

**THE
SCHOOLMASTER**

A Study of
Law and Grace

THE SCHOOLMASTER

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by

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DEDICATION

“To my childhood sweetheart, who became my wife and mother to our children . . . and who by the grace of God has somehow survived my most legalistic years.”

**“WHEREFORE THE LAW WAS OUR SCHOOLMASTER
TO BRING US UNTO CHRIST,
THAT WE MIGHT BE JUSTIFIED BY FAITH”**

Galatians 3:24

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INTRODUCTION

Jules Verne has been called the father of science fiction. In September of 1865 he published *De la Terre a la Lune* (From the Earth to the Moon). In this account he pictured travel in space some 14 years before George B. Sheldon applied for a patent on the "horseless carriage," 38 years before Orville and Wilbur Wright achieved their maiden flight at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, and over 100 years before Neil Armstrong stepped on the moon and announced, "That's one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind."

Verne's uncanny insight is made even more incredible when you consider that a Frenchman like himself would have his spaceship launched from Florida. Furthermore, his craft was essentially the same size and weight as those used on the Apollo moon expedition. Finally, he would have it splash down in his novel only 2-1/2 miles from the place in the Pacific where the Apollo moon craft would splash down in reality 104 years later.

The predictive insight of Jules Verne, however, pales into insignificance by contrast with the space age concepts of the sacred Scriptures.

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Before man had even learned to build a simple archway of stone, God was attempting to invigorate his mind with the glories of celestial cities. These bold concepts were so much beyond the grasp of man at the time that God began a process of gradual revelation that would span the centuries from Adam to Christ.

At sundry times and in divers manner He would reveal Himself unto the fathers by the prophets. These revelations were so intriguing that even the angels desired to understand their meaning, but they were not able. The prophets themselves searched and inquired diligently regarding the significance of their own prophetic revelations. The message, however, was so much beyond them that they had to content themselves with only the realization that the import of their inspired words would be for a future generation.

When the fulness of time finally arrived and the message of the ages was at last fully revealed to mankind, it was so utterly beyond the grasp of the finite mind that little children would be able to accept it while the intellectual establishment would not.

A United States inventor by the name of Nikola Tesla said in November of 1928,

No rocket will reach the moon save by a miraculous discovery of an explosive far more energetic than any known. And even if the requisite fuel were produced, it would still have to be shown that the rocket machine would operate at 459 degrees below zero—the temperature of interplanetary space.

Little children, however, do not worry themselves with such intricate matters and scientific details. Consequently, they would be much easier to convince about the realities of space travel than the scientist.

In similar fashion, the glories of celestial cities are all but invisible to the hardened intellect of those whom the world deems wise and prudent. It is so much beyond the reach of earthly wisdom that we have to be born again in order to see it. We have to be converted and become like little children. We have to leave the cold and sterile stock-pile of knowledge which we have accumulated over a few short centuries of time and leap by faith into a new dimension where we can call things which are not as though they were.

The Scriptures teach that, "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1).

To those who are bound to earth this is a pipe dream of ridiculous proportion. "Invisible substance" seems like "nonsense" instead of

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reality. They who are of this world would summon the believer back to what they would refer to in their ignorance as "hard facts." In so doing they would by-pass the very principle through which God spoke the universe into existence, by which the miracles of history became reality, and through which it is possible for sinful and imperfect man to achieve a right relationship with a sinless and perfect God.

One major obstacle to man's justification by faith is his propensity toward self-justification.

As long as we have a fig leaf behind which to hide we will clutch at it in desperation before we will fall down in nakedness, utter defeat, and fling ourselves on the mercy of God. What we have already done, unfortunately, means more to us than what God has promised to do.

Such a background sets the stage for what may very well be the most spectacular experiment of all time. Since we harbor delusions of our own grandeur and even fatal misconceptions of our own capabilities, God gave to us a period of Law. This law was designed by God to be a schoolmaster to drive us to the principle of justification by faith. It was intended to pry us away from the failure and frustration of earth and lead us to the joys and victories of heaven.

For one thousand five hundred years He permitted us to taste the dregs brewed up in the bitter caldron of our own imperfection. The covenant of law was and is a covenant of death.

The law brought death to 3,000 Israelites on the day it was delivered to them by Moses. Subsequently it brought death to the Levites who had strapped on their swords to slay those sinners who broke the law and ultimately, it even brought death to Moses, who gave the law, for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

The law brought death to the whole generation, but the experiment had only just begun.

Down through the long centuries came the thousands and the millions who would step into the arena of this world in the dispensation of law to match their strength and skill with the great gladiator of sin. Each would fall in the pitiful and pathetic residue of his own gore.

It was not a pleasant experiment. It was not intended to be a pleasant experiment. It was designed to make men desperate. It was designed to rub our noses in fifteen centuries of futility.

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It was a "schoolmaster," a pedagogue, not a teacher but a slave. This was to be a hard handed slave who would make us so miserable that we would come to Jesus. That was the purpose of the law. It was to lay so many painful stripes upon us that we would be driven in desperation to Jesus and the transcendent principles of His heavenly kingdom.

To this end we invite your attention to a study of the Law. If we do it properly it will bring us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. It will translate us from the dimension of time to that of eternity. It will elevate us to sit with Christ in heavenly places. It will enable us to reign with Him in a Kingdom where moth and rust do not corrupt and where thieves do not break through and steal.

In the words of Jesus, "I thank thee Father, Lord of heaven and earth that Thou has hidden these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes" (Matt. 11:25).

I

THE PURPOSE OF THE LAW

Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee . . . (Deut. 31:26).

We write laws in an attempt to control people . . . God did not. When our Pilgrim ancestors landed at Plymouth Rock, their little Mayflower Compact was utterly basic and simple. It was almost like Eden for legalistic simplicity.

The Pilgrims, however, saw the necessity of writing more laws. Each new law grew out of some special need. Down through the years we have accumulated literally thousands of laws, each written for the purpose of controlling us, yet we see a continual increase of lawlessness.

Certainly our laws have had some restraining influence upon society, but it is also equally obvious that laws have not corrected the basic problems of lawlessness in the human heart.

Caryl Chessman was executed on May 2, 1960. From all outward indications he went to the gas chamber utterly unchanged by the

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laws which condemned him to death. He is quoted in *Time Magazine*, September 13, 1982, pp. 42-43, as saying:

It seemed to me just as it usually seems to my kind, that society was simply trying to strip or rip off my shield, that it was willing to do so ruthlessly, that it didn't care about me personally, or the amount of humiliation or degradation it might inflict in the process. I stubbornly balked at being manipulated, regulated, or being compelled to conform blindly through fear or threat of punishment, however severe. Indeed, I came to question the validity of a society that appeared more concerned with imposing its will than in inspiring respect. There seemed to me something grossly wrong with this. "We'll make you be good!" I was told, and I told myself nobody should, would or could MAKE me anything. And I proved it.

I have in my possession a book of "Gun Laws." It is a rather large book about 8-1/2 by 11 inches and about an inch thick. It was given to me by a gun dealer and contains literally thousands of rules and regulations which are intended to control the use of firearms in the United States. It has not! Today we have more violations of these laws than ever before. Furthermore, if we were to write 20,000 more laws this year we would not solve the problem.

We write laws in an attempt to control people . . . God did not! He had more intelligence than that.

God knew that man would not even be able to keep one rule. That is why Jesus Christ knew, even before the foundation of the world, that He would have to die (I Pet. 1:20).

If Adam and Eve could not keep even one law in the Garden of Eden, what would make a rational person think that man could keep 10 laws at a later and less convenient time in history? Adam and Eve were created as perfect specimens in a sterile and spotless world that had never known sin. If they could not keep even one law . . . or if their conduct could not be controlled by law, certainly it is utter folly to think that law can solve our problems at this late hour.

If God did not give the law in an attempt to control people, why then did He give the law?

The text before us in Deuteronomy indicates that it was given as a witness against the children of Israel. Moses had observed their rebellion during his lifetime, and he anticipated an even greater

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rebellion after his death. This is categorically stated in Deuteronomy 31:27.

For I know thy rebellion, and thy stiff neck: behold while I am alive with you this day, ye have been rebellious against the Lord; and how much more after my death.

Certainly God established laws for different reasons than men do.

“ . . . THAT ALL THE WORLD MAY BECOME GUILTY . . . ”

Another aspect of law is seen through the inspired eyes of Paul in Romans 3:19:

Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

It is the very nature of law with reference to man, that no one can keep it perfectly. Moses himself, through whom God gave the law, is a perfect example of this.

There is no question that Moses was not only the outstanding man of his generation, but also for generations yet to come. The Scriptures put it like this:

And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses whom the Lord knew face to face (Deut. 34:10).

So defensive was God of Moses that when Miriam dared to speak critically of him she was smitten with leprosy. Upon that occasion God explained:

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? (Nu. 12:6-8)

Yet Moses was forbidden by God to enter into the land of Promise. You cannot understand why he was forbidden to do so until you understand the nature of law. It is the nature of law that whosoever keeps the whole law and offends in only one point, is guilty of it all (James 3:10). Therefore, all Moses had to do in order to become “guilty

before God” was to make one tiny little mistake . . . and this he did at Kadesh Barnea.

Early in their wilderness wanderings, God commanded Moses to “smite” a rock and it would bring forth water.

Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt SMITE the rock, and there shall come water out of it . . . (Ex. 17:6).

Now thirty-eight long years have gone by and God gives Moses another command. This time, however, he commands him to “speak” to the rock . . . not to “strike” it. And the Lord spake unto Moses saying: “. . . speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water . . .” (Nu. 20:8).

In the pressure and anxiety of that moment Moses disobeyed God and “smote the rock twice” (Nu. 20:11).

Now my friend, you are going to be introduced to the hard consequences of law. The very nature of law excludes mercy. The very nature of law was designed by God to make us guilty. Therefore, the judgment of God was given against Moses:

And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, because ye believed me not to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them (Nu. 20:12).

This fact is of such significance that it is repeated several times in the Scriptures.

And the Lord said unto Moses, Get thee up into this mount Abarim and see the land which I have given unto the children of Israel. And when thou hast seen it, thou also shalt be gathered unto thy people, as Aaron thy brother was gathered. For ye rebelled against my commandment in the desert of Zin, in the strife of the congregation to sanctify me at the water before their eyes . . . (Nu. 27:12-14).

The same truth is also repeated in Deuteronomy 1:37; 3:26; 32:48-52; etc. Each time the failure of Moses to enter the Promised Land is associated with the technical blunder which he made at Kadesh Barnea in the wilderness of Zin. Upon this occasion Moses “struck” a rock that God had commanded him to only “speak” to. It was an event so trivial to most of us that it almost literally boggles the mind that God would make such a big deal out of it. If you do not understand the reason why God gave the law, you are apt to think of God

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as some sort of a dirty bully who wants to keep us from the blessings and promises which He has given.

Exactly the reverse is true. Jehovah is a God of infinite mercy, love, and compassion. He does not desire that any should perish, but that all come to repentance (II Pet. 3:9).

What happened to Moses was intended by God to teach us something which is very important. It was to demonstrate the utter futility of trying to achieve the promises of God through the law. It was to be a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith.

Moses was a deliverer, a mediary, and an intercessor. He did for the Hebrew people what Jesus has done for all mankind. For this reason Moses predicted:

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 (Deut. 18:15).

This prophecy was quoted by the Apostle Peter in Acts 3:22ff. and was in fact, fulfilled by Jesus Christ.

There is a sense in which Moses became "guilty" and there is also a sense in which Jesus became "guilty." For Him who knew no sin, God made to be sin that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (II Cor. 5:21).

Schoolmaster

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith (Gal. 3:24).

It is important for us to remember that God did not give us the Law in an attempt to control us. It was a "schoolmaster" to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith.

In His infinite wisdom He knew that man could never be controlled by external pressure. Such a system would never work. Therefore, He gave us the Law for a much higher and more noble purpose. He did not want us to be "conformed" by pressure from without, but "transformed" by pressure from within.

So, in His infinite wisdom and love, He gave us the Law. It was a bold experiment lasting some one thousand five hundred years. He wanted us to find out by personal experience the sadness and imperfections of a society based upon external laws. At the end of the

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experiment men were just as bad as they had always been, and perhaps even worse.

When the Law was given at Mt. Sinai, the nation was involved in an idolatrous orgy. They took off their clothes and corrupted themselves before a golden calf.

After 1,500 years man was just as corrupt as he had ever been . . . but he had learned to mask his corruption behind a veneer of self righteousness. Caiaphas and Annas did not do their dirty work in the open as did their ancestors. They had learned the art of duplicity and hypocrisy. They could devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers. They could appear righteous on the outside when in reality they were full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.

The Law was not given to make men "self-righteous." It was given to make us "guilty."

The fact that Jesus was crucified by students of the Law is proof positive that men can pervert the Law and distort the purposes of God. Sin is merely the misuse of good things. Everything that God gave to us is good . . . but is also capable of being twisted and perverted into something which is bad.

The perversion of the Law by those men who crucified Jesus has been repeated in virtually every generation.

I am told that the devout Jew began his religious studies by memorizing the book of Leviticus . . . these who had such reverence for the Law were the very ones who crucified Him the first time. This leads me to the frightening conclusion that when He is crucified afresh and put to an open shame, this also may be done by students of the Scripture who in their misdirected zeal have missed the purposes behind the giving of the Law of God.

There is no question that God gave the Law.

There is also no question that God had a reason for giving the Law.

It is the purpose of this little book to show that the Law was given as a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

1. Why do men write laws?
2. Do laws control us or not?

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3. Why did God write laws?
4. Did God's laws control people?
5. Why did students of God's law want to kill Jesus?
6. Whom do you think was closer to God, Caiaphas and Annas, or Herod and Pilate?
7. If given more time under the law of God would the Jews have become better or worse?
8. Which do you think is easier to deal with, idols like the golden calf (Exodus 32) or idols of the heart (Ezekiel 14:3)?
9. Why was it easier for the publicans and harlots to enter into the Kingdom of God than for the chief priests and the elders (Matt. 21:31)?
10. If God did not give the law to control people, why then did he give it?

II

THE NATURE OF GOD

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us . . . (Jn. 1:1, 14).

Early in my Christian life I thought that the Law reflected the nature of God. It does not! At least not in any accurate sense, and it was not intended to.

As ridiculous as it sounds today, at one time I actually thought that the Law was given to teach that God was legalistic. I was wrong!

When I read that Moses was kept out of Canaan because of a technical mistake, I thought that to be like God I had to become technical.

When I read in Leviticus 10 that Nadab and Abihu were killed by God for offering strange fire which the Lord had not commanded, I thought that to be like God I too had to become judgmental upon those who also did things which the Lord had not commanded.

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When I read in II Samuel 6 that Uzzah died for touching the Ark of God, I felt a strong compulsion to be “God like” and also condemn those whose conduct violated the teaching of Scripture.

Again I repeat, the Law was not given to reflect the nature of God or to teach that God was legalistic.

The Law was given as a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith.

Shadows and Substance

Hebrews 10:1 teaches that the Law was only a “shadow” and not “reality.”

Shadows are ever changing, but God is never changing. He is the Father of Lights in whom there is no variation or shadow cast by turning (James 1:17).

We do not understand the nature of God by looking at shadows. Such a practice has resulted in distortions without number and problems that defy description.

The intelligent way to know about God is by looking at Jesus. He is the Light of the world and in Him is no darkness at all.

Jesus is God manifest in the flesh. His name was Immanuel, which means, God with us.

The Colossian letter teaches us to avoid being spoiled through philosophy and intellectualism, and to recognize that in Jesus all the fulness of the Godhead dwelled in a human body.

My shadow is not me. Your shadow is not you. The law was only a shadow . . . not God.

The most theologically accurate view that mankind can have of God . . . is Jesus!

God and Law

There is an old joke which goes like this: “Where does an 800 pound gorilla sit?” Answer - “Anywhere he wants to.”

In this respect it is both axiomatic and obvious that God can do “anything He wants to.”

God operates outside the realm of law. He can never be controlled by external pressure.

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If there was a law to which God had to subscribe, who made that law and who will enforce it?

We have been schooled to think that someone who operates outside the realm of law is bad. We call him an "outlaw" and the very mention of that word conjures up frightening images in our minds.

God, however, operates outside the realm of law and He is good. There is no one who can make God do anything. He does exactly what He pleases. The nature of God is such, however, that He only "pleases" to do that which is good.

Here then is the mystery which no eye had seen, no ear had heard, and which had never entered into the heart of man. God was going to establish a kingdom of people just like Himself. Citizens of this heavenly kingdom would not be controlled by external pressure or law, but by a new nature from within. God would accomplish this miracle by placing His sperm within us and enabling us to be "born again" (I Jn. 3:9). He would replace our sinful human spirit with His blessed Holy Spirit.

The First Adam began a physical race which was subject to deterioration and decay. In Adam all die.

Jesus is called the "last Adam." He is the progenitor of a new race. He is the founder of an heavenly kingdom. Those who are "born from above" and who have their "citizenship in heaven" partake of "everlasting life."

Citizens of heaven are not conformed by earthly laws and carnal commandments, but by a totally new concept of government and law.

The New Nature and the New Law

Citizens of earth are bound by certain "laws" of nature. Everytime we drop something, it falls. This leads us to assume that there is an inexorable "law of gravity" from which no one can escape.

We live in a generation now, however, which knows that astronauts in orbit can drop objects which only float. They operate in a totally different environment. The laws that apply to someone outside the atmosphere of earth transcend earthly considerations.

At sea level, with standard barometric pressure, water will boil at 212 degrees Fahrenheit. Not so in outer space, for the boiling point of water is directly associated with barometric pressure.

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On earth we are instructed that an airplane moving through the atmosphere faces two kinds of resistance—induced drag and parasite drag. Conditions are such that when an airplane doubles its speed, the drag quotient is quadrupled. This is not true in outer space at all. A satellite can move at 18,000 miles per hour with virtually no drag at all. A person who steps outside of an airplane in flight had better have on a good parachute. But the person who steps out of an orbiting satellite doesn't need a parachute at all. He merely floats alongside. Things are different in outer space.

Einstein proved that even time is not absolute, but relative. The faster we go through space, the shorter is the period of time. If we should ever be able to accelerate to the speed of light . . . time would stand still. We would exist in an eternal "now."

The point of it all is this. God does not have to abide by earthly laws. Jesus stated it succinctly: ". . . Ye are from beneath, I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world" (Jn. 8:23).

God doesn't have to go 55 miles per hour if He doesn't want to! For those who are citizens of heaven there is:

"A change of the law . . ." (Heb. 7:12)

"The perfect law of liberty" (James 1:25)

"The Royal Law" (James 2:8)

"The Law of the Spirit of life in Christ" (Rom. 8:2)

"The Law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2)

etc.

Citizens of heaven reign in "heavenly places" with Christ Jesus. Here we experience a righteousness without law. We do the will of God because we want to, and not because we have to.

Can Man Judge God?

Some years ago a farmer friend related to me a humorous incident involving a new hired hand.

The young man hurried out to the barn and climbed on the farmer's brand new tractor. Where he came from it was, "first come, first served." Needless to say he was now in a different place than where he came from.

It did not take the hired hand long to find out that his personal rules and philosophy were not binding upon his boss. When you own

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a farm and own the tractors, and pay all the wages, you are in a position to ride any tractor you jolly well want to. Certainly those of us who are merely "laborers" are in no position to question or coerce the Creator and Sustainer of the universe.

Jesus once likened the Kingdom of Heaven unto an householder who went out early in the morning to hire labourers for his vineyard. He agreed with the workers on a certain wage and sent them out to work.

Later the Master of the vineyard went out at the third hour, and the sixth hour, and the eleventh hour, and hired other workers.

Those who had worked all day long felt that they were in a position to manipulate and control the owner of the vineyard. They were not! The owner of the vineyard could do anything he wanted to . . . which he did. (See Matt. 20:1-16.)

Neither are we in a position to take God to court and demand anything. God is God! He is the absolute Sovereign in the universe. When we have attempted to do all that is required of us we will fall down before Him and confess that we are but unprofitable servants. We will cry out with Paul:

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).

Man is finite, God is infinite. We measure from point to point and from one increment of time to another. We do not have the mental capacity to understand either "infinity" or "eternity."

God's thoughts are not like ours, and vice versa. Isaiah expressed it beautifully when he wrote:

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts (Is. 55:9).

If we could understand all there was to know about God, He would no longer be the object of our adoration and worship. While we can never know all there is to know about God while experiencing the limitations of flesh, it is obvious that the nature of God is better communicated through light than through shadows, through Jesus . . . than through law.

Pause for a moment and look at your own shadow. The world's most brilliant and analytical scientists could study your shadow for a

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lifetime without knowing anything of your basic nature and personality. Neither could they identify you in person if all they had ever seen was your shadow.

The Law was a shadow cast by Jesus but the most devout students of that Law did not even recognize Him.

The purpose of that shadow was not to accurately reveal the nature and personality of God, but rather to act as a schoolmaster to bring us unto Jesus who was "God manifest in the flesh."

This encounter with Christ occurs through the phenomenon of faith by which means we may also receive our justification.

For ". . . the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith."

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

1. Is God controlled by any influence from without?
2. The Scriptures teach that God does not change (Mal. 3:6, James 1:17, etc.). Can this be said of anyone else, or anything else?
3. How does a shadow differ from reality?
4. In what way is God reality and not a shadow?
5. In what way is the Law a shadow and not reality (Heb. 10:1)?
6. In what way are the children of God to be like God?
7. Does God want us to be controlled from without, or from within?
8. Is man's basic nature good or bad?
9. Can man's basic nature be changed?
10. How can man's basic nature be changed?

III

THE NATURE OF GOD IS REVEALED IN THE SCRIPTURES

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts (Is. 55:8-9).

It is obvious that God's thoughts and ways transcend our thoughts and ways. It is equally obvious, however, that God has from the very beginning sought to communicate with mankind.

In the Garden, God spoke to man. Someone has observed that no human being ever speaks until he is spoken to. Language is learned, not inherited. Psychologists analyzed a seven year old boy who had been raised by a pack of wolves. He did not speak at all, but only made sounds approximating the noises which he heard around him.

God longed to communicate with man. Ultimately, the words of God were reduced to writing. The spoken word became the written word. Naturally, something of God's nature would be communicated through His words.

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A word is a vehicle of communication. Again may I emphasize that Jesus Christ is the Word of God in the truest and clearest sense that man is capable of understanding. The Word of God became flesh and dwelt among us. He longed for us to understand His nature. At sundry times and in different manners He spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, but in these last days He has spoken unto us by His Son.

The nature of God revealed in His Son is, of course, in complete and perfect harmony with the nature of God revealed in the Scriptures. Even a brief overview of the Scriptures will reveal that the nature of God transcends earthly law and human reasoning.

Cain and Abel

When Adam and Eve sinned they were promised that the "seed of woman" would triumph over the serpent (Gen. 3:15).

This was, no doubt, the subject of many conversations around the camp fire.

When Cain was born, he must have thrilled to these stories and may have even believed that he would champion the cause of humanity by crushing the serpent's head.

When his younger brother, Abel, was born, he found himself superior to him in many ways. Up to a point, an older brother is always physically and intellectually superior to his younger brother. A four year old, for example, is almost always bigger, stronger, faster, and smarter than his two year old brother.

God, however, did not accept Cain's offering, even though he was the first born. He had respect instead for the sacrifice of Abel.

The book of Hebrews informs us:

By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts, and by it he being dead yet speaketh (Heb. 11:4).

There is a sense in which no human being is righteous. Romans 3:10, for example, states: "There is none righteous, no not one."

The Scripture does not state that Abel was righteous, only that he "obtained witness" that he was righteous. Or as other versions put it, that he was "declared righteous."

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The story may actually be much like the story of the Prodigal Son which Jesus would tell many years later. The older brother excelled in many ways, but the younger brother was honored with rewards and a banquet. The prodigal was no more righteous than was Abel, but he obtained honor because of his submissive and humble spirit.

In both instances the older brother was angry. Each expected God to see things from a human point of view and to judge humanity from an earthly perspective.

God did not do so! And the record of His actions is recorded on the opening pages of our Bible to provide us with an index into the way that He thinks.

The story of Cain and Abel points us to the transcendent power of faith, and this is precisely the same reason why God gave us the Law of Moses. It was a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith.

Abraham and Sarah

It is not our purpose to present a complete catalog of the heroes and heroines of the faith, but rather to briefly scan the Scriptures to show that in every age and dispensation, God has operated aloof from human law and reasoning.

There must have been thousands of women God could have used to perpetuate the sacred lineage and enable the "seed of woman" to ultimately triumph over satan. He deliberately selected, however, a barren woman who had passed the age of bearing. It was through faith that she received strength to conceive seed. It was through faith that Abraham staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief. Each became utterly convinced that what God had promised, He was able also to perform—regardless of the "laws" of nature. Their faith transcended earthly laws.

Ishmael and Isaac

When Isaac was born, the family faced a legal dilemma. In the event that Abraham had no children, his estate would pass to the steward in his household with the greatest seniority. In this case it would have been Eliezer of Damascus (Gen. 15:2).

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Ishmael, however, was born as the legal heir to Abraham. Even though his mother was a slave, he still had a legitimate and legal claim as the "firstborn."

Later it would be specifically written in the Mosaic Law:

Then it shall be, when he maketh his sons to inherit that which he hath, that he may not make the son of the beloved firstborn before the son of the hated, which is indeed the firstborn: But he shall acknowledge the son of the hated for the firstborn, by giving him a double portion of all that he hath: for he is the beginning of his strength: the right of the firstborn is his (Deut. 21:16-17).

There was, however, a principle that transcended legal claims and human law. It was the principle of faith.

The promises of God to Abraham were not fulfilled through Ishmael, but Isaac. This story is not in the Bible by accident . . . God was obviously trying to teach us something.

Esau and Jacob

Isaac had two sons. Esau was unquestionably the firstborn, but again the sovereignty of God took precedence over legal considerations.

Before these boys were born, and before either of them had any opportunity to do either good or evil, God determined that the elder would serve the younger (Rom. 9:12).

Such a story is enough to give a lawyer a migraine headache. It baffles those who would reduce God to Someone we could shove around in court or coerce by a legal contract. It is, however, in perfect harmony with the way that God has revealed Himself throughout the pages of Holy Scripture.

Reuben, Ephraim, and Judah

Reuben was the firstborn of Jacob, Ephraim was given the right of the firstborn, and Judah prevailed over them all as the possessor of the sceptre and the progenitor of the Christ.

Note I Chronicles 5:1-2:

Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel, (for he was the firstborn; but, forasmuch as he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was

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given unto the sons of Joseph the son of Israel: and the genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright. For Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the chief ruler; but the birthright was Joseph's.)

Reuben was the firstborn, then came Simeon and Levi, then Judah. These four sons were born to Jacob through Leah. Next in the family were Dan and Naphtali, the sons of Jacob through Bilhah. Then came Gad and Asher through Zilpah. Leah then had two more sons, Issachar and Zebulun. Joseph and Benjamin were the last two sons to be born. It does not seem fair that Joseph would be granted the honor of having his son as Jacob's "firstborn" taking precedence and priority over his uncles who by law were before him.

The situation is made even more incredible by the fact that when Joseph stood his two sons before the aged Jacob, he carefully placed his firstborn before the right hand of the patriarch. Jacob then crossed his hands to confer a blessing.

Joseph remonstrated, "Not so, my father: for this is the firstborn; put thy right hand upon his head" (Gen. 48:18).

Jacob refused to do so! Ephraim, though younger, would be considered as the "firstborn" in spite of the fact that his brother Manasseh was legally the firstborn.

God determined that He would no longer reckon the genealogy of Jesus through the "firstborn," therefore, in His own sovereign wisdom, He selected Judah.

Genesis 49:10 puts it like this:

The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.

Therefore, when Matthew chronicles for us the genealogy of Jesus, it is not through Reuben, or Ephraim, or Manasseh, but through Judah.

Surely God was trying to teach us something by all of this!

Pharez and Zarah

Judah's firstborn was named Er, and he died. His second son was named Onan, and he died. Both of these brothers had been married

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to Tamar. Judah's third son was named Shelah. The law of the land indicated that Shelah should also become the husband of Tamar. Later it would be recorded in Deuteronomy 25:5-6:

If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband's brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an husband's brother unto her. And it shall be, that the firstborn which she beareth shall succeed in the name of his brother which is dead, that his name be not put out of Israel.

Judah, however, refused, or at least neglected to give Shelah unto Tamar as her husband.

Therefore, she dressed up like an harlot, seduced Judah, and gave birth to twins. Not by any stretch of the imagination the most legal way to do it, but nonetheless, this was the way Jesus was born through the lineage of Judah.

Our human judgment is again shocked by which of the twins became the ancestor of Christ.

The legal definition of the firstborn was given to the child which first opened the womb. Therefore, when Tamar travailed to give birth the midwife correctly identified the firstborn by tying a scarlet thread about his hand and announcing, "this came out first." They named him Zarah, which means "dawn."

Zarah drew back, however, and his younger brother was born first. They named him Pharez, which means "breach."

Each time the genealogy of Jesus is given, it is always reckoned through Pharez and not Zarah.

Surely God was trying to teach us something by all of this!

Sons of Abraham

The Jewish people could trace their lineage back to Abraham. They took great pride in announcing to the world, "We have Abraham to our Father." They scrupulously adhered to the rite of circumcision. Their legal case was airtight.

The only problem was that God has always remained aloof from human thinking and Jewish Law.

It is true that God gave the law, but we must not forget that the law was not given so that man could take God to court and demand

his rights, the law was given as a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith.

John the Baptist probably beckoned with his hand to gentile territory when he announced:

And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham (Matt. 3:9).

After emphasizing the role of the law in bringing us to Christ by faith, Paul continued:

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).

The Advantage of the Non-Religious

This teaching is so absolutely radical that one has to be "born again" in order to see it. We have to be converted and become like little children.

As we have said before, the devout Jew began his religious studies by memorizing the book of Leviticus. Yet Jesus said of these men, "The publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you (Matt. 21:31).

It seems that the thief on the cross had greater insight into the kingdom than even the apostles of Christ. They thought Jesus had failed and that there would be no kingdom, but the thief saw something they had not yet seen. By faith he said, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom" (Lk. 23:42).

The disciples forsook Jesus and fled, but the thief heard the words, "Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Lk. 23:43).

Those who have accumulated what they deem as a great stockpile of information will find it difficult to come to Christ like a little child.

In reality, the knowledge and information in the brain of a newborn infant bears the same relationship to God as does the knowledge and information that was in the brain of Albert Einstein. 1×0 is exactly the same thing as $1,000,000 \times 0$. All human intelligence is in some

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respect the same when it is compared with the infinite wisdom and knowledge of God.

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).

Hamaan and Mordecai

How vividly I recall an incident which occurred many years ago. I had spoken for a special meeting and the preacher had driven me to the airport where I was to take off in a private plane for home.

It was late at night and the little grass strip was deserted. He warned me that I should watch for deer which might be on the runway.

I sensed that he wanted to talk, however, and so we sat in his car and visited. Words are not adequate to express the feelings which I experienced that night. I came to love and appreciate that man in a new and meaningful way.

He, like Jacob, had wrestled with God and prevailed. The intense struggle had made a profound and lasting impression upon him. His insights into spiritual things were both incisive and profound.

Finally, swearing me to secrecy, he confessed that he had just completed a study of the book of Esther and concluded that he was Hamaan.

As a preacher, he had been so scrupulous about his doctrinal purity that he never once questioned his relationship to God. Consequently, he had developed judgmental attitudes toward other preachers and other churches.

When he reflected upon someone whom the Lord would delight to honor, he naturally concluded that it would be him. Other "Christians" like Mordecai he assumed would be condemned.

Legally speaking Hamaan had a good case!

Hamaan had been promoted above all the princes that were with him (Esther 3:1).

The King had commanded all his servants to bow down to Hamaan (Esther 3:2).

Mordecai had transgressed the King's command (Esther 3:3).

Mordecai was warned daily but still refused to obey (Esther 3:4).

It was written and sealed by the King that the Jews should be destroyed (Esther 3:9-12).

The law of the Medes and Persians could not be changed (Esther 1:19; 8:8; Dan. 6:8, 12, 15).

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In addition to this Hamaan was rich and had many children (Esther 5:11).

Hamaan was also the only special guest at a banquet with the King and Queen (Esther 5:12).

When the King asked, "What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honor?" it was logical for Hamaan to conclude, "To whom would the king delight to do honour more than to myself?" (Esther 6:6).

Hamaan was wrong!

As smart as he was . . . as rich as he was . . . as successful as he was . . . there were still some things that Hamaan didn't know. The King had other considerations of which Hamaan was not aware.

The King's love for Esther took precedence over even the law of the Medes and the Persians which could not be changed.

Esther and her people were saved, and Hamaan was hanged on his own gallows.

Surely the Scriptures are trying to tell us something about the nature of God.

Certainly the law was a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

1. How do words communicate?
2. What failures and limitations in communication can result from words?
3. Since Jesus was the Author of the Bible why didn't the students of the Bible recognize Him?
4. Is there any association between the mentality of Cain who killed his brother and the mentality of the Jews who crucified Jesus?
5. Put yourself in the place of Ishmael and tell why God's dealing with you did not seem fair.
6. Did the selection of Abraham have anything to do with the Law?
7. Which is more important, law or faith?
8. Did the thief on the cross accurately discern the nature of Christ's Kingdom? If so, why didn't the disciples?
9. Is it fair to say that God operates without control by law?
10. Does God desire us to operate without control by law?

IV

THE NATURE OF GOD IS REVEALED IN CHRIST

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. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily . . . (Col. 2:8-9).

The word "Godhead" occurs but three times in the New Testament Scriptures. It is found in Acts 17:29 where we are informed that,

Forasmuch then, as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.

The nature of God transcends anything which man can create, either physically or philosophically. The letter to the Romans, however, reveals that God made known to us something of His nature by means of His own creation.

For the invisible things of him from creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse (Rom. 1:20).

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The most clear and complete revelation of God, however, came in the person of Jesus Christ. In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead in a body.

The human family cannot have a better view of Deity than we have in Jesus Christ. He is the most theologically accurate concept of God which man is capable of assimilating. He is, in fact, God manifest in the flesh (I Tim. 3:16).

Marco Polo was born in the year A.D. 1254, to a noble family in Venice. His father and his uncle were merchants to the East and journeyed to the court of Kublai Khan who was the grandson of Genhis Khan.

In 1271, 17 year old Marco Polo accompanied them to the Orient. It was 24 years before he returned to Italy.

When he did return and tried to relate the glories of what he had seen, he was regarded as the greatest liar in Europe.

The Europeans had never seen a coconut, or an alligator, a reindeer or a polar bear. They had no concept of a postal system or paper money. The scientific advancement of the East was so far beyond the European mentality of the time that virtually no one believed what Marco Polo had to say.

As a matter of fact, on his deathbed a priest was begging him to recant these stories and ask God for forgiveness.

Polo responded that he had not told them the half of what he had seen.

Jesus faced a similar problem. He said,

Ye are from beneath; I am from above, ye are of this world; I am not of this world (John 8:23).

When Jesus tried to explain the new birth to Nicodemus, the message was more than he was able to comprehend. Jesus then said,

If I have told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things (John 3:12)?

The crucifixion of Jesus is a monument to ignorance! Jesus was not only God, He was also the "Word" of God (John 1:1). A word is a vehicle of communication. Therefore, Jesus was the vehicle by which God communicated His nature to man. God not only reveals to us His nature on the pages of Holy Scripture, but also in the person of Jesus Christ.

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Just as God's revelation in the Scripture transcended law, so also the manifestation of God in Jesus Christ also transcends law.

We see this first of all in the realm of physical law. Jesus was born of a virgin—contrary to physical law. He turned the water into wine, He multiplied the loaves and fish, He healed the sick, He raised the dead, He walked upon the water. All of these "miracles" transcended the "laws" of the physical world.

But it is also true that the life of Jesus transcended the laws of man and also the Law of Moses. It is not just that Jesus correctly interpreted the Law of Moses, it is that He operated outside the realm of its jurisdiction.

As astronaut in orbit does not have to worry about stop signs and speed limits. He operates at a totally different level.

So Jesus operated outside the realm of the law's jurisdiction.

Tribute Money

Once Peter was asked if his master paid the tribute money. Peter said "yes." Jesus, however, didn't have to do so at all. He said to Peter,

What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children or of strangers?

Peter correctly responded - "of strangers."

Jesus then observed that the children were exempt from tribute. Jesus, however, elected to pay the tribute with a coin that was miraculously obtained. This He did, not because he HAD to, but because He WANTED to (Matt. 17:24-27).

Jesus was never coerced by outward pressure. His life instead was governed by His divine nature.

The Temple

The first major act of our Lord's public ministry was to enter into the Temple in Jerusalem at Passover time and to disrupt what was going on. He found those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money, and when He had made a scourge of small cords, He drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables (John 2:13-16).

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It is clear that Jesus did what He wanted to in the Temple—but remember that He was God and, therefore, only wanted to do that which was right!

Worship

The Hebrew people were forbidden by law to worship God at any place except where He had chosen to put His name. (See Deut. 12:5.)

When God chose to put His name in Jerusalem, Jewish people had to journey there from all over the world in order to worship.

The book of Acts confirms this truth by observing,

And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven (Acts 2:5).

In the following verses a great number of different nationalities were then listed.

Transcending what the law had to say, Jesus told the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well,

Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet in Jerusalem, worship the Father (John 4:21).

Again He said,

But 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. God is a spirit: and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24).

Again it is clear that Jesus had a concept of worship which transcended that which was revealed in the law.

Lepers

Lepers, according to law, were unclean. They were to be segregated from others in society and were to go about crying, "unclean, unclean" (Lev. 13:45).

Jesus, however, operated above the law and reached out and touched lepers, (see Matt. 8:2-4; Mk. 1:40; Lk. 5:12-14) and even went into the house of Simon the Leper in Bethany (Matt. 26:6ff.). From the human point of view this seemed "illegal."

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Once when Jesus entered into a village, He met ten lepers who stood afar off just like the law required. Jesus told them to go show themselves to the priest, just like the law required. And as they went they were cleansed.

Then one of these lepers who was cleansed did something which it seems to me was contrary to the law. He no longer stood afar off but came right into the presence of Jesus and fell down at His feet and gave thanks (Lk. 17:12-19).

By law the process by which a leper was admitted back into society was a lengthy and complicated one. It is recorded in Leviticus 13 and 14 and required many sacrifices and many days.

The man who returned to give thanks may not have been familiar with all of these technical details for he was a Samaritan. But he did possess something which enabled him to transcend the law—faith.

Jesus said to him, "Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole" (Lk. 17:19).

It seems that Jesus was trying to teach us something.

Issue of Blood

Leviticus 15:19-33 deals with the specific situation of a woman who had an issue of blood.

The woman, in such circumstances, was not only unclean, but everything and everybody who came in contact with her was also unclean. The uncleanness extended even to those who came in contact with something which she had sat upon or laid upon.

In Luke 8:43-48 we are told the story of a woman who had an issue of blood for twelve years.

The crowd on this occasion was so great that the multitudes were "thronging" Jesus.

Contrary to the law, this woman was in the midst of that crowd, and unclean as she was, she dared to reach out and touch the border of the garment which Jesus was wearing.

Again, however, faith transcended law and the woman was cleansed. Jesus said it like this, "Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace."

Surely God was trying to teach us something.

Defilement of the Dead

Numbers 19:11-22 deals with defilement of the dead. It informs us that anyone who even touched a dead body would be unclean for seven days. Anyone who touched the dead and was not subsequently purified according to the Law of Moses was to be "cut off from Israel" (Nu. 19:13).

The defilement of the dead was so potent that it extended to anyone who even touched the grave of a dead person (Nu. 19:16, 18).

Furthermore, anyone or anything who contacted a defiled person also became unclean.

And whatsoever the unclean person toucheth shall be unclean; and the soul that toucheth it shall be unclean until even (Nu. 19:22).

Jesus, however, was not intimidated by dead people. He reached out and took a dead girl by the hand (Lk. 9:54). He touched the bier upon which a dead man was lying (Lk. 7:14), and even felt free to command others to touch the grave of Lazarus (John 11:39).

These experiences transcended anything dealt with in the law because the moment these dead people came in contact with Jesus, they were no longer dead.

There was no legal precedent by which human beings could render an accurate judgment.

Surely God was trying to teach us something by all of this.

The Sabbath

Remembering the sabbath was a part of the Mosaic Law. In Deuteronomy 5:12-14, the Hebrew people were not only commanded to remember the sabbath themselves, they were also held responsible for making sure that nobody else violated the sabbath. No work was to be done by a son, a daughter, a manservant, a maidservant, an ox, an ass, or any cattle, not even by a stranger who happened to be living there.

Exodus 31:14 specifies that anyone who defiles the sabbath or does any work on the sabbath is to be put to death.

Numbers 15:35 provides us with an inspired example of a man who was put to death for gathering sticks on the sabbath day.

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Jesus, however, never allowed sabbath regulations to keep Him from doing anything which He wanted to do. Remember, however, that Jesus was God and only wanted to do things which were good.

Here is a list of some of the things which Jesus did on the sabbath:

He plucked grain and ate it - Matt. 12:1ff.; Mk. 2:23ff.; Lk. 6:1ff.

He healed a man with a withered hand - Matt. 12:10ff.; Mk. 3:2ff.; Lk. 6:6ff.

He entered the synagogue and taught - Mk. 1:21ff.; Lk. 4:16ff.

He cast out demons - Mk. 1:25-26

He ate bread and healed a man with dropsy - Lk. 4:1ff.

Perhaps even more serious from the legal perspective was the fact that Jesus commanded others to do things upon the sabbath day.

John 5:1ff. is a classic example. Upon this occasion Jesus went into the midst of a multitude of sick and impotent people—healed one of them, and then commanded him to rise, take up his bed and walk (John 5:8).

The Jews responded by doing exactly what the law commanded them to do, they went about to kill Jesus (see Ex. 31:14 and John 5:16).

Later Jesus healed a man born blind by making a mixture of spittle and dirt and placing this upon the blind man's eyes. Then, even though it was the sabbath day, He commanded that man to go and wash in the pool of Siloam.

Such commandments by Jesus were obviously calculated to challenge the law of the sabbath.

What David Did

When the Pharisees confronted Jesus with accusations of sabbath violations, Jesus reminded them of what David did.

David did that which it was not lawful for him to do!

There is no way around this obvious truth of Scripture. This fact is specifically mentioned three different times in the Gospels (Matt. 12:4; Mk. 2:26; Lk. 6:4). David did that which it was not lawful for him to do.

This boggles the mind of those who see law as greater than God. It is not a problem, however, when we see the law in its proper perspective.

The example of David is so significant that we will later devote an entire chapter to it.

Gentiles

When the Lord gave Israel His covenant of law He set them apart as a separate and peculiar people. He did not make this covenant with their fathers (Deut. 5:2-3) nor with any other nation on earth.

With reference to the Israelites Paul said that to them “. . . pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises . . .” (Rom. 9:4).

In a number of places God commanded Israel to be a separate people. Deuteronomy 7:1ff. is a good example. They were to destroy the seven nations that inhabited Canaan and were specifically forbidden to show them mercy, or make a covenant with them, or to intermarry with them.

Jesus, however, specifically showed mercy to a woman of Canaan. He did so upon the basis of her faith.

The story is recorded for us in Matthew 15 and Mark 7 and interestingly enough comes just after Jesus had been rejected by the multitudes of Israel.

Jesus came into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon and a “woman of Canaan” came to Him and said, “Have mercy on me, O Lord” (Matt. 15:22).

Again may I remind you that mercy to such a person was specifically forbidden in Deuteronomy 7:2, “thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them.”

Yet Jesus did have mercy upon her saying,

O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour (Matt. 15:28).

It is obvious that Jesus was looking for “faith” more than for a fleshly relationship with Abraham.

John the Baptist told his listeners that God was able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham (Matt. 3:9). Perhaps, as we have said before, he beckoned with his hand to gentile country when he made that statement.

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When Jesus delivered a sermon to His home town in Nazareth, He reminded them that there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah the prophet, yet Elijah was sent to a gentile widow in the city of Sidon.

He also pointed out that there were many lepers in Israel in the days of Elisha the prophet, but none was cleansed save Naaman the Syrian.

Then the people in the synagogue rose up and sought to cast Jesus headlong over the brow of a hill (Lk. 4:29).

When Jesus healed the Centurion's servant, He said, "Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, NOT IN ISRAEL" (Matt. 8:10).

The message of Jesus transcended the message of the law. The message of Jesus was not just for Jews, it was for "whosoever."

"Whosoever" can believe and be saved (John 3:16; 11:26; 12:46; etc.). Peter was a long time grasping this truth, but after much teaching and several miracles, he finally acknowledged this to the household of Cornelius. "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH in him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts 10:43).

Again you can see a dramatic distinction between the way the law spoke about gentiles and the way that Jesus treated them.

Surely God was trying to teach us something.

Woman Taken In Adultery

Though this story is wanting in some manuscripts, it provides us with a clear contrast between the law and Jesus.

The law was crystal clear that a woman caught in the act of adultery should be put to death (Lev. 20:11; Deut. 22:22, etc.). The Jews knew this and brought such a woman to Jesus for His verdict.

Jesus stooped down and with His finger wrote on the ground. He then invited any who was without sin to cast the first stone, and again He stooped down and wrote upon the ground.

The woman's accusers began to leave, beginning with the eldest, and presently no one was left but the woman.

The law condemned her, but Jesus did not.

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“Neither do I condemn thee” said Jesus, “Go and sin no more” (John 8:11).

Surely that ought to teach us something.

The Cross

There are, of course, many other aspects of the life and ministry of Jesus which challenge the law as a basis for living.

Jesus, however, did more than merely challenge the law, He triumphed over it.

The book of Colossians puts it like this,

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 (Col. 2:14-15).

Perhaps no greater frontal assault was made on the law than that which Jesus made by means of His death.

He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and God laid upon Him the iniquity of us all. Him who knew no sin God made to be sin that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

I suppose there are an almost inexhaustible number of ways to die, but Jesus died in a way which specifically made Him accursed by law.

“He that is hanged is accursed of God” (Deut. 21:23).

Yet, Jesus still triumphed . . . surely this ought to teach us something.

Remember that the law was only a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

1. Did Jesus operate under the law or above the law?
2. Was the attitude of Jesus toward law an example for us?
3. Is it possible to really know someone without personal experience with them?
4. Can we personally experience God through words?
5. Which is more important, the letter of the law or the spirit of the law?

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6. Why didn't Jesus condemn the woman who violated the law by being in a crowd while having an issue of blood?
7. If the purpose of the law was to prepare men for Jesus, why didn't the students of the law receive Jesus?
8. Does faith operate under law or above law?
9. Does one have to understand faith in order to use it?
10. If God did not expect men to live under law, why did He give it?

V

THE LAW DOES NOT REVEAL THE NATURE OF GOD

For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law . . . (Heb. 7:12).

For I am the Lord, I change not . . . (Malachi 3:6).

The law of Moses was given at Mt. Sinai, approximately 1,500 years before Christ was born in the manger at Bethlehem. Ussher gives the date as 1491 B.C. Jesus was crucified at approximately A.D. 30. At this time there was a "change of the law." In fact Jesus took the law out of the way "nailing it to His cross" (Col. 2:14).

To us 1,500 years seems like an incredibly long time. It represents more than twenty lifetimes and perhaps the rise and fall of many nations. To God, however, it represents only a day or two. With God, a thousand years is only like a day, and vice versa. God exists in the timelessness of eternity, and from His perspective the law was only used for a very brief period. Even from the standpoint of human history as a whole, the law represents only a fraction of God's dealings with man.

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As we view the law it is important to remember that it does not reflect the nature of God, or of reality in general. The purpose of the law was not to reflect the nature of God, or reality, but to act as a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ and the reality of this strange phenomenon called "faith."

When we step back and attempt to see the law from the vantage point of God there are parts of it that appear ludicrous and almost comical. These apparent anomalies and inconsistencies disappear, however, when we view the law in relation to the PURPOSE for which it was designed by God. God is a Master Designer who does all things well, and the law was perfectly designed to fulfill its intended purpose.

When Solomon dedicated the temple he acknowledged the fact ". . . behold the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?" (I Kings 8:27).

The size of our universe is more than the finite mind can comprehend. We speak of stars that are billions, or trillions of light years away, only to discover that what we once thought to be stars are actually whole galaxies of stars. Our most powerful telescopes cannot penetrate the extremities of space, and they leave us wondering how many billions of blazing suns are yet to be discovered.

Yet, for all intents and purposes, the law trained the Hebrew people to think of God in association with a little tent that they carried around in the wilderness. (See Ex. 25:8; 29:45-46; etc.)

We know that God is "omnipresent" but by law the Hebrew people could only make offerings to Him in one place. Each year, no matter how far away they lived, they were required to make the long journey to Jerusalem so that they could "worship." Even then they were not permitted to worship God directly, but were forced to depend upon a priest who was sometimes utterly unscrupulous and corrupt. I Samuel 2:22, for example, indicates that the sons of ~~Samuel~~ ^{Eli} raped the women who came to the Tabernacle to worship.

Certainly such a system does not really reflect the nature of God. If you are capable of seeing this contrast between the narrow parochialism of law and the vastness of Jehovah God, you will make a giant stride toward seeing the law in its proper perspective.

Over and over the law required the Hebrews not to show mercy (see Deut. 7:2; 7:16; 13:8; 19:13; 19:21; 25:12; etc.). This is the very nature of law, but it is not the very nature of God.

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The Scriptures abound with references to the mercy of God. For your convenience we here quote Psalm 136, but we remind you that this is just a token representation of the many Scriptures which could be used.

O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good:
for his mercy endureth for ever.

O give thanks unto the God of gods: for his
mercy endureth for ever.

O give thanks to the Lord of lords: for his
mercy endureth for ever.

To him who alone doeth great wonders: for his
mercy endureth for ever.

To him that by wisdom made the heavens: for his
mercy endureth for ever.

To him that stretched out the earth above the waters: for his
mercy endureth for ever.

To him that made great lights: for his mercy
endureth for ever.

The sun to rule by day: for his mercy endureth
for ever.

The moon and stars to rule by night: for his
mercy endureth for ever.

To him that smote Egypt in their firstborn: for his
mercy endureth for ever.

And brought out Israel from among them: for his
mercy endureth for ever:

With a strong hand, and with a stretched out arm:
for his mercy endureth for ever:

To him which divided the Red sea into parts: for his
mercy endureth for ever:

And made Israel to pass through the midst of it: for his
mercy endureth for ever:

But overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea: for his
mercy endureth for ever.

To him which led his people through the wilderness: for his
mercy endureth for ever.

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To him which smote great kings: for his mercy endureth for ever:

And slew famous kings: for his mercy endureth for ever:

Sihon king of the Amorites: for his mercy endureth for ever:

And Og the king of Bashan: for his mercy endureth for ever:

And gave their land for an heritage: for his mercy endureth for ever:

Even an heritage unto Israel his servant: for his mercy endureth for ever.

Who remembered us in our low estate: for his mercy endureth for ever:

And Hath redeemed us from our enemies: for his mercy endureth for ever.

Who giveth food to all flesh: for his mercy endureth for ever.

O give thanks unto the God of heaven: for his mercy endureth for ever.

Now if God is merciful, and He is, why did He command the Israelites to show no mercy? The situation is quite confusing until you see the reason why God gave the law. He gave the law to make us so disgusted with the whole concept of Law that we would make the leap of faith and find justification in Jesus Christ. God once gave Israel quails until they came out their nostrils and became loathsome (Nu. 11:30). I am suggesting that He also gave them so much law that it too came out of their nostrils and became loathsome. Can you see it? God is the giver of all life, but the law brings death, and the letter of the law killeth.

God is a loving Father, but the law is a merciless judge.

God is a Spirit and He wants people everywhere to worship Him everywhere. The law did not permit people to worship God everywhere, but required that they worship Him only in one place (see Deut. 12:13, etc.).

God wants "whosoever will" to come into His presence, and He promises that He will in no wise cast them out, but the law taught that only the high priest could come into His presence (Lev. 16).

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During the regime of law the Hebrews were taught that no Ammonite or Moabite could come into the congregation of God forever (Deut. 23:3). That's not the way God is at all. As a matter of fact, Jesus Himself had Moabite blood in His veins, for Ruth, His ancestress, was from Moab.

God is a God of all nations, but the law pictured Him as only the God of one nation.

The nature of God is to bring peace and brotherhood to all men, but the nature of the law was to build walls and promote segregation.

Surely you can see that the law does not reflect the nature of God.

The law taught men to retaliate,

Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe . . . (Ex. 21:24-25).

In reality God does not want men to retaliate, but wants to handle the matter of retribution Himself. For "vengeance is mine, I will repay saith the Lord" (Rom. 12:19). He only gave the law to bring us to Jesus.

During the period of law, no man could be a priest unless he came from the tribe of Levi and unless he was a descendant of Aaron. (This made it impossible for Jesus to even be a priest according to the law for Jesus came from the tribe of Judah.) But more than that, even Aaron's sons could not become priests if they had any blemish. Some specific defects are listed in Leviticus 21:17ff. and they include the blind, the lame, flat nose, brokenfooted, brokenhanded, crooked backed, dwarf, etc. You know that's not the way God is. He just gave us these rules to bring us to Jesus.

God forbade a priest to marry an immoral woman (Lev. 21:7) but over and over God pictures Himself as the Bridegroom of an adulterous Israel. He even commanded Hosea to, "Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms . . ." (Hos. 1:2). It seems like God contradicts Himself until you see the purpose of law!

During the period of law the Hebrew men were commanded to put away their wives who were foreigners (Ezra 10:3). Some of them even had children by these wives (vs. 44). That's not the way God really is. He just wanted us to be driven in desperation to the principle of faith.

There is ever the temptation for some of us to hold up our head and throw back our shoulders and say, "God is too like that! He is a

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jealous God and a consuming fire.” This is the subtle and utterly devastating thing about law. You think you can get by. You think you are better than “sinners.” You are thankful that you go to church and pay your tithes and do all other kinds of “good” things. Then you discover that either through commission or omission, “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). Then you discover that whoever keeps the whole law and only offends in even one little point is guilty of it all. Then, hopefully, you will discover that God is trying to teach us a better way. Please don’t wind up worshiping the slave who was intended to be only our schoolmaster.

Death By Stoning

The most common form of capital punishment during the days of the law was by stoning. It usually took place outside of the city (Lev. 24:23; Nu. 15:35, 36; I Kings 21:13; etc.). At least two witnesses were required (Deut. 17:6). These witnesses then laid their hands upon the guilty person (Lev. 24:14). The witnesses were then required to cast the first stones (Deut. 17:7). Then the rest of the congregation was to cast stones also. Several times God specified that the stoning was to be done by:

“all the people . . .” Deut. 17:7

“all the congregation . . .” Nu. 15:35

“all Israel . . .” Josh. 7:25, etc.

It is therefore obvious that God was not merely punishing evildoers. He was teaching a lesson. If United States law required every citizen to walk by and throw the switch on the electric chair, we would be well advised to ask why. The same question needs to be asked about the law of God.

Of particular interest to me is the command in Exodus 21:28ff. to stone to death an ox which had gored someone to death. I suggest for your thinking that this is not a very easy way to kill an ox. I remember a farmer whose bull suffered a broken leg. He rushed to the butcher so that the meat could be salvaged before infection set in. The enraged animal was placed in a holding chute and shot between the eyes six times with a .22 pistol. A combination of his thick skull and violent anger left him very much alive. The butcher then went

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next door for a larger caliber weapon and subsequently dispatched the animal with no more difficulty. Can you not imagine, however, that killing such an animal with rocks might provide the participants with some moments of real excitement. The death of the ox was merely the tip of the educational iceberg. Death by stoning was also teaching Israel something very significant about the nature of law.

Stoning was commanded for a variety of offenses:

Any man or animal which touched Mt. Sinai was to be stoned (Ex. 19:13).

A man was commanded to be stoned for gathering sticks on the sabbath (Nu. 15:32-36).

A rebellious son was to be stoned (Deut. 21:18-21).

Stoning was also the penalty for adultery (Deut. 22:24); giving one's seed to Molech (Deut. 20:2); having a familiar spirit (Deut. 20:27); cursing and blaspheming God (Deut. 24:14-23). A woman who came to the marriage altar without the tokens of her virginity was to be stoned at the door of her father's house (Deut. 22:20-21) etc.

Now, for the sake of illustration, let us suppose that a young man rebels against his parents. They take him to the elders of the city and say, "This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice . . ." (Deut. 21:10). The men of the city are then to stone him with stones that he die. Can you imagine that those who filed by and cast their stones at the squirming victim may have felt a bit uneasy about the whole procedure. The more honest ones may have realized that this would have been their fate if their parents had only turned them in.

Or what about the poor woman whose tokens of virginity were absent . . . even though she was a virgin. If you are so naive as to think that there were no miscarriages of justice during the period of law I need only point you to Calvary and remind you that it was the exponents of the law who demanded the death of Jesus. Pilate couldn't understand it; but they cried out, "We have a law and by our law he ought to die . . ." (John 19:7).

The point is this. If the law had worked . . . nobody would have needed Jesus. If 1500 years of law had turned Israel into a Utopia of fraternal bliss, there would have been no need for the Kingdom of Heaven to come.

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The law instead did exactly what God intended it to do. It drove us to Jesus and to a totally different concept of justification.

Moses was kept out of Canaan by a tiny little technicality. Most of us are guilty of far more than technicalities. Yet, legalism breeds a kind of hypocrisy which causes us to pick little specks out of someone else's eyes and then be totally unaware of a giant beam in our own eye.

When God placed man upon the earth, He gave him every herb and every fruit for food. Later, after the flood, man's diet was expanded to include "every moving thing that liveth . . ." (Gen. 9:3). The law, however, began by restricting the Hebrew diet for 40 years to a substance called "manna" which came down from heaven. How much less this was than what God really wanted us to have.

God is eternal and spiritual . . . and the law was temporal and carnal. It is almost as though God went to a pendulous extreme to give us exactly the opposite of what He was really like.

He created us in His own image. He wants us to be like He is. He knew, however, that such a dream would seem like only a dream. He knew that we would be tempted to sell out our souls for a mess of pottage. He knew he would cash in our real treasures for a few tinsel trinkets which would rust and tarnish with the passing of time. Therefore, He gave us the law. He chained us like a slave to a physical system that was guaranteed to make us miserable. But remember, He had a divine purpose for doing so.

Jesus reduced the complexities of life to only two choices—"God" or "mammon." He said you cannot serve God and mammon. You must make a choice.

The word mammon is found only four times in the Scriptures. W. E. Vine says that it comes from the Hebrew word signifying to be firm, steadfast, hence that which is to be trusted.

In other words, in what do you trust? Some people trust in God for salvation, some people trust in something else, or someone else.

The law helps us to realize that we have no other choice but God. It does not represent the nature of God and was never intended to. It was a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith.

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THOUGHT QUESTIONS

1. Can you discern someone's nature from their shadow (Heb. 10:1)?
2. The Scriptures teach that God does not change, can this be truly said of anyone else?
3. Did the law require mercy or not?
4. Is God merciful?
5. How would our faith be affected if Jesus had come from the tribe of Levi?
6. What do you think is the most merciful way of execution?
7. Why was it necessary to have a change of law (Heb. 7:12)?
8. Were Caiaphas and Annas representative of what kind of people the law produced?
9. Discuss the contrast between Jesus who wanted to save the thieves on either side of His cross, and the Jews who wanted to break their legs (John 19:31).
10. Was everyone who studied the law without mercy?

VI

THE LAWFUL USE OF LAW

But we know that the law is good, if a man use it unlawfully . . .
(I Tim. 1:6).

The church at Ephesus was experiencing a problem with teachers of the law. They wanted to teach the law but they did not understand what they were saying or whereof they were affirming (I Tim. 1:7).

Jesus once said that you could recognize teachers by their fruit in the same way you could recognize a tree by its fruit. One does not gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles.

What had these teachers of the law produced at Ephesus? It is obvious that they had produced trouble and dissension. The situation had become so serious that Paul left Timothy there to charge these men to quit their divisive teaching and argumentation.

As I besought thee (Timothy) to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine. Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions rather than godly edifying . . . (I Tim. 1:3-4).

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History proves that you cannot argue yourselves into unity, or debate yourselves into agreement.

God did not give us the Scriptures in order that we might argue about them. He gave us the Scriptures to teach us to love. This is specifically stated in I Timothy 1:5: The end or goal of what God commanded is love out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.

The presence of argumentation and strife in the church was proof that something was wrong. Christians are to be known by their love for one another. The problem, again, was that someone was using the law in the wrong way.

The law was not given in order to coerce and control Christians. It was given as a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith.

So Paul continued:

Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine: (I Tim. 1:9-10)

Christianity is to manifest the “righteousness of God without law” (Rom. 3:21). The definite article “the” is absent in the Greek text. Christians are without law, but then so is God. God is good, not because anyone makes Him be good, but because His basic nature is good. Christians are good for the same reason. We have had a change in our basic nature. We have been born again.

When sheep know the voice of the Shepherd, and follow Him, you do not need to control them with barbed wire fences.

Though the Christian is not under law, there is still a legitimate use of the law for the Christian.

Shadow of Good Things

“For the law having a shadow of good things to come . . .” (Heb. 10:1).

The law did not save, it was not the “very image” of spiritual things, but it did provide a “shadow of good things to come.”

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Whole books have been written upon this subject without exhausting it. God who gave us the law built into it many facets of His infinite nature and of spiritual realities in the heavens. Here is a brief overview of but a few.

Moses was a shadow of Jesus.

The life of Moses, the lawgiver, prefigured the life of Jesus in many ways.

Both had their lives threatened by kings during their infancy.

Both were providentially preserved.

Both fled to a foreign land to escape.

Both were deliverers to those enslaved.

Both were lawgivers—Moses gave us the Ten Commandments and Jesus gave us the “law of love.”

Both were intercessors who interceded for God’s people.

Both were prophets to whom obedience was required.

Moses was responsible for building a physical sanctuary for God and Jesus is building a spiritual sanctuary for God.

There are at least some thoughts which indicate that Moses was a shadow of something good to come.

The experience of Israel was a shadow of the Christian experience.

I Corinthians 10 and other passages make the deliverance of Israel from Egypt and their journey in the wilderness analogous to the Christians experience.

Israel was enslaved and Christians were enslaved.

Israel was delivered by a baptismal experience in the Red Sea and Christians have been separated from their old life of slavery by baptism into Christ.

Israel was miraculously sustained by bread and water and the Christian is dependent upon Jesus for sustenance.

They were strangers and pilgrims searching for Canaan and we too are strangers and pilgrims searching for a better country.

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Many Israelites fell into temptation in the wilderness and did not make it to Canaan and many Christians also fall from their own steadfastness.

Before they entered Canaan they had to cross the troubled waters of the Jordan and before we can enter heaven we must face the experience of death.

There was a rest promised to Israel and there is a rest promised to the Christian. In one respect we do not have to die in order to enter into rest, but in Christ we enter into a new dimension of power and victory which is also analogous to Canaan.

These and other considerations indicate that Israel during the period of law was a shadow of something good to come.

The tabernacle was a shadow of heavenly things.

When Moses supervised the construction of the tabernacle, he did so with a divine blueprint before him. On the mountain he was given the "pattern" by which the tabernacle was to be constructed (Heb. 8:3). The pattern did not resemble anything on earth but was a pattern of heavenly things (Heb. 9:23).

Consider these few observations:

The tabernacle was a sanctuary, or dwelling place for God just as today the church is the Body of Christ where His Spirit dwells.

The workmen on the tabernacle were selected by God and filled with his Spirit to do their work just like the Apostles and prophets of New Testament times were selected by God and filled with His Spirit (Ex. 31:1-11; 35:30—36:2).

The material from which the tabernacle was constructed came from a freewill offering by the people (Ex. 25:1-9) and the church is composed of those who volunteer themselves to Christ.

Inside the outer court was the altar of burnt offerings. The original fire upon this altar was kindled by Jehovah (Lev. 6:13; 9:24). We also as Christians have an altar where perpetual atonement is obtained and our altar is Christ (Heb. 13:10-12).

Before entering the Holy Place each priest would have to pause at the laver and wash (Ex. 30:17-21). The Scriptures teach

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that the believer is "baptized into Christ" (Gal. 3:27) and that by one Spirit were all baptized into one body (I Cor. 12:13).

In the Holy Place was the table of shewbread which was changed every week (Lev. 24:5-9) and in the church is the Lord's Supper which was eaten at weekly gatherings (Acts 2:42; 20:7).

In the Holy Place was also the seven branched lampstand (Ex. 25:31-39) which burned continually. It was the only light in the Holy Place. Today the Word of God is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path. It provides continual guidance.

Also in the Holy Place was the altar of incense (Ex. 30:1-10). Every morning and every evening highly perfumed incense was burned upon it with fire from the brazen altar. The sweet fragrance filled the room and penetrated into the Holy of Holies. In Revelation 5:8, vials full of odours, or incense, are said to be the prayers of the saints.

The veil separating the Holy of Holies was rent in two from the top to the bottom when Jesus died (Matt. 27:51). This reminds us of the new and living way that we have to enter into the presence of God (Heb. 10:19-20).

The ark of the covenant contained the law of God and today the law of God is written upon the heart of all believers (Heb. 8:10; II Cor. 3:3).

On the ark was the slab of gold called the "mercy seat" which prevented the cherubim from seeing the law. Christ is our "covering" or propitiation which prevents the spirit world from seeing our sins.

These are just a few of the considerations which cause us to believe that law was a shadow of good things to come.

The Sacred Seasons were a shadow of good things to come.

The Sabbath teaches us about our rest in Christ.

The Year of Jubilee teaches us about the joys of grace and forgiveness.

The Passover Feast teaches us about the possibilities of deliverance from death.

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The law was given on the day of Pentecost and this is precisely the day when the church was established.

The Feast of Trumpets began the seventh or sabbatical month. Ten days later would be the Day of Atonement. The Gospel is the trumpet of God by which we summon men to His Atonement.

The Day of Atonement was the day in which the High Priest entered into the Holy of Holies to obtain forgiveness for the people. The year of Jubilee began upon this day. Today we have a perpetual Jubilee because Christ ever ministers in the presence of God in our behalf.

Volumes could be written on these Feasts and the many facets of spiritual truth which they prefigure. Suffice it to say that they were an integral part of worship during the period of law and they were a shadow of good things to come.

We could continue to talk about the Feast of Dedication, the Feast of Purim, the cities of refuge, the various types of offerings and sacrifices which the law required. Each of these would contain a "shadow" of something good and properly expounded would bring us into Jesus that we might be justified by faith.

None of These Diseases

Dr. S. I. McMillen in his excellent book, *None of These Diseases*, offers a beautiful commentary on Exodus 15:26. God promised His people that if they would obey His commandments, He would put "none of these diseases upon thee, which I brought upon the Egyptians. . . ."

He then proceeds to demonstrate that the Bible offers rules for health which make modern scientific discoveries 4,000 years late. A number of these prohibitions, restrictions, and instructions are found in the books of law.

Such teaching about morality and health certainly provides us with another "lawful use of law." These instructions, however, will only realize their complete fulfillment when the law brings us to Jesus that we might be justified by faith.

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It is important to remember that the law was only a shadow and not reality. My shadow is not me and your shadow is not you.

The law was not God . . . not reality . . . only a shadow!

Is The Law Good News or Bad?

The Scriptures contain a number of statements about the law which seem to be in conflict with one another.

In Matthew 5:17, Jesus said that He did not come to destroy the law but to fulfill it. In Colossians 2:14, the Scriptures teach that Jesus took away the law nailing it to the cross.

In Romans 7:12, we find that the law is holy and the commandment holy and just and good. In Galatians 3:13, the law is called a curse and we are told that Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law.

In Romans 7:14, we find that the law is spiritual, but in Hebrews 7:16, the commandments of the law are called carnal (see also Heb. 9:10).

Paul said, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man" (Rom. 7:22), and in Ephesians 2:15 he referred to the law of commandments as "enmity."

These and other similar Scriptures can be resolved quite easily by recognizing the purpose for which the law was given.

The law was never given to save. It was given to point out sin, and man's inability to save himself and to be a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith.

Schoolmaster

Our English word "schoolmaster" comes from the Greek word "paidagogos" which occurs but three times in the New Testament Scriptures.

It is found in I Corinthians 4:15 where the King James Version renders it "instructors."

For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

The two other times it is found occur in Galatians 3:24-25:

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.

The paidagogos was not the instructor of the child, but was a slave

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who exercised general supervision over him. Thayer indicates that until the age of manhood a boy with such an overseer was not allowed to step out of the house without supervision.

The severity of these slaves is reflected by the terminology associated with the situation. In Galatians 3:23 it is called being "kept" or as later versions say "kept in ward," a situation which was tantamount to being in jail or "shut up."

There were some good things about the law, especially if a man used it lawfully, but the general picture of law was that of a severe slavery preceding the kind of maturity which blossomed into freedom and trust.

Christ is our teacher, and the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to him. The emphasis of law is on "doing." The emphasis of faith is much different. The emphasis of faith is that which takes us beyond the finite and physical to the dwelling place of God.

In conclusion, we must categorically affirm that there is a "lawful use of law." The law was given to us by God and we may be confident that He has a good reason for doing so. Jesus came to fulfill the law (Matt. 5:17) and men like Paul expressly stated that they believed all things that were written in the law (Acts 24:14). When Paul preached Christ, he was able to do so out of the law of Moses and the prophets (Acts 28:23).

We suggest for your thinking, however, that the "lawful use of the law" involved placing it in its proper perspective to the over all plan of God so that it became a "schoolmaster" to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

1. In what way is love the end of the commandments (I Tim. 1:5)?
2. How had men in Ephesus perverted the law? (See I Tim. 1.)
3. List some important lessons taught to us by law?
4. If the law is good why did Paul call it a curse (Gal. 3:13)?
5. If the law is a curse why did Paul call it good (Rom. 7:12)?
6. In what way is the law of the Lord perfect, converting the soul (Ps. 19:7)?
7. Were the Hebrew people better off with the law or without it (Rom. 3:1-2)?
8. Define "schoolmaster."
9. What kind of people need to be "kept in ward"?
10. What happens to a criminal when he is "born again"?

VII

A MERCIFUL PRIEST

Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people (Heb. 2:17).

Lately I have been asking around to see what people think of when they hear the word "priest." Today people invariably think of a Roman Catholic priest.

Even though people may have strong prejudices against the Roman Catholic Church, they generally consider Catholic priests to be kind, courteous, and understanding individuals. A merciful priest is not difficult for us to understand at all.

The situation was much different during the days of the law. Under the law the primary function of the priest involved killing.

The worshiper would bring his sacrifice to the priest to be killed. The priest would then take a knife and cut the victim's throat. One can well imagine that not every victim was cooperative and that large animals such as heifers and bulls could create some moments of real excitement.

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Once the victim was slain the priest would then take the blood and sprinkle it in the appropriate places. Next, he would have to concern himself with the disposal of the carcass.

The choice parts of the viscera over and on the entrails, the two kidneys and their fat, and the appendage to the liver were all consumed on the altar (Lev. 4:8-10). A part of the meat that remained was for the sustenance of the priest and the remainder of the meat and the carcass had to be disposed of by the priest.

On special occasions a great many sacrifices would be made. Solomon, for example, offered unto the Lord the sacrifice of 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep (I Ki. 8:63).

Certainly it is no exaggeration to say that literally millions of innocent victims were dragged to the priests during the days of the law to be butchered.

Neither is it wrong to assume that people in that day became as attached to their animals as we do in our own day and age. How vividly I remember my grandfather's sorrow when he had to sell his team of horses, and my children's tears when their little dog was run over by a passing car.

Can you not see that people could easily come to fear the priest? When passover time came around and you took your precious lamb to Jerusalem to the priest, it created a far different emotion than going to visit a priest does today.

Sons of Levi

The Levites were the priestly tribe during the days of the law. Levi demonstrated something of his vicious nature when he displayed his vengeance upon the family of Shechem.

Shechem, you will recall, was the Hivite prince who fell madly in love with Levi's sister, Dinah, and forced himself upon her.

When he desired her in marriage the sons of Jacob refused the offer unless the Hivite men submitted to the rite of circumcision. The men consented.

On the third day after the surgery, however, when the men were so sore that they were incapable of defending themselves, Simeon and Levi came bodily into their camp and massacred every man, plundered everything, and even carried away the women and children as captives (Gen. 34).

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It is also worthy of note that at the giving of the law the people who engaged in a shameful orgy were to be executed, and the Levites were to kill them.

And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him (Moses). And he said unto them. Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor. And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses; and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men (Ex. 32:26-28).

The very idea of men killing "every man his brother . . . and companion . . . and friend" almost literally boggles the mind. However offensive this may be to modern man, it needs to be understood that this is the stuff that priests were made of during the period of law. I am not certain how you perceive him, but Levi appears to me to be a man with a vicious and vengeful nature.

Melchisedek

Centuries before the law was given, there was a priest in Jerusalem by the name of Melchisedek.

We have no record of his ancestors and no idea of what became of him. Consequently, he is said in the Scriptures to be "without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life . . ." (Heb. 7:3).

As far as we know there was no blood upon the hands of Melchisedek. We have no record that he ever performed animal sacrifices.

More significant, however, is the fact that Abraham paid tithes to Melchisedek. Since Abraham was the progenitor of the Hebrew people, it is obvious that Melchisedek took precedence over a Hebrew priesthood.

If Jesus had been from the tribe of Levi and had become a priest according to the law, we would have good reason to fear him.

But the priesthood of Jesus transcends the whole concept of law. Jesus is a priest after the order of Melchisedek. This is stated in the 110th Psalm and is repeated in Hebrews 5,6, and 7.

With reference to the law, the Scriptures explicitly teach:

If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law) what further need was there that another

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priest should rise after the order of Melchisedek, and not be called after the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah, of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood (Heb. 7:11-14).

Mercy vs. Sacrifice

In order to properly understand the Scriptures, it is important to see the overall plan of God. The commands which God gave are not an end in themselves, they are a means to an end.

When you command your children to stand in the corner, you have a goal in mind beyond that immediate circumstance. The command you give is not an end in itself, it is a means to an end.

So also with the commands of God.

During the period of law people became so obsessed with their own salvation that they lost sight of ministering to others.

When I am bringing my sacrifice to the altar my major concern is with my own relationship with God. When I am extending mercy my major emphasis is for others.

Now, which does God want? Mercy? or Sacrifice?

The Scriptures are crystal clear:

For I desire mercy and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings (Hos. 6:6).

This is one of the passages quoted by Jesus to explain His conduct. God gave us the law and the law demanded certain sacrifices, but neither the law nor the sacrifices which it demanded were ends in themselves, they were only means to an end.

The law was a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith.

Atonement *The Day of ~~Pentecost~~*

There can be little doubt that the high point of priestly function under the law of Moses came on the Day of Atonement. It was on this day that the High Priest entered into the Holy of Holies with blood for himself and for the errors of the people.

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The responsibilities of the High Priest on this holy day are given in Leviticus 16. They are as follows:

- He bathed.
- He dressed in holy garments of white linen.
- He offered or presented at the door of the tabernacle a bullock for a sin offering for himself and his house.
- He presented at the same place two goats for a sin offering for the congregation.
- He cast lots on the two goats for one of the goats was to be sacrificed and the other was to be let go in the wilderness.
- He sacrificed the bullock.
- He passed from the court, through the Holy Place, and into the Holy of Holies with a censer and incense, and filled the space with a cloud of smoke.
- He returned to the court for blood from the bullock and passed again within the veil to sprinkle blood on the mercy seat and seven times before it.
- He returned to the court and killed the goat upon whom the lot for sacrifice had fallen.
- For the third time he returned to the Holy of Holies and did the same with the goat's blood as he had done with the blood of the bullock.
- He purified the outer part of the tabernacle by the sprinkling of blood and placed some of it on the horns of the altar of incense (Ex. 30:10).
- He returned to the court and placed the blood of the bullock and goat upon the horns of the altar of burnt offerings and sprinkled it seven times.
- He offered to God the remaining goat, layed his hands upon it, and confessed the sins of the people.
- He consigned the goat to a man who was to take it to the border of the wilderness and release it.
- He bathed and changed his linen garments for the regular high priest's clothing.
- He sacrificed two rams as burnt offerings for himself and for the people.
- He burnt the fat of the sin offering upon the altar.
- He saw to it that the remainder of the sin offering should be burnt without the camp.

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It is obvious that the High Priest had a busy day. It became necessary for preparations for this Holy Day to begin seven days in advance in order for everything to be properly done. In later times the High Priest practiced all week long under the oversight of the elders and on the night before he was not permitted to sleep.

If there ever was a time, however, when the Jewish people could feel at peace with God, it was on the Day of Atonement. It was on this day that their High Priest was ministering in their behalf in the presence of God.

The problem was that this assurance was only for one day. Their High Priest was a human who was subject to death even during the time that he was ministering before God.

By comparison with the High Priesthood of Jesus Christ, we may almost say that there is no comparison.

The book of Hebrews puts it like this:

And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: 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 (Heb. 7:23-28).

Tempted In All Points Like As We Are

I think everyone of us is embarrassed by unusual temptations. We face some bizzare situation which causes us to have unholy thoughts which we would not even confess to our closest friend.

What a comfort it is to know that Jesus understands. He actually had the same kind of temptation.

He was tempted in ALL POINTS like as we are.

The Scriptures put it like this:

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 (Heb. 4:15).

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The next verse encourages us . . .

LET US THEREFORE COME BOLDLY UNTO THE THRONE OF GRACE THAT WE MAY OBTAIN MERCY, AND FIND GRACE TO HELP IN TIME OF NEED (Heb. 4:16).

Jesus understands. The only blood upon His hands was His own.

Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all (Is. 53:4-6).

The priesthood of Aaron was woefully inadequate. It was never intended by God to be adequate. It was intended to be a schoolmaster to bring us unto the priesthood of Jesus Christ that we might be justified by faith.

The Year of Jubilee began upon the Day of Atonement. Because we have the everlasting ministry of an undying and merciful priest like Jesus, we can forever rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory . . . and it is the law which brings us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

1. Why would a professional butcher possibly be excluded from jury duty?
2. Why would mercy perhaps impede the work of a Hebrew priest?
3. Could you ever come to the place where you could kill your "companion, brother, or friend" (Ex. 32:26-28)?
4. Why did Jacob associate Simeon and Levi with instruments of cruelty (Gen. 49:5)?
5. How did God show the superiority of the Priesthood of Melchisedek (Heb. 7:)?
6. Why did God allow the priesthood of the Levites to end?
7. Was Jesus literally tempted in all points like as we are (Heb. 4:15)?

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8. The priesthood of Law lasted approximately 1,500 years. What proportion is this of recorded human history?
9. How does the priesthood of Melchisedek more accurately represent the reality of Christ's work than the Levitical priesthood?
10. Do we need to come into the presence of Christ with fear?

VIII

THE FEAR MENTALITY

God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind (II Tim. 1:7).

The whole concept of law causes man to be afraid and insecure. The word "unclean" occurs 94 times in the book of Leviticus alone. It is obvious that a person could become unclean by accident.

This is specifically pointed out in Leviticus 5:1-3. The first verse indicates that one can become guilty by not testifying when he knows of someone else's sin. The second verse indicates that a man can become guilty by touching an unclean animal or creeping thing. Even if he is unaware of it, he is still unclean and guilty. The third verse indicates that a person can become guilty by contacting the uncleanness of a human and this uncleanness still contaminates even when one is not aware of it.

These few references are like the tip of the proverbial iceberg. There are literally dozens of ways to be spiritually contaminated under the law.

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The most devout keeper of the law could have his entire weekend ruined by accidentally bumping into the wrong person or thing at 5:00 on Friday evening.

In Leviticus 7:21 we are informed that the soul that touches any unclean thing and then eats of the peace offerings is to be cut off from his people.

In Leviticus 11:31 we discover that a person can become unclean by touching a dead snail or other "unclean" creatures which creep upon the earth.

In Leviticus 12:4 we find that a woman is forbidden to touch a hallowed thing or to come into the sanctuary for 40 days after giving birth to a male child and for two weeks after giving birth to a female.

In Numbers 4:15 we are informed that any who touched the holy vessels of the sanctuary would die.

In Numbers 16:26 we read that the death penalty extended to those who even touched anything that belonged to Korah, Dathan, and Abiram and their followers who rebelled against Moses.

Let me suggest a little scenario which will provide insight into the frustration experienced by those who lived under the law.

Let us suppose that you are going to attempt to be pure, by law, for one period of twenty-four hours. You begin the day by fumigating the room where you will stay so that it will be free from any unclean insect. The room is then locked so that you have absolutely no contact with any person. Even a door knob touched by a menstruous woman could contaminate you so you stand at attention in the middle of the room . . . with the shades drawn. Before you is the law of God upon which you strive diligently to meditate, seeking to avoid any impure or unclean thought.

At the end of the day you find that you are guilty . . . not because of anything which you have done or failed to do, but because the High Priest has sinned.

Leviticus 4:3 teaches that the priest that is anointed could sin so as to bring guilt upon the people. Like the nation suffering for the sin of Achan, they could suffer again because of the sin of a King like David, or the sins of a priest.

One can easily see how the period of law promoted and perpetuated a mentality of fear. The most scrupulous individual could unwittingly commit an unclean act of the most serious proportions and those

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who were locked into the legal mentality went out of their way to avoid any possibility of contamination by what they "touched."

The story of the good Samaritan provides us with an interesting case in point. The priest and the Levite not only did not help the man who had fallen among thieves, but they deliberately avoided him. Jesus explicitly said of both that they "passed by on the other side" (Lk. 10:31, 32). The Greek word used to describe their actions is "antiparalthen." "Parerchomai" is the word which means to come or go from something, and the word "anti" before it specifies to pass by opposite or to avoid.

The Samaritan did not have a legal mentality. He was deemed as irreligious by his Jewish contemporaries. Therefore, it was the Samaritan who was neighbor to him who fell among thieves and who set an example for us. Jesus put it like this, "Go thou and do likewise" (Lk. 10:37).

Uzzah and the Ark

II Samuel 6 tells the story of Uzzah who died because he touched the ark of the covenant.

The basics of the story go like this. David gathered together 30,000 chosen men of Israel to go fetch the ark of the covenant. They brought it out of the house of Abinadab in Gibeah and placed it upon a new cart. Uzzah and Ahio drove the cart.

David and all the house of Israel played before the Lord on all manner of instruments.

When they came to Nachon's threshingfloor, Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it.

And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God (II Sam. 6:7).

The death of Uzzah involved several violations of the law of God. First of all, the ark was not to be transported on a cart, it was to be carried. Properly sanctified, Levites were responsible for carrying the ark. And finally, of course, no one was to touch it.

David corrected these errors and we read in I Chronicles 15:12ff.,

... Ye are the chief of the fathers of the Levites: sanctify yourselves, both ye and your brethren, that ye may bring up the ark of the Lord God of

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Israel unto the place I have prepared for it. For because ye did it not at the first, the Lord our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after the due order. . . .

Modern Fear

Many of our modern brethren have read this story and concluded that God was teaching us always to worship Him after the "due order." Consequently, they would reject anything as "worship" which is not specifically mentioned in the "law."

As ridiculous as it may sound to the uninitiated, there are those who believe it sinful to worship God with a mechanical instrument of music, a songbook, or even a tuning fork. There are those who reject Sunday School Classes, benevolent institutions, multiple communion cups, and Christian Colleges.

Their thinking hearkens back to the days of Uzzah and they assume that God was trying to teach us to always worship Him according to the law.

Exactly the reverse is true. God was trying to teach us that it was impossible for us to worship Him by law.

The law was not given to make us legalistic, it was given as a school-teacher to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by a principle transcending the whole concept of law.

Him That Is Weak

For many years I harbored the mistaken notion that legalistic churches were strong. I thought that the more rules a congregation had and the more legalistic demands which it made increased its strength and brought it closer to God. Probably the reverse was true.

The fourteenth chapter of Romans deals specifically with this issue. It teaches us that weak people are to be received in a peaceable way without arguing about their scruples.

For one man believeth that he may eat all things, another, who is weak, eateth herbs (Rom. 14:2).

Note that the person with the most restrictive lifestyle is the "weak" one. The man who ate only herbs needed to grow in his faith.

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The same was true regarding Holy days. One man regarded one day above another and another esteemed every day alike. The legalistic Jew led a very restrictive lifestyle and some of them carried their same hangups into Christianity.

God Hath Not Given Us A Spirit of Fear (II Tim. 1:7)

The Scriptures seem to be clear that if you have a spirit of fear you did not get it from God.

God gives to us a spirit of boldness, as personified by Jesus. He was different from the Scribes in that He spoke with authority. They were never quite sure . . . always hesitant . . . always insecure. Jesus, by contrast, was never hesitant . . . never insecure, . . . and always certain.

When we appropriate the Spirit of Jesus we too become confident. "The wicked flee when no man pursueth; but the righteous are bold as a lion" (Prov. 28:1).

Some have suggested that Timothy had a special need of this kind of admonition.

When Timothy was on his way to Corinth, Paul saw the need of paving the way for his coming by writing,

Now if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear: for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do (I Cor. 16:10).

When Paul first met Timothy, it was during a period of persecution. Timothy was fully aware of these persecutions and afflictions which came to Paul in Antioch, and Iconium, and Lystra (II Tim. 3:11) and for this reason may have needed a special reminder to not be ashamed of the Lord, nor of Paul, his prisoner.

Jesus was fearless. He spoke with authority, not as the scribes. The Scriptures teach that those who fear are not made perfect in love for perfect love casteth out fear (I Jn. 4:18). It is to be regretted that the King James Version speaks of Jesus as being heard by God because of fear (Heb. 5:7). The best manuscripts use not "phobos" but "eulabeia" and perhaps the New International Version has captured the sense by rendering it as "reverent submission." Jesus did have reverent submission, but He did not have any reason to be afraid.

Fear and timidity are so utterly out of character with the Christian life that the “fearful” are listed in Revelation 21:8 with whoremongers, sorcerers, idolaters, and liars.

Paul did things which the devout Jew could not consent to or comprehend. He actually became a gentile to the gentiles (I Cor. 9:21). He could eat gentile food and do other things which the Jew understood to be in direct violation of the will of God. The reason was that Paul was “born from above.”

A caterpillar cannot fly. He is doomed to crawl along and munch a few leaves. The butterfly is a converted caterpillar. He has gone through a metamorphosis which enables him to live a transcendent life.

Heavenly Places

The expression “heavenly places” occurs five times in the book of Ephesians. The word “places” is in italics, which means that it is not in the original text. Some, therefore, render it simply as “heavenlies.” It is in the “heavenlies” that the believer reigns with Christ at the right hand of God, far above all principalities and power 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).

- We are blessed with spiritual blessings in the heavenlies (Eph. 1:3).
- Christ reigns in the heavenlies (Eph. 1:20).
- We sit with Christ in the heavenlies (Eph. 2:6).
- The church displays the manifold wisdom of God in the heavenlies (Eph. 3:10).
- We wrestle, not against flesh and blood, but against spiritual wickedness in the heavenlies (Eph. 6:12).

Ephesians 1:17-23 contains a prayer of Paul for the brethren in Ephesus. He wanted them to:

- (1) Have the spirit of wisdom and revelation in knowledge about him.
- (2) He wanted them to know of the hope of their calling.
- (3) He wanted them to have their eyes opened to the exceeding greatness of God’s power to us who believe.

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He then continues to explain that this power available to us is identically the same power which was operating in Jesus when God raised Him from the dead and set Him on His own right hand in the heavenlies, which is far above any earthly rule, or authority, or kingdom.

It is here that God expects us to operate as believers.

B.C. Lives in an A.D. World

How sad it is to see believers tapping along like blind men, always hesitant and uncertain about which step to take next. Like the Ephesians of old, our eyes need to be enlightened. We need to sit with Christ in heavenly places and assume the perspective which enables us to forge ahead with fearless determination.

I heard some time ago of three congregations which were offered the privilege of operating a brand new hospital facility. They hesitantly declined, fearful that the church had no business doing such a thing.

I know of congregations where the fear mentality reigns so supreme that the custodian wouldn't dare sit down on the steps and eat a sandwich for fear that he would be in violation of a "law" in I Corinthians 11.

Some churches partition off special places and forbid common folk to violate certain boundaries. They seem not to know that Jesus has done away with Holy Places and Holy Things by making us Holy People.

Luke Perinne tells the story of a ladies' group which decided to play a game to see who could look the meanest and ugliest. The lady who won wasn't even playing.

Our legalistic approach to God has filled our congregations with frowning worshippers who are afraid to relax for fear that something which they say or do might be used against them. I even heard of one congregation where the board voted to forbid anyone from shaking hands after the meeting has officially begun.

How different is the glorious covenant which by means of the Holy Spirit replaces the slave mentality with that of a son, who transforms us from a cringing and fearful bondservant to a happy child who can rush boldly into the presence of God and fling his arms around Him crying out, "Abba, Father."

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The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ that we might achieve the new perspective of faith and come boldly and fearlessly into the presence of God.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

1. How can the fear of the Lord be wrong since the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge (Prov. 1:7)?
2. In what way does perfect love cast out fear (I Jn. 4:18)?
3. Did Jesus fear God or not (Heb. 5:8)?
4. Is the "fear of the Lord" good or bad?
5. What does it mean in II Timothy 1:7 "For God hath not given us a spirit of fear"?
6. Why were the Jewish people afraid to pronounce the name of God (Ex. 20:7)?
7. Where does the Christian get the boldness to call God "abba" or "daddy" (Gal. 4:6)?
8. Who are the fearful that will be condemned to Hell (Rev. 21:8)?
9. Why were the Jews afraid to enter into the Holy of Holies?
10. Why does the Christian have boldness to enter into the Holiest (Heb. 10:19)?

IX

TWO KINGDOMS

A multitude of laws in a country is like a great number of physicians, a sign of weakness and malady. Voltaire

Christians in every age have been faced with the dilemma of dual citizenship. On the one hand we are citizens of heaven where there is no law but the "law of love." On the other hand we live in a world where only a remnant belong to this heavenly kingdom. Many people in this world are so utterly perverse that Peter describes them as ". . . natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed . . ." (II Pet. 2:12).

How vividly I recall the 14th of July 1966 when eight student nurses were brutally murdered by Richard Speck. Then only a few days later on August 1, 1966, an architectural student named Charles J. Whitman barricaded himself in the University of Texas tower and killed fifteen people and wounded 31 others with a high powered rifle.

It is not my business to sit in judgment on either of these men with regard to their eternal destiny. Fortunately, Jesus Christ is the ultimate

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judge of that. It is, however, quite obvious that neither of these men could be reasoned with at the time they were committing their crimes.

Richard Speck murdered the student nurses one at a time. As each was taken from the room, the others no doubt felt like they would certainly be able to reason with this man and talk him out of doing anything irrational. They were wrong. Some men are like "brute beasts." You can no more reason with some men than you can reason with a lion or a bear. Even Jesus warned us against casting our pearls before swine. Swine do not have the capacity to appreciate a pearl and, therefore, they would only trample the pearl under their feet and turn around and seek to destroy you.

The same was true with Charles Whitman. He had been an exemplary student and fine citizen until he went beserk and began shooting innocent people. After being gunned down by police, an autopsy revealed the presence of a brain tumor which may help to explain his irrational behavior.

Be that as it may, it is quite obvious that we cannot expect non-Christian people to behave like Christian people. And even Christian people may succumb to some circumstance which renders them irrational or in some capacity not responsible for their actions.

A close friend and one of the finest Christian men I know was hospitalized some years ago for kidney stones. During his hospitalization he had a reaction to his medication and became violent. He later told me that he would have thrown an orderly out of the window if he had been able to do so.

In order to protect society from destructive elements from within and without, God has ordained civil government. The laws of man do not make men righteous, but they do present an alternative to anarchy.

Therefore, Paul wrote to the Romans,

Let every soul be subject unto the high powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation (Rom. 13:1-2).

The Emperor of Rome was not a Christian . . . and later would even unjustly condemn the Apostle Paul himself to a cruel death. Even a bad government, however, is preferable to no government at all.

Anarchy in a Lifeboat

At 11:50 p.m. on Sunday, March 9, 1942, a ship called the "Rooseboom" was sunk by a Japanese torpedo in the South Pacific. A lifeboat that was designed to hold 28 people was crowded with 135 survivors. Eighty of the survivors were jammed inside the boat and fifty-five more were in the water clinging to the boat for safety.

Twenty-six days later only five people were alive to be rescued. Initially there was a semblance of order as the Captain of the Rooseboom was on board. He gave the orders and as long as he was obeyed, circumstances were as good as could be expected.

Each person was to receive a tablespoon of water at sunup and a spoonful of tinned milk and water at night. A 12-ounce tin of bully beef would be shared by 12 people each day. To lessen the unbearable overcrowding, every man who was not injured was to spend five hours in the water every day clinging to the boat or to the lifelines.

Gradually, however, people began to lose sight of community needs and to think of their own survival. The Dutch Captain was stabbed to death by his engineer who subsequently jumped overboard to his death.

Now it was every man for himself. Since people reasoned that the fewer the people there were to eat and drink the rations the greater were their chances of survival . . . they began to kill one another. More and more people "mysteriously" disappeared. One night there were twenty such disappearances. Some people went beserk and killed themselves . . . others went beserk and killed others. Since weapons were few, a jagged bully beef tin might suffice to cut the throat of an unsuspecting victim. As the situation became more desperate some of these murders were even committed in broad daylight.

The word "anarchy" is a compound of two different Greek words, "an" meaning "without" and "archos" meaning "ruler." Anarchy is a condition where there is no ruler and every person does that which is right in his own eyes. Such a condition is so deplorable and destructive that even a bad government is preferable to no government at all.

Anarchy is bad anywhere . . . but its cruel effects are more easily seen in a lifeboat with men slashing at one another's throats with jagged tin cans.

Law in the Book of Romans

The Greek word for law is “nomos.” It occurs 68 times in the book of Romans. Perhaps we can summarize the teaching about “law” in the book of Romans with these few brief references.

Rom. 5:13 “For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.”

Rom. 2:13 “For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.”

Rom. 3:20 “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight. . . .”

Rom. 4:15 “Because the law worketh wrath. . . .”

Rom. 3:21 “But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested. . . .”

Rom. 6:14 “For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.”

Rom. 7:4 “Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ”;

Rom. 8:3-4 “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. 13:8 “Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.”

Christians Are Like Sheep

The analogy of shepherd and sheep is used many times in the Scriptures to describe the relationship of Christ and His church.

Jesus said in John 10:27, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.”

There is no need for fences for those who are committed to hear the Shepherd’s voice and to follow Him. Jesus does not rule us by coercion. He does not make us follow Him by force.

Upon one occasion a great number of Jesus’ disciples went back and walked with Him no more. Jesus turned to the twelve and said,

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“Will ye also go away?” (John 6:67). They did not! The force which kept them from doing so, however, was not an external one. They were not “conformed” by a power without, but “transformed” by a power within.

Not Everyone Is Like Sheep

Again we call to your attention the words of the Apostle Peter as he spoke of those who “despise government” and are “presumptuous” and “self-willed.” These individuals are not afraid to speak evil of “dignities,” and are like brute beasts instead of sheep (II Pet. 2:10-12).

These corrupted individuals do not hear and obey the voice of the Shepherd. Like animals they must be corralled and restrained by external force.

This is the reason why God ordained civil government. The law of Moses was given as a “schoolmaster” to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith, but human laws are given to restrain wicked men and to protect society from the destructive influence of anarchy.

The Use of Force

As we have mentioned, Jesus does not use force to coerce people into following Him, but human governments use force to control the unconverted and immature. Therefore Romans 13 continues,

For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good and thou shalt have praise of the same. For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; FOR HE BEARETH NOT THE SWORD IN VAIN: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to EXECUTE WRATH upon him that doeth evil (Rom. 13:3-4).

The Christian is not exempt from obeying these civil authorities. So Paul states that we “must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake” (vs. 5). That is, not only because we are afraid of punishment, but because we know it is the right thing to do.

The next verse explains that this is the reason why we pay taxes, because civil authorities are “God’s ministers” attending to the business of protecting society.

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Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour (Rom. 13:7).

Under normal circumstances the Christian is an ideal citizen. He is respectful, responsive, and obedient to civil authorities. He pays his taxes with no intent to defraud his government.

He is instructed by Scripture to,

Submit . . . to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well . . . (I Pet. 2-13-14).

The Dilemma

So the devout Christian is sometimes faced with a dilemma. He wants to submit to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, but upon some occasions a civil government may require something of the Christian which is in direct violation of the will of God.

For example, the Christians in the Jerusalem church were commanded not to preach or to teach in the name of Jesus. In this instance Peter himself cried out, "We ought to obey God rather than men." If God commands us to preach and men tell us not to . . . we have a clear mandate and a Scriptural example, for civil disobedience.

Other cases may not be quite so clear. Suppose, for example, you were in the armed forces of Argentina and your government commanded you to shoot at the British . . . or vice versa. If we conclude that a Christian can belong to the armed forces of his native land, which some believers would deny, is there any point at which this believer should refuse to obey his government? If so, where is it?

Because believers are perpetually at different stages of spiritual growth and development, it is doubtful that we will ever draw the line in identically the same places.

The Need for Law

Throughout most of this volume we have pointed out that the law of Moses was a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ that we

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might be justified by faith. We have shown that in Christ we have a righteousness without law. We are members of a heavenly kingdom that functions without force and coercion from without. We are members of a body of which Christ is the head. We are sheep in the fold of which Christ is the Good Shepherd. We are citizens of the Kingdom of which Christ is the King.

It is imperative, however, that we avoid the mistake of thinking that the absence of law in our heavenly kingdom argues for a lack of law in the kingdoms of men.

Someday the Kingdoms of this world will become the Kingdoms of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ . . . until that day I fear that we shall perpetually be in need of human laws to restrain those godless elements in society.

I have to concur with Voltaire, "A multitude of laws in a country is like a great number of physicians, a sign of weakness and malady."

At the same time, however, I must conclude that society is very very sick and until it is healed by Jesus we will need our laws just like we need our physicians.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

1. Why can we not expect non-Christian people to live like Christians?
2. When is a Christian justified in protecting himself, or his rights?
3. In what way do some people become like animals?
4. How should these people be treated?
5. Under what circumstances may Christians commit acts of civil disobedience?
6. In Romans 12:19 we are told that vengeance belongs to God. In Romans 13 we are told that the representative of the State beareth not the sword in vain. Explain.
7. Can a Christian be a good citizen in a communist country?
8. Give an example of "casting pearls before swine."
9. What kind of a community could function well without laws?
10. How does the Kingdom of Christ differ from human kingdoms?

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DAVID

The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham . . . (Matt. 1:1).

As we pick up the New Testament Scriptures and begin to read, we are immediately informed that Jesus Christ was the "son of David." Whatever other genealogical references were deemed necessary or appropriate, we are not allowed to forget that Jesus was the "son of David." Even reference to Abraham is placed in a secondary role.

As word came down from heaven to those immediately involved in the birth of Christ there was constant reference to David:

- The angel who appeared to Joseph called him - "Joseph, thou son of *David*" (Matt. 1:22).
- Gabriel informed Mary that the child in her womb would inherit the throne of his father *David* (Lk. 1:32).
- When the tongue of Zacharias was loosed the Holy Spirit inspired him to bless God for: ". . . raising up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant *David* . . ." (Lk. 1:68).

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- When the angel informed the shepherds of the nativity he said, “. . . unto you is born this day in the city of *David*, a Savior which is Christ the Lord” (Lk. 2:11).

Surely these references to David are not accidental nor incidental in the Holy Scriptures. God was obviously trying to communicate something which He considered both significant and important. Jesus had many, many ancestors. The genealogical record in Luke 3 traces the lineage of Jesus clear back to Adam and ultimately to God. Every one of these ancestors was an essential link in achieving the incarnation, but reference to David is given special priority.

The Gospel records are filled with numerous references to Jesus as the “Son of David” (Matt. 9:27; 20:30; Mk. 10:47; Lk. 18:38, etc.). Even the Canaanite woman who begged for mercy called Him, “O Lord, thou Son of David” (Matt. 15:22). His triumphal entry into Jerusalem gathered about Him a frenzied mob tearing branches from Palm trees and throwing their garments on the roadway before Him. They were shouting, “Hosanna to the son of David.” Even little children in the temple picked up the refrain and echoed the oft repeated and inescapable fact that Jesus was the “son of David” (Matt. 21:15).

The First Mention of David in the Bible

The first mention of David in the Bible is found in the book of Ruth. The book was obviously written after David was born, but covers a period of history several centuries before when Israel was ruled by judges (Ruth 1:1).

The last verses of the book of Ruth give us a part of David’s genealogy. Interestingly enough, the record begins with “Pharez” (Ruth 4:18).

Pharez, you will recall, was conceived in unusual circumstances and born in a certain amount of controversy.

Tamar, his mother, had suffered the loss of two husbands, Er and Onan. Judah, her father-in-law, had promised her his third son, Shelah, when he was old enough for marriage.

Judah, however, did not keep his promise. Tamar therefore disguised herself as a harlot and seduced Judah. When she gave birth to twins one infant extended his hand from his mother’s womb. The midwife tied a scarlet thread upon his hand and said, “This came

out first" (Gen. 38:28). The legal definition of firstborn involved the one which first opened the womb. But it came to pass that the boy with the scarlet thread drew back and the other twin was born first. They called him "Pharez" which means "breach." The baby with the scarlet thread was called "Zarah" which means "dawn."

The genealogy of Judah to David was not reckoned through "Zarah" who was the legal firstborn, but through Pharez. This genealogical record is found in the book of Ruth, who was herself a foreigner from Moab and a convert to Judaism. It needs to be remembered that this genealogical record is not just that of Judah and of David, but also of the Christ.

Thus, the first time we find the name of David mentioned on the pages of the Bible it is done so in association with individuals and events which challenge our thinking and lead us to ponder the marvelous way that God works. Surely we have a God who is not bound by law or legal systems.

What David Did?

Once while Jesus and His disciples were walking through a field on the sabbath day, His disciples were hungry and began to pluck the ears of grain and eat them. When the Pharisees criticized them for doing that which was not "lawful," Jesus responded.

Have ye not read what David did (Matt. 12:3)?

The incident before us is of such significance that it is repeated three times in the Gospels (Matt. 12:1-4; Mark 2:23-28; Lk. 6:1-5). Each time Jesus specifically stated that David did something which it was not "lawful" for him to do.

A closer consideration of this "crime" reveals that David entered into the house of God and ate the shewbread, which it was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests. Yet, remarkably, David was not condemned . . . even though he did that which was not lawful to do.

Jesus asked His contemporaries to consider this story. He expected them to ponder what David did and to gain understanding and insight into what He was doing.

In the light of these probing questions of Jesus perhaps it would be appropriate for us to take a closer look at what David did. With

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everything which God does, the closer we examine it the more beautiful it becomes. A snowflake, for example, is beautiful when seen on a mountaintop or a frosted tree, but it is even more beautiful when it is seen closely and magnified a thousand times. That which man does, by contrast, is more ugly and disgusting the more closely it is examined. The picture which looks so beautiful from across the room loses a great deal of its beauty when examined with a magnifying glass. The closer we examine David, the uglier he becomes.

I Samuel 20

Let us begin our story with I Samuel 20. David was now suspicious and afraid of the wrath of King Saul. He consulted with Saul's son, Jonathan, to map out a strategy for survival. A certain signal was agreed upon if it was safe for David to remain, and another signal was determined if David was to flee. It was not safe. Saul even hurled his javelin at Jonathan himself. David therefore arose from his hiding place and fled for his life.

I Samuel 21

The fleeing David arrived at Nob and spoke with Ahimelech the priest. Ahimelech was afraid and wondered why David was alone.

At this point it is difficult to believe what we are about to read. For David, the man after God's own heart, told a terrible lie. A lie that would not only cost Ahimelech his life, but which would take a great many other lives as well. It resulted in the deaths of 85 priests as well as all the men and women and children who lived in the city of Nob (see I Sam. 22:18-19). Since you as a busy reader may not take the time to check out this Scripture, we here reproduce it for your convenience.

And the king said to Doeg, Turn thou, and fall upon the priests. And Doeg and the Edomite turned, and he fell upon the priests, and slew on that day fourscore and five persons that did wear a linen ephod. And Nob, the city of the priests, smote he with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and sucklings, and oxen, and asses, and sheep, with the edge of the sword.

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David was later to admit to Abiathar: "I have occasioned the death of all the persons of thy father's house" (I Sam. 22:22).

David told Ahimelech,

The king hath commanded me a business, and hath said unto me, Let no man know any thing of the business whereabout I send thee, and what I have commanded thee: and I have appointed my servants to such and such a place (I Sam. 21:2).

This, however, was not true. David was not on an urgent matter for the king; as a matter of fact, if Saul had known where David was he would have killed him.

If Ahimelech had only known the truth, he might not have been so willing to provide David with Holy Bread and the weapon of Goliath, and he and his colleagues might not have been condemned for what Saul considered an act of high treason.

Be that as it may, we are left to wonder at "what David did." Nadab and Abihu died for offering strange fire (Lev. 10:1ff.). The men of Bethshemesh died for looking into the Ark (I Sam. 6:19). Uzzah died for touching the Ark (II Sam. 6:7). Saul was rejected by God as King for presuming to function as a priest (I Sam. 13:13) . . . But David did that which was not lawful for him to do . . . and somehow . . . some way . . . he was not condemned.

Other Things Which David Did!

The incident with Ahimelech is just the tip of the iceberg. David did a great many other things which boggle the mind of a Bible student. Take, for example, his association with Achish, the King of Gath. Initially, David survived in Gath by pretending he was crazy,

. . . and feigned himself mad in their hands, and scrabbled on the doors of the gate and let his spittle fall down upon the beard . . . (I Sam. 21:13).

Later, however, David became more bold and aggressive. He was given the city of Ziklag, by Achish (I Sam. 27:6) and used this city as a staging base to attack the enemies of Israel.

And David and his men went up, and invaded the Geshurites, and the Gezrites, and the Amalekites: . . . and David smote the land, and left

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neither man nor woman alive, and took away the sheep, and the oxen, and the asses, and the camels, and the apparel, and returned and came to Achish (I Sam. 27:8-9).

When Achish inquired what he had been doing, David lied to him. He said he had made war "against the south of Judah, and against the south of the Jerahmeelites, and against the south of the Kenites." And because David had killed all the witnesses, there was no one to inform Achish what had actually happened:

"So did David, and so will be his manner all the while he dwelleth in the country of the Philistines" (I Sam. 27:11).

Achish thought David was being abhorred by Israel. In reality, he was being joined by men from Israel (see I Chron. 12:1-17) and was sending spoils to his friends there which he had taken from the enemies of God (I Sam. 30:26-31).

When the stage was set for Saul's final battle, David lined up to fight with the Philistines against Saul. The princes of the Philistines questioned the wisdom of trusting David. They said,

Is not this David, of whom they sang one to another in dances, saying, Saul slew his thousands, and David his ten thousands? (I Sam. 29:5).

Achish had been totally deceived. Note his defense of David.

. . . David . . . hath been with me these days, or these years, and I have found no fault in him since he fell unto me unto this day? (I Sam. 29:3).

Then Achish called David, and said unto him, Surely, as the Lord liveth, thou hast been upright, and thy going out and thy coming in with me in the host is good in my sight: for I have not found evil in thee since the day of thy coming unto me unto this day . . . (I Sam. 29:6).

And Achish answered and said to David, I know that thou art good in my sight, as an angel of God; . . . (I Sam. 29:9).

Fortunately for Achish, the princes of the Philistines prevailed, and David was not permitted to join their ranks in the battle against Israel. We have reason to believe that David would never lift his hand against Saul and if his men had been permitted to infiltrate the Philistine army the outcome of the battle might have been much different (see II Sam. 1:15-16).

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David and the Moabites

We know that David had ancestral roots in Moab because he was born from descendants of Ruth. Some have speculated that David's mother may have been a Moabite, because he left her and his father in Moab for protection while he was fleeing from Saul (I Sam. 22:3-4).

Later, however, David smote Moab and put them to death in an unusual manner. He cast them down to the ground and began to measure with a line. He killed all those in the first measurement, and also the second, but saved alive the final one-third of the people (II Sam. 8:2). So the Moabites became David's servants and brought him gifts.

David and the Ammonites

When David conquered Ammon he tortured them with great severity.

And he brought forth the people that were therein, and put them under saws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and made them pass through the brick-kiln: and thus did he unto all the cities of the children of Ammon . . . (II Sam. 12:31).

Keil and Delitzsch in commenting upon this passage say:

So far as the circumstances themselves are concerned, the cruelties inflicted upon the prisoners are not to be softened down, as Daaz and others propose, by an arbitrary perversion of the words into a mere sentence to hard labour, such as sawing wood, burning bricks, etc.

Translating from the Hebrew they insist that "he cut (sawed) them in pieces" and insist that the meaning cannot be more precisely determined.

God's Assessment of David

When Samuel came to anoint one of the sons of Jesse to be the next king, we are explicitly informed,

. . . the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart (I Sam. 16:7).

The idea that David might be the next king did not seriously enter the mind of his family, and even after he had been anointed in the

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midst of his brethren, the firstborn son, Eliab, looked upon him as the victim of pride and a naughty heart (I Sam. 17:28).

But the Lord does not see things as man sees them. We look only upon the externals . . . God looks upon the heart.

Years after the death of David the inspired author of the Kings would write,

. . . David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside from anything that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite . . . (I Kings 15:5).

Though his exploits in war prevented him from the privilege of constructing the temple, he is remembered in sacred history as a man who found the blessedness of an imputed righteousness without works. His iniquities were forgiven, and his sins were covered (Ps. 32; Rom. 4:6-8).

Moreover, he provides us with many profound considerations as we seek to understand the nature of God and His marvelous grace.

Surely the Lord is trying to teach us something.

While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions (Matt. 22:41-46).

Perhaps it is not the time for us to be asking questions either. Maybe we need to meditate upon David as he relates to law and grace and our own personal need for faith.

Without faith it is impossible to please God . . . and the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

1. Why do you suppose that Jesus was called the "Son of David" before he was called the "Son of Abraham" in Matt. 1:1?
2. How was it possible for Pharez to be a part of the Messianic line when his twin brother came out first (Gen. 38:28)?

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3. When Samuel came to Bethlehem to anoint a king, why do you suppose David was not among the candidates but was out in the field with the sheep (I Sam. 16:11)?
4. In your judgment which of David's sins was the worst?
5. How was it possible for David to be a man after God's own heart when he did so many things that were wrong?
6. Why was King Saul not known as a man after God's own heart (I Sam. 13)?
7. How was David able to do that which was not lawful, and not be condemned for it (Matt. 12:1-4)?
8. Explain I Kings 15:5: "Because David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside from any thing that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matters of Uriah the Hittite."
9. Explain: ". . . for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (I Sam. 16:7).
10. Which is more important to God, what a person does with his body, or what he has in his heart?

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XI

WHAT IS FAITH?

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen (Heb. 11:1).

We have said a great deal about the law being a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith. It certainly seems appropriate to ask the question, "What is faith?"

The Scriptures refer to faith as the "substance" of things hoped for. The word for "substance" in the Greek text is "hupostasis." The word "hupo" means "under" and the word "stasis" means "standing." "hupostasis" is therefore that which stands under or that which is foundational. Thayer says that it refers to the "substantial quality, or nature of any person or thing."

The word "hupostasis" is found two other times in the book of Hebrews. In Hebrews 1:3 Jesus is said to be the "express image" of God's person. The word "hupostasis" used here for Jesus is foundational to our understanding of God. He is the very image of God's quality or nature.

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The word is used again in Hebrews 3:14 where it is translated in the Authorized Version as "confidence." We are made partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our "confidence" steadfast unto the end. We must never abandon that which is foundational to our faith. This provides us with an interesting play on words for in reality faith is the very foundation of Christianity. It is the "substance" or "reality" of what we hope for.

In addition to being "substance" faith is also "evidence." It is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.

The Greek word translated as "evidence" is "elegchos" which has been defined as "a demonstration of the certainty of a thing by sure argument and indubitable reasons."

God has given to us various ways to comprehend the physical world around us. We can see, touch, taste, hear, and smell physical things. But physical things are only temporal. The things which we see will ultimately pass away. The things which most people are giving their lives for are transient. Someday these physical things will pass away with a great noise and melt with fervent heat. In the meanwhile they are subject to moth and rust and are in constant danger of being stolen.

It is the things which we do not see which are eternal. These are treasures which moth and rust do not corrupt and which thieves do not break through and steal.

The antenna by which we establish contact with the invisible world is faith.

Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear (Heb. 11:3).

All of this sounds so ridiculous and so twenty-first century that we would have to have a very strong motivation before we would abandon the physical world around us and stake our lives and our eternal destiny on something as nebulous and difficult to define as faith.

This is precisely the purpose of the law. It was designed to make men desperate so that we would turn to faith.

It is like being trapped in a sunken ship with only a few hours of oxygen available in the room. You pound and scream until you are utterly exhausted. Surely someone will come, you tell yourself, but they do not. Finally, you are virtually out of air. You don't know

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whether you can make it by opening the door and trying to swim to the surface. The distance may be too great. There may be obstacles in the passageway which will trap you. There may be cables and wires in which you will become tangled. You don't know whether you can make it or not, but it becomes increasingly obvious that you have to try.

It is in this vein that many turn to faith in God. Those who understand the utter hopelessness and futility of salvation through law have got to try something.

Our plight is like that of the lepers who were starving during the siege of Samaria. Finally they said, "Why sit we here until we die?" (II Ki. 7:3). They did not have many options, but they knew that anything was better than what they were doing.

Their daring decision to enter into the camp of the Syrians provided them with a bonanza beyond their wildest expectations. Never did they dream that risking so little would gain them so much.

So also with those who dare to abandon the righteousness of law keeping, to risk and dare the principle of justification by faith. The treasure of those lepers pales into insignificance when we remember that by faith Abraham became "heir of the world" (Rom. 4:13). By faith we can become children of Abraham and heirs according to the promise.

The Power of Faith in the Past

Faith is not just an ethereal principle which opens the doors and oils the hinges on air castles in the sweet by and by. Faith has been living and vibrant in every age of human history. It existed centuries before the law was given and it still exists centuries after the law has been nailed to the cross.

It is easy for us to document some of what faith has done in the past. A brief resumé is provided in Hebrews 11:

Through faith the elders and Abel pleased God.

Through faith Enoch was translated and avoided death.

Through faith Noah and his family were saved while the world around them perished.

Through faith Abraham and Sarah conceived Isaac in a dead womb.

Through faith Abraham believed that God could raise the dead.

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After a brief list of these heroes and heroines of the faith, we are informed that faith has,

. . . subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection . . . (Heb. 11:33-35).

No one who believes the Bible has any doubt about the power of faith in the past.

The Power of Faith Today

For years I had a narrow and parochial view of faith today. I read in the Bible, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). My understanding of this verse was stiff and mechanical. If the Bible said it, I believed it, but I was reluctant to permit God to operate outside the realm of my perceptions and understanding.

I was like the laborers in the vineyard who felt it was unfair for the Master of the vineyard to pay all of his workers the same wage regardless of how long they had worked. It is ridiculous for finite man to attempt to sit in judgment upon our Infinite God.

Now I have come to the place where I am willing to let God be God; to confess my own ignorance and unbelief and to fall prostrate in wonder at the power of faith which I believe is at work right now in the world in which we live.

What I now say will undoubtedly be offensive to some. Several years ago it would have been offensive to me. I confess in advance that the power of faith is beyond my comprehension. I can only pray that my own ignorance and incompetence will not cause anyone to stumble.

Many years ago Bob Richards wrote a book entitled, "The Heart of a Champion." I regret that it is now out of print.

The basic idea in the book is that a champion is made by the right kind of a heart and not by the right kind of a body. The book was literally filled with exciting stories of champions who overcame

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infirmities and crippling afflictions to find their way into the record books. Here are a few examples.

Glenn Cunningham was so badly burned at the age of five that his doctors predicted that he would be a hopeless cripple. He overcame that handicap to set the world's record for the mile run in 1934.

Johnny Fulton was run over by a car at the age of three. His hips were crushed, his ribs were broken, his skull was fractured. He suffered compound fractures of the leg. No one thought he would live, but he grew up to run the half mile in 1:49.5.

Walt Davis was totally paralyzed by polio at the age of nine, but became an Olympic high jumper in 1952.

Shelley Mann was paralyzed by polio at the age of five. She overcame her illness and claimed eight different swimming records for America and won a gold medal at the Olympic games in Melbourne, Australia.

Howard Connolly won the Olympic hammer throw despite a crippled left arm which had been broken 13 times.

The man who claimed the gold medal in pistol shooting in the 1952 Olympics lost his right arm six months after his victory. He trained the next three and one-half years with his left hand and won his second gold medal in 1956. The thing that makes a champion is not your arms, but your heart.

Tennley Albright had crippled legs and the experts predicted that she would never use them again. She went on to win the World's Figure Skating Championship.

Bill Nieder broke the world's record in the shot put after being told by the doctors that the many operations on his stiff right leg would keep him from competition.

These are just a few samplings from literally thousands of life experiences which take place. On the surface these stories seem to reflect a total absence of any association with religion. I have a growing conviction, however, that they are vitally related to the vibrant principle of faith by which the penitent sinner can find forgiveness and justification in the sight of God.

What you believe has a direct association with what you achieve!

It has been stated that Neil Armstrong believed that he would be the first man to walk on the moon from the time he was five years old. We know that faith without works is dead. So in order for his

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faith to become reality, he would have to combine what he believed with what he did. This is precisely what happened.

When Neil Armstrong sat down to eat, he no doubt ate the kind of foods which would make his body strong . . . so he could someday walk on the moon.

When he studied in school he did so with greater determination than those who had no specific goals in life. Mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually his life was shaped by something which he believed. His faith became the reality of what he had hoped for. He was the first man to ever walk upon the moon.

Napoleon Hill has said that anything which the mind of man can conceive and believe, he also can achieve.

This is a powerful principle, and has unlimited applications for both good and evil. The same power that obliterated Nagasaki and Hiroshima can also light great cities and turn the wheels of industry and productivity.

The penitent sinner confesses his faith in Jesus Christ and is buried with his Lord in Christian baptism. He is saved by his faith, but not all have the same degree of faith. Some converts can move mountains and others cannot move a mole hill. Who can doubt or deny that the degree of our faith is a key ingredient in analyzing our success or failure. The very principle which helps you be a successful athlete also helps you to be a successful Christian.

Paul Cho is pastor of the largest congregation in the world. Several years ago the members of that church dared to believe that God was capable of granting them a thousand converts each month for an entire year. This was not some flippant figure drawn out of the air. It was a serious conviction arrived at in such intense prayer that Pastor Cho believed that he and his flock entered into a "fourth dimension." What they firmly believed enabled them to achieve the object of their faith. They did, in fact, have 12,000 converts during the year. Today they are having almost this many converts every month.

For those who have an ear to hear, let them listen to Jesus. He is God manifest in the flesh and without Him was not anything made that was made. Jesus said,

. . . If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you (Matt. 17:20).

WHAT IS FAITH?

. . . have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them (Mk. 11:22-24).

. . . If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you (Lk. 17:6).

Jesus said . . . I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die . . . (John 11:25-26).

These Scriptures could easily be multiplied. Each should be studied in its Biblical setting and context, but please do not make the mistake of reading around and explaining away the power of faith.

Believing In Vain

The Scriptures teach that it is possible to "believe in vain" (I Cor. 15:2).

Zig Ziglar tells the story of a man named Victor Seribriakoff. At the age of 15 he was encouraged to quit school and learn a trade. For 17 years he worked as an itinerant doing a variety of odd jobs. At the age of 32 he was tested and found to have an I.Q. of 161. Firmly convinced of his intelligence he began to write books, become a businessman, and filed for patents. He even became chairman of the International Mensa Society, a group so select that no one with an I.Q. of less than 140 is admitted.

The principle of faith is capable of infinite applications. You can use it to win Olympic medals, make millions of dollars, or transform yourself from worldly failure to great achievements and sparkling fame.

All of these earthly achievements are merely an exercise in futility. Ultimately, they will pass away with a great noise and melt with fervent heat.

The one valid and eternal application of faith involves "justification." It means that deep down in our hearts we believe that the miracle of the ages has taken place. It means believing that the Infinite Creator God has consented to dwell in our bodies and make our hearts the ark

of His New Covenant. It means believing that Jesus Christ has become our great High Priest and that even now He is ministering in our behalf in the presence of God and the Holy Angels.

If you have come to believe this, then the law of Moses has served its intended purpose. God intended it to be a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith.

If you merely use your faith to make a million dollars or to become a successful athlete, then your faith has been vain in a very real sense. Bodily exercise may profit for a little, but godliness is profitable unto all things, having not only the promise of the life that now is, but also of that which is to come.

Grasshoppers

When the children of Israel sent spies to search out the land of Canaan, the spies returned saying, “. . . and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers . . . (Nu. 13:33).

This analysis was certainly not a manifestation of faith. As a matter of fact, it was an absolute distortion of reality. Everybody knew that there were giants in the land. Nobody questioned that at all. The faithless spies had a problem with self-image. In their own eyes they were so inadequate and deficient that they assigned to themselves a sub-human status.

Before they saw the giants they were regular people. After they saw the giants they were still regular people, but they saw themselves only as grasshoppers.

The giants remained the same size, the walled cities remained the same size, the figs, pomegranates, and grapes remained the same size, and even the spies remained the same size. The problem was in their perception of themselves.

As we rethink this biblical story, it is well to be reminded that God does not like negative reports. When the faithless spies returned with their grasshopper distortion of reality, they not only sealed their own doom, but the doom of a faithless nation as well.

This brings us to our own self-perception. Shall we as the Bride of Christ suffer from a low self-image? Shall we who are citizens of heaven go through life with stooped shoulders and broken hearts? Shall we mourn the dismal circumstances around us and whine that we too are but grasshoppers?

WHAT IS FAITH?

How much better to live a life of faith, to believe that no matter what happens we are "More than Conquerors" through Him that loved us. Our Omnipotent God is capable of working all things together for good regardless of the circumstances. He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, and has promised that He will never leave us or forsake us.

When we "believe" . . . really believe these promises, we transcend the physical world around us and join company with those heroes and heroines of faith of whom the world is not worthy. It is the law which helps to bring us to this glorious triumph in Christ, "and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (I John 5:4).

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

1. In what way are the things which we see only temporal (II Cor. 4:18)?
2. How can faith be "substance" (Heb. 11:1)?
3. When is faith more powerful, in the past, the present, or the future?
4. How does what one believes affect what he achieves?
5. What relationship does faith have with the Word of God (Rom. 10:17)?
6. Is it possible to believe anything about which the Word of God does not speak?
7. What does one have to believe in order to be saved?
8. What does it mean to believe in vain (I Cor. 15:2)?
9. Is it possible to be humble while at the same time believing that you can do all things through Christ who strengthens you (Phil. 4:13)?
10. Is it possible for someone to be saved who does not believe he is saved?

XII

WHAT IS JUSTIFICATION?

Criminals collected together tend to corrupt each other, they are worse than ever when at the end of their incarceration they are released on an unsuspecting public. Napoleon

Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust (II Pet. 1:4).

In the final analysis there are only two ways by which man can be controlled. First of all, by external pressure, and secondly, by internal pressure.

The principle of law endeavors to control man by external pressure and threat of punishment. We have already shown the futility of this system. The Scriptures teach that when you command someone, "Touch not; taste not; handle not" it has an appearance of wisdom, but is of no value in checking the indulgence of the flesh.

Probably no country on earth has more stringent moral laws than South Africa. Casino gambling is illegal. Movies and organized sports on Sundays are considered as disrespectful. Interracial coupling is

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forbidden. Puritanical blue laws reflect the Calvinistic ethics of the government. I have heard that it is against the law to read a copy of *Playboy Magazine* in South Africa.

Do these laws make the South African people righteous? Absolutely not! But it does make them hypocritical. It has done for them exactly what law did for the Pharisees.

If all of these things are against the law "in South Africa," then all you have to do to sin legally is get out of South Africa. The legal mind has no trouble doing this at all. Therefore, independent countries are now springing up within South Africa.

Sun City, for example, is a mere two and one-half hour drive northwest of Johannesburg. Here you can gamble to your heart's content; here all races can casually mix with absolutely no restrictions; here bare breasted chorus girls entertain goggle-eyed spectators and mirrored hallways lead to roulette wheels and blackjack tables.

Against the law? Of course not! For Sun City is in the independent country of Bophuthatswana. There are no passports needed, no customs to go through, but Bophuthatswana is a sovereign state just the same. The paved highway leads right through a dusty wilderness and every weekend multiplied thousands are bumper to bumper on their way to Sun City. The moment the wheels of their bus or car cross over the line, they can revel in an orgy with no holds barred and no fear of law.

Susan Goodman in the March 1983 *Friends Magazine* has written a humorous article called "Laws of the Bungle." Here are a few examples of laws which some communities have passed.

In Quitman, Georgia, it is against the law for a chicken to cross the road.

In Kirkland, Illinois, it is against the law for bees to fly over the town.

In Baltimore it is a crime to mistreat an oyster.

In Topeka it is against the law to worry squirrels.

A Colorado law upholds a dog's right to one bite.

In Paulding, Ohio, a police officer has the legal right to bite a dog back.

In Kentucky it is against the law to shoot clay pigeons during the breeding season.

California has a law forbidding a motorist to shoot any animal from his car but a whale.

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In Gary, Indiana, it is illegal to attend a theater within four hours of eating garlic.

For the first four months of the year it is illegal to take pictures of rabbits in Wyoming.

The Pine Island District of Minnesota requires that a man tip his hat to cows passing by.

In Washington, D.C., it is illegal to punch a bull in the nose.

Please do not feel that these examples are given to make fun of the law of God. The law of God was perfectly designed to do exactly what He intended for it to do. It was not intended to make men righteous (Gal. 3:21); it was not intended to make men obedient (Rom. 3:19). It was intended to be a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith.

Escape From Lust

Hebrews 7:19 states unequivocally that the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did.

What the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God has now accomplished through Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:3).

This change does not occur because of external laws pressuring us to "conform" but by His Holy Spirit operating from within. We are not "conformed," we are "transformed."

Putting a caterpillar in a rigid mould and trying to make him into a butterfly is not only a messy experience, but a fatal one to the caterpillar.

For many years I tried to coerce people to conform to the image of Jesus by threats of punishment. If the brethren did not behave like Jesus, I felt that dangling them over the flames of hell would purge away their lust. I was wrong!

This first began to dawn upon my mind while I was teaching a class in South Bend, Indiana. I quoted II Peter 1:4 from memory, emphasizing that each of us is to be a partaker of the "divine nature."

A quizzical look must have come upon my face as I apologized to the audience and asked leave of them that I might quote that Scripture again for myself. "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (II Pet. 1:4).

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It is not the threats that help us to escape from lust and to be partakers of the divine nature . . . it is His exceeding great and precious PROMISES.

Why hadn't I seen that before?

Suppose I command you not to think about lemon pie. Then I wax eloquent in my denunciation of it by describing its flaky crust and homemade filling. Then I threaten you with punishment, even if the pie just came out of the oven and has a meringue topping that is two inches tall.

Such an approach is self-defeating. You were probably not even thinking about lemon pie until I mentioned it, and the more I mention it, the more you have a tendency to think about it.

Paul wrote,

. . . I had not known sin but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law has said, Thou shalt not covet . . . (Rom. 7:7).

Again let us suppose that you are going to fast for forty days like Jesus did. Anticipating a difficult time you send off to the local seminary for help. The student minister arrives and the first day his sermon is against junk foods. The second day he lectures on the evils of rich desserts. The third day he belabors bacon from an unclean animal and eggs that create excessive levels of cholesterol.

Could you survive forty days without lust by following such a program?

The divine prescription involves the promises. This is not to say that there is no place for warnings as our next chapter will point out, but it is only to reaffirm what the Holy Spirit said through Peter. He has given unto us exceeding great and precious promises that by them we might be partakers of the divine nature and escape the corruption that is in the world through lust.

Justification

In the New Testament Scriptures the word "justified" and a whole family of related words come from the root "dike." For example:

"dikaisune" - righteousness

"dikaios" - upright

"dikaioo" - justify

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“dikaïoma” - righteous deed

“dikaïos” - justly

“dikaïosis” - justification

etc.

The original root noun is felt to have meant “instructress” or “instruction.” In Greek mythology, “Dike” was the daughter of Zeus and the implacable enemy of violence. Through her “instruction” mankind is permitted to survive by learning to live without violence.

In post-Homeric times, Dike was considered as the goddess of punishment who pursued wrongdoers. Dike and its derivatives were at this time battle cries which became concepts basic to the establishment of a community. Without “justice” anarchy would prevail. When Paul was bitten by a deadly viper, the islanders felt that he must have been a murderer when “Dike” or “justice” was about to kill (Acts 28:4).

Thus the Dictionary of New Testament Theology (Vol. III, p. 253) sums up:

Hence, the righteous man (dikaïos) was originally one whose behaviour fitted into the framework of his society and who fulfilled his rightful obligations towards the gods and his fellow-men.

I think most everyone can appreciate the fact that this concept from the Greeks is remarkably similar to what Jesus described as the basic message of Scripture.

Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets (Matt. 22:37-39).

The problem is that there is none righteous, no not one.

The Hebrew word for “evil” is “ra.” It comes from the root “ra a” which literally means to “break in pieces.”

Since man ate of that tree which gave him the knowledge of evil, we have lived in a fragmented world. Man did not have a right relationship with God, and neither did he have a right relationship with his fellowmen.

After four thousand frustrating years man was no closer to harmonious living than he was when he first set foot out of Eden.

Imputed Righteousness

The Greek word translated as “imputed” is “logizomai.” It means to “reckon” or to “take into account.”

Abraham was not righteous. His conduct toward his wife in turning her over to Pharaoh, for example, was cowardly and sick. Abraham was not righteous, but God “counted” him as righteous because of what he believed (Rom. 4:3).

Abraham was the recipient of three great promises from God.

1. “I will make of thee a great nation” (Gen. 12:2).

His children were to be as numerous as the dust (Gen. 13:16).

and as the stars (Gen. 15:5).

2. He was to inherit Palestine - “And the Lord said unto Abram . . . Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art . . . for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever . . .” (Gen. 13:14-15).

3. The family of Abraham was ultimately to bless all the families of the earth (Gen. 12:3).

It is significant to note that Abraham died before any of these promises became reality. At the time of his death he had only a handful of direct descendants. He did not receive an inheritance of land, “no, not so much as to set his foot on” (Acts 7:5), and he had been unable to bless even the country where he dwelt, to say nothing of “all the families of the earth.” Illustrative of this fact is the journey of Isaac to Padan Aram for a wife, undoubtedly to avoid the corrupting influence of the Canaanites.

Though Abraham did not receive the promises, he saw them afar off (Heb. 11:13). He shared the ability of God to call things that are not as though they were (Rom. 4:17). He was “fully persuaded that what God had promised, he was able to perform, AND THEREFORE IT WAS IMPUTED UNTO HIM FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS” (Rom. 4:21-22). The promises of God were counted as solid evidence for things which were not yet seen (Heb. 11:1). Spiritual perception was considered as valid a proof of reality as physical perception and thus Jesus testified: “. . . Abraham rejoiced to see my day: AND HE SAW IT, and was glad” (John 8:56).

WHAT IS JUSTIFICATION?

History has vindicated this father of the faithful. It was some 500 years before the family of Abraham inherited the land that God had promised . . . but they did receive it. It was many generations before the family of this believing nomad multiplied into a great nation . . . but the promise did come true. Almost two millennia of time transpired before the "seed" appeared to bless all the families of the earth . . . but Jesus was born . . . and Abraham with eyes of faith saw that day almost 2,000 years before it came to pass.

It is therefore highly appropriate that Abraham be presented to mankind as a proper example for all believers. The faithful remnant need never be discouraged by statistics of gloom and prophets of catastrophe. The Christian views the panorama of history from the mountaintop of faith. Our vision transcends the storm clouds of turmoil and despair, and over the horizon we discern that city whose builder and maker is God. Beyond the veil of suffering and death we see the jubilant throng. Above the roll of the drums and the rumble of war we hear the happy voices of the redeemed of earth.

Abraham saw the day of Jesus and rejoiced . . . and if you belong to Jesus you are thereby Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

David

David was not righteous. We devoted an entire chapter to him and pointed out at least a few of his sins. But David described the blessedness of the man unto whom God "imputed" righteousness. . . .

The 32nd Psalm uses four different words to describe the fragmentation of our relationship with God and man. They are: sin, iniquity, transgression, and guile. A part of this Psalm is quoted by Paul in Romans 4:7-8,

Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

In spite of our sin, iniquity, transgression, and guile, we can still be blessed if we understand what it means to have our sins "covered" . . . and to not have them "imputed" unto us.

These concepts are so basic to Christianity that God has been trying to prepare us for them since the beginning. When Adam and Eve sinned they realized that they were naked and tried to "cover"

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themselves. Any covering fashioned by man is inadequate, therefore God made coats of skins to clothe or cover sinful man. The first animal sacrifices were apparently performed by God.

This concept of "covering" was woven into the Hebrew language to such an extent that the Hebrew word for "atonement" is "kaphar" which means "to cover."

The law which condemned us, and which was preserved as a witness against us, was placed beneath the outstretched wings of the cherubim within the ark of the covenant. The cherubim, you will recall, were stationed East of Eden with flaming sword turning every way, to keep man away from the precincts of the tree of life.

It is important for us to experience the impact of these cherubim gazing intently down upon the law. They were keen eyed and efficient. Man would surely never have a chance to again eat of the tree of life and live forever.

But the cherubim did not see the law! On top of the law was a golden slab called the "mercy seat." It was a "covering" which prevented the sinfulness of man from being presented in the presence of God.

Jesus Is Our Covering

When John the Apostle described the resurrection it is significant to remember that there were angels in the garden tomb. One was at the head and the other was at the feet of the place where Jesus had lain.

These angels, like the cherubim, looked down on Jesus. Later John would write,

. . . and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world (I John 2:2).

God had promised to commune with Moses "from above the mercy-seat, from between the two cherubim" (Ex. 25:22). Jesus is the "propitiation," or "mercy seat" for our sins. He is the "Word" or vehicle by which God communicates to man. He is the covering which makes it possible for sinful creatures such as we are to appear "justified" in the presence of a perfect God.

All of our righteousness is like "filthy rags," it is only when covered by Christ that we dare to stand at the Wedding Feast of God.

WHAT IS JUSTIFICATION?

The Psalm of David did not promise blessedness to those who never sinned, for in such a case no one would ever be blessed. He promised that those would be blessed to whom the Lord would not "impute" their sins.

We commit the sins, we make the mistakes, but God sees only Jesus. Somehow this absence of fear and this blessed assurance from God enables us to become partakers of the divine nature and to escape the corruption that is in the world through lust.

Here is a poem for little children which has also a profound message for everyone. I absorbed it by osmosis from a Christian record which we purchased for our children many years ago . . . I do not know the author.

MARY HAD A LITTLE PIG

Mary had a little pig,
and it was white as snow.
That is when it had had a bath,
as you of course might know.
But Mary had an awful time
to keep that piggy clean
For he was just the dirtiest pig
that one had ever seen.
She'd wash him, and she'd scrub him,
till he'd squirm and squeal,
As if he wanted her to know
it was an unfair deal.
And then in the green backyard,
he'd play from morning until night,
Unless he'd happen to slip right out
and lose himself from sight.
Poor Mary thought and wondered much
what she could ever do.
And then she figured out a plan,
and this she carried through
She took him to a doctor,
who put the pig to sleep
And then he took his heart right out . . .
But not, of course, to keep.

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And then he took a little lamb,
and took his heart out too.
And put it in the little pig,
before the piggy knew.
And when the piggy did awake
he had no more desire
To wallow in the mud again,
or ever in the mire.
And so you see boys and girls,
we need a new heart, too!
Just like the little piggy did,
The old one will never do!

—author unknown

Once while quoting that poem for a group of young people one little boy raised his hand and said, “Mister, what happened to the little lamb?”

This question too, has profound spiritual significance. for the Little Lamb was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray, but the Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all.

The law was indeed our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith. When we believe these promises, a miracle takes place within us and we are on our way to deliverance from debilitating lust.

Almost everyone has heard of couples who couldn't have children until they adopted one. Somehow all of their efforts to produce a new life failed, until they quit worrying about it. In the absence of worry their systems relaxed to such an extent that a new life resulted.

The same blessed surprise is in store for those who concentrate upon the exceeding great and precious promises of God. They can so fill our lives that we can actually be transformed into the likeness of the divine nature of Jesus.

The law was an essential ingredient in the recipe of God to bring us to the beautiful promise of justification by faith.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

1. In what way are the commandments “touch not; taste not; handle not” of no value in checking the indulgence of the flesh (Col. 2:21-23)?

WHAT IS JUSTIFICATION?

2. Is it possible for law to change a person's heart?
3. How do things from the heart defile (Matt. 15:18)?
4. What is the difference between "conformation" and "transformation" (Rom. 12:2)?
5. How do commandments stir up lust (Rom. 7:7)?
6. How do promises help us escape from lust (II Pet. 1:4)?
7. What is the difference between "righteousness" and "imputed righteousness"?
8. Is any sin too hard for God to forgive (Ps. 103:3)?
9. How does Jesus become a "covering" for our sins?
10. How much condemnation is there in Christ (Rom. 8:1)?

XIII

BEWARE

Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets (Acts 13:40).

No one can doubt or deny that Paul championed the cause of justification by faith. He has a great deal to say about salvation by grace, and about the love and mercy of God.

Some might be surprised, therefore, to find his sermons, and his writings filled with warnings to those who would reject the grace of God and trample under foot the blood of the covenant.

The passage in Acts 13:40 is recorded from a sermon which Paul preached at Antioch in Pisidia. That message of grace and love was concluded with a severe warning—"Beware!"

The quotation Paul used was from Habakkuk 1:5. It indicated that God was going to do something to Israel which they would not believe even if someone declared it unto them.

God determined to raise up the Chaldeans, a bitter and hasty nation to chastise the people of Israel.

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The Chaldeans were terrible and dreadful. Their horses were swifter than the leopards and more fierce than the evening wolves. Their horsemen would come from afar like the eagle that hasteth to eat. Those who can envision a predator like a leopard, a wolf, or an eagle tearing its prey will have keen insight into the judgment which God was going to bring to pass upon His people who rejected Him.

Ah! you say. That's from the Old Testament Scriptures. Surely God would never do anything like that now! Wrong! This is the very point of Paul's warning. The examples of God's wrath in ancient times are used as a teaching tool to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith.

The writer of Hebrews went so far as to say,

He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses. 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. 10:28-29).

Before creation, God was all there was. There was no one to rebel or challenge His sovereignty in any way.

With creation, came rebellion. Man was not created like a robot with no ability to determine the course of his own destiny. He was created in the very image of God. He had the right to thumb his nose at Deity and to attempt to make himself the center of the universe in place of God.

The Scriptures teach that God will someday again be "all in all" (I Cor. 15:28). He will someday destroy every vestige of rebellion and once again be "everything to everybody."

Judgment is coming, but in the meanwhile God knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation and to reserve the unjust unto punishment. He demonstrated this when he destroyed the old world and saved Noah and his family. He demonstrated this again when he destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrhah and delivered Lot (see II Pet. 2).

The first time He destroyed the earth by water, but the next time He will destroy it by fire,

BEWARE

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 (II Pet. 3:10).

Betrayal?

I can almost sense that some of you will feel betrayed by this last chapter. You have been intrigued by an approach to God that is not legalistic, and now you feel that we are offering you "more of the same."

This is not so, and may I encourage you to be patient with me while I try to explain.

The law of Moses condemned people on the basis of their external actions. There was no way that human judges could analyze or assess the condition of a man's heart.

God, by contrast, discerns the thoughts and intents of our heart. This is why David is given to us as an example of someone whose iniquities were forgiven and whose sins were covered. He was a man after God's own heart.

Once Jesus and His disciples were condemned for eating with unwashed hands. Jesus took this opportunity to explain that the things which happen to you externally cannot defile you. The things which defile you come from within.

For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: ALL THESE EVIL THINGS COME FROM WITHIN, AND DEFILE THE MAN (Mark 7:21-23).

The law of Moses condemned people for their external actions, but the final judgment will not only take into consideration the deeds of the body, but also the secrets of men's hearts.

The Secrets of Men

In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel (Rom. 2:16).

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When the people of Israel came to worship at the tabernacle or temple, they could go through all the motions of religion, without a poor and contrite spirit.

Isaiah wrote specifically about this problem,

He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offereth swine's blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in the abominations (Is. 66:3).

The old covenant involved externals. You could go through all of the motions hypocritically. You could honor God with your actions and your lips while your heart was far from Him.

The New Covenant, however, is not in Jerusalem, but rather in the heart of every true believer. To dishonor God in your heart is the greatest crime of all.

Ananias and Sapphira provide us with a good illustration of a corrupted heart. On the outside they did nothing offensive, but their hearts were not right with God. Note the way that the Scriptures focus on the source of their defilement and corruption:

. . . why hath Satan filled *thine heart* to lie to the Holy Ghost . . . ?
(Acts 5:3)

. . . why hast thou conceived this thing in *thine heart*? . . . (Acts 5:4)

Or consider the case of Simon the Sorcerer:

. . . *thy heart* is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of *thine heart* may be forgiven thee. . . . (Acts 8:21-22)

When the people in Rome rejected the grace of God, Paul was reminded of these words of Isaiah:

For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them (Acts 28:27).

GOD'S FINAL JUDGMENT WILL JUDGE THE SECRETS OF MEN'S HEARTS!

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The Sermon on the Mount

Before we consider the way that the Sermon on the Mount emphasizes the importance of a pure heart, let us consider these words of Jesus about His fulfillment of the law.

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. 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 wise enter into the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 5:17-20).

The Sermon on the Mount was not just "one" sermon which Jesus delivered and never repeated, it was representative of the way that He taught all the time.

It is therefore appropriate that Jesus establish His teaching as a "fulfillment" of God's eternal plan, rather than some heretical doctrine which was contrary to it.

The word "fulfilled" occurs quite a number of times in the Gospel of Matthew. Here are a few examples earlier in the book which will help us to focus on what the Holy Spirit meant by fulfilling the law.

The journey of Christ to Egypt until the death of Herod "fulfilled" the prophecy of Hosea (Matt. 2:15). The slaughter of the infants in Bethlehem "fulfilled" the prophecy of Jeremiah (Matt. 2:17). The fact that Jesus dwelt in Nazareth "fulfilled" the prophecy that He would be called a Nazarene (Matt. 2:23). The ministry of Jesus in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim "fulfilled" the prophecy of Isaiah (Matt. 4:14).

Then we are informed that Jesus did not come to destroy the law, but to "fulfill" it.

The law of the Lord is perfect. Certainly we have no right or reason to be critical of God's law.

God's prophetic utterances are also perfect. We have no right or reason to be critical of them.

But the law and the prophecies are incomplete without a fulfillment. By themselves they are only partial and inadequate. When filled with the fulness of Christ they assume a new beauty and significance.

THE SCHOOLMASTER

The purpose of the law, as we have stated so frequently, was to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by a principle that transcends carnal law . . . that transcendent principle is the law of faith.

Many of the Jews, however, settled down in union with the law as though it were an end in itself, instead of a means to an end. This can only be done by twisting, or perverting the law from its intended purpose.

So Jesus had special warnings for those who would "break" one of the least commandments. The Greek word translated as "break" is from "luo" which means "to loosen." It is not a flagrant confrontation with law, but rather an infringing loosening of the law which Jesus condemned.

The Scribes and Pharisees are perfect examples to be avoided. Rather than face up to the full impact of the law and admit their utter destitution and guilt, they "loosened" the law so that they could live with it. These traditions which "loosened" the law of God actually made the Word of God of none effect (Mark 7:13, etc.).

The reason why these men did not come to Christ in order that they might be justified by faith, is that they had perverted the purpose of the law and established a righteousness of their own. Instead of being humbled in guilt by law, they became proud and self-righteous.

As long as Pharisees like Saul of Tarsus considered themselves blameless with reference to the righteousness of the law, there was no need for them to come to Christ that they might be justified by faith.

It is necessary for someone to recognize that he is lost, before he will recognize his need of salvation. Certainly the followers of Jesus would have to be different from the Scribes and the Pharisees or they would never enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

After establishing the fact that He did not come to destroy the law, but to fulfill it, Jesus then distinguishes between the law of Moses which involved only externals, and His law which involved the heart.

You have heard thou shalt not kill . . . but Jesus taught against anger.

You have heard bring your gift to the altar . . . but Jesus taught the priority of relationships.

You have heard not to commit adultery . . . but Jesus taught against lust.

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There are a whole series of contrasts between what they had heard and what Jesus was now telling them.

Each of these contrasts focuses upon the condition of the heart. There is a sense in which I am the sovereign over my own heart. As long as I maintain this egotistical self-rule I am a pitiful victim of a mighty poor administration.

The smartest thing that one can ever do is open his heart and let Jesus come in. When Jesus is enthroned in our hearts, we experience such a radical transformation that it is described in the Scriptures as being "born again."

To reject His Lordship . . . is to be damned!

An Invitation to Glory

God is Eternal - (Deut. 33:27; Ps. 90:2; Rev. 4:8-10)

Incorruptible - (Rom. 1:23)

and Invisible - (Job 23:8-9; John 1:19; 5:37; Col. 1:15;
I Tim. 1:17)

With no desire to detract from the reality of God, He is, at least in some respects to the human family, an abstraction.

Man is unique in the world of created things in that he has the capacity to think abstractly. Man can love and worship God even though God is invisible.

Peter expressed it beautifully, ". . . Whom having not seen, ye love . . ." (I Pet. 1:8).

James Strong in his Exhaustive Concordance associates the Greek word for "worship" with the way a dog licks his master's hand. The dog has five senses. He can see, hear, touch, taste and smell. He does not, however, possess the capacity to love a master whom he has never seen and cannot experience physically.

Just as the heavens are high above the earth, our Infinite God transcends the finite world in which we live. Since the earliest moments of recorded history, however, God has been about the business of self-disclosure. He has been trying to communicate His nature to man whom He created in His very image.

Human parents face a similar problem as they cradle a newborn infant in their arms. The infant has virtually no capacity to comprehend his father's mind even though he is in a sense, also created in the very image of his father.

Thus God, in the infancy of the world, cradled mankind in His loving arms and tried to teach us of His love. Since we were created in His image He wanted us to understand His nature and to grow up as His children to be like Him.

One word which is used quite frequently in association with God's revelation of Himself to man is the word "glory." The word is difficult to define because it contains a dimension that is abstract or transcendent.

For example, the Hebrew people came out of Egypt into the barren wastelands of Sinai. There they began to murmur and complain about their dismal circumstances. At this juncture the Lord promised Moses that He would rain bread from heaven and Moses said to the Hebrew people, ". . . And in the morning, then ye shall see the glory of the Lord . . ." (Ex. 16:7).

Later as Aaron was speaking unto the congregation, ". . . they looked toward the wilderness, and, behold, the glory of the Lord appeared in a cloud . . ." (Ex. 16:10).

It is difficult to describe or define exactly what happened as God's glory became manifest to Israel. Perhaps it was something that was easier experienced personally than described to others.

The Hebrew word translated as "glory" in this passage is the word "kabob." It comes from the root word "kabad" which means "to be heavy, or weighty." This root occurs 376 times in the Hebrew Bible. A literal use of the word is found in I Samuel 4:18 where we are informed that "Eli was heavy . . ." and again in II Samuel 14:26 where we are told that "Absalom's hair was heavy."

Perhaps the association of this root word with glory is not totally dissimilar to our own use of the word "heavy" in the modern vernacular. We not only refer to a heavy object but also to a "heavy" experience. By this we communicate our own difficulty with the experience. It is "heavy" or "weighty" and causes us to summon all of our mental energies to deal with it.

So the "glory" of God was manifest at the giving of the law at Mt. Sinai (Ex. 24:16-18; Deut. 5:24). The tabernacle was to be sanctified by God's glory (Ex. 29:43). When the tabernacle was erected Moses was unable to enter the tent because the "glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle" (Ex. 40:35).

The same phenomenon occurred at the construction of the temple.

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So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord (I Ki. 8:11).

God's glory appeared when the people complained because of the lack of water (Nu. 20:6), when Korah, Dathan, and Abiram were destroyed (Nu. 16:19ff.), and when Israel was in danger because of the evil report brought back by the spies (Nu. 14:10). All of these were "heavy" experiences. There were physical manifestations with profound spiritual implications.

The Hebrews said "glory!"

The versatile Greek language is remarkably inexplicit with reference to the word glory. As a matter of fact, twenty-five different Hebrew words are all translated in the LXX by the Greek word "doxa" or "glory."

The word "doxa" comes from the root "dokeo" which means "to seem." In secular Greek its basic meaning was "opinion, or conjecture." The Dictionary of New Testament Theology lays special stress upon the "impression" created by manifestations of "glory" and feels that this aspect is essential for our understanding of the concept (Vol. II, p. 45).

So again we are set adrift with a "heavy" experience to ponder and about which to form "opinions and conjectures."

The word "doxa" is found 165 times in the New Testament Scriptures and derivations of the word are used many more times.

Sometimes we use the word "Shekinah" to refer to the presence of God among men. "Shekinah" is a non-biblical term and comes from the Hebrew word which means "to dwell." The use of this term as applied to God's presence arose among the Palestinian and Babylonian Jews, in contradiction to the Alexandrian teaching that God was above contact and communication with that which was human and mundane. It is used in the Targums and Talmud to bridge that gap between heaven and earth and was helpful in preparing the way for acceptance of the Messiah who was destined to "glorify" God upon the earth.

John's Gospel informs us that the "Word" "Tabernacled" among men and we beheld His "glory" (John 1:1). There are 18 occurrences of the term "glory" in John's Gospel and only 23 in Matthew, Mark, and Luke combined. Just as God's glory radiated in brightness from the Tabernacle, the Light of Jesus shined out in such away that the darkness could not put it out.

There were times, however, when the glory of Jesus was more easily discernable than at other times. At His miracles, for example, he manifested forth "glory" (John 2:11; 11:40, etc.). At the transfiguration He appeared with Moses and Elijah in "glory" (Lk. 9:31; II Pet. 1:16ff.). When Stephen was stoned he saw the glory of God and Jesus standing on His right hand (Acts 7:55). When Jesus appeared to Saul on the road to Damascus, Saul could not see for the "glory of that light" (Acts 22:11).

There is also a sense in which the sufferings of Jesus were an entrance into glory (Lk. 24:26). John 7:39; 12:16; 13:31ff.; 17:1ff., all refer to the death of Jesus in conjunction with glory. Hebrews 2:9 teaches that Jesus was crowned with glory and honor because of the sufferings of death. The Gospel of the cross proclaims the riches of His glory (Col. 1:27; Eph. 1:18). Paul gloried in the cross (Gal. 6:14), and Revelation 5:14 portrays the Lamb that was slain as worthy of "glory."

The Scriptures make many references to the "glory" which is associated with Christianity. There are many aspects of this "glory" which are better experienced than described.

There is an old story about the little boy attempting to describe the sweetness of honey. After several unsuccessful attempts to describe it he finally said in desperation, "you'll just have to taste it for yourselves."

Thus it is with the glory of receiving Jesus Christ as Lord. We can try to describe the glory of His presence in the Tabernacle or Temple, but we can never know that glory personally until we open the inner chambers of our heart and invite Him in.

We should not be surprised to discover that the same terms which are used to describe the intimacy of our relationship with Jesus are also used of the sexual intimacy which husbands and wives experience with one another.

Adam "knew" his wife and she conceived and brought forth a son. To "know" means to become intimate so that a new life is produced. Surely we need to "know" Jesus Christ as Lord.

Since our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, and the woman is the "glory" of the man (I Cor. 11:7), the sexual relationship provides us with a foretaste of the glories to be experienced in the inner chambers of our heart when we are married to Jesus Christ.

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It is in this context in I Corinthians 6 that we are admonished to "flee fornication." Such behavior is utterly incongruous to those who have made their bodies temples of the Holy Spirit of God.

Opening the door of your heart is not done by accident, but by deliberate decision. Please prayerfully consider this invitation from Christ.

Behold I Stand at the Door and Knock

You and I are creatures who have been fashioned in the very image of God. We are sovereigns in our own little world. Like an autistic child, we possess the capacity to withdraw into this world. We can shut out everything else and everyone else who threatens our right to rule our own lives.

The law was given to point out the shambles we have created in our lives so that we would turn to Jesus for help.

Our initial reaction to the law is to blame someone else for the problems in our lives. Adam blamed Eve; Eve blamed the serpent. But the Scriptures teach that a person is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed (Ja. 1:14). Our problem with sin is not from without, but from within. From within proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, etc.

This then is our dilemma. The problem is not from without but from within. The problem is with my own will. *Yet, I cannot by my own will overcome my own will.*

The solution to this dilemma is quite simple. We simply open our innermost self and invite in a helper.

Jesus has a standing invitation to do just that! Note this beautiful promise in Revelation 3:20,

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: and 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.

This promise is not just for those who have never received Jesus Christ as Lord, but also for those who within the church need a greater measure of grace to face the rigors in this world of turmoil and temptation.

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As a matter of fact, the words of Jesus about standing at the door and knocking were originally written to the Church which was at Laodicea.

One of the beautiful words in our Bible used to describe the Holy Spirit is "parakletos." It is translated as "advocate" or "comforter" but it should be understood that the word itself basically refers to calling for help. "Para" means "beside" and "kaleo" means "to call."

Jesus reminds us that if we are evil and yet know how to give good gifts unto our children, how much more shall our heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him (Lk. 11:13)?

Literally millions of witnesses could be called upon to testify that our wonderful Lord will do just exactly what He promised to do.

Just last week I spent three days with a family that had faced an unusual amount of trouble and temptation. The wife has a terminal illness. Their marriage was falling apart. They had no medical insurance. In desperation the young wife and mother went out to a deserted road at 2:00 in the morning and severed an artery in her throat.

God who sends His messengers to minister in behalf of those who are the heirs of salvation sent an officer of the law out that night to check license plates. He had never done such a thing before and never expected to do it again, but on that night he was used by God to save a life.

Still running from the knock at the door of her heart, she left her husband and children and went to Kansas City where she found employment in a hotel. When she opened the drawer to put away her clothing, she was confronted with a Gideon Bible. She fell to her knees and for three hours was unable to utter a word.

Finally she opened the door to her heart. It was the innermost part of her being. Hitherto it had been a private domain. Now it was in shambles with not much left to save. But Jesus did just what He promised He would do. Like a Carpenter of Souls, He began a beautiful work of restoration in a broken life. I am thankful to report that severed relationships have been restored, sadness has been replaced with joy, the shadows of hopelessness and despair have given way to the sunshine of a bright today and the hope of eternal bright tomorrows.

It is important for you to know that the loving Savior is standing at the threshold and knocking at the door of your heart. Until you

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open the door and let Him in, your every activity will be plagued with the stench of death and the warnings of Scripture will hang like an albatross about your neck.

Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets . . . (Acts 13:40).

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith (Gal. 3:24).

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

1. How can God be a God of love and also a consuming fire?
2. What part do warnings have in Gospel sermons?
3. How could Paul say that he was "blameless" as touching the righteousness which is in the law (Phil. 3:5)?
4. Did anyone ever completely keep the Law?
5. The Old Covenant was written in stone and kept in an earthly tabernacle. Where is the New Covenant (Heb. 8:10)?
6. Define in your own words "glory."
7. What association is there between marriage and conversion?
8. How can our bodies become temples of the Holy Spirit?
9. Can I, by my own will, overcome my own will? Discuss!
10. Why would anyone not want Jesus to rule their hearts?

