower it. Billingsly has been repeatedly challenged to produce a copy of his “great moral law” which, of course **he cannot do because it does not exist** as he conceives of God’s moral law (i.e., an instinctive moral guide that is separate from and other than the Law of Christ)!

I have shown that the alternate systems of law set forth by those who deny that alien sinners are amenable to the Law of Christ are imaginary, mythical, fictional, and thus, anti-Biblical systems. Further, I want to

emphasize that **all men** (including alien sinners) who have lived since the cross will be judged by one standard—the Law of Christ. The Lord made this plain: “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings [words, KJV], hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day” (John 12:48). Surely, it is clear that Jesus is describing alien sinners when he speaks of those who reject Him and His Word. If aliens who have lived since the cross are not accountable to the Law of Christ (per Fuqua, Bales, Billingsly), but will be judged by it nonetheless (John 12:48), then these men make of the Lord a cruel and unjust Judge indeed! No! Those who reject Christ by rejecting His Word (non-Christians) will **still** be judged by that very Word!

Do God’s Covenants Require Man’s Agreement?

One of the most crucial and fundamental errors of the belief system I am reviewing in this chapter (especially Billingslyism) is a false assumption concerning the meaning of “covenant” when it pertains to God-given covenants with men. That the common dictionary definition of a covenant between men (i. e., a contract which is binding only upon those parties which agree to its terms) does not apply to Divine-human covenants is apparent from the following:

1. A brief overview of God’s covenants with men in the Bible demonstrates the true nature and definition of Divine-human covenants. The following chart should help the reader see how the Scriptures use and define “covenant”:⁶

How Scripture Uses And Defines “Covenant”

1. God **establishes** His covenants with men (Gen. 6:18; 9:9)
2. Ten Commandments called “covenant” (Exod. 19:5; 34:27–28; Deut. 4:13; Heb. 9:4)
3. “Covenant” and “law” used interchangeably (Jer. 31:33; Heb. 8:10; 10:16)
4. “Covenant” described as “statute,” “ordinance” (Josh. 24:25)
5. “Covenant” is **commanded** (Josh. 23:16; Deut. 4:13; Heb. 9:20)
6. God **gives** a covenant (Acts 7:8)
7. God **makes** a covenant (Deut. 5:2; Acts 3:25; Heb. 8:8, 10; 10:16)

Summary:

1. God’s covenant to man was/is a sovereign dispensing of grace
2. Man must obey God to receive the grace
3. If man rejects the covenant, he is punished
4. Bilateral, but only in the sense that two parties are involved—God and man
5. Unilateral in the sense that God alone determines blessings and conditions
6. Man is unilaterally amenable, whether he agrees to obey or rejects God’s covenant

God’s covenant with Israel was simply a way of referring to the commandments and the Law He delivered to Israel (Josh. 23:16; Heb. 9:19–20). The New Covenant is also defined as the Laws of God (Jer. 31:33; Heb. 8:10; 10:16). We therefore see that the inspired writers used “covenant” to refer to the authoritative Law of God which He gave to men and to which they were accountable, whether or not they agreed to keep it.

2. Evidence from standard reference works of uninspired writers (Bible dictionaries, Bible

encyclopedias, and word studies) accordingly reflects the Biblical use and definition of “covenant” as demonstrated above. The following chart provides a sampling of said definitions and explanations:⁷

How Various Authorities Define “Covenant”

1. “A *diatheke* is a will that distributes one’s property after death according to the owner’s wishes. It is completely unilateral...”⁸
2. “A one-sided disposition imposed by a superior party.”⁹
3. “As man is not in the position of an independent covenanting party, such a covenant is not strictly a mutual compact...”¹⁰
4. “It advises us again how alien to the covenant-concept is any notion of compact or contract between two parties. The thought of bilateral agreement is wholly excluded.”¹¹
5. “‘Covenant’ in the strict sense, as requiring two independent contracting parties, cannot apply to a covenant between God and man.”¹²
6. “In its Biblical meaning of a compact of agreement between two parties, the word ‘covenant’ is used—1. Properly, of a covenant between man and man..., 2. Improperly, of a covenant between God and man.”¹³

Why do these authorities give this definition to Divine-human covenants? Because the Scriptures demonstrate this definition so clearly that it is demanded! God’s covenants have always been the expression of His plan, His will, His order, His law, His commandments. God created man as a creature of free will who could choose to obey or reject His will (John 12:48), but who is still amenable to it in either case. Those living in rebellion to the Law of Christ (i.e., alien sinners) are no less

accountable to His law just because they do not “agree” with its terms or conditions! As earlier emphasized, to argue otherwise would be parallel to arguing that one who is not an American citizen and who rejects American laws is thereby not accountable to them while he resides within American territory.

Does The Fact That Aliens —As Aliens—Are Not To Keep Certain Points Of The Law Of Christ Imply That They Are Not Amenable To It?

Both Bales and Billingsly give a great amount of emphasis to answering the foregoing question in the affirmative. They apparently believe it is a powerful and compelling assertion. It has admittedly confused some, and these men like to play as fully as possible on that confusion. It is evident, of course, even to a novice in the Scriptures, that aliens—**as aliens**—are not to repent and pray in hope of forgiveness of their sins, as are saints (Acts 8:22). Nor are aliens in a position to Scripturally partake of the Lord’s supper (Acts 20:7). Bales and Billingsly believe that this proves that aliens are not under any of the Law of Christ, but of course, it does not. Let us test the assertion.

The following principle of application of any system of law to specific individuals has long been understood: One may be unable (due to certain prerequisite conditions) to obey every single statute in a given body of law, but may nevertheless be accountable to that body of law as a whole. Consider the following examples:

1. There are certain statutes in the Texas Code of Law that apply only to state legislators. I have not fulfilled the prerequisites (i.e., by becoming a state

legislator) for making those specific regulations apply **directly** to me. This fact does not mean that I am not accountable to the body of law of the state of Texas as a whole, however.

2. Our Lord was not in a position to be a priest under the Law of Moses because He was of the tribe of Judah instead of Levi (Heb. 7:14; 8:4). Therefore, the statutes concerning priests did not **directly** apply to Him. Did this mean that He was not amenable to the Law of Moses as a whole? Absolutely not—He was “born under the law” (Gal. 4:4).

3. Jewish women were answerable to the Mosaical covenant as a whole, but the commandment of circumcision did not directly apply to them because they did not (and could not) meet the prerequisite condition—being male.

Such illustrations could be listed almost indefinitely, but the force of them all would be the same as those above. Just because a given commandment of the Law of Christ does not **directly** apply to an alien sinner, it does not follow that he therefore is not accountable to the Law of Christ at all.

I would also have the reader see that the old adage, “That which proves too much, proves nothing,” is true of the contention we are now examining. Let us grant for the moment that, because one or a few commandments of the Lord’s new covenant do not **directly** apply to the alien sinner, he is thereby not accountable to any of it. Will the advocates of this doctrine apply the same principle to Christians, who, they insist, are not only amenable to the New Covenant, but the only ones who are? I think not, for when they do they will, **by the same reasoning**, destroy the amenability of every **Christian** to the covenant of

Christ. This would render the New Testament an absolutely useless piece of Divine legislation, for no one on the face of the earth (either aliens or saints) would be accountable to it! Consider the following examples:

1. Christian wives are no less accountable to the New Covenant as a whole regardless of the fact that they are not (and never will be) in a position to obey, “Husbands, love your wives” (Eph. 5:25), a specific command of said covenant.

2. Christian bachelors are no less accountable to the New Covenant as a whole regardless of the fact that they are not in a position to fulfill the mandate, “The bishop therefore must be...the husband of one wife...” (1 Tim. 3:2), a specific statute of the Law of Christ.

3. Christians are no less accountable to the New Covenant as a whole regardless of the fact that they are not **directly** addressed by the New Testament command, “Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins...” (Acts 22:16).

If the fact that an alien sinner is not **directly** addressed by the command to repent and pray for forgiveness (Acts 8:22) (a part of the Law of Christ) means that he is not accountable to any of it, then consistency demands that the same principle must be applied to the Christian and his accountability to the Law of Christ. The application to Christians of the Bales/Billingsly contention concerning alien sinners and “covenant amenability” illustrates the absurdity and falseness of their contention concerning alien sinners.

Does God’s Marriage, Divorce, And Remarriage Law Apply Only To Aliens?

Do Matthew 5:31–32; 19:3–9 and 1 Corinthians 7

apply to any besides Christians? That is, are these passages universal in their application, thereby embracing alien sinners and saints? As already demonstrated, Bales and Billingsly deny that alien sinners are under the New Testament at all (except, of course, what they call the “entrance requirements”), thus excluding them from any accountability to the Lord’s teaching on marriage, divorce, and remarriage. The case I have already set forth demonstrating that alien sinners are accountable to the Law of Christ demands the conclusion that alien sinners are therefore subject to Christ’s laws concerning marriage, divorce, and remarriage. However, I want to provide more information concerning why Matthew 19:9, the most-often attacked passage on this subject, cannot be restricted merely to Christians. I submit the following as compelling reasons why we should understand Matthew 19:9 as universal language, thus binding upon alien sinners and upon Christians as well:

1. Jesus used universal language, “Whosoever shall put away his wife...”
2. Jesus clearly includes more than Christians, because He originally spoke it to Jews.
3. Jesus rooted His teaching in God’s Law which had been in effect from “the beginning” (Matt. 19:4, 8), before He made any “covenant people” distinction through Moses’ Law.
4. Jesus reinforced God’s all-time, universal

law of marriage—one man, one woman, bound to each other by God for life (Gen. 2:24), only adding the one Divinely-allowed exception of fornication. The statement of this exception in no wise affects those to whom it applies.

5. Universal language must be allowed to be absolutely universal unless (1) something in the immediate context limits it, (2) it is qualified by some remote context, or (3) it is impossible or illogical to understand it in an absolutely universal sense. Neither of the latter two are true of Matthew 19:9. While Jesus does exclude certain ones (vv. 10–12), I believe He does so (as explained below) in an employment of strong irony to actually emphasize that there really are no exceptions to His Legislation. Thus, there are **no** valid reasons for the rejecting the absolutely universal application of Jesus' Law.

6. The only ones not able to receive His teaching (thus excepted by Jesus from His Legislation) are eunuchs, who are not candidates for marriage (vv. 11–12). The effect of His statement is to emphasize that **all married or marriageable persons** are subject to His Law.

7. Jesus used “whosoever” in an absolutely

universal sense in the nearby context of Matthew 18:4, making it most unlikely that he meant something less than universal in Matthew 19:9.

8. Jesus gave similar legislation in Matthew 5:32, in which He used the two universal terms, “everyone” and “whosoever” with no contextual qualifications.

9. If Jesus had intended to make His statement in Matthew 19:9 universal, how better could He have done so than by the use of the universal terminology He employed?

10. There is no reason why the Lord’s legislation on marriage, divorce, and remarriage should be for Christians only when there are not separate standards for alien sinners and saints on other moral issues (murder, lying, theft, etc.).

However, it is argued that since 1 Corinthians was addressed to the church, what Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians (1) must apply to Christians only and (2) could not apply to aliens. None will question that Paul addressed his epistle to the church in Corinth. I am even quite willing to admit that Paul was addressing Christians on the subject of marriage in 1 Corinthians 7. However, this does not in itself necessarily exclude the application of these things to aliens as well, which is what Bales and Billingsly

must prove. When one is addressing a specific group of people he may say what is appropriate to them and mention only them in the context without necessarily excluding others to whom his words may apply. Paul teaches that those who belong to Christ will be resurrected at His coming, without mentioning that those who do not belong to Christ will also be resurrected at that time (1 Cor. 15:23). Are we therefore to conclude (with the annihilationists) that the unrighteous will not be raised since they are not mentioned in this context? One is mistaken to so conclude because Jesus taught elsewhere that the righteous and the unrighteous will be raised at the same time (John 5:28–29).

Further, I have shown that (1) alien sinners are accountable to the covenant of Christ in general and (2) that Jesus' teaching on marriage, divorce, and remarriage is universal legislation. Thus, while 1 Corinthians 7 is specifically addressed to Christians (because they were the ones who asked the questions to which Paul responded), Paul's teaching applies to aliens as well.

Some Affirmative Arguments Proving That Alien Sinners Are Accountable To The Law Of Christ

In the previous section I provided negative responses to the assertion that alien sinners are not under the covenant of Christ, but that they are under some sort of unwritten, unrevealed, innate moral law. I now turn to some affirmative arguments to prove that alien sinners are accountable to the Law of Christ. I will set these forth in chart form.

The One Part—All Parts Principle ¹⁴

One Part—All Parts Principle

1. If all men who are answerable to part of a body of law are answerable to said body of law as a whole, and if all men are commanded to repent and be baptized as a part of the Law of Christ, then it follows that all men are answerable to the Law of Christ as a whole.
2. All men (a) who are answerable to part of a body of law are answerable to said body of law as a whole (Gal. 5:3; Jas. 2:10), and all men (b) are commanded to repent and be baptized as a part of the Law of Christ (Acts 2:38).
3. **Therefore**, all men are answerable to the Law of Christ as a whole.

In Galatians 5:3 Paul wrote, “Yea I testify again to every man that receiveth circumcision that he is a debtor to do the whole law.” Here item 2a in the foregoing chart is plainly set forth—if one is accountable to one point of God’s covenant, he is accountable to the covenant as a whole. Further, James 2:10 declares: “For whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all.” If one becomes guilty of violating all of God’s law by violating only one point of it, then one must be amenable to God’s Law as a whole if he is amenable to any one precept of it. The command to repent and be baptized issued by Peter on Pentecost was for “everyone” (Acts 2:38), and he so commanded because the Christ had commissioned the apostles to take the Gospel (His Law) to every nation, all the world, and the whole creation (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15–16). The conclusion of

item 3 must follow. Note, as previously demonstrated, this conclusion does not mean that every person accountable to the covenant of Christ will be in a position to obey every single statute in it, without regard to prerequisites. He must obey each statute as and when he is in a position to do so.

The Some Persons Answerable—All Persons Answerable Principle¹⁵

Some Persons—All Persons Answerable

1. If some persons are answerable to the Law of Christ as a whole which contains specific commands not directly applying to them, then all men **may** be answerable to the Law of Christ as a whole which contains specific commands not directly applying to them.
2. Some persons are answerable to the Law of Christ as a whole which contains specific commands not directly applying to them (Heb. 7:14; 8:4; Eph. 5:25).
3. **Therefore**, all men **may** be answerable to the Law of Christ as a whole which contains specific commands not directly applying to them.

I call your attention to the following proofs of item 2, some of which I have already set forth in an earlier context: (1) Jewish women were accountable to all of the Law of God given through Moses (axiomatic), but the commandment to be circumcised did not **directly** apply to them (since they had no foreskins). (2) Jesus was answerable to the Law as a whole, but the Laws concerning priests did not **directly** apply to Him since He could not be an earthly priest (Heb. 7:14; 8:4). (3) Christian women

are accountable to the Law of Christ as a whole, but the command, “Husbands, love your wives...” (Eph. 5:25) does not apply **directly** to them since they are not and never can be husbands. I have thus proved that all men **may** be answerable to the Law of Christ as a whole although it contains specific commands which do not directly apply to them. What I have demonstrated **may be the case** with all men, I will now prove **is the case** with all men, which Bales and Billingsly adamantly deny.

All Men Under The New Testament As A Whole Principle¹⁶

All Men Are Under The New Testament As A Whole

1. If there is one—and only one—universal body of spiritual law (the New Testament) in force under Christ, which is to be preached to and obeyed by all who would be saved (Christian and alien sinner), then it follows that all responsible persons are amenable to this body of spiritual law (the New Testament) as a whole.
2. There is one—and only one—universal body of spiritual law (the New Testament) in force under Christ, which is to be preached to and obeyed by all who would be saved (Christian and alien sinner) (Mark 16:15–16; Rom. 1:16; 6:17–18; Acts 6:7; 8:4; Isa. 2:3; John 17:17; 1 Tim. 4:1–5; Jer. 31:33; Heb. 8:10; 10:16; Gal. 3:23; et al.).
3. **Therefore**, all responsible persons are amenable to this body of spiritual law (the New Testament) as a whole.

I call your attention to the demonstration of item 2. The Roman saints were saved by obeying the Gospel (Rom.

1:16; Mark 16:15–16), yet Paul says they were saved by obeying the doctrine (Rom. 6:17–18). The Jewish priests were obedient to the faith (Acts 6:7), which is the same as the Gospel and the doctrine of Christ. When the saints were scattered from Jerusalem they preached the Word (Acts 8:4), obviously the Gospel we are commanded to preach to all the world (Mark 16:15). The Law and the Word of the Lord were prophesied to go forth from Jerusalem (Isa. 2:3), which occurred when the consummated Gospel was first preached on Pentecost. The Truth is the same as the Word and the faith (John 17:17; 1 Tim. 4:1–5). The New Covenant is referred to as the Law of God (Jer. 31:33; Heb. 8:10; 10:16). The faith is the New Covenant (Gal. 3:23). These various terms do not describe several different bodies of spiritual law, but they all refer to God's one body of spiritual Law He gave through His Son (Matt. 28:18; Acts 3:22; Heb. 1:1–2; et al.).

Now I will demonstrate that the one covenant of Christ, referred to under one or more of the aforementioned designations, is for alien sinners and saints alike. The gospel is for the whole world (Mark 16:15) and for saints (Rom. 1:15). The doctrine of Christ is for sinners (Acts 5:28) and saints (Acts 2:42). The faith is for sinners (Acts 6:7) and saints (Jude 3). The Word is for sinners and saints to obey (Acts 13:5–7; 2 Tim. 4:2). The Law of the Lord was preached to sinners (Isa. 2:3; Acts 2), but saints are under it (1 Cor. 9:21). The Truth was for sinners and saints to obey (John 8:32; Gal. 2:5). The New Covenant/Testament was/is for sinners (Heb. 9:15–18), and surely none will deny that saints are amenable to it. As a will or testament, it became effective when Christ died (cf. Col. 2:14). **It is the Law of God for all men today.** Having proved that

God has only one body of spiritual Law for man under Christ and that it is to be preached to and obeyed by all men, it must follow that all men are accountable to it.

Some Implications Of Denying That Alien Sinners Are Accountable To The Covenant Of Christ

The implications of a doctrine, assertion, premise, or argument can help us determine whether it is true or false, helpful or harmful. Any doctrine that implies a false doctrine is itself a false doctrine. Let us see some of the implications of the denial of alien sinner accountability.

Two Systems Of Law Instead Of One

If the contentions of Bales and Billingsly are true God has a separate Law for alien sinners who have lived since the cross from that which He has for Christians. But the Bible teaches (as I have demonstrated) that He has only one universal Law—the Gospel—and that all men are amenable to it and will be judged by it.

Universal Damnation

If the contentions of Bales and Billingsly are true no one can be saved. They argue (and correctly so) that alien sinners are not saved until they obey the Law of Christ. However, they also contend (incorrectly) that alien sinners are not accountable to the Law of Christ until they obey it (the doctrine I am herein refuting). Thus, if their doctrine is true, the alien sinner is caught in a classic “catch twenty-two” predicament—God requires him to obey His Law in order to be saved (2 Thes. 1:7–9), but it is not possible for him to obey God’s Law because it does not apply to him, he is not accountable to it (Rom. 3:19)!

Only Saints Should Be Baptized

According to the Bales/Billingsly doctrine, only saints are amenable to the Law of Christ (the Gospel, the New Testament, the faith, the Word, the covenant of Christ, et al.). Baptism is a part of the Law of Christ. It is certainly not a command of the Old Testament. Even if Bales could find a copy of "the law in the heart" or if Billingsly could find a copy of "the great moral law," neither of them would expect to find baptism to be a part of it. Since (1) alien sinners are not accountable to the Law of Christ (per their contention), (2) only saints are accountable to the Law of Christ (per their contention), and (3) baptism is a command of the Law of Christ, then it must follow that the only ones accountable to the command to be baptized are saints.

Denominational Preachers Do Not Sin When They Preach Error

No one can violate a law to which he is not subject (Rom. 4:15). Denominational preachers go beyond and teach things contrary to the Law of Christ (faith only, instrumental music, inherited sin, infant "baptism," perseverance, hierarchical government, separate and titled clergy, et al.). Yet, as alien sinners, according to Bales and Billingsly, they are not accountable to the Law of Christ and thus cannot violate it. Therefore they do not sin when they preach their false doctrines, if Bales and Billingsly are correct.

Adulterous Marriages (Including Polygamy) Are Sanctioned

According to Bales and Billingsly, since the teaching of Christ on marriage, divorce, and remarriage is "covenant doctrine," no alien sinner is accountable to it. One becomes subject to this teaching only when he becomes a Christian

and is married to a Christian. Thus, the alien sinner (or the saint married to an alien) can marry several wives either concurrently (where civil law allows) or successively with God's approval. The alien sinner (or the Christian married to an alien sinner) could also live in a "group marriage" situation where he and other men were "married" to several women at the same time and all shared sexual privileges among them. In fact, an alien sinner would not violate God's Law by simply living with one of the opposite sex without marriage because, practically speaking, it would be impossible for an alien to commit adultery or fornication.

When One Is Baptized He/She Is To Remain With Current Mate

Since alien sinners are not accountable to the Law of Christ on marriage, divorce, and remarriage (per Bales and Billingsly), God is not concerned with how many times they have been married before they become Christians. They may (in fact they should, we are told) stay with their current mate, even if they had five others before the current one, none of whom had been sexually unfaithful to them.

These are by no means all of the false, disastrous, far-reaching, and immoral implications of denying that alien sinners are accountable to the Law of Christ. However, I believe that these few are so reprehensible as to allow the Truth-loving reader to see the awfulness (as well as the error) of the doctrine.

Conclusion

I seriously doubt that the doctrine that denies the alien sinner's accountability to the Law of Christ would ever have been thought of and would certainly have never

been taken seriously had men not been seeking some means of circumventing the plain language of Jesus in Matthew 19:9. The popularity of this doctrine has increased in almost direct proportion to the increase in the number of divorces and remarriages among (1) those who are already Christians and (2) those who want to be baptized, but who have been divorced and remarried. In this issue we see a classic case of the accommodation of the Will of God to the worldly and immoral ideas and practices of men and women (Rom. 12:1–2). We must see ourselves and help all men see that all men who have lived since Christ died on the cross are subject to the Law of Christ and will therefore be judged by it.

Endnotes

1 **Divorce and Remarriage: Are Non-Christians Amenable to the Law of Christ? The Warren-Fuqua Debate**, Thomas B. Warren and E. C. Fuqua (Jonesboro, AR: National Christian Press, 1985 rep), 3–4, 10.

2 Dub McClish and Dan Billingsly, **The McClish-Billingsly Debate: The Amenability of Alien Sinners to the Law of Christ** (Denton, TX: Valid Pub., Inc., 1986), 15–16, adapted and used by permission.

3 James D. Bales, **The Scope of the Covenants** (Searcy, AR: James D. Bales, 1982), 245–246.

4 James D. Bales, **The Law in the Heart** (Dallas, TX: Gospel Teachers Pub., Inc., 1981), 55.

5 McClish and Billingsly, 109, 167–168.

6 *Ibid.*, 20, adapted by permission.

7 *Ibid.*, 21, adapted by permission. In preparation for my debate with Dan Billingsly I consulted a total of 6 Bible dictionaries, 3 Bible encyclopedias, and 12 word studies authorities and they unanimously agree with the quotations on

this chart.

8 Merrill F. Unger and William White, Jr., ed., **Nelson's Expository Dictionary of the Old Testament** (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Pub., 1980), 82–83.

9 Merrill C. Tenney, ed. **Zondervan's Pictorial Bible Dictionary** (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub. House, 1967), 186.

10 Merrill F. Unger, **Unger's Bible Dictionary** (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1977), 244.

11 J. D. Douglas, ed., **The New Bible Dictionary** (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1962), 264–267.

12 A. R. Fausset, **Fausset's Bible Dictionary** (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub. House, 1977), 140.

13 John McClintock and James Strong, ed., **Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature** (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1970 rep.), 2:544.

14 McClish-Billingsly, 36–37, adapted by permission.

15 Ibid., 51, adapted by permission.

16 Ibid., 53, adapted by permission.

Chapter 20

The Consequences Of Covenant-Breaking

Wade Webster

With the exception of the angels who kept not their first estate (Jude 6), covenant-breaking in the Scriptures has reference to man. After all, from the beginning of time, man has been a covenant-breaker. Adam and Eve originally broke God's covenant concerning the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and their descendants have followed in their footsteps (Gen. 2:16-17). Although man has consistently broken God's covenants, God has continually kept the covenants that He has made with man. Like many others in the Old Testament, Solomon described God as "keeping covenant and mercy" to a thousand generations (1 Kings 8:23; cf. Deut. 7:9; 2 Chron. 6:14; Neh. 1:5; 9:32; Dan. 9:4). Down through the centuries man has forgotten covenant (Deut. 4:23, 31; Prov. 2:17) and God has remembered covenant (Psm. 105:8-10; 106:45; 111:5); man has broken covenant (Psm. 78:10; Isa. 24:5) and God has kept covenant (Psm. 89:34; Dan. 9:4); man has forsaken covenant (Jer. 22:9; 31:32) and God has established covenant (Ezek. 16:60, 62).

From the beginning of time, there have been consequences to breaking God's covenant. Although the covenants have differed with time, the consequences have

remained relatively the same. Since man is still in a covenant with God (Heb. 8:6-13; 10:16, 29; 12:24), it is important for man to be mindful of the consequences of failing to keep God's covenant today. In this lesson, we will notice that covenant-breaking brings desolation, negation, alienation, starvation, inflammation, demoralization, lamentation, incarceration and expiration to God's people.

Desolation

Covenant-breaking comes with the consequence of desolation. God warned His people that if they broke His covenant, their land would be desolate and their cities would be waste (Lev. 26:31-33). The covenant-breaking that God had in mind in the context of the twenty-sixth chapter of Leviticus was the failure of His people to observe the sabbaths of the land (Lev. 26:34-35, 43). The seventy years of Babylonian captivity came as a result of their breaking God's covenant concerning the sabbaths (Jer. 25:11-12; Jer. 29:10). Also, the people were warned that if they broke God's covenant, the heavens would not give forth her rain and the land would not give forth her grain (Lev. 26:19-20; Deut. 28:17, 23-24; 29:22-25). The barren land of Palestine today is a constant reminder of the consequences of breaking God's covenants. It is hard for us to look at the land of Palestine today and see a land which at one time was described as "flowing with milk and honey" (Exod. 3:8, 17). The land still shows marks of the desolation which sin brought upon it in the past. In addition to a barren land, Moses prophesied that the people and their cattle would be barren if they violated God's covenant (Deut. 28:18). When there was an increase of man, land, and cattle, Moses prophesied that the increase

would be destroyed by neighboring nations (Deut. 28:30-31, 51; Lev. 26:16), insects (Deut. 28:38-39, 42; cf. Joel 1:3-7, 8-13), and wild beasts (Lev. 26:21-22). The children of Israel could have avoided all the desolation that they suffered if they had only kept God's covenant (Deut. 28:1-5). In order to fully understand the desolation which came as a result of covenant-breaking, it is necessary to remember the good land that God initially gave His people. Concerning the land of Canaan, Moses wrote:

For the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey; A land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack anything in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass (Deut. 8:7-10).

As a result of their sins, the bountiful land of Canaan became a barren land of captivity.

Although covenant-breaking may not lead to physical desolation today, it will lead to spiritual desolation. When we break God's covenant today, we remove ourselves from the spiritual blessings that are found in Christ (Eph. 1:3). Like the barren land of the Israelites, we become barren when we break God's covenant. Jesus made clear that men can only produce fruit as they abide in Him. Jesus said:

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no

more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me, ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you (John 15:4-7; cf. 2 Pet. 1:8).

No doubt, all of us know people who have gone from good ground to wayside soil because they ceased to hear and heed the word of Christ. Those who violate God's covenant suffer desolation because they allow sin, the great destroyer of men's souls, to come into their lives. For example, those who violate God's covenant by teaching false doctrine bring upon themselves and others destruction. Paul wrote:

For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things (Phil. 3:18-19).

In like manner, Peter wrote:

But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought

them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction (2 Pet. 2:1; cf. 3:16).

Today, the Lord's church is suffering desolation in many areas because of false teachers who have broken the covenant of God.

Negation

Moses warned the children of Israel that going after and serving other gods would cause their name to be negated or blotted out from under heaven. He wrote:

Lest there be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the Lord our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood...The Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven (Deut. 29:18, 20; cf. 7:24; 9:14; Exod. 17:14; Psm. 9:5; 69:28).

Following the idolatrous worship of the golden calf, Moses pleaded for God's mercy and forgiveness (Exod. 32:15-35). His love was so great that he even spoke of his name being blotted out if they were not forgiven (Exod. 32:30-35). It is clear from the Old Testament that keeping God's covenant is essential to keeping one's name in the book of life (Mal. 3:16-17). In order to fully understand the consequences of their covenant-breaking, it is

important to remember the name that God initially gave to His people. Moses wrote:

The Lord shall establish thee an holy people unto Himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the covenants of the Lord thy God, and walk in His ways. And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the Lord; and they shall be afraid of thee (Deut. 28:9-10; cf. Num. 6:27; 2 Chron. 7:14).

The glorious name which was given to the Israelites was turned into a byword because of their sins.

Today, covenant-breaking still results in negation. John wrote:

For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book (Rev. 22:18-19).

Only those who keep God's covenant and overcome the world will remain in God's book and be confessed by Christ before God and His angels (Rev. 3:5). Those who break God's covenant today must always remember that their actions will erase their names from the book of life and rob them of a home in heaven (Matt. 7:21-23; Gal. 5:19-21).

Alienation

God warned the people through Moses that their covenant-breaking would lead to alienation or separation from Him. We read:

And the Lord said unto Moses, Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers; and this people will rise up, and go a whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land, wither they go to be among them, and will forsake me, and break my covenant which I have made with them. Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide my face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them; so that they will say in that day, Are not these evils come upon us, because our God is not among us? And I will surely hide my face in that day for all the evils which they shall have wrought, in that they are turned unto other gods (Deut. 31:16-18; cf. 32:20; Isa. 8:17; Ezek. 39:23-24).

Like other inspired men in the Old Testament, Moses knew that those who break God's covenant lose the company or fellowship of God. Isaiah wrote:

Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear (Isa. 59:1-2; cf. 64:7).

In like manner, Jeremiah wrote:

Therefore, behold, I, even I, will utterly forget you, and I will forsake you, and the city that I gave you and your fathers, and cast you out of my presence (Jer. 23:39).

In order to appreciate the consequences of their covenant breaking, it is essential to get an understanding of their former fellowship with God.

Through Moses, God said:

And I will set my tabernacle among you; and my soul shall not abhor you. And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people (Lev. 26:11-12; cf. Deut. 23:14).

A pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night assured God's people during the wilderness wanderings of His presence among them (Exod. 13:20-21). Sadly, the sweet fellowship which the Israelites enjoyed with God was lost when they violated His word.

Today, we still suffer the consequence of alienation or separation when we violate the present elements of the covenant of God. The apostle John made clear that Christians have to walk in the light in order to have fellowship with God and with one another (1 John 1:6-7; cf. 2 Cor. 6:16). Throughout the New Testament, God's people are told to withdraw themselves "from every brother that walketh disorderly" (2 Thess. 3:6; 1 Cor. 5:7, 13). Brethren are to withdraw themselves from those who have broken God's covenant because those individuals are

no longer in fellowship with God. Not only does covenant-breaking lead to separation from God and His people in this life, it leads to separation from God and His people throughout eternity. Jesus spoke of a certain rich man who was separated from God by a great gulf which no man could cross (Luke. 16:26) and Paul spoke of those who would be punished “with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power” (2 Thess. 1:9).

Starvation

Starvation is listed in the Scriptures as a consequence of covenant-breaking. Through Moses, God said:

And when I have broken the staff of your bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and they shall deliver you your bread again by weight: and ye shall eat, and not be satisfied (Lev. 26:26; cf. Deut. 28:48; Jer. 44:11-14).

In graphic terms, Moses described how great the hunger would be as a result of their breaking God’s covenant. He wrote:

And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, which the Lord thy God hath given thee, in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee: So that the man that is tender among you, and very delicate, his eye shall be evil toward his brother, and toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the remnant of

his children which he shall leave: So that he will not give to any of them of the flesh of his children whom he shall eat: because he hath nothing left him in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in all thy gates. The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, her eye shall be evil toward the husband of her bosom, and toward her son, and toward her daughter, And toward her young one that cometh out from between her feet, and toward her children which she shall bear: for she shall eat them for want of all things secretly in the siege and straitness, wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates (Deut. 28:53-57; cf. 2 Kings 6:24-29; Jer. 19:9; Lam. 4:10).

In spite of being given a “land flowing with milk and honey,” some of God’s people would eventually starve to death because of their sins. Those who had been fed with manna and quail in the wilderness would one day die from a lack of bread and meat (Exod. 16:35; Num. 11:31-32; Deut. 8:3, 16; Psm. 105:40).

Although covenant-breaking may not lead to physical starvation today, it does lead to spiritual starvation. Since our source of food spiritually is Christ and His word, when we forsake the covenant of Christ, we have cut off our food source. Jesus said:

I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is

the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world (John 6:48-51).

If we cease to hear and heed Christ, we have ceased to be fed spiritually. The word of Christ is the only food that our souls have spiritually. It is the milk and meat of our spiritual diets (1 Cor. 3:2; cf. Heb. 5:12, 14).

Inflammation

Inflammation or sickness is a consequence of covenant-breaking. Moses wrote:

The Lord shall smite thee with a consumption, and with a fever, and with an inflammation, and with an extreme burning...Then the Lord will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance. Moreover he will bring upon thee all the diseases of Egypt, which thou wast afraid of; and they shall cleave unto thee. Also every sickness, and every plague, which is not written in the book of this law, them will the Lord bring upon thee, until thou be destroyed. And ye shall be left few in number, whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude; because thou wouldest not obey the voice of the Lord thy God (Deut. 28:22, 59-62; cf. 29:22).

The “inflammation” which is mentioned by Moses as a consequence of breaking God’s covenant was a terrible disease. Adam Clarke believed that the inflammation was elephantiasis. He referred to elephantiasis as the most horrid disease that can afflict human nature. The disease caused the whole body to be covered with a loathsome scurf and all the joints to be prematurely enlarged. Ultimately the skin becomes so rigid that it breaks across all the joints (Clarke, Vol. 1, 812). It is interesting to me that God could keep their feet from swelling throughout the wilderness wanderings but the people could not keep inflammations down once the wanderings had stopped and they were at home in the promised land (Deut. 8:4). In addition to “inflammation,” Moses spoke of an itch that would not stop (Deut. 28:27, 45). I don’t know about you, but the thought of an itch that wouldn’t stop makes me very uncomfortable. Israel could have avoided all of these diseases and physical problems if they had only kept God’s covenant. At the bitter waters of Marah, Moses said:

If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in His sight, and wilt give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee (Exod. 15:26).

Although physical sickness may not be a consequence of covenant breaking today, spiritual sickness is a consequence of covenant breaking (Matt. 9:12). When we forsake God’s covenant, we lose the source of our health - God. The sweet psalmist of Israel spoke of God as the

health of his countenance (Psm. 42:11; 43:5). We maintain our spiritual health by fearing God and keeping His commandments. Solomon wrote, “Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil. It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones” (Prov. 3:7-8; cf. 4:20-22). God’s word is the “balm of Gilead” for our souls (Jer. 8:22). When we forsake God’s covenant, we invite a spiritual sickness into our souls which can only be healed by a repentance and a return to God’s covenant. The only way that we can have sound spiritual health is through holding fast the sound words of God (2 Tim. 1:13; cf. 1 Tim. 1:10; 2 Tim. 4:3; Tit. 1:9; 2:1).

Demoralization

Demoralization or doubt is a consequence of covenant-breaking. Moses wrote:

The Lord shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart: And thou shalt grope at noon-day, as the blind gropeth in darkness...And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind: And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life: In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see (Deut. 28:28-29, 65-67).

Moses warned the people that they would become so apprehensive and fearful that they would flee from the wind. Moses wrote:

And upon them that are left alive of you I will send a faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies; and the sound of a shaking leaf shall chase them; and they shall flee, as fleeing from a sword; and they shall fall when none pursueth. And they shall fall one upon another, as it were before a sword, when none pursueth: and ye shall have no power to stand before your enemies (Lev. 26:36-37).

The great prophet Isaiah spoke of how that one thousand Israelites would flee at the rebuke of one aggressor because they had rejected the confidence of God (Isa. 30:15-17). In order to appreciate the consequence of their covenant-breaking, it is important to recall the confidence that they had when they were keeping God's covenant. Moses wrote,

Whither shall we go up? our brethren have discouraged our heart, saying, The people is greater and taller than we; the cities are great and walled up to heaven; and moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakims there. Then I said unto you, Dread not, neither be afraid of them. The Lord your God which goeth before you, he shall fight for you, according to all that He did for you in Egypt before your eyes; And in the wilderness, where thou hast seen how that the Lord thy God bare thee, as a man doth bear his son, in all the way that ye went, until ye came into this place (Deut. 1:28-31).

Israel lost their confidence and assurance when they abandoned the covenant of God.

Demoralization is still a consequence of covenant-breaking. When we break God's covenant, we lose the boldness and confidence that comes with being faithful. The Hebrew writer wrote:

And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end...For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end (Heb. 3:5-6, 14; cf. 10:35; Prov. 28:1).

We can only have confidence if we hold fast the covenant of God. After all, confidence comes by faith. Paul wrote:

According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him (Eph. 3:11-12).

In like manner, John wrote:

And now little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming (1 John 2:28; cf. 4:17; 1 Tim. 3:13).

It is important to note that great boldness is **in** Christ

and not out of him. In the book of First John, confidence is clearly connected with keeping God's commandments (1 John 3:21-24; cf. 5:14). Since God is our confidence (Prov. 3:26; 14:26), we lose the confidence that comes from having God's help when we violate the covenant of God (Rom. 8:31; Heb. 13:5-6).

Lamentation

Moses prophesied that lamentation would be a consequence of their covenant-breaking. He said that if the people violated God's covenant, they would "pine away" in their iniquity (Lev. 26:39) and be filled with "sorrow of mind" (Deut. 28:65). Perhaps the most vivid picture is painted by the psalmist in the one hundred and thirty-seventh psalm. He wrote:

By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea,
we wept, when we remembered Zion. We
hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst
thereof. For there they that carried us away
captive required of us a song; and they that
wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us
one of the songs of Zion. How shall we sing the
Lord's song in a strange land? (Psm. 137:1-4).

In order to appreciate the consequences of covenant breaking, we need to recall the joy which Israel possessed before breaking God's covenant. Moses wrote:

Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee,
O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy
help, and who is the sword of thy excellency!
and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee;

and thou shalt tread upon their high places
(Deut. 33:29).

The happiness which Israel possessed when they were right with God was lost when they violated His covenant.

Today, lamentation remains a consequence of breaking God's covenant. Since true happiness is found in the Lord, we lose the source of our happiness when we break God's covenant (Phil. 4:4; Psm. 32:11). We can only enjoy true happiness as we keep the words of God. Jesus said, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" (John 13:17). In like manner, Solomon wrote, "Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he" (Prov. 29:18). In addition to losing happiness in this life when we break God's covenant, we will lose eternal happiness if we die as a covenant-breaker. Hell is described as a place where there is "weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 25:30).

Incarceration

Incarceration is a consequence of covenant-breaking. Moses wrote:

Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things: and He shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until He have destroyed thee...And the Lord shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships, by the way whereof I spake unto thee, Thou shalt see it again no more: and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and

bondwomen, and no man shall buy you (Deut. 28:48, 68; cf. Lev. 26:25).

It is interesting that Moses mentioned going back into Egypt again as a consequence of breaking God's covenant. No doubt, Egypt brought back sore memories for every Israelite. After all, Israel had just been delivered from an extremely hard period in Egypt. Moses records:

And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigor: and they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigor (Exod. 1:13-14).

When God heard the cries of the Israelites and saw their oppression in the brickyards of Egypt, He called Moses to go and lead His people out (Exod. 2:23; 3:1-10). No doubt, freedom was sweet to these weary Israelites. Yet, they would not remain free for very long because of sin.

Although covenant-breaking may not lead to physical incarceration today, it will lead to spiritual captivity. Breaking God's covenant separates one from the truth which has the power to make man free (John 8:32). To the Galatians who were in danger of breaking God's covenant, Paul wrote, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Gal. 5:1). In the context of Galatians, Paul was concerned about false teachers leading the brethren at Galatia back into bondage (Gal. 2:4). In the book of Romans, Paul made clear that men become the servants of those to whom they yield their

members whether it be unto sin or unto righteousness (Rom. 6:16, 18).

Expiration

Covenant-breaking in the Old Testament often resulted in expiration or death. For example, God warned Abraham that those who did not keep his covenant concerning circumcision would be “cut off from his people” (Gen. 17:9-14). It seems clear that the expression “cut off” referred to the separation of death. In fulfillment of the covenant of God, Abraham and all the men of his house were circumcised (Gen. 17:23-27). It is interesting that Abraham was ninety-nine years old at the time that he was circumcised (Gen. 17:24). Clearly, Abraham knew that man never outgrows the responsibility of keep God’s covenant. Later in Old Testament history, the great man Moses almost lost his life as a result of his failure to circumcise his son (Exod. 4:24-26). Although Zipporah seems to have resented the action, she took a sharp stone and performed the circumcision immediately (Exod. 4:26). The same consequences were prescribed for other breaches of the covenant like failing to observe the Sabbath day. We read:

And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you. Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord: whosoever

doeth any work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death (Ex. 31:12-15; cf. 35:2).

No doubt, most Bible students are familiar with the account of the man who gathered sticks on the sabbath day (Num. 15:32-36). As a result of his violating God's covenant, the man was stoned to death by the whole congregation of Israel (Num. 15:35-36).

Today, we must realize that covenant-breaking will lead to expiration. Although breaking God's covenant today may not lead to physical death, it will lead to spiritual death. Paul made clear that "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23) and James made clear that sin when it is finished bringeth forth death (Jas. 1:13-15). In addition to spiritual death, covenant-breaking will lead to the second death. John wrote:

But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death (Rev. 21:8).

Although John did not use the word "covenant" or "covenant-breakers," he clearly referred to the ultimate end of those who break God's covenant.

In a study like the study that we have engaged in this day, it is possible for us to look at the covenant-breaking of the Israelites without taking a look at our own relationship to God's covenant. Lest we should become like the man who saw the mote in his brother's eye and missed the beam in his own eye, we must be careful

to examine ourselves (Matt. 7:3-5). We must always keep in mind that God recorded the sins of Old Testament Israel to help New Testament Israel. God recorded the covenant-breaking of the Israelites that we might not repeat their mistakes with the present covenant of God (1 Cor. 10:1-11; Rom. 15:4).

Chapter 21

The Period Between The Testaments

Curtis A. Cates

Enthusiastic gratitude is herein expressed to the outstanding Southaven congregation, to her splendid elders, to her gifted preachers. Special appreciation is expressed to the editor of **Power**, director of the **Power** Lectureship, and editor of this fine volume, brother B. J. Clarke. May the Lord continue richly to bless all their great efforts to exalt the Christ and to carry the pure, soul-saving gospel to the community and to the world!

Why This Study

Although the pen of inspiration was silent during the approximately 400 years of the Intertestamental Period (being the period of history between God's revelation in the Old Testament Period and the New Testament Period), the time "between the testaments" has great significance relative to the study of God's dealings with His people and of the conditions which existed at the time of Christ ("the fulness of time," Gal. 4:4) and at the time when the kingdom was established (Acts 2).

A number of observations are appropriate initially concerning the intertestamental times.

1. Though there were no inspired writings between the time Ezra and Nehemiah and the time of the New Testament writers, some non-canonical books were written by certain Jews during this period. These would include the “Apocrypha,” containing a quite valuable historical tool for the intertestamental period, 1 Maccabees. 2 Maccabees is somewhat helpful. The Roman Catholic Church accepted the “Apocrypha” as a part of the Old Testament canon, but it is uninspired literature and was thus rejected even by the Jews as not of God. Some pseudo-apocalyptic writings were produced at this time (attempting to imitate such genuine apocalyptic writing as Daniel). Some Greek and Roman historians wrote about and during the intertestamental years, which works assist in certain areas of research. The non-canonical writings of the Essenes at Qumran reveal additional information. The historian Flavius Josephus sheds the most light on the time between the testaments, especially in *The Antiquities of the Jews* and *The Wars of the Jews*.

2. Daniel wrote predictive prophecy of many significant events which would transpire during the intertestamental era, and those prophecies were so completely and minutely accurate that the modernists characterize the book as pseudepigraphic (false or spurious writing); that is, the book is charged with having been written as history, after the fact (after the events transpired), as if it were prophecy.

3. The four world empires (Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome) made their own peculiar contributions to the “fulness of time” and thus to the establishment of the kingdom, as prophesied by Daniel.

4. The sects of the Jews had their origins during the events between the testaments, and their history gives

some insight into their dealings with Christ and the early church, as do the origin and history of the Samaritans.

5. Some religious practices of the Jews were observed during Christ's day which were unknown at the beginning of the intertestamental period.

Historical Background

In attempting to write of the time "between the testaments," which will in this forum be of necessity abbreviated and limited, a sketchy look at its background is helpful. The student of the Old Testament knows that the nation of Israel conquered Canaan, the land of abundant, rich pastures (milk) and of abundant pollen or bees (honey). After a period of judges, the Hebrews cried out for a king, to be like the nations about them. During the United Kingdom of 120 years, Saul and David and Solomon reigned. However, because of the excesses of Solomon, God divided the kingdom; a number of things contributed to its division into the Northern Kingdom (Israel) and the Southern Kingdom (Judah). Israel lasted for about 250 years, a time characterized by idolatry, wickedness, materialism, rebellion, pride, and treachery. They were carried into Assyrian captivity, never to return **as a nation**. However, representatives of the ten tribes did return to Palestine.¹ After about 400 years of existence, Judah was carried into Babylonian captivity, returning to Palestine after seventy years. Though there were periods of righteousness and uprightness in Judah (especially during the time of the "royal reformers" [Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and Josiah]), Judah eventually followed the wicked, perverted ways of her northern sister and had to be punished. God raised up prophets to warn both kingdoms; they were largely rejected, ignored, and/or persecuted.

The Carrying Away of Israel

Though the strong empire of Assyria had been on the horizon for many years, things were becoming more and more ominous and threatening with Tiglathpileser (Pul) (2 Kings 15:29; 16:7-9). Upon his death, Shalmaneser besieged Samaria (capitol of Israel) three years, taking tribute from King Hoshea (2 Kings 17:1-6). Upon Shalmaneser's death during the siege, Sargon became king of Assyria and completed the siege and destroyed Israel in the year 721 B.C. The sacred record stated,

...Shalmaneser King of Assyria came up against Samaria, and besieged it. And at the end of three years they took it (2 Kings 18:9,10). And the king of Assyria carried Israel away into Assyria (18:11).

Why? It was

because they obeyed not the voice of Jehovah their God, but transgressed his covenant, even all that Moses the servant of Jehovah commanded, and would not hear it, nor do it (18:12).

This event holds significance for the intertestamental period in a number of ways, including its being the origin of the Samaritan people. Sargon claims in the Display Inscriptions at Khorsabad to have taken 27,290 people when he besieged the capitol, Samaria, after which he left one of his officers to impose tribute upon those inhabitants who were left. Only the very poorest, the "peasants," were

left in the land. Their being still rebellious against Assyria, the king sought to weaken their nationalism. Sargon wrote further, following the former ways of Assyria when capturing other lands, “The town I rebuilt better than it was before, and settled herein people from countries I myself had conquered” (Annals of Sargon). Inspiration records,

And the king of Assyria brought men from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath and Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel; and they possessed Samaria, and dwelt in the cities thereof (2 Kings 17:24).

What religion did they bring with them, and what religion did many of the Israelites continue to practice? Idolatry! Being that there had been a great thinning of the population, the fields lay uncultivated and grew up in weeds and jungle. The Bible records further,

And so it was, at the beginning of their dwelling there, that they feared not Jehovah: therefore Jehovah sent lions among them, which killed some of them. Wherefore they spake to the king of Assyria, saying, The nations which thou hast carried away, and placed in the cities of Samaria, know not the Law of the god of the land: therefore he hath sent lions among them, and behold, they slay them, because they know not the law of the god of the land” (2 Kings 17:25,26).

God used the wild beasts as punishment. Those who

had been imported decided that they did not know how to please and to worship the “god” of the particular land.

Then the king of Assyria commanded, saying, Carry thither one of the priests whom ye brought from thence; and let them go and dwell there, and let him teach them the law of the god of the land. So one of the priests whom they had carried away from Samaria came and dwelt in Bethel, and taught them how they should fear Jehovah” (2 Kings 17:27,28).

The inspired writer records, “They feared Jehovah, and served their own gods” (17:33), which practice was persisting when 2 Kings was written (17:34,41), for the children and grandchildren followed the idolatrous ways of their parents. They became somewhat familiar with and “feared” God, but they continued worshiping the idols of their homelands (17:30-32).

Howbeit every nation made gods of their own, and put them in the houses of the high places which the Samaritans had made, every nation in their cities wherein they dwelt (2 Kings 17:29).

Thus, they combined idolatry with “worship” of Jehovah.

The remnant of the people of Israel who were left in the land intermarried with those peoples imported from other nations, thus basically half Jew and half Gentile (heathen, to the Hebrews). Thus, the possibility or thought of association of the Hebrews with this group of people (who became known as Samaritans because of the district or area of Samaria which they inhabited in the midst of

Palestine (Luke 17:11) was very repulsive, whether social or religious association. The Samaritans were pure or true neither in blood nor in worship (though they claimed to worship God—

...then they [the Samaritans] drew near to Zerubbabel, and to the heads of fathers' houses, and said unto them, Let us build with you; for we seek your God, as ye do; and we sacrifice unto him since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assyria, who brought us up hither, (Ezra 4:2).

When the Jews returned from captivity, as recorded in Ezra 4, and began to rebuild the temple, the Samaritans wanted a cosmopolitan, ecumenical religion—the Jews would have no part in it; they **would not compromise**. To *claim* to worship and seek God does not necessarily make it so! When the Jews were being blessed and prospering, the Samaritans would claim blood kin; when the Jews fell upon hard times, the Samaritans emphasized their descendency from those imported by Sargon and Esarhaddon from foreign lands.

The Samaritans held their own version of the five books of Moses, the Samaritan Pentateuch, to date back to the time of their beginning when the priest was sent back to Samaria (2 Kings 17:26,27). However, they rejected all other writings of the Hebrews. They would be greatly influenced later by Grecian worldly philosophy, materialism, and culture—yet while claiming some “loyalty” to the God of the Pentateuch.

The Carrying Away of Judah

Sennacherib, son of Sargon and his successor as king

of Assyria, took the fortified cities of Judah, and Hezekiah, king of Judah, bought him off by paying tribute. But, he did not stay bought off. Rabshakeh called upon Hezekiah to surrender (2 Kings 18:13-37). Hezekiah laid the situation out before the Lord, humbled himself, and prayed for the Lord to save the nation (19:1-19). Isaiah prophesied to Hezekiah:

Therefore thus saith Jehovah concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come unto this city, nor shoot an arrow there, neither shall he come before it with shield, nor cast up a mount against it.... For I shall defend this city to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake (2 Kings 19:20-34).

The result was:

And it came to pass that night, that the angel of Jehovah went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when men arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies (2 Kings 19:35).

However, the time would indeed come when Judah (because of her wickedness, idolatry, and gross rebellion) would likewise be destroyed and taken into captivity. 2 Kings 20 and Isaiah 38 and 39 are a background and prophecy concerning the first carrying away into Babylon.

In Judah, Manasseh had followed his father, Hezekiah, as king. Unlike his dad, his fifty-five year reign was characterized by idolatry and human sacrifice being

practiced (2 Kings 21:1-9), even more than by the Canaanites. He killed those faithful to God (21:16). Josiah attempted to restore righteousness and worship of Jehovah to the land; however, and unfortunately, his reforms were only “skin deep,” and after his untimely death in battle against Pharaoh-necho of Egypt; the people returned to their terrible wickedness, rebellion, and idolatry (22:1-23:37). After one last gasp of hope with Josiah, the nation was ripe for the picking by God’s conquering servant, Nebuchadnezzar (24:1,2).

While Judah was increasingly digressing from God’s law and will, things were changing on the eastern front. The Chaldeans were increasing in strength. Two of the areas controlled by Assyria revolted against the great king, Sin-shar-ishkun; they were Nabopolassar, the Babylonian, and Cyaxeres, the Mede. Help from Egypt for Assyria came too late; they besieged Nineveh, and it fell in three months (612 B.C.), fulfilling Nahum’s prophecy. Sin-shar-ishkun being killed, the remnant fled to Haran (once inhabited by Abraham), led by Ashur-uballit II and were defeated (610 B.C.). The mop-up campaign took them to Carchemish, where Nebuchadnezzar defeated the last stronghold of Assyrians and Egyptians decisively (606 B.C.). [The Bible student will remember that when Jonah preached to Nineveh, the Assyrian capitol, their repentance delayed their destruction for nearly 200 years, from 800 B.C. to 612 B.C.].

One hundred years earlier, Isaiah had told Hezekiah that some of his sons (the seed royal) would be taken to Babylon and made eunuchs in Babylon. The fulfillment was sure and precise. In 606-605, Nebuchadnezzar, son of Nabopolassar and co-regent of the Babylonian Empire, captured Jerusalem and took away certain of the seed royal

(Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah) and made them eunuchs (Dan. 1:1-7). It being not unusual for a conquering nation(s) to take the brightest captives, with their enviable, elite training of their homeland, and put them in the finest universities available locally, Nebuchadnezzar placed Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah in college for three years, after which they stood before the king as wise men.

As noted earlier, one cannot study the intertestamental period without using Daniel as a springboard. One sees this very clearly as related to Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 2, a dream which he had forgotten. Inasmuch as the wise men called to the king could not reveal the dream and interpret the dream, this powerful potentate ordered **all** the wise men to be killed. Of course, that included Daniel and his companions. Being granted an audience with the king, Daniel revealed the dream and then made known the interpretation [enabled to do so by the God in heaven] (2:1-30).

The king dreamed of four world empires, represented by a colossal image, whose head was of gold, breast and arms of silver, belly and thighs of brass, and legs of iron and feet of iron and clay. A little stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and it smote the image in its feet and destroyed the image. This stone grew and grew and filled the whole earth (2:31-35).

Nebuchadnezzar was the head of gold (Babylonia). God had blessed him with a great empire, very showy; yet a stronger one but less fancy or showy or elaborate would follow Babylon—one of silver (Medo-Persia). Silver is inferior to gold, yet a harder metal. Following it would be one of brass (Greece), stronger even than the silver. The

fourth would be as strong as iron, smashing and crushing (Rome). And yet, there would be internal weakness, for iron and clay do not mix; it had its innate weakness of weakened patriotism, long bread lines, etc. Conquering so many people, snatching them from their own homelands to others, even to Rome, and watering down their own blood in war, the empire would “not cleave one to another.” It would be in the days of the Roman kings that the Lord’s kingdom, the church, would be established. Unlike each of these empires which would pass to others, God’s kingdom would never fall nor would it be ruled by another. Though a spiritual kingdom, it would “break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and...stand forever.” Cut out of the mountain, established by the Lord, it would “break in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold” (2:36-45). The Lord’s church and the blood of the martyred saints did indeed eventuate in the demise of the colossal image.

Daniel himself saw a vision in the first year of Belshazzar which paralleled the dream of Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 7). This brings us down in Babylonian history a number of years. After Nebuchadnezzar’s reign of 43 years (605-562 B.C.), his son Evil-Merodach reigned two and one half years (562-560 B.C.). His sister’s husband, Neriglissar, assassinated him and reigned from 560 to 556 B.C., meaning a change in dynasty. His son reigned but nine months and was killed. Nabonidus now reigned until Babylon fell in 539 B.C.² at the hand of Gobryas (Darius the Mede) in Daniel 5:30. Three years later, Cyrus the Persian arrived in Babylon, proclaiming himself “King of Babylon and King of the Nations.” Now, it was in the first year of Belshazzar that Daniel saw the dream, or vision, in Daniel 7. When Nabonidus reigned in Babylon,

his son Belshazzar was co-regent from the third year of his reign. Thus, Daniel's vision was approximately 553 B.C.³

Daniel saw a stormy sea (perhaps representing society), and four beasts, or kingdoms, coming out of the sea. The first was Babylon, represented as a lion, which rose swiftly; the second Medo-Persia, a bear which was really rough and mean; the third Greece, a leopard rising exceedingly swiftly, and also having four heads; the fourth Rome, the diverse beast exceedingly terrible, before whom none could stand. It would be during the time of this beast, Christ would ascend to the Ancient of Days, God, and receive dominion, glory, and a kingdom, which would be everlasting (7:1-14).

Daniel beheld the demise of the diverse beast (Rome), as Nebuchadnezzar had in chapter two. He beheld the "judgment" upon that beast, "even till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed, and it was given to be burned with fire." Interestingly, when Daniel saw the Roman Empire destroyed (476 A.D.), he also beheld the influence of Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece live on (though they had been destroyed as empires) in the Roman Empire; however, when Rome was destroyed, their influence was destroyed. The little stone destroyed the influence of **all** the image—the head of gold, the breast and arms of silver, and the belly and thighs of brass, as well as the iron and the clay (7:12; 2:45); that is, when Rome fell. Each in its own time helped prepare for the coming of Christ and the establishment of the kingdom. "...but when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman [the virgin birth; cf. Gen. 3:15; Isa. 7:14; Jer. 31:22; et al.], born under the Law [Christ was born, lived, and died under the Law of Moses, and (having fulfilled it, Matt. 5:17, 18)

nailed it to His cross (Col. 2:14-17; Rom. 7:1-4; Gal. 3:16-26)]]” (Gal. 4:4). When everything was in readiness, Christ came.

The Return Of The Israelites

We say “Israelites,” because representatives of all twelve tribes returned to Palestine. Just as there were three carryings away into Assyria (2 Kings 15-17), and three carryings away into Babylon (2 Kings 24,25), there were three returns into Palestine. The first return was in the first year of Cyrus, under the leadership of Zerubbabel. The commission was to return and **rebuild the temple**. The work was frustrated by the Samaritans, and the rebuilding was shut down. Finally it was completed in 516 B.C., in the sixth year of the reign of Darius Hystaspes (Ezra 1:1-6:16).

The second return was in the seventh year of Artaxerxes Longimanus (Ezra 7:7-10). This commission was to **restore the Law**, under the leadership of Ezra. Note that as in the decree of Cyrus (Ezra 1:1-3), Artaxerxes decreed that

all of the people of Israel, and their priests and the Levites, in my realm [in all Medo-Persia, including former Assyria] that are minded of their own free will to go to Jerusalem, go with thee (Ezra 7:13).

Note that this would include those of all twelve tribes! No wonder they offered in sacrifice “*twelve he-goats*” for all Israel (Ezra 6:17;8:35)!

The third return was thirteen years later in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes (Neh. 2:1). This commission

was to **rebuild the city, with its walls, streets, and moats** (Neh. 2:3 ff; Dan. 9:25; Zech. 8:3-5), led by Nehemiah, God's servant who was also cupbearer to Artaxerxes. A king wants someone loyal and honest to prepare and serve his food; Nehemiah was exactly that. And, God could depend upon him to be loyal to Him and His Word, even in the face of opposition. As one would expect, the Samaritans again threatened the work, even to the point of trying to get Nehemiah to compromise (2:17-20), by ridicule, and by physical threat (4:1-6-6:16). With many today, compromise, ecumenical meetings, no backbone, and cowardice is the name of the game—not so with Nehemiah! And, from where does ridicule come? Often, it is from those who merely **claim** to fear Jehovah (as did the Samaritans). So, the Hebrews were back at home with their temple and city rebuilt and the Law restored. For it to remain so would demand constant vigilance (8:1-13:3).

As the Medo-Persian Period continued, the inspired record says that Nehemiah returned to his responsibilities to Artaxerxes (13:6). After certain days, Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem (in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes), and was appalled at the sight. Of all things, Eliashib the priest had formed an alliance with the Samaritan Tobiah and had set him up—in the temple, mind you. For all intents and purposes the temple service had ceased; the Levites had to work at secular jobs to make a living. Nehemiah asked, “Why is the house of God forsaken?” (13:4-11). He threw Tobiah and his “stuff” out of the temple chambers, and he restored the service (13:12-14). He also stopped the work and trading of goods on the Sabbath day, commanding the gates of the city to be closed. He threatened with bodily harm the merchants and sellers

who hung around the gates on the Sabbath to see if the policy would be maintained (13:15-22).

Another terrible thing had happened in just several years. The children “spoke half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews’ language.” Nehemiah reviled them, contended with them, and smote some of them, and he strongly rebuked them for taking wives of the Samaritans and thus sinning against God (13:23-27). Do you wonder, dear reader, why loyal elders, preachers, and teachers warn against apostasy, why false teachers and preachers are marked, and why false doctrines are exposed—even before these things get into certain local areas and congregations? Per the case of Nehemiah and the Jews, apostasy can take place in even **less** than one generation, as it did in Jerusalem.

Even though Nehemiah warned the people and rebuked error strongly, even to exposing and severing the compromising and false ties with Tobiah and the Samaritans, God’s people in Jerusalem split. A rival altar and place of false worship was built on Mt. Gerizim. The record states,

And one of the sons of Joiada, the son of Eliashib the high priest, was son-in-law to Sanballat the Horonite: therefore I chased him from me. Remember them, O my God, because they have defiled the priesthood, and the covenant of the priesthood, and of the Levites. Thus cleansed I them from all foreigners, and appointed charges for the priests and for the Levites, every one in his work; and for the wood-offering, at times appointed, and for the firstfruits. Remember me, O my God, for good (Neh. 13:28-31).

Josephus wrote these sequences from other sources:

Now when John had departed this life, his son Jaddua succeeded in the high priesthood. He had a brother, whose name was Manasseh. Now there was one Sanballat, who was sent by Darius, the last king [of Persia], into Samaria. He was a Cuthean by birth; of which stock were the Samaritans also. This man knew that the city of Jerusalem was a famous city, and that their kings had given a great deal of trouble to the Assyrians, and the people of Celesyria; so that he willingly gave his daughter, whose name was Nicaso, in marriage to Manasseh, as thinking this alliance by marriage would be a pledge and security that the nation of the Jews should continue their goodwill to him.⁴

Josephus wrote further,

But the elders of Jerusalem being very uneasy that the brother of Jaddua the high priest, though married to a foreigner, should be a partner with him in the high priesthood, quarreled with him; for they esteemed this man's marriage a step to such as should be desirous of transgressing about the marriage of [strange] wives, and that this would be the beginning of a mutual society with foreigners...so they commanded Manasseh to divorce his wife, or not to approach the altar, the high priest himself joining with the people in their indignation against his brother, and driving him away from

the altar. Where upon Manasseh came to his father-in-law, Sanballat, and told him, that although he loved his daughter Nicaso, yet was he not willing to be deprived of his sacerdotal dignity on her account, which was the principal dignity in their nation, and always continued in the same family. And then Sanballat promised him not only to preserve to him the honor of his priesthood, but to secure for him the power and dignity of a high priest, and would make him governor of all the places he himself now ruled [Samaria—CAC], if he would keep his daughter for his wife. He also told him further, that he would build him a temple like to that at Jerusalem, upon Mount Gerizim, which is the highest of all the mountains that are in Samaria; and he promised that he would do this with the approbation of Darius the king. Manasseh was elevated with these promises, and staid with Sanballat, upon a supposal that he should gain a high priesthood, as bestowed on him by Darius, for it happened that Sanballat was then in years. But there was a great disturbance among the people of Jerusalem, because many of those priests and Levites were entangled in such matches; for they all revolted to Manasseh, and Sanballat afforded them money, and divided among them land for tillage, and habitations also, and all this in order every way to gratify his son-in-law.⁵

Though Josephus misplaces this occurrence, putting it in the time of Alexander the Great, it is nonetheless

deemed reliable history. He was likely following Samaritan accounts, which sought to tie the origins of the altar with the times of the great conqueror, who befriended them.⁶

Until this time, there was sympathy in some of the Jews in Jerusalem toward Sanballat, Tobiah, and the Samaritans. However, with the return of Nehemiah and his righteous demands and with many priests and Levites defecting to Samaria and to Samaritan worship with Manasseh, the tendency to compromise with the Samaritans ended. Harrison stated:

This event precipitated the rupture between the Jews and Samaritans that occurred during this period.⁷

What was built on Gerizim was an altar and likely a makeshift “temple.”

Time forbids a discussion of Queen Esther, during the time of Xerxes (Ahasuerus), king of Medo-Persia, except to point out that she through God’s providence saved the Jews in Persia. In New Testament times, the Jews were celebrating the Feast of Purim, dating back to the decree of Esther and Mordecai, thus:

...to confirm these days of Purim in their appointed times, according as Mordecai the Jew and Esther the queen had enjoined them, and as they had ordained for themselves and for their seed, in the matter of the fasting and their cry. And the commandment of Esther confirmed these matters of Purim; and it was written in the book (Esth. 9:29-32).

And, with the times and works of Malachi and Nehemiah, the writing of the Old Testament and its recorded history closes. However, the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy would indeed continue, both in the intertestamental period and into the New Testament period.

The Intertestamental Period

The period of time between the testaments speaks volumes to the student of the Bible and to those who want keenly to appreciate the unfolding of God's plan for human redemption. Already have been mentioned the contributions the four world empires would make to the "fulness of time." Having noticed some of the history of God's people and the Babylonian and Medo-Persian Empires, let us now notice their contributions to the time of Christ's coming and of the establishment of God's kingdom.

Babylon's contribution was the synagogue worship. As the reader will recall, Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the temple of God in 586 B.C., the time that the last group of Jews were carried into captivity. The Jews came to the realization that they were to worship God—not their idols. Thus, they were without the temple, could not build one in Babylon, and were in real spiritual need to worship. This led to the development of synagogue worship—the center of social and religious activities. The "high places" of idolatrous worship had long been forbidden, and the temple was gone.

Observe their sadness, their dilemma, their need to worship in Babylon:

By the rivers of Babylon, There we sat down,
yea, we wept, When we remembered Zion. Upon

the willows in the midst thereof, We hanged up our harps. For there they that led us captive required of us songs, And they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. How shall we sing Jehovah's song In a foreign land?" (Psm. 137:1-4).

So, the synagogue (meaning gathering or congregating) was developed to meet their worship needs while separated from the temple. When the Jews returned from Babylon, their synagogue concept went with them. Though the temple was rebuilt, as a place of sacrifice, etc., the synagogues spread throughout the locations of the Jews, in the "dispersion," and in Palestine, and even in Jerusalem (Acts 6:9). There, the Israelites prayed, read scriptures, explained and studied the Word, et al. "For Moses from generations of old hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath" (Acts 15:21). A synagogue could be organized in any location where could be found ten heads of Jewish families. Thus, the gatherings in houses to read the Law, to worship, and to pray "became the basic pattern for that type of worship which took place in the synagogues of the postexilic period."⁸

This has **great** significance to the age of Christ and the establishment of the church, for the synagogues were the virtual launching place for the teaching of the gospel and of the establishment of the church in countless communities, villages, and cities. And, in the synagogues were also the God-fearers, Gentiles who worshiped in the synagogues. It is interesting to observe that Paul rarely stopped and preached the gospel where there was not a synagogue; Philippi is an exception (Acts 16). It was there

that the gospel preachers and teachers would find an audience who believed in God, who knew and believed the Old Testament prophecies, and who looked for the Messiah. Also, because the proselytes did not have Hebrew blood going through their veins and the Jewish prejudices, they were most often the more ready to believe and obey the truth (cf. Acts 13:46)—the synagogue was a ready opportunity to teach.

Medo-Persia made its own peculiar contribution to the fulness of time—law and order. The saying was, “The law of the Medes and Persians altereth not.” This is no more clearly seen than in Daniel 6. You will recall that when Daniel was nearly ninety years old and was prime minister under Darius the Mede, some evil men tried to have him killed; why? It was because he bowed down to God. [Darius had been flattered into making a decree that if any person bowed down to “any god or man” except to King Darius for thirty days, he would be thrown into the lions’ den]. Daniel bowed down in prayer to God as usual, and the enemies reported it to the king. Since he loved and highly respected Daniel, Darius was greatly grieved.

Then the king, when he heard these words, was sore displeased, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him; and he labored till the going down of the sun to rescue him. Then these men assembled together unto the king, and said unto the king, Know, O King, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians, that no interdict nor statute which the king established may be changed (Dan. 6:14-15).

Of course, Daniel’s life was saved by God’s angel,

and the king cast those evil men and their families to the lions (6:16-27).

Just as the synagogue worship begun in Babylon continued, the strong emphasis upon law and order persisted in those empires to follow. It was this emphasis that contributed to the peace and protection which existed when the apostles, evangelists, and other Christians went throughout the Roman Empire with the precious message of the gospel.

Daniel and Medo-Persia

Daniel foresaw in the third year of Belshazzar the rise of Medo-Persia; he was by the river Ulai. Daniel saw a ram with two horns; both were high, but one was higher, and it raised up last. The horns, representing strength or authority (rule), likely stood for two rulers—Darius the Mede, and Cyrus the Persian. The ram pushed wherever he wished, and no beast (country or nation) could withstand him; the ram did what he wished, and conquered whom he would (Dan. 8:1-4).

Now, how does one know the identity of the ram? Verse 20 says, **“The ram which thou sawest, that had the two horns, they are the kings of Media and Persia.”**

Daniel saw further concerning Medo-Persia,

And now will I show thee the truth. Behold, there shall yet stand up three kings in Persia: and the fourth shall be far richer than they all:

and when he is waxed strong through his riches,
he shall stir up all against the realm of Greece
(Dan. 11:2).

The king who was already up and whose general Darius was (in whose first year Daniel saw this vision), was Cyrus (Dan. 11:1), the great king of Medo-Persia. Cyrus moved his army and conquered virtually at will. The three who would arise were Cambyses, then the pretender Gaumata (Pseudo-Smerdis), followed by Darius, son of Hystaspes. It was this Darius who carried out the decree of Cyrus, that the temple in Jerusalem be completed, with funds even from the treasury of the king of Persia (Ezra 6:1-15).

Then there was the fourth to follow Cyrus, Xerxes. Darius had experienced some rebellion in the empire, including the Greeks, Egyptians, and Babylonians. Having again subjugated Egypt and Babylon, Xerxes prepared three years to attack Greece by land and sea, then crossed the Hellespont.⁹ Though attacking Greece with more than five million Persians, Xerxes' army was defeated by Leonidas at Thermopylae, and his fleet defeated by Themistocles at Salamis. That was the final time the Persians crossed the Hellespont.¹⁰

One thing was certain, though; the Grecian philosophers would be preaching, "Unify Greece!" Indeed, as Daniel prophesied, the situation was stirred up. Grecian patriots wanted to unify to get back at the Persians. Though they lacked unity at present (because of the rivalries of the city states), their culture (Hellenism) was developing as a powerful force and influence. Macedonia, north of Greece, was growing in power though led by a powerful personality.

Daniel and Greece

Daniel prophesied further, “And as I was considering, behold a he-goat came from the west over the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground: and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes. And he came to the ram that had the two horns, which I saw standing before the river, and ran upon him in the fury of his power. And I saw him come close unto the ram, and he was moved with anger against him, and smote the ram, and brake his two horns; and there was no power in the ram to stand before him; but he cast him down to the ground, and trampled upon him; and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand. And the he-goat magnified himself exceedingly: and when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and instead of it there came up four notable horns toward the four winds of heaven” (Dan. 8:5-8).

Who was the powerful he-goat?

And the rough he-goat is the king of Greece: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king. And as for that which was broken, in the place whereof four stood up, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not with his power” (Dan. 8:21,22).

Daniel 11:3,4 reads:

And a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule

with great dominion, and do according to his will. And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven, but not to his posterity, nor according to his dominion wherewith he ruled; for his kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others besides these.

The mighty king, the notable horn of the he-goat, Greece, was Alexander the Great. Philip of Macedonia [while the Medo-Persian Empire was showing signs of weakness, revolts, and possible collapse, incidentally] had developed a great, enviably trained army, the strongest army in the world, and his early conquests had brought into his control some rich gold mines, which he developed and with which he financed his campaigns. Moving into Greece from the sea, his goal was to master that country and to extend his control even to Persia.¹¹ Brother Turner wrote about Philip:

Relying only on soldiers recruited on a voluntary system, he constructed a force of 40,000 men who were severely disciplined, trained to march long distances in full equipment, carrying their baggage and food sufficient for three days.¹²

Greatly opposed by the orator and patriotic Athenian Demosthenes, Philip nonetheless was successful in the battle at Chaeronea, in Greece (338-337 B.C.) Realizing his outstanding leadership and military brilliance, Philip was chosen by the Greeks to lead their forces against Persia.¹³ They had united, except for Sparta, under the League of Corinth. Philip was praised by Isocrates for his

generosity; for, this brought the people's cooperation and backing.

To Philip and his wife, Olympias, was born Alexander (356 B.C.). So impressive in ability was Alexander that Philip gave him the best education available, that of Aristotle, the Greek philosopher who was receiving great notice for his instruction techniques. This went on through his teen years. At age sixteen, Alexander was trusted to govern Thrace and Macedonia while his father was away, and at eighteen, he led the left arm of Philip's army at Chaeronea. When Philip was assassinated by Pausarias, at his daughter's wedding, Alexander set out to unify Greece and to carry out the goal of his illustrious father. Losing no time and encouraged by the people, unity was achieved in one year (the exceeding swift rise of the leopard with four wings), and then the young Master of Greece at age twenty lunged toward Persia (touched not the ground) and defeated Darius III at the river Granicus.¹⁴ Alexander then would move into and subdue Asia Minor, Syria, Palestine, and Greece.

Pfeiffer terms Alexander "the Apostle of Hellenism," pointing out that he was "a Macedonian by nationality, and he dreamed of national glory as the heir of Philip," "a Greek, educated by Aristotle himself," and "was sold on the excellences of the Greek 'way of life.'"¹⁵ Seth Wilson summarized his influence thus:

The Persian rule was broken by the world-sweeping conquests of Alexander the Great, out of Macedonia. Alexander showed consideration for the Jews, and did not destroy or plunder Jerusalem. His short but brilliant career had far-reaching results in the introduction of Greek

language over Palestine and all the Mediterranean area.¹⁶

Upon conquering Syria, Alexander besieged Tyre, which also had an island fortress a short distance in the Mediterranean Sea; the other cities in Phoenicia had surrendered. During the seven month siege of Tyre, Alexander sent a letter to Judda, the high priest of the Jews, to send him provisions and soldiers to assist in the siege. Josephus records that Judda refused, having made an oath to Darius not to oppose him. Alexander angrily vowed to work havoc on Jerusalem and teach Judda and “all men to whom they must keep their oaths.” Alexander took Tyre, including the city, in seven months by building a causeway out to the island on which he could move his army and engines of war. Afterward, Alexander moved toward Jerusalem. Josephus records further that the high priest met Alexander in his high priest clothing with the other priests in white garments, whereupon Alexander and his army greeted and bowed before them, per a dream that Alexander had earlier experienced in which he was thus to honor God. It was thus that Jerusalem was spared. Josephus further says that he was pointed out as the Grecian who would destroy Persia, as prophesied in Daniel, and that Alexander granted all the Jews’ request. A temple was at this time built upon Mount Gerizim, inasmuch as the Samaritans had helped Alexander in the siege and conquest of Tyre.¹⁷

The spread of the Grecian Empire through Alexander’s exploits would have very significant influence on the “fulness of time.” It was his great spread of the Greek language throughout the Empire that tremendously helped the spread of Christianity 300 years later; **the New**

Testament was written in Greek. Of course, the spread of Greek philosophy, learning, and culture powerfully impacted society in and out of Palestine leading up to the time of Christ. At the age of thirty-three, Alexander died a natural death; no “animal” (man or army of an enemy) broke the notable horn between the eyes of the he-goat. Four horns came up on its place (Dan. 8:8).

The Influence of Hellenism on the Jews

Palestine would be greatly impacted by the Grecian Empire and by Grecian thought. Callahan wrote:

Alexander’s conquest of the Persian Empire, the domains of which included the land of Judah, was to have a far-reaching effect on the Jewish people. Though Palestine had been under foreign rule for many centuries before the Greeks came—namely, under the Assyrians, Babylonians, and Persians—there had been no permanent change wrought in the life of the nation. But, as a part of Alexander’s new empire, the Jews were subjected to the powerful influence of Hellenism—an influence so strong that it was to change the entire course of their future history. They became so completely Hellenized in the time that the common tongue, Aramaic, was supplanted almost entirely by the Greek language.¹⁸

Upon Alexander’s death, who left no heir, the kingdom was divided among his four generals [as Daniel had prophesied 200 years before; Alexander died in 323 B.C.]. No prominent leader emerged, so the divisions were

thus: “Antigonus, who occupied the country from the Mediterranean to central Asia; Cassander, who ruled Macedonia; Ptolemy Lagi, who ruled Egypt and Southern Syria; and Lysimachus, ruler of Thrace.”¹⁹

Daniel 11:5-20 focuses upon two of the above kingdoms, Syria (the Selucids) and Egypt (the Ptolemys), which had a profound influence upon the history of Palestine. During the next 150 years, these two kingdoms were in nearly constant rivalry, treachery, and war. When one would get strong enough, it would attack the other, and vice versa. Jerusalem and the nation of Israel were in between. It was that “when armies march, people tremble.” When either would march, the army would go right through Palestine and Jerusalem and often “take it out on” God’s people.

Reference is made to this time of great hardship and persecution when Isaiah prophecies,

But there shall be no gloom to her that was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali; but in the latter time hath he made it glorious, by the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined (Isa. 9:1,2).

It was exactly in this area, Cana of Galilee, where Christ performed His first miracle, at the wedding feast when He turned water into wine (John 2:11); here, the Lord “manifested His glory,” here the Light shined. Just after His temptations by Satan, Christ went into the

borders of Zebulun and Naphtali, “that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah” (9:1,2). “From that time began Jesus to preach, and to say, Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt. 4:12-17). This area, through which armies virtually constantly marched and which was under constant threat from the foreign powers Syria and Egypt, was the first to be blessed by the great spiritual deliverance and hope brought by “the Lamb of God.”

Though space does not permit in this forum a detailed discussion of the period between Alexander the Great and Antiochus Epiphenes IV, his cruel acts upon God’s people must not be omitted. With the triumph of Antiochus the Great over the Egyptian general Scopas in 198 B.C., Palestine fell under the rule of Syria. Whereas the Ptolemies, Egyptians, had not been very overbearing upon the Jews, “The Seleucids determined to force the Jews to accept Hellenism.” In 190 B.C., Antiochus was soundly defeated in Greece and also in Asia Minor at Magnesia by the Roman Cornelius Scipio. In suing for peace, among other terms was that Antiochus had to deliver twelve hostages to Rome, one of whom was his son Antiochus Epiphenes IV. He learned to respect Rome’s rising power and influence.²⁰

After the eleven year reign of Seleucus Philopator, oldest son of Antiochus the Great, Antiochus IV ruled from 175-163 B.C. He wore the appellation Epiphanes, meaning “the madman.” His goal was to “civilize” those in his dominion, and to him that was to influence them into Grecian learning, manners, customs, and philosophy.

His tactics and brutality are in prophecy:

And one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and

toward the east, and toward the glorious land [Palestine]. And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven, and some of the host and of the stars it cast down to the ground and trampled upon them. Yea, it magnified itself, even to the prince of the host: and it took away from him the continual burnt-offering, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down. And the host was given over to it together with the continual burnt offering through transgression; and it cast down truth to the ground, and it did its pleasure and prospered. Then I heard a holy one speaking; and another holy one said unto that certain one who spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the continual burnt offering, and the transgression that maketh desolate, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred evenings and mornings: then shall the sanctuary be cleansed” (Dan. 8:9-14).

Daniel prophesied further concerning Antiochus Epiphenes,

Then shall he return to his land with great substance; and his heart shall be against the holy covenant; and he shall do his pleasure, and return to his own land. At the time appointed he shall return, and come into the south; but it shall not be in the latter time as it was in the former. For ships of Kittim [Cyprus—CAC] shall come against him; therefore he shall be grieved, and shall return, and have indignation against

the holy covenant, and shall do his pleasure: he shall even return, and regard unto them that forsake the holy covenant. And forces shall stand on his part, and they shall profane the sanctuary, even the fortress, and shall take away the continual burnt offering, and they shall set up the abomination that maketh desolate. And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he pervert by flatteries; but the people that know their God shall be strong, and do exploits. And they that are wise among the people shall instruct many; yet they shall fall by the sword and by flame, by captivity and by spoil, many days. Now when they shall fall, they shall be helped with a little help; but many shall join themselves unto them with flatteries. And some of them that are wise shall fall, to refine them, and to purify, and to make them white, even to the time of the end; because it is yet for the time appointed” (Dan. 11:28-35).

Please keep in mind that Daniel saw these visions nearly 400 years before the events occurred. The liberals say these are so accurate that they had to be written after the fact, as if they were prophecy. But—they do not believe in God!

Maccabees tells of the reign of “Antiochus surnamed Epiphenes, son of Antiochus the king, who had been an hostage at Rome” (1:10). Remember that this writing is *not canonical* yet is valuable as history. When Antiochus was coming to power, many of the Jews in Jerusalem had become wicked; in fact, “In those days went there out of Israel wicked men, who persuaded many, saying, Let us

go and make a covenant with the heathen that are round about us” (1:11). Antiochus, as Daniel prophesies, had gone into Egypt on a conquest and had gotten paid well for the effort. He decided to go back and receive more riches; however, on this trip he was met by a Roman envoy outside of Alexandria, Egypt. Now, Rome was moving steadily toward the East and conquering as they went; however, they would conquer no more than they could control at the time. They were not quite ready to conquer Syria and the environs; however, they did not wish for Syria to conquer Egypt and thereby strengthen itself. Therefore, the envoy from the island of Cyprus told Antiochus to go back home and to vacate Egypt. Antiochus told him he would think about it. The envoy, having drawn a circle around him in the sand, told him essentially, “By all means do, but make your decision before you step out of the circle.”

Antiochus did not like the demand; however, he knew of Rome’s power, having been a prisoner in Rome. He thus angrily departed and took out his anger upon God’s temple and city, His people and covenant. Josephus records:

...the king came up to Jerusalem, and, pretending peace, he got possession of the city by treachery; at which time he spared not so much as those what admitted him into it, on account of the riches that lay in the temple.²¹

He plundered the temple, took away its golden candlesticks, golden altar, fine linen and scarlet, and its greatest treasures, and left nothing. He shut down the daily sacrifices, slew some inhabitants of Jerusalem, took

many captives, burned down buildings, tore down the walls, offered a sow on the altar of the Lord (the abomination of desolation), sprinkled the pig broth in the holy place and most holy place of the temple, forbade any worship of Jehovah, commanded that the Jews worship idols and offer swine daily upon altars, forbade the circumcision of their sons, under punishment of death.

Amazing indeed is the fact that he was encouraged, strengthened, and helped in this by the Hellenist Jews. Many of them were so liberal that Josephus points out that in order for the liberal Jewish men not to appear as circumcised, but rather to appear like the uncircumcised Gentiles in the Olympic type games in the gymnasium, they would undergo operations to hide their circumcision.²²

And indeed many Jews there were who complied with the king's commands, either voluntarily, or out of fear of the penalty that was denounced. But the best men, and those of the noblest souls, did not regard him, but did pay a greater respect to the customs of their country than concern as to the punishment which he threatened to the disobedient; on which account they every day underwent great miseries and bitter torments; for they were whipped with rods, and their bodies were torn to pieces, and were crucified, while they were still alive and breathed. They also strangled those women and their sons whom they had circumcised, as the king had appointed, hanging their sons about their necks as they were upon the crosses. And if there were any sacred book of the law found, it was destroyed, and those with whom they were found miserably perished also.²³

At the time of this action and persecution, interestingly, Josephus writes:

When the Samaritans saw the Jews under these sufferings, they no longer confessed that they were of their kindred, nor that the temple on Mount Gerizim belonged to Almighty God... And now they said that they were a colony of the Medes and Persians...²⁴

And, why did Antiochus demand these things? “To the end that they might forget the law, and change all the ordinances” (1 Macc. 1:49).

The Maccabean Period

Not every Jew was liberal, for sure. But, the desire to be like the nations and like the prevailing “culture” is strong peer-pressure, is it not? Note the hue and cry regarding “culture” in the church today. But, as then, not every child of God is forsaking the old Jerusalem gospel! The beginning of the Maccabean Period took place in the little village of Modin. Officers of Antiochus showed up one day demanding the villagers to revolt, to offer forbidden sacrifices. They called upon a noted Israelite to lead the way, set the example. Mattathias Maccabeus **refused**. An apostate Israelite stepped forward to sacrifice. Mattathias, out of righteous indignation, rushed forward and slew the apostate, killed the king’s commissioner, and tore down the altar.

The war for God and country had begun. Mattathias said throughout the city, “Whosoever is zealous of the law, and maintaineth the covenant, let him follow me” (2:1-27). They left all they possessed and fled to the mountains.

Joined by many other Godly Israelites, Mattathias was helped greatly by five outstanding sons, each one of whom came to prominence in his own time: Joannan, called Caddis; Simon, called Thassi; Judas, who was called Maccabeus, (also known as “the hammer”); Eleazor, called Avoran (also known as the “beast-sticker,” because of his having stabbed an elephant, thinking it was the king’s, which elephant fell upon and killed Eleazar); and Jonathan, called Apphus.

The heathen soldiers of the “madman,” Antiochus, fought Mattathias’ soldiers on the Sabbath day and the Israelites did not fight back; a thousand men, their wives, and children they killed. Having mourned the dead, Mattathias and his friends determined that lest they be all killed on the Sabbath day, they would defend themselves on the Sabbath. Not very long thereafter, the father died and was succeeded by Judas the Hammer. Notice the faith and courage by which they fought, shown by a statement of Judas when their small number were confronted by a large army:

Unto whom Judas answered, It is no hard matter for many to be shut up in the hands of a few; and with the God of heaven it is all one, to deliver with a great multitude, or a small company. For the victory of battle standeth not in the multitude of an host; but strength cometh from heaven. They come against us in much pride and iniquity to destroy us, and our wives and children, and to spoil us: But we fight for our lives and our laws. Wherefore the Lord himself will overthrow them before our face: and as for you, be ye not afraid of them (3:17-21).

When one thinks of those who would destroy our trust in the Lord, our obedience to His Word, and our walking in the Old Paths, what a powerful statement to remember! When the very souls of our loving helpmeets and precious children are threatened by heathens and liberals, what resolve—to trust in the Lord! There is but **one way** to win the victory.

The Hasidim (or “pious”) party were those who stood for and defended the truth. The army of Judas made its way back to Jerusalem, defeated the Syrian forces, got rid of the Hellenistic party’s high priest, Menelaus, and refurbished the temple. Upright priests “cleansed the sanctuary, and bare out the defiled stones into an unclean place.” They tore down the profaned, defiled altar and built a new altar; they made new vessels for the temple and the furnishings, they put out the shewbread, and *then*, they “offered sacrifice according to the law upon the new altar of burnt offerings, which they had made” (4:41-53). They inaugurated the “Feast of Dedication,” beginning with the twenty fifth day of Casleu [Kisleu (December), celebrated today as Hanukkah]. Notice John 10:22:

And it was the feast of the dedication at Jerusalem: it was winter; and Jesus was walking in the temple in Solomon’s porch.

Unfortunately, the battle against Syria did not end there; however, when the temple worship was restored, Antiochus was dying a grievous death in a foreign land (Dan. 11:45).

Briefly, this period had much implication for the first century, for the existence of several sects of the Jews have their origin in the time of the desecration of the temple.

The Hellenist (liberal) Jews evolved into the Sadducees of Jesus' day. They rejected many teachings in the Law, including the existence of angels, spirits, and the resurrection. They loosed where God had bound. On the other hand, the Hasidim Party [which was so faithful and who defended the truth so strongly during the time of the Maccabees, praised so highly by Daniel and who shall shine as the stars in heaven after the second coming and the resurrection (Dan. 12:2,3)] evolved into the Pharisees. How was that possible? Though they stood so stalwart for the pure Law of Moses, in opposing the innovations and teachings of the liberals, they became in time "so straightlaced that they leaned over backward." They were not careful enough through the years not to make laws for God. Thus, their man-made traditions eventually they held as law. They bound where God had loosed, whereby they made void (vain) the Law of God by their traditions (Matt. 15:3,6,9,13).

Whereas Antiochus had desecrated the temple in 167, it was refurbished and the true worship restored in 163 B.C., after three and one-half years. But, as we have seen, the influence of those happenings would have far-reaching implications. As noted above, the Maccabees, wanted to be true to God and certainly did not want to join in with or be influenced by either Hellenism or by Syria. After all of the sons of Mattathias were deceased, John Hyrcanus, son of Simon, headed up the nation. Simon had been in his older years recognized as their leader and high priest: "Also that the Jews and priests were well pleased that Simon should be their governor and high priest for ever, until there should arise a faithful prophet" (1 Macc. 14:41). Thus began the dynasty termed the Hasmoneans. When John Hyrcanus began as governor, Syria again exerted

influence over the Jews. When Syria recognized John as governor of Israel, the “conservatives” were “in” and the Hellenists’ influence was fading. It was in this time that the “Pharisees” and “Sadducees” were coming about. John Hyrcanus was professing himself a Sadducee before his passing.

John Hyrcanus’ reign was one of expanding the territory of the state of Israel. Among other things, Hyrcanus conquered Idumea and demanded the Edomites be circumcised; he also destroyed the temple of the Samaritans which had been built on Mt. Gerizim (129 B.C.). It is interesting that the state under Hyrcanus was now conquering other peoples and oppressing them, as they themselves had been oppressed at the time of Hyrcanus’ grandfather. Great emphasis was upon commercialism and the secular; the high priest’s office was moving from spiritual to political and secular in emphasis by the time that John died in 104 B.C. The aristocrats and those who would profit financially from such emphasis were pleased, but much of the populace was not. By his death, John had gotten Israel from beneath the yoke of Syria. The death of Hyrcanus brought about “a dynastic struggle among his children.”²⁵ “His son [Aristobulus—CAC] was ambitious and murderous, took the title of king, ended the glory of a great family, started it on its decline, a period of 60 years filled with intrigue and barbarous civil war.”²⁶

The Roman Conquest

Pompey conquered Jerusalem in 63 B.C. The area had been in the shadow of Rome for many years, for Rome had been steadily expanding her vast influence to the East. They had thwarted the conquests of Syria; they had

his aid against the Syrians. Pompey had been given responsibility to control and defeat the pirates on the Mediterranean; then, he had been given additional command. Having subdued Syria, he also conquered Judea.²⁷ Pompey took away the last vestige of Jewish independence. He entered the temple, but he was surprised greatly when he found no idol, no statue nor any other visible object that one might worship. Of course, the Jews were alarmed and horrified when he went into the holy of holies. Having appointed Hyrcanus II as high priest, he forbade him to be “king.” He took away from the Jews all but the immediate territory of Judah; all other territory gained in the Maccabean conquests was taken away.²⁸

Pompey, forbade Hyrcanus to have any power over the government. The affairs of state were placed, instead, in the hands of a shrewd and wealthy politician named Antipater—who was not a Jew but an Idumean [an Edomite—CAC]. Antipater had supported Hyrcanus in his fight against Aristobulus, as he considered the former likely to win. It had been his plan to gain a foothold in Judea by means of this support, and thus be on the winning side should Rome step in. This ambition achieved, the Idumean determined to gain political friendship with the rising world power by favoring its successive leaders. When Pompey’s power declined in Rome, Antipater managed to gain favor with the masterly statesman and general who succeeded Pompey—Julius Caesar. He gave aid to Caesar in the latter’s Egyptian campaign, and for this he was awarded Roman citizenship, and appointed Procurator of Judea (47 B.C.). One of his sons, Herod—surnamed the Great—was appointed governor of Galilee.²⁹ Seth Wilson describes this period thus:

The plots and murders of the different members of the Maccabee family continued to curse the land. Antipater, of Idumea (Edom), and his famous infamous son, Herod, took part in the rivalries and the deals with Rome until Herod finally conquered Judea, amidst shocking atrocities, in 37 B.C. He destroyed the rest of the Maccabee family, including his wife Mariamne. This Herod rebuilt the temple (larger than Solomon's and much richer than Zerubbabel's), and slaughtered the babies of Bethlehem in an attempt to murder the Messiah (Matthew 2). He gave to the kingdom the greatest external splendor it ever knew, save in the reigns of David and Solomon. Yet the moral and religious quality of his reign was deplorable. Despite the outward splendor, Israel chafed under the yoke of subjection to Rome and under the crimes of Herod's regime. "The tabernacle of David was, indeed, fallen, and the elect spirits of the nation, the 'Israel within Israel,' looked and longed for him who should raise it up again and build it as in the days of old (Amos 9:12)." —B. S. Dean³⁰

Conclusion

Yes, Christ would come in the "fulness of time." The time was now right. Nearly two thousand years before, Jacob had prophesied, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh come; And unto him shall the obedience of the peoples be" (Gen. 49:10). See Revelation 5:5. An Edomite was on the throne, and Augustus Caesar was the Roman

Emperor (Luke 2:1ff). The wicked, jealous, suspicious, amoral Herod tried to kill the baby Jesus, but God saved His only begotten Son (Matt. 2:1-23).

The Lord was born in the days of the Roman kings, as prophesied. Rome contributed to this occurrence the synagogue worship from Babylon; the law and order, Medo-Persia; the language from Greece, as well as the *Pax Romana* (Roman Peace, achieved by Augustus Caesar), Roman roads, and protection. It was said, “All roads lead to Rome.” But all roads also led out of Rome. The emperors built those fine roads to move the powerful Roman army quickly to any part of the empire—to quell uprisings among the provinces. It was under the protection and peace of Rome that evangelists and other Christians traveled those very roads, carrying the gospel to every creature under heaven (Col. 1:23).

Indeed, the time was right for John, the forerunner of Christ.

Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, will suddenly come to his temple [church—CAC]; and the messenger of the covenant, whom ye desire, behold, he cometh, saith Jehovah of hosts” (Mal. 3:1).

Endnotes

1 See the author’s work on “**Will the Ten ‘Lost’ Tribes of Jews Return to Jerusalem?**” (Memphis, TN: Cates Publications).

2 Charles F. Pfeiffer, **Old Testament History** (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1973), 454-458.

3 *Ibid.*, 458,459.

4 **Antiquities of the Jews**, XI, vii. 2.

5 *Ibid.*, viii. 2.

- 6 Pfeiffer, 486.
- 7 R. K. Harrison, **Old Testament Times** (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1970), 286.
- 8 Ibid., 267.
- 9 Pfeiffer, 499-525.
- 10 Rex A. Turner, **The Inter-Testament Period**, Unit III, 1.
- 11 Gertrude E. Callahan, **Through the Old Testament and the Apocrypha** (New York: The Beechcrest
- 12 Turner, 5.
- 13 Callahan, 267,268.
- 14 Turner, 6-16
- 15 Pfeiffer, 551.
- 16 William Smith, **Old Testament History** (Joplin,MO: College Press, 1970), 726.
- 17 Antiquities, XI, viii. 2-7.
- 18 Callahan, 268.
- 19 Pfeiffer, 555
- 20 Ibid., 562
- 21 Josephus, XII, 5,4.
- 22 Ibid., 1.
- 23 Ibid., 4.
- 24 Ibid., 5.
- 25 Pfeiffer, 577-581.
- 26 Smith, 727, 728.
- 27 Merrill C. Tenney, **New Testament Times** (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1965), pp. 48,49).
- 28 Turner, pp. 55-57.
- 29 Callahan, p. 281
- 30 Smith, p. 728.

Chapter 22

Selected Types And Antitypes From The Two Covenants

Edited by T. J. Clarke

Editor's Note: Jim Pharr will speak on the topic listed above, but due to illness in his family he was not able to prepare a manuscript. The study on types and antitypes below is offered to our readers with the hope that it will inform you and stimulate your interest toward further study. This material has been edited by Ted Clarke considerably in order to reduce it to the length necessary for inclusion in this book. Text and Scripture references enclosed in brackets [] have been added in the process of editing for smoothness and information. Endnotes give full bibliographic information and explain some of the changes and omissions made.

SCRIPTURE TYPES¹

by Robert Graham²

[Originally] From the Christian Teacher³

[Introduction]

There is no subject connected with our religion that requires more care in its interpretation than that of types; and few that yield more instruction and pleasure, when handled with due regard for the Word of

God. Few Bible readers will question that we have a system of types in the Old Testament, but there has been so reckless a method of interpretation applied to it, and so absurd conclusions drawn from it, that many have turned away from this delightful theme, and many more persist in a refusal to investigate it at all.

We propose a few short essays on the subject, rather suggestive than exhaustive, in the hope that our readers will examine for themselves the Law and the gospel; the tabernacle “made with hands,” and that which “God pitched, and not man,” in the relation of type and antitype, shadow and substance, letter and spirit, which form such an important and instructive contrast in the writings of the apostles, especially in the epistles of [Paul].⁴ We maintain that a full-orbed view of the Sun of Righteousness, such a one as shall bring healing in his rays, can only be had by him who sees the sun rising from the shadows of the east, while the starlight, moonlight, and twilight of the patriarchs, Moses, and [John] the Baptist, insensibly disappear in the richer effulgence of that “true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world” [John 1:9].

We acquire much of our knowledge in nature, art, and religion by comparison, showing resemblances and contrasts. Were we to take away from literature the allegories, parables, and analogies with which it abounds, we would be amazed at the poverty of what was left; and surely we need not be told what would be the effect of such a course with the writings we hold most dear—the memoirs of Christ, and the epistles of Paul. Who can read the letters of this distinguished apostle to either the Galatians or the Romans, and not be struck with the constant reference to the Jewish polity and ritual, its

economy and worship, abounding everywhere with type and symbol, pattern and outline, analogy and similitude? And who can study the Epistle to the Hebrews,⁵ with profit and pleasure, without an intimate knowledge of the great fonts of types set up and stereotyped by Moses?

The epistles of Paul, if we had no others, are enough to encourage us in an attempt to examine this most extensive and instructive subject; with him as our guide, we may enter “the tabernacle of witness,” and reverentially listen while he shows the nature and explains the meaning of courts and furniture, sacrifices and ablutions, propitiations and benedictions, that all were “a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things” [Heb. 10:1].

If we carefully note our feelings while reading the Scriptures, or any book of typical or emblematic character, we shall discover that the Author of our being has established an intimate correspondence between typical systems and our intelligence. The child delights in his illustrated primer, and must have the picture for the eye, as well as the word for the ear, before he can master with facility the [primary elements] of human knowledge. We all take great pleasure in tracing the resemblances and discovering the meaning of those rites and ceremonies of preceding and adumbrative dispensations that prepared the world for “the bringing in of a better hope, by the which we draw nigh unto God” [Heb. 7:19]. Often a single word spoken by Christ, or leaping from the pen of an apostle, will, to a mind instructed in the forms of Jewish worship, send conviction to the heart, or image forth a world of beauty, that, without this instruction, would be lost.

We contend, that, beside the pleasure arising from a familiar acquaintance with the typical system of the Old

Testament, no one can for a moment, call into question the divine origin of Christianity, when it is studied in the light of that system. [T]he student of God's system of grace and mercy is assured of an omniscient God, who saw the end from the beginning, and who, by type and symbol, has stamped on the sacred page, prefigurations of Christ's kingdom.

And herein we find another and important advantage of types and symbols, in communicating to men the mind and will of God. Words are ever changing, just as change the customs and costumes of succeeding generations. We need revisions of the Scriptures, in process of time, to bring the thoughts of God into the phrases of living men; but to the eye of humanity, of every tribe, and age, and clime, the pictures which patriarchs, prophets, and apostles have drawn on the walls of "the temple made with hands," will signify the same, will always convey the same ideas concerning the service and worship of God, and his dealings with men and nations in the government of the world. A bleeding lamb, smoking altar, brazen laver, golden lamp, and a table with bread thereon, will never cease to teach men unmistakably the essence of revealed religion, under every dispensation. We cannot become well acquainted with the manner in which blood, water, and oil were used in the tabernacle service, without learning much about the atonement, purification, and sanctification brought to us by Christ, and the way in which we are to obtain these inestimable benefits. [L]et us not be unmindful of the dangers of the proposed voyage, and the peculiar qualifications needed in the pilot who is to give us a safe passage over shoals, where many have been shipwrecked. Let us take warning from the mistakes and failures of others.

We are not at liberty to regard as typical, whatever resemblances, farfetched and often imaginary, we may fancy to exist between the details of Jewish and Christian worship. As there have been expositors who held that in any given passage of God's revelation, every word has as many meanings as can be brought out of it [;] so another class, like them in many respects, have made the types to signify a thousand things unknown to the Scriptures, and often in direct contradiction to them. Witness the long and seemingly endless controversy about baptism coming in the room of circumcision, which language, if it have any meaning at all, simply imports that circumcision is a type of baptism, in direct opposition to the apostle who says, in effect, that it is a type of the spiritual circumcision of the heart; "the putting off the body of sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ" [Col. 2:11]. Now this is effected by immersing the penitent believer in water, and has no more to do with sprinkling a few drops of water on the face of an innocent and unconscious babe than with any other pagan or papal rite.

While we thus enter our protest against the wild and licentious method of many expositors in their treatment of Scripture types, we can not subscribe to the statement of another class, who will not allow anything to be a type in the preceding economies but what is affirmed in the New Testament. We regard this latter opinion as the necessary recoil from the extreme of the former class. Both are wide of the mark; both are extremes, and therefore to be avoided.

There can be no canons of criticism and Bible-interpretation given that will supersede the necessity of good sense, caution, and reverence in handling "the things of the Spirit." Religion, like any other of God's works, will

reveal its wonders only to the diligent, the prudent, and the devout. Next to a mind free of party bias, we need sound judgment in order to effect a correct interpretation of Old Testament types. There is so much to dazzle the imagination and allure the fancy, so much to delight the mind and draw it aside into forbidden paths that we need sound and discriminating judgment, and a firm resolution to disregard fine-spun theories to secure us against the vagaries and extravagances of mystics.

Along with reverence for the Scriptures and a sound judgment, we must have correct and well-established principles of interpretation, if we hope to come to rational conclusions in this important field of inquiry. Nothing must be left to caprice. There are rules in this department framed by men of learning and pious industry, from broad inductions and deep study which will guide us right in what, without them, would be a labyrinth without a thread.

We invite particular attention to the fact that in these essays we shall speak of **Scripture** types. We wish to treat types as defined by Paul where he says:

Now all these things happened to them for **ensamples** (types), and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world (ages) have come (1 Cor. 10:11).

In thus treating them we shall find that Christ and his religion, God's government over nations, and his method of saving the penitent and punishing the rebellious, as well as the grand consummation of all in the downfall of antitypical Babylon, the mother of harlots, are all foreshadowed in the Old Testament.

No. 2⁶

[Characteristics And Categories Of Types]

We might expect, if the God who made the world is indeed the God of revelation, that there would be strong analogies between his methods of procedure in each. If he has made a revelation of himself and his dealings with men in a book full of types, figures, and symbols, we ought not to be disappointed in looking for these everywhere in the physical world. Or, to reverse the case: if the student of nature finds in geology and embryology typical forms on every hand, anticipations in one age of what is to come in the next, he ought to find in his Bible a similar method, on the hypothesis that the God of nature is the God of grace. The archetypes of all material entities, of all bodies and all forms, seem to have existed in the divine mind before the world was spoken into existence by the word of God. The general form which belongs to any tribe of animals or plants is its type, hence we have "types of mankind," meaning thereby the races, such as Caucasian, Indian, Negro, etc. If it were not for typical forms, and the conformity of nature thereto, the naturalist could have no such thing as classification, and we would be lost in the multiplicity and variety of God's works; we could have no such thing as natural science.

We might extend our investigations indefinitely, but the foregoing are sufficient to indicate the line of argument. There is one system of God embracing nature and supernatural; these are not contrary the one to the other, but are in divine harmony, when we read their teachings right. Typology shows this, and hence those who are best read in the works of God will, if only they have the proper spirit, be best prepared to understand his word.

From this very meager and imperfect outline, we

pass to the consideration of that grand system of types which we have a right to expect, and which we do really find in the Scriptures. That system embraces typical persons, places, times, things, numbers, and actions. In the development of God's plan of grace and mercy, that culminates in man's restoration to his presence through the second Adam, each person, place, time, thing, number, and action that belongs to the typical system has its own purpose, its *telos*, or end; and besides this its common form, or *tupos*, the type to which it belongs. For example, the tabernacle was the place where Jehovah was worshiped by the Israelites, but besides this it is a most instructive type of the Christian system in its ordinances and worship. The people contemporary with the events, times, and actions which sustained this prefigurative character did not understand their full significance. The proof that types, as well as other things in religion, were mysteries unrevealed to the ancients, is abundant; we need only allude to one: "And not as Moses who put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished" (2 Cor. 3:13).

Is it not a little remarkable that while *tupos*, the Greek word for type, occurs just sixteen times in the New Testament, it should have been represented by King James' translators by no less than eight English words? Thus—**Ensample** five times; 1 Cor. 10:11; Phil. 3:17; 1 Thess. 1:7; 2 Thess. 3:9; 1 Pet. 5:3. **Example** twice; 1 Cor. 10:6; 1 Tim. 5:12. **Print** twice; John 20:35. **Figure** twice; Acts 7:43; Rom. 5:14. **Pattern** twice; Tit. 2:7; Heb. 8:5. **Fashion** once; Acts 7:44. **Manner** once; Acts 23:25. And **form** once; Rom. 6:17. These references should be well pondered by all who would have a clear view of Scripture typology. Were we compelled to select some one

of these eight words to represent the original, we would choose pattern as the best, and yet it does not answer the whole purpose, and therefore we prefer to use the word type, as more clearly representing to English ears the idea and imagery of the Greek term.

As to the arrangement and classification of the Old Testament types, we prefer to speak of them under the heads of Typical Persons, Typical Ordinances, [and] Typical Things. We do not affirm that this is absolutely the best division; but we have found it to be the most convenient in arranging our knowledge in a somewhat protracted study of this beautiful field of religious truth.

In entering upon the first division, we must not omit to notice the dualism that appears on every hand in the ancient families of the people of God. In the first household, and immediately after the fall, the drama opens with the introduction of two brothers, an altar, gifts, and a sacrifice. Cain and Abel stand out as the beginning of this dualism. The elder, the younger; the first, nature-born, the second, grace-born; one according to the flesh, the other according to faith. The former is proud, impious, and resentful; the latter, humble, pious, and submissive. [E]nough is suggested to enable the reader to trace into it many more points of dissimilarity, and with these in mind to understand the two great types of character and relation in Ishmael and Isaac, Esau and Jacob, the sons of Leah and the sons of Rachel, Manasseh and Ephraim, Absalom and Solomon. In all these and more, we have two distinct types of persons, and they all set forth some truth in reference to the worldly man and the Christian.

No type is perfect, and the best falls short of setting forth the perfection of the life in God, just as, on the other hand, neither Nimrod nor Pharaoh can [fully] symbolize

the rudeness, tyranny, and enormity of those “vessels of wrath, fitted to destruction.” [I]f we would study the character of those Jacobs and Esaus, the general homology, as well as the special purpose of each life, we would have clearer and juster views of God and his dealings with men; the loving and hating which is predicated of him; and the election and reprobation affirmed of [those of] faith and [those of] the flesh. We would not apply what was spoken nationally of types in an age of shadows to men and women individually under the reign of Christ. We would not attribute to God a capricious partiality, hateful in a human parent; but a grand scheme of mercy worthy of the heart of the divine Father of humanity.

No. 3

[Typical Persons Illustrated]

[W]e come now to speak of typical persons. This naturally constitutes the first great chapter of types, and there is not a subject of more interest and beauty; nor is there one, when rightly understood, that throws more light on the Christian system. There is nearly a score of persons, in our view of the case, who, in the Old Testament, sustain a typical character; of course, we can not speak of all these. If we can but suggest trains of thought by a few striking examples, [we can thereby] show how the investigation should be carried on.

The first great type is the father of our race, Adam. No one can read Romans 5:12-21, and compare what is there said with First Corinthians 15:45-49, and not be convinced that the Holy Spirit intended to instruct us, in a large degree, by means of typical persons. [W]e find such a fine chapter on “Adam and Christ-A Type,” in [brother Walter] Scott’s able work, **The Great**

Demonstration, that we have concluded to adopt it better than anything we can say. He says:⁷

There is a general analogy pervading all God's systems, mineral, vegetable, animal, and religious, and the typology of Scripture is founded on that analogy. [Adam], as the generic man was the fountainhead of humanity,— the great personage from whom the whole race was detailed or particularized. "Multiply," etc. said the Creator (Gen. 1). In the fall, original man lost the right to life and all its headships. Free to stand and free to fall, by an act of disobedience he forfeited the life, righteousness, and Paradisiacal state of the race, and was accordingly separated from the heavenly communion. The Creator met the emergency in great mercy. A new economy was decreed, by which the race were to be regenerated and associated effort conserved.

[Adam], therefore, in the generic phase of his nature, constituted a type of the future Deliverer of our race— the Messiah. He could still be a shadow of "him that was to come." He could be the generic head, the dynamic unit of a mortal race, and, as such, a "figure" of Christ, the head of an immortal race.

By the laws of genus and species, therefore, the race were accounted: (1) Sinners; (2) [Judged worthy of] death; (3) Bereft of the [Paradise] state. Hence, since the fatal era of the fall of man these sore evils have haunted our common humanity; sooner or later they are verified in

the experience of every man. “By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin. So death passed upon all men for that all men have sinned [Rom. 5:12].

Notwithstanding the many points of dissimilarity between Adam and Christ, there exists between them an element of resemblance, by which they are with propriety placed in the relation of type and antitype, the generative and regenerative heads of society and the church respectively. Christ is styled the “second man, the second Adam, the head of the body—the church.” As the antitype of the first Adam, the regenerative head of the redeemed, Christ’s acts and state, his righteousness, life, and personality are transitive; that is, they pass over from him to his regenerated children, who, by virtue of their relation to him as children, begotten in his own likeness, by the gospel, inherit the following blessings, namely: (1) Justification [from sin] by his blood; (2) The Holy Spirit; [and] (3) [Christ’s] personality and eternal life.⁸

In Christ Jesus, therefore, there is offered by heaven to humanity the glorious privilege of renewing life and unity on an eternal basis, the second Adam; of which the animal basis, Adam the first, is but a shadow. [The apostle Paul provides] many lower points of difference in First Corinthians 15, [verses 21-57]. [He] places them before us in strong contrast as the two dynamic units, and thereby offers to us a general privilege, an opportunity of contemplating our relations to each separately, under the antithesis

of their respective order of details

The Holy Scriptures, like the sun, the earth, and the heavens, are their own witnesses. Our duty, therefore, is to read them till we learn this—till we learn that life under Adam and Christ, the units of life, is double—animal and spiritual, temporal and eternal, and that the Scriptures, which speak of these and reveal them, certainly have for their author the omniscient God.

No. 4

[Typical Persons Continued]

Types, prophecy, and miracle are three great chapters of internal evidence which the Scriptures offer for the confirmation of our faith, and to him who closely studies it the first is by no means the least interesting or important. We have seen how Christ's headship is typified in Adam; and if we take Paul as our guide, we can not go astray in following up the points of similarity and contrast between the first and second Adams.

Is it any wonder, then, that to stereotype this many sided relation of our Redeemer to the church and the world, we should have as typical persons men like Adam, Abel, Noah, Melchizedek, Isaac, Moses, Joshua, David, Jonah, and a host of others among the patriarchs, prophets, warriors, kings, priests, and deliverers, who with holy heroism wrought righteousness and subdued kingdoms, even as he has done and is now doing, whose servants they were.

Let us pick out a few of these from the long list of Old Testament saints and worthies, whose lives and sufferings and triumphs prefigure the like things in our

Messiah. There is, in the infancy of time, Abel, the first martyr persecuted and slain for his faith in God. He stands at the head of the noble company of the martyrs, the first of whom we have any account that they offered sacrifice; the first to taste the bitterness of death; the first to enter the house appointed for all living. His blood cried for vengeance, and the cry entered the ears of the Lord of Sabbath. The persecutor is brought to punishment and goes forth a wanderer and a vagabond, with the curse of God on his brow and a brother's blood on his conscience. Henceforth the persecuted and the persecutor find their types in these two brothers; but not till we see Him whose blood speaks better things than the blood of Abel lying a bleeding victim, and the Cains that slew him driven forth to wander under the curse of God, a byword and a hissing among the nations, do we comprehend the full significance of these impressive types.

Then there is Melchizedek to prefigure the priestly character of the Son of God. What a remarkable personage is he in the light of a few passages of Scripture!

And Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine, and he was the priest of the most high God; and he blessed him, and said: Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thine hand, and he gave him tithes of all (Gen. 14:18).

Again: "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent; thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek" (Psm. 110:4). This last passage is quoted by the writer of the

Epistle to the Hebrews no less than three times in the fifth and sixth chapters of that epistle, and in the seventh he breaks out into one of the most eloquent descriptions of Christ's priesthood compared with that of Melchizedek, in the relation of type and antitype, that can possibly be conceived.

Who Melchizedek was, we have no certain means of knowing; for this name is official rather than personal, meaning "king of righteousness." But whoever he was, he was a remarkable person, a type of Christ, [who] lived two thousand years before the Christian era, and united in himself both the regal and sacerdotal functions—he was king of Salem, as well as priest of the most high God.

In the patriarchal age, the head of each family was its priest by a divine right, but Melchizedek stands out rather as a high-priest, and as such he is related to our high-priest [cf. Heb. 5 & 7 for the New Testament references on Melchizedek]; for mark, Christ is not simply a priest, but he is "the high-priest of our profession" [Heb. 3:1]. The epistle to the Hebrews was written to prove the superiority of the new over the old economy. [T]he apostle shows that our priesthood is after a better order than that of the Jews; ours is after Melchizedek, theirs after Aaron; ours, therefore, antedates theirs nearly five hundred years, and was before the Law, in which they gloried. The former is a royal priesthood, the latter is not. Melchizedek blessed Abraham, and hence was greater than Abraham, for "the less is blessed by the greater." But Abraham was confessedly greater than Aaron, and therefore the prototype of our priesthood is clearly greater than the great high-priest of the Jewish nation. Not only so, but Aaron paid tithes to Melchizedek in Abraham, "for he was in the loins of his progenitor" when the priest met the patriarch

returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him, and received a tenth of all [Gen. 14].

[Melchizedek] had no pedigree; we know not who were his father and mother; we know not the beginning of his days nor the end of his life. The Scriptures are silent on all these points. To fulfil the requirements of a most significant type, this illustrious man was, then,

without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually [Heb. 7:3].

As Melchizedek was the only priest of his order having neither predecessor nor successor, so Christ is the only [high]priest in Christianity.

The only perfect sacrifice ever offered being made when Christ expired on the cross, it was the last ever offered by divine approbation; it put an end to all literal sacrifices, and when he ascended to heaven, to present in the holy of holies his own blood, he fulfilled the type, and removed the whole sacrificial system that had obtained for four thousand years. There is, in a word, no hierarchy among Christians, only as all alike are constituted kings and priests to God by Him whose blood cleanses from all sin [Rev. 1:5-6].

Again: Melchizedek did not, like Aaron, officiate for one people; he stood before God for the race, for all who came to him for his ministrations. So Christ offers his sacrifice for all who will come to God through him. He takes away the sin of the world. Our Melchizedek has a universal priesthood, and all may come to his atonement who feel its need and will accept its benefit. As the typical

priesthood of this grand order was never abolished, so our Anointed, the antitype, is an eternal high-priest; death does not come to end his generous ministrations on our behalf. He was made a priest according to the power of an endless life. "He ever lives to intercede for us" [Heb. 7:25]. We shall soon die, but our tender and merciful high-priest ever lives [Heb. 4:15-16], and will reappear at the end of the world without a sin-offering to the salvation of his people [Heb. 9:27-28].

He is also a royal priest; this was not Aaron. He wears a crown as well as a mitre, a spectre as well as a crosier. He unites in himself all royal dignities and glory, and all holy and pure affection. His kingly mien is tempered with condescension and kindness. He sits upon a throne which has been sanctified with blood. His palace is also a temple, and while we honor him as our sovereign, we worship him as our Savior.

We can devote only a few paragraphs to speak of him who said:

A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, like unto me; unto him shall ye hearken, and it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall not hearken to that prophet shall be cut off from among the people [Deut. 18:18; notice too that Peter relates this verse directly to Christ in Acts 3:22-26].

In whatever point of view we look at Moses and Jesus, we shall find numerous interesting coincidences which constitute the former an instructive type of the latter.

In one prominent circumstance, with their birth[s], there is a strong resemblance. Moses is born under the

reign of a tyrant who aims at the extermination of all male children born of Jewish parents in his dominion. Moses is spared by the special care of Heaven working through secondary agencies and instrumentalities, little observed by those cruel oppressors, whose empire was to be shaken and finally overthrown by causes cradled in the little ark that bore him on the turbid waters of the Nile [Exod. 1 & 2]. The hand of God is visibly manifested in the preservation of this great redeemer of an oppressed and suffering people.

Fifteen centuries afterward he who was to be like unto Moses is born under the sway of another Pharaoh. Herod conformed in disposition and action to his infamous prototype, even as Jesus to the lawgiver of the Hebrews. He, too, seeks to compass the destruction of a redeemer, by issuing a cruel edict that all male children under two years of age should be slain [Matt. 2:1-23]. Rachels again weep as they wept on the banks of the Nile, and refuse to be comforted because their sons are not. But the God of Moses is the Father of Jesus, and he thwarts the design of this tyrant, just as he did those of the other. The two redeemers, one of Israel after the flesh, the other of Israel after the spirit, are objects of God's special care, and are preserved in infancy from similar dangers.

In character Moses also displays the same admirable traits that appear in Christ. He was the meekest of men, most unselfish, a man of single purpose, zealous for God's honor, and devoted to his service. As far as a mortal could, in qualities of mind and heart, be a type of Him who was holy, harmless, and undefiled, Moses fulfilled all of the requirements of a perfect type; and in a life singularly unique and eventful foreshadows the life and disposition of Him who came to be the light of the world and to finish

what Moses began. “The Law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” [John 1:17]. But it is in their official relations, and chiefly as great deliverers [and lawgivers], that the most pleasing features of their likeness appear.

Surely the unity of the Bible and its divine origin, its being worthy of God, and suited to the wants of our intelligence, are seen in its types and antitypes. [Other resemblances between Moses and Christ will be presented in the lecture given by Gary Colley elsewhere in this book.]

No 5 **[Typical Ordinances]**

[I]n view of the limits assigned ourselves in these papers upon typical persons, we pass to the consideration of those ordinances which in former dispensations plainly had a typical character. And here we can be at no loss, for on every hand in the worship of the Israelites, we discover appointments that can be regarded as worthy only on the ground that they were designed to be but temporary and adumbrative until the coming of the Just One, and until the establishment of his kingdom should introduce us to that which is perfect and enduring.

To rightly apprehend the nature of the three great dispensations of revealed religion, and the relation existing among them, we should keep constantly in mind a distinction we pointed out in our first article, between the *tupos* [common form] and the *telos* [purpose] of each. [P]erhaps to the ordinary reader the meaning of these two Greek words is not sufficiently clear. Observe, then, that the first is the type or model according to which God has constructed the things of both nature and religion. This type, pattern, or model is found in all God’s systems of

religious administration. In nature it is unchangeable and enduring, and this affords us a sufficient ground for analogical reasoning in reference to revealed religion. It is this fact that forms the ground for all inductive analogical reasoning; it is the basis of all classification, without which we could not reason at all. Neither, indeed, could we have a single law of nature, for the classified facts of nature are her laws, and it is the conformity of facts to a common *tupos* or type that enables us to arrange the facts into classes.

Now let us look at the *telos*, or end of each part, individual, or system in the creation of God. There is not an animal, a plant, or a planet, that is not adapted in its whole constitution, being, and nature to the special system of which it is a part. All have their special adaptation to the age in which they live; to the system to which they belong. Of course, we speak of classes and orders here. It is true, we now and then meet a [freak of nature], but these are abnormal, exceptional, and not to be taken into the account. Now what is true universally in the work of God in nature, is just as true in his gracious provisions for our redemption. Men in every age, from Plato to Emanuel Swedenborg, and, indeed, before and since the times of these great men, have been struggling after a realization of the thought that what we see, the phenomenal in nature and religion, are but the antitypes of divine ideas which must ever have existed in the eternal Mind. The fault with these profound men has been, that, leaving the path of revelation, they have been lured by far-reaching prospects and charming vistas, enchanting scenes, and the music of waterfalls, to wander into the mazes of forbidden speculation. Not that all speculation is wrong, [b]ut let his thoughts be guided by revelation,

and imbued with its spirit.

[T]here are revealed in the word of God three great institutions, properly called the Patriarchal, Jewish, and the Christian. Each of these has its own ordinances, and laws, just as each had its own centre, priesthood, mediators, deliverers, and its own system of rewards and punishments. All these have a general character, and, besides, are nicely adjusted to a special end. They are adapted to the wants and genius of the age and people for which they were instituted. In the Old Testament we see the shadow of good things to come; in the New Testament we have the image of the things; but in heaven we shall enjoy the things themselves. We have in this world only the patterns of things in the heavens, and by means of these, God is surely qualifying us for our heavenly inheritance and the everlasting realities of his kingdom and worship as ever he did the seed of Abraham thousands of years ago, for the bringing in of a better hope.

Abel saw a bleeding lamb, and all after him, till [John] the Baptist, had but faint conceptions of the meaning of all that sacrificial blood of lambs slain day by day and offered at the altars of the false religion and the true; “they could not see to the end of that which is abolished.” It remained for John to point to God’s Lamb, in contrast with those lambs of men that could not take away the sin of the world. But even [John] knew but little compared with the least in the kingdom of heaven, and surely the greatest in the kingdom of heaven knows little, very little, in comparison with that which shall hereafter be revealed in us. Thus, progress, growth, and development, are the Law of God’s spiritual kingdom no less certainly than it is in nature. We have infancy, youth, and manhood in the individual; we have the world, the

church, and heaven, as the Jews had an outer court, a holy place, and a most holy, forming the tabernacle in the desert and the temple at Jerusalem.

The ordinances of religion in every age connect themselves chiefly with the elements, blood, water, oil, bread and wine; if these do not embrace all, they are chief, and to these we devote a brief space. Atonement, purification, sanctification, and communion are the ends accomplished instrumentally in all the divine economies by the use of these elements. Blood makes atonement, water cleanses, oil consecrates, and bread and wine support life, by bringing us into communion with the source of all life and blessedness. But in the type these were predicated of things as well as persons; in the antitype the latter only are the subjects of atonement, purification, consecration, and fellowship.

In the consecration of any one, under the Law to the priest's office, atonement was made for him by the shedding of blood, and part of the blood shed was to be sprinkled on the person [Heb. 12:24; Exod. 24:8; 29-20-21], as well as before the Lord. This consecration gave rise to the expression, "blood of sprinkling." We, then believe in sprinkling, but it is the sprinkling of blood, and not of water. The sprinkling of **mere** water is not found in either law or gospel [emphasis by ed.]. In the 19th chapter of Numbers we find a full account of the water of separation which was sprinkled on the unclean. This was a peculiar appointment as any one may see by reading the whole chapter. This water of separation freed the person from ceremonial impurity, and is the ground of the beautiful prophecy: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you" (Ezek. 36:25).

This water of separation was composed of the water of a running stream, and the ashes of a red heifer, slain and burnt with all belonging to it. While burning, cedarwood, and hyssop, and scarlet wool were to be thrown into the fire, then all was gathered up and kept for further use. But the use of this did not relieve one from the necessity of bathing the whole person in [regular] water, as may be seen in the 19th verse of the chapter [Num. 19].

Whoever wishes to get a clear idea of the ceremonial use of blood, water, and oil, should read in connection with this chapter the 14th of Leviticus, in which we have the ordinance for cleansing the leper; and he will see from these, and the other ceremonies of the Jewish ritual, that those consecrated and those to be cleansed came to the sprinkling of blood, the washing of water, and the pouring of oil, before they dare enter the sanctuary to enjoy communion with God. To confound these distinctions is to miss half the beauty of the significance of both law and gospel. We may carp at the arrangements of God, and find seeming exceptions to the rule of his procedure, just as a carping naturalist may do in respect to the work of God [in creation], but in such a spirit we can never learn much either of his word or his works. Since time began, the literal use of blood, water, and oil in religious service is, that we are besprinkled with blood, bathed in water, and anointed with oil. Derange this order, and you mar the beauty of divine ordinances. Blood is not poured; [mere] water is neither sprinkled nor poured upon us; we are not immersed in nor besprinkled with oil.

It is hardly necessary to say that the blood of Christ is to us what the blood of sacrifice [animals] was to the Jews. Baptism answers to the ablutions of the Law, and we are anointed with the Holy Spirit, instead of the oil of

consecration, used in the tabernacle service, and in setting apart prophets, priests, and kings. Does the phraseology of the New Testament conform to this view of the subject? Is this analogical argument confirmed by the style of the apostles in their allusions to the former dispensation? Let us see. We open first to Heb. 9:13, and read:

For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God [cf. verses 19-22; 10:22; 11:28; 12:24].

First Peter 1:2 says we are “elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.”

If we are said to be washed in his blood, to drink his blood, to be guilty of his blood, etc., these are metonymics, and in no wise conflict with the idea that blood is always literally sprinkled. It is only when mingled with this [blood], or the ashes of the blood colored heifer, that water was sprinkled at all. [T]o sprinkle mere water on man, woman, or child, on either head, body, or feet, in Patriarchal, Jewish, or Christian ages for any purpose, religious or secular, was never enjoined by divine authority. [Consider how these facts impact upon the denominational ideas of sprinkling or pouring for baptism and infant baptism.] It is, therefore, of the fathers [man made], and not of God, and ought to be rejected as a human tradition.

The New Testament allusions to the connection between blood and the guilt of sin are not more striking than between water and its impurity. As a specimen, take the following: “Wash away thy sins” (Acts 22:16). “But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of God” (1 Cor. 6:11). There is only one washing in the name of Christ known to the gospel. “That he might cleanse it (the church) with the washing of water by the word” (Eph. 5:26). Paul says: “He (God) saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Spirit” (Titus 3:5).⁹

Quotations on all these points might be multiplied, but we depend upon the readings of those interested in this argument, in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, with the commentary on them, contained in the Epistle to the Hebrews. [I]f men will not, by the simple instructions of the Scriptures, learn the forms of God’s ordinances, it is hardly expected that they will be convinced by these types. But to those who keep these ordinances as delivered to them by the apostles, how these types and symbols, these analogies and figures, these forms and patterns, illustrate and confirm their faith!

No. 6

[Types From The Tabernacle]

We devote this number to an examination of the tabernacle and its furniture, use, and meaning of its main parts, the great lessons we are taught by the daily and yearly service performed in it, and afterward in the temple. The latter was like the former in these particulars, and different from it chiefly in this, that it was permanent while the other was movable. [The temple] was also larger, to accommodate the increased numbers of worshipers

when Israel became settled under the reign of Solomon. The lessons taught by both are the same. We select the tabernacle because it is the original, and because [the author of Hebrews] chooses it in his admirable treatise on type and antitype.

If we had no other allusion to the typical nature of the tabernacle and its service in the New Testament, this 9th chapter [of Hebrews] would be enough to authorize us to look at this beautiful tent as an expressive type of the Christian system. [He] expressly affirms, in the 24th verse, that the holy places made with hands are the figures (types) of the true. The same in effect is repeated again and again in this chapter, and is confirmed by the tenor of the whole epistle. In fact, a leading objective of the apostolic writings is to show that the Christian institution is the antitype of the Law, ordinances, and worship of the Jews.

But let us attend strictly to the tabernacle and its service, and note what lessons they have for us. A tabernacle is simply a tent, a movable abode. This tent was built at the command of God, and according to his directions [Exod. 25-40; Heb. 8:1-5]. The direction to Moses was, that he see that it was built according to the pattern shown him in the mount; and so particular was God that he inspired two men, Bezaleel and Aholiab, that they might, as master-workmen, construct everything according to his will. The interest God manifests in this tabernacle, the care he takes of it, and the large space it occupies in the Pentateuch, all go to show us its importance, and make it an object of close study to those who desire to obtain a full view of the Jewish and Christian systems.

When Israel was stationary, and the tabernacle was

set up, it consisted of an enclosed space of one hundred cubits by fifty. [T]he outer court had its entrance at the east, wide and open to all Israel who were not disqualified from entering by some impurity. This outer court was the place of sacrifice—the place where the sinner appeared with his victim, to be slain for his sin. Here the priest met him and began his ministrations on his behalf.

Advancing westward we come to the tabernacle proper, of the same form and proportions as the outer court. It was about fifty-five feet long, twenty-two wide, and eighteen high. This was wholly closed and impervious to light from without. Its fixtures were gold, the sides of precious wood bound together by longitudinal bars, the whole very firm, and the top protected by no less than four coverings. The holiest of all—[holy of holies]—was formed by a very thick curtain drawn across the sanctuary about two-thirds of the way back from the entrance, thus separating a small space esteemed most sacred, entered only by the high-priest, arrayed in his robes of glory and beauty, and only on the most solemn occasions, and after due preparation, as we shall shortly see. The furniture of this part was pure gold, and its light was the shekinah or divine presence.

God did not arrange these apartments, give such minute instructions to Moses about them, and take such interest in the due and proper ordering of everything in them, to no purpose. These things are not uninteresting trifles; they can seem so only to those who have been too indolent or too careless to attend to their real typical meaning. Let us approach them with reverence. The outer court is the type of the world, the holy place [typical] of the church, and the most holy [typical] of heaven. Humanity stands in this outer court of the world, with its

sin upon it, and dependent on the light of nature; it enters from the east and follows the sun. The worshiper passed out of the outer court and entered by the door, if he entered at all, into the holy place; he left the outer court and its natural light behind him, and entering into the holy place he received new light and enjoyed richer blessings. Here, worship in its proper sense began; he became now a priest, and officiated in God's sanctuary. We pass out of the world into the church; we leave the world behind us, and by our entrance into the church we are made priests in the best sense of that term—its Christian sense. We no longer depend on natural light; we have the light of God in his sanctuary, and we enjoy privileges guaranteed only to those who enter in by the door.

From the holy place the high-priest drew aside the veil, and stood in the presence of God. [T]his veil was rent [torn] from top to bottom, as by the hand of God, at the crucifixion of Christ, and [Hebrews 10:20] commenting on this says:

Jesus has consecrated for us a new and living way through the vail [veil], that is to say, his flesh, by which, with the blood of our slain victim, we may enter into the holiest of all" (cf. Heb. 6:19; 9:3).

Our High-Priest has drawn aside the vail, symbol of death, that separates the church below from the church above, and has entered God's presence to officiate for us. But mark, we pass out of the outer court into the holy place, and from the holy place into the most holy; so humanity must pass out of the world into the church, and out of church into heaven; there is no other way. This is God's

order, the order of the word, the teaching of all these types. What is literally taught elsewhere these types illustrate and confirm.

Let us now go back and examine the furniture of each apartment of this typical tent and learn what it teaches. In the outer court the first thing we see is the brazen altar, standing on our right hand, a few steps in advance of the entrance. It is about eight and a half feet square, and five feet high. Connected with it are all the utensils for performing sacrifice. It was here, day by day for centuries, that offerings were made continually. Blood flowed here in rivers, victims died by thousands, sinners innumerable came to this for forgiveness; "without the shedding of blood [there] is no remission" [Heb. 9:22]. Now for the antitype. Christ died in the outer court [of the world], he died a victim, and his blood was taken into heaven, the true holiest place, and there made reconciliation for iniquity. The Jewish worshiper came first to the altar in the outer court; the sinner must now come to Christ and his sacrifice. There is no approach to God but by the blood of Jesus. We must come to the brazen altar, where bleeds the Lamb of God.

The worshiper made a few steps and came to the brazen laver on his left; the way into the holy place passed by this also. It is so now. As the blood of Jesus removes our guilt, so, by divine appointment, water is to remove our impurity. We wash as the priests of old, and are prepared to enter the holy place. Baptism is at this laver, and it is in the outer court, or the world. It is not in the holy place, the church, nor is it at the door; it is just before the door, and by it we come to the door. Our Baptist brethren have been tugging and sweating for many years to get the brazen laver into the holy place, forgetting that

it is too large, and that by getting it in they would throw into disorder all the beautiful furniture Moses placed in the holy place. We can not put baptism inside the church without deranging every item of the gospel; and this the Baptists do by first receiving the sinner on his Christian experience, as it is called, and afterward baptizing him, not to put him into Christ, the door, but because [they say] he is in Christ already, by faith alone [Gal. 3:26-27; John 10:7, 9; Jas. 2:24; Mark 16:16].

In the holy place, the first item was the golden candlestick; its light was constant—it never went out; the sacred oil was well supplied, and by its light all the beauty and glory of the sanctuary was seen. The Spirit of God, symbolized by the oil of the tabernacle service, is in the lamp of God's word; it is truly a light to our feet [cf. Psm 119:105]. The candlestick typifies the word of God, through which the Spirit enlightens all who by blood and water enter the church, the true holy place. Here also the priests saw on the opposite side—the right hand—the golden table, on which were the loaves of the presence, removed once a week, and eaten by priests. In the church, we have a table, even the table of the Lord's presence among his people, and at it once a week his priests and kings do eat and are filled. The Lord's Supper is beautifully symbolized by this table of show-bread [cf. 1 Cor. 10:16-21; 11:23-34]. We advance, and before us is the golden altar and the burning of incense, setting forth the throne of grace and the prayers of God's people. John saw this, and he was told that it was the prayers of the saints [Rev. 5:8]. From the holy place, the church, prayer as incense is going up continually. Here, then, we have in the church light, sustenance, and heaven, by communion; and as purified and anointed priests of God we perform acceptable

service, while our High-Priest alone has as yet gone into the heavens—the holiest of all [1 Pet. 2:5, 9-10].

We draw aside the veil which Jesus rent [Matt. 27:51], and through which we may not fear to follow him, and, behold, we are in the presence of God; there is his throne—overshadowed by the cherubim and resting on the ark of the covenant, with the Law at its side, [and where the blood of atonement was applied for sin]. Justice and mercy embrace each other before God. Here, then, we rest. [L]et these beautiful pictures, that silently set forth in prophecy and type the glorious achievements of our Redeemer and the beauty of his religion, be fixed in our hearts forever, and incite us to a more intense devotion.

No. 7¹⁰

[A Brief Mention Of Typical Places, Times, And Numbers]

The present number will conclude what we have to say on Scripture types, [but] the subject is by no means exhausted. [P]laces [are not] devoid of typical significance. [W]e have Eden, Canaan, Jerusalem, Calvary, and Mount Zion. Are not Eden and Canaan but types of heaven? Egypt and Assyria [and Babylon] of anti-Christian powers? Sodom and Gomorrah, of the damnation that awaits the cruel opposers of God and his people? How Mount Moriah, when Abraham the sire and Isaac the son were there, adumbrates Calvary and its tragedy; and how gloriously does Jerusalem and Mount Zion, whither the tribes go up, on those days of feasting and joy, when Israel, from every nation under heaven, were assembled at the feasts of the Lord, represent the city of our God, and the gathering together of the true Israel from all kindreds and tribes and peoples of the earth. And so we might go on, for there

is scarcely an end to this field.

Times, also, have a significance in typology that is at once instructing and pleasing. To treat these as they deserve would transcend our present limits. It is painfully brief, but it is all we can do now to suggest that the Sabbath, the sojourn in Egypt, the forty years in the desert, the year of jubilee, the years of captivity in Babylon, are all spoken of in Scripture as types, as much as Jonah's three days in the belly of hell are used by Christ to teach us that he would be three days in hades [cf. Matt. 12:39-41].

In Scripture the numbers 3, 7, 12, and 40 [and others] are ever recurring, nor is it in vain they do so. I say there are in all the works of God typical numbers, typical in its proper sense, and he is [unlearned] that denies the same thing in the word of God. If any object to the book called the Revelation of John because these numbers are found on every page, I can object to nature and her works on the same ground. I will not delay to give instances of the typical use of numbers; they will readily occur to any one even moderately acquainted with the sacred Scriptures.

[An Example Of Lessons Learned From Types]

As a sample of what may be learned from all these, we will take a case from one of the epistles, used there to impress on a congregation of disciples a warning, to which we would all do well to take heed. [T]he journey from Egypt to Canaan of this Israelitish host gives us a fine font of types relating to the Christian life, the trials, dangers and deliverance of God's elect people, now on their way to the true Canaan above.

[In First Corinthians 10:1-11] we have a graphic

picture, and because it suited Paul's purpose in admonishing the Corinthian church to note the things he does in the travels of the Israelites from Egypt to Canaan, we can but suppose that had it suited his purpose he would have chosen other chief events of that journey also as types of what happens to the Israel of God in passing through this desert life toward their heavenly home.

We find in this history of Israel's deliverance, 1. The land of Egypt. 2. The desert. 3. The land of Canaan. The moment a redeemer [Moses] comes to break their yoke [Israel's bondage to Pharaoh in Egypt], the iron bands of their servitude are drawn tighter, their sighs and sobs and loud wailings are heard in heaven. They believe Moses, and turn away from all their love of Egypt. The record shows that it cost them an effort to break away, and it is what we might expect. This Egypt, what an instructive type in the world of sin, with its idolatries, prostituted science, its oppression, and its tyranny! And how the ruler of this Egypt, hardly letting go of his slaves, answers to Satan himself. Does not the sinner now need to receive by faith the Christ who comes to deliver him from the Egypt of sin, as Israel did Moses? And is it not with many a struggle here, as there [cf. Exod. 5-14], that the sinner turns his back on the world; and on the Devil, that never yet let one escape his slavery but by the uplifted hand and outstretched arm of God?

When Israel believed Moses and turned their backs upon Egypt, they came to the Red Sea, where, according to 1 Cor. 10:1, they were baptized unto Moses, in the cloud and in the sea. They were not clean gone from the grasp of the tyrant until being baptized. Then they triumphed over their enemies, and sung on the shore of deliverance their victorious song [Exod. 15:1]. [T]hey were prepared

to take up their line of march for the promised land. So when we have believed in our Deliverer and turned our back on a world of sin, we too, come to the Red Sea of our baptism. They were baptized into their Redeemer, we are baptized into ours; they were freed from Egypt in their baptism, we are freed from sin in ours. They began their march to Canaan, we move forward toward our home in heaven.

This brings us to the second idea in this typical [journey]. Israel, delivered from their great enemy Pharaoh, had a long and wearisome way before them; they had to journey many a long league and suffer many years before they were gladdened with a sight of “Canaan’s happy land.” In these trials and troubles they often fell, often murmured, and were often chastised. But God did not forsake them; he gave them bread from heaven; [h]e supplied them with water from the smitten rock. That rock, says Paul, in his bold, symbolical style, was Christ. Christ is the smitten rock from whom flow rivers of grace, by which alone we can find refreshment in our desert wanderings. We depend on God for daily sustenance while marching here below, as much as Israel did for the manna from heaven and the refreshing water from the smitten rock [cf. John 6:32-35].

But they met enemies on the road. Amalek came down and fought against the people of God; and it was only through the intercession of Moses that Israel was strengthened to withstand the onset and finally prevail. We defeat our spiritual foes that oppose our progress to heaven in the same way. Through the intercession of Christ, while we are fighting our way along, our enemies are overcome; and as God then swore to blot out the name of Amalek from under heaven, and did accomplish it in

the days of Saul, so our enemies shall be destroyed [when] we are settled in [our] Canaan [heaven].

Canaan, sweet Canaan, [Israel's] happy home; it came to view after long and weary years. Israel, faint, yet trusting in God, encamped on the banks of the rolling Jordan; its turbid waters affright them. God says: "Go forward!" and the ark of the covenant advances, borne by white-robed priests, and followed by believing, trusting multitudes. They emerge from the bed of the river, and lo! the sweet fields arrayed in green are before them. They are, after a long journey, many trials, and much toil, in Canaan, the land promised to their fathers [Josh. 3:14-17]. Thus, also, the true Israel of God [the Lord's church] will at last cross the Jordan of death [separation], and rest in Emanuel's land, the object of many anxious solitudes during their pilgrimage through this desert life. The promises of God will all have been fulfilled, his faithfulness proved, and the wonders of his grace and mercy be the theme of his saved ones forever and ever [Rev. 21:1-7; 22:1-5].

[Conclusion]

To hear many of our ministers, one would suppose that prophecies, types, allegories, parables, and figures ought to be studiously avoided in our pulpit ministrations as things dangerous and forbidden, whereas we can read scarcely a page of the memoirs of Christ, or the epistles of the apostles, without meeting these on every hand; and no argument is necessary to convince us that this method of teaching has a strong hold on the popular taste, in view of the simple fact that those hymns that contain the most of the allegorical and typical are the most frequently sung, both at public meetings, and around the fireside. How

many a despairing saint has been revived and cheered
when fatigued and faint from the toils of the journey, by
hearing the hymn—

“On Jordan’s stormy banks I stand,
And cast a wishful eye
To Canaan’s fair and happy land,
Where my possessions lie.”

Endnotes

1 The material for this article has been edited from a series authored by Robert Graham, entitled, “Scripture Types,” IN **Lard’s Quarterly** (Kansas City, MO: Old Paths Book Club, 1950), 3:203-206, 271-275; 4:95-99, 202-223, 331-336. Article No. 2 is incorrectly identified as No. 5 in vol. 3:271. Articles Nos. 4-7 are not listed in the Table of Contents in vol. 4, but are found on the pages listed above. **Since these articles were written in 1866 and 1867 the spelling and forms of many words are different than those words would be spelled today. The same is true with excessive punctuation.** We have left Graham’s material as much in its original form as was possible.

2 Robert Graham was a graduate of Bethany College in 1847. He located in Fayetteville, AR in 1848. He later opened a college in that city which graduated its first class in 1854. Source: Earl I. West, **The Search for the Ancient Order** (Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1964), 1:144-145.

3 We could find no information on this publication and do not know if the articles on “Scripture Types” were original with this publication or if they appeared previously in another form.

4 We have not supplied a Scripture reference for every phrase quoted by Graham, although we have supplied the

references for many quotes. Apparently it was common during Graham's time to cite the Scriptures without providing the references to book, chapter, and verse.

5 There has been no effort to disagree with or to try and clarify every minor detail of this material, such as whether or not Paul wrote the epistle to the Hebrews. To do so would have required more space than allotted.

6 This lesson is incorrectly given as "No. 5" in **Lard's Quarterly**, 3:271.

7 This section is greatly condensed and does not use the numbering system given by Scott.

8 While these concepts are often perverted, we take it that Scott does not refer to the denominational doctrine of imputed righteousness, nor direct operation of the Holy Spirit, nor a literal indwelling of Christ (cf. Rom. 5:1; 8:9, 14; 2 Pet. 1:2-4; 2 Cor. 3:18).

9 In this condensation we have eliminated Graham's views on the typical nature of anointing with oil and the receiving of the Holy Spirit. While there are some legitimate comparisons to be made, we felt that some of his remarks confused the miraculous and non-miraculous manifestations of the Spirit in the instances he cited and could lead to some doctrinal confusion in the mind of the reader.

10 Some of the material in Graham's article No. 7 has been placed in a different order for the purpose of providing a smoother flow and more suitable conclusion.

Chapter 23

Jesus Christ—The Link Between The Covenants

Jim Dearman

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. The Bible begins with these words. In the beginning of the Gospel according to John, we learn that Christ was the living Word present at creation and that without Him was nothing made.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made” (John 1:1-3).

Scripture informs us that all things were made through Jesus Christ. He was active in creation. The culmination of creation was man, made in the image of God and placed in the Garden to live in perfect fellowship with the Father. However, fellowship was broken by man’s transgression, and God in His mercy initiated a plan to restore the relationship man and God enjoyed before the fall. Who

would be the central figure in the reconciliation process? Genesis 3:15 provides the answer:

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.

Thus, we are introduced to the Seed, which would ultimately bruise the head of Satan through His death, burial, and resurrection.

As the plan unfolds throughout the pages of God's revelation to man, Jesus Christ remains the central figure. Jesus Christ is not only the link between the covenants, He is before the covenants. Beyond the covenants, at the end of time, He will judge those who have lived in all ages under all covenants.

First, let us notice how Christ dominated the period of the Old Covenant. We will see Him in the Pentateuch and, then, in the writings of the prophets, as they pointed to the physical coming of Christ as the Savior of the world.

Christ In The Pentateuch

In the first five books of the Bible, known as the Pentateuch, Christ is present in the person of the writer of these books, Moses. Who can deny that Moses, the great mediator and leader of God's people Israel, is typical of the Christ who would become the perfect mediator between God and man? Deuteronomy 18:15-18 points out the typical relationship Moses enjoyed to the Christ who was to come:

The Lord your God will raise up for you a

Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear, according to all you desired of the Lord your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, nor let me see this great fire anymore, lest I die. And the Lord said to me: What they have spoken is good. I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him.

In his sermon in Acts 3:22,23, Peter refers to the Deuteronomy passage, clearly applying it to the Christ. The prophet “like me” of whom Moses wrote was Jesus. Therefore, Christ is present in type in Moses and is like him in many ways. However, the Hebrews writer points out that Christ, as the antitype, is superior to Moses:

And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward, but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end” (Hebrews 3:5,6).

In the pen, as well as in the person of Moses, Christ is present. In every book of the Pentateuch, Christ can be seen. The passage in Genesis has already been cited. Genesis 3:15 refers to the culmination of God’s plan for redeeming man through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Near the end of Genesis, in Jacob’s prophecies to his sons, Christ is again prominent:

The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes; and to Him shall be the obedience of the people” (Genesis 49:10). This is a reference to Jesus Christ, the ultimate lawgiver and ruler of God’s people, who would come from the tribe of Judah to reign as king over His spiritual kingdom, the church. Throughout Genesis many references could be cited to show the centrality of Christ in God’s scheme of redemption.

In the book of Exodus, the deliverance from sin is typified by the freedom from Egyptian bondage. Freedom from sin is possible only through the Christ. Therefore, the theme of the book of Exodus emphasizes the redemptive work of Christ. In the twelfth chapter, where the instructions for the Passover are given, the blood of the lamb was placed on the houses of the Israelites, as God instructed, to save their firstborn from death. Who could fail to see the typical significance of this event as it pointed to our Passover, Jesus Christ? Paul, by inspiration, refers to Christ as “our passover” in 1 Corinthians 5:7. Then, in Exodus 19 and 20, as Moses brought Israel to Mount Sinai and gave them God’s law for their generations, we are reminded of Christ our lawgiver, who has brought us out of Satan’s bondage and has given us His perfect law of liberty.

The book of Leviticus is replete with reminders of the Christ. The late Franklin Camp, known, among other things, for his excellent teaching on redemption through the Bible, called this book “the Gospel in the Old Testament.” He pointed out that the book contains principles of grace enabling God’s people to enjoy fellowship with Him through sacrifice, the priesthood, and the place to approach God, the tabernacle. The offerings

described in Leviticus depict the ultimate offering of Christ for our sins. For example, the burnt offering was to be a male animal without blemish. The entire animal was offered, typifying the complete and perfect sacrifice of Christ for us. How many more analogies could be drawn between the sacrifices described in Leviticus and the supreme sacrifice of Jesus to which they pointed? The comparison may be summarized through Paul's inspired pen: "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21). Christ's becoming "sin for us," no doubt, refers to His being made a sin offering for all mankind. The phrase "sin offering" is found repeatedly in Leviticus. Thus, the point is established. Those offerings under the Old Law were effective only as they pointed to the final sin offering of the sinless Son of God.

The fourth book of the Pentateuch is the record of the wilderness wanderings. The New Testament affirms that Christ was with them in those journeys. The apostle Paul refers to this part of Israel's history in 1 Corinthians 10:1-4:

Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.

The one who provided literal water in the wilderness now provides living water to thirsty souls.

An incident in Numbers 21 is critical to the study of Christ in the Old Testament. The brazen serpent was erected to deliver God's disobedient people, as they looked upon it in compliance with God's command. Jesus Himself refers to this incident and applies it to Himself. In John 3:14, the Lord's words are recorded: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up." The Lord also said, "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself" (John 12:32). The passages in John refer to Christ's being lifted up on the cross for the sins of the world. Jesus leaves no doubt as to the connection between the cross and the incident in Numbers 21. As God's people of old had to look upon the brazen serpent to live, all men today must look to the cross for eternal life. Looking to the cross means complying with the commands of the gospel.

The final book of the Pentateuch has already been used to show Christ in the person of Moses. Moses, as deliverer, lawgiver, and mediator, typified the one who was to come after him, as Deuteronomy 18:15-18 predicted. As noted earlier, Peter clearly applied the prophecy to Christ. In John 1:45, the words of Philip to Nathaniel summarize well the emphasis upon the Christ in the writings of Moses. Philip told Nathaniel, "we have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." This statement also leads us to the prophets, to show the emphasis given to the Messiah in their writings.

Christ In The Prophets

While the prophetic element is seen in the Pentateuch written by Moses, "the prophets" are generally considered those men whose writings are contained in the

books which bear their names. The books are categorized as major and minor, based upon the volume of material written by each inspired seer. These writings are filled with references to the Christ, too numerous to be examined in the scope of this work. However, it is profitable to study key passages from the prophets to demonstrate that Jesus Christ was the central theme of their inspired revelations during the Old Testament period.

Where better to begin than with the Messianic prophet Isaiah? Not only does this major prophet deal extensively with the coming kingdom of Christ, but he depicts graphically the sufferings of the Savior whose redemptive work would introduce the kingdom to the world. Isaiah 2 provides the description of the coming kingdom and identifies the time of its advent as “the last days,” clearly identifiable in Scripture as the Christian dispensation. Isaiah 7:14 speaks of the virgin birth of the Savior, who would shed His blood to establish the kingdom: Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.” The fulfillment of the prophecy in Christ and none other is pinpointed by inspiration in the Gospel according to Matthew: “So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying:

Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel which is translated, God with us” (Matthew 1:22,23).

Isaiah 53 is a poignant picture of the sufferings of Christ, who is described as a lamb being silently and

submissively led to slaughter. Thoughtful reading of this chapter should produce within every heart gratitude beyond expression to Him who gave so much for us.

Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed (Isaiah 53:4,5).

Paul, in contemplation of the cross, would later write,

For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again (2 Corinthians 5:14,15)

Another of the major prophets writes of the kingdom of Christ. Daniel identifies the time of the kingdom of Christ as the days of the Roman Empire. In Daniel 7, the prophet describes the receiving of the kingdom by Christ:

I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting

dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed (Daniel 7:13,14).

This is a reference to Christ's ascension to the Father, "the Ancient of Days," at which time He was given His kingdom, the church, over which He will reign until His second coming. "Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power" (1 Corinthians 15:24).

The minor prophets write of the coming Christ. Micah pinpoints the birthplace of the Savior (Micah 5:2); Zechariah depicts Him as king and priest upon His throne (Zech. 6:13); and Malachi prophesies of the "Sun of righteousness" who would "arise with healing in his wings" (Mal. 4:2). Hundreds of prophecies are found in the inspired works of these spokesmen for God in the Old Testament. When Peter preached to the household of Cornelius, he stated, "To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins" (Acts 10:43). The Lord himself summarized the emphasis given to Him in the writings of both Moses and the prophets:

Then He said to them, These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me" (Luke 24:44).

This brief study of Christ in the Old Testament provides powerful proof of the inspiration of the Bible. How could men writing at different periods, from varied

backgrounds, provide a perfect record and such precise prophecies without a single contradiction or error? The only answer lies in the fact that God inspired their writings, in which Christ as Redeemer is the central theme.

Christ In Person

John describes the incarnation of Christ in the following way:

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

The Word is Jesus Christ, the Messiah. He is the one of whom Moses and the prophets wrote. He came in the flesh to fulfill His mission to seek and save the lost. To do so, the establishment of the New Covenant was essential. It was a covenant prophesied by Jeremiah.

Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall

be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord, for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more (Jeremiah 31:31-34).

This is a description of Christ's covenant, the one God intended to make from the beginning. Christ was the "end" of of Moses. That is, He was the very purpose for which the Old Law was given. That law was to demonstrate the need for a better covenant with a better mediator, Jesus Christ. The Old Law was described as the schoolmaster to bring us to Christ and His law. In His final days on earth, Jesus made it clear that His covenant was to take the place of the former law. In Matthew 26:28, Jesus said, "For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." The epistle to the Hebrews, which emphasizes the "better" covenant of Jesus Christ, states,

Then He said, Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God. He takes away the first that He may establish the second. By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Hebrews 10:9,10).

"That will" is the last will and testament of Jesus Christ, which became effective after the death of the testator himself (Heb. 9:15-17). In Colossians 2:14, Paul's words cannot be misunderstood:

Having wiped out the handwriting of

requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.”

There is no doubt that the New Covenant is in effect and that it has as its central figure, its mediator, Jesus Christ. Beginning with the first sermon on Pentecost, Jesus Christ is exalted as King over His kingdom, having all authority. All that was preached and practiced was to be in His name—that is, by His authority as the “author and finisher of our faith.” The New Covenant is “the faith” which produces faith in man and which will judge him in the last day. Jesus said,

He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day” (John 12:48).

Therefore, it has been demonstrated that Christ is the central theme of both the Old and New Covenants—of the former covenant, in prospect, and, of the present covenant, in person. Now, let us see how Christ links the two Testaments together.

Christ--The Link Between Two Laws

Jesus Christ is, first of all, the link between two laws, the Law of Moses and the Law of Christ. The transition between the Testaments is not a transition from law to no law. Some would have us believe that we are no longer under law, but under grace. However, the grace which Jesus made manifest came with truth: “For the law was

given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ” (John 1:17). John is not drawing a contrast between law and grace, as if to say that grace is freedom from obedience. The grace of God gave Israel the Law of Moses, by which they might worship and serve God; therefore, grace is present in the Old Testament.

The first time the word “grace” is used demonstrates, for all time, the principle by which God’s grace is extended to man in any age. Genesis 6:8 reads: “But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.” Was the grace of God extended to Noah arbitrarily and without condition? If so, would this not make God a respecter of persons? The basis upon which God’s grace was given to Noah is seen in Genesis 6:9: “This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God.” Noah was not sinless, but he “walked with God.” He was obedient to God’s commands. The final verse of Genesis 6 informs us: “Thus Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so he did” (Genesis 6:22). The principle of salvation by grace through obedient faith is established here and is consistent throughout the Bible. Therefore, the contrast of John 1:17 cannot be a contrast between law and no law. The contrast is between the blessings and benefits of the Old and those of the New, where, in the New Covenant, grace is abundantly manifested in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. It is a contrast between a law which, in itself, could not make man perfect and the “perfect law of liberty,” to which the former pointed. The Law of Moses was designed to demonstrate the exceeding sinfulness of sin and to create within man the realization of a need for the Christ. How tragic it is that so many have misapplied and misunderstood the contrast here drawn and have

contended for “a” faith rather than “the” faith which Jesus clearly established.

The New Testament makes clear the fact that the abundant grace of God came “teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age.” That admonition in Titus 2:12 cannot be construed as advocating no law. It demands obedience in response to the grace of God, which made possible the perfect plan by which man might be fully forgiven.

Therefore, Jesus Christ, in the shedding of His blood to establish the New Covenant, is the link between two laws, the latter giving special emphasis to the abundant grace of God as the source of our salvation. However, the New Testament makes it clear that man must appropriate the grace of God through his obedient faith.

Christ—The Link Between Two Loves

Jesus Christ is also the link between the two loves of the Old and New Testaments. Love is not new to the New Covenant. The importance of love is emphasized throughout the former law. The Decalogue itself describes love as that which prompts obedience to God’s Word. In Exodus 20:6, where the record of God’s giving the commandments to Moses is found, God describes Himself as one who shows mercy to those who love Him and keep His commandments. In the book of Deuteronomy especially, in many passages, love is set forth as the motivation for the keeping of God’s commandments. In Deuteronomy 6, God, through Moses, enjoins the people to teach their children gratitude to God.

In Leviticus 19:18, the specific command is seen: “You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against

the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.” Jesus, as He lived on earth, reiterated the importance of love under the Old Covenant. The lawyer asked Jesus which was the great commandment in the Law.

Jesus said to him, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:37-39).

While many of the Jews lost sight of love’s importance, the Lord always expected His people to obey willingly and lovingly.

In Isaiah 5, as part of a parable depicting the rebellion of God’s people toward Him, God through the prophet asks:

What more could have been done to My vineyard that I have not done in it? Why then, when I expected it to bring forth good grapes, did it bring forth wild grapes?” (Isaiah 5:4).

This rhetorical question from the Lord indicates He had blessed His people abundantly, and they should have obeyed willingly out of gratitude and love.

However, in the New Covenant, Jesus speaks of love which is “new” in some ways. In John 13:34,35, He speaks to His disciples,

A new commandment I give to you, that you love

one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

Again, in John 15:12, we find these words of Jesus concerning the new commandment: “This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.” It has been established that love itself as a commandment was not new in the New Testament of Jesus. Therefore, the newness must be ascribed to the qualities of the love which Jesus commanded.

Jesus revealed the love of God to man in the fullest and most sacrificial sense:

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

Jesus told His disciples, “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends” (John 15:13). Thus, the supreme love was showered upon man by the Savior. We live and love in the sunshine of God’s love for us, as He manifested it through Jesus Christ. The knowledge and full appreciation of such love by man provides perfect motivation. John wrote,

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. We love Him because He first loved us” (1 John 4:18,19).

The Savior has shown us the standard of love. While it is impossible for man to achieve that standard in his reciprocal love, he, nonetheless, should strive for it.

Jesus has linked the loves of the Old and New Testaments by shedding the full light of His love upon mankind through the cross. A passage from Paul's inspired pen, cited earlier, summarizes man's reasonable response to the "light of the world":

For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if one died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again (2 Corinthians 5:14,15).

Christ—The Link Between Two Lives

Finally, Jesus is the link between two lives. In John 10:10 Jesus said,

The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

The context of this passage is a contrast between the Good Shepherd and His abundant blessings and the false teacher, who would deprive the sheep of those blessings and ultimately destroy them eternally. In His words here, Jesus reminds us that His presence has made possible life with an overflowing of blessings never before known.

In the Old Testament, those who followed God partook of God's blessings. However, they, during their

lives, were not the recipients of God's promises pertaining to the gospel. Those now living in the "sunlight age" are blessed to live the more abundant life Jesus came to provide. As the love discussed earlier has intensified and increased in scope and quality, so the life of the child of God has become more "abundant" in Jesus Christ.

Concerning the heroes of the faith, the epistle to the Hebrews states:

And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us" (Hebrews 11:39,40).

Theirs was a prospective view of the promises in the gospel. Ours is a personal participation in those promises. The link between our lives and those who "died in faith, not having received the promises" is Jesus Christ.

Chapter 24

Truth Vs. Error Concerning The Covenants And The A.D. 70 Destruction Of Jerusalem

Garland M. Robinson

The task before me is to examine the fallacies of the “Max King Doctrine” as it relates to the destruction of Jerusalem and the covenants. Some may yet be unaware what the “Max King Doctrine” is. Briefly stated, it is the fanciful theory (heresy) that all the things for which we look to occur in the future have already come to pass. Those things that brethren have, since the first century, believed and taught (which the Bible so clearly sets forth) that will occur at the Lord’s second coming, were all fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem in the year of 70 A.D.

As wild a dream as your imagination will allow, can you believe the **Lord’s second coming** is in the distant past, not the future? Can you believe the **resurrection of all the dead** has already occurred? Will you likewise believe that the **judgment** and the **end of the world** had its fulfillment in the first century? Also, will you

permit yourself to believe the **church**, the kingdom prophesied throughout the Old Testament, was not really established on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 in its fullness, glory and power? This heresy says the church began in 70 A.D. when the city of Jerusalem was conquered and destroyed!

Background

The subject of this study is known by a number of terms and phrases: The A.D. 70 Doctrine, Realized Eschatology, Kingism or the Max King Doctrine. Each of these are all designations of this wild, reckless and foolhardy heresy.

It is referred to as the “**A.D. 70 Doctrine**” because it seeks its fulfillment in the year A.D. 70. It is claimed that all the Bible foretold to occur in the future was fulfilled in A.D. 70 when the city of Jerusalem was destroyed.

“**Realized Eschatology**” has to do with the fulfillment of “final” or “last” things.

a. The word “eschatology” is a compound word of two Greek forms: *eschatos*, which is the word for last or final things; and, the word *logos*, which means something said or taught (instruction). *Logos* is commonly translated by our English term “word.” Therefore, “eschatology” has to do with the Bible’s teaching of those things that have to do with the “end of time.”

b. The word “realized” suggests the concept that something has already happened or occurred. If something is yet future, then it has not been realized. Things which are in the past have been realized.

c. Therefore, to speak of “realized eschatology” simply identifies that all those things which have to do with the

end of time, the future, have already been realized or come to pass.

It is called **“Kingism”** or the **“Max King Doctrine”** because this teaching has been popularized by a man whose name is Max King who was once a faithful gospel preacher. King debated the late Gus Nichols in July, 1973. The proposition King affirmed was: “The Holy Scriptures teach that the second coming of Christ, including the establishment of the eternal kingdom, the day of judgment, the end of the world, and the resurrection of the dead, occurred with the fall of Judaism in A.D. 70.”

Immediate Reaction

Everyone that first hears of this fanatical illusion cannot believe their ears! Their thought is that this is so far-fetched, ridiculous, ludicrous, absurd, preposterous, asinine, outrageous and wild, how would or could anyone be persuaded by it? Immediate questions arise, “if the end of the world has already occurred, then what are we doing here?” “If the resurrection of the dead is long past, why are the cemeteries still full?” Good questions! But, as unbelievable as it is, we know by experience that however ridiculous or absurd a teaching might be, no matter how contradictory to clear and plain passages, some people will believe it and promote it. This doctrine is no exception. It has captured the attention and ensnared in its tentacles of error a number of our own brethren. It appears to be gaining ground in some areas. Therefore, it is necessary that we spend some time studying it so that we may be able to help those who may be enticed by it and others who have already been caught in its trap. Hopefully, we will be able to snatch some “out of the fire” while there is yet time (cf. Jude 1:23).

Major Errors Of Max King's A.D. 70 Doctrine

1. The Church Was Not Established On Pentecost, 33 A.D. The church was not established on Pentecost, 33 A.D., as is commonly believed – so say the proponents of Kingism! What they actually say is that the kingdom did come on Pentecost, but not in its glory and power – it was not complete until A.D. 70. Nothing is further from the truth according to the Bible!

In the *Spirit of Prophecy*, a book by Max R. King, in which he sets forth his doctrine, we offer the following quotes. When discussing why it is error to tie together Mark 9:1 and Acts 1:8 he says:

The kingdom was to come with power, and Acts 1:8 does not mention kingdom. The apostles' question and the Lord's answer concerning the kingdom, places its coming in power beyond Pentecost (p.138). Mark 9:1 is parallel with Matt. 16:27-28. Instead of coming in his kingdom on Pentecost, Christ had gone to receive it (p.139). There is nothing contained in Dan. 2:44 that makes Pentecost the necessary date of its fulfillment (p.140).¹

King plainly says that “Christ did not come in his kingdom with power on Pentecost,” (p.138) and yet on the next page he says:

Pentecost was the beginning of his kingdom, but the fall of Jerusalem was the climatic state of its development and manifestation in power, glory, and judgment” (p.139).

The refutation of this teaching is simple, though not accepted by Kingites. It is obvious that whatever Scripture refutes their doctrine must be explained away and so they make such an attempt as is seen in the quotes above with Mark 9:1.

Mark 9:1 coupled with Acts 1:8 and Acts 2:4 has been used effectively by the Lord's people since the establishment of the church/kingdom on the day of Pentecost. Jesus said:

...Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power (Mark 9:1).

The pronouncement of the Lord was that the kingdom would "come with power." The kingdom (which is the church, Matt. 16:18-19) would make its appearance with power, i.e., be accompanied with power. Therefore, to learn when the kingdom came is to know when the power came; or, to learn when the power came is to learn when the kingdom came. Both the kingdom and power would come at the same time. In Luke 24:49 Jesus said:

And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued **with power** from on high.

On the day Jesus ascended up into heaven He told His apostles to wait in Jerusalem until they received the promise of the Father which they had heard of Him (Acts 1:4). "When they therefore were come together, they asked of Him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again

the kingdom to Israel?” Jesus said, “Ye shall **receive power**, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you...” (Acts 1:6-8). With this passage, we learn the Holy Ghost (Holy Spirit) would come upon the apostles when they received power; and, they would receive power when the Holy Spirit came. To receive the one (power) was to receive the other (Holy Spirit).

“Rightly dividing” (cf. 2 Tim. 2:15) these verses is to learn that the “**kingdom**” was to come “**with power**” (Mark 9:1) and the power would come with the “**Holy Spirit**” (Acts 1:8). To learn when any one of the three came is to learn when all three came.

Acts two reveals when the Holy Spirit came. The twelve apostles were assembled in Jerusalem on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus.

And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And **they were all filled with the Holy Ghost**, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance (Acts 2:2-4).

The Holy Spirit had come upon them! They received power to speak in languages they had never learned (along with other miracles) and the kingdom was established – all at the same time.

Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. ...

Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And **the Lord added to the church** daily such as should be saved (Acts 2:41,47).

The kingdom/church came on Pentecost!

Did the kingdom have its full glory and power on Pentecost? Kingites say “no.” However, read the following verses and judge for yourself.

Colossians 1:13 states that when one becomes a Christian, he/she is delivered from the “power of darkness” and translated into the “kingdom of his dear Son.” Does this mean a sinner was removed from the power of Satan but was void of the power of the kingdom for the first 40 years of the kingdom’s existence? That would be the case if the kingdom did not come in its full glory and power until A.D. 70! The next chapter plainly says these brethren were “complete” in Christ (Col. 2:10). To be complete means to be full. How could Christians be complete or full, when according to Kingism, they were members of a kingdom which was not complete or full until A.D. 70? Further, Colossians 1:9-12 speaks of being

...filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; ...all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work... Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; ...made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

These were all long before A.D. 70! Jesus said to the apostles, “..I appoint unto you a kingdom... That ye may

eat and drink at my table in my kingdom...” (Luke 22:29-30). The table of the Lord was the Lord’s supper that every congregation took part in every first day of the week (Acts 20:7). The Corinthian church/kingdom were partakers of the table of the Lord (1 Cor. 10:16-17). In verse 21 they were even rebuked when we read, “Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord’s table, and of the table of devils.” But, when congregations partook of the Lord’s supper for 40 years prior to A.D. 70, was the kingdom, in which the table of the Lord existed, a gloryless and powerless kingdom? If so, where is the evidence to support such? The fact is, none can be found!

Ephesians 3:10 makes clear that the church was in its fullness before A.D. 70:

To the intent that **now** unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church **the manifold wisdom of God.**

God’s manifold wisdom was THEN being made known by the church. The text says NOW, not in the future. This was before A.D. 70!

The apostle Peter was given the keys to the kingdom (Matt. 16:18-19). The keys were used on Pentecost, A.D. 33 according to Acts 2. But, if Kingism be true, the keys were not used until A.D. 70. By this time, practically all the apostles were dead!

2. The Final Judgment Occurred In A.D. 70.
According to the *Spirit Of Prophecy* (p.68):

This was the end of the world, the destruction of the temple, and the coming of Christ (Matt.

24:1-3). This was when heaven and earth passed away (Matt. 24:35; Rev. 20:11).

The blunder of Kingism in this doctrine is that they take every passage which speaks of judgment and relegate it to a local, political or temporal judgment.

The Bible often speaks of “judgment” in the sense of a localized or temporal judgment. God often speaks of bringing judgment upon different nations, cities and people because of their wickedness. God brought judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. chaps. 18-19), Egypt (Exod.12:12), Moab (Jer. 48), Edom (Obad. 1), Nineveh (Jonah 1-4) and many others.

On the other hand, the word “judgment” is often used in the sense of the final, universal judgment. The demands of many Scriptures cannot be met without a universal judge, Jesus Christ, and a universal gathering of all men and women that have lived since Adam and Eve. Scriptures from both the Old and New Testaments speak of such a final, future judgment.

In the Old Testament we read:

Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous... And he shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness (Psm. 1:5;9:8).

Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment. For

God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil (Eccl. 11:9; 12:14).

In the New Testament we read, "...That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof **in the day of judgment**" (Matt. 12:36). If the "day of judgment" here is referring to the destruction of Jerusalem then where does that leave us? Does this verse have nothing to say to men today? It could only fit the future, final, universal judgment!

Jesus worked many mighty miracles in the cities of Chorazin and Bethsaida but they did not repent.

Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon **at the day of judgment**, than for you (Matt. 11:21-22).

If this "day of judgment" is the destruction of Jerusalem, what could it possibly have to do with the people of Tyre and Sidon who had been dead for centuries? The Lord plainly said it would be easier, i.e., more tolerable, for the people of Tyre and Sidon "at the day of judgment" than for those among whom He worked miracles. It's impossible that the day of judgment here could be the destruction of Jerusalem. Would the Lord resurrect the people of those ancient cities and place them in Jerusalem in A.D. 70 to experience the holocaust brought upon it by Titus the Roman General and the empire of Rome? Nonsense! There is a last, final, universal and future judgment day.

When Paul spoke on Mar's Hill in Athens he said:

And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth **all men every where** to repent: Because he hath **appointed a day**, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead (Acts 17:30-31).

Were "all men every where" in the entire world in Jerusalem in A.D. 70? They couldn't be! Therefore, there is a future, universal, judgment day coming! This will be in "a day," not days or whole year.

There is a judgment seat upon which Jesus Christ sits. Someday, yet in the future from now, every person in the world will stand before the throne of Christ and be judged according to how he/she has lived.

For we must **all appear before the judgment seat of Christ**; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men... (2 Cor. 5:10-11).

If these verses were fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem, then they mean nothing to us – it is useless for us to preach them! Why would we persuade men to obey the gospel if there is no future judgment? To the church at Rome Paul said:

...we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For...every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God (Rom. 14:10-12).

We might as well cut these verses out of the Bible, for they mean nothing if they were fulfilled in 70 A.D.

Hebrews 9:27-28 makes the final judgment clear:

And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but **after this the judgment:** So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

The judgment, according to Kingism, came upon Jerusalem in A.D. 70 while men were still living in the city. The judgment mentioned in Hebrews 9:27 would be after death, not before it. If that were not enough, we note that many people survived the destruction of the city – they did not die. Did judgment come upon them? According to Kingism it did! And, it came while they were alive, not dead. Kingism contradicts these verses!

Second Peter 2:4 says:

...God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, **to be reserved unto judgment.**

Were these angels reserved unto the judgment that came upon Jerusalem in A.D. 70? Were they in Jerusalem?

Don't think so! Verse nine says God holds the wicked "unto the day of judgment to be punished." Were all the world's wicked brought into Jerusalem to be punished? You can't find it in the Scriptures!

In Revelation 20:10-15 the judgment scene is depicted where all the dead, small and great, stand before God and are judged. The devil is said to have been cast into the lake of fire and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. Before this, he worked his diabolical scheme among men, but now, he is removed from the scene and cast into the lake of fire. If this happened in A.D. 70, then he would not be in the earth today to continue his work. But he is among men! Therefore, there is a future, universal, judgment of God when Satan will be cast into the lake of fire.

3. The Resurrection Of All The Dead Occurred In A.D. 70.

The author sincerely believes that the general resurrection belongs to the same time and event as given to the coming of Christ, the judgment, end of the world, and receiving of the eternal kingdom. This text deals with spiritual, not physical death, which is fairly evident from the context. The quickening power of God and Christ (John 5:19-23) has to do with spiritual regeneration (*Spirit of Prophecy*, pp.212,219).

The teaching of Kingism says that the references to the resurrection in the New Testament have to do with a spiritual resurrection and not a resurrection of the body. Their view is that the church of Christ which began on Pentecost (33 A.D.), was stifled, repressed, and restrained

by the Old Law of Moses. The Lord's church, they say, ran concurrently with the Law of Moses until the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. At that time, the body of the church was "resurrected" (in a spiritual sense) from the shackles of Judaism and received in its full glory and power. Therefore, references to the resurrection have to do with the spiritual resurrection of Christianity.

Again, with this teaching comes the immediate question, "If the resurrection of all the dead occurred at the destruction of Jerusalem, then where are they now and what are we that are alive doing here? Why are the grave yards still full and men around the world continue, day by day, to populate them even more?" Good questions! The Holy, inspired Scriptures, easily refutes this wild and reckless doctrine. Jesus said:

Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which **all that are in the graves** shall hear his voice, And **shall come forth**; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation (John 5:28-29).

As per Kingism, this is a reference to the church under the persecuting domination of Judaism. But, this Scripture speaks of "all" that are in the graves. Literally, two Greek words are used in this verse, both of which are plural, saying "**all those**" in the tombs. Question, is the church plural? Were there **churches** being smothered by Judaism? No, the church is one body, not many (Eph. 4:4; 1 Cor. 12:13).

If that were not enough, consider this: was the church "dead" for the first 40 years of its existence? Did the Lord

establish dead, lifeless, bodies (the church) which would be resurrected from the graves (tombs, plural) in A.D. 70? Imagine, the Lord died and shed His blood in order to purchase and establish a dead religious system that consisted of “bodies” (plural) and placed in “graves” (plural) to be resurrected 40 years later! Who can believe it?

Further, there are two classes of “all those” that will be resurrected from the “graves” in John 5:28-29: some have done good while others have done evil. Each class of “all those” (individuals, plural) will receive that which is due them. There’s no way in the world to arrive at any other conclusion than to understand that this verse identifies a general resurrection of “all those” that have lived upon the earth, from Adam and Eve, to the last person in the world.

Between A.D. 30 and A.D. 70, was there a good church(s) and an evil church(s)? Were both resurrected and did each receive that which was due them? Outrageous! This text cannot be explained in any way other than a general resurrection of “all those” dead ones (bodies) who have been buried in “graves” around the world since the beginning of time.

In writing to the church at Corinth, Paul discusses at length the resurrection of the dead (1 Cor. 15). He establishes the fact of the Lord’s death, burial and resurrection from the grave (vs.1-11). The brethren there believed and accepted that fact. However, in verse 12 we read, “Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?” The Holy Spirit emphatically sets forth, in the remainder of the chapter, the fact that those who have died will one day be raised from the dead just as Christ was raised from the dead. Christ’s bodily

resurrection is used as a comparison or likeness of our own bodily resurrection. Heaven's argument is:

...If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming (1 Cor. 15:13-23).

One day, yet in the future, those who have died will come out of their graves and stand before the Lord to be judged (2 Cor. 5:10)! Our body will be changed! It will not be the body that was buried for flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven (1 Cor. 15:36-58). None the less, there will be a bodily resurrection of all the dead. Every verse in this text makes plain that what is under consideration are humans, people, those who once lived and have died. There's no way the church is spoken of

here because it is alive and singular, not dead and plural. The church does not have now, nor has ever had, “flesh and blood” (cf. v.50). Adam (a living human being) died even as all humans die as a consequence of his sin. Through Christ, all (along with Adam) will one day be made alive (v.22).

Christ is referred to as the “firstfruits” of them that sleep (vs.20-23). That is, Christ was the first to be raised from the dead never to die again. For Him to be the first, implies there were others to follow. That is the argument and point of First Corinthians 15. But, if the resurrection occurred in A.D. 70 and it was only a “spiritual” resurrection, then that necessitates the Lord’s resurrection was only a spiritual resurrection – that He did not literally, bodily, rise from the grave! But He did rise from the grave! He walked, talked and ate with the apostles (John 21). He showed them the scars in His hands, feet and side (cf. Luke 24:39-40; John 20:20-27).

The Lord’s resurrection from the grave is proof of our future resurrection from the grave (1 Cor. 15:12-22). “But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; **afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming**” (1 Cor. 15:23). It is inconceivable to imagine how some say the resurrection is past already – long ago in 70 A.D. and, that it was the spiritual resurrection of the church from under the suppression of Judaism.

The Bible often speaks of departures from the truth and provides ample information to refute such damnable doctrines. Error concerning the final, universal, resurrection from the dead is nothing new in our generation. There were even those as far back as the first century that believed and taught damnable error with regard to the resurrection. Two men especially were

immortalized in Heaven's book, the Bible, in calling their names and marking them for their error for all time. Read it:

But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is **Hymenaeus** and **Philetus**; Who concerning the truth have erred, **saying that the resurrection is past already**; and overthrow the faith of some (2 Tim. 2:16-18; Rom. 16:17-18).

Notice: saying the resurrection has already occurred is a doctrine of no little consequence. Those who so believe and teach have left the faith and overthrow the faith of others! It is not and can not be an optional matter to deny the final resurrection of all the dead. It is a matter of faith – a matter of fellowship – a matter of heaven or hell. To deny the future resurrection of all the dead is to deny the resurrection of Christ and to deny the resurrection of Christ makes salvation impossible and our preaching to be vain (1 Cor. 15:12-19).

4. The End Of The World Occurred In A.D. 70

Before you question my sanity at the above heading, please take note that the system of "Realized Eschatology" teaches the world ended in A.D. 70. Of course you are probably now shaking your head and thinking, if that is so, what are we doing here? What has been going on the past 1,900 years? If there is no future end of the world, will the earth continue on and on? What's going on here? Kingism says:

This was the end of the world, the destruction of the temple, and the coming of Christ (Matt. 24:1-3). This was when heaven and earth passed away (Matt. 24:35; Rev. 20:11) (*Spirit of Prophecy*, p.68).

A.D. 70 advocates make the references to the “end of the world” equivalent to the end of the “Jewish age.” But, as we have seen in previous points, their forced interpretations will not hold up.

Matthew 24 is so clear and discerning as to the descriptions of both the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (vs.4-34) and the end of the world (yet future; vs.24:35—25:30) that it is hard to conceive how anyone can miss it. In verse one we read:

And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, **when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world** (Matt. 24:1-3)?

In Matthew 24:4, Jesus begins to answer their questions. He begins telling when these things shall be and what “signs” to notice that will signal the approaching destruction. When the Christians observed these signs they were to escape to the mountains – leave Jerusalem.

But in regards to the end of the world, there would be no “signs” given, for escape will not be possible! In verse 34 Jesus says, “...This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.” Everything preceding verse 34 would come to pass in “that generation” and there would be sign after sign to indicate its arrival. However, a sure and marked contrast to the destruction of Jerusalem is discussed beginning in verse 35. Whereas regarding the destruction of Jerusalem there were “signs” to watch for so that one would know when to leave the city; but concerning the end of the world, no signs would be given. “But of **that day and hour** knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only” (v.36). If “that day and hour” (v.36) is discussing the same event as “this generation” (v.34), then there is a certain and irreconcilable contradiction. The remainder of the chapter, as well as chapter 25, gives one example after another to show there would be NO “signs” or “warnings” as to when the end of the world would occur.

When the end of the world comes, it will be without warning. There will be absolutely no indication that such is about to happen. Notice the examples Jesus used to illustrate this truth: 1) Business will be as usual among men, just as it was when the flood came (24:37-41); 2) No one knows when a thief may break into his house (24:42-44); 3) A master comes home unannounced to recompense to his servants their due (24:45-51); 4) The 10 virgins had no indication when the bridegroom would come to take them to the wedding (25:1-13); 5) The man who travelled into a far country and left his goods with his servants gave no indication when He would return (25:14-30).

This physical world in which we now live and the entire material universe will one day be destroyed so that

it will no longer exist. By inspiration, the apostle Peter, very ably and plainly said, in talking about this physical world:

But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which **the heavens shall pass away** with a great noise, and **the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.** Seeing then that **all these things shall be dissolved,** what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein **the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat** (2 Pet. 3:7, 10-12).

He is plainly talking about this physical world (2 Pet. 3:3-6). As the flood of water in Noah's day destroyed the earth, the day is yet future when "fervent heat" will melt the earth, all the works that are in it, and all elements of the universe. Everything will be dissolved (v.10-11)! There's no way to strain a spiritual fulfillment out of this text!

Hebrews one discusses the majesty and deity of Jesus the Christ. It reveals that God, through Jesus, made the worlds (material universe) "in the beginning" and maintains them by the power of His Word (1:2-3,10; cf. Gen. 1:1). Jesus is eternal (1:8), but His creation, the "worlds," are temporary.

They shall perish; but thou remainest; and **they all shall wax old** as doth a garment;¹²And **as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed:** but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail” (1:11-12).

A.D. 70 theorists take Hebrews one and say that it refers to the end of the Mosaic age, not the material universe, just as they do all passages which speak of the “end-time!” But, such is the plight of those who have an agenda to maintain. In the case of Kingites, they must take every passage that speaks of future things and twist them around to fit their doctrine that every Bible prophecy of “end things” was fulfilled in A.D. 70. On this point in Hebrews one, brother Wayne Jackson comments:

In verse 10, when the record says, “And thou, Lord, in the beginning didst lay the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands,” is there anybody in his right mind who is going to read this passage in this fashion: “And thou, Lord, in the beginning of the Mosaic dispensation, didst lay the foundation of the earth, that is, you established the law of Moses; and the heaven, that is, the ordinances of the law, are the works of your hands?” To interpret that as the Jewish law has to be the biggest bunch of theological garbage that I have every been exposed to in my life. It is pure foolishness.²

Revelation 20:11-15 reveals the judgment scene in which heaven and earth **“fled away; and there was found no place for them.”** All the dead, small and great,

wherever they were, stood before the throne and were judged according to their works. Where did such occur when Jerusalem was destroyed? Were the dead which had died at sea resurrected and brought to Jerusalem to be judged? Were the dead in the hadean realm resurrected in 70 A.D. to stand before the Lord's throne in Jerusalem? Strain as hard as you might, and you will not find it here!

5. The Second Coming Of Christ Occurred In A.D. 70. According to the Max King doctrine, we read:

There is no time period between the fall of Jerusalem and the second coming of Christ. They are synchronous events time-wise. ... There is no scriptural basis for extending the second coming of Christ beyond the fall of Judaism. (*The Spirit of Prophecy*, p.81, 105).

In his debate with Gus Nichols, King said:

I affirm the VISIBLE coming of Jesus Christ in the destruction of Jerusalem. And I affirm the ACTUAL coming, and the REAL coming of Jesus Christ in the destruction of Jerusalem (p.48). ... I affirm that Jesus came REALLY and TRULY and ACTUALLY and VISIBLY the second time (p.49)!

As with the other points of departure from the Truth in the Kingism Cult, the idea of the Lord's second and final coming occurring in A.D. 70 is shocking and shameful. And, like the other points we have examined, is easily shown to be utterly false from the Scriptures.

That the second coming of Christ has NOT occurred

and is yet in the future is clearly set forth in many passages. We shall examine a few.

Hebrews 9:28 is the only text that specifically uses the word “second” in referring to the Lord’s coming again after He left the earth in Acts 1:9-11:

So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the **second time** without sin unto salvation.

The Lord’s appearance the “first time” was a literal appearance. He shall appear the “second time” in a literal appearance. His second appearance will not be a spiritual or figurative appearance.

The Lord will come the “second time” to: raise the dead (John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15), judge the world (Matt. 25:31-46; Rom. 14:10-12; Acts 17:31), sentence the wicked (2 Thess. 1:7-9), reward the righteous (Rev. 22:12; Matt. 25:46), and deliver up the kingdom (church) to the Father (1 Cor. 15:24). According to Kingism, all these have already taken place in A.D. 70!

Let’s note what the Bible says will occur when the Lord comes again. If these things have not come to pass, then we know the Lord has not come again. That ought to be simple enough.

First Corinthians 15:23-24 says that when the Lord comes again, “Then cometh the end, **when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.**” The kingdom is His church. And, since the church/kingdom is still in existence today, the Lord either has not come or failed to do that which

this verse says He would do. The Lord's purpose cannot fail. Therefore, the Lord has not come!

This passage also says that when He comes He would "have put down all rule and all authority and all power." However, authorities and powers still exist today and remain under the influence of Satan (cf. Eph. 6:12). Therefore, the Lord has not come.

Further, the text here says the Lord will raise the dead – all will be "made alive" (v.22) at His coming (v.23). Yet, the cemeteries are still full and mourners continue to bury their dead day by day. Therefore, the Lord has not come.

In **Philippians 3:20-21** we read:

For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: **Who shall change our vile body**, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

The Lord is now in heaven and has a glorious body – not the body He had on earth. When He comes again, He will change our vile body, the body we have now, to be like His – a glorious body (cf. 1 Cor. 15:35-54). But, we still have our vile body – the body of our humiliation, our low estate. Therefore, the Lord has not come.

Second Thessalonians 2:1-12. Some at the church in Thessalonica apparently had the mistaken idea that the Lord's second coming was "at hand" – that it was near or soon. Paul wrote them concerning the "coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (v.1), the "day of Christ" (v.2) saying, "Let no man deceive you by any means: for **that day** shall

not come, **except there come a falling away first...**" (v.3). Here is a prediction of a "falling away" – a general and major departure from the Truth. The text clearly says the Lord will not come until this departure from the Truth comes first. It is believed this was written in late 53 or early 54 A.D. If the Lord came in 70 A.D., then there had to have been a "falling away" – an apostasy – of the Lord's church between 54 A.D. and 70 A.D. There is no record of a "falling away" during that time. Therefore, the Lord did not come in A.D. 70. The "falling away" came, as we all know, in the forming and existence of the Catholic Church which recognized its first pope in 606 A.D.

In **Second Thessalonians chapter one**, Paul mentions the hardships and persecutions inflicted upon the brethren (vs.4-5). He reveals there will be a time when they will be able to rest from such tribulation when He says, "And to you who are troubled rest with us, **when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven** with his mighty angels..." (v.7). When would they be able to rest? When "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven" He will inflict punishment upon those who "know not God" and those who "obey not the gospel" (v.8). Are the saints of God today at rest? Do they still suffer persecution? Yea verily! Therefore, the Lord has not yet come.

In **First Corinthians 11:26**, Paul said, in speaking of the Lord's supper, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, **ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.**" One of the purposes of eating the Lord's supper is to "shew the Lord's death." How long will the saints of the church eat the supper? They will eat it "till he come." Do we eat the Lord's supper today? Yes. Therefore, the Lord has not come. If He came in A.D. 70, then saints of God have no business eating the Lord's supper today. Do

those who espouse the King doctrine eat the Lord's supper?
Yes.

John 14:1-3 holds great significance to the subject of the second coming. Jesus said:

In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, **I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.**

Jesus said when He comes again He would receive the disciples to be with Him in that place He was preparing for them. That place was in heaven, not on earth, for He said "I go" and "I will come again." Are we now in heaven or on earth? We are on earth. Therefore, the Lord has not come.

Matthew 25:31-46 describes the judgment scene that will take place "when the Son of man shall come." "All nations" will be gathered before the Lord to be judged. Were all nations gathered in Jerusalem in A.D. 70? Were those living in North and South America there? They are a part of all nations (cf. Rev. 5:9; 14:6). No, they were not there. The scene described in Matthew 25 has not yet occurred. Therefore, the Lord has not come.

Revelation 1:7 says:

Behold, **he cometh** with clouds; and **every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him:** and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

When the Lord "cometh with clouds," every eye, every

person, would see him. Have you seen the Lord coming in the clouds? Neither have I. Therefore, the Lord has not come.

Matthew 16:27 says:

For **the Son of man shall come** in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then **he shall reward every man according to his works.**

Have all men/women been rewarded for their works? The very fact that people continue to live on this globe is evidence that such has not occurred. You nor I have been rewarded according to our works. Therefore, the Lord has not come.

Need we continue? How many verses will it take to convince you that the Lord's second coming is yet future, not passed?

The Real Significance Of A.D. 70

Even though there is a great deal of error being circulated, believed and taught relative to the destruction of Jerusalem which occurred in A.D. 70, that does not mean that sincere Bible students should seek to avoid what the Bible **does say** relative to that event. The destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. is an historical event that cannot be denied. What significance did it have for those who lived in that day; and, what significance does it have for us today, if any? The fact that it is prophesied of in both the Old and New Testaments reveals that it does hold importance in God's scheme of things (cf. Zech. 14; Matt. 24:4-34; Mark 13:5-30; Luke 21:8-31; 1 Pet. 4:17-18).

In Genesis 12:1-7 God made a promise to Abraham that was three-fold: 1) "I will make of thee a great nation"

(v.2), 2) “in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed” (v.3), 3) “unto thy seed will I give this land” (v.7). Through Abraham’s grandson Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel, the “great nation” of Israel was born. God was carrying out His promise to Abraham in them. After leaving the bondage of Egypt, they were caused to possess the “land of Canaan” and live under the Law of Moses received at Mt. Sinai. Even then, there would come a day when the Law given by Moses would end and a new prophet and law would be established (cf. Deut. 18:15; Jer. 31:31-34; Acts 3:19-24). The Gentiles would be brought in as God’s people along with the Israelites (cf. Isa. 62:1-2; 65:1; Deut. 32:21). A new law would be established that would encompass all tongues, peoples and nations and cover the whole world. God sought to protect and provide for the nation of Israel through whom the promised Messiah would come. When the nation of Israel had accomplished its purpose, it would cease to have significance. The Law of Moses is plainly described as a

...schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:24-26).

Through the centuries of the nation of Israel, there were those who grew to love and count as their whole existence the fleshly nation of Israel. They clung so closely to it they could not conceive of it ending. They could not dream that it was only temporary. Even after God made known His will through the revelation of the Gospel (cf. Rom. 16:25-26; Eph. 3:1-11), the majority of Jews refused to let

go of fleshly Israel with its law, sacrifices and temple worship. God, in His infinite knowledge and wisdom, knew that such would be the case. There would, of necessity, have to be a cataclysmic event that would ultimately and finally cause the Jewish political, civil and religious system to crumble and fall. The destruction of the city of Jerusalem along with the temple and its sacrifices was that devastating event. Through this means, God put a stop to all that the devout fleshly Jews held dear. No longer would any Jew be able to trace their lineage to Abraham. No one would be able to confirm from what tribe they descended. No priest could establish his right to offer sacrifices. All genealogical records had been destroyed!

The nation of Israel under the Law of Moses was unique in that the Israelites comprised the religious, political and civil governments. Unlike today, the religious, political and civil are each distinct and separate. The Lord's church is not a part of the political or civil system – and vice versa. But under the Law of Moses, such was not the case. Every Israelite was a child of God. Therefore, those who made up the political and civil systems were children of God just as those who officiated at religious services. Each of these systems (political, civil and religious) under the Law of Moses would end.

The death of Jesus on the cross in 33 A.D. marked the end of the religious system of the Law of Moses which was boldly proclaimed on Pentecost in Acts 2; and, the destruction of the city of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. ended the political and civil system of the Jews. Beyond A.D. 70, all hope of a future Messiah and an earthly political regime among the Jews was finally and forever crushed!

The destruction of Jerusalem was certainly a significant event. It impacted every facet of the Jewish political, civil, economic and religious systems. It showed once and for all, to those who yet refused to believe, that God had ended His dealings with the Jews. In God's providence, He brought together events to demonstrate to the Jews that His Son's death on the cross had put an end to Judaism.

Another occasion where God intervened to accomplish His Will is at the conversion of the household of Cornelius (Acts 10-11). This event was designed to convince the Jews that the gospel was for the Gentiles also. This actually began on the day of Pentecost but was not fully carried out by the Lord's people until the baptizing of Cornelius. Likewise, the Law of Moses, along with all that attended it, ceased at the cross (Col. 2:14) and the proclamation of it was preached on Pentecost, but it took the decisive event in A.D. 70 to convince many people that such was indeed the case.

Conclusion

The summary of the whole A.D. 70 system is aptly described by Wayne Jackson:

So brethren, the whole A.D. 70/King scenario is false. Christ did not effect His second coming in A.D. 70; the dead were not raised in A.D. 70; the judgment day did not occur with the destruction of Jerusalem; and the world did not end in A.D. 70. The entire theory of "realized eschatology" is false from start to finish. We deeply grieve that good brethren have been caught up in this foolish movement.

It has produced much harm and no good. It is unsettling and divisive. The situation is, however, a commentary upon the extremes to which some will go in an attempt to make a name in history. It is further an example of how ill-informed many members of the church actually are; they are ripe for the picking. The words of the ancient prophet are applicable even today – “My people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge.”³

This doctrinal theory of A.D. 70 is so fantastic, incredible, inconceivable, that it fits well with other religious systems that are likewise so far-fetched and preposterous, they are unbelievable and easily refuted with the Scriptures. Systems such as: Mormonism, with their “God was once a man” doctrine and Jehovah Witnesses, with their idea that Jesus is not deity and man doesn’t have a soul. I’m not trying to make light of those who believe the A.D. 70 doctrine, but I am seeking to show the utter nonsense of the doctrine itself.

May this brief study cause those who embrace Kingism to deeply examine and profoundly probe the doctrine they espouse and uphold. May it be the case they will see the error of their way and repent of this most serious error. We pray for the hastening of that day.

Endnotes

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2 Wayne Jackson, **The A.D. 70 Theory, A Review of the Max King Doctrine**, (Courier Publications, Stockton, CA),

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Crucial Passages Concerning The Covenants

Chapter 25

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(Heb. 9:11-14; 13:12)

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Chapter 25

The Blood Of The Everlasting Covenant

Winfred Clark

One can find support for the topic named above in a number of Bible passages. One of the best known would perhaps be that of the Hebrew writer:

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant” (Heb. 13:20).

Some things come into focus in the reading of this verse. One, the blood. Two, the covenant. These are found to be inseparable in this book as we shall see. The primary emphasis of this study will have to do with “the blood.”

We Find The Blood Clearly Identified

If we take a moment to look at the context of this word in the Hebrew letter some things will become apparent. We will see the nature of this blood, both by character and contrast. Time and again we will find references to blood in this epistle. A study of such will help us to identify such. Note:

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant” (Heb. 13:20).

Herein we find the blood connected to the everlasting covenant. But we have seen this before in our Bible. Remember that Jesus spoke of such. “For this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Matt. 26:28). We would surely agree that the blood of the New Testament and the blood of the everlasting covenant would be the same. Jesus clearly identifies such as being “His blood.” The Hebrew writer leaves no doubt about the blood of the everlasting covenant. Note what he has to say:

Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us (Heb. 9:12).

Here we find the Lord’s blood placed in bold contrast with the blood of animals. What the blood of animals could not do, the blood of Christ could and would accomplish (Heb. 10:1-9).

Through This Blood The Church Is Sanctified

One can have no doubt at all about this fact. “Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate” (Heb. 13:12). But who are these people? One can have no doubt about these being in the church. These are the people who have an altar that differs from the tabernacle. (Heb. 13:10).

These are the people who have received a kingdom that cannot be shaken (Heb. 12:28). These people belong to the general assembly and church of the firstborn (Heb. 12:23). These are people who are sons of God (Heb. 12:5-7). These are people who assemble regularly (Heb. 10:25). These are under the Jesus, the High Priest over the house of God (Heb. 10:21). But note:

But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end (Heb. 3:6).

Note carefully, “whose house we are.” There can thus be no doubt about the nature of the people who are sanctified by this blood. These can be no less than the church. But there is a clear and positive statement in the Hebrew letter which will state without a doubt this fact. Note:

Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?” (Heb. 10:29).

One can clearly see the relationship between the blood and those who are said to be sanctified.

But you will find in other instances where the matter of the blood and the sanctifying of the church come into view.

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also

loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word" (Eph. 5:25-26).

There can be no question about the blood. This is seen in the fact "that He gave himself." There can be no question about the relation of that blood which He gave, and the sanctifying and cleansing of the church.

Because Of This Blood God's Forgiveness Is Justified

One can surely have no question about the fact that God is just in forgiving the sinner. This is exactly the argument being made by Paul to the saints at Rome.

Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus (Rom. 3:24-26).

None who read the Roman letter can have a doubt as to the need for justification or forgiveness. Again and again we are able to see why man needs forgiveness. For one thing, his sins have separated himself from God (Isa. 59:2). Ezekiel will tell us why:

Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek. 18:4).

One can read Paul's language to the saints at Rome and see the same thing. He pictures the Gentiles as those who knew God but would not glorify Him (Rom. 1:21). They are shown to have become fools. (Rom. 1:22). They were given up by God (Rom. 1:24). They are worthy of death (Rom. 1:32). They are thus shown to be sinners along with the Jews (Rom. 2:21-24). They are under sin, none righteous, gone out of the way (Rom. 3:9-12). They are all declared to be guilty (Rom. 3:19). All must admit such for "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). Unless men see themselves as they are, sinners, they will never see the need for being justified. One can see this aptly illustrated in the gospel of Luke. You will recall that Jesus spoke of two men who went to the temple to pray (Luke 18:10). The Pharisee trusted in himself that he was righteous. We know this by what he said and what the Lord had to say about him. However, there was a publican. There is no question in his mind as to his needing justification. He is willing to say, "God be merciful to me a sinner." (Luke 18:13). He admits it, he pleads guilty. So must all men.

Now one is left with some questions. How is God going to remain just and holy and at the same time justify one who sins, or transgresses His law? After all, such is sin (1 John 3:4). How can God ever consider a man righteous who has violated His law and broken His commandments? What makes it possible for God to justify, or forgive? He cannot ignore this problem for this would say God had demanded too much of man. Can He allow His compassion to overrule and overlook such violations? His word must be upheld. How can such occur. Perhaps we can illustrate this by an Old Testament example. You will remember that Daniel was in captivity. Some

members of the kingdom became jealous of Daniel and devised a plan by which he might be destroyed. They came to the king with a plea that nobody make a request except to the king for thirty days. Note what they say to the king: “Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not” (Dan. 6:8). But one will note Daniel’s conduct does not change:

Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime” (Dan. 6:10).

The account shows the men who opposed him found him praying and came and related such to the king. They would say he must be cast into the lion’s den for this had been the decree. One can read the account of what occurs and see that the king did not want to place Daniel in the den. Yet, his law had been broken. Suppose the king had a son that did not go contrary to his will and rather than allowing Daniel to go into the den, his son would be placed there in his stead. Suppose this son had been killed by the lions. Would this weaken the law of the king? would it cheapen the law? The death of his son would exalt the law and show it must be respected. Could he not therefore be justified in forgiving Daniel and allowing him to go free? Truly his grace would be seen clearly in all of this. Surely we can see how God can thus be justified in forgiving if He is willing to allow His own Son to die in our stead.

In This Blood God's Love Is Magnified

Time and again one will find the death of Jesus and the love of God related. One of the first passages that would come to mind would be:

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

Herein we find the expression of God's love. Herein is the extent of God's love. This love would show itself in the death of His Son. One can surely have no doubt about the relationship between blood and love. But again, “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8). Here is the display of God's love as seen in the blood of the cross. But take a moment to think about the people for whom He died. These are not his friends, and truly, “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for His friends” (John 15:13). One can have no doubt about the fact that Jesus would die for His friends. There are people who would die for families. There are people who would die for freedom of others. When you watch the Son of God die, you see one who is dying for men who were opposed to Him. Remember what He had to say from the cross. “Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots” (Luke 23:34).

Paul reaffirms this fact of love and the blood when he says:

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live;

yet not I , but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal. 2:20).

Note that he would say, “who loved me.” But he also tells to what extent he loved, “and gave himself for me.” Of this fact, Paul never lost sight.

John, the beloved disciple, has something to say about the matter from Patmos:

And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood (Rev. 1:5).

John could surely see a connection between the blood and the love that was shown. This is the same disciple that would record these words:

Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not (1 John 3:1).

When you stop to look at this verse you will find John using words that speak of the superlative nature of Divine love. Note: “Behold.” This says, “stop, look, listen and do not miss what is there.” It says “gaze” as one would at a masterpiece and see the tones and hues. It would say “pay close attention.” It would also say, “just look.” It says, “what manner of love.” This means the kind of love

one does not usually find when we look at the blood shed and love shown.

Conclusion

Yes, the blood of the everlasting covenant binds God to his word and demands loyalty on our part. The blessings of that covenant come because of the blood which sealed and ratified the covenant. Blood ratified the first (Heb. 9:18). Such was surely the case with the second, or everlasting (Heb. 9:12-17). So we see this precious blood identified, we see that it sanctifies, we see it justifies, we see that it magnifies and one glad day we will see it glorifies.

Chapter 26

The Allegory Of The Two Covenants (Gal. 4:21-5:4)

James W. Boyd

Before we discuss the text we must consider the overall context of Paul's epistle to the churches of Galatia. Because of the influence of teachers that were subverting the faith of brethren by calling them back to Judaism, and attempting to bind upon Gentiles the rites of the Mosaic law in order to be saved, Paul's authority as an apostle had evidently been challenged. Keep in mind that Paul had special interest in these churches because they existed primarily due to his hard labor and influence. Therefore, a portion of the letter was to establish his apostolic authority so his message would be received. He defended the distinction between the faith of Christ from the Mosaic system under which Israel had lived for many centuries. Christianity is not just an appendage to Judaism but an entirely new religion even though founded and delivered through the former covenant and the nation which was subject to it.

But especially in Galatians did Paul emphasize the freedom the Christian has in Christ in contrast to the bondage that characterized those who lived under the Law

of Moses. This last theme is the one we shall stress as we study the allegory Paul presented.

Definition Of An Allegory

An allegory has been defined as a story that is told to explain or teach something. It is similar to a parable which is a story of something that either did or could happen that is used to illustrate some truth. An allegory is a description of something under the figure of another. This one in chapter four presents a strong inspired argument against the continuation of the Jewish system.

Whereas a parable and some allegories may be fictional, we are not to think Paul considered the event he used to present this allegory as being anything other than historical. The events had occurred.

The design of this allegory is to show the effect of being under bondage of the Jewish law compared with the freedom imparted by the gospel while also showing under which religious system we live.

The Historical Record

Paul begins with the invitation, "Tell me," which is much like the appeal of Isaiah 1:18, "Come, let us reason together." He addresses himself to those who contended that the Law of Moses must be followed even under Christ. Of course, those who might be influenced by these teachers would also profit from his teaching. It was extremely difficult for the Jews of the first century to realize the Old Law was designed to pass away, and did so in their day. He urges them to consider what the Lawsays, not just read it, but pay attention to its message.

The term "law" is used in different senses. Sometimes it refers to the Pentateuch, or the Law of Moses given at

Mount Sinai, or the Law of Christ, or the principle of law and authority. Paul uses the first two in his opening remarks. He calls attention to an event recorded in Genesis, the first book in the book of Law, the Pentateuch. In the book of the Law we have the record Paul used to show the law Moses received at Sinai in its present proper position. Paul used what the Judaizing teachers claimed to believe, and presented the truth and refuted their contentions. He meets and defeats them on their own turf. The account he mentioned served as the foundation for the rest of the teaching.

We read in Genesis twenty-one the account of two mothers and two sons, all belonging to Abraham. One mother was Hagar, a slave, and her son, Ishmael. The other mother was Sarah, a free woman, and her son, Isaac. Their bondage or freedom, whichever be the case, is of vital import in the truth Paul brings in this allegory because the status of the mother determined the status of the son. The events surrounding their relationship provide the illustration Paul presented.

God had promised a son to Abraham in his old age, to be born of Sarah, who had always been barren and was now also old. Evidently, Sarah thought God needed some help to keep His promise for Abraham to have an heir, so she devised a plan for Abraham to go to Hagar, Sarah's handmaid, and by Hagar bear a son which legally would belong to Sarah and Abraham. But this was not what God promised. Her plan provoked much strife and discord in the family until Sarah demanded that Hagar be sent away, which was done. God never approved such an innovation. The existence of Ishmael was the result of Sarah's misunderstanding and impatience. Abraham went along with the assistance because, while his faith in God's

promise did not waver, neither did he understand how God would do what God had said and promised.

Paul said Abraham had two sons. Actually he had other sons later by Keturah after the death of Sarah, but only these two are involved in the allegory, and he had only these two at the time the historical foundation took place.

Some Comparisons

These two women symbolize or were like the Two Covenants: Sarah representing the faith of Christ which governs the church of Christ, and Hagar the Mosaic system.

There was a great difference in the two births. Ishmael was born of the flesh of his parents, Hagar and Abraham. Isaac, although born of Sarah and Abraham, was a child of God's promise, and the obvious result of God's intervention due the inability of Abraham and Sarah to normally have children, Sarah being barren.

As Ishmael was added while waiting for the child of promise to come, the Mosaic law was added while waiting for the Christ and the new covenant (Gal. 3:19-24).

When Isaac was very young, Ishmael, who was some thirteen years older than Isaac, mocked and persecuted his younger brother to the dismay and anger of Sarah. This provoked Sarah to have Abraham send Hagar and Ishmael away. This action is the point regarding the covenants that Paul was driving home. It was true in the time of Paul that the first persecutors of the Lord's church came from the ranks of Jewish people, particularly those who were jealous for the Mosaic law. As Ishmael was a persecutor, the Jews were persecutors. As Isaac was the persecuted, the Christians were the persecuted.

This allegory contributes to the understanding of the differences as well as similarities of the Two Covenants, but primarily and distinctly shows which covenant is operative under Christ and to which we are subject. It provides additional Biblical revelation showing how to “rightly divide the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15). One of the more often committed errors in coming to a knowledge of the way of salvation and how to worship and work for God is the failure to distinguish between the dispensations and erroneously mix portions of the Two Covenants.

Hagar represents the covenant given at Mount Sinai, and the “Jerusalem which now is.” The Law of Moses, including the Ten Commandments, were given to Israel through Moses shortly after Israel’s deliverance from Egypt. Jerusalem had become the center of authority for Israel because it was their capital and the place of their temple. But Jerusalem was in bondage, not only literally under the bondage of the Roman Empire physically, but under the bondage of the Old Law, which was oppressive, threatening curses, but not providing for the ultimate remission of sins. The demands of the law were impossible to meet, and Paul once said it was a law that “was contrary to us” (Col. 2:14).

Sarah represents the New Covenant of Christ, which was delivered from heaven, having its beginning in Jerusalem, characterized as “Jerusalem which is free.” Under Christ’s covenant Christians are free from past sins, free from the guilt and conscience of former transgressions, free from the law of sin and death (which simply stated means, “You sin, you die,” Rom. 8:2), free to approach the Father as His son in prayer, free to do God’s will in life, free from the burdens imposed by the Law of Moses. As Jesus had earlier taught, “Ye shall know the truth and

the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). This freedom is never to be understood as the right to “do your own thing your own way,” but imposes severe obligations and responsibilities which must be met and obeyed.

It is noteworthy that this is not the first time, even in the letter to the Galatians, that Paul has shown the differences in bondage versus freedom that characterize the Two Covenants. We must keep before us that he in reality is repeating a truth already taught, but now being illustrated with a record that all who are familiar with the Old Testament can recognize. This same truth is found especially in the book of Romans and Hebrews.

Isaiah’s Reference

Verse twenty-seven is a quotation from Isaiah, chapter fifty four, verse one. The barren one of Isaiah’s words would be like Sarah. The Hebrew women grieved if they were not able to bear children. But Sarah’s grief would have no more cause because her children would be more numerous than others. The meaning seems clear that by and through her son, Isaac, there would be many descendants physically, but even more, spiritually, in Christ. Is not Paul declaring that the children of the New Covenant will far exceed the children of the old, not only in relationship to God but also in number?

Who Are We?

Where does this place those of us who are Christians, serving God through Christ? We are like Isaac, children of promise. Isaac represents the church of Christ in this allegory. Let us be reminded of the marvelous promises God made to Abraham on several occasions as recorded in Genesis, and especially the promise that through his seed

all the families and nations of the earth would be blessed. That was God's promise. Paul had already explained in chapter three that the seed of Abraham referred to Christ. We who are in Christ are the beneficiaries of that Abrahamic promise that God gave, therefore, we are children of promise as Isaac was a child of promise.

Paul Calls For Scripture To Testify Again

For the third time in this brief passage Paul calls attention to what the Scripture says. He had cited the Genesis historical record, he pointed to the words from Isaiah, and now he returns to the closing portions of the episode between Sarah and Hagar with emphasis upon Sarah's instructions regarding Hagar:

Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman (Gal. 4:30).

With this remark Paul draws into focus the major point of his discourse. He shows where the Old Law stands in relationship with the new. He reminds them that just as Hagar and Ishmael were not allowed to be heirs with Sarah and Isaac, so those who continue to follow the Mosaic system shall not be heirs with those who are of the Lord's church. Hence, we who are Christians have "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Pet. 1:4). Sarah is the "mother of us all," (speaking of all Christians). The American Standard Version says, "our mother." That Old Law must be "cast out." It has been nailed to the cross (Col. 2:14), and fulfilled (Matt. 5:17), having served its purpose (Gal.

3:24). Our Lord took away the first in order to establish the second (Heb. 10:9). It is evident that none can be justified by the deeds of the Old Law (Rom. 3:27). We live under a new and different system, one that embraces God's grace, love, and mercy, that was executed by the sending of His Son who died on the cross, was buried, but rose again, and the benefits of which become ours by our faith and obedience to the commands of the Law of Christ.

Not only is the Old Law to be cast out, but there is no place for those who would attempt to be justified by the Mosaic system or its parts. Today when men try to justify what they believe and practice by turning to the Old Testament for authority, they are guilty of partaking of that which has been cast out. Those who subscribe to a special priesthood, burning incense, instrumental music, Sabbath keeping, abstaining from pork, and any other of the shadows of the Law should take heed of this strong apostolic warning.

We are like Isaac in that he was a child of a free woman who represents the covenant of Christ. We are children of the New Covenant. Paul's verdict was that one was to be cast out, and the other to remain.

Stand For Freedom

The theme continues into the next chapter with an emphasis now on the freedom we have in Christ and the need to stand fast in that freedom. The writer is careful to give the credit for this freedom to the One to whom it belongs, the Christ. Paul would not that his brethren be pushed from the faith back into that from which they had been delivered. They should not even allow themselves to become entangled again in the bondage they have escaped. This is similar to the words of Peter in 2 Peter 2:20-22

where he urged essentially the same thing regarding Christians becoming entangled again in the pollutions of the world. As Paul admonished in Rom. 6:2, “How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?” The Law of Moses was not sinful (Rom. 7:7), but it would be a sin to abandon the way of Christ and return to that law for salvation. With gathering pressures upon them, the faithful must learn to stand fast and not be exploited by false Judaizers.

Paul begins his plea now with another reference to himself, calling for attention with the words, “Behold, I Paul say unto you...” In chapter one, verse one, he identified himself as an apostle of Christ and therefore he spoke with authority. Paul uses that authority here. He is in essence saying to everyone, “You better pay attention to what I tell you because I speak by the authority given me by Christ.”

That which false teachers had particularly attempted to bind was circumcision. Paul wrote nothing against being circumcised as if the action itself was sinful. What he opposed was the demand that one must be circumcised in order to be saved, as was being promoted but was refuted in Acts fifteen.

The Bible student will recall how Paul did circumcise Timothy (Acts 16:3), because it was expedient that it be done, seeing how Timothy was to be working among Jewish people, and Timothy’s father was a Greek and this was widely known. That fact would unduly prejudice the minds of those they sought to convert to Christ unless Timothy was circumcised.

But when some tried to bind circumcision upon Titus (Gal. 2:3), evidently contending for a religious significance to it, Paul and others did not compel it be done. Later in

the fifth chapter Paul asserted that circumcision was nothing one way or the other in determining one's relationship with God through Christ.

There was far more involved in demanding circumcision than even those who demanded it realized. Circumcision was but a part of the law. If anyone was going to rely on that part, he then assumed the obligation to live by the whole of it. As James wrote:

For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law (Jas. 2:10,11).

This means if one violates the law of circumcision, he violates the Law even though he may have kept the remainder of the Law. And to keep other portions of the Law and not circumcision would produce the same dire results. To attempt to be saved by following a rite of a law that has been removed is to make salvation by Christ of none effect. To claim you must or may be saved by any other than Christ, as those who would be justified by the Law of Moses claimed, would mean "ye have fallen from grace." Is it not strange that Paul indicates some had already defected, and yet some today falsely teach that nobody, once saved, can fall? In Galatia, some had done what some today deny can be done.

Some Inescapable Conclusions

Since the Law of Moses no longer was the way to serve God, Israel, the singular nation to whom the Law

was given, would no longer be God's chosen people to the exclusion of others on the basis of race. Peter learned the lesson well:

Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him (Acts 10:34,35).

Fleshly ancestry counted for nothing any more in determining who is and is not the child of God. One would be a child of Abraham, not because of Abraham's flesh and blood tie, but because of a faith like Abraham's. While there was a physical Israel through which the Messiah came, the fact is that He has come and now there is spiritual Israel, God's spiritual children, His church.

It is somewhat remarkable that at the time Paul was writing of casting out the Old Law, the Old Law showed no signs of departing. Judaism was quite powerful and strong, and the influence of Jerusalem, which was under the dominance and control of Jewish authorities religiously, was a formidable power. It was but a few years, however, until the Romans came against the city and destroyed it in A.D.70, including records, genealogies, instruments, the temple, and other essentials to the continuation of Judaism as given under Moses. While there is a religion today known as Judaism that partakes of many of the things of the Judaism of Moses, it is a physical impossibility for anyone to ever resurrect the religion God gave Israel because of the destruction of what would be necessary to restore it. Any prophecy, doctrine, or national policy to establish a national Israel on the basis of Biblical promise is false to the core.

We would also like us to be reminded that even though one may be in physical bondage, this is not to be in spiritual bondage. One may be forced to live in the flesh as a slave, but he can still be an heir of God if he lives by the New Covenant.

All in all, the allegory of the Two Covenants, and the admonition to stand fast, is a powerful persuasion to correct, and prevent, apostasy. Why should anyone forsake that which produces the desired result, salvation, and turn to that which holds no promise, such as the Law of Moses? And what can be said of that law can be said of all the doctrines and schemes of men of various stripes of religious thought. These things will not, because they cannot, bring us salvation. The Christ can, and only the Christ can save, and He does so by and through His New Covenant believed and obeyed, the Covenant which is the rule and pattern for the church revealed in the New Testament.

Chapter 27

**The Ministration Of
Condemnation
And The Ministration
Of Righteousness
(2 Cor. 3:6-18)**

David P. Brown

Introduction

In the study of these verses an exposition of the passage as it pertains to the two covenants will be given. Specific attention will be directed to what is meant by the “glory” of the Law of Moses. We will then study the “glory” of the New Covenant and its superiority over the Old Covenant will be studied. Having finished these matters, an exposure of the fallacious doctrine that obedience was necessary under the first covenant but not necessary under the second will be set forth.

Exposition of the Text

In order to understand the text we must first understand the context. Paul is in the process of defending his apostleship. At this point in his defense he is discussing his work as an apostle of Christ. He has written of his triumphant work (2 Cor. 2:14-17). Next, he

emphasizes the credibility of his work (3:1-3). The converted Corinthians serve as the only credentials Paul needed to prove his integrity. His confidence in his work does not derive from within himself, but from the sufficiency that only Christ can provide (3:5). With the previous material setting the environment for the verses of our study, Paul continues his theme with a discussion of the glory of his work.

Verse 6. — “Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament;” Herein Paul is emphasizing the critical nature of his work. By these words he reveals his tremendous sense of responsibility to discharge his obligations to God. Paul reveals that by and of himself alone he is not sufficient to accomplish his assigned task. He wants his readers to understand that he was not a man of special talents, but through God’s grace he was equipped to meet the tasks that the apostolic office demanded.

The apostles of Christ were not apostles of the Old Testament, but apostles of the New Testament. It was the responsibility of the apostles of Christ to be the first to carry the gospel of Christ to a sinful world that sorely needed it (Acts 1:8).

“Not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.” For the most part the Jews did not understand the Law as an end within itself. Over all they never saw the Law as their “...schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, ...” (Gal. 3:24). Thus, outwardly the Jews kept the letter of the Law, but they did not understand the “spirit” (design and purpose) of the Law. This is why Paul queried the Jewish Christians in the church at Rome with, “And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, **who by**

the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law? (Rom. 2:27 — Emphasis mine, DPB). Did the Law of Moses command that eight days after a male child's birth he was to be circumcised? Yes (Lev. 12:3; Acts 15:1). Did the Jews obey this command? Yes. Then why did Paul say that the Jews had "...by the letter and circumcision ..." transgressed the Law? Because the Jews did not understand the deeper meaning (the significance) of circumcision. They saw it only as an end within itself. Circumcision was to be a sign of a pure heart that was dedicated to God. Moreover, the Jews certainly did not see fleshly circumcision as a type; the antitype of which was revealed by Paul when he wrote:

But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God. (Rom. 2:29).

The significance of circumcision was not alien to the Jews. Jeremiah had commanded:

Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem: lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings (Jer. 4:4).

Hence, while the Law was binding on the Jews, God expected them to understand that circumcision was far more than a surgical procedure. With this same thought in mind Paul wrote to the Colossian Christians, saying:

In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. (Col. 2:11, 12).

Hence, as an apostle of the New Testament Paul said:

But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter (Rom. 7:6).

The actual design of the Law of Moses for the Jews was to create within them the full realization of their lost condition, and that they could not save themselves (Rom 7:13). The Law was designed to point them to God as their only source of salvation. Thus, with Paul, we know that when used as God intended, "...the law is spiritual..." (Rom. 7:14). Did the Jews see this in the Law? No. Simply put, the Law of Moses properly understood, pointed or directed the Jews to the Christ and His last Will and Testament, the ultimate source of correct spiritual conduct.

Standing alone, the effect of the Law of Moses in the mind of the Jews produced only condemnation. By it they learned that they were sinners and no one was to blame for their lost condition but themselves. Moreover, they learned from the Law that whether Jew or Gentile, no man could save them. Properly understood the Law of Moses directed the Jews to Christ. Hence, Jesus said "For

had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me" (John 7:46; Also see Acts 3:22 - 26).

Verse 7. — "But if the ministration of death."

Having mentioned in the previous verses the superiority of the gospel of Christ, Paul now proceeds to show and emphasize just what made the gospel exceedingly better than the Law of Moses.

"Ministration" translates the Greek word *diakonia* from whence we get our English word deacon. The fundamental meaning in the scriptures of *diakonia* is one who ministers about holy things with great urgency (Acts 1: 17, 25; Rom 11:13; 1 Cor. 12:5; 1 Tim. 3:8 - 13). Paul employs the word here to refer to the complete Mosaic system as well as the Christian system.

After his "face to face" meeting with God for the purpose of receiving the law, the glory of God could be seen in the face of Moses (Exodus 34:29 - 35; Deut. 5:1 - 5). "Glory" translates *doxa* (brightness or splendor). It has to do with the praise and honor of God. Moses, therefore, radiated the splendor and brightness of his ministry to the praise and honor of God. Hence, the children of Israel could not look (a steady gaze is meant by *atenisai* translated *look*) on the face of Moses. However, as glorious as the ministry of Moses was, it could only minister death and condemnation. It made sin "become exceeding sinful" (Rom. 7:13).

Verse 8. — "How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious?" The ministry of Paul and the rest of the apostles was of such glory that every person who so desired could, with steady gaze, behold the glory of Christ (3:18). Moses' glory faded; but not the glory of the Christ. Moses' glory was transient and temporary; but the glory of Christ is abiding and permanent. The

gospel system provides life, not death. Rather than stone, the gospel (the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God) is written on human hearts (Rom. 1:16; Eph. 6:17).

Verse 9. — “For if the ministration of condemnation.” Paul continues the same thought introduced in verses 7 and 8. He contrasts the condemnation of the Law of Moses with the righteousness of the New Testament. The Law of Moses condemned the guilty party, man. It also vindicated God’s justice in punishing the sinner. The glory of the Law of Moses is seen therein. Thus, it exalted the justice, majesty, and holiness of God.

The Law of Moses was righteous in that it was the will of God (Psm. 119:172). However, Paul now applies the term “righteousness” to the Christian system, the faith. It alone can fully and completely make man righteous (Jude 3). It is not something that man has authored. It comes only through Christ and His gospel (John 14:6; Rom. 1:16, 17). Paul wrote:

But now the righteousness of God, without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ **(not one’s personal belief in Christ, but the faith or Christian system - DPB)** unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: (Rom. 3:21, 22; John 14:6).

Therefore, Paul wrote to the Galatians: “I do not frustrate the grace of God for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain” (Gal. 3:21). Hence, this judicial term, *dikaïosune*, (righteousness) properly states God’s

acquittal of guilty man through the Gospel of Christ. The Law of Moses could never do this for sinful man. It was never so designed and had no such power. The writer of the book of Hebrews penned:

For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect (Heb. 10:1).

Later in the same chapter he concludes, “For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified” (Heb. 10:14). Hence:

But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises (Heb. 8:6).

It should be noted that the term **ministry** is employed in the same manner in this passage as it is used in 2 Cor. 3:6. Therefore, Paul spoke of the gospel dispensation as (*hyperballouses*) “the glory that excelleth” (2 Cor. 3:10).

Verse 11. — “**For if that which is done away was glorious.**” Since verse eight, Paul has been engaged in what logicians call an *a fortiori* argument, i.e. with greater reason he has shown the greater glory of the gospel system over the lesser glory of the Mosaic economy. Therefore, he concludes that “...much more that which remaineth (the gospel - DPB) is glorious” (2 Cor. 3:11).

Verse 12. — “**Seeing then that we have such hope.**” Hope does not mean **wishful thinking**. It means

a desire to receive what one has a right to expect. Neither expectation without desire, nor desire without expectation is biblical hope. Biblical hope, therefore, is the alliance of expectation with the desire for that which is expected. In this context “hope” refers to all that Paul has just written regarding the superiority of the gospel. Because of the excelling glory of the gospel of Christ, Paul has placed all that he is and has in its message of redemption from sin, its guilt, and condemnation.

This hope caused Paul to **“use great plainness of speech”** (verse 12). In his presentation of the gospel Paul was bold and clear rather than timid and obscure. Paul did not routinely teach by types, figures, metaphors, and allegory as did the Mosaical system and the Jewish rabbis. Only one time in the New Testament did Paul teach by allegory (Gal. 4:22-31). At that time he identified the Old Testament account, then fully explained and applied it (Gal. 4:22-31). No room was left for fanciful and subjective speculation.

The faithful preacher of the gospel is not interested in veiling or cloaking his meaning. He is seeking to be understood, not misunderstood. However, the false teacher enjoys using his **cloaking devices**. If Simon Peter had spoken in the vernacular of some preachers of our day he could have responded to our Lord’s question to the apostles regarding His identity with the following words. **“Thou art the Messianic Parousia, the Preexistent Logos, the Eschatological Anticipation of the Cosmos.”** Jesus could very well have retorted with, **“Who????!!!!”**

Please consider the following regarding being understood.

And we are also reminded of Lord Darlington's remark to the duchess in *Lady Windermere's Fan*. The Duchess: "Do, as a concession to my poor wits, Lord Darlington, just explain to me what you really mean." "I think I had better not," answers the lord; "nowadays to be intelligible is to be found out."¹

The true gospel preacher wants his auditors to understand the gospel message. When, therefore, a preacher is routinely misunderstood by honest and qualified hearers, methinks there are grounds to conclude malice of forethought behind the veiled message. Furthermore, Paul penned:

How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; (Eph. 3:3 - 5).

All things being equal, the true scholar has the desire, learning, and ability to take the profound and, as much as the material will permit, teach it on the level of the ordinary diligent student. Jesus, the Master Teacher, is our perfect pattern of how to teach profound subjects on the level of the ordinary man.

Verse 13. — "And not as Moses." Note that Paul is herein contrasting his conduct with that of Moses (Exodus 34:33-35). In Moses' narrative regarding the veil

he placed over his face there is no mention of the purpose that Paul by inspiration gives regarding the reason for which Moses placed it there. Herein is further evidence that the smallest matters of the Law, as well as things and persons pertaining to its deliverance, were types; which antitypes are found in the New Testament.

Moses removed the veil when he was before God, but replaced it when he was with the Israelites. Paul tells us the reason Moses covered his face with a veil. It was to keep the Israelites from seeing the glory or splendor gradually fade from his face. It is in verse thirteen that we learn from Paul that such indicated that the Law would be abolished. This is another retort to the Judaizing teachers who constantly sought to discredit Paul's apostolic authority. It is the ministry of Paul and the other apostles that is filled with glory, not those who sought to hold on to the Law; to the lesser glory that had faded.

Verse 14. — “But their minds were blinded.” *Poroo* is the Greek word translated blindness. It actually means “to harden” and is employed regarding the heart and persons of men (Mark 6:52; 8:17; Rom. 11:7). Metaphorically it means that one is dull or stupid in his understanding. In the case of the unbelieving Jews as well as the Judaizing teachers, they were so insensible that they could not see the true end of the Law and all things pertaining thereto. Throughout the Old and New Testaments, because of the Jews' routine rejection of God's Will, their “spiritual stupidity” is mentioned. In Paul's day this “hardness” continued to be characteristic of the Jews as a whole.

Thus, without the New Testament, the Jew continued to have a veil over the Old Testament. He

simply did not understand its true meaning. As Paul wrote, **“But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart”** (verse. 15). However, when Moses “turned to the Lord” he removed the veil (verse 16). Accordingly, when the Jews would be converted to Christ they would understand the design and purpose of the Law as well as the nation to whom it was given.

What is there about the process of conversion that would of necessity “turn” the Jews’ hearts to the Christ? Conversion demands an honest heart, an intense desire for the truth, and a firm resolve to obey said truth when it is learned (Luke 8:15; Matt. 5:6; John 7:17). Furthermore, it was imperative that the Jews employ their rational natures to assimilate the evidence, think about what it meant, and realize what it proved; i.e. that Jesus Christ of Nazareth is the Messiah, the only begotten Son of God, the Savior of all men (Isa. 1:18; Acts 17:2; 18:4; 24:25, 1 Thess. 5:21; John 3:16; 14:6). Such a conclusion based upon adequate evidence and credible witnesses is seen in Peter’s conclusion to his sermon on Pentecost when he declared: “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:37). The “therefore” of this verse means that in the light of the foregoing evidence the inescapable conclusion is that Jesus is the Christ. Moreover, they then had to act upon that truth in obedience to it. Obedience is the only adequate proof of one’s faith, belief, trust, and confidence in Christ and His gospel to save one from sin and its consequences (Matt. 7:21; Heb. 5:9; James 2:14-26). Hence, before they could understand the design and end of the Law of Moses in Christ, such a living and active faith in the Christian system had to be formed in them. It is obvious that such

a saving faith was not formed in the Jewish auditors on Pentecost by a miracle or without any effort or activity (mental or otherwise) on their part. That the devout Jews on Pentecost understood the necessity of obedience, and that salvation came only at the point of obedience, is evidenced when, as believers in the Christ (Rom. 10:17), they addressed the apostles with the question, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:47). Now, that is a very silly question if God’s grace rules out doing anything in order to be saved. Hence, Paul later wrote of the unbelieving Jews:

For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth (Rom. 10:3, 4).

The “righteousness of God,” which the Jews as a whole had “not submitted themselves unto,” is the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ. Thus, Paul would declare:

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith (Rom. 1:16, 17).

Therefore, we understand why, with only the Old Testament to study, the Ethiopian Eunuch did not know of whom Isaiah wrote in chapter fifty three of the prophet’s

book. Furthermore, we understand why Philip “began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus” (the gospel - DPB; Rom. 10:17). Thus, Christ became to the teachable, believing, and obedient Eunuch “the end of the law for righteousness;” and, having obeyed the gospel “he went on his way rejoicing” (Acts 8:27-40; Rom. 10:16; 2 Thess. 1:8). Since the first Pentecost following the resurrection of Christ it has ever been so, and so it shall be until the end of the Christian dispensation (Matt. 28: 18-20; Mark 16:15, 16; Jude 3).

Verse 17. — “Now the Lord is that Spirit.” In keeping with the context of the discussion, Paul, by this expression, indicates the conclusion that should be drawn from the preceding arguments. In the Roman epistle he put it in the following words. “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth” (Rom. 10:4). Paul, in a direct statement to the Galatians, points out that the Law acted as a *paidagogos* (“schoolmaster” - KJV; “tutor” - ASV, 1901) “to bring us unto Christ” (Gal. 3:24). Hence, Paul is not saying that the Christ is the Holy Spirit; neither is he teaching that the Lord in His essence is spirit. Rather, Paul is teaching that in and through Christ one comprehends the design and purpose of the Law of Moses. Yes, indeed, the Jews in particular, and mankind in general are caused to understand that Jesus fulfilled the law (Matt. 5:17).

The apostle John put it this way, “For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (John 1:17). Did John mean that while the Law of Moses was in effect there was no grace and truth? Of course not. As pointed out earlier, the Law of Moses was glorious when it made sin exceeding sinful to the Jews; when it caused them to realize more fully their guilty state before

God; when it proved to them that they had no one to blame for their condemnation but themselves; when it moved the Jews to see that they could not save themselves, nor could any other mere human save them; when the Law vindicated God in His just punishment of the Jews and all sinful mankind; and when it pointed the Jews to Jesus Christ of Nazareth as the only Savior for Jew and Gentile alike. As John the Baptist declared of Christ, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Hence, the Law of Moses was complete in what God intended it to accomplish. However, God never intended it to accomplish what only Christ and His gospel could and can do. Hence, we read: "For the Law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect" (Heb. 10:1). In the words of Paul we magnify the Christ who "is that Spirit" of forgiveness; of light; of life; of justification; of reconciliation, of sonship; of perfect peace; of perfection; and of liberty:

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:3-11).

In words inspired, the peerless apostle to the Gentiles gives greater glory to the Christ. For he looks

...unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith...who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords...the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him (Heb. 12:2; 1 Tim. 6:15; Heb. 5:9).

Yes, indeed, without Christ the Law of Moses was worthless. Paul wrote:

For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. (Rom. 8:3, 4).

He, therefore, could say of the church, "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ" (Rom. 7:4; Eph. 1:22, 23; Col. 1:18). Hence, Paul penned that through the glorious gospel "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us:" (Gal. 3:13). Furthermore, Paul tells us that Christ came "to redeem them that were under the law" (Gal. 4:5).

Hence, when Paul declares that "**the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty,**" the conclusion drawn is that Christ through His Gospel is the only avenue out of man's sin and condemnation which the Law of Moses fully emphasized

as it pointed men to the Christ (verse 17). Furthermore, the ministry committed to Paul is not one of shadows and types, but one of openness and liberty that belongs to the person who stands before God forgiven of his sins by belief and obedience to the gospel. Thus, we see the imperfect Law of Moses with its faded glory set in contrast to the “perfect law of liberty;” “the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my (Paul’s - DPB) trust” (James 1:25; 1 Tim. 1:11). That same “perfect Law of liberty” is also called “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:” (Eph. 6:17). We may, therefore, conclude that where “the perfect law of liberty” holds sway in the hearts and lives of men, freedom from the Law and its curse is enjoyed.

Jesus said to the Jews:

If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. (John 8:31, 32).

They understood him to say that they were in bondage to men, which they denied. Jesus made clear that He had reference to their bondage to sin. Again, they responded that they were children of Abraham. By this reply they meant that since they were physical descendants of Abraham they were not considered sinners before God. By these Jews’ replies to Jesus they revealed their ignorance of how Abraham was acceptable to God and the design and purpose of the Law of Moses. Our Lord answered them with, “If ye were Abraham’s children, ye would do the works of Abraham” (John 8:33-39). As noted earlier Jesus, in a similar situation with the Jews, had

pointed out that they trusted in Moses, but that in actuality Moses was not a friend to them; rather, he was their accuser. Jesus said to them:

For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words? (John 5:45-47).

While the Old Testament, due to its nature, could not be as clear as the New Testament, the Jews as a whole did not believe it in the first place. How, then, could they comprehend Jesus (See John 8:40-47)?

Verse 18. — “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord.” Again, Paul alludes to the veil with which Moses covered his face when he appeared before the people after being in the presence of God. Persons today, however, may see the glory of the Lord without anything to obscure their vision. To look into the gospel is as one peering directly into a mirror. We can see the dazzling radiance of the plan of God for the redemption of man. This was not possible when one studied the Law of Moses. Of this very thing Peter wrote:

Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us

they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into (1 Peter 1:10-12).

Hence, in the Old Testament the “Spirit of Christ” in the prophets signified the way of salvation in shadows and types, but such could not clearly reveal just how God would redeem man. However, in the gospel, the way of salvation is fully revealed. Listen to Paul regarding this matter:

Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen (Rom. 16:25-27).

The third division of Paul’s second epistle to the Corinthians closes with the apostle concluding that “the Spirit of the Lord” in the gospel is the way men “are changed into the same image from glory to glory” (verse 18). As Peter said to the persecuted saints of old, “for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you.” (1 Peter 4:14).

Is 2 Corinthians 3:6 Speaking Against Emphasizing Obedience?

The person who is influenced by the doctrine known

as “Calvinism” does not believe that anyone can do anything in order to be saved from sin. Thus, he must seek to twist and wrest every scripture that teaches the necessity of sinful man’s obedience to God in order to be saved. Such a person must attempt to make these scriptures say the opposite of what they actually teach. This is the case with 2 Corinthians 3:6.

Already emphasized in our study is the truth regarding what Paul meant when he said that “the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.” The Law of Moses caused sinful man to fully realize his lost condition and that he could not save himself. It also pointed him to the Lord as his only Savior. Hence, the word “letter” stands for the Law of Moses. On the other hand “spirit” stands for the gospel. Paul declared to the Corinthians:

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved (1 Cor. 15:1).

Can anyone conceive of a person being saved without the life giving gospel? Hence, Paul is contrasting the less glorious Law of Moses with the ever abiding greater glory of the gospel, God’s power to save (Rom. 1:16).

Hear Paul further regarding the work of the Law of Moses in the lives of the Jews:

Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. 5: 20, 21).

While the Law of Moses was in effect for the Jews it accomplished for the faithful Jew just exactly what God intended. Namely, it gave him a sharper consciousness and realization of sin and its consequences. At the same time it caused him to look to God for a Savior. By what means did the Law of Moses “rule” to bring about death or the realization of man’s separation from God? By the instruction of the Law. Hence, understanding the precepts of the Law of Moses and compliance with those laws was essential to the Jews salvation.

In the Christian dispensation it is grace and life that “reigns” or rules through the gospel and not death through the Law of Moses. But, how does grace “reign” or rule in the life of the one in need of salvation? It reigns through righteousness. But what is righteousness? David declared that “My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments are righteousness” (Psm. 119:172). Yes, indeed “all thy commandments are righteousness.” Hence, today in the Christian dispensation the grace of God that brings salvation to all of us “reigns” or rules through the commandments of God revealed in the gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16).

God’s grace reaches no one to save him if that person is of such a disposition of mind that he will not obey the gospel commandments. Paul told Titus that “the grace of God that brings salvation came into the world teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world” (Titus 2:11,12). Herein Paul clearly points out that the grace of God teaches that if man is to be saved by the gospel of Christ he must not do certain things and do certain other things. Men learn by the study of the New Testament the specific “do’s” and “don’ts” of the grace of

God, i.e. just how the spirit gives us life (2 Cor. 3:6). Paul's "ministration" was not "of the letter" or the Law of Moses, but his was the "ministration of the spirit," the gospel. Commandment keeping was and is involved in both religious systems as proof of one's love of and faith in God and His Scheme of Redemption.

Moreover, obedience, was involved in the Patriarchal system; the first religious system God gave man. One of the greatest examples in all of the Bible of one man's love of and faith in God is Abraham's obedience to God's commandment for him to kill his son, Isaac, and offer him as a burnt offering to God (Gen. 22). Is it not interesting that this example is given in the 'ministration of the spirit,' (the New Testament) for us to understand how and at exactly what point we are saved by the grace of Christ?

In discussing when the brethren in Rome became Christians, Paul, whose ministration is of the spirit, penned:

What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to who ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? (Rom. 6:15,16).

Did not the same apostle by the same Holy Spirit declare to the church in Corinth "the ministration of the spirit" to be the same thing as "the ministration of righteousness" (2 Cor. 8, 9)? Have we not read from the same apostle that God's grace "reigns" or rules in and over man through righteousness (Rom. 5:21)? We should not be surprised when we continue to read from Paul:

But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness (Rom. 6:17, 18).

Now, when did the brethren at Rome become Christians? When they became “servants of righteousness.” When did they become servants of righteousness? When they were “made free from sin.” When were they made free from sin? When they “obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered them.”

In his first letter to the Corinthians Paul clearly stated that they stood in the gospel which he had preached unto them (1 Cor. 15:1, 2). Are we beside ourselves to think that the Corinthians became Christians in the exact same way that their brethren in Rome became Christians? There was and is only one true gospel (Gal. 1:6-9). Thus we see just how and when “the ministration of the spirit” gives life; it is when one’s faith in Christ is living and active in obedience to the gospel. Hence, Jesus is the author of eternal salvation to only one class of people; “unto all them that obey him” (Heb. 5:9). Thus, at the end of the world, Christ will punish “with everlasting destruction” all those who have not obeyed the gospel (2 Thess. 1:8). Jesus clearly taught “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15). The same evidence is proof of one’s faith in Christ. “Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only” (James 2:24). Hence, the only genuine proof that one loves and believes in Christ and His gospel is obedience to the Lord’s commandments. Therefore, the phrase of 2 Corinthians

3:6 “the letter killeth” has not one thing to do with teaching that obedience to the gospel in order to be saved by or to remain faithful to Christ is wrong. To the contrary, to not obey the gospel is to reject the means whereby grace rules. To reject the means whereby grace rules is to reject the saving power of Christ (Rom. 1:16). Woe be to the person who teaches and believes such a pernicious doctrine (Rom. 10:16).

Endnotes

1 Lionel Ruby, **The Art of Making Sense**: (New York: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1954), 57.

Chapter 28

What God Told Jeremiah About The Two Covenants

James W. Watkins

Notwithstanding the clear, unmistakable distinction between the Old Testament and the New Testament, the superiority of the blood of Christ over the blood of animals, the unbridgeable gulf between the Priesthood of Christ and the sacerdotal system of the former economy, many sincere, dedicated, deeply religious people still make no distinction between the “Letter” and the “Spirit,” the “Ministration of Condemnation” and the “Ministration of Righteousness” (2 Cor. 3:6-9).

Introduction

The assignment for this chapter has to do with a very familiar passage from the pen of the prophet Jeremiah:

Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in

the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was a husband unto them, saith Jehovah. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith Jehovah: I will put my law in the inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know Jehovah; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith Jehovah: for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more (Jer. 31:31-34).

The foundational premise for this entire scenario is couched in the nature of man and the transgression of Adam. We learn from Genesis 1:26-27 that God created man in His own image. Since God is Spirit (John 4:24) and a spirit does not have flesh and blood (Luke 24:39), we must assume that the statement, "For thou hast made him but little lower than God" (Psm. 8:5a), makes reference to man's intelligence, his independence, his free moral agency.

We recall that there were two trees in the perfection and beauty of Eden. These were made necessary in light of man's nature; he is a creature of choice. Following the transgression of our progenitor, by reason of which the entirety of his posterity was alienated from God (Rom. 5:12), God made a promise. Addressing the devil, He said: "...He shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. 3:15b). Somewhere, down the stream of

time, somehow, in the divine economy, the Seed of woman would ultimately deliver a fatal blow to the head of the tempter. It is in the fulfillment of this promise that the context assigned for this discussion finds its rightful place.

Following his loss of Eden, man was tested as to his moral and spiritual strength. The first sixteen hundred and fifty six years, marking the antediluvian period of human history, demonstrated, quite well, that man could not direct his own steps (Jer. 10:23). God preserved a seed in the person of Noah and ten generations later focused the scope through which we could more clearly see the promised Seed; He chose Abram (exalted father) and changed his name to Abraham (father of a multitude). To this man's fleshly descendants, God, more than four hundred years later, gave a written law. It might be said that the Ten Commandments formed the constitution and that the Pentateuch gave it definition and application. In connection with His Law, He has provided twelve books dealing with the history of Israel under its jurisdiction. In His mercy He allowed them to speak from their hearts in some five books of poetry. From that point we find some sixteen books of prophecy, excluding Jeremiah's Lament, through which the telescope is focused sharply, enabling mankind to see with ever increasing clarity, the dawning of a brilliant day. All of this, the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms (Luke 24:44) foretold the coming of the Messiah.

As we move back to our text we observe that God is saying to Jeremiah, who lived under the Old Covenant, that the time was coming when He would establish a New Covenant. God further informed Jeremiah that the New Covenant would not be according to that covenant He had made with their fathers when He took them by

the hand to lead them forth out of the land of Egypt.

I am particularly concerned with the fact that God said:

I will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them forth out of the land of Egypt.

Well, what kind of covenant was the one that God made with the fathers? Well, I remember that the apostle Paul made the statement in 2 Corinthians 3:6:

Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

Now he said, “The letter killeth but the spirit giveth life.” What is he doing? He is contrasting the Old Law with grace actually. You see, the Law was written and engraven on stones. Well, why would the Law given to ancient Israel, written and engraven upon stones, be referred to as the ministration of death? The writer of Hebrews points out that it was just a system of carnal ordinances imposed until a time of reformation. So, it is said to be a ministration of death. Why would it be thus described?

In Galatians 2 :16, we are told “for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.” Now, let us be sure that we understand what this passage is saying. “For by works of law - any law - shall no flesh be justified.” Paul made the same statement in Romans 3:20, did he not? In other words, the Law of Moses, written and engraven on

stones was given to make sin sinful. The Law of Moses enabled man to see that he could not stand justified before God either on his own merit or even by the works of law.

You see, the Old Law was never given to forgive or justify. Law is given to condemn the infraction of its content. Violate it and it condemns you. That's what law does. Suppose that you are on the interstate, tooling along and enjoying life, and you glance down at that speedometer. To your horror you recognize that you are sitting on 80. Whoa! Your foot comes off the accelerator, but the rear view mirror tells you that you are too late. That bubble gum machine is whirling and you hear that siren. A tall broad-shouldered fellow with the campaign hat on comes up and says, "Sir, may I see your license?" He pulls out a little yellow book and he begins to write, and it doesn't really matter about your excuses. You see, he is going to issue you a traffic ticket. You are in violation of the traffic law. Well, how so? Well that little sign you passed back there said 65 mph. Now let me tell you something about law: there is no law in heaven, on earth, or for that matter, in existence, that can make you innocent. Because the law said 65, and you were doing 80, you have violated the law. You see, that's what law does. Law has no remedy, law has no power to forgive.

But now wait a minute. Someone says, "God forgave sin under the law." Indeed, He did. He forgave sin under patriarchy before there was any written law at all. But now bear in mind that no sin has ever been forgiven except in anticipation of the shed blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. You can read that in Hebrews 9:15:

And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were

under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

Christ is the mediator of a New Covenant, or better covenant.. The blood of Jesus Christ, when it was shed, reached backward to the transgression of Adam. All of those who lived conscientiously, according to the Law under which they were regulated, by which they lived, had their sins removed when Christ died on the cross. The blood of animals offered once in the year by the high priest in the Most Holy Place, had to be offered every year, and for the same sins over and over and over again (Heb. 10:1-4). Thus, when Christ died, he blotted out these sins. And from His death came the establishment of the New Covenant. So you see, under law there was no remedy for sin.

It's interesting that the writer of Hebrews quotes the entirety of Jeremiah 31:31-34:

Behold the days come saith the Lord, that I will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them forth out of the land of Egypt; for they continued not in my covenant and I regarded them not saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days saith the Lord, I will put my laws under their mind and on their heart also will I write them and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people, and they shall not teach every man his fellow citizen and every man his

brother saying, Know the Lord, for all shall know me from the least to the greatest of them. For I will be merciful to their iniquities and their sins will I remember no more (Heb. 8:8-12).

The writer of Hebrews added in verse 13: “In that he saith, a new covenant, He hath made the first old, but that which is becoming old and waxeth aged is vanishing away.” Now that’s an interesting thought. Do you recall the statement of the Lord in Matthew, chapter 5:17,18? He said:

Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets, I came not to destroy, but to fulfill, until heaven and earth pass away, not one jot or one tittle shall in any wise pass from the law till all things be fulfilled.

Well, did it ever pass? Oh yes.

Having blotted out the bond written in ordinances which was against us which was contrary to us. He hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to His cross. Having spoiled the principalities and powers and made a show of them openly triumphing over them in it. Let no man therefore judge you in respect of meat or drink or a new moon or a feast day or a sabbath day, which are a shadow of the good things to come, but the body, the substance is Christ (Col. 2:14-17).

You see, under the Old Testament, the Jews, among other

things, were to remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. That doesn't apply in the Christian age. There is no holy day per se. Yes, Christians meet upon the first day of the week (Acts 20:7) and such is unique in that it is "The Lord's Day" (Rev. 1:10). But it is not in the same category with Saturday, as your calendar reads, or the seventh day under the Old Jewish covenant. The seventh day was a "holy day" and in it they were to do no servile work, no menial tasks were to be performed. They were to rest upon the Sabbath day, the seventh day of the week. So Paul is saying in Colossians 2, that the Old Law is no longer valid. As a source of authority in matters religious, it has been removed. When was it removed? When Christ died on the cross. He thus fulfilled the Old Testament law (Matt. 5: 17,18). And it was by His death that he validated, and made authoritative, His New Covenant.

Now you recall the statement we were noting from Hebrews chapter 9? Notice the following verses:

For where a testament is, there must also be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead; otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth (Heb. 9:16-17).

Hence when Christ died on the cross, he validated his last will and testament and sealed it with His blood. You can't have two testaments in force at the same time. The first had to be fulfilled. Christ said, not one jot or one tittle (smallest characters in the Hebrew alphabet) shall in any wise pass from the law till all things be fulfilled. Thus, Jesus fulfilled the Law, and nailed it to His cross. That's why a man can't take the Old Testament and say to me,

“Watkins, you’re not obeying the Lord, you’re unfaithful to the Almighty. You’re not keeping the sabbath.” No, and I’m not building an ark either, you see. God was talking to Noah when He said, “Build me an ark and make it of gopher wood, etc. etc. Now we understand that. God was speaking to the Jewish nation through the Law of Moses. That’s why He said what He said in Jeremiah 31:31-34.

Do you remember that Peter, in the conference recorded in Acts chapter 15, made this statement: “Why bind a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?” Peter, what are you saying? The Law of Moses could not bring salvation from sin, simply because man could not keep it perfectly, so he called it a yoke, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear. Why would he do that?

The apostle Paul said in Galatians 3:10, “Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things that are written in the law to do them.” What are you saying, Paul? Why would that be the case? Just as we’ve said, when you violate law, it condemns you. Since man cannot keep it perfectly, then he stands condemned in its violation. No wonder Peter called it a yoke which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear. And that’s why Paul calls the Law the letter which killeth. He refers to the New Covenant as the spirit. Actually, one is law, the other is the Law of the Spirit, which provides for man’s redemption, not on the basis of his sinless perfection, but salvation, in the Christian age, is dependent upon the grace of God being appropriated by faith in my heart. When faith leads me, in compliance with the Lord’s instruction upon which he predicated my salvation from sin, then my state is changed, my relationship to God is changed, and I find

myself under the protective custody, that is, the continual cleansing of the blood of Jesus Christ as long as I continue to walk in the light.

Under the New Covenant, written upon the hearts of the recipients, there will be a removal of the stain, the guilt of sin. God said, "I'll forget it, I'll remember it no more against them, I'll remove it as far as the east is from the west."

There is an interesting statement in the book of Galatians. Paul wrote to the brethren in the region of Galatia to fortify them against the errors that were being taught among them. The basic problem with the region of Galatia was the false teaching of the Judaizers. These Judaizing teachers were reluctant to let go of the Law of Moses, and they were still holding to certain tenets thereof, and, they were trying to bind upon Gentiles certain elements of the Law of Moses. In fact, "You've got to be circumcised or you can't be saved," seems to be the message the Judaizing, false teachers.

Now of course, the conference in Jerusalem, recorded in Acts 15, had to do with that very thing. You can't put the ordinances of the Old Covenant into the New Covenant, without corrupting it. These are separate and distinct covenants. God gave one to the children of Israel, written and engraven on two tables of stone, and the last will and testament of Jesus Christ is given to Jew and Gentile. The legalistic elements of that former covenant have been completely removed.

Now, someone says, "Well preacher, in other words the Old Testament is of no value." Hold on! The Old Testament is as valuable as it ever was. Yes, it was written for our learning and for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come. Whatsoever things are written

therein were written for our learning that through patience and through comfort of the Scriptures we might have hope (1 Cor. 10:11; Rom. 15:4). The Old Testament is the truth. It contains the Word of God and it provides, in a system of types and shadow, a vague reference to that which is the anti type and the substance. In other words, the New Testament is the fulfillment of God's promises found throughout the Old Testament, and the New Testament is not a legalistic system as was the Old.

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us. For it is written, "Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree." Christ came and bore my sin. He died the perfect for the imperfect, the sinless for the sinful, the guiltless for the guilty. Living a perfect life, he satisfied the demands of justice and brought salvation within reach of the sinner.

Do you recall the passage where God required Abraham to take his son, Isaac, and to offer him? God had previously promised Abraham that all the nations of the earth, all the peoples of the world, all men everywhere, would be blessed through the seed of Abraham. How did God accomplish such?

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise. (Gal. 3:16-18).

Now let's get the picture here. In Genesis 22, verse 18, God said, "in thy seed shall all of the families of the earth be blessed." We've learned from inspiration that "the seed" under consideration is Jesus Christ. Now four hundred and thirty years after God made that promise to Abraham he gave the Law to ancient Israel at Mount Sinai. They were just three months out of the bondage of Egypt and they came unto the wilderness of Sinai. It was here that God gave the Decalogue, ten words, or Ten Commandments, written upon the two tables of stones.

So what is Paul saying in Galatians, chapter 3? God made a promise to Abraham that in Jesus Christ all the families of the earth would be blessed. The blessing of salvation to the human family, both Jew and Gentile, can be available only through Jesus Christ. But what about the legalistic system known as the Law of Moses which was given at Mount Sinai, 430 years after God made this promise to Abraham? It served a purpose, to be sure. But it did not in anyway nullify the promise that God made to Abraham that in his seed, Christ, all of the families of the earth would be blessed.

Now with this kind of teaching, the Orthodox Jews would logically ask the question, "What then is the Law?" In other words, if God made the promise to Abraham that in Jesus Christ all the families of the earth would be blessed, and 430 years later he gives the Law, then pray tell what purpose does it serve? What then is the Law? Paul answers that it was added because of transgressions till the seed should come to whom the promise hath been made. So the Law was given to enable man to see that he is not walking with God, and to the extent that he violates this law he gets further and further away from God.

How long was the Law to be authoritative? What was the tenure of the Law? Till the Seed should come. The Seed is Christ (Gal. 3:16). Therefore, the Law was to be authoritative only until Christ came on the scene. That's correct.

The statement in our text, "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying Know Jehovah; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them" (Jer. 31:34a), is a principal indicator of the distinction between the covenants. Under the former, a child, born of Jewish parents and circumcised on the eighth day of his life, became a child of God (Gen. 17:9-14). It was necessary, therefore, that the circumcised youngster be taught to "know the Lord." Under the New Covenant only those old enough to make a decision, based upon their knowledge of God's Word, can choose to be born again (Rom. 10:17; John 3:3). The Christian thus becomes such by virtue of the fact that he knows the Lord (John 8:32; 1 John 2:3-4).

Now all men have equal opportunity to be justified by faith in Jesus Christ, whether Jew or Greek. This New Covenant that God promises in Jeremiah 31 and alluded to in Hebrews, chapter 8, provides for the salvation of both Jew and Gentile. All men everywhere can be recipients of the blessings provided by the unmerited favor of a loving, Almighty God.

Now here in Galatians, chapter 3, he continues. Now he said, "But before faith came,"; now we need to understand how faith is used in the New Testament. Sometimes it is used of an individual's faith in the Lord. Occasionally, however, it is used in the New Testament as a designation of the last will and testament of Jesus

Christ. For example:

Beloved while I was giving all diligence to write unto to you concerning our common salvation I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend earnestly for **the** faith, which was once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3).

The faith. Yes. The system of faith. Thus, the term “faith” in this context embraces the totality of divine revelation validated by the shed blood of Christ. That’s called His last will and testament (Heb. 9:16,17). So before this system of faith came we were kept inward under the Law, shut up unto the faith which should afterward be revealed, so that the Law is become our tutor to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith (Gal. 3:23-25). The Law was like a school bus driver, responsible for the children until he/she delivers them to the teacher. “But now that faith is come, we are no longer under a tutor. But you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For, as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ. There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be neither male nor female for you are all one man in Christ Jesus And if you are Christ’s then are you Abraham’s seed, heirs according to the promise” (Gal. 3:26-29).

Thus, the New Covenant that God promised through Jeremiah, that the Hebrew writer affirms has been given, provides for human redemption through obedient faith in Jesus Christ. How marvelous indeed to walk in the freedom of salvation, to know the love of God. Yes, we are aware that we make mistakes. We’re conscious of the

limitations of the flesh. But under grace, we pray to the Lord. We think of our relationship to Him constantly. We desire to be with Him, and thus we study His word and apply it. And we are thus continually cleansed from sin. Thank God for the blessings of the New Covenant.

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Chapter 29

The Doctrine of Circumcision In The Two Covenants

David B. Jones

Much confusion exists in the religious world concerning the nature of the Two Covenants. Members of the church of Christ are falsely accused of not believing the Old Testament. Those making such a claim do not seem to understand the difference between example and authority. We are no longer under the authority of the Old Testament, for it had a purpose, and that purpose was fulfilled in Christ (Gal. 3:22-25; Matt. 5:17; Col. 2:14). However, we still are influenced by the examples found therein its pages. The apostle Paul wrote:

For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope (Rom. 15:4).

On the other hand there are those in the religious world who still mix Old Testament prophesies, which have already been fulfilled, with modern fulfillments and create

confusion and chaos. For example, some attribute the references in the Old Testament relative to the coming kingdom, to a time yet in the future. They have Christ coming back and reigning on the earth, while the Bible clearly shows Christ established His kingdom on the day of Pentecost and could not reign on earth as king (Acts 2; Jer. 22:30; Dan. 2:44; 7:13,14). Erroneously, they interpret passages, such as Isaiah 11:6 to refer to a literal future state on earth, when it actually refers to the church or the kingdom:

The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.

This passage just shows the peace which would characterize the kingdom.

Some try and use the Old Testament to show they can use mechanical instruments of music today in worship. Various religious groups contend we are still bound by the Ten Commandments as recorded in the Old Testament.

There is even confusion concerning the subject of circumcision in the Two Covenants. We will explore the purpose and importance of circumcision in the Old Testament. We will also notice the problems caused by the unbelieving Jews in the New Testament relative to this subject.

Circumcision Was A Seal Given To Abraham

The Lord appeared to Abraham when he was ninety-nine years old and said:

...I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly” (Gen. 17:1-2).

God also promised to give to Abraham and his seed after him the land wherein he was a stranger (Gen. 17:8). The “token” or seal of this covenant was each male child was to be circumcised on the eighth day. The word token means “a signal as a flag or beacon.” Paul comments on this in Romans:

And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: (Rom. 4:11).

The word seal means “the stamp impressed (as a mark of privacy, or genuineness).” Paul confirms the unity of the Abrahamic covenant, for in Romans 4:3, he quotes from Genesis fifteen — where the word covenant occurs for the first time in connection with Abraham. The main difference between the two chapters is one gives us the divine side (ratifying the covenant- Gen. 15), the other the human side (the keeping of the covenant, or obedience to the divine command - Gen. 17).¹

We also note circumcision was a “seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had.” As a seal from God, circumcision was a divine pledge for him from whom would issue seed which would bring blessings to all nations. Circumcision was not a memorial of anything

which he had already actualized, but an earnest of that which was yet future — namely, of that justifying righteousness which was to be brought in by Christ.² Circumcision was a token to Abraham of the Messiah which would eventually come through his lineage.

The details of circumcision are made very clear: (1) The act of circumcision: the removal of the foreskin (Gen. 17:11); (2) the destination: the sign of the covenant (Gen. 17:11); (3) the time: eight days after the birth (Gen. 17:12); (4) the extent of its efficacy: not only the children, but slaves born in the house (and those also bought with his money) were to be circumcised (Gen. 17:12-13); (5) its inviolability: those who were not circumcised should be cut off, uprooted (Gen. 17:14).³

There are various ideas as to the reason God instituted circumcision as a seal of the covenant. The Pulpit Commentary records:

(1) As a sign of the faith that Christ should be descended from him; (2) as a symbolic representation of the putting away of the filth of the flesh and of sin in general; (3) to foster in the nation the hope of the Messiah; (4) to remind them of the duty of cultivating moral purity; (5) to preach to them the gospel of a righteousness by faith; (6) to suggest the idea of a holy or a spiritual seed of Abram; (7) to foreshadow the Christian rite of baptism.⁴

Of the above reasons listed, several of them could be considered as possible explanations for circumcision. It seems logical to conclude God wanted to distinguish the line through which Christ would come into the world

from the other people in the world. This distinguishing would remind them of the coming Messiah. Circumcision would not have been a foreshadow of baptism for the following reasons: (1) Circumcision was for males only; baptism is for all; (2) circumcision was performed on infants eight days old; baptism, in the scriptural sense, cannot be administered upon any persons whomsoever, except those of accountable age who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, have repented of their sins and have confessed Christ before men; (3) circumcision had absolutely no connection whatever with the forgiveness of sins, baptism is for the purpose of receiving the remission of sins; (4) in circumcision, the initiative for the performance of the rite of necessity existed apart from the one circumcised, whereas, in baptism, the Lord said, “Repent and have yourselves baptized” (Acts 2:38), showing that in Christianity, the initiative must derive from the person being baptized; (5) circumcision had nothing at all to do with Abraham being justified, because that took place before the rite was ever given; however, baptism is a factor in the Christian’s justification, in the sense that he cannot be justified while refusing to submit to it; (6) circumcision was merely a “token” of the covenant, whereas baptism into Christ is a most essential element of the Christian covenant itself.⁵

Circumcision As Commanded Under The Law Of Moses

The Law of Moses commanded the Israelites to be circumcised on the eighth day, “And in the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised” (Lev. 12:3). Jesus referred to the giving of circumcision under the Law of Moses:

Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision; (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers;) and ye on the sabbath day circumcise a man. If a man on the sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day?" (John 7:22-23).

The male child who was not circumcised was to be "cut off" from his people (Gen. 17:14). To be "cut off" from his people means he forfeited his standing in the congregation, i.e., ceased to be a member of the Hebrew commonwealth.⁶ The failure to be circumcised separated one from the people of Israel. No uncircumcised person could partake of the Passover:

And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof" (Exod. 12:48).

Although the penalties are not directly expressed in the Law of Moses, they would have been understood since the Israelites had already been given the command to be circumcised before the Law of Moses.

Circumcision was to be a sign of the covenant, much like the rainbow of Genesis 9:16-17, in order to remind the Israelites of their responsibilities and obligations as God's people. The Israelites who refused to be circumcised were guilty of breaking the covenant with God (Gen. 17:14).

The command to physically be circumcised also taught the Israelites a spiritual lesson. To be physically circumcised was an outward sign of an inward submission to the commands of God. Refusing to be circumcised showed direct rebellion to the authority of God. The Lord used this idea to teach them spiritual lessons regarding hearing and heeding the Law of God. Moses pleaded with the Israelites when he said, “Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked” (Deut. 10:16). Moses used the physical idea of removing the foreskin and applied it to laying open their hearts and allowing the Word of God to penetrate. In another reference Moses said:

And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live (Deut. 30:6).

This was promised if they would obey the Word of God (Deut. 30:2).

Another application of this principle was made by Joshua in Gilgal. After Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt, he led them to the threshold of the promised land. Because of Moses’ sin, he was not allowed to lead the Israelites into Canaan. Joshua was chosen to replace Moses, and he led them across the Jordan River. Upon arriving at Gilgal, the Lord instructed Joshua to circumcise all the males. Those who were circumcised in Egypt had died along the way and those now living had not been circumcised (Josh. 5:4-7). The name “Gilgal” means “circle,” or “rolling away.” The Israelites were reminded by the physical circumcision at Gilgal that the reproach

of being in Egypt had been now “rolled away” and the promise of God to give them Canaan was about to be realized.

Thus, the Law of Moses indeed commanded circumcision and the Law itself emphasized the importance of it. The Israelites should have learned they were to be a different people and that obedience to the Word of God was essential to enjoying the blessings of God.

Circumcision Today Is Not Essential For Salvation

The Law of Moses was in effect for 1500 years, and then Jesus came and fulfilled it. The purpose of His coming was to fulfill the prophecies and promises made in the Old Testament. Jesus Himself affirms this:

And beginning at Moses and all the prophets,
he expounded unto them in all the scriptures
the things concerning himself (Luke 24:27).

In His great sermon on the mount, Jesus told of the purpose of His coming, “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil” (Matt. 5:17). With the fulfilling of the Law of Moses, Jesus ushered in the gospel, nailing the Law to His cross:

Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that
was against us, which was contrary to us, and
took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; (Col.
2:14).

With the taking away of the Law, the command of circumcision was also taken away. With the taking away of the Law, there was the tearing down of the middle wall of partition and the making of twain a new man in one body (Eph. 2:13-16). There is now neither Jew nor Gentile, but all are one in Christ (Gal. 3:27-29). There has been a change of the Law (Heb. 7:12) and thus a change in the terms of acceptance to God. Today one is to obey the gospel in order to be God's child and fleshly circumcision has not part in that acceptance. The Jews of the Old Testament were to be submissive from their hearts, but they also had to be circumcised in their flesh. Today one must be submissive from his heart, but baptism is what puts him into the blessings of the Beloved.

The Impact Of Judaizing Teachers In The New Testament Relative To Their Insistence Upon Circumcision

The Jews were a people who were proud of their heritage and lineage. They placed a great amount of importance upon being able to trace their fleshly ancestry back to Abraham. When the gospel was put into force and the Law of Moses fulfilled, the Jews fought against its spread. Not only were the Jews a proud people, but they were also a prejudiced people. A prime example of the prejudice which existed is seen in Galatians chapter two. Peter was eating with the Gentiles, but when the Jews came in, he withdrew himself from the Gentiles. Paul wrote:

But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did

eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision (Gal. 2:11-12).

Thus, when the gospel was taken to the Gentiles, the Jews had a hard time accepting them as equals in the Lord. The Jews placed restrictions upon the Gentiles which the Lord had not placed. This caused the early church much trouble.

The apostles and elders of the church in Jerusalem met to discuss the troubles caused by the Jews. Luke recorded:

And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved (Acts 15:1).

This caused Paul and Barnabas much disputation as Luke records:

When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question (Acts 15:2).

There was a sect of the Pharisees which believed which rose up against those who assembled for the meeting (Acts 15:5). Peter, Paul, Barnabas and James spoke during this meeting. After the meeting it was decided to send letters

hoping to clear up any misunderstanding which the Jews had caused. Luke records:

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 commandment: (Acts 15:24).

Notice the church was troubled by the words of the Judaizers. These Judaizers impacted the church to such a point that this meeting had to be called and these men taken from their work. Satan is always seeking ways to bring God's men down from their good work.

We also see the impact these Judaizers had when we read Paul's epistles. For example, in the book of Galatians one can see much trouble caused by these false teachers. Paul could not believe the Christians had been so influenced by them:

I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed (Gal. 1:6-8).

These were not only troubling the church, but they were perverting the gospel. They were adding to the Word of God and this was, and still is, sin. According to Paul, the Judaizers were bewitching the brethren of Galatia, "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?" (Gal. 3:1). The word "bewitching" means to fascinate by false representations. Thus, the Judaizers were falsifying the truth and causing problems for the Galatians. Paul was concerned that his work had been in vain, "I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain" (Gal 4:11). In fact, he asked them had they suffered what they had suffered in vain (Gal. 3:4). If they were going to listen to and be led by the Judaizers, they were going to go away from the Lord. All they had done before would have been in vain.

Paul warned the Philippians of these men, "Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision." (Phil 3:2). According to Strong's, the word "concision" means "(to cut); a cutting down (off), i.e. mutilation (ironically)". Paul makes a play on the idea of cutting to warn the brethren of the Judaizers who were trying to pervert the right ways of the Lord. Apparently these men followed the apostle Paul wherever he went and tried to undo what he had done.

Today there are those who are falsifying the truth in other ways. They are doing what they do for the same reasons the Jews did, namely, pride, prejudice and prestige. They desire the praises of men more than the praises of God. Their god is their belly and what they do, they do to please their god. Many are extending fellowship to the denominations and participating in joint worship efforts. These are also bewitching the church today. There are those who claim the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship is a matter of opinion. Basically, what they have done is redefine how the Bible is to be

interpreted. They say what is not explicitly condemned is allowed. At the least, it becomes a matter of opinion. They are quick not to be judgmental, that is, they do not take stands any more, lest they lose their influence and affluence. They have redefined grace by their own terms. They insist we do not contribute anything to our salvation. The church today has been impacted by these teachers and their insistence upon perverting the gospel.

The Contrast Between Fleshly Circumcision And Circumcision Of The Heart

The apostle Paul wrote, “For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh” (Phil. 3:3). Paul made a difference between fleshly circumcision and a circumcised heart. Anyone who is accepted by God must be one who is willing to hear and heed the Word of God. In order to do this, he must have a heart which is open to the planting of the seed of the kingdom. The circumcised heart is the heart which is open to the Word of God. Just being circumcised fleshly says nothing for the heart of the person. The Jews were people who placed a great emphasis on the flesh or visible things, and less on the spiritual things. Jesus spoke to this point when He said:

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!
for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin,
and have omitted the weightier matters of the
law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye
to have done, and not to leave the other undone
(Matt.23:23).

Examples of the Jews’ emphasis on the outward

appearance are manifold in the Old Testament. For example, the prophet Joel said to the Jews:

Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil (Joel 2:12-13).

God wanted them to rend their garments, but He wanted that rending to come from the “inside out.” Isaiah rebuked the Jews of his day for the same attitude:

To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. (Isa 1:11-13).

God was not saying that He did not want any more sacrifices, but in reality He was saying that He wanted their hearts to be right along with their sacrifices. In Hosea’s day this was also a problem. Hosea wrote, “For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings” (Hosea 6:6). God desired

their acknowledgment of Him as God in their hearts by the way they set Him apart. Over and over, the Jews placed their emphasis on what could be seen and not on the hidden man of the heart. God required, and still requires, to be first in man's heart.

The apostle Paul wrote about this point in the book of Romans:

For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God (Rom. 2:28-29).

To be a true Jew, one had to have a heart which was open to the Word of God. Robert Whiteside says of these verses:

Outward circumcision was necessary to a Jew, but outward circumcision was worthless unless it was accompanied by the circumcision of the heart. Circumcision of the heart is the cutting off of the stubbornness and sinful desires of the heart.⁷

The Bible places a great emphasis on the importance of the renewing of the inner man, that is, the heart of man. The body of Christ today needs to once again learn this lesson. The church today is the priesthood of believers (1 Pet. 2:5,9) and as the priesthood, has the right of sacrifice through the High Priest, Christ (Heb. 3:1). When sacrifices are offered today, they must be accompanied by hearts which are circumcised. God will in no wise accept

sacrifices from His people today whose hearts are centered on anything except Him (Matt. 6:33). We must ever guard against dethroning God in our hearts and setting up idols.

Conclusion

God made a covenant with Abraham and gave him the command to circumcise as a seal of his righteousness. Abraham was assured by the sign of circumcision that God would bless all nations through him and his lineage who would come after him. Circumcision showed an outward cutting which was to be accompanied by an inward cutting of the heart which would hear and heed God's Word. Those refusing to circumcise would forfeit their privileges and blessings.

We are no longer bound by that covenant and so circumcision is no longer a command for God's people. However, all men are to still have circumcised hearts, that is, have hearts which have the stubbornness and sinful desires cut from them. The Judaizers troubled the early church due to their prejudice against the Gentiles. We need to heed the lessons from the past and have hearts which are receptive to God's Word and obey that Word.

Endnotes

1 A. W. Pink, **The Divine Covenants**, (Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan), 1973, 134.

2 Pink, **The Divine Covenants**, 134-135.

3 C. C. Crawford, **BIBLE STUDY TEXTBOOK SERIES, GENESIS The Book of The Beginnings, Vol. III**, (College Press, Joplin. Mo.), 1970, 251.

4 Thomas Whitelaw, **The Pulpit Commentary**, (Macdonald Publishing Co., McLean Va.), 233.

5 James Burton Coffman, **James Burton Coffman**

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6 Crawford, **BIBLE STUDY TEXTBOOK SERIES, GENESIS The Book of The Beginnings, Vol. III**, 263.

7 Robert L. Whiteside, **Commentary On Romans**, (Guardian of Truth Foundation Publications, Bowling Green, Ky), 1988, 65.

Chapter 30

The Doctrine Of Worship In The Two Covenants

Kevin D. Beard

Of all the things that have changed throughout the ages, the existence of worship has remained constant. Contrary to what some assume, man did not invent worship, but God dictated it. As early as Cain and Abel, the Bible specifically records man's worship in light of God's instruction (compare Gen. 4:1-5; Heb. 11:4; Rom. 10:17). Jesus discussed worship with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. He told her that the Father seeks true worshipers to worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24). So the Father not only demands, but also desires to be worshiped. But ages have changed. The Patriarchal Age gave way to the Mosaic Age which in turn gave way to the Christian age. With the change of laws came a change in worship. God demanded different things from man in each new age.

The Two Covenants, the Law of Moses and the Law of Christ, are in many ways dissimilar, yet in many other ways they are quite similar. The doctrine of worship within these two covenants is both similar and dissimilar as well. The New Testament is clear in its teaching that

the Old Law has been taken away (Eph. 2:14-15; Col. 2:14; Rom. 7:1-4). For this reason, the Mosaic law of worship with its sacrifices, tithing, instrumental music, incense, and such like, is no longer in effect. But while the Lord has changed His specific laws regarding the acts of worship, there are still guiding principles which govern worship similarly now as they did then.

Worship Must Be Spiritual

The spiritual focus of man's worship of God forms the foundation of all attempts at worship. If man does not seek to glorify and please God through worship, then his worship is unacceptable. This was so in the Old Covenant and it still is in the New. Israel could not have missed this point. When Moses ascended Mount Sinai to receive the Law, these are the first things he was told:

I am the Lord thy God...Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image...Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God...(Exod. 20:2-5).

Jehovah made it perfectly clear to Israel that He wanted to be first in their hearts and in their worship.

The Lord emphasized this principle in the tabernacle. Priests were given strict regulations regarding their work in this holy building. Special garments were made for their work (Exod. 28:1-3). The priests had to be consecrated through sacrifices, washings, anointings, and the sprinkling of blood before they were able to minister (Exod. 29:1-46). Before their daily service priests were required to wash at the laver (Exod. 30:18-21). One

purpose of all of this was to remind the priests and the people that they were worshiping a holy God. After giving the requirements for the priests' consecration, the Lord said:

And they shall know that I am the Lord their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them: I am the Lord their God (Exod. 29:46).

He always demanded to be placed first in their worship. Unfortunately, the people did not retain this spiritual aspect to their worship. It was not long after their conquest of Canaan that a generation arose "...which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which He had done for Israel" (Judg. 2:10). This generation turned from following the Lord and served the false gods of those people whom they had been commanded to expel (Judg. 2:11-13). From this time on, idolatry became a stumbling block for Israel. Through the years they served Baal, Ashtoreth, Chemosh, Molech, and seemingly every other false god worshiped by their neighbors. This idolatry ultimately brought Israel's destruction.

What could cause a nation so richly blessed by their God to turn from Him to serve the lifeless, powerless imitations concocted by other nations? Certainly it could not have resulted from any divine failure, but it had to come from the people themselves. They began to want more than what God had given them. They wanted to be like the nations around them (compare 1 Sam. 8:5, 19-20). Their selfishness eventually brought their destruction, just as it did for the nations around them whom they so desperately wanted to imitate.

Worship in the New Covenant also must be spiritual, or God-centered. When Jesus discussed worship with the Samaritan woman, her main concern was with the place of worship. Jesus turned her attention to the object of worship as He discussed the coming kingdom:

But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:23-24).

Six times in these two sentences Jesus refers to the Father. Certainly the Lord Himself understood that worship must glorify God and no one else.

When men remove God as the focal point and object of worship, that worship becomes meaningless. One way this happens is by ignoring the Father’s teachings. Jesus condemned the Pharisees, saying, “But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” (Matt. 15:9). The Pharisees’ greatest desire was to be seen by men as being the religious elite, the super righteous. To achieve this goal they made great effort, broadening their phylacteries, enlarging the borders of their garments, and seizing the chief seats in the synagogues (Matt. 23:5-6). In their zeal they enforced the observance of their traditions even above the Law. All of these things removed God from their worship and replaced Him with themselves. What more fitting description of their worship then could Jesus have given? Truly such worship is vain, empty, meaningless.

In an age where entertainment is king, Christians

must guard against a similar kind of vain worship. If God's instructions are set aside for the sake of entertainment, then worship again becomes vain. Some today are calling for a restructuring of worship. They say the singing is out of touch and the sermons are mere tired repetitions. Worship ought to be a celebration, a "holy wow," according to some. Thus, in some men's eyes, worship ought to be a tool merely to excite the emotions. From this basis comes the attempted justification of hand clapping, solos, choirs, and anything else that will excite men's emotions. And with that, those things which God has commanded are substituted with whatever fad happens to please man today. Such attempts at worship are devoid of that basic spiritual, God-centered characteristic which God demands.

Worship Must Be Sincere

Acceptable worship must originate from the heart of man. If it does not, then worship degrades into a lifeless, formal ritualism devoid of purpose, meaning, and benefit. Though the Old Covenant dictated the use of many ritualistic elements, Jehovah never intended for the execution of these to be done mindlessly. Each of the prescribed sacrifices involved outward ritual, yet each was designed to turn man's heart toward a specific attribute of God and man's relation to God. For example, the burnt offering was to be made "before the Lord" (Lev. 1:3, 5); it was to make atonement (Lev. 1:4); the worshiper was to lay his hands on the animal's head, symbolizing the fact that the animal was taking his place (Lev. 1:4); and when all of this was done and the animal was burned, it became "a sweet savor unto the Lord" (Lev. 1:9). When offered acceptably, the worshiper must have been stricken with

the fact that devotion to God must be complete, and that only through an atoning sacrifice could a right relationship with the Lord be maintained. Certainly a sincere worship was the only one of which the Lord approved. The other offerings: the sin offering, the trespass offering, the peace offering, the meal offering, were all similarly prescribed, with each one pointing man's heart to God.

Yet Israel did not continually offer sincere worship to the Lord. It became only an outward exercise. For this empty attempt at worship, the Lord said through Isaiah:

To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and of the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them (Isa. 1:11-14).

Surely none of the Jews could have argued that the items of their worship were wrong. God had commanded the offerings, the observance of new moons and Sabbaths, and all of the things Isaiah itemized. Yet the Lord told them those things now only moved Him to anger and disgust. What caused this reaction from the Lord if the people were doing those things He had commanded? It

was their insincerity. When the people spread their hands before the Lord, their hands were full of blood (Isa. 1:15). They brought their offerings to the Lord, yet they refused to reform their lives. So the worship which was intended to draw man closer to God through atonement and sanctification became a mockery of the holiness of God Himself. The only way the situation could be remedied was through true repentance:

Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow” (Isa. 1:16-17).

In other words, they had to approach God in sincere worship.

The New Covenant dictates sincere worship too. Again, in Jesus’ discussion with the woman at the well, He emphasized that the Father seeks true worshipers, and that true worshipers would be ones who worshiped in spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24). Worship in spirit and in truth is worship with the right attitude and the right action. Without both constituents, worship is not acceptable to God. One can attempt to worship God in all the ways the New Testament authorizes and still not please God if that worship is insincere.

The early Christians demonstrated this attitude of sincerity with their zeal for learning and their fear of God:

And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every

soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles” (Acts 2:42-43).

Their worship was anything but formality. It would be hard to imagine those Christians approaching worship with a sense of drudgery. Having been made aware of their guilt in the murder of the very Son of God, and then having been cleansed from that awful guilt, these Christians expressed their love, their respect, their reverence, and their appreciation for Jehovah through the sincerity of their worship.

By the time the book of Revelation was written, insincerity had again become a problem with some churches. To the church in Ephesus, the Lord’s condemnation was “thou hast left thy first love” (Rev. 2:4). Their service to the Lord had become empty and meaningless because it was not founded upon love. As Paul told the Corinthians, no matter what a child of God may do, even if it is giving his life, if he does it without love it profits him nothing (1 Cor. 13:1-3).

Insincerity remains a problem today. Some have developed the attitude which asks “how little must I do to get by?” In worship it manifests itself in little or no participation and sporadic attendance. These are the members who are more concerned with whether or not the preacher finishes his sermon in time to beat the crowd to the restaurant for lunch. These are the members who find it next to impossible to remain seated for an hour, and leave the auditorium in the middle of the sermon. These are the members who find every excuse to sit as silent as a tomb during the singing. These are the members who find the time allotted for the Lord’s Supper to be an excellent time to review the day’s further

activities. Sadly, some members of the church waste their lives never knowing the joy, the encouragement, and the blessing of worship. Each member of the Lord's church ought to remind himself that God desires true, or sincere worshipers.

Worship Must Be Sacerdotal

The worship of Jehovah has been a sacerdotal or priestly worship in both covenants. In the Old Law, only those who met the Lord's qualifications could serve as priests to mediate between the people and God. This was the only avenue of approach to God in worship. Aaron and his sons were singled out from the people to serve the Lord in the priest's office. Of the priests only one was chosen to be high priest. The high priest alone was allowed to enter the most holy place only on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16), the day in which the people atoned for their sins by offering an atoning sacrifice. The high priest entered the most holy place only on this day with the blood of the atoning sacrifice. He was the mediator between God and the people. The other priests officiated in the daily worship, taking care of such things as the daily sacrifices, burning the incense, and so forth.

The Lord did not look lightly upon those who violated these sacerdotal laws. Not even the king could take these duties upon himself without incurring the wrath of God. Early in the reign of Saul, he faced an impending battle with the Philistines. Before this battle, Saul waited in Gilgal for Samuel, who would offer a burnt offering to the Lord there. But in his impatience, and because the people began to be scattered from him, Saul decided to offer the sacrifice himself, even though he was not a priest (1 Sam. 13:8-9). As soon as Saul finished, Samuel arrived. He

told Saul of God's displeasure with this act:

Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the Lord have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over his people because thou hast not kept that which the Lord commanded thee (1 Sam. 13:13-14).

Saul forfeited his chance to be established in Israel as king. His descendants would not reign, but God had chosen "a man after his own heart," one who would respect all the Laws of God. All of this happened because Saul violated God's sacerdotal laws regarding worship.

Another king ignored these laws and suffered God's wrath. King Uzziah had been a righteous king, following in the ways of the Lord. Jehovah gave Uzziah victory over his enemies, and Uzziah did much work in strengthening the land of Judah (2 Chron. 26:5-10). Yet Uzziah was not content with what God had given him. He allowed himself to become puffed up with pride and entered the temple to burn incense before the Lord (2 Chron. 26:16). Azariah, the high priest, and 80 priests opposed Uzziah, saying:

It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the Lord, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed;

neither shall it be for thine honor from the Lord
God (2 Chron. 26:18).

When Uzziah obstinately opposed the priests and the Lord, God struck him with leprosy, and Uzziah remained a leper till the day he died (2 Chron. 26:19-21). A sacerdotal system of worship exists under the New Covenant as well. A high priest has made that atoning sacrifice which enables the people of God to come into God's presence. Jesus is that high priest. He offered Himself as the atoning sacrifice, and thus it remains a perfect sacrifice, once for all time. Consider the following:

Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself (Heb. 7:27).

But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; ...For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified (Heb. 10:12, 14).

As the perfect high priest, Jesus stands as man's only mediator with God (1 Tim. 2:5).

But in the New Covenant there is no separation of the priestly class from the rest of God's people on earth. Peter described the church as a "royal priesthood" (1 Pet. 2:9); John said that Christ has "...made us kings and priests unto God..." (Rev. 1:6). Each child of God possesses the right to enter God's presence in worship. But the priestly function today involves a different kind of service from the animal sacrifices and burning of incense made

under the Old Covenant. The function of the priesthood today is "...to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 2:5). "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name" (Heb. 13:15). Each child of God has the right and the privilege of coming before God: "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus...let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith..." (Heb. 10:19-22).

This principle must be clearly understood in light of what some today advocate concerning the denominations. The idea prevails in some circles today that the church is not important. This notion has borne fruit in the ecumenical, "community wide" worship spectacles in which some congregations of the Lord's church have participated. Their fellowship of these denominational groups shows a complete ignorance of, or abhorrence for the sacerdotal worship of God. What happened to Saul and to Uzziah when they presumed to take the priestly duties upon themselves? Will God overlook the arrogant ones today who seize for themselves or grant to others a privilege to worship which is not rightfully theirs? Peter wrote to true Christians, people who faithfully had obeyed all of God's plan, when he said they were a royal priesthood. Can those who are not priests of God today worship Him acceptably? Certainly not. Paul said, "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen" (Eph. 3:21). Only in the church can praise and glory rightly be given to God because the church is that royal priesthood.

Worship Must Be Structured

Structured worship is worship that follows a strict

plan or pattern. In the Old Law, God's structure for worship contained different animal sacrifices, food sacrifices, burning of incense, and other acts such as these. He gave the Jews strict guidelines for the exercise of these worshipful acts. These guidelines governed every aspect of their worship: the kind of animals for acceptable sacrifice, the way in which the animals were killed, the times when these acts were appropriate, etc. In fact, the book of Leviticus may be thought of as a handbook for the priests to guide them in fulfilling their responsibilities.

Those who deviated from the structure of worship as God had ordained did not find pleasure in God's eyes. Through the sin of Nadab and Abihu, Israel discovered how seriously the Lord views His pattern for worship. His pattern demanded that fire for burning incense come from the altar (Lev. 16:12). But Nadab and Abihu ignored this detail. Scripture does not record their reason for using strange fire. Did they think one source of fire was as good as another? Did they want to rebel against God's authority? Was there some other factor involved which clouded their judgment (some have supposed that Nadab and Abihu were under the influence of alcohol since the prohibition against the priests' drinking while serving in the tabernacle immediately follows this account, Lev. 10:8-11)? The Bible does not say. It simply says:

And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not (Lev. 10:1).

Some might accuse the Lord of being overly harsh in

His judgment of Nadab and Abihu. After all, look at all of the things which were right about their worship. They were the sons of Aaron, the ones divinely appointed to burn the incense. Burning incense was something God had commanded. They were using their censers as they had been instructed. They burned the incense in the tabernacle, just as the Law had prescribed. Why then would God make so strong a statement to all of Israel in destroying the two priests over a detail such as the source of their fire? Surely the Lord wanted all to know that those who worship Him must have the right kind of respect for His Word. This is why worship must be structured; it demonstrates respect and reverence for God's authority.

The lesson learned from Nadab and Abihu's mistake must still influence men today. Even though worship no longer involves burning incense, it still involves following the divine pattern. Worship necessarily involves a superior party and an inferior party. Can the inferior party in worship presume to decide for himself what will please the superior one in worship? Perhaps man could make such a decision if God had not spoken on the matter.

But God has spoken on the matter. He has given man exactly what he expects in worship. He wants to be worshiped through singing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16), prayer (Acts 2:42; 1 Tim. 2:8), giving (1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 9:6-7); the Lord's Supper (Matt. 26:26-29; 1 Cor. 11:23-29), and the teaching of His Word (Acts 2:42; 20:7). No other means of worshiping can be found in the New Testament. For man to take what God has authorized, set it aside, and substitute his own ideas is the utmost in arrogance. Man does not have the right to omit or alter any of the things God has demanded, nor does he have the right to add other things which God has not authorized. The Lord plainly

and clearly explained what He wants in worship. Reverence and respect demand that man follow those things without alteration. Worship must be structured according to the divine plan.

Conclusion

Worship must be important to God, for His Word is filled with teaching regarding it. But His Word also is filled with examples of those who displeased God while attempting to worship Him. So if one assumes that he may worship God however he chooses, he makes a dangerous mistake.

While different in specifics, worship in the Two Covenants is similar in principle. Acceptable worship in both covenants is spiritual; God must be the focus of worship. It must be sincere; to worship otherwise makes a mockery of God and of worship. It must be sacerdotal; God always demanded a priesthood through which worship comes. And it must be structured; worship can be pleasing to God only if it follows His pattern. From this study of the doctrine of worship in the Two Covenants it is clear that God both desires and demands worship, but only the kind of worship that He has authorized.

Chapter 31

The Tabernacle Of The Old Covenant

Paul Meacham, Jr.

And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it (Exod. 25:8-9).

With these two short verses God set in motion the construction of one of the most famous of all structures assembled by man. These verses make it clear that the design, construction, and purpose of the tabernacle all had their origin in God. It is because this tent, simple in many respects, had its origin in God that it carries significance for us today. It is that significance which prompts the following investigation of the structure, furnishings, material, labor, purpose, pattern, and some of the abundant lessons of the tabernacle of the Old Covenant.

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance defines the Hebrew word translated tabernacle as "...a residence..." and lists "dwelling place", "habitation", and "tent" as other English words of proper translation. This definition tells us much

about the structure even before we know of its construction. If the building in question is to be a “dwelling place” and God said, “...let them make **ME** a sanctuary;” (emp. mine-PDM) then our respect for and interest in **this** tent should be increased.

From the above definition, the word “tabernacle” could, and sometimes does, refer to structures other than the dwelling place of Jehovah among the Israelites. However, for this study, we will limit ourselves to this one reference unless stated otherwise.

The Structure

Every aspect of the structure of the tabernacle was unique, amazing, and divinely directed. The first of God’s directions, concerning the gathering of materials, was possibly the most amazing of all:

And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering. And this is the offering which ye shall take of them; gold, and silver, and brass, And blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats’ hair, And rams’ skins dyed red, and badgers’ skins, and shittim wood, Oil for the light, spices for anointing oil, and for sweet incense, Onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod, and in the breastplate (Exod. 25:1-7).

Here God leaves the furnishing of the materials to the good nature and free-will offerings of His people. Though this is a foreign concept to many in the religious world

today, it was the choice of God then and is still God's way under the New Covenant. "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:7). No limits, minimum or maximum, were set for the people. Nor do we find a grudging people asking, "How much do I **HAVE** to give?" Instead, we find the response to be overwhelmingly positive:

And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the LORD's offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all his service, and for the holy garments. And they came, both men and women, as many as were willing hearted, and brought bracelets, and earrings, and rings, and tablets, all jewels of gold: and every man that offered, offered an offering of gold unto the LORD. And every man, with whom was found blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, and red skins of rams, and badgers' skins, brought them. Every one that did offer an offering of silver and brass brought the LORD's offering: and every man, with whom was found shittim wood for any work of the service, brought it (Exod. 35:21-24).

Notice that both men and women came giving gifts. This means that many of the gifts given were probably personal objects rather than "family funds" which would have been under the control of the man. Also notice the gifts themselves. A review of Exodus 11:2-3 tells us that many of these things given were probably obtained by the

Israelites through the working of God on the Egyptians. That may help explain why the people were so willing to give. If we remember today that the blessings we have come from God, and not our labors, we will also be more willing to spend and be spent in His service. Finally, notice the abundance of the gifts:

And all the wise men, that wrought all the work of the sanctuary, came every man from his work which they made; And they spake unto Moses, saying, The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work, which the LORD commanded to make. And Moses gave commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing. For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much (Exod. 36:4-7).

This record is truly remarkable when you consider that all the materials, except the silver (collected by a tax (Exod. 38:25-28)), was collected without coercion and the abundance was so great that the people had to be restrained lest they give too much. It is also worth noting that the workers were wise indeed. They showed no personal desire for the objects given and when the bounty exceeded the need, they stopped the peoples' giving.

With the materials now gathered, our attention turns to the labor and workmanship needed to craft God's dwelling place. God's design did not call for a mere tent, but a structure that required the finest of spinners,

weavers, carpenters, carvers of wood, stone, and jewels, embroideries, and smiths of gold, silver, and brass. These needed artisans came, as did the material, freely and willingly:

And all the women that were wise hearted did spin with their hands, and brought that which they had spun, both of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine linen. And all the women whose heart stirred them up in wisdom spun goats' hair (Exod. 35:25-26).

Once again, we find the people leaving their tents and coming to do what the Lord's work required. Though the tasks are different today, we still look for those workers ready to come to the harvest (Luke 10:2).

Though the workers were ready, an undertaking of this magnitude required people of great skill and organization. Again, God was there to provide:

And Moses said unto the children of Israel, See, the LORD hath called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; And he hath filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship; And to devise curious works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, And in the cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of wood, to make any manner of cunning work. And he hath put in his heart that he may teach, both he, and Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. Them hath he filled with wisdom of heart, to work all

manner of work, of the engraver, and of the cunning workman, and of the embroiderer, in blue, and in purple, in scarlet, and in fine linen, and of the weaver, even of them that do any work, and of those that devise cunning work (Exod. 35:30-35).

Now all the pieces were in place. Every need had been met seemingly before it was even realized by Israel. In reading this I think of all those today so eager to cater to the “felt needs” of the people. For some reason man has come to the conclusion that a need doesn’t exist until we see it, and once we see the need, we are the only ones able to devise a method suitable to meet it. However, the Bible says that God knows our needs before we do (Matt. 6:8, Luke 12:30) and has already provided all things necessary to meet them (Phil. 4:19, Psm. 23:1, 2 Cor. 9:8).

It occurs to me that in the cases of the giving of material, and the volunteering of labor and skills, no one would be left out. Those who had gold gave gold. Those who could not afford gold gave brass. Those unable to afford gold or brass gave skins or cloth. Those possessing great skills and talents used them. Those less gifted could work in the moving of materials. Those too old to apply themselves to great physical labor could organize and schedule. There was something that each person could do and therefore something that each person should do!

Now, with able management, willing workers and ready supplies for their labors, let us turn our attention to the structure erected by Israel. This may be easier to do in two pieces. First, we will examine the tabernacle proper and then the courtyard surrounding it.

The tabernacle was a tent-like structure 10 cubits

wide and 30 cubits long. Assuming a cubit to be 18 inches, this gives us a tent 15' by 45'. The tent itself had three wooden sides consisting of boards 15' long and 27" wide. The eastern end was of skins providing entrance to the tent. Each board had two tenons joining it to the next board and was held in place by two sockets of silver on the bottom edge. The boards were then braced by bars and pillars of wood. All the wood was shittim wood and was covered with gold. On this framework of wood was hanged four layers of cloth and skins to serve as a covering. The innermost layer was fine linen of blue, purple, and scarlet embroidered with cherubims (Exod. 26:31). Working from the inside out, the outer three layers were of goat, ram, and badger skins. The interior of the tent was divided into two compartments by a linen veil like that used as the innermost covering. The outer room was 10' wide by 7.5' deep and was called the Holy Place. The inner room was 15' by 15'. This was the Holy of Holies. Only the priests were allowed to enter the tabernacle and only the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies.

The tabernacle, though small, was surrounded by a courtyard 150' long and 75' wide. The boundaries of the courtyard were marked by a fence 7.5' high. The fence was made of brass pillars with silver hooks. From these hooks hanged fine linens. The courtyard was entered by an opening in the eastern end of the fence.

The Furnishings

As marvelous and fantastic as the tabernacle was, its furnishings were certainly equal to the setting. All the furniture of the tabernacle was designed by God. Just as He had given detailed instructions for the building of the tabernacle, He gave detailed instructions for those

objects that were to occupy it. Let us now take a brief look at the divinely designed objects.

Possibly the best known of all is the ark of the covenant. The ark was a wooden box 3'9" long and 2'3" wide and high. The wood was covered inside and out with pure gold and had a golden crown that rimmed the top of the box. Inside the chest, you would find the stone tablets containing the Ten Commandments, a golden pot of manna, and Aaron's rod that budded (Heb. 9:4) The lid of the ark was made of pure gold and had two cherubims on it. The two cherubims faced each other and their wings stretched upward and over the ark. This lid was called the Mercy Seat. It was here that God said:

And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandments unto the children of Israel (Exod. 25:22).

The ark of the covenant had four golden rings. These were placed one at each corner. Wooden staves overlaid with gold were then placed through these rings and thus the ark was to be carried. While this may seem a trivial point to some, God considered this, and all the details, to be of the greatest importance. As an example, I would direct you to 2 Sam. 6:1-7 and the account of Uzzah's death. The ark of the covenant was the only object in the Holy of Holies.

Next, we notice the golden altar, or the altar of incense. This was an altar of wood covered with gold. It was placed in the Holy Place just before the veil. It was

18" square and 36" high. Burning incense was offered to God each morning and evening on this altar. The only other offering made on this altar was an offering of blood once each year on the Day of Atonement.

Third, we notice the golden candlestick. This was a solid gold candlestick with a central stem and three branches on either side of it. It and its accompanying tools were fashioned from one talent of gold. The candlestick was placed along the northern side of the Holy Place where the priests would attend to it.

Opposite the candlestick, along the south wall in the Holy Place, we find the table of shewbread. This was a wooden table 3' long, 18" wide, and 2'3" high. The table was covered with gold. Twelve loaves of unleavened bread were placed on this table each Sabbath. They were arranged in two stacks of six, one loaf for each tribe. The old bread was taken away each Sabbath and eaten by the priests in the Holy Place.

The two final furnishings were made of brass and placed in the courtyard outside the tabernacle. First, we find the altar of burnt offering. This was an altar 7.5' square and 4.5' high. It was made of shittim wood and covered in brass. All of its tools were made of solid brass. This altar was used for burnt offerings and meal offerings which were made daily.

The final object we will mention is the laver. This was a basin which sat on a foot, both made of brass. The laver sat between the brass altar and the entrance to the tabernacle. The basin of the laver contained water that the priests used to wash their hands and feet before serving in the tabernacle. The penalty for failing to complete this washing was death. Just as a side note, I cannot help but wonder if anyone of their day accused them of believing in water salvation.

The Purpose

A logical question to address at this point is “Why?” Why would God direct His people to erect such a structure? Why would God have them go to such great trouble and expense to construct a tent? Why would God have Moses give the account of the creation of this world and all that pertains to it in such stark detail and then recount the building of a temporary structure in the finest of detail? We may not be able to answer all of these questions, but we are provided with the answers to many.

The first of these answers is found in the passage used to open this writing. “And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them” (Exod. 25:8). Here God states this is to be His dwelling place. As God is everywhere at all times, we should not understand this to mean that He left heaven, but rather that this was to be the appointed place in which Israel would approach and address Jehovah. The passage says “...that I may dwell among them”. Here was to be God’s dwelling **AMONG** His people. Remember that the tabernacle was not instructed or constructed until the people had accepted the terms of God’s covenant.

Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel. And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him. And all the people answered

together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD (Exod. 19:5-8).

With the covenant agreed on, God gave the people a visible reminder of His presence. In his commentary, Matthew Henry says it this way:

...there he manifested his presence among them, and it was intended for a sign or token of his presence, that, while they had that in the midst of them, they might never again ask, **Is the Lord among us or not?**

Therefore we see the first purpose of the tabernacle was that it should be the dwelling place of God among His people.

The second purpose for the tabernacle is found in God's instructions for its placement in the camp. We find in Exod. 33:7-11 that a tent had been erected and Moses had named it the "tabernacle of the congregation". This tent was pitched outside the camp. All who sought God would leave the camp to make their petitions at this tent. However, when the tabernacle of God's design was pitched, it was pitched in the center of the camp. It was God's desire that His dwelling place should ever be the center of their lives. It is from this central seat of power that the elders judged the people (Num. 11:16), and here that God called Moses to meet with Him. In fact from the time of its consecration, all of Israel's movements were directed by God from the tabernacle (Exod. 40:36-38).

Let us now look briefly at one more of the tabernacle's

roles. In Hebrews, chapters 8 and 9, the writer engages us in a tremendous discussion of the Two Covenants and the superiority of the second. In doing so, the inspired penman used as a proof, the comparison of the tabernacles of the old and new covenants. As marvelous as the old tabernacle was, it was a mere shadow of that which was to come.

It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience—concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation. But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God (Heb. 9:9-14)? (NKJ)

Having an understanding of the first tabernacle and its workings, we are now much more able to grasp the difference between that having eternal substance and that of earthly transience. Dwelling among His people under

the first covenant gives us today a better understanding of God's nature. It also shows us that, contrary to the thoughts of deists, God has always had an active hand in the affairs of His people.

The Pattern

God had a pattern by which the tabernacle should be built. God, through Moses, gave that pattern to Israel. God expected His people to carry out the construction of the tabernacle in complete compliance with every detail He had given. All of these things are abundantly clear from scripture. Please notice the following:

According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it (Exod. 25:9).

And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount (Exod. 25:40)

And this work of the candlestick was of beaten gold, unto the shaft thereof, unto the flowers thereof, was beaten work: according unto the pattern which the LORD had shewed Moses, so he made the candlestick (Num. 8:4).

...for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount (Heb. 8:5).

By paying attention to the usage of the words "all" and

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“pattern”, it is clear that God intended for the people to accept and obey his instructions in every detail. The Hebrew word here translated “pattern” means “a model” or “form”. That means God did give an explicit blueprint. If Israel had approached God’s pattern for the tabernacle with the same spirit that some today approach the gospel, I fear the tabernacle would have been made of stone instead of wood and skins and housed a basketball gym instead of the ark and altar. For an example of the detail of God’s instructions, please notice the following examples from the book of Exodus:

COMMANDED

free-will offering (25:2)
collect gold, silver, and brass (25:3)
collect blue, purple, and scarlet (25:4)
collect linen, goats’ hair, rams’ skin dyed red, and badgers’ skin (25:4-5)
collect oil for the lamps (25:6)
collect stones for the ephod (25:7)
make an ark (25:10)
use shittim wood (25:10)
2.5 X 1.5 X 1.5 cubits (25:10)
overlay it with gold (25:11)
rim it with a golden crown (25:11)
four rings of gold on the corners (25:12)
staves of shittim wood (25:13)
overlay them with gold (25:13)
staves in the rings (25:15)
mercy seat of pure gold (25:17)
one cherubim on each end (25:19)
cherubims facing each other (25:20)

OBEYED

free-will offering taken (35:21)
gold, silver, & brass collected (35:22,24)
blue, purple, & scarlet collected (35:23)
linen, goats’ hair, rams’ skins dyed red and badgers’ skins collected (35:23)
oil for the lamps collected (35:28)
stones for the ephod collected (35:27)
made an ark (37:1)
used shittim wood (37:1)
made it 2.5 X 1.5 X 1.5 cubits (37:1)
overlaid it with gold (37:2)
rimmed it with a golden crown (37:2)
put 4 rings of gold on the corners (37:3)
made staves of shittim wood (37:4)
overlaid them with gold (37:4)
put the staves in the rings (37:5)
made a mercy seat of pure gold (37:6)
placed one cherubim on each end (37:8)
cherubims faced each other (37:9)

mercy seat placed on ark (25:21)

put the mercy seat on the ark (40:20)

table of shittim wood (25:23)

made a table of shittim wood (37:10)

Here I have listed twenty detailed instructions that God gave Moses. I have also listed the accounts showing that each of these instructions was obeyed in every detail. Lest you think the point inadequately made, consider that in the book of Exodus alone, we find no less than 135 such detailed commands and the subsequent acts of obedience to them. Just as in the twenty examples above, the pattern established by God was always followed to the nth degree. This should teach us, once and for all, that obedience to God must be complete or it isn't obedience at all.

Lessons

Romans 15:4 tells us that:

... whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

This is certainly true concerning the account of the tabernacle of the Old Covenant. Let us now look at a few of these lessons.

Paul instructed the Corinthians:

Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come (1 Cor. 16:2).

In fulfilling our requirement in this area it would do us

well to remember the generous and cheerful giving of Israel for the tabernacle. If we like Israel and the Macedonians of 2 Cor. 8 will give ourselves first, we will find it a short reach from our hearts to our wallets.

The second lesson I would like to notice is one concerning those who worked on the tabernacle. The great craft and skill of these willing laborers was noted earlier. The point I would like to make here is this: no matter how skillful and creative the artisans were, their activities concerning the tabernacle were limited to those things authorized in God's pattern for it. Today there are those, even among my brethren, who have decided the music of the Lord's church must be changed. The reasons usually go something like this: "We won't be able to keep the interest of the young people if we do not have more modern music." "If we don't provide an outlet for those of our number possessing great musical talents, we will lose them." "The old-fashioned congregational singing just won't attract the big crowds any more." What seems to be lost in the search for youthful enthusiasm, creative outlets, and MTV-style worship services is the desire to worship God according to His pattern. Let us remember that the skills used on the tabernacle were God-given talents. However, talent does not constitute license. Just because a form of music may be pleasant and well performed does not mean it is acceptable for worship to God. If God created us, and He did (Gen. 1:1, John 1:3, Psm. 33:9), and God gave us our talents, and He did (Jas. 1:17), and God told us how to worship Him, and He did (Eph. 5:19, Col. 3:16-17, John 4:24), what fit of egomania would lead us to believe that we suddenly know more about the matter than God? "...Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1 Sam. 15:22).

A third lesson gleaned from the old tabernacle is a most comforting one indeed. It has already been mentioned that the tabernacle was placed in the center of the Israelites' camp. It has also been mentioned that the tabernacle was God's dwelling place among His people. How blessed we are that our Creator loves us so much that he desires to be near us. Under the Old Covenant, God dwelt among His people in a tent because they were living in tents. At the ushering in of the new covenant, Jesus walked the earth as a man and thereby God dwelt among us in the flesh, just as we live in the flesh (John 1:14). Now, under the New Covenant, God is ever near as He communes with His people in the church of His dear Son:

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me (Rev. 3:20).

A fourth lesson to be learned from the tabernacle is found in an examination of the role of the priests. Notice what God instructed Moses concerning the transportation of the tabernacle. To the family of Gershon was given the job of caring for and transporting the curtains and tapestries of the tabernacle. To the family of Kohath fell the responsibility of the furnishings: ark, altars, candlestick, table, and laver. Merari's family was charged with the solid parts of the structure: boards, pillars, pins, sockets, cords, and bars. All the priests had a job, but not the same job. As it was true then, so it is true today. Please notice:

For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him (1 Cor. 12:12-18).

Each one of us has certain duties given by God. To equip us for them, God has given each of us talents and abilities. In addition, God has assigned to us a variety of roles. Some of these roles are based on age (Tit. 2:2-8, 1 Pet. 5:5). Some tasks are given according to station in life (1 Tim. 6:1, 1 Pet. 2:18, Tit. 2:9-10) and some are reserved for us based on our sex (Eph. 5:22-25, 1 Tim. 3:1-2, 1 Pet 3:5-6, 1 Tim 2:12). I pray that each of us would search His Word, learn what roles have been reserved for us, and give our whole being to fulfilling them. If we would, husbands would love their wives and take the reigns of leadership in the home, fathers would endeavor to raise children to be servants of God, wives would live happily in subjection to their husbands, children would obey and honor their

parents, Christians would gladly submit to the elders, and the family of God would love each other with a fervent love. I know that some would consider this a wild, fantastic dream, but the Bible says it is God's pattern for our lives.

Finally, let us learn from the temporary nature of the tabernacle. It was after all a tent and not a palace. In like manner we have been housed in a fleshly tent. Even with all its aches and pains our bodies are truly marvels. We have eyes better than expensive cameras, hands more sure than robotic claws, feet with built-in suspension systems, brains more powerful than all the computers in the world combined, and a heart with a mean time between failure that would run the most reliable copier into the ground. Still, our bodies are but tents designed to house us for only a little while. Let us never forget the words of Peter:

Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me (2 Pet. 1:14).

How much time do you have left in this tabernacle? I do not know the answer any more than you do. I do know that relatively speaking, it isn't much. I also know that the One who prepared this temporary dwelling for us said:

I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also (John 14:2-3).

God built the tabernacle that He might dwell among His

people and sent His Son that in the end we might dwell with Him. Considering all His goodness toward us, can we give any reply other than that given by Israel long ago? “And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do” (Exod. 19:8).

Endnotes

- 1 James Strong, “Strong’s Greek/Hebrew Dictionary,” **PC Study Bible For Windows, Ver. 2.0, CD-ROM, BibleSoft**, July 1995.
- 2 Matthew Henry, “Matthew Henry’s Commentary,” **PC Study Bible For Windows, Ver. 2.0, CD-ROM, BibleSoft**, July 1995.

Chapter 32

The Temples Of The Two Covenants

Jack Williams

In discussing the temples of the Old Testament Robert Milligan stated:

... the human heart has always desired, if not a local Deity, at least some local manifestation of His presence. “Oh, that I knew,” says Job, xxiii, 3, “**where** I might find him,” that I might come even to His seat! To gratify this desire of the human heart was, therefore, evidently one of the benevolent objects for which both the Tabernacle and Temple were erected. God’s primary design in both cases was simply to furnish a **House** in which His presence, and His power, and His glory might be manifested to His people, and where they might all seek and find Him.¹

That such is true is seen in such passages as Exodus 25:8, wherein the Lord spake concerning the tabernacle and told Moses, “let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.” He gave Solomon similar assurance when in reference to the temple, He said, “I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake

my people Israel” (1 Kings 6:13). It is our task in this lesson to examine the temples of the Old Covenant, noting the divine need for a pattern and plan for them. We will then note some contrasts between the temples of the Old Testament and the temple of the New Testament, the church, emphasizing of course, the superiority of the New Testament temple.

Historical Information Concerning The Temples Of The Old Testament

The first temple to be built was that by Solomon. His father, David, had desired to build the temple for God (2 Sam. 7:1-3), but God forbade him from doing so (2 Sam. 7:4-17). Instead, Solomon was chosen of God to build the temple. God had, though, entrusted David with the pattern for the building of the temple; a pattern which David passed to his son along with provisions needed for the building (1 Chron. 28:9-29:19). The building of the temple began in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon’s reign (1 Kings 6:1). The design of the temple was magnificent and monumental. If one figures eighteen inches for a cubit it was 90 feet long, thirty feet wide and forty-five feet high (1 Kings 6:2). Of the length thirty feet were for the oracle or Most Holy Place which housed the ark of the covenant. The remaining sixty feet were for the house or holy place (1 Kings 6:16-17). Within the Most Holy Place or oracle, he formed two cherubim fifteen feet high. Each wing was seven and one-half feet, with the wingspan being fifteen feet. They were placed with their wings touching one another and the outer wings touching the walls (1 Kings 6:23-27). There was much intricate carving, and the cherubim and most of the

structure was overlaid with pure gold (1 Kings 6:18, 20,-22, 28, 29-35). One writer states that it was no doubt, the most costly and resplendent building on the earth at that time being valued in our dollars at from two to five billion dollars!² Seven years of labor went into this beautiful temple (1 Kings 6:38). As Solomon assembled the people to bring the ark into the temple he prayed unto God, “I have surely built thee an house to dwell in, a settled place for thee to abide in forever” (1 Kings 8:13). Yet for all its beauty the temple could not keep the people’s hearts upon the God of heaven. Solomon’s reign ends with his heart being turned from God because of his love for many strange women; thus the kingdom was divided at his death (1 Kings 11:1, 9-11).

Solomon’s demise was likewise followed by the demise of the grandeur of the temple. The temple then faced competition from the golden calves of Jereboam, who had taken many of the people to the north in rebellion to Rehoboam, Solomon’s son (1 Kings 12:28). In the fifth year of Rehoboam’s reign the king of Egypt took many of the treasures from the temple (1 Kings 14:26). When Rehoboam’s grandson, Asa, reigned, he desecrated the temple with his idols (1 Kings 15:15) and eventually plundered the temple in order to form an alliance with the king of Syria (1 Kings 15:18). Later Athaliah also stole the dedicated things from the temple to bestow them on Baalim (2 Chron. 24:7). King Joash restored the temple (2 Chron. 24:13-14), but Joash himself soon fell into idolatry, forsaking the temple of God (2 Chron. 24:17-18). Later Jehoash, king of Israel, came down and plundered the temple again (2 Kings 14:13-14). Several other attempts were made to restore the temple before Ahaz took the treasures, again to form a league with another

king and further destroyed the temple, making a new altar and removing much of the furnishings from the temple (2 Kings 16:8-18). Hezekiah attempted to restore the temple, but the invasion of Sennacherib caused him to go so far as to cut the gold from the doors of the temple and give as tribute (2 Kings 18:14-16). Manasseh, Hezekiah's son was perhaps the worst of all in his desecration of the temple. He built altars within the temple itself to worship the host of heaven (2 Kings 21:3-7). Energetic efforts at restoration of the temple and reform came at the hand of Josiah (2 Kings 22:1-20:25), but the people soon returned to their old ways. The end for the great temple came when Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, first plundered the temple and its treasures (2 Kings 24:13) and ultimately destroyed it with the city of Jerusalem (2 Kings 25:8-10). The once great temple which Solomon had built had lasted about 400 years.

The next temple of the Old Testament is what is commonly referred to as the temple of Zerubbabel. The children of God had been in captivity for seventy years, just as Isaiah had prophesied (Jer. 25:8-12). In 536 B.C. Cyrus, king of Persia, was stirred up by the Lord to allow the release of the people and the building of the temple (Ezra 1:1-4; Isaiah 44:28; 45:1). Ezekiel, prophesying during the captivity of the children of God (Ezek. 1:1-3) had given a pattern for the temple to be rebuilt (Ezek. 40:1-48:35). Though some of Ezekiel's vision was clearly figurative, it still emphasized that the temple was to be constructed as He commanded and for the purpose for which He desired. Zerubbabel was the one who led a group of some 50,000 back to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple (Ezra 1:1-2:70). After overcoming many obstacles, and at the prompting of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, the

temple was completed about 515 B.C. (Ezra 6:15). Not much is known of the physical appearance of this temple, though it was larger than that built by Solomon, being 60 cubits in height (90 feet) and 60 cubits in breadth (90 feet) (Ezra 6:3). Cyrus had returned to the people many of the treasures Nebuchadnezzar had taken in addition to many other treasures (Ezra 1:7-11). In spite of its physical size and the treasures supplied by Cyrus and the people, we read that when the foundations were poured that those who had seen the glory of the first temple wept as they compared it to the grandeur of the first temple (Ezra 3:12; see also Hag. 2:3). The time of great prosperity as had been under Solomon was now past and the ransacking and pillaging of the temple had taken its toll on the treasures within. One writer notes in regard to the greater glory of the first temple:

The greater glory of the former Temple can only refer to adornment, and to the presence in it of objects wanting in the second. The Mish declares that the second temple lacked five things present in the first: the ark, the sacred fire, the *sh^ekinah*, the Holy Spirit, and the Urim and Thummim (*Yoma*, xxi.2)³

The temple was divided into the holy and most holy place like its predecessor and a veil separated the two. The “most holy place ... was empty, save for a stone on which the high priest, on the great Day of Atonement, placed his censure.”⁴ The temple furniture was much simpler and less ornate. This temple remained for some 500 years, again enduring the ravages of ungodly men. The history of the temple built by the people under Zerubbabel is found

in the writings of men, not in the sacred record which fell silent for the 400 years between Malachi and the New Testament record. In 1 Maccabees 1:20-24, we read of Antiochus Epiphanes taking the altar and furniture of the temple. These were restored by Judas Maccabaeus (1 Maccabees 2:48-50). In 66 B.C., Pompey took the temple hill and entered the most holy place, but did not take the temple treasures. Some years later Crassus carried away everything of value he could find.⁵ This takes us then to the time of Herod in about 39 B.C.

Herod began rebuilding the temple in about 20 B.C. John records for us that the time for the building of the temple and its surrounding buildings had consumed some forty-six years at the time of Jesus (John 2:20). This was the temple to which Christ came. The temple was of marble and gold, a truly magnificent structure. This temple remained until the destruction by the Romans in A.D. 70, which Jesus prophesied, saying, “There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down” (Matt. 24:2).

Some Information Concerning the Pattern of the Temple

It is worthy to note that when the temple was built God gave a pattern by which it was to be constructed. Notice that in 1 Chronicles, as David is instructing his son, Solomon, on the temple he is to build, that four times the word “pattern” is used (1 Chron. 28:11,12,18,19). The word used here is defined by such words as “model, resemblance, figure, form, likeness, pattern, similitude.”⁶ One writer says that “Wherever *tabnit* refers to structures it is best understood as plan;” e.g. David supplied Solomon with *tabnit* (specifications, blueprints) for temple items

(1 Chron. 28:11, 19).⁷ Such information should not surprise the Bible student. Eleven times in the Old Testament we find the English word “pattern” (Exod. 25:9 [twice], 40; Num. 8:4; Josh. 22:28; 2 Kings 16:10; 1 Chron. 28:11, 12, 18, 19; Ezek. 43:10). Of these five refer to the building of the tabernacle (Exod. 25:9, 40; Num. 8:4; Josh. 22:28) and five to the “pattern” of the temple built to God (1 Chron. 28:11,12,18,19; Ezek. 43:10). The Old Covenant being written for our learning (Rom. 15:4), we ought to learn that God has always desired that man follow a pattern in those things religious.

The Temples of the New Covenant

As we now turn our attention to the New Covenant we likewise find reference to a temple for a dwelling place for the God of heaven. There are of course references to Herod’s temple (cf. Matt. 4:5; 21:23; etc). Likewise we find reference to Christ, Himself, as a temple (John 2:19-22) in whom dwelleth all the Godhead bodily (Col. 2:9). But of these, Herod’s temple has been destroyed (Matt. 24:2, 34); and Christ has ascended to the heavens to sit at the right hand of God (Acts 1:9, 2:30-36). Does that mean that the world is now without a place in which God dwells? No, for we find the word temple used further in reference to the church collectively (1 Cor. 3:16-17) as well as individual Christians (1 Corinthians 6:19) who make up the church as a whole (Acts 2:47). It is this latter usage, that of the church, upon which we will emphasize our examinations; for it is obviously here that God wishes for us to continue the ideas and principles of the temple which He began in the Old Testament. Perhaps paramount in such a comparison needs to be the realization of a pattern. God made plain the need of a pattern in regard to the Old

Covenant temple (1 Chron. 28:11-12). Likewise in the New Covenant He demands that things be done according to His pattern. Notice just a few instances in which God declares His demand for a pattern in all things:

One must follow His will (a pattern of things) in order to be acceptable to Him.

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven (Matt. 7:21).

We will be judged by His Word (a pattern of teaching).

In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel (Rom. 2:16; see also John 12:48).

There are things He has given (a pattern of teachings) beyond which we are not to go.

Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against the other (1 Cor. 4:6 - ASV).

To go beyond the teaching of Christ (a pattern of things) is to be without God.

Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son (2 John 9).

We are to do all things by His authority (pattern).

And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him (Col. 3:17).

Multiplied passages could be given which affirm the same basic principle that God has and does demand that we follow His pattern. How tragic that so many today reject the idea of pattern theology in favor of following the whims of man in things pertaining to religion. The words of Christ ought to echo in their hearts, “And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” (Luke 6:46). A people without a pattern is a people without a Lord. Let us now note some of the areas in which there is a common pattern in the temples of the Old and New Covenant.

A Pattern of Origin

Old Covenant - There were many temples built by men to gods they had conceived in their hearts, but only one was acceptable to God, the one He originated.

New Covenant - There were in the first century many temples of pagan origin. Likewise in our day there are many temples or churches. But, as in the Old Covenant, there is but one that can be acceptable to God. Jesus

proclaimed he would build “My church” (Matt. 16:17). It was brought forth on the day of Pentecost as recorded in Acts 2:47. Any other origin fails to follow God’s pattern.

A Pattern of Materials

Old Covenant - As we read in the Old Covenant of the building of the temple we find that many precious things were given for the construction of the temple; such things as gold, silver, onyx, glistening stones and the like (1 Chron. 29:2). Of note, also, is that all were offered willingly for use in the temple (1 Chron. 29:6; Ezra 2:68).

New Covenant - The New Testament presents a different kind of structure, one not made with hands (Acts 17:24). But the materials He demands are even more precious than the gold and treasures of which the temple of the Old Covenant was made. In Acts 2, where we read of the beginning of the New Covenant temple, the church, we find a pattern of things regarding those who comprise the church. These had:

- Heard and believed the word of God -verse 4ff.
- Repented of their sins - verse 38
- Acknowledged Christ as Lord - verse 36-37
- Been baptized for the remission of their sins -
verse 38

What more precious material could there be to build a temple than those who had gladly received His word and were baptized (Acts 2:41)? It is these whom God, according to His pattern, added to the church daily (verse 47). It is tragic how many today wish to add materials to the Lord’s church which He has not authorized; such as: those who are sincere (but wrong), those baptized for

various unscriptural reasons, and those baptized into denominational bodies. God has established a pattern that no man has the right to negate.

A Pattern of Worship

Old Covenant - One has only to read the book of Leviticus to see the emphasis of our God on the worship in the Old Covenant temple. His demand for a pattern was plain.

New Covenant - As we turn to the New Covenant we find Christ proclaiming that God always had and always will have a pattern for worship:

The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him (John 4:23).

His pattern of worship in the New Covenant is plain, just as in the Old Covenant. As the church began we find the disciples continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers (Acts 2:42). Such steadfastness to God's pattern delivered by the apostles led to the Lord's Supper being taken on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7), singing praises to God (Eph. 5:19), teaching of His Word (Acts 20:7), freewill offering of one's means on the first day of the week (1 Cor. 16:2) and prayer (Acts 2:42). Following any other pattern of worship is to worship in vain, following the doctrines of man (Matt. 15:9).

A Pattern of Leadership

Old Covenant - Again, one need only look to the book of Leviticus to see the pattern which God demanded relating

to the priesthood and its responsibilities. While all had a responsibility to worship, they were limited in the role they would partake as dictated by God's pattern.

New Covenant - As we look to the New Covenant we find that here, too, there is a pattern of leadership. As always, there is divine leadership in all things (Eph. 1:22-23). In each congregation there are to be men who meet divine qualifications who oversee that congregation (1 Tim. 3:1-7). Likewise, there are qualifications for those men who will serve in the office of deacon to assist under the oversight of the eldership (1 Tim. 3:8-13). Men are to teach other men (or mixed assemblies), with women being limited in that they cannot take a position of authority over men (1 Tim. 2:8-12). Of course each individual ought to be involved in the work of the church that it may be properly built up (Eph. 4:16). With such plain affirmations as to God's pattern for the leadership in the New Covenant temple, it is amazing that so many today are attacking His plan in favor of such things as feminist challenges and a desire to be like the world.

It is plain that God still has a temple to show forth His glory upon this earth. God's desire has been throughout eternity that the church would be that body upon this earth that would make known to principalities and powers the manifold wisdom of God (Eph. 3:10-11). How sad when men tamper with His pattern and thus tarnish that glory by making to suit man rather than God.

The Superiority of the Temple of the New Covenant

When we look at the overall scheme of things as revealed in the Bible, some have trouble seeing the superiority of the New to the Old. Such is not new. The

book of Hebrews was written to combat that very problem. There were those in danger of returning to the old system of things they had left and thus they were encouraged to see the better things in the church, the temple of the New Covenant. Note some of the better things set forth in this letter of which the church can be assured:

Christ, A Better Messenger to Guide the Church (1:1-4:13)

Christ, A Better High Priest (4:14-7:28)

The New Covenant, A Better Covenant to Guide Us (8:1-9:28)

Christ, A Better Sacrifice Than Those of the Old Covenant (10:1-21)

Christ's Way, A Better Way (10:22-12:29)

Indeed there can be no doubt as to the superiority of the church, the temple of the New Covenant. Whereas the temple of the Old Testament was only temporary on this earth, a mere shadow of the glory to come, the church is the very body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23). It was built by Christ, not men, and as such can never be destroyed by men (Matt. 16:18).

As we ponder the temples of the Old and New Covenant and see plainly the glory of the New, it is no wonder then that Paul proclaimed, "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen" (Eph. 3:21).

Endnotes

- 1 R. Milligan, **Exposition and Defense of the Scheme of Redemption as it is Revealed and Taught in the Holy Scriptures**, (Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate Company, 1977) 117.
- 2 Henry H. Halley, **Halley's Bible Handbook** (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1965) 218.
- 3 W. Shaw Caldecott and James Orr, "Temple," **The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia**, Vol. 5 ed. James Orr (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1974) 2936.
- 4 Caldecott and Orr, **The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia** 2936
- 5 Caldecott and Orr, **The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia** 2936
- 6 James Strong, **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance**, (Nashville: Crusade Bible Publishers, n.d.) 122.
- 7 Bruce K. Waltke, "tabnit," **Theological Wordbook Of the Old Testament**, vol. 2, ed. R. Laird Harris (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 255.

Chapter 33

Two Covenants: Two Mediators: Moses And Christ

Gary Colley

It is a pleasure to be associated with the Southaven church of Christ in this great 1996 POWER Lectureship. We commend the elders and brother B. J. Clarke, director, who have challenged us with this years theme concerning the “Two Covenants.” This study is so very needful to our brotherhood, and to the rest of the world who now walk in darkness without submission to the Covenant of Grace, the New Testament. Hopefully these speeches, and later the cassettes, videos, and book, will be far reaching in bringing understanding to the multitudes concerning God’s Divine Law for our day. We further commend this congregation for their interest in this great work, their many good works, and warm hospitality their visitors always enjoy!

Introduction

Many wonder how so many religions have come to exist in the world. Confusion reigns in the hearts of many over so many divisions and churches, and especially concerning those who claim to be guided by the same book,

the Bible. Hopefully this study will dispel some confusion and help in understanding the origin and working of religion in general, but especially help all who desire to be enlightened and to grasp the all sufficient religion of Jesus the Christ, the Son of the Living God, Who as the mediator of the second covenant brought the New Testament into the world for the salvation of all who will accept it in obedience.

Origin Of Religion

“Religion” means a system of faith and practice. All religion is taught and learned by those who practice it. If the teaching is right the religion is right, but if the teaching is incorrect so is the religion, regardless of how sincere and honest may be the practitioners! For this cause each individual must be cautious and sincere in searching for God’s way above all others whom he may trust. The Psalmist expressed it well for all those who desire to travel the right road to Heaven. He declared the proper teaching to follow and that teaching is found in God’s revelation to the world:

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light
unto my pathway...Forever, O Jehovah, Thy
word is settled in heaven (Psm. 119:105, 89).

The True Standard

It is an important fact to know, that religion had its beginning with God. His revelation, the Bible, is the measuring rod or standard to allow man to determine what is right and what is wrong in religion. For this reason we are commanded to accept no other teaching, and rightly

divide God's Word in order to know that we walk in the right way (2 Tim. 2:15). This is one of the most fundamental lessons needed today, and that which would delete all of the divisions that now extant in the world. It is no wonder that Jesus prayed to the Heavenly Father with the clear expression that the way for all to be one would be through following only His Word (John 17:20-21).

Sub-Standards

Since the beginning of time all religions have had a standard of authority by which individuals who participate are guided in the conduct of their lives. These creeds divide and separate their followers from all others in the world. It cannot be otherwise. All religions have a standard, but sadly most of them are not strictly the Bible. Men have made sub-standards in the form of additions to the Bible, in the humanly written New Translations, man-made creeds, catechisms, disciplines, and additional books such as the Book of Mormon. These changes are not approved by God, and should not be trusted by man! (Cf. Matt. 7:15; 1 John 4:1). These have been made in spite of the fact that man is forbidden to add to or take from God's Revelation (Deut. 4:2; 12:32; Rev. 22:18-19). Hence, we should all be able to see that the many additions to and deletions from God's standard have brought the many differing religions and confusing man-made doctrines.

Following these as our religion, causes even our worship to become vain before God (Matt. 15:9). All man-made creeds either speak more than what the Bible says or less than what the Bible says! If they speak the same as the Bible, they would not be needed!

Teaching Others

Before entering into the discussion of any religious matters, the first thing that must be determined is what will be the standard upon which we each can agree? We are highly privileged to have God's Word given to the world! (Cf. 1 Cor. 2: 9-11). It is our obligation to limit our teaching to this standard and no other (1 Tim. 4:16; 2 Tim. 2:2). In the purity of God's directives, man is safe in his eternal warfare and welfare; but away from it the soul is in danger! The Bible is the only true standard given to "thoroughly furnish" all who will respect its divisions and obey its precepts (2 Tim. 3:16-17; John 5:39-40). We greatly rejoice that this guide book is readily available, well printed and beautifully bound, and priced so that all may afford a copy!

The Bible's Divisions

Most are aware that the Book Divine is divided into the Old Testament with its thirty-nine books and the New Testament with its twenty-seven books. In its present state generally there is a blank page between the Two Testaments representing four hundred silent years when there was no revelation given from God to man. These divisions greatly assist the diligent student with an easy approach to rightly dividing the dispensations, or separate constitutions, which must be respected and understood, for the clear and proper application of God's Will to our lives.

The Bible is certainly a book of orderly plan, and should be handled as such. The Old Testament contains five books of Law, twelve books of history, six books of poetry, and sixteen books of prophecy; The New Testament involves four books of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, one book

of the history of the establishment of the church of Christ and how people were converted to Christ, twenty-one letters on how to live the Christian life, and one book of prophecy.

The Bible's Dispensations

Religion began when Almighty God in the morning of time instituted the Patriarchal (meaning father-rule) system, wherein God taught His Will to the fathers of the family who in turn taught God's system to their family. The father was the prophet, priest, and king of the family. Where ever the family chanced to go, they could stop, build an altar, and offer the commanded sacrifice of worship unto God, being assured that God would accept that worship offered in harmony with His Will (Heb. 11:4). During this dispensation, Noah was commanded to build the ark, and Abraham received the land promise and the Spiritual promise, which were perpetuated through Isaac (Gen. 12:). Abraham's call and the promises were given during this dispensation, in 1921 B.C.. The Law of Moses was given four hundred and thirty years after this promise, and would find it final fulfillment in Jesus Christ, the Son of God (Gal.3:16-18). This family system lasted for some twenty-five hundred years, until God gave a new system on Mount Sinai.

The Mosaical Dispensation

The Law of Moses, and this dispensation of time, was an outgrowth of the promises made to Abraham and his seed (Gen. 12:2). Its purpose was to separate the Jewish nation from all other nations in order to keep the blood line pure for the then future Messiah. It made of them a separate and peculiar people for God own possession, along

with which God's divine protection, guidance, and care was promised throughout their age.

After the people of Israel were delivered out of the rigorous bondage of Egypt, and were led by the mighty hand of God across the Red Sea, fifty days later Moses and Joshua went up to Mount Sinai at the command of God, to receive from Him the two tables of stone upon which were written the Ten Commandments. Thus, a national religion was born and established which separated the Jewish nation from all others, in what may be termed the Mosaical age or Jewish dispensation. God gave through Moses, as His mediator, the pattern for the Tabernacle, built on a foundation of silver and ordered by God as the place where His name and blessings would be obtained. This was the place then where all Jews would assemble for worship as God directed. This moveable tent would continue to be the place of worship, until the time when the Temple was built in Jerusalem. It was then to be in the Temple that God placed His name, and where all faithful Jews from that time forward would have to go to acceptably worship God according to that religion or system of faith and practice.

Man's First Written Law And Mediator

The Law of Moses was the first written Law or system of religion given by God, and for our study, the first of two covenants with which we are dealing in this lectureship. In all covenants or agreements made between God and man, God is the one who gives all of the conditions, and man either accepts the agreement or denies himself covenant-relationship with God.

During the time of the Jewish Dispensation the Law of Moses was in effect, and therefore those who sought

God's blessings must obey this law. But, where God had spoken before directly to the fathers of each family, He now appoints for the first time a mediator between Himself and man, the man Moses. The position of work for a mediator is very important for us to understand, especially when we note that God is altogether righteous and man is sinful, yet God wanted to make an agreement and therefore it is sought between these two parties.

Mediator Defined

In certain cases, a mediator is demanded. One such case would be seen where two parties are at variance with each other, since a mediator is one who intervenes between two parties. Both of the parties in a dispute may be equally to blame; however, it can also be true that one party may be innocent while the other may be guilty. One may be superior while the other party is inferior. For one to be a mediator he must know the facts, be fair to both parties, and have the proper guidance to intervene without prejudice. This "go-between" has a very important work to accomplish!

Needs Must Be Seen

God made this dispensation different from the former, in that there was now one altar for worship established in either the Tabernacle in the wilderness or the Temple in Jerusalem, with one tribe which would be acting as rulers, and the one tribe functioning as priest (Levites), in order to offer the worship acceptable to God. This Law of Moses now established, served God's intentions to make the separate nation of the Jews, with an exclusive national life. Its temporary purpose was especially to keep Abraham's posterity a separate and

distinct race until promised seed (Christ) should come (Gal. 3:16-19). The Law of Moses, therefore, foreshadowed the New Testament as a rough outline of the bountiful blessings that were to come in Christ (Heb. 10:1). It was not the “real,” but only the shadow of the real. It was to act as a pedagogue or the vehicle which delivers children to the place of education. It was likened in the Bible then to what we think of now as a bus-driver, whose function is to take children to the place where they receive instruction. Paul helps us to understand that one of the intentions of the Law of Moses was in being the conveyance to bring the Jews to Christ (Gal. 3:24).

God’s Providential Care

God placed a line of protection around this select nation, distinguished them as His people, and exalted them to His favor above the rest of the world. They were His possession. The Law served the need to separate, for a limited amount of time, between God’s people and the rest of the world. It is therefore called in the New Testament “the middle wall of partition” (Eph. 2:14). It was never intended as a permanent Law, but rather simply as a temporary arrangement until another mediator should bring grace, forgiveness, and peace to the world. Or, the Mosaic Law was only to last “till the seed should come to whom the promise hath been made” (Gal. 3:19).

The Old Law Declared The Messiah

Though the Jew refused to see this change in Law and priesthood from their own Scriptures, it nevertheless was the case. This wall of separation between the Jews and all others continued for some fifteen hundred years, until Christ came and removed it by nailing it to His cruel

cross (Col. 2:14). There He terminated it and removed it. He said, "It is finished" (John 19:30). Still, many of the Jews unto this present day refuse to see the Messiah of the world, Jesus Christ! It is reported widely that the reading of Isaiah 53, which so clearly describes the Messiah's sufferings, death, and exaltation, is refused and rejected as reading material in the present synagogues! They will read chapters on either side of Isaiah 53, but skip and ignore this portion of their own scriptures! Moses foretold of the mediator who would come, as He was revealed to him by Jehovah:

Jehovah thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; according to all that thou desiredst of Jehovah they God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of Jehovah my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And Jehovah said unto me, They have well said that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him (Deut. 18:15-19).

Moses himself spoke of the Christ who would descend from the Jewish brethren, who would be like Moses in being a Lawgiver and Deliver, and who would speak only the Word

of God. Further it is noted, that this one prophesied of by God through Moses, would call to account and punish those who refused to hear the Word, or who would neglect the Word which He speaks in the Father's authority.

The Old Law “Weak” And “Faulty?”

It is difficult for some to understand why this first written Law, given by Almighty God, was called in the New Testament “faulty” and “weak” (Heb. 8:7). It was not in the fact that God made something that was not perfect and strong, but rather because the people were weak and faulty in not keeping it perfectly (Acts 7:51-53). Paul showed the two Laws in contrast, stating to the Roman brethren:

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the Law of sin and death. For what the law (*of Moses*. GC) could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God (*did*, GC) sending his own Son the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law (which it demanded. GC) might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit (Rom. 8:1-4).

Moses The First Mediator

How thrilling to take note of the Bible account of the submissive life of Moses, as the providence of God brings him to be the first mediator of God's first written Law. Moses was born to humble parentage, who believed in and

faithfully served the true and living God (Heb. 11:23). They acted by faith in hiding Moses from the first attempts to practice abortion (Acts 7:20), through the decree to the mid-wives to kill all male children at birth, by wicked King Pharaoh (Exod. 1:15-21). The King, seeing his first attempt thwarted by the refusal of murder by God-fearing mid-wives, then commanded to cast every male child born to the Israelites into the river! Three months after the birth of Moses, the “ark of bulrushes” was prepared by Moses’ mother and set to float in the river, while his sister Miriam stood guard. When he was found, Moses became the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; but through Miriam’s quick action, Moses was given his nurturing and early training at the knee of his own mother, for which she received wages!

Preparatory Work

He was then trained “in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds” (Acts 7:22). This gave Moses a part of the good foundation necessary to be the mediator of the Jewish Law. Following this first forty year period, the second forty year period of his training came in Midian, in which he saw and learned God’s power in nature. It was here that God appears to him in a burning bush, to give Moses instruction for his next forty years of service! Hence with eighty years of preparation, Moses is now ready to render as God’s chosen mediator, forty years of service. Moses was a magnanimous man! There was no Hebrew prophet, ruler, or sage, that equaled him in character, official dignity, or in the knowledge of God and His will for the Jews, and in the opportunities of announcing God’s Precepts to the world!

The Second Mediator Is Preeminent

The New Covenant, between all nations and the God

of Heaven, was brought into the world by a second mediator, of whom Moses spoke by the Word of Jehovah as he referred to Jesus Christ. This universal religion He introduced into the world was an outgrowth of the spiritual promises made to Abraham (Gen.12:3), and is known as the Christian Dispensation. The new and different covenant promised by Jehovah through Jeremiah (Jer. 31:31-34), predicted that the Law of God, the Gospel, would reign in the hearts of His people, and that those separated from the worldly life by forgiveness under this covenant, would be God's possession: "and they shall be my people." Paul declares this prophecy has been fulfilled through the more excellent ministry of Jesus Christ:

But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises (Heb. 8:6).

In the next seven verses of Hebrews 8, Paul quotes the words of Jeremiah 31-31-34, and shows vividly that all was fulfilled in Jesus Christ! The New Covenant of Jesus Christ could not begin or come into effect until after "the death of the testator" (Heb. 9:16-17). As is true of all wills, after the death of the maker the will could not be changed. The Christian Dispensation began following Jesus' death, burial, resurrection, and ascension back to Heaven, on the day of Pentecost, fifty days after the resurrection of Christ (Acts 2). Christ lived and died under the Old Covenant; He did so in order that he might fulfill the Old Law and remove it (Matt. 5:17).

The New Law Is Preeminent

Christ came into the world to set in order a new law

system, and to be a Prophet, Priest, and King to the world. This He did in every respect, as is seen by every serious and honest student of the Bible! In harmony with God's plan, He took away the first covenant and established the second (Heb. 10:9). The first law, the Law of Moses, had served its purpose in preserving a knowledge of God in the midst of a heathen world. It had brought the Jews to Christ (Gal. 3:24). It served the intent to prepare, to some extent, the world to recognize God's Son when He did come. In its predictions it served the world in bring understanding of the meaning of Christ's life and death. With its temporary intent, after these purposes were accomplished, Jesus the Christ removed it out of the way by nailing it to the cross of Calvary (Col. 2:14). He purchased the church in which all who will come by obedience may be saved (Matt. 16:18-19; Acts 2:41,47). He delivered through His apostles the simple plan of salvation and invited all to come (John 17:8,14,18; Matt. 11:28-30). His miracles and signs, from His miraculous virgin birth (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:23) to His sacrificial death on the cross (Matt. 27), confirmed His Word and proclaimed Him to be just what He claimed Himself to be, the Son of God from Heaven (John 20:30-31). He gives us the assurance that if we will hear and obey Him Heaven can be ours at last (John 6:44-45; 14:1-6).

The Saviour Of The World Is Preeminent

His religion, or system of faith and practice, is called the "perfect law of liberty" (Jas. 1:25). Never before has the world known such a Mediator! He intervenes perfectly between God who is superior and man who is inferior; He is completely innocent like God the Father, while the world is guilty and lies in sin. Paul said of Him, "For there is

one God, one mediator also between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus” (I Tim. 2:5). Because He has been partaker of both Heaven and earth, He is equally related and knows all of the facts of man’s lost condition (Heb. 2:9, 17-18; 4:15), as well as knowing the justice of God (Phil. 2:6). It should cause all who know these facts to cry, “Oh, What a Saviour!”

His Authority Is Preeminent

His authority is recognized above the scribes and all other humans (Matt. 7:28-29; Jn. 7:46); above Moses and Elijah as representatives of the Old Law and prophets (Matt. 17:1-5); and above the laws of all men (Acts 5:27-29). His authority is unlimited in Heaven and on earth (Matt. 28:18-20); His teaching is “all truth” (John 16:13; 17:17; 8:31-32); His authority encompasses the natural realm of creation as well as the spiritual realm, the church (Eph. 1:22-23); He even has authority over the grave (1 Cor. 15:22, 55; John 5:28-29).

His Salvation Is Preeminent

His “grace and truth” is preeminent to all that was shown by God under Moses’ Law (John 1:17). His authority, love, grace, and law, come to us today through His chosen and sent apostles, to whom He gave the Word of God, the keys of the kingdom, and of whom He made His ambassadors and witnesses to the world (Matt. 16:19; 2 Cor. 5:20). These apostles are to be received by all today who want to know the King’s Will, since they are the authorized representatives (Luke 10:16). The Word they gave us is the Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 John 9-11). We should receive the New Testament of Jesus Christ, and that Word only, as our absolute authority, our only

authority, and by this means make Jesus the Lord (Ruler) of all in our lives!

Our Hope Is Preeminent In Him

With the knowledge that “though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;” and that by His being “made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him” (Heb. 5:8-9), let all in this conviction, submit and conform our lives to His New Testament. The Bible declares that sinners must come to Him by hearing the New Covenant, believing in Jesus as Saviour, repenting of the sin of our life, confessing before men with our mouth our belief in Him, and going with Him into the watery burial of baptism to wash away our sins, and arising to begin the new life in the kingdom or church of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13). Let us live in glorious hope; and when He comes to receive His own, the faithful can go home to Heaven as our eternal abode!

Chapter 34

Two Covenants: Two Priesthoods

Harrell Davidson

The honor bestowed upon me by brother B.J. Clarke, and the Southaven elders in speaking again on this great lectureship, and to have part in the writing of this book, is momentous. There are certain lesson objectives to be met in this study, and we shall do our very best in answering these challenges.

There are many similarities that exist between the priesthood of Aaron and that of Christ that we will not get to exploit due to the limitation of space. The question that occurs to us is: “was there ever a time when there were no priests?” After careful study of the meaning of the word and its etymology, we must draw the conclusion that Adam was the first priest. A priest is one that is described as being the head of the family, and as such, would make certain sacrifices. Cain and Abel were told to offer sacrifices in Genesis 4. Are we to understand that this is something that is totally foreign to them? We think not, for it appears to be the characteristic of man to offer gifts unto Him who is the greater. Everyone felt inferior to make such an offering, but the head of the family would do so. Our reasoning just here is that the word “priest” in the English language comes from the Greek word

presbyter. This is an obvious reference to one that is older. “For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins” (Heb.5:1). This would adequately convey the word to the Greeks as the word *sacerdos* does to the Latins. It is rather sad that there is no real consensus among the Hebrew scholars as to the real meaning of the corresponding word *kohen*. There are two or three alternatives, one of which seems to us to meet the qualities of the priest. Most agree that the word is of Arabic usage and connects with the Arabic root “to draw near.” “And let the priests also, which come near to the Lord, sanctify themselves, lest the Lord break forth upon them” (Ex. 19:22). And:

When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the Lord (Ex.30:20).

Notice the words “come near the Lord”, and “come near to the altar.” These represent what a priest would do. We know that after the flood Noah offered up sacrifices to God. All of us have learned that one can trace the journeys of Abraham with the altars he built to offer sacrifices. Others would follow after this same pattern. All of them were priest in that sense of the word. This does not convey the idea of the high priest, but does state the case for there always being priests.

The Priest And The High Priest

It is very important to understand the duty of the

priest and the high priest if we are to understand fully the priesthood of Christ. One should read the latter part of Exodus and all of Leviticus in order to get a mental grasp as to what priesthood is all about. Sometimes the words “priest” and “high priest” are used interchangeably. However, there was only one high priest at the time. All the priests were to be of the tribe of Levi and a descendant of Aaron, the first high priest:

And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron’s heart, when he goeth in before the Lord: and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the Lord continually (Ex. 28:30).

We notice that Aaron had the Urim and Thummim upon his heart when he went before the Lord. This breastplate represented judgement. Man had fallen away from God through sin and was thus judged to be condemned. The breastplate represented more than this as part of the priestly garments, but this is sufficient for this study. “And he poured of the anointing oil upon Aaron’s head, and anointed him, to sanctify him” (Lev. 8:12). Moses points out that only Aaron was anointed as the high priest. The sons of Aaron were priests but they could not officiate in the Most Holy Place and bear the sins of the priest, high priest, and for the people. This was Aaron’s responsibility, and after his death one of his descendants would become the high priest.

And he shall take a wife in her virginity. A widow, or a divorced woman, or profane, or an

harlot, these shall he not take: but he shall take a virgin of his own people to wife. Neither shall he profane his seed among his people: for I the Lord do sanctify him (Lev. 21:13-15).

These regulations, among other things, demand pure marriages. Since the high priest is the type of Christ, his wife must of necessity be a virgin, one who is pure. Is it therefore possible that the pure bride was a type of the church? Consider, please, 2 Corinthians 11:2:

For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

The bride of Christ is to be a “chaste virgin.” Further consider, Ephesians 5:26-27:

That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

The church, the bride of Christ, is a glorious church. It is to be pure, having neither spot, wrinkle, or blemish, but to be holy. The pure bride of the priest must typify the bride of Christ today.

The priesthood was a very important part of God’s long range plan in redeeming the human race. Through priesthood, mediation, and sacrifice God was to be appeased for the sins of fallen man. Let us not forget, “Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own

blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us” (Heb. 9:12). All that Aaron, and the high priests who followed, did was only temporary, but was very important for the people of God. Without priesthood, there could be no mediation. Without mediation, there would be nothing that man could do within himself to stand before God in a conditional cleanliness. Without the bloody sacrifice that was brought by the people to the priest, there could be no atonement. With no atonement, God’s justice and mercy could not be met. He could not maintain His holiness without the conditions that He set forth for man to use through priesthood, and as such, man would have no hope. This would be the paved road that would lead to the High Priest of our profession which is Christ. Without the understanding of these musts in the Law of Moses, we can never fully understand and appreciate our own sin offering which was Christ.

Look in Leviticus 16 and underscore the word “atonement.” It appears in verse 6, where Aaron must make an atonement for himself. In verse 16, an atonement was made for the holy place because of the sins of the people. In verses 17 and 18 are regulations that pertain to Aaron making the atonement. The express purpose of these was for the “reconciling of the holy place” (vs. 20). On through the chapter we note that the day of atonement was the day in the Jewish year that all else gravitated around. The people made daily sacrifices through the priests (sons of Aaron). However, only the high priest could go into the most holy place on the day of atonement for himself, the tabernacle, the holy place, the most holy place, and for the people.

Now please reflect back on this section and ask, what

would have been the condition of man without priesthood? Now we can understand the sacrifice of Jesus much better! Let us never forget that the Law of Moses was never intended to be permanent. It was temporary and was to last until the perfect sacrifice could be offered.

After The Order Of Melchizedek

We will say much about Melchizedek because of his importance in history as pertaining to the priesthood. We have read much in regard to Melchizedek, and we are not satisfied because some lessons have been missed that should not have been. We have gained much insight into this man's life by that which has been written before. For this we are very grateful, and we pale into insignificance in comparison to those who have done some great work in regard to this man.

Melchizedek is used three ways in the scriptures. In Genesis 14, he is used historically. In Psalms 110, he is spoken of in a Messianic way by prophecy. In the book of Hebrews, he is spoken of doctrinally. One might think that just because we have basically three references regarding him in the Scriptures that relatively little about him is known. To this conclusion we are not drawn.

Let us begin by going to Genesis 12:3:

And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse
him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all
families of the earth be blessed.

This needs to be studied through the entirety of the sacred scriptures. "I will bless them that bless thee" was said by God to Abraham. We shall call him Abraham throughout, though his name was not changed at this moment in

history. Abraham obeys God and starts his journey into places that God would lead him and his kin. In Genesis 13, Abraham and Lot would separate, with Lot making the choice, at the insistence of Abraham, of all the land that was before them. Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom, where the most fertile soil with greener pastures existed, so there would be no strife between Lot's herdmen and Abraham's herdmen. Lot was Abraham's nephew. As time goes on, he is captured; and the word of his capture comes to the ears of Abraham. All this comes about in Genesis (the book of beginnings) in chapter 14. Here, all of a sudden, we see war between the kings of the land in the capturing of Lot. Word of this came to Abraham and he said that "his brother was taken captive" (Gen.14:14). He again refers to Lot as being his "brother" in verse 16. This shows the heart of Abraham. His faith and compassion was so great. The king of Sodom went out to meet them after the battle and the defeat of Chedorlaomer. Now let us note:

And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth
bread and wine: and he was the priest of the
most high God (Gen.14:18).

We learn that Melchizedek was king of Salem. This is the first mention in the scriptures of Jerusalem, which would later play a great role in the development of the place where Abraham would erect an altar (the same as Mt. Moriah) where he would attempt to offer Isaac, his son. Later the temple would be built there by Solomon, and finally the church of our Lord would have its birth in this great city. Who was this man? The Bible says that he was "priest of the most high God." While all the

patriarchs were priests as pertaining to the head of the family, this is the first mention of the word “priest” in the all the Bible. Think about the significance of this word and what an important role it would play through the history of the world to the present time. We ought, in light of this fact, be very familiar with its meaning and that, in the Christian system, we all are priests of God (cf. 1 Pet.2:5; Rev.20:6).

What did Melchizedek do? “And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth” (Gen.14:19). He blessed God’s blessed man at this point in time, as God had made promise to Abraham. God was with Abraham in this war, and the latter became the blessed as per God’s promise. Melchizedek recognized Abraham as being of the most high God, and knew that God was possessor of heaven and earth. Now look at what the priest of God knew and what he did. In verse 20, Abraham gives Melchizedek tithes of all the spoils. So in the midst of confusion and war, there is a man who steps out who would later be called the king of righteousness and king of peace (cf. Heb.7:2). We can learn that in chaos, righteousness and peace can reign in man’s heart. There can never be any real peace without righteousness. The principle is not peace and then righteousness, but the reverse order is true. If righteousness is lacking, there can be no true inner peace. Without this peace, we cannot see beyond the vale of tears and death with any assurance whatsoever. There is a peace that passeth all understanding (Phil.4:7). Without the righteousness, this lasting peace is not possible. Man would be hapless, hopeless, and in despair without this peace. Let us demonstrate it this way:

In Matthew 17:1-5, we have what is known as the

transfiguration of Christ, where Moses, Elias (Elijah), and Jesus were transfigured before the face of Peter, James and John whom Jesus took with Him on this “high mountain apart.” What happened? What went on? Is there any conversation that took place between any of the parties other than the apostles? Did Moses, Elijah and Jesus have any thing to say to each other? Look now at the answer in Luke 9:30-31:

And, behold, there talked with him two men,
which were Moses and Elias: Who appeared in
glory, and spake of his decease which he should
accomplish at Jerusalem.

In what are Moses and Elijah interested? The scriptures reveal that they are interested in the death of Jesus on the cross of Calvary. Why are they interested, hundreds of years after they have lived their life on this earth, in the cross of Christ? Here is Moses, the lawgiver and one that God buried Himself no man knowing where his grave is to this day, and Elijah, whom God received in a fiery chariot up into heaven. Moses represented all that was written in the Law including the matter of priesthood and atonement for sins, and how this was only a temporary measure. Moses looked ahead till Christ should go to the cross. Elijah represented all that the prophets had said regarding the Christ of the cross, the Christ of the crown, and the Christ of the cosmos. Why is he interested in what Christ would accomplish in Jerusalem? He knew that without the cross there was no complete forgiveness, but only a lingering of all the sins that man had committed. “How does all this connect?” one might ask. Back up with me to Matthew 16, before the transfiguration and after

He had said “I will build my church,” and notice verse 21. “From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.” Was Christ worried or in a daze of bewilderment? Not in the least! Look at the last part of the verse. He said that He would be killed and be raised the third day! He could see beyond the cross to the resurrection. He had that inner peace because he was righteous. Who was His predecessor? Was it not Melchizedek, who was king of righteousness and king of peace? Now, can there be any kind of lasting peace without righteousness? Moses, Elijah, David (Acts 2: 25), and all others that had placed their hope and faith in God were anxious for the cross. One cannot overlook the implications and the importance of this to our study. Now let us go back to Abraham, Lot and Melchizedek.

Lot going into Sodom represented the light of God to this sinful forsaken people. God has always dealt justly and fairly, and this has been done in the light of His Holiness. His love is extended to all the people, not just someone who is special. We misread the Bible if we don't understand the nature of God. God is love. God loves everyone and doesn't want one person lost. Lot was loved by God and Peter called him a “just man” (2 Pet.2:7). Lot had made a wrong choice, but the king of Sodom had opportunity to know of the love of God, and failed to grasp it. Abraham showed his great faith in going to retrieve Lot from the enemy. Melchizedek blesses Abraham; and in this, we learn that the blessings of God are always intended to be first, spiritual and secondarily, physical. The righteous today are spiritually the seed of Abraham.

Abraham was a righteous man as was Melchizedek, but Melchizedek was not a descendent of Abraham or of Abraham's family. It should be noted that God is interested in righteousness wherever it is found. God even recognized the righteousness in the Gentiles as the Bible unfolds. Who is Melchizedek? He appears from nowhere, and then with the reading in Genesis 14, he steps back out of the picture. This has created a mystery over the years. No doubt we look ahead to the Hebrews writer so we can understand the mystery, and why God chose through the Holy Spirit to put a shroud around this man, for he is here referred to as the type of Christ.

We have genealogies from Adam to Noah, and from Noah to Abraham to Moses then to David, and from David to Christ, but nothing about Melchizedek. Here is a man that Abraham paid tithes to and we have no genealogy of him:

Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually (Heb.7:3).

This does not mean that he had no father or mother. Some argue that he was deity. We deny this most emphatically. Others say that he was an angel or some kind of spirit. We think this to be in error also. Without father or mother does not mean that he was not born in the flesh or that he did not have ending of days. What is clear is that God chose not to reveal any of these things for man to have the knowledge as it pertains thereto. To be made like the Son of God he must have no ascent or descent. In order for Christ to be a priest forever after the order of

Melchizedek, he could have no beginning or end for our Lord had neither beginning or ending. He is the Alpha and Omega. Let us gather up some things we have learned about Melchizedek. First, he was a righteous man. Second, he was not a descendent of Abraham and as such not of the Levitical tribe. Third, he blessed the father of the faithful. Fourth, Abraham paid tithes to him who was the greater of the two. Fifth, if Abraham knew Melchizedek's ancestry, he did not reveal it, but he accepted the events surrounding this king by faith. Sixth, Abraham and his fleshly descendants would all someday have an end of days. That being the case, there is not a Jew living that can prove that he is a descendant of the Levitical tribe or any other for that matter. By providence when Titus the Roman general and his army destroyed Jerusalem, they destroyed the genealogy of the Jews. This, within itself, would prove that no one could be a high priest today after the Levitical lineage. Seventh, God chose Christ to be of the lineage of Melchizedek to confirm all that is said in the Old Testament. Eighth, this man was righteous aside from genealogy. God intended for all of Abraham's descendants to be righteous. He did not intend for them to put their faith in genealogy. Ninth, the emphasis is on righteousness and peace. "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (Psa.85:10).

Abraham realized the importance of righteousness and priesthood. America as a nation needs to realize the importance of righteousness. All the prayers that we could pray for peace cannot be answered without there being a return to righteousness.

Melchizedek, being a king and priest, would become the type of Christ (Heb. 5 & 7 to be discussed later).

Zechariah said; “Even he shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both” (Zech. 6:13). Melchizedek’s priesthood was different from that of Levi. It was not just another priesthood but totally different. This suggests that the Levitical system was only temporary. If the Levitical system was to last forever, then would that priesthood of Melchizedek be necessary? This is the argument in Hebrews 7:11 which says:

If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchizedek, and not be called after the order of Aaron?

Melchizedek was appointed a priest by God. Abraham was an ordinary priest as far as the heads of family is concerned, but he recognized something. Here is a priest that was superior to family descent. If not, why did he pay tithes to him? Evidently Abraham knew that Melchizedek had been appointed by God. It is not the purpose of Genesis to give us the details, but the principles, and this is the only light in which we can think about these matters.

The Relationship To Hebrews

We are now ready to look at the book of Hebrews for some obvious lessons that are intended. Understanding the true purpose of priesthood, mediation and sacrifice, we can now come down to “consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus” (Heb. 3:1). The

book of Hebrews paints one of the most beautiful pictures of our Lord found nowhere else. The book starts with God and His Son in the beginning. It begins to gradually express how He is higher than anyone one else whether compared to angels or men. God never said to an angel, "...Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom" (Heb.1:8). Notice that righteousness is the scepter of the kingdom of Christ. The word of the angels was:

...steadfast and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation...(Heb. 2 :2,3).

The world was lost without Christ. He came into the world to be the captain of our salvation through the sufferings (sacrifice). Remember what the high priest did? The main purpose of Christ's priesthood was to atone by means of His death for the sins of the world. By His sacrifice He made reconciliation for our sins so that we might be a redeemed people unto God from which we are estranged because of sin. This entire plan was in the mind of God from the moment of sin in the Garden of Eden.

Moses is the lawgiver, but Christ is greater than he. There was no complete rest for the people until Christ came and accomplished what Moses and Elijah, and others wished and longed that He would do in Jerusalem. Having accomplished this there is a rest remaining for the people of God. "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession" (Heb.4:14). There is no doubt about the credentials of Jesus:

And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee. As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec (Heb.5:4-6).

Christ was not of any Levitical order:

For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest” (Heb.7:14,15).

The Lord sprang out of “Judah” not Levi nor the Aaronic priesthood. What was accomplished?

For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God (for those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec (Heb.7:19,21).

Our High Priest is “... holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens” (Heb.7:26). The high priests under the Law were continually making daily sacrifices, but not Christ:

Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself (Heb.7:27).

Consider the three appearances in Hebrews 9 and we have the complete picture of the stark contrast between the Two Covenants, and the priesthood of Aaron, and that of Christ.

Chapter 35

Two Covenants: Two Kingdoms

Paul Kidwell, Sr.

As we enter into this important study, the following passages will help us introduce the concept of God's eternal purpose:

You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' (Acts 3:25).

Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, which things are symbolic. For these are the Two Covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar; for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children; but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of

us all. For it is written: Rejoice, O barren, you who do not bear! Break forth and shout, you who do not travail! for the desolate has many more children than she who has a husband. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise (Gal. 4:21-28).

The word covenant is a Bible word. It appears three hundred thirteen times in our English Bible. Two hundred eighty-two of these occurrences are in the Old Testament. The first time we see the word is Genesis 6:18 where God made a covenant with Noah. While the word does not appear in Genesis 3:15, this verse contains God's promise of a Savior. The original covenant made to Eve and later specifically to Abraham was guarded and borne along by the covenant at Horeb. Thus, Paul would say, "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ" (Gal. 3:24).

To preach the Two Covenants as disjointed and unrelated entities, is to do violence to the scriptures. The original covenant made to Abraham was conditional. When the conditions were met, the blessings were realized. The Law did exactly what God intended that it do. It brought us to Christ. In Christ there is the fulfillment of the promise made to Eve, to Abraham, and the "filling full" of the Law of Moses.

There are two covenants of special note in this study. In the text read, Paul says that there are two covenants in the allegory of the two women and their sons. The two sons are representative of the Two Covenants. One son represents the Law of Moses and is thus designated as **"the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage."** This first covenant was designed to bring man

to the fulfillment found in the second covenant. In a very real sense, Christ is the ultimate fulfillment of both the Law of Moses and the promise to Eve and then to Abraham:

Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill (Matthew 5:17).

Jesus fulfilled prophecy. His miraculous conception, His birth, His life, death, burial and resurrection fulfilled prophetic utterances made by God's men through the ages. In the same sense, Jesus fulfilled the Law of Moses. He kept the provisions, but in His life, death, and resurrection, He also brought the **righteous conclusion of the Law of Moses**. He did not destroy the Law. He completed the Law. In Christ the dual purpose for giving the Law was accomplished:

What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator (Gal. 3:19).

The Law served a dual purpose. First, it was given to curb transgression. It made sin "exceedingly sinful." Next, it preserved the lineage of the Messiah-till the Seed should come."

The Relationship Of The Covenants And The Kingdoms

The Old Testament and the New Testament, by these

designations, both specify and identify two covenants. The Covenant of the Old came to be identified as the Law of Moses. That Covenant resulted in the physical nation of Israel. The Law of Moses was the constitution of Israel. Thus, the covenant was the foundation of the kingdom:

Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel (Exod. 19:5-6).

The specifics of that covenant were given directly by Jehovah. In an awesome picture we have this record:

And God spoke all these words, saying: I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments. You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who

takes His name in vain. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it. Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you. You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's. Now all the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood afar off. Then they said to Moses, You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die. And Moses said to the people, "Do not fear; for God has come to test you, and that His fear may be before you, so that you may not sin." (Exod. 20:1-20)

We should note the great scene pictured in the giving

of the Law of Moses. Far too often, as we reflect on the superiority of the New Testament, we may leave the impression that the Old is held in contempt. Such must not be! This was the Law which Jehovah made. It was given for a purpose and that dual purpose, which we have noted, was accomplished. It is true there was some inadequacy in the Old. Some “fault was found.” When this is said, we should hasten to add that God knew of the inadequacy of the Law when it was given. Whatever shortcomings existed were both known by God; indeed they were created by God who gave the Law.

Finding Fault With The First

For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. Because finding fault with them, He says: “Behold, the days are coming,” says the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; (Hebrews 8:7-8).

The fault which was “found” in the first Covenant is identified in the words of Jehovah through His prophet Jeremiah, as repeated both in Hebrews 8 and in Hebrews 10. Look carefully at this prophecy, for it provides the transition vehicle for our study to pass from the first covenant and its resulting kingdom, to the second covenant and the kingdom of Christ. Read carefully God’s promise through Jeremiah:

Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD,
when I will make a new covenant with the house

of Israel and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, says the LORD, I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more (Jer. 31:31-34).

With this text we couple the statement of Paul:

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the Law of sin and death. For what the Law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit (Rom. 8:1-4).

Before Jesus, no man ever kept the Law perfectly. The righteous requirement of the Law could only be fulfilled in Jesus. He did no sin. He kept the law perfectly. In doing so, he condemned sin in the flesh. He left man without excuse as a transgressor, yet simultaneously demonstrated the righteousness of God as Lawgiver.

Characteristic of the New Covenant, as contrasted with the Old, God through Jeremiah promised, “ their sin I will remember no more.” Paul had argued the inadequacy of the blood of bulls and goats. Once man violated the Law, there was no escape from the **guilt** of sin under the Law. The punishment for sin could be postponed through the animal sacrifices. The guilt of sin remained. Thus, the glaring inadequacy of the Law was in the deficiency of the blood. Man needed more than could be obtained by the blood of bulls and goats.

The Precious Blood

knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God. Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not

of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, because All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and its flower falls away, but the word of the LORD endures forever. Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you (1 Peter 1:18-25).

The New Covenant is superior to the Old in many ways. The book of Hebrews is a book of “better than” studies. In no way is the superiority of the New demonstrated in greater fashion than in the blood. In Peter’s writings he extols the “precious blood.” Notice that Jesus is here pictured as “**foreordained before the foundation of the world.**” This one statement should convey a great principle. God had all this in mind before the foundation of the world! The First Covenant and the resulting Kingdom of the Old Testament, as well as the Second Covenant which resulted in the Kingdom of the New Testament, were both included in the eternal purpose of God. Paul affirms so:

To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to **make all people see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God** who created all things through Jesus Christ; **to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church** to the principalities and powers in

the heavenly place, **according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom** we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him. Therefore I ask that you do not lose heart at my tribulations for you, which is your glory. For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, **that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith;** that you, being **rooted and grounded in love,** may be able to **comprehend with all the saints** what is the **width and length and depth and height;** to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that **you may be filled with all the fullness of God.** **Now to Him who is able** to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, **to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus** throughout all ages, world without end. Amen. (Eph. 3:8-21)

In this text Paul talks of the “eternal purpose.” Let us learn from these key statements:

v 9-and to make all people see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God.

The mystery of Ephesians 3 is revealed! It is not something unknowable. It is something not known in earlier times. Now it is revealed. Paul spoke of the grace (favor) given to him to allow him to make known this mystery to all people. But, where is this revelation made known?

vv 10-11 - to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord,

Key phrases in this text include “might be made known by the church” and “according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.” The manifold wisdom of God is equivalent to the “mystery” of verse 9. Paul is saying that the diverse, multifarious, complex wisdom of God is **demonstrated** in the church. It is not simply revealed, as the church is God’s divine missionary army, although this fact is evident. Paul is saying we can learn the wisdom of God, which He intended, when we learn of the church of God which was in His eternal purpose. This text says more than the fact that Jesus as Savior was in the Divine plan from eternity. It says that the church of Christ was in that original plan. If this is a correct interpretation of this text, then several conclusions follow. First, man must know about the church if he is to know that which God wants him to know. Too, the relationship of the church to the New Covenant and its attendant blessings must be sought.

What Must Man Know About The Church?

In this study, the first logical thing which man must know is that the church of the New Testament is the Kingdom of **Prophecy** and **Promise**. Daniel prophesied the establishment of a Kingdom (Daniel 2:44). The gospel writers tell of the preaching of John the Baptist as he said “the kingdom is at hand.” Jesus and His disciples preached “the kingdom is at hand.” Jesus promised to build His church, and used the term “kingdom” as synonymous with same (Matt. 16:16ff). In a remarkable passage in Mark 9:1, Jesus said:

And He said to them, Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power.

Faulted theology concerning the church of Christ will result in fatal error! Some have sought to minimize the importance of the false conclusions of premillenarianism. The false notion that the church is unimportant finds root in this doctrine. R.H. Boll, in a work entitled *The Kingdom Of God*, concluded the church of Christ was an “after thought,” left on earth by Jesus as a substitute for the Kingdom He originally came to establish. This doctrine of failure is deprecating to the church. In proper perspective in this study, it should be seen as an insult to the Divine Scheme of Redemption. Paul said the ultimate knowledge of the manifold wisdom of God was demonstrated in the church. The idea of man that the church is a substitute completely ignores this principle. The church was in the mind of God from eternity. The kingdom of the New Testament is the church of the New Testament! Many passages so teach (Col.1:13 ff).

The Value Of The Church

Many areas could be considered in this phase of our study. The origin, ownership, head, builder, purchaser and purchase price are just some of the concepts which reflect on the value of the church. Focusing on the study in this particular assigned topic, it is proper that we give special attention to how the church relates to the covenant and kingdom.

As we have noted, the church and the kingdom are one. This will be more fully demonstrated as we learn the fact that kingdom (church) of the New Testament is a result of that New Covenant just as the physical kingdom of Israel was a result of that Old Covenant.

Blessings In Christ

The phrase “in Christ” is of special significance to this study. There are occasions where the phrase made simply allude to the whole of the teachings of Christ. There are some occasions where it evidently refers to a place and position. To be in Christ is, in these instances, to be in His spiritual body. Note some of the blessings which are identified as being “in Christ”:

being **justified** freely by His grace through the **redemption** that is in Christ Jesus, (Rom. 3:24).

Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be **dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ** Jesus our Lord (Rom. 6:11).

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is **eternal life in Christ** Jesus our Lord (Rom. 6:23).

There is therefore now **no condemnation to those who are in Christ** Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life **in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death** (Rom. 8:1-2).

Therefore, if anyone is **in Christ, he is a new creation**; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new (2 Cor. 5:17).

so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another (Rom. 12:5).

Many other passages could be cited which contain “in Christ” and are understood to mean in His body, the church. The conclusion is evident. If all spiritual blessings are in Christ (Eph. 1:3), then we must be in Christ to obtain these. But, if to be in Christ is to be in the body of Christ (Rom. 12:5, 1 Cor. 12) and since the body is the church:

And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence (Col. 1:18).

Thus, it follows that **one must be in the church**, the body of Christ, to have all spiritual blessings.

Galatians 3 is the final key. There are so many parallels between Ephesians and Galatians. It is fitting that Galatians 3 should be the final commentary on Ephesians 3. In Ephesians Paul has said the manifold wisdom of God is made known through the church.

Galatians 3 will conclude that the covenant made with mankind in the garden, later specifically to Abraham and his family, and further narrowed in scope as regards the Messianic lineage to the house of David finds its fulfillment “in Christ.” In Galatians 3, Paul deals specifically with the Law and its purpose, and then turns to the promise made to Abraham and shows how this is fulfilled. Read and thrill to see God’s scheme of redemption, planned before creation, find its realization in the body of Christ. The question is one of sonship. Abraham’s seed is the sought after position and blessing. Hear Paul as he says:

For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise (Gal. 3:26-29).

A careful analysis of this text makes it come alive. In it we will see the plan and promise of the ages realized.

First, **“For you are all sons of God.”** Written to Christians and applicable to all Christians, this is **what** we are. We are sons of God. **“Through faith”** is **how** we are sons of God. The faith under consideration here is the system of faith, the gospel. It is the faith which Paul now preached and the same as he had once persecuted:

that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles [in Christ] Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith (Gal. 3:14).

“In Christ Jesus “ - this is where we are sons of God. We have seen, to be in Christ is to be in His body, the church. “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”- This is how we came to be where we are. God places man in the church (Acts 2:47). This happens when one is baptized into Christ. God makes no mistakes. Everyone He places “in Christ” is one who has been baptized. He places none in that should be left out, and He leaves none out that should be placed inside.

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” - All men have “equal access” under the gospel. God has made of Jew and Gentile one man in Christ.

“And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” - Abraham’s seed! This is the coveted promise of the ages. Now, says Paul, those who are Christians are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise. Physical Israel was not to be the blessed people, but rather, the “Israel of God”:

And as many as walk according to this rule,
peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the
Israel of God (Gal. 6:16).

God’s plan for redeeming man is fulfilled in Christ. Those who are Christ’s are Abraham’s seed. As many as have believed in Jesus and obeyed His word are the true Sons of God, and Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise.

Chapter 36

Two Covenants: Two Promised Lands

Keith A. Mosher, Sr.

Preface

It is a great pleasure for this writer to be given the privilege of participating in the “Power Lectureship.” Since I was a located preacher at Southaven church of Christ for seven years, and since I have so many friends in the congregation, I am especially thrilled to be a part as I have on each occasion of the lectures. To brethren Bill Pierce, and Coleman Simpson (elders) and to brethren B.J. Clarke and Bill Bryant (preachers) go my commendation and gratitude for planning this wonderful week of teaching and fellowship. Truly, the Southaven congregation is a lighthouse of truth in an often dark community.

Introduction

The Bible is the verbally inspired, infallible product of God’s revealing His mind through specially selected writers. ¹ Paul affirmed:

All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness; That the man of

God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:16).²

All one knows of God’s promises to ancient Israel and to contemporary Christianity is scripture related and to write of “two covenants” and “two promised lands” presupposes that the reader understands that God’s covenants with man are **one-sided** in that Jehovah **identifies** with a person or group of persons (e.g. Israel) who do His will.³

Too, the subject under consideration rather involves three covenants: (1) With Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3) and subsequently with his offspring. (2) With Moses and Israel (Exod. 19:1-6). (3) With Christians (Heb. 11:8-16; 4:9).

Further, the term, promise, is used, Biblically, to include blessings, assurances of pardon; i.e. every word of God’s grace.⁴ Even God’s commandments are “promises conditioned upon man’s willingness to obey. The study here will revolve around four points: (1) The ancient land promises to Abraham. (2) Traveling to the land by Israel. (3) The fulfillment of the land promise. (4) The promise of a heavenly land to Christians.

The Land Promise To Abraham

Out of a world given to idolatry, God called Abram from Ur of the Chaldees to get away from that country **and** Abram’s family “unto a land that I will shew thee” (Gen. 12:1). Abram’s kinsman had served idols “on the other side of the flood” (Euphrates river) and God wanted Abram to separate himself from those cultists (Josh. 24:15). Abram, later Abraham, received some of the greatest promises ever given. The account of this

dispensation concerning the Abrahamic promises extends from Genesis 12 through Exodus 19 unto the assembly of a multitude of Israelites at the base of Mount Sinai.

Abraham was promised a great nation, a great name, and a great seed (Gen. 12:2-3). Israel proceeded from his loins; his name is synonymous with faith and with being the “Friend of God” (James 2:22); and his “seed,” Christ, is truly a blessing to all nations (Gal. 3:23-29). Pertinent to the study here is the extend of the land promised to Abram -- “from the river of Egypt unto the great river Euphrates” (Gen. 15:18). This “promised land” has become a term analogous to the goal of every faithful child of God as that child thinks of his own promised land--heaven (Heb. 4:1,9).

God specifies that the literal or material land would be Canaan (Gen. 17:8). Canaan, too, has become a synonym for heaven in the language of Christians. But, the ancient land would be given to Abraham’s **seed** not to him (Gen. 24:7). The land promise was repeated to Isaac (Gen. 26:1-5) and to Jacob (Gen. 35:9-15) and the “seed” that would actually inherit the land would be Israel.

Abraham had **two** sons -- Isaac and Ishmael -- and the two represent a crossroads in patriarchal history. Ishmael and Isaac had the same father, but only Isaac is the child of promise (Rom. 9:7). God “visited” Sarah, the wife of Abraham, in order miraculously to open her seemingly dead womb (Rom. 4:19). Abraham, not weak in faith, went in to her and Isaac was conceived when Abraham was 99 (Gen. 17:1ff.). Careful Bible students will note that though Isaac was born because of Abraham’s not being weak in faith; Isaac was not born by “faith only.” This great miracle on Sarah confirms the fact of God’s promise and emphasizes that what God

promises He is able to accomplish, even under what appear to be overwhelming obstacles (cf. 21:5-6). God's people will enter their promised land, if faithful (Rev. 2:10).

Traveling To The Land By Israel

Perhaps a Christian can become concerned when things do not occur as quickly as one would like. A vital lesson of comfort may be drawn from the fact of the amount of time between the initial promise to Abraham to the actual entrance into Canaan of ancient Israel; a time-span covering 430 years (Gal. 3:17). One might suppose that Israel became discouraged having to wait so long; but as Christians wait for their promised land it should seem a "light" thing since life is very brief and life's afflictions "but for the moment" (2 Cor. 4:17-5:1).

If one were to ask an Israelite why he believed in God, the answer might well be a reference to the fact that Israel escaped from Egyptian bondage (Exod. ff.). In order to inherit the promised land Israel must enter Canaan. But Israel is trapped in Egypt [Note that at a later time in her history Israel (Judah) will be in Babylonian-Persian bondage (Ezra 1). The nation must return to Canaan, however, because it is in that land, and only in that land, that God will fulfill the promise to Abraham of the Messianic seed (Gen. 12:3; Gal. 3:16)]. Israel will also initially struggle to get to that promise land of "milk and honey," strive mightily to survive there, and serve as an example of the faithful's struggles in this life (1 Cor. 10:11).

Israel leaves Egypt after a series of plagues by God on the Egyptian oppressors and under the human leadership of Moses (Exod. 3:13-18). The first test of

Israel's faith is to fend herself trapped between Pharaoh's army and the Red Sea (Exod. 13:19-14:31). No Bible student can ever be unaware of what happened as Israel stood still to see the "salvation of the Lord" (Exod. 14:13). The Red Sea parted and Israel walked through this "baptism unto Moses" and God destroyed the enemy (1 Cor. 10:1-4). Many today doubt God's ability to save through baptism, but without one's faith in this "operation of God" no one today is able to escape the clutches and degradation of sin (Col. 2:11-14). Ancient Israel's crossing of the Red Sea is a type of a Christian's baptism in water for the remission of sin (Acts 2:38). And, ancient Israel's journey to the promised land could **not** have been started without that baptism. Baptism into Christ, today, is the first step toward one's heavenly home.

There were numerous difficulties, defeats, and discouragements as Israel traveled toward Canaan. One trial, that is a type of every person's human struggle, occurred when Israel came to Mount Sinai (Exod. 19:1ff.) Moses went up on the mountain and when he was delayed forty days, the people began to murmur and told Moses' brother, Aaron; "Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses...we wot not what is become of him" (Exod. 32:1). The people, led by Aaron, make a golden calf and worship in a base way (Exod. 32:6; cf. 1 Cor. 10:7).

Why this kind of idolatry? Note that the "golden calf" filled a **supposed** need since the people felt alone and forsaken by God and Moses. When one begins to surmise that the problems one faces are insurmountable and somehow **special** and unlike any common to mankind, one is in the same Devil's trap as was Israel. Paul, who by inspiration, used the scene at Sinai and others from

Israel's journey as a type of idolatry, insisted that when one begins to think that "he standeth" (i.e. alone and without precedent for his problem) is "ready to fall" (1 Cor. 10:12). Paul also calls this type of thinking idolatry (1 Cor. 10:1-7, 14).

No one's problems can ever be greater than such as are the common lot of all men (1 Cor. 10:13). Those who think that God has deserted them because they are suffering or feeling forsaken are committing idolatry! They **love self** so much that they can not believe that such afflictions are **not** unusual. The "way to escape" such erroneous thinking is to remember that "God is faithful" and one is **not** standing alone (1 Cor. 10:12-14). The faithful may **feel** like asking, "Why me?" The Christian answer is, "Why not me?"

A third event, chosen for this brief essay out of many historical occurrences in what are known as the "wilderness wanderings," caused Israel to be delayed nearly forty years from reaching Canaan! Israel camped near a place called Pa-ran and Moses sent twelve men to spy on the peoples of Canaan and to **reconnoiter** the land (Num. 13:1-20). The men did not hesitate to go and they did a commendable job of scouting, but the report from ten of the twelve caused such fear in the congregation of Israel that she failed not only to enter the land but made plans to return to Egyptian control (Num 14:1-4)! God's wrath against those ancient fearful ones resulted in the sentence that all those (except the faithful Caleb and Joshua) from twenty years old and upward would die in the wilderness (Num. 14:26-35). The ten terrified spies were destroyed by plague (Num. 14:36-37).

Fear will keep one from entering heaven just as fear kept Israel from her promised land (Rev. 21:8). Do

elderships fear to release money for the cause of Christ under the pretense that there may be bills to pay in the future? Do preachers fear to preach certain doctrines lest some be offended? Do Christians fear to be personal workers because of fear of embarrassment or failure? Do sinners fear to obey the gospel because they may not persevere? Will the “promised land” be lost over and over because of inexorable fear? The perfect love of god would cast out such a phobia (1 John 4:18).

Many in ancient Israel forgot God’s promise of the land He would **give** them; a land flowing with milk and honey (Exod. 12:25; 3:8,17). But, since God made the covenant, he would prevail. Despite their individual ineptnesses, Israel eventually reached Canaan, a fact much more indicative of God’s faithfulness than Israel’s perseverance. Joshua, the successor to Moses, who also missed Canaan (Num. 20:1-12), made a final, grand speech to remind Israel that **all** that God predicted, promised, and provided concerning Canaan had come to pass.

Total Fulfillment Of The Land Promise

Joshua, the son of Nun, had succeeded a legend when his mentor Moses “died there in the land of Nebo” never having been allowed to enter Canaan (Deut. 34:5; Josh. 1). The greatness of Joshua’s military genius is recorded as a kind of historical biography of this courageous, devoted, servant of God. Joshua’s oratorical ability is also engrafted in Holy Writ as a memorial of that ancient warrior’s pleading to Israel to remember what God had done for her.

To the two and one-half tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh, descendants of Jacob, Joshua had earlier assured:

Ye have kept all that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, and have obeyed my voice in all that I commanded you...And now the Lord your God hath given rest unto your brethren, as he promised them: therefore now return ye, and get you into your tents, and unto the land of your possession, which Moses the servant of the Lord gave you on the other side Jordan (Josh.22:2,4).

Joshua had commanded the two and one-half tribes who intended to settle on the eastern side of Jordan to aid their brethren in conquering Canaan. Since God “hath given” rest, those tribes could return home. Some years later, Joshua, stricken with age, called for **all** Israel to remind them of several blessings from God (Josh. 23:1-2).

Joshua first reminded Israel that God had fought for her (Josh. 23:3) and as Israel would continue to press forward in Canaan, God would:

drive them (Israel’s enemies, K.M.) from out of your sight; and ye shall possess their land, as the Lord your God hath promised unto you (Josh. 23:5).

Israel was also warned to obey God and to “cleave unto the Lord” or else the land would be taken away (Josh. 23:6-13). Joshua then stated:

And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you: all are come to pass

unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof
(Josh 23:14).

Any honest Bible student will be impressed with the above, clear, strong, unequivocal, unanswerable insistence by Joshua that God indeed had fulfilled the land promise (as well as all other promises) to Israel!

A theological error known as premillennialism has long held the idea that God never did fulfill the promise of giving the land of Canaan in “fulness” to Israel. A close relative of the foregoing error is that there eventually were ten lost tribes of Israel who also must be returned to Canaan in order to fulfill God’s promise. Such teaching not only reaches the heights of absurdity, but climbs over the tops of those heights! Can the premillennialist not read what Joshua said? **Not one** thing had **failed** of **all** God promised!

As for those ten lost tribes who are surmised by premillennialists to have disappeared during Assyrian dominance (c.a. 722 B.C.), the tribes are **not** lost. Representatives of all twelve tribes returned to Canaan **after** Assyrian and Babylonian captivity (Ezra 2:70). In fact, after the return from Babylon, Ezra ordered that “twelve he goats” be offered “according to the number of the tribes of Israel” (Ezra 6:17). Especially significant is that the Levites are named as present at the sacrifice (Ezra 7:18). The Levites were one of those ten “lost” tribes!

In the New Testament the reader is introduced to one Anna of the tribe of Asher (Luke 2:36). If her tribe were lost, the Holy Spirit and Luke did not know it! History students are aware that premillennialistic error, pervades the foreign policy of America. Do not most Americans defend the idea that Palestine (Canaan)

“belongs” to the Jews? Bible students are aware, however, that God had made another promise to Israel about the land:

Therefore it shall come to pass, that as all good things are come upon you, which the Lord your God promised you; so shall the Lord bring upon you all evil things, until he have destroyed you from off this good land which the Lord your God hath given you. When ye have transgressed the covenant of the Lord your God, which he commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed yourselves to them; then shall the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which he hath given unto you (Josh 23:15-16).

Israel did break the ancient covenant (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:8-12) and lost her right to the land. In the words of Jesus, “Behold, your house is left unto you desolate” (Matt. 23:38). A **new** covenant came to man which covenant promised a better country and a permanent rest (John 14:1-6).

The Christian’s “Promised Land”

Contained in the Abrahamic covenant was the promise that in Abraham’s “seed” all nations would be blessed (Gen. 12:3). Abraham’s “seed” is Christ, the “seed” of woman (Gal. 3:16; Gen. 3:15). The Messiah made a new covenant with man and promised a better land (John 12:48; 14:3). That land of promise for the faithful is heaven:

Think of stepping on shore and finding it heaven!
Of taking hold of a hand and finding it God's
hand: Of breathing new air; and finding it
celestial air; Of feeling invigorated; and finding
it immortality: Of passing from storm and
tempest to an unbroken calm; Of waking up and
finding it home.⁵

As Israel's promised land was a real place so is the Christian's (John 14:3; Eccl. 12:7). One should not imagine a fantasy, or some dream state. God is there with Jesus; the Holy Spirit, angels, "elders," and eventually all saints (Rev. 4-5; 1 Pet. 1:4). The Christian's promised land is a "city" and a "better country" (Heb. 11:10; 11:16; 12:22). One on the journey of life should keep his goal in mind of reaching that land (Phil 3:13-14).

As Israel was side-tracked from reaching Canaan by fear, idolatry, worldliness, and rebellion so are too many of God's children. Countless numbers have never obeyed God but far too many also are falling away after obedience. Do these unfaithful children forget where heaven is? It is **up** (Isa. 40:26; Psm. 75:6; Ezek. 1:4). Look "up" dear Christian. Set the mind and heart on heaven and see the unseen (Col. 3:1-3; 2 Cor. 4:16-5:7). Is there fear of not being able to overcome? Remember that "greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4). Be faithful to assemble as often as possible with strong saints and remember how the fear of the ten spies caused an entire congregation of people to fail. Therefore, be a Caleb or Joshua and succeed!

As ancient Israel could not imagine how there could be room for them in a land of giants, are some thinking there will not be "room" in heaven for them (Num. 13:28;

c.f. John 14:3)? The Bible does not contain a specific measurement of heaven, but the apostle John was favored in seeing a city “foursquare” descend **out** of heaven (Rev. 21:2,16). If “foursquare” is a **literal** measurement, that city would cover an area of 1500 square miles. Such a city could contain forty-one trillion apartments, and note that the city was not heaven but came from heaven. Surely in our Father’s house are **many** mansions (John 14:3).

As ancient Israel left Egypt and started forward Canaan, did she image a journey too long and too dangerous (c.f. Exod. 14:11)? If one thinks heaven is too far and the journey is too fraught with danger, let that one recall a moment in the life of the prophet Daniel. As the seventy-year Babylonian captivity ended for Israel, Daniel began to long for his Jerusalem home (Dan. 9:2). Daniel prayed penitently, confessing his sins and the sins of his people (Dan. 9:3-7). While Daniel prayed, a most unusual event occurred; Gabriel, the messenger-angel of God, appeared (Dan. 9:20-21). Gabriel had been commanded, at the beginning of Daniel’s prayer, to leave heaven and to “fly swiftly” to Daniel (Dan. 9:21-23). Heaven, thus, is not far. Heaven is **one** prayer away as fast as an angel can fly! Those weary souls who battle the temptations of the world need to remember how close heaven really is.

As ancient Israel traveled toward Canaan did she hope for a better place (c.f. Exod. 15)? Surely the common yearning of all mankind is for something better lying beyond. “If a man die, will he live again” (Job 14:14)? Even atheists have wondered! Abraham **looked** for a city; David would **go** to a dead son; (Heb. 11:10; 2 Sam. 12:23). Heaven is a new tent or dwelling (2 Cor. 4-5). A new body is given (1 Cor. 15).

As Israel wandered for forty years toward Canaan, and as the rebellious died, is it possible that many of their children who entered the land carried sad memories of lost parents? ? Reunion is a tender term and joyous thought. For the faithful no sad memories will impair the joy of heaven, but the reuniting with those who have already gone will make the Christians eternal state truly a land of promise. An unknown author wrote:

When I was a boy I used to think of heaven as a glorious golden city, with jeweled walls and gates of pearl, with nobody in it, but the angels and they were all strangers to me. But after a while my little brother died; then I thought of heaven as that great city full of angels with just one little fellow in it that I was acquainted with. He was the only one that I knew there at the time. Then another brother died and there were two in heaven that I knew. Then my acquaintances began to die, and the number of my friends in heaven grew larger all the time. But it was not until one of my little ones was taken that I began to feel that I had a personal interest in the home of the soul. Then a second went, and a third, and a fourth; and so many of my friends and loved ones have gone there that it seems as if I know more in heaven than I know on earth. And now when my thoughts turn to heaven, it is not the gold and the jewels, and the pearls I think of--but the loved ones there. It is not the place so much as the company that makes heaven seem beautiful.⁶

A side-issue to the point made above of reunion and happiness concerns recognition. Will saints know one another in heaven? Of course. The rich man **knew** Lazarus (Luke 16:23). “But,” the question is asked, “If one will remember and recognize those in heaven; Will one not also remember those who did not get there? How then is there happiness?” Happiness requires knowledge of sadness is the answer. The joy of heaven is knowing what one went through to get there. Do not quit for **any** reason, dear Saint, for the promised land awaits.

Conclusion

The faithfulness of God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is never more evident than in the covenant with Abraham. Abraham’s descendants did inherit the promised land of Canaan, albeit not all. And Abraham’s seed today can inherit heaven (Gal: 3:29).

The Christian’s promised land is a place where the not fully known is known. The arid wilderness of this life gives way and the final answer to “what happens when we die” is given. Will saints long to “go back, to Egypt” as ancient Israel did or will saints press toward the goal? God has promised and He will keep His covenant. Man needs to respond.

Endnotes

1 See Keith A. Mosher, Sr., **The Book God Breathed** (Memphis, TN: Mosher Publications, 1995) for a more in-depth study of this point.

2 All scripture references are from the King James version unless otherwise specified.

3 Lewis Spence has a rather lengthy discussion of “Covenant,” in **Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics**, vol. IV,

ed. James Hastings (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1961), 206-10.

4 Herbert Lockyer, **All The Promises of the Bible**, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1970), 34.

5 No author, "Stairway to Heaven," in **Christian Woman** (August 1959): 8.

6 No author, "Heaven," in **Christian Woman** (August 1959): 30-31.

Appendices

Appendix A

We Must Strive For Loving Unity--
But Should We Strive For Unity In
Truth Or "Unity" In Error?

by Thomas B. Warren

Appendix B

What I Owe Jesus And Joe

by Ted J. Clarke

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Appendix A

We Must Strive For Loving Unity— But Should We Strive For Unity In Truth Or “Unity” In Error?

Thomas B. Warren

Introduction

Quite a number of articles on “unity” have been printed. The idea seems to be that **unity** is a matter of such importance that we are under **obligation** (from God) to “unite” (agree to **disagree**) even if it means that we have “unity in error”! If such is indeed what we ought to do, then alleged “unity” is **more important** than the truth! In fact, if the position under review is true, then the truth is really of no value! To be saved eternally, one must be truly faithful unto death (Rev. 2:10).

To be sure, **scriptural unity** is of tremendous importance! We all should be deeply concerned about unity. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself made clear that—to be saved—one **must** be concerned about it (John 17:20-21). But while the Lord exalted unity in **truth**, never—not for even one moment—did He ever approve of “Unity in error”! It seems clear that some brethren, in a

misguided zeal for “unity” at any cost (i.e., “Unity-in-diversity”), seem willing to approve of—in utter **contradiction** to what Christ and His apostles and prophets taught on the matter—”unity” in **error**! Such people seem not to realize that the need for **the truth** is **logically prior** to the need for unity! In fact, the truth involves unity in **truth** but **not** “unity” in **error**! To deny this is to implicitly affirm that truth does **not** really matter, that truth is really of no value! People must not allow themselves to denigrate the truth (the gospel).

We are to strive constantly and fervently for the unity for which Christ prayed (John 17), and about which the New Testament writers wrote, but the cruciality of such striving **does not** warrant the conclusion that men can have the approval of God while “agreeing to disagree” on matters which—according to Bible teaching—are matters of **obligation** (either **obligation to do** or obligation **not to do** something).

It is true that two men can **disagree** with impunity on matters which—according to Bible teaching—are matters of **option** (expediency—matters in which **human judgment** can be exercised with God’s approval) and both be pleasing to God. But such is **not** the case with **obligatory** matters. For two men both to be right on matters of **obligation**, they must hold to the same view and practice the same thing in regard to that matter (**not** either **forbidden** matters or **optional** matters).

Two men attain Christian fellowship with one another when each one of them attains fellowship with God (1 John 1:3; Eph. 2:13-16). One attains **fellowship** with God when he—as a penitent believer in Christ—is **baptized** into Christ (2 Tim. 2:10; Rom. 6:3-5; Gal. 3:26-27; et al.), and thus, men attain Christian fellowship with

one another when each one of them is baptized into Christ. Further, two children of God maintain Christian fellowship with one another (and with faithful children of God) by walking in the light of His word.

But what about denominationalism? The simple and conclusive implication is that no denomination can rightly present any of its members as having been saved (from their sins) by the blood of Christ.

Only those penitent believers (in Christ) who have **repented** of their sins and have **confessed** Jesus Christ as the Son of God can (upon their having been **baptized** into Christ, (Rom. 6:3-5; Gal. 3:26-27; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38, et al.), rightly claim that they have been **saved** from their sins. This is the case because their sins were washed away by the blood of Christ by reason of their having been baptized into Christ (cf. Acts 22:16, et al.).

It should be further noted that two (or more) children of God maintain their Christian fellowship with one another (and with all other **faithful** children of God), by their walking in the light of His word (the word of God, the gospel, the new covenant, the truth, et. al., 1 John 1:7).

Thus, it should be clear that no child of God can scripturally extend Christian fellowship to any one who has not been baptized in the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:1-5; et al.) and that Christian fellowship must be **withdrawn** from (after proper, i.e., scriptural, steps have been taken with him in regard to seeking to restore him to his first love) each child of God who, in adamant rebellion to God, no longer walks in the light of God's word (1 John 1:7; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; 11 Thess. 3:6-15; et al.).

God has a **law of inclusion**, and God has a **law of exclusion**: (1) Those who can be referred to correctly as

“liberals” (i.e., those who **reject** things which are **authorized** by the Bible) and those who can be referred to correctly as **“antis”** (i.e., those who **reject** things which are **authorized** by the Bible) are both in the midst of sin. No man can be faithful to God if he does not honor both God’s **law of inclusion** and His **law of exclusion**. The honoring of these two laws is a matter of **obligation**, not of mere option.

Some Questions Which Bring the Issue Into Focus

In contrast to the truth pointed out in the paragraphs above, it seems clear that some brethren are presently alleging that “unity” (even “unity in error”) is important above all else. As noted above, unity is enormously important, but it is not more important than the truth (the gospel) and it is not to be gained at the expense of truth. The truth (the gospel) upholds, and even demands, unity in truth. But “unity in error” is ungodly. God does not approve of such. “Unity in error” is rebellion against God. Nevertheless, it is clear that some brethren (many of whom, no doubt, mean well but are simply misguided) are now urging “unity” at virtually any cost. It is this sort of contention which has long been the very “backbone” of both liberalism and denominationalism. Denominationalists **agree to disagree** relative to religious matters. It is the basic contention which ever leads the church itself toward apostasy.

Below will be set out a number of questions which will be used to help the reader to see at least some of the things which are very dangerous trends presently in the church:

1. **Should we accept into the fellowship of the**

church those who have not been baptized in the name of Christ (i. e., unto the remission of their sins)? No. It is **clearly wrong** to do such. The Bible teaches that salvation is **in Christ** (2 Tim. 2:10), that one becomes a son of God **in Christ** (Gal. 3:26-27), that one is baptized into Christ (Rom. 6:3-5), and thus that as long as one has **not** been baptized in the name of **Christ**, he remains a child of **the devil**. Obviously, Christian fellowship is **not** to be extended to those who are children of the devil. It must be remembered that Jesus promised to build His church (Matt. 16:13-19). Paul said that Jesus purchased the church with His own blood (Acts 20:28). Paul further said that there is **one body** (Eph. 4:4), that **the church** is that one body (Eph. 1:22-23), that the body is the church (Col. 1:18, 24); that men are baptized **into** the one body (1 Cor. 12:13) and that Jesus is the **Savior** of that one body (Eph. 5:23). Thus, to attempt to extend Christian fellowship to a man who has **not** been baptized in the name of Christ (Acts 2:38) merely because he believes in God and in Jesus Christ as His Son can be nothing other than “union in error.”

2. Should we accept as brethren in Christ (and, thus, as members of the one true church) denominationalists such as Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists, Catholics, Pentecostals, et al ? No, we should not! Even though it is true that Baptists have been immersed in water in a religious ceremony, it is nevertheless the case that they have not been baptized in the name of Christ in being baptized with the baptism which is advocated by Baptist doctrine. (This is not to say that no one attending a Baptist church has been baptized in the name of Christ. No doubt there are some people who have been scripturally baptized into Christ

who have fallen away from the faith and espoused the false doctrine which is taught by the Baptists). This is the case because Baptist doctrine entails the view that men are to be baptized because they have already been saved (at the point of faith in Christ, **before** and **without** being baptized in the name of Christ)! Such is not baptism in the name of (by the authority of) Christ (Acts 2:38). Those who are members of a **denomination** are members of a religious body which has been **invented** and **established** purely by **mere human authority**. God approves of **none** of these (cf. Matt. 15:13). As noted above, all of those who have been saved by **the blood of Christ** are members of the **one body**. All of those who apostatize remain children of God, but they have become apostate members when they fall away. To sum up this point: it is simply false to say that a man can be saved from his sins by obeying a mere human law (which, for example, the Baptist, Pentecostal, Methodist, et. al. plans of salvation are mere human inventions).

3. **Is it the case that every Christian (to be pleasing to God) must baptize any and every person who requests to be baptized in the name of Christ, even if the one who so requests has made it obvious that he either is not a believer in Christ or else is not penitent of his sins—or both?** Since the Bible teaches that only penitent believers in Christ (as the Son of God) are proper subjects for baptism in the name of Christ, the answer to this question is, "No." Note, please, some of the **absurd consequences** which would follow if this doctrine were true. If the doctrine (which is implied by an affirmative answer to the question posed above) is true, then it follows that if any of the following persons request to be baptized, then any Christian (to be faithful

to God would be forced to baptize: (1) those who do not believe in God (but note Heb. 11:6), (2) those who do not believe the gospel (but note Mk. 16:15-16), (3) those who do not believe on the Lord Jesus Christ (but note John 8:24), (4) those who are living in a **homosexual relationship**, and who make this fact known to the preacher whom they have asked to baptize them, and who, while admitting that they know that such a relationship is grievously sinful, adamantly **refuse to repent** of that sin and to **stop** being involved in it (but note Rom. 13:8-10), (5) men who are living in **polygamy** (that is, men who have, say, ten wives) and who, even though they admit that it is sinful to live in a polygamous marriage, adamantly refuse to repent of this sin but openly declare that they intend to continue living in that relationship after they are baptized. Thus, on and on it could go with many sins which one might list.

Should we baptize such impenitent people? If we did, we could perhaps, deceive ourselves into believing that we were gaining “fellowship” and “unity” with a great many more people than we otherwise would have! Think of how many more people with whom we could have “unity” if only we would not be so “picky” about who **is** and who **is not** a proper subject for baptism in the name of Jesus Christ! Surely, brethren, we all know better than to baptize either a baby or an unbeliever or an impenitent person (be he a believer or otherwise) if the facts are known to us. What if a three-year-old boy “responded to the invitation” and asked to be baptized (so he could eat the Lord’s supper, as so many grown folks are doing each Lord’s day), which preacher or elder (or any one else) among us would baptize him? Brethren, think on this! Christianity is not irrational, it “fits together” without self-

contradiction! In the Bible, there are (1) matters of **obligation** (2) matters of **option** and (3) matters which are **forbidden**. Baptizing babies and small children and baptizing unbelievers, and baptizing those who are obviously impenitent are **not** matters of **mere option**! They are matters with which we **must comply** to be pleasing to God. What is **not authorized** by Bible teaching **cannot** be practiced with **impunity**!

When I have preached the gospel, making clear both **what** repentance **is** and the **necessity** of it, and some person responds to the gospel invitation and says that he/she wishes to be baptized, I question him/her concerning his/her faith in Christ as the Son of God. But let us all ask ourselves; what about occasions in which the one requesting baptism has openly admitted that he/she is living in a sinful relationship and just as **openly refuses** to repent of that sinful relationship and to get out of it? What should we do if **two men** who are **openly** in a **homosexual** relationship (and they openly **admit** that they are living in such a relationship and that they **know** that such is **sinful**, and yet, they **refuse to repent** of it) **ask** to be baptized? What if a man (who has requested to be baptized) says, **before** being baptized, "I have ten wives. I **know** that it is **sinful** to have more than one wife. But I **refuse** to give up **any** of my wives. I **refuse** to stop living with **any** of them. Yet I **demand** to be baptized." Would he be saved by the blood of Christ if some one **immersed** him? If the answer is "Yes," then **repentance is not necessary to salvation**! But remember: Acts 2:38; 17:30-31; et al. make it clear that **repentance is absolutely necessary** for one to be **saved**! Since repentance is **necessary**, he would not be saved without repenting.

John the Immerser demanded of the wicked Jews that they “bring fruit worthy of repentance” (Matt. 3:8). While John was not under the authority of the Great Commission, **the principle** which is involved is the same for us today (cf.: Rom. 15:4; Heb. 11:1ff.). We cannot always **know everything** we would like to know (a man who appears to us to be a good man may be seen by God to be a hardened sinner), but we **must** do the best we can, in the light of God’s word, to do what the Bible teaches. It is surely **not right** (1) to baptize **children** who are **too young** to have sinned, (2) to **baptize unbelievers**, or (3) to baptize **obviously impenitent** people.

We cannot have unity in the truth if we accept (into the fellowship of the church) those who refuse to repent of their sins and/or those who have **not been baptized** in the name of Christ. To think that we achieve “unity” by accepting into fellowship those who have **not become children of God** is to grossly **deceive** ourselves, to be disobedient to God, and to achieve nothing but “union in error”! The very fact that we ask (of the candidate for baptism) even one question is proof of the fact that we **may** have to **refuse** to baptize him!

4. **Should we baptize those who, after requesting to be baptized, in answer to the question, “Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” emphatically declare, “No, I do not! I believe that Jesus of Nazareth was just an ordinary human being—just like you or me. But I still want to be baptized in His name.”** Again, this brings up the question, “Who is a proper (scriptural) subject for baptism in the name of Christ?” Jesus made clear that one who does not believe in Him as the Son of God cannot be a proper subject for baptism in the name of Christ (Mk.

16:15-16). Peter made clear that **only** such **believers** as are **truly penitent** are proper subjects for baptism in the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:38; cf.: 3:19; 17:30-31; 2 Pet. 3:9). To baptize a man who—even though he strongly demanded to be baptized in the name of Christ—openly declared that he did **not believe** that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, would be an **obvious violation** of the teaching of the Bible.

5. **Should we (Christians) continue to extend the hand of fellowship to a man who, after he had been properly admonished (according to the steps set out in the Bible), adamantly declares that he believes with all of his heart (after studying with “Jehovah’s Witnesses”) that Jesus was (is) a created being?** The Bible teaches **the Word** has existed always (John 1:1). Thus, He was **not created**. In fact, every thing was created through the word (John 1:1-3). Thus, since He could not have created Himself, He Himself was not created. But let us suppose that the teacher of a Bible class in a local congregation made the following announcement just before the beginning of his class one Lord’s day morning: “Class, as you know, for many years I have believed and taught that **Jesus was not created**; that is, I have believed and taught until recent days that the Word (John 1:1) was eternal, that is, without beginning. But after studying for months with the people we know as “Jehovah’s Witnesses,” I have concluded that **they are right** about Jesus Christ and that all of **us** have been **wrong** about that matter all of these years. I want you to know that, as a matter of conscience, I simply must teach this truth; I cannot be silent about it. So, you can expect me to teach it whenever and wherever—including this class—I feel that it would be advantageous to the

cause of Christ to teach it.” Let it be further supposed that the leaders of the congregation worked with him very carefully and lovingly, following all of the steps which the Bible teaches should be followed in such matters. Still further, let it be supposed that, after all of this has been done, the man remains adamant that Jesus was (is) a created being and that he (the Bible class teacher) will continue to teach such doctrine to be the truth whenever and wherever he feels that he should, including the class which he has been teaching. The Bible clearly teaches that **fellowship** should be **withdrawn** from such a person.

Brethren, let us strive for unity with all of our hearts, souls, minds, and strength. Let us strive for unity in truth—not “unity” in error! God neither **approves** all so called “unity” nor **condemns** all division (see Luke 12:51; Rom. 16:17-18; 1 Cor. 5:1-13, et al.). May God help us to stand on the truth! There are some matters about which we may hold differing views (matters of expediency). For example, shall a congregation put pews or opera chairs in its new meeting house? What time on the Lord’s day shall the congregation meet for Bible study and for worship? Which preacher shall we hire to work with us? How much shall we pay him? etc., etc.? Let us not allow ourselves to become so “carried away” with “unity” (which, as I noted above, is a **tremendously important** subject) that we become willing to accept “unity in error” (which is sinful) rather than UNITY IN TRUTH (which is demanded by God). There are at least some things about which we simply must be right! (Consider: Heb. 11:6; John 8:24; 2 Pet. 3:9; John 3:5; 2 John 9-11; et al.). Therefore, there are at least some things about which we must hold the same views! **Failing** in this, if we have any “unity” at all, it certainly is **not** the unity which **God** demands of us; we

must recognize “optional” matters.

It is our very crucial obligation to be certain (1) that we **recognize** and **honor** all **obligatory** matters, (2) that we **recognize** and **honor optional** matters, and (3) that we **reject forbidden** matters. In all things, we must be motivated by **love**—love of **God**, love for **fellow Christians**, and love for **all others**.

One who does **not love** his fellowman can not be pleasing to God. But, brethren, please, let us **not** allow the devil to **deceive** us into **accepting** the **false** view that, somehow or other, **loving** other people warrants our **substituting** striving for **unity in error** for striving for **UNITY IN TRUTH**. After all, it was Jesus who said, “...ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32) and “Think ye that I am come to give peace in earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division:...” (Luke 12:51-53).

Let us be **united on the truth**, the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Let each and every one of us study the Bible with intense and regular desire to **know** the truth of what the Bible teaches. The basic (most important) goal of each and every human being of responsible, accountable age (as over against those children who are too young to be accountable before God for what they do) ought (1) to **learn** the truth of God’s sacred word (the Bible), (2) to **believe** that truth, (3) to **love** that truth (and its giver), (4) to **obey** that truth (in becoming a Christian—a saved child of God), and (5) to be **faithful** unto death (Rev. 2:10) so that one might spend eternity in Heaven with God, Christ, the Holy Spirit and all who will be there as the result of their faithfulness. What a glorious day that will be. May it be the case that all of us will strive for the remainder of our lives to this end.

Appendix B

What I Owe To Jesus And Joe!

Ted J. Clarke

Introduction

This article is not a “personal testimony” in the way that phrase is used and abused in denominational religion. On the other hand, it does contain personal references to myself and family, but there are scriptural points behind each example which I pray may be helpful to any who are struggling with life as I once did. This article is intended as a tribute to the person and example of Joe Crockett as a Christian soul-winner, and it is for the praise and thanks to my blessed Savior, Jesus Christ.

Every person in this world, who is thoughtful enough to reflect on his or her life, seeks answers to the questions: (1) “Where did I and this world come from?”; (2) “What is the meaning of life and my purpose in living?”; (3) “Where can I find true happiness?”; and (4) “What will happen to me when I die?” Many try to find the answers to numbers 2 and 3 in what the world has to offer, while trying to ignore questions 1 and 4. Often, we do not believe that anyone can answer 1 and 4, so we miss the real answers to 2 and 3. Most seek to find happiness and meaning to life in strictly material, physical things such as secular

education, jobs, even our families. On a lower level many seek satisfaction in pleasures such as open sex, alcohol and drugs, wealth, or power and fame.

As much as we may delight in our families (and well we should), as satisfying as our jobs may be, and as interesting and helpful as secular education can be, in reality we know that **something significant is missing** which leaves our longings unfulfilled. We also find the pleasures listed in the paragraph above to be shallow and temporary, often bringing terrible heartaches and troubles in the aftermath. There is no lasting joy in these pursuits, only a feeling that our life does not produce a real peace and satisfaction which can bring us to say, "This is it! This is the best and most satisfying life a person can know." If you have an emptiness in your life, if you despair of ever really being happy, or if you know others who feel these voids, **there are good answers that can satisfy your deepest longings.** Read on.

A Tough Guy, Broken

As a teen, I was the tough guy you never want your children to be. Smoking at 10, drinking regularly by 15, I was a juvenile delinquent. Rebellious of all authority, I ran away from home at 16, returning to drop out of school and enter the military. In the service my fighting, gambling, and drinking all increased dramatically. I abused the power I had as a military policeman and learned to steal from the government. I influenced others to abandon their religious principles and join me in what I portrayed as the "good life." After going AWOL, for a time, I was court-martialed and sent overseas to Okinawa. Having been married for only a year, with my wife expecting our first child, being sent overseas added to my

problems. My drinking became an addiction to escape my despair and my fighting and gambling became my ways of proving I was “somebody.” I seriously contemplated suicide on two occasions. My sin-filled mind and life was devoid of the happiness I so desperately desired, but I had no idea how to obtain it. Religion never entered my thoughts. I used God’s name daily, but in vain cursing, never in prayer. I hated life and most people and I was hated by many. Only 20 years old, I felt I had lived the miseries of 1000 lifetimes. I didn’t care if I died, but could not bring myself to end it all.

My tough guy image was a front. All the things which the world said offered meaning and happiness were lies. My life was broken, shattered, and I didn’t know how to fix it.

A Christian Named Joe

After a fist fight with my roommate he moved out and the service assigned another young man to bunk with me. He was Joe Crockett, from Coleman, Texas. Joe was 17, maybe 18, the son of godly parents whose father was an elder of the church of Christ in Coleman. We didn’t talk much the first few days, but Joe was watching me and listening when I complained about how unfair life was. Joe could have requested a transfer to another room. He could have looked at me and written me off as one who never would be interested in the subject of religion.

One day, when I was wallowing in the anguish of my life and a hangover, young Joe Crockett looked on this chief of sinners and said, **“You know, I believe if I were in your shoes I would start reading my Bible.”** What he said caught my attention like a slap in the face. I wasn’t offended. I didn’t want to fight him. I simply thought to

myself, “Does the Bible hold out hope for someone like me?” I didn’t even have a Bible. Later, the tough, broken guy asked Joe to go with him to the Base Exchange to buy a Bible. As I read and asked questions, Joe helped me to understand a great deal. His parents had trained him well. I had to come a long way and I wasn’t sure what my study would lead to, but Joe Crockett had showed me hope for my troubled life. Perhaps, if Joe had not loved my soul I would have ended my life. Dear friend, if you are as I once was, may I say, “Start reading your Bible.” Seek help in understanding from a preacher, elder, or member of the Church of Christ. If you truly desire to know God’s will, you can (John 7:17). The Scriptures contain all you need to know and do for a truly happy and fulfilled life (John 13:17; 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

A Savior Named Jesus

Joe and I found a church of Christ at Ojana, Okinawa, where I studied further with an elder there by the name of Robert George. He helped guide me in a study of the life and mission of Christ, enabling me to see that Jesus died for me, to take away my sin and its misery and condemnation. As I expressed my faith in Christ (Romans 10:9-10), repented of my many sins, confessing His name (Acts 2:38; 8:37), brother George baptized me to wash my sins away in Christ’s blood (Acts 22:16; 1 Peter 3:20-21; Romans 6:1-5). My burden of sin was lifted and the joy I knew in obeying the gospel of Christ was a real lifesaver. He continues to be the best reason for living today.

After returning to the States from Okinawa in 1962, I became a backslider into the ways of the world again. There was no more satisfaction to living an ungodly life the second time, and the same types of problems plagued

my life. One day, a wrong turn down a street took me by a church of Christ and I remembered the Jesus to whom Joe had introduced me and found His incredible forgiveness was still held out to me as a wayward child of God. I repented and prayed for His restoring grace to cleanse me and to restore unto me the joy of salvation (Psalm 51:12; Acts 8:22-24; 1 John 1:7-10). My wrong turn down the street became a right turn in my life.

Christianity - Profitable Now And Eternally

When I really got serious about being a Christian, dedicated to the service of God, my wife soon obeyed the gospel of Christ and our lives got even better. Together, we have worked through some difficult times in our lives. Both of us are convinced that our marriage would not have survived without our commitment to Christ and His teaching (Ephesians 5:22-23). We have tried to raise our children in the “nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:1-4; Proverbs 1:8-9; 22:6) and we pray that they will raise our grandchildren the same way (cf. Deuteronomy 6:1-9). One of our sons preaches the gospel for the church in Southaven, Mississippi, and we pray that one or more of the grandsons will continue the line of preachers.

Indeed, the teachings of Christ in our lives have blessed us beyond description. With Paul we say, “godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and that which is to come” (1 Timothy 4:7-9). All of this joy and happiness is ours because a young Christian man, taught by godly Christian parents, loved this sinner’s soul and was bold enough to carry on the Great Commission in telling me about our

Wonderful Savior, Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Romans 3:9-23; 6:23; 8:1-5). You can see why I offer this tribute to Joe Crockett for caring for me and loving me, and to Jesus Christ for giving my life hope and purpose (Colossians 1:27; 1 Timothy 1:1).

No Conclusion

This is a story with no conclusion till Jesus comes again. You see the power of one person, like Joe, who is not ashamed of the gospel, to influence the lives of thousands of others. As long as I faithfully preach, teach, and write, trying to help others as Joe helped me, his influence will live on. Even after Joe and I are gone from this earth, his influence is extended to another generation through my children, perhaps especially through B.J. as he ministers God's word to thousands through his years of preaching. It may be extended generations further through our grandchildren

Brethren, this situation is not unique to my family. It has happened thousands of times over 2000 years as Christians like Joe have perpetuated the gospel of Christ by teaching others. Other men, like myself, are preachers today because of other "Joes" who loved Jesus and souls. But each of us must be faithful and bold to continue to speak to sinners who are lost, confused, and looking for hope and meaning to life, as I was. Remember 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, and do not look at drunkards, thieves, prostitutes, homosexuals, idolaters, and such like, and say to yourselves, "They wouldn't be interested in hearing about the gospel of Christ." I shudder to think of what my life would have been if Joe had said that about me and had turned away without trying to teach me. Some, perhaps most, will not be interested, but let each one make

that decision for himself/herself! Read and reread the Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:1-23; Mark 4:1-20; Luke 8:1-18). There are “good and honest hearts” searching for the only thing that can give life true and lasting meaning - salvation in Christ.

A Postscript

I left Okinawa to return to the States before Joe did. A short while after he returned to Coleman, Texas, he had an automobile accident and broke his neck. He has been a quadriplegic (paralyzed in all limbs) for over 30 years. His caring but aging parents cared for him at home as long as they could, but Joe has had to have the kind of care provided in nursing homes for much of that time. The strong faith in Christ which he displayed in talking to me about the Lord has carried him through some very difficult times. He was engaged to be married when his accident happened, but he never married. He has not known the joys of wifely love, nor the happiness of nurturing children and grandchildren in the Lord’s ways. But Joe’s faith is rooted in the knowledge that the Jesus in whom he has trusted and taught to others for so many years, shall give him a new body for all eternity, an incorruptible body free from pain and disability. Paul says Jesus will “change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body” (Philippians 3:21). Our family is Joe’s family. One of our grandchildren has “Joe” as his middle name and another bears the middle name of “Crockett.” Of course, I can never repay Jesus nor Joe all that I owe them.

May I ask you a favor? If you are blessed by this paper, by my ministry in other ways, or through the love of Jesus as shown by my wife or children, would you send

Joe Crockett a card or letter and let him know that his labors in the Lord are still bearing fruit. Send your correspondence to: Mr. Joe Crockett, c/o Songbird Lodge, 2500 Songbird Circle, Brownwood, Texas 76801.

Then, too, will you let Joe's example of soul-winning encourage you to speak to someone else about salvation from sin and the good life in Christ Jesus? Although Joe cannot do what he once did, his influence will live on. Think of the possibilities for church growth if such could be said of each of us. We all owe Jesus and men like Joe!

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