

Present Truth

2 Peter 1:12

Dear Readers,

December 2003

“Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.” (Titus 1:4) Keep in mind that we will be having meetings in Pensacola, Florida, starting at 7:00 p.m. on Friday, December 5, and continuing through the evening of Sunday, December 7, at Emerald Coast Ministries, 30 South 3rd Street. You may call Jack Van Ord for further details at 850-458-5549. The meetings in St. Louis that we held in November went very well. They were recorded, and will soon be aired on television. Please pray for our brethren in St. Louis. Due to time and space constraints we will not have a health article this month. We will continue with the series next month.

The Real Issue Concerning the Ten Commandments

by Lynnford Beachy

Recently there has been a lot of debate concerning the Ten Commandments, and its place in our lives. Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore has been adamantly defending his right to place a monument of the Ten Commandments in the courthouse. On November 12, after a long, heated debate over this issue, the 2.6-ton monument was removed. The same week, Moore was removed from office. A November 14 CNN report says that “only one in five Americans approve of the federal court order” to remove the monument. (<http://www.cnn.com/2003/LAW/08/27/ten.commandments/index.html>)

Many people in Alabama, and in other southern states, have begun placing Ten Commandment signs in front of their homes as a way of showing their support for keeping the Ten Commandments displayed in public places. It is refreshing to see Americans showing their support for the most significant law in the universe. Ironically, however, few of these people who support the displaying of God’s Ten Commandments really respect and obey the Ten Commandments.

Right in the heart of the Ten Commandments is a law that says, “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:

But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.” (Exodus 20:8-11)



A Ten Commandment monument being removed from a courthouse in Alabama

God’s commandment says “the seventh day is the sabbath,” yet most Christians believe that it is not necessary to literally obey this command. They say that even though Saturday is the seventh day of the week, Jesus Christ died, and was resurrected on Sunday, and therefore we should honor Sunday, the *first* day of the week, instead of

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Saturday, the *seventh* day of the week. Most Christians will freely admit that Saturday is the seventh day of the week, and the day which God referred to in the Ten Commandments, but they are unwilling to obey this command, primarily because the Sunday-keeping tradition is so strong, and to keep the seventh-day Sabbath holy, one must go against the majority, who honor Sunday.

In an attempt to justify their disobedience to the fourth Commandment, some Christians reject the entire Ten. The following statement echoes the sentiments of a suprisingly large amount of Christianity today: "The Ten Commandments have been done away with." (<http://www.lawofliberty.com/sabbathkeeping1.htm>).

The desire to publicize the existence of the Ten Commandments is commendable, yet there is more to be done. We must recognize our own responsibility to keep those Commandments, and show, by example, how they are to be kept, including the fourth commandment. Let us take a few moments to consider what the Bible says about the Ten Commandments.

The giving of the Ten Commandments

Exodus chapter 20 begins by saying, "And God spake all these words." (Exodus 20:1) The Ten Commandments were so important to God that He did not entrust the giving of them to any man, but spoke them Himself. "For who is there of all flesh, that hath heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived?" (Deuteronomy 5:26) It was an awesome thing for humans to hear the voice of the living God.

What does God say concerning those things that have come out of His mouth? "My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips." (Psalm 89:34) God says that He will not change anything that has gone out of His lips. More specifically God says that He will not alter the Ten Commandments. "The works of his hands are verity and judgment; all his commandments are sure. They stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness." (Psalm 111:7, 8)

Solomon, the wisest man that ever lived, wrote, "I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him." (Ecclesiastes 3:14) Whatever God does, it will last forever. Man is not permitted to add anything to it or take anything away from it.

John wrote, "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." (Revelation 22:18, 19) "What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it." (Deuteronomy 12:32) It is a very serious thing to attempt to alter those things which God Himself has spoken.

Did the Lord change His mind after He spoke the Ten Commandments at Sinai? He said, "For I am the LORD, I change not." (Malachi 3:6) God does not change. Man may go to great lengths to prove that God has changed His mind concerning the moral law which He spoke at Sinai, yet the Scriptures say that God does not change.

Did Christ change the law?

As we have seen, God, the Father, did not change His law which He spoke at Sinai, but did His Son, Jesus Christ, change the law? Prophesying of Christ's mission on earth, Isaiah wrote: "The LORD is well pleased for his righteousness sake; he will magnify the law, and make it honourable." (Isaiah 42:21) Christ's mission did not include changing the law of God for it is written that He will "magnify the law and make it honourable."

Jesus said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. 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." (Matthew 5:17-19)

According to Jesus the law of God is to stand until "heaven and earth pass." Obviously this has not occurred yet, so naturally the law has not been done away with. Jesus went on to say that it is dangerous to teach men to "break one of these least commandments." It is very plain that the law which Jesus was referring to is the Ten Commandment law, for the rest of the chapter deals with Jesus expounding on certain points within this Ten Commandments.

The testimony of Jesus agrees with that of Solomon, who wrote, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." (Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14)

Not only does God require us to keep His commandments, He also makes it clear that if we want to enter the kingdom of heaven we must "do his commandments." "Blessed are they that *do his commandments*, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." (Revelation 22:14)

God will have a group of people in the last days who will keep His commandments. Concerning the final generation upon earth John wrote, "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." (Revelation 12:17) "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." (Revelation 14:12)

The prophet Zephaniah expounded on this great truth when he wrote, "The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid." (Zephaniah 3:13) Speaking of God's remnant people John wrote, "And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God." (Revelation 14:5)

As we can clearly see, God will have a group of people in the last days who will keep His law. Those who break the law are sinners, "for sin is the transgression of the law." (1 John 3:4)

What does the Bible say will happen, at the time of the second coming of Christ, to those who transgress God's law? "Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it." (Isaiah 13:9) That is a very solemn warning. It is no wonder the Lord says, "prepare to meet thy God." (Amos 4:12)

Is it possible to keep the law?

Certainly there are some who will quickly protest, claiming, "We cannot keep the law of God, we can never stop sinning." It is true that we cannot keep the law of God in our own strength. "Because the carnal

mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." (Romans 8:7) Yet, the Lord has said, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." (Matthew 19:17) Surely there must be some remedy for sin.

Paul wrote, "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." (Romans 3:24, 25) Praise God that He has made a way of escape! God, through His infinite wisdom, has designed a way in which we can be forgiven of our past sins. That is wonderful! Notice that the verse said that we can have "remission of sins that are *past*." Nowhere in the Bible is there any indication that we can be forgiven *now* of sins that are yet *future*. In fact, the Lord has made it clear that once we are forgiven we are expected not to continue in that sin. "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Romans 6:1, 2)

Suppose a known thief comes to your church seeking membership, claiming that he wants to give his life to the Lord, and asking for prayer that he might give up his habit of stealing. Now suppose the pastor tells this man, "My friend, you have it all wrong; don't you know that we can never stop sinning? Just accept Jesus as your Saviour and everything will be okay." Certainly any conscientious individual would immediately see that the pastor's reply is wrong. Yet, many pastors make similar statements without raising the slightest suspicion in the listeners, when they claim that it is impossible to stop sinning. If it is true that we cannot stop sinning, then where do we draw the line? Is it only that we cannot stop sinning when it comes to sins that may go unnoticed, such as lying and coveting, or would we go on to say that we cannot stop sinning even when it comes to such sins as adultery and murder? One may say that these more obvious sins can be avoided, but why stop there?

If it is true that the compulsive liar cannot give up lying, then it must also be true that the murderer cannot give up murdering and the thief cannot give up stealing. If this were the case then this world would be filled with nothing but the vilest of criminals. It is very obvious that the assertion, "we cannot stop sinning," is completely contrary to common sense, but is it contrary to the Bible?

Paul shared a wonderful promise when he wrote, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." (1 Corinthians 10:13) Praise God! He has promised us that there is no temptation that will ever come upon us from which we cannot escape. God always provides a way out of sin. Thank God that Satan cannot force us to sin.

What shall I do when I am tempted?

God says, "Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." (Psalm 50:15) If we will call upon the Lord when we are being tempted, He will give us the victory over every temptation. "For in that he [Christ] himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to [run to the cry of." *Thayer's Greek Lexicon*] them that are tempted." (Hebrews 2:18) If we do not call upon the Lord when we are tempted, He cannot help us and we will be left to our own strength. When we call upon the Lord at the time of our temptation it does not have to be in an audible voice, but cry unto Him in your thoughts. Silent prayers are heard by Him who "searcheth the hearts." (Romans 8:27)

Some say that it is a grievous burden to keep God's commandments. But this contradicts the Word of God, which says, "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." (1 John 5:3) John wrote, "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." (1 John 2:3, 4)


John also wrote, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." (1 John 2:1) God wants us to cease from sin, which is transgression of the law. If the law has been done away with, I confess to you that it is not possible for anyone to sin, for how can one break a law that does not exist? If the law was done away with, it is perfectly just and right to murder, steal, commit adultery, etc. It is clear that God's moral law is still in effect, and those who violate God's law are sinners.

Conclusion

Let us exalt the Ten Commandments before the people of this nation. Yet, in the midst of our eagerness to

share them with the world, let us not overlook the fourth Commandments which deals with the Sabbath. This Commandment is just as valid today as it ever has been.

Chief Justice Moore demonstrated courage in standing up for his convictions. Let us also stand up in defense of God's law. Let us demonstrate, by our actions, that we are willing to obey God's Commandments, including His Command to keep holy the seventh day of every week, by ceasing from our worldly labors and devoting our attentions to Him in worship and praise on His holy day, even though our friends, family, and neighbors may turn against us because of our stand for the truth. The real issue concerning the Ten Commandments is not whether or not they will be displayed in public places, but whether or not we will acknowledge their validity by our words and actions.

Jesus says to you today, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 10:32, 33) Stand up, and be counted, as one who is in favor of *all* of God's Ten Commandments. 

Ghana Camp Meeting Announcement

Brothers Howard Williams and David Clayton, of Restoration Ministries in Jamaica, visited Ghana in September, with very good success. The brethren in Ghana are excited about what they learned, and they are hosting a camp meeting from December 28 to January 4. They are expecting about 2,000 people to attend these meetings, and they have asked one of us to come and share the truth about God with them.

Plans are underway for either Allen Stump or myself to attend these meetings to share this message with them. Please pray for these meetings, and if you are in the area, please make every effort to attend.

For further information you may contact Brother Paul Osei Agyeman at the Remnant Evangelist Center, PO Box 505, Berekum, Brong Ahafo, Ghana. You can call him at: 233-20-816-6950, or e-mail him at: remnantec@yahoo.com. *Editor*

Answering Some Objections to the Law

by Lynnford Beachy

The main reason why most Christians believe that the Sabbath is no longer a requirement for Christians is that it is part of the Old Covenant and they think it has nothing to do with the New. They say, “We are under the New Covenant, not the Old, therefore the old Jewish Sabbath commandment does not apply to us.”

On the surface, this argument seems to be very persuasive, yet let us take a few moments to examine what the Bible says about the Sabbath and the Old and New Covenants.

God, in Scripture, nowhere refers to the Sabbath as “the Jewish Sabbath,” but rather as “my holy day,” “the Sabbath of the LORD.” The fourth commandment states, “But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates.” (Exodus 20:10) When a stranger, a gentile, wished to give his life to the Lord, or if he was just visiting with the Jews, he was commanded to keep the Sabbath. “Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the LORD, to serve him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant; Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer.” (Isaiah 56:6, 7)

The Old and New Covenants

Let us take a few moments to examine what the Bible says about the New Covenant.

We read the following in Hebrews 8:6-9. “But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. [Notice that the Old Covenant was established on promises.] For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. [There were faults in the Old Covenant. What were those faults?] For finding fault with them, [The first covenant was based on promises that the Israelites made to God. God found fault with them because they did not keep their promises.] He saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because

they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.”

It is plain that the Old Covenant was faulty, not because God’s promises were faulty, nor because His law was faulty, but because the Israelites failed to keep *their* promises. After God spoke His Ten Commandments the Israelites said, “All that the LORD hath spoken we will do.” (Exodus 19:8) The law was what the Israelites covenanted to keep. The covenant was the promise that the Israelites made to God. The covenant made with Israel was established on faulty promises of the people. The law played an intricate part of the Old Covenant, and, as is clear from the above verses, the law plays an intricate part of the New Covenant. The Old Covenant was based on promises that men made and failed to keep. The New Covenant is based on the promises of God, who promised to write the LAW within our hearts. Notice, it is the exact same law, based on better promises. The Old Covenant was done away with, not the Law.

The New Covenant is a placing of the Ten Commandments, including the Sabbath, in our minds and hearts. God said, “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.” (Ezekiel 36:26, 27) God will cause us to walk in His ways.

Concerning the New Covenant Paul quoted the Scripture that says, “For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: [Notice that the Old Covenant was based upon the promises of Israel to keep the Ten Commandments. The New Covenant is based on God’s promise to write those same Ten Commandments in our hearts, and to cause us to walk in His ways.] And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.” (Hebrews 8:10-13)

What was decaying and waxing old was not the Ten Commandments, for they stand fast forever. The covenant based on the Israelites' promise to keep the law was what was ready to vanish. The New Covenant is now based on God's promise to fulfill His law in our lives. This can only happen if we let Him have His way in our lives.

Concerning the ratification of the New Covenant Paul wrote, "For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament [or covenant] is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth." (Hebrews 9:16, 17) The New Covenant was ratified by the death of Christ, and was not in force until His death. "Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto." (Galatians 3:15) After the death of Christ nothing could be added to the New Covenant. Some say that Sunday keeping is part of the New Covenant and point to the resurrection of Christ on that day as proof of this assertion, yet that Sunday came three days too late to be part of the New Covenant. Any assertion that Sunday is part of the New Covenant is proven untrue by the Scriptures.

Christ is the end of the law

As further justification for the claim that the law has been abolished, some quote Romans 10:4, which says, "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." Many conclude that this means that Christ abolished the law, but Jesus said that He "came not to destroy the law." The Greek word that was translated "end" is "τελος" meaning, "the point aimed at as a limit, a goal." (*Strong's Greek Dictionary*) Hence, Christ is the ultimate goal whom each of us are striving to imitate. "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." (Ephesians 4:13) The same author used the word "τελος" in this way: "Now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end [τελος] everlasting life." (Romans 6:22) Clearly, Paul was referring to everlasting life as the point being aimed at, or the goal of our Christian walk. Even so, coming to "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" is the end, or goal of the law.

A man cannot ever be justified by the works of the law. Being justified is to be forgiven of sins, and there is no way that by keeping the law we can make up for even one sin that we have committed. Only by faith in the

atoning death and resurrection of Christ can we be forgiven of sins. Paul exclaimed, "I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." (Galatians 2:21)

The Bible declares that "sin is the transgression of the law." (1 John 3:4) If the law has been done away with, there can be no law to transgress. If this were true, then there could be no sin, and hence, no sinner, and no need for justification. Doing the works of the law will not save you, but not doing them can cause you to be lost, unless you repent. (See Galatians 5:19-21)

Would you consider it a bondage to have a law telling you not to kill your neighbor? No! that law is for your benefit. Even so, the commandments are for our benefit. "And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, To keep the commandments of the LORD, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?" (Deuteronomy 10:12, 13)

The blotting out of ordinances

Paul wrote concerning what happened at Christ's death, "Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace." (Ephesians 2:15)

He also wrote, "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." (Colossians 2:14) Some claim that the above verses prove that the law has been nailed to the cross. Is this really what Paul was saying? Paul said this concerning the law: "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." (Romans 7:12) This agrees with the testimony of David: "The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple." (Psalm 19:7)

Notice that Paul did not say that the law, or the Ten Commandments, were nailed to the cross. So what was Paul talking about when he said "the handwriting of ordinances" was nailed to the cross? We read in Exodus concerning the feast of Passover, "And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever." (Exodus 12:14) The Jewish Passover, the sacrificial system, and the priesthood, which were "a shadow of things to come," were called ordinances. This is what Paul was referring to,

which was done away with. God's moral law, known as the Ten Commandments, was not "the handwriting of ordinances that was against us."

Paul continued his thought concerning what took place at the cross by stating, "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." (Colossians 2:16, 17) A few verses later, he wrote, "Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to **ordinances**. (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using;) after **the commandments and doctrines of men?**" (Colossians 2:20-22)

There was a big controversy in the early Christian church in which Jewish converts were seeking to compel gentile Christians to observe their traditions. The controversy was so great that a council was called in Jerusalem, as recorded in Acts 15. This is undoubtedly what Paul is referring to in Colossians 2. He referred to these ordinances of the Jews as "traditions of men" (v. 8), "commandments and doctrines of men," "shadows of things to come," and "the handwriting of ordinances that was against us."

The ceremonies of the Jews were good for the time they served, but the rending of the veil of the temple, at Christ's death, signified the end of that system. Anyone who would continue the traditions of the Jews after the cross would be following the commandments of men.

When Paul mentioned "the sabbath days," he was not referring to the weekly Sabbath, for that was never a commandment of men, but the Sabbath of the Lord thy God. He was referring to the sabbath days associated with the feasts of the Jews, which could fall on any day of the week. The fact that Paul referred to the sabbath days, linking them with feast days, new moon, and meat and drink offerings proves that he was not referring to the fourth Commandment. For if he was, he would have mentioned it with other commandments in the Ten Commandments.

Concerning these verses one Bible Commentary states, "'SABBATHS' (not 'the sabbaths') of the day of atonement and feast of tabernacles have come to an end with the Jewish services to which they belonged (Leviticus 23:32, 37-39). The weekly sabbath rests on a more permanent foundation, having been instituted in Paradise to commemorate the completion of creation in six days. Leviticus 23:38 expressly distinguished 'the sabbath of the Lord' from the other sabbaths." (*James, Fausset, Brown Commentary on Colossians 2:16*)

It is quite clear that Paul was not referring to the Ten Commandments when he stated that the handwriting of ordinances was nailed to the cross.

A disannulling of the commandment

Paul wrote, "For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law." (Hebrews 7:12) "For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof." (Hebrews 7:18) Paul is referring to a law that is weak and unprofitable. He said that since the priesthood has changed there must also be a change of the law. It is obvious that the law Paul was referring to was not the Ten Commandments, for they had nothing to do with laws concerning priests. Moreover, the Ten Commandment law is not weak and unprofitable, but "holy, and just, and good." (Romans 7:12) The law that was changed due to the changing of the priesthood is the ordinances concerning the sacrificial system, the priests, and the earthly sanctuary service.

Paul wrote, "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." (Hebrews 10:1-4) Here we can plainly see that the law which was changed and done away with was the law of ordinances which dealt with the sacrificial system, the priesthood, and the earthly sanctuary service.

The law as our schoolmaster

"Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions,... 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." (Galatians 3:19-25) The law of God speaks only to those who have broken that law. "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." (Romans 3:19) Once we have come to Christ and have been justified (literally, made innocent), the law has nothing to say to us for we stand before God as if we had not sinned. Hence we are no longer in need of a schoolmaster. The moment we again break that law, the law is there to testify that we are a sinner. Hence we again

need that schoolmaster to bring us back to Christ. If there were no law to tell us that we have sinned, we would continue in a deplorable condition.

“What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.” (Romans 7:7) Thank God for His law, for without it we would be liars, thieves, murderers, and such like. We need the law, our schoolmaster, to tell us when we have stepped out of God’s plan for our lives. If we are following Christ, we do not need the schoolmaster, because it will have nothing to say to us.

The ministration of death

“But if the *ministration* of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away.” (2 Corinthians 3:7)

There is no doubt that the phrase “written and engraven in stones” refers to the Ten Commandments. Notice that Paul does not say that that which was “written and engraven in stones” was done away, but he said the “glory was to be done away.” Paul said that the “ministration” of the law “was glorious,” “which glory was to be done away.” It is clear from this verse that Paul was not referring to the Ten Commandments as being “done away.” This fact is made even more certain when we look at other verses written by Paul. The beginning of Romans chapter three is taken up with Paul proving, from the Old Testament, that every man is a sinner in need of a Saviour. He wrote, “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.” (Romans 3:19) Here Paul says that “the law” speaks that “all the world may become guilty before God,” “that every mouth may be stopped.” According to Paul, the law speaks to every man, convicting him of his guilt. A law that has been done away could not possibly convict a man of his guilt. If I am driving down the road at 70 miles per hour in an area where the speed limit used to be 55, but now has been done away, can that abolished law possibly convict me that I am guilty of breaking it? Certainly not! An abolished law is useless, and unable to convict of sin.

Notice how Paul ends Romans chapter three. After explaining how we can be justified of our transgression of the law, he wrote, “Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.” (Romans 3:31) It would be pointless and ridiculous for

Paul to say that we establish an abolished law. Furthermore, he said clearly that we do not make void the law. In other words, the law is still in effect.

This point is brought out even more forcefully by the words of James, when he wrote, “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.” (James 2:10-12) James was evidently referring to the Ten Commandment law as “the law of liberty” by which we “shall be judged.” You can be certain that we will not be judged by a law that has been abolished.

Also notice that James said that if you break the Ten Commandment law you are a “transgressor of the law.” John wrote, “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.” (1 John 3:4) If the law has been abolished, it is not possible for anyone to transgress it and, hence, there would be no such thing as sin or sinners, and no need for a Saviour. Certainly nobody could accept such an absurd idea, yet if we make the claim that the law is abolished we have no choice but accept the inescapable conclusion that sin is non-existent and needs no pardon.

Again, Paul wrote, “What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.” (Romans 7:7) It is certain that Paul is referring to the Ten Commandment law because he quoted the tenth commandment. He goes on to say, “Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good... I consent unto the law that it is good.” (Romans 7:12, 16) It is evident that in 2 Corinthians 3:7 Paul was not referring to the law as being done away, but to the glory that attended Moses’ *ministration* of that law. Furthermore, God said that the New Covenant consisted in Him taking that same law and writing it in our hearts. (Hebrews 8:10) As we continue with the remaining verses of second Corinthians chapter three we will see this point brought out more clearly.

“How shall not the *ministration* of the spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.” (2 Corinthians 3:8, 9)

Notice that Paul is referring to the *ministration* of the law as glorious, rather than the law itself.

“For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. For

if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.” (2 Corinthians 3:10, 11)

What is done away? Some mistakenly assume that this refers to the Ten Commandments. However, we have seen that this is not possible. Furthermore, the context clearly refers to Moses’ ministration as being glorious. It is Moses’ ministration, and the glory that attended it, that was done away, not the law itself. Now, the ministration of righteousness exceeds the glory of the ministration of Moses. The same Ten Commandment law is being ministered, but now it is ministered by the Spirit, “that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” (Romans 8:4)

“Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished.” (2 Corinthians 3:12, 13)

Notice, Paul said that the vail over Moses’ face hid “that which is abolished.” What was the vail hiding? Not the Ten Commandment law engraved in the stones which he was holding in his hands, but the glory of Moses’ *ministration* of that law. That is what was abolished. The ministration of the law through Moses is totally different than the ministration of the law through the Spirit working upon our hearts. Moses ministered the law through ceremonies and services, while the Spirit ministers the law in our hearts.

Paul wrote, “But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ.” (2 Corinthians 3:14)

Now, through Christ, we can read the Old Testament without the vail. The Old Testament becomes a new book to those who understand the mission of Christ. The vail was taken away from the two men who were on the road to Emmaus when Jesus, “beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.” (Luke 24:27) After they heard the Old Testament for the first time without the vail, “they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?” (Luke 24:32)

When we read the whole passage of second Corinthians chapter three in its full context, it is indeed very clear. It in no way teaches that the Ten Commandments have been abolished.

Let us confess, with Paul, “Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.” (1 Corinthians 7:19) ✍

Update on Milan Singh

In the May 2003 issue of *Present Truth*, was a report of a trip that Howard Williams and I had taken to India. In that report, we shared the story of Pastor Milan Singh. He had been visiting areas in India that were populated by extremely zealous Hindus (called the RSS), who are violent toward Christians. He would go into these places and preach Christ to them. After frequently visiting these villages, three whole villages decided to become Christians. This aroused the anger of some of the zealous Hindus, and they determined to kill him. Several of them found him traveling home from one of these villages on a motorcycle, and they approached him in jeeps and ran him down. The zealous Hindus left him for dead, thinking that they had fulfilled their mission.

This brother lay there in blood for two hours, then he was found by a friend and was brought to the hospital to have surgery. His femur had been broken, and kneecap destroyed. A surgery was performed, with metal plates and long screws inserted in his leg. His femur was pushed up into his hip nearly two inches, damaging his hip and destroying the hip joint, shortening his leg. The initial surgery did little to correct the problems, and barely saved his leg.

Pastor Singh told us that if he could have another surgery to replace his hip, and remove the metal plates and screws, he would be able to walk normally again, enabling him to do the work of the ministry much better. He was very excited about what he had learned at our meetings, and he wants to share it with others.

The Lord impressed some of the *Present Truth* readers to send in the needed funds for his surgery. He had his first surgery in October, and by the time you receive this paper he will have had his second. Praise the Lord for providing so wonderfully for the needs of this minister of the gospel.

Please pray for him, and his associates, that the Lord would provide for all their needs. The poverty in India is about like Africa, and it is very hard to survive, especially since Pastor Singh is providing for a wife and two young children.

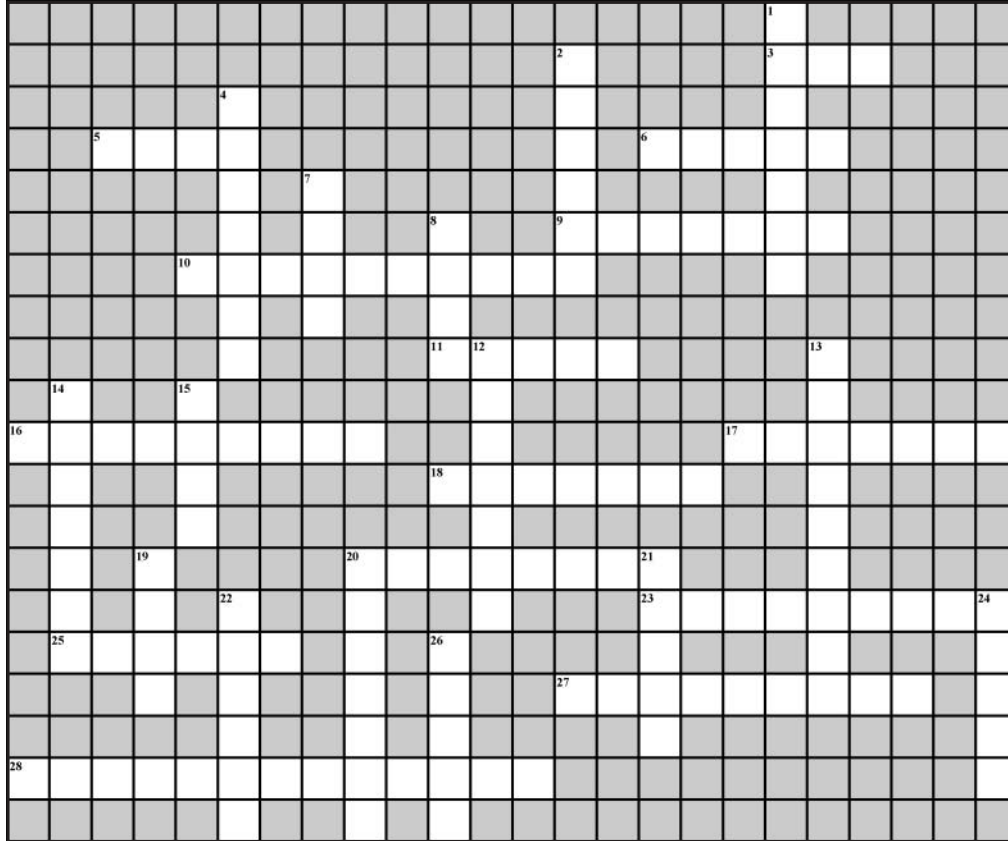
Editor



Something for the Young at Heart

This month we are continuing a series of crossword Bible studies that are based on the “These Last Days” Bible Lessons. In order to maintain the flow of the study, this crossword puzzle is not split into Across and Down sections—Across or Down is indicated at the end of each line.

You Can Be a New Person!



Answers are on page 12

- **Note:** “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” (Galatians 5:19-21)
- Whoever commits sin is the ____ of sin. John 8:34—**9 Across**
- **Note:** “His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins.” (Proverbs 5:22) “Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” (Romans 6:16)
- The wages for serving sin is _____. Romans 6:23—**11 Across**
- Jesus came to ____ His people from sin. Matthew 1:21—**19 Down**
- When we become free from sin, we become the servants of _____. Romans 6:18—**28 Across**
- If Jesus makes us free, we will be free _____. John 8:36—**22 Down**
- **Note:** “For sin shall not have dominion over you.” (Romans 6:14)
- No man can serve two _____. Matthew 6:24—**18 Across**
- We must ____ whom we will serve. Joshua 24:15—**2 Down**
- After we accept Christ, He enables us to ____ sin no more. Romans 6:6—**24 Down**
- We are to reckon ourselves ____ to sin. Romans 6:11—**8 Down**
- **Note:** “How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?” “For he that is dead is freed from sin.” (Romans 6:2, 7)
- We must put off the old man, which is _____. Ephesians 4:22—**17 Across**
- And we must put on the new man, which is ____ in righteousness. Ephesians 4:24—**14 Down**
- **Note:** “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.” (Psalm 51:10) “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are

- passed away; behold, all things are become new.” (2 Corinthians 5:17)
- We receive grace and the ____ of righteousness. Romans 5:17—**7 Down**
 - **Note:** “Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe.” (Romans 3:22)
 - Through Christ we are made _____. Romans 5:19—**23 Across**
 - Righteousness is a _____ unto justification. Romans 5:18 (2 words)—**20 Across**
 - Receiving this gift, we become filled with all the ____ of God. Ephesians 3:19—**20 Down**
 - We are then partakers of the ____ nature. 2 Peter 1:4—**25 Across**
 - When this happens we will have ____ the corruption of the world. 2 Peter 1:4—**12 Down**
 - We will no longer live to serve fleshly lusts but the ____ of God. 1 Peter 4:2—**15 Down**
 - **Note:** “For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries.” (1 Peter 4:3)
 - We will now be ____ from sin. Romans 6:22—**5 Across**
 - Being freed from sin, we must not make any ____ for the flesh to fulfil its lusts. Romans 13:14—**16 Across**
 - **Note:** “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God.” Romans 6:12, 13.
 - We are partakers of Christ’s power as long as we hold the beginning of our ____ unto the end. Hebrews 3:14—**10 Across**
 - **Note:** “If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:31)
 - If through unbelief a person falls back into his former passions he has probably ____ that he was purged from his old sins. 2 Peter 1:9—**13 Down**
 - We can be confident that God will continue to ____ the good work He started in us. Philippians 1:6—**4 Down**
 - God is able to keep us from _____. Jude 24—**1 Down**
 - God is able to do much more than we can ____ or think. Ephesians 3:20—**3 Across**
 - God’s divine power has given us _____ that pertain unto life and godliness. 2 Peter 1:3 (2 words)—**27 Across**
 - **Note:** “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” (Romans 8:32) “But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:19)
 - If you ask for the transforming gift of God’s righteousness, it will be ____ you. Matthew 7:7—**26 Down**
 - Then you must ____ yourself to God. Romans 6:13—**6 Across**
 - **Note:** “For as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.” (Romans 6:19)
 - Then you will say to God, ____ I am thy servant. Psalm 116:16—**21 Down**

Lessons on Faith (Part 13)

by Alonzo T. Jones

“In Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.” (Galatians 5:6) With those who were in mind when this scripture was originally written, circumcision was everything; and it was everything simply because of what it represented.

And what circumcision represented to those people was works and works only. It was the greatest of all works—greater than creation itself—because, as the rabbi put it, “So great is circumcision, that but for it the Holy One, blessed be He, would not have created the world.” “It is as great as all the other commandments,” “equivalent to all the commandments of the law.”—*Farrar’s “Life of Paul,” chapter 22, para. 5, note; chapter 35, para 4, note.*

Yet this which to them was so great, the Lord sweeps away, as with a blast, in the words, “Circumcision is nothing,” (1 Corinthians 7:19) and in Christ Jesus, circumcision avails nothing. And, in view of what circumcision meant to them, this was simply to say that works are nothing and in Christ Jesus works avail nothing.

Then to all the others who, in view of this, might be inclined to boast in their lack of works and thus excuse sin, the word is given with equal force: “And uncircumcision is nothing.” (1 Corinthians 7:19) “In Jesus Christ neither... uncircumcision... availeth anything,” which, in its connection, was simply to say that the absence of works is nothing and in Christ Jesus the absence of works avails nothing.

So then works are nothing and the absence of works is nothing. In Christ Jesus neither works nor the lack of works avails anything.

This word of the Lord, therefore, utterly and forever excludes both classes from all merit and from all ground of merit in themselves or in anything they ever did or did not do.

And this is all as true today as ever. Today, whether persons are out of Christ or in Christ, neither works nor no works avail anything.


What then? Is everybody left in utter emptiness? No, no! Thank the Lord there is *something* which avails for all and avails forever. Though it be the everlasting truth that “in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, neither works nor no works avail anything; yet it is also the eternal truth that “in Jesus

Christ... FAITH WHICH WORKETH" does avail. (Galatians 5:6)

Notice that it is not faith *and* works that avail; it is "faith WHICH worketh." It is faith which *itself* is able to work and does work—it is this and this alone that avails for anybody anywhere at any time.

Faith is only of God and working; it works only the works of God. Thus he who, in Christ Jesus, has the "faith *which* worketh," has that which avails to show God manifest in the flesh, working the works of God. And thus "this is the *work of God*, that *ye believe* on him whom he hath sent." (John 6:29)

And so, while you are in Christ, if there is any good in you, it is wholly attributable to the mercy of the compassionate Saviour. Your connection with the church, the manner in which your brethren regard you, will be of no avail unless you believe in Christ. It is not enough to believe *about* Him; you must believe *in* Him. You must rely wholly upon His saving grace.

"Hast thou faith?" (Romans 14:22) Have the faith of God. "Here are they that keep... the faith of Jesus." (Revelation 14:12) 

(This is an edited version of an article that was first printed in the March 28, 1899 issue of *The Review and Herald*. It is also found on pages 41-43 of the book *Lessons on Faith* by A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner. *Editor*)

Answers to Crossword Puzzle on page 10

