

Present Truth

2 Peter 1:12

Dear Readers,

June 2008

“Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:2). I pray that you are all doing well. The world is in an upheaval more now than any time I can remember. Almost every day the news is announcing some new disaster. There are earthquakes, tornadoes, floods, cyclones, etc. With the world economy on shaky ground, and fuel prices rising. Major changes are coming soon. The Bible predicted these things. Now, more than any other time, it is imperative to “Seek ye the LORD while he may be found” (Isaiah 55:6).

Camp Meeting Notices: The 2008 WV Camp Meeting will be held June 10-14 at the Smyrna chapel. I hope to see you there. Seed of Truth Ministries is hosting their annual Pennsylvania Camp Meeting July 2-6. For directions and details, please contact them by e-mail seedoftruth@comcast.net, or you may call 814-676-8660. Please seek to attend these meetings.

The Importance of Understanding and Keeping God's Commandments

According to the Scriptures (Part 1)

by Joseph E. Lahud

“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children” (Hosea 4:6).

Introduction

In all the vast numbers of writings in the world, there is only one short document that was actually written by God Himself. This document is known as the Ten Commandments. Unwilling to trust any man to write this law at His instruction, God chose to write it with His own finger. It is the single most important document in the whole world, and its words are recorded for us in the Bible (Exodus 20:1-17). Sadly, the importance and scope of this document has been overlooked by many Christians today.

Jesus instructed, “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.” (Matthew 7:13-15). “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name?

and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work *iniquity* [lawlessness]” (Matthew 7:21-23).

What is “lawlessness”? The Bible is clear! “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4).

This celestial body named planet Earth is the home of close to 6.7 billion people. This numerical value does not include the number of souls who lived in ages past which, if added together, would greatly increase this total. Considering that the number of professing Christians today would account for perhaps one third of the 6.7 billion souls. Does it not seem peculiar that, according to Jesus Himself, the majority will not enter into eternal life? In fact, He adds that not everyone who thinks themselves

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worthy to enter into the kingdom of God will be permitted to enter in. He declares to a certain group of people to depart from Him for He does not recognize this group as “knowing” Him. He declares that only a few souls will find the way which leads to eternal life! Have you heard a sermon which includes this topic preached lately? It is probably very unlikely.

Jesus revealed a key characteristic of those who will be able to enter into eternal life. He said, “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).

No one will argue that it is against God’s Commandments to kill, or to steal, or to lie, etc. However, there is a great controversy in regards to the Fourth Commandment, which clearly declares WHO we are to Worship and WHEN. God is THE Creator of the heavens and the Earth. *His* instructions are the only light we should follow.

Almost every time I have discussed the commandments of God with an individual, the conversation begins with their agreement as to how they and “their church” obey and teach God’s Commandments, however, when the controversy regarding the Fourth Commandment, God’s true Sabbath day, is mentioned, all quickly defend “their” church and typically end the conversation with “that was the old testament” or “that was only for the Jews.” So, they start by professing obedience to God’s word, and when the logic of disregard to the Fourth Commandment is realized, conveniently excuse any error by quickly dismissing God’s Law as not for Christians in living in New Testament times.

Most Christians today, including myself, were raised with the un-scriptural, but centuries-old, popular belief that Sunday is the biblical day of worship. It was not, however, until later in my adult Christian life that I had to research my beliefs in the Scriptures to satisfy my conviction that I must study for myself to find true “biblical doctrine.” It is a fact that God led me in this direction, for I am certain that I did not “stumble” into this understanding on my own. The following is not to be regarded as an exhaustive study, but as a presentation of the concept and message found in the Scriptures, regarding the importance of obedience to God’s Commandments.

The subject matter in these pages is not intended to bring forth accusations against any particular church, creed, or denomination. To the contrary, the purpose is to stimulate the reader to search out for themselves if what he or she believes is actually in harmony with the Word of God as declared in the Holy Scriptures. This should be sought with earnest prayer and petition to our Heavenly

Father to guide us by His Holy Spirit to reveal HIS Truth; that we might follow Him alone, and not man-made traditions and fables. The following is not a popular subject. Truth causes many to stumble for it exposes our sins. The Law of God is that which reveals sin. Paul declares: “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).

I am not a writer by profession, My efforts are in the hope that the reader will be led to a closer walk with our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, who are the first treasure and the love of my heart. Secondly, that my wife and my children, whom I know are also greatly loved by Them, as are you, my dear friend, would also be led to a closer walk with Them. Please pray first, asking our Heavenly Father to lead you into all truth before you continue to read any further.

Faith Upon Solid Rock?

It has been said that a man does not rule his beliefs, but his beliefs rule him. When you have been raised to believe certain things you often accept those beliefs and practices without any questions. We respect our parents and the traditions which were given to us since birth. We trust the “church” and its teachings as the pure biblical truth. So, unless you see or discover something within the framework of your belief that causes you to wonder, or unless you experience an emptiness from some of the teachings, rituals, and services within that framework, you will most likely remain content where you are. The majority of Christians today attend a house of worship out of custom, habit, tradition, or invitation, rather than from the result of a diligent search of the Scriptures. Very few are associated with their religious organizations as a result of real earnest sessions of prayer for guidance coupled with deep study. Not many people can testify that their attendance at a place of worship was the result of earnest prayer before God, and obedience to the leading of His Holy Spirit. I think many call a church “theirs” because of convenience, social ties, or they like the pastor. Sometimes it is because they simply like the building’s architecture. Or worse, they simply want to belong to the most popular church in town.

God’s Holy Law Broken in Heaven and Earth

It is no mystery that the enemy of our souls is out to kill and to destroy (John 10:10; 1 Peter 5:8).

Permit me to submit to you from, the biblical account, some facts which must be introduced as evidence

pertaining to the controversy regarding God's Laws. The Scriptures declare that Lucifer, when in paradise as an angel, coveted God's throne. The Scriptures declare he aspired to ascend the throne of God (Isaiah 14:12-15). He is also called a murderer and the father of lies (John 8:44). This teaching is in harmony with the Ten Commandments. Satan broke the First, the Second, the Sixth, the Ninth and Tenth Commandments. It could be said that he broke the Eighth for he was planning to steal God's position and throne. Adam and Eve sinned by breaking the First and Second Commandments. They disobeyed God and they idolized knowledge. Cain broke the Sixth Commandment (thou shall not murder), and He knew it! He killed Abel out of jealousy because Abel's offering was accepted and Cain's offering was not. Thus, he broke the Tenth Commandment. He tried to lie his way out of it, his response when questioned by God of his brothers whereabouts he retorted, "Am I my brother's keeper?" thus breaking the Ninth Commandment.

This is evidence that the Law existed at the time of the fall, for otherwise there could not be sin. Says Paul, "Where no law is, there is no transgression" (Romans 4:15). Also, "sin is not imputed when there is no law" (Romans 5:13). "My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee" (Proverbs 3:1, 2).

"Freedom" in the Law

Consider this: the United States was rightfully called the land of the free. The constitution provided laws which effectually gave guidance to the people and, if followed, would provide a certain level of quality and freedom in their lives. The founding fathers were given the insight that if the people had a reverence for God and obeyed His Commandments, God would prosper and bless this nation. And He did! This land of the "free" had its origins with laws which, when obeyed, permitted its population to live under its freedoms. Why is it that God's Laws which were designed by God to help us live in freedom from sin, are taught to be a type of bondage? We are taught that being subject to the Holy Law of God was "only for the Jews." Is this really truthful? Upon what does this contrary line of thinking base its foundation? Where does this concept originate? "And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die" (Genesis 3:4). Satan taught that man could disobey God's Law and it would be liberating, without negative results. He was insinuating that God's Law was a type of bondage.

Quite to the contrary, God's Laws do not put us under bondage, but rather, as God's Word declares; "Where the

Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." (2 Corinthians 3:17). Christ, through His Holy Spirit, is able to regenerate our fallen natures. We can walk in freedom from sin which is obedience to God's Laws. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13).

James refers to God's Law as "the Law of liberty"! (James 2:8-12). Christ came to set the captives free from the bondage of sin, not from the very instrument which He ordained to let us know what sin is! This is the purpose for the Royal Law. It establishes the guidelines for God's creatures (angels and mankind) to obey and follow, thus providing the freedom as free moral agents to exist in harmony and obedience with God's purposes and blessings. Actions contrary to this code of conduct is rebellion against God. It is contrary to God's pure, perfect and holy character.

"Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding. For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my law" (Proverbs 4:1, 2).

God Blesses the Sabbath

In Genesis 2:2-3 we are given the account of the completion of creation. "And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made" (Genesis 2:2, 3).

Please notice that God did *two* things to this day: He blessed it, and He sanctified it. Nowhere in Scripture can you find that the Lord blessed and/or sanctified the first day-Sunday. We are introducing evidence to support the biblical teaching of the "Lord's day Sabbath/Saturday." Please keep these points in mind. By the way, The Bible refers to Sunday the "first day" a total of nine times. It is always referred to as any other regular work day. The Bible refers to the Lord's day or Sabbath in the New Testament 59 times, always with the same title it had in the Old Testament, the "Sabbath day." In the Old Testament the Sabbath is referred to over 360 times. This includes the Fourth Commandment. Please also note that the Seventh day, the Sabbath, is always regarded as "the Lord's day" never as anything else; not the Jew's day, or the old Sabbath for the Jews, etc. It is strictly adhered to as the "Lord's day." The fact is that the Moral Law existed some two thousand years before any Jewish individual ever set foot on the face of the Earth. In the book of Isaiah chapter 66, verses 22, 23 we read: "For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your

name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another [month to month], and from one sabbath to another [week to week], shall all flesh come to worship before me [in His presence], saith the LORD.” This is a prophecy, a promise, that His restored creation will worship their Creator on the day God appointed as His own, the day He blessed *and* sanctified. This is in the future. The restored creation is the habitation we will occupy in our new glorified bodies with the Lord. Has this taken place yet? Obviously not!

While it is true that there were other “sabbaths” required of the Israelites, given as “ordinances,” these are not to be confused with the “seventh-day” Sabbath, carefully placed right in the middle of the Decalogue, The Ten Commandments. This is the true Lord’s day.

In the book of Matthew we are instructed by Jesus, “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). The definition of the word “fulfill” is: “to accomplish or carry into effect, as a prophecy, promise, design, desire, prayer, to perform, to complete by performance” (*Webster’s Library of Universal Knowledge*). Did heaven and earth pass away yet? No! Jesus is instructing believers that we are to keep the Commandments and instruct others to do so. He says that by “doing” them and teaching others the Commandments, we shall be called “great” in the kingdom of heaven!

Jesus, speaking to the church leaders of His day, “answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition” (Mark 7:6-9). Jesus also said, “It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail” (Luke 16:17, also please read the promises and the curses in Deuteronomy 28.)

When Scripture is repeated, it is an indication that God really wants you to pay attention. Remember Joseph in Egypt, when God gave him the interpretation of

Pharaoh’s dream. Joseph commented on the importance which God had given to the prophetic dream shown to Pharaoh for He gave the dream twice! Joseph says, “And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass” (Genesis 41:32, read from verse 25).

Christ “the Lamb of God” Fulfilled the Ceremonial Law

Many Pastors today will quote some verses that “sound” like they mean the Law is done away with. For example they will quote Romans 6:14, which says, “For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.” The phrase, “under the law” is said to refer to a person who believes the law is still valid. Yet, in this verse we are given the instruction that sin shall not have dominion over us. Being under the law must include being under the dominion of sin, which is a transgression of the law. The whole context of this verse shows that Paul believed very strongly in the validity of God’s Law. A few verses later he wrote, “*Being then made free from sin*, ye became the servants of righteousness” (Romans 6:18). Being made free from sin is being free from transgressing the Law. Romans 6:14 is supposed to “prove” that Christians do not have to keep the Fourth Commandment today; we are supposed to forget the one that begins with “Remember the Sabbath day...”

Galatians 3:24 is also given as proof that the Law has been abolished. It says, “Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ.” This is used to show that the Sabbath Commandment, the Fourth in the Moral Law (or “Royal Law”) was no longer needed after Jesus has come. It is true that the Law points us to Christ, and once we have Christ we have the Law living in us, and no longer need the Law to point us to Christ since we already have Him living in us. But as soon as we allow our old sinful nature to rule us again, and commit sin, we once again need the Law to point us to Christ. The purpose of being pointed to Christ is so that we can experience the New Covenant, and have the Law written in our hearts (Hebrews 10:16) so that we no longer transgress the Law. Christ does not destroy the Law, but fulfills it in us. “That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Romans 8:4).

Another verse often quoted to prove the Sabbath Commandment has been abolished is Colossians 2:14, which says, “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.” These ordinances

which constituted the killing of animals as peace offering, sin offerings, ceremonies, etc., were done away with. Their purpose was symbolic, pointing to Christ. This is supposed evidence that Jesus nailed all the Old Testament Laws to His cross! All the Laws? These, as well as other verses, are used to support the false doctrine that God's Ten Commandment Law has been abolished, a doctrine that is preached today to many believing congregations. Sloppy Agape!

Paul warned, "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry" (2 Timothy 4:3-5).

"Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them" (Ezekiel 22:26).

"For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts. But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the LORD of hosts. Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law." (Malachi 2:7-9).

"For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile: But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts" (1 Thessalonians 2:3, 4).

It is common knowledge that Moses was commissioned to lead the Israelite nation out of Egypt. God had delivered them from many years of slavery. (By the way, remember Egypt stands for sin in scripture.) Afterward the Lord intended to "renew" their minds, a spiritual reprogramming from the adulterous sun-worshipping belief systems which they had been under while serving the Egyptians. He took them on the road to the land "flowing with milk and honey," a beautiful land where He would prosper them along paths of His righteousness, so they could become happy, healthy, and holy people, set aside for His service, to the absolute amazement of the surrounding nations and the rest of the world. They were to bring the knowledge and truth about the one true God to the rest of the pagan world, including the hope of the Messiah's coming and the Sabbath of the Lord, which is

the test of our faithfulness to the true God of Heaven. A specific, dedicated sign of our explicit allegiance to Him.

As I write this I am reminded, this was the commission continued at the time of Solomon, who was to give this same message to the rest of the world. Palestine was the very center of commerce at the time of Solomon's reign. God had positioned these people at the right place, at the right time, and equipped them with the truth, the faith, His Laws, the prophets, the temple with His very presence, the wisdom and the wealth and admiration of the world. Did Solomon fulfill this privilege? We know the answer is no. Because of rebellion against God's Commandments mankind has, throughout history, always failed; always the bride's maid, never the Bride.

The Royal Law Written by the Finger of God

Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt. He climbed the 6,791-foot high mountain called Sinai (also called Mt. Horeb) and received instructions from God. What exactly did he receive? That old Jewish Law?

Moses received from the hand of God, by God's own handwriting, the Royal Law! The "Moral Law," if you will, the Ten Commandments, are found in Exodus 20:1-17. They are:

- 1) I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt [remember that Egypt can also represent sin], out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
- 2) Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image [idols], or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.
- 3) Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.
- 4) 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 [employees], nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates [colleagues,

associates, customers, etc.]: 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.

- 5) Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.
- 6) Thou shalt not kill.
- 7) Thou shalt not commit adultery.
- 8) Thou shalt not steal.
- 9) Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.
- 10) Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

This is the same set of Laws that is the precept by which heaven is guided. We read earlier about Lucifer breaking them. We identified them. Also Adam and Eve, and Cain were subject to this Law. We pointed these out on page one. There is a trend by most churches today to regard God in the Old Testament as an antiquated old intellect, that wore a frumpy old polyester, plaid jumpsuit, as if He changed from one era to another. Whereas in the New Testament, He gets a makeover, “improves His image,” to be better accepted by modern society. Does God change? He said, “I change not” (Malachi 3:6).

Please also note that the tablets containing the Ten Commandments were placed inside the ark, under the mercy seat, covered symbolically by the sacrificial blood, a type, representing the blood of Christ to come, the antitype. The other sets of laws and ordinances were placed outside of the ark on the side (Deuteronomy 31:26). These others were referred to as “the law of Moses,” again, symbolic of their order of importance in God’s eyes. (Consider this with the principle in mind that God was viewing mankind through the corridor of eternity, foreseeing His people’s future trials.)

As in any legal contractual agreement, the covenant between the parties is given in duplicate. One for each of the parties involved (one in the ark on Earth, and the original in the ark in heaven—Revelation 11:19), the terms of a covenant disclose the benefits and the requirements of those to whom it pertains. The two stone tablets were written on both sides, Moses was to place these in a Holy vessel, the ark. Moses went up the mountain no less than four times! Moses was summoned three additional times to receive not only another set of stone tablets (since he smashed the original set), but instructions on how to

build, and conduct services in, the temple of the Lord. Moses provided the “blanks” for the new set of stone tablets and hauled them up the 6,791 feet and God wrote on them the “Royal Law or Moral Law” with His own finger. God also gave Moses three other distinct sets of laws which can be categorized as the ceremonial law, the judicial law, and the health law.

The Ceremonial Law

This law contained instructions for the services of the Levitical priesthood, the sacrificial system (which pointed to the future, to Christ), annual ceremonies, etc. (Read Exodus 35-40.) These ceremonial laws contained many “sabbaths” (independent of the weekly Sabbath), feast days, procedures, etc., as part of their “spiritual re-programming” to regenerate the lives of these former slaves, to teach them to honor and worship the true God alone, and not any false god. The ceremonial system was the “shadow of things to come”—Christ Jesus!

Moses remained with the Lord on the mountain for forty days and forty nights (Exodus 24:18), being prepared for his ministry as the leader of God’s people. This pointed forward to Christ’s entrance into His ministry, when immediately after His baptism He was led to the desert for forty days and forty nights. God wanted Moses to clearly understand all the instructions He had given him, including the pattern for the tabernacle, the ark, the instruments (the table of shewbread, the lamps, the altar, the laver, etc., and the services which pointed towards Christ). These items were also symbolic in their purpose; the bread represents Christ, the oil represents God’s Holy Spirit, etc. The sacrificial system was clearly explained to Moses, in precise detail.

The basic form of the sacrificial system was originally given to Adam, who taught it to Cain and Abel, as well as to future generations. God said about Abraham, that he “obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws” (Genesis 26:5). This was 550 years before Sinai!

Adam preceded the giving of the Ten Commandments on Sinai, so did Abraham, but they kept God’s Commandments. What about Noah? “But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God” (Genesis 6:8, 9). Christ had not come yet, how could Noah be called just and perfect in God’s eyes? Noah kept God’s Commandments. Noah understood and had faith in the Messiah’s coming. Adam lived 930 years. Methuselah lived 969 years and died just before the flood. Noah could learn from Methuselah all that Adam had taught him because Methuselah was more

than 200 years old when Adam died. These patriarchs taught the Law.

The Judicial Law

The judicial law is God's instructions on how the Israelites were to govern themselves. Since they used to be slaves, they needed instructions on how to develop and function in a free society, a "Theocracy," how to behave as an orderly, Godly society. Read Deuteronomy chapters 7-28.

The Health Law

In Leviticus 11 God explained his health laws regarding clean and unclean animals. God's children are to be a living example to a dying sick world. Our bodies are the temple of God. Are the health laws done away with? Are you "free" to defile your body "because we are under grace"?

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." (1 Corinthians 3:16, 17). "And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." (2 Corinthians 6:16).

In the book of Acts, chapter 10 (verses 10-16) we read about a vision that was given to Peter. Most people today use this passage to justify the eating of foods which God has otherwise declared unclean. However, in verse 28 of the same chapter, Peter declares the meaning of this vision, which he said God had revealed to him, and it is that he should not call any man unclean. This passage is neither referring to cannibalism nor the approval of eating things which God, as a loving Father, warned us not to eat (for our own good). Today, we are suffering from cancer, high blood pressure, tuberculosis, diabetes, Alzheimer disease, arthritis, etc. Recent studies performed on Egyptian mummies reveal that the ancient Egyptians suffered from some of these same sicknesses. God declared to the Hebrews that if they obeyed Him, He would not put upon them the diseases of the Egyptians (Exodus 15:26). Do we obey Him today? Ask yourself if Christianity today bears the fruits of obedience to God's word? Yet, God is merciful!

Other Laws

There are other laws we follow, Paul speaks of "the law of faith" (Romans 3:27). Is this an "old Jewish law" that was done away with? What about the law of sin and

death? Is this law also done away with? Can we now sin under grace? Our nature is rebellious. We do not want to be governed by any "laws" or rules. God knows this. In His infinite wisdom, He provided His creation with the guidelines for obedience according to *His* righteousness. Not ours.

Illustration of God's Preciseness

In the account of Uzzah (1 Chronicles 13:7), God struck him dead when he tried to steady the ark of the Covenant. As a young Christian, when I first read this account I was perplexed as to the severity of God's action against Uzzah. After all, it seems as though he was trying to do good; to honor God. Yet, it is often overlooked that Uzzah was trained in the Levitical laws. The ark had been in his house for many years, and his brother is expressly said to have been "consecrated... to keep the ark of the LORD" (1 Samuel 7:1). Uzzah knew that God had commanded the ark to be carried by its golden poles, by Levite priests, consecrated, wearing the garments and vesture appointed to them as per God's clear instructions. Uzzah deliberately disobeyed God's specific command. "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17).

Disregarding God's Word

Today there exists many various denominations and churches, each with their own variation of biblical doctrine. Yet, each claim that they have the truth and that they preach "the Bible and the Bible only." Can they *all* be right? Which ones are in error? By what standard can the degree of error be measured? By God's Word! Specifically, His Commandments contained in His Law. Rebellion against God causes our separation from Him (Isaiah 59:2). Do we want this? "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:20). Rather than helping people grow, mixing diluted half-truths with error brings forth debauchery and compromise. Promoting sin (lawlessness) under the cover of "grace" is "Christianized paganism."

We no longer sacrifice bulls and lambs for "Christ came once, and sacrificed Himself for us" opening the direct channel for us to the Father. This is why, at His crucifixion, the veil of the temple was rent from top to bottom, signifying that it was not by human hands, but divinely appointed. (This veil was very thick, and could not have been ripped by human hands, especially not from the top to the bottom since men would have to start at the bottom due to its height.) This rending of the veil symbolized the end of the Levitical system, allowing man access to the

Heavenly Father through the ultimate sacrifice of His Son. The rebellious priests ignored this, however, repaired the veil, and continued sacrificing animals for sins. “Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us” (Hebrews 9:12).

Remember the Sabbath day

We no longer cut cows in two and walk between the two halves to enter into agreements, nor do we give each other our sandals for proof of purchases. It is of special interest to note that at the beginning of these other laws, or “statutes,” the Lord included a mention of keeping the Sabbath—the Seventh day. We noted earlier that when God repeats Himself He really wants our attention on the given matter. I think that even a blundering detective would take notice of this fact. When such emphasis is placed on continually bringing the Lord’s holy day before the people, do you think He meant for us to notice this? The Fourth Commandment of the Royal Law, the one which instructs us to “remember the Sabbath” is very clear! God instructs us specifically to remember this day! Sadly, this is the one which many religious leaders today teach we should forget. Where is the Scripture for this?

In the book of Acts we read that after the apostles were arrested the first time for preaching the “good news” they rejoiced! The account describes their prayer and exclamation. The words they used were, in fact, repeating part of the Fourth Commandment—naming God as the One who “made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is” (Acts 4:24). This was no coincidence. They knew who they were honoring. The book of Acts was

written after Christ’s death. Why would the apostles bother to quote the same words? Is it a coincidence? Perhaps not! If there was any indication of a change for God’s true Sabbath day, where is the instruction? It is not to be found in the Scripture. “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” (Psalms 111:7, 8).

The Seventh day is God’s “Seal”

Royalty or important dignitaries are often identified by their “seal.” The President of the USA has a seal. It is found on the White House walls and carpet, in the Oval Office, on Air Force One, and it can be seen on the lectern when he gives a speech. It identifies his name: George W. Bush, his title: President, and it identifies his domain: the USA.

God’s “seal” is His day—the Sabbath! It identifies His name: Jehovah or Yahweh, His title: Creator, and His domain, the universe. The Sabbath is the seal of God which identifies Him as the Sovereign God and Creator of the entire universe. When we come across a Scripture that seems to say “the law was done away with” we need to be careful that we understand correctly what we are reading. We can not just assume it is “that old Jewish law” as many sincere pastors teach today. Should we gloss over the Scriptures to satisfy the approval of compromise?

(To be continued)

(This article was taken from a booklet written by Joseph Lahud. For a copy of the complete booklet, you may contact Joseph directly at: 42012 State Hwy. 32 SW, Fertile, MN 56540, or by calling 218-945-3733. *Editor*)

WAGGONER ON ROMANS — THE GOSPEL IN PAUL’S GREAT LETTER (PART 26-CONCLUSION) by Ellet J. Waggoner

(We are continuing a series of articles commenting on Paul’s epistle to the Romans. We pray that they will be a blessing to you. *Editor*)

“One Faith”—We may now stop to see how this that the apostle has said connects with what he has said in the fourteenth chapter, about Christ’s being the minister of the circumcision, to confirm the promises made to the fathers, in order that the Gentiles might glorify God.

“Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.” Mark this: They who are to be received “as Christ also received us to the glory of God,” are those who have the faith. Now there is but

“one faith,” as there is but “one Lord.” (Ephesians 4:5). And faith comes by hearing the word of God. (Romans 10:17).

Since there is to be but one fold, and Christ, the one Shepherd, is not divided, there must be no division in the fold. Disputings, which come from human wisdom and human human ideas, are to be left out, and the word of God alone followed. That allows of no disputing, since it tells ever one and the same thing. This is the rule: “Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that

ye may grow thereby; if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.” (1 Peter 1:1-3).

Faith, Hope, Joy, and Peace—“Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.” Here we have faith and hope, joy and peace. The God of hope is to fill us with all joy and peace in believing, and this is to be by the power of the Holy Ghost. This connects the present instruction with that of the fourteenth chapter, where we are told that “the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”

Paul’s Successful Gospel Outreach—Romans 15:15-33

Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God, That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost. I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God. For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed, Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man’s foundation: But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand. For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you. But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you; Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company. But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things. When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain. And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ. Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me; That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints; That I may come unto you with joy by

the will of God, and may with you be refreshed. Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

The Gospel Commission—When Jesus was about to leave this world, he told his disciples that they should first receive power by the Holy Spirit, and then, said he, “Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” (Acts 1:8). “To the Jew first, and also to the Greek,” but to all alike, and the same gospel to all. So Paul declared that his work as a minister of the gospel consisted in “testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Acts 20:21). So in our text he tells us that as “the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God,” he had “through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God” “fully preached the gospel of Christ” “from Jerusalem and round about unto Illyricum.”

Partaking the Same Spiritual Things—The apostle, speaking of his desire to visit the Romans, said that he hoped to see them when he took his journey into Spain. “But now,” said he, “I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.”

A very simple statement, but it shows that the Gentiles received nothing spiritual except that which came from the Jews. The spiritual things of which the Gentiles had been made partakers came from the Jews, and were ministered to them by Jews. Both partook of the same spiritual meat, and therefore the Gentiles showed their gratitude by ministering to the temporal necessities of the Jews. So here again we see but one fold and one Shepherd.

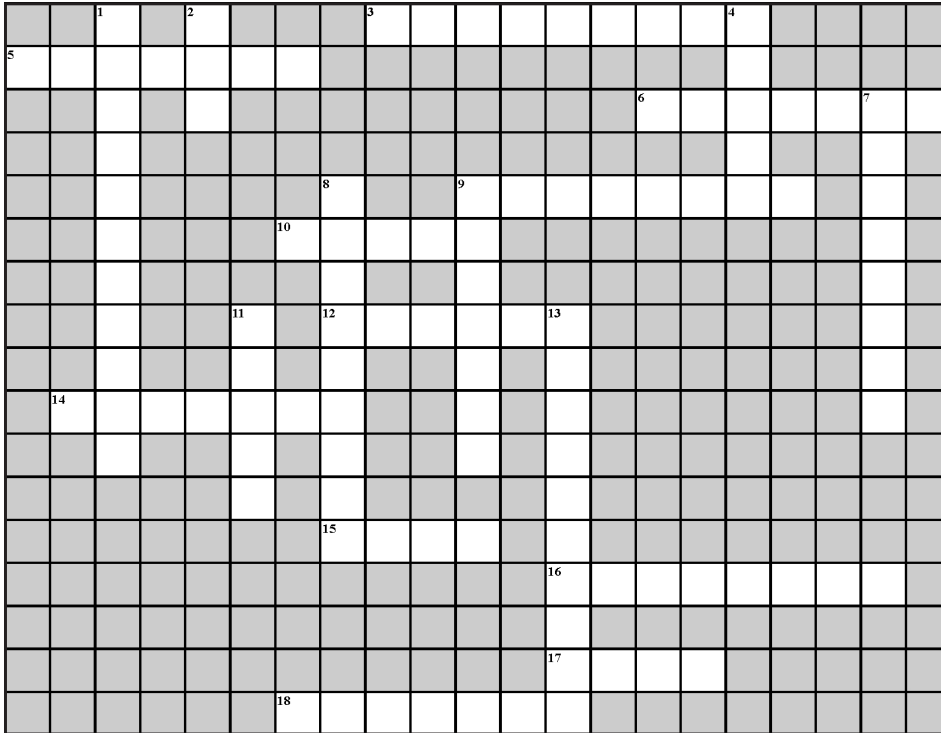
The God of Israel—Many times in the Bible God is declared to be the God of Israel. Peter, full of the Holy Spirit, immediately after the healing of the lame man, said to the people, “The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus.” (Acts 3:13. Even in this age, therefore, God is identified as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of Israel.

(Continued on page 11)

Something for the Young at Heart

This month we are continuing a series of crossword Bible studies that are based on a Bible Lesson printed by Richard Stratton of Philadelphia Press Ministries, PO Box 218, Florence, Colorado 81226. 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.

The Sacredness of Marriage



Answers will be printed next month on page 12

- "Marriage is ____ in all, and the bed undefiled." Hebrews 13:4—**13 Down**
- "Husbands, ____ your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." Ephesians 5:25—**17 Across**

Note: Only where Christ reigns in the heart can true love be found in a marriage. Unselfish love for a spouse finds its root in Christ's unselfish love for His church.

- "A woman that ____ the Lord, she shall be praised." Proverbs 31:30—**6 Across**

- "Thou shalt not commit ____." Exodus 20:14—**16 Across**

Note: "This commandment goes beyond just sinful actions, and reaches to sensual thoughts and desires. Jesus taught that even looking on another woman for the purpose of lusting after her is a violation of this command just as truly as the sinful act.

- When Joseph was tempted to break this commandment, he said it would

be a "sin against ____." Genesis 39:7-9—**2 Down**

Note: Joseph obviously knew that the law against adultery was binding upon him, demonstrating that he had been taught the precepts of the Ten Commandments, long before they were given on Sinai.

- Jesus said, "Whosoever ____ on a woman to lust after her..." Matthew 5:28—**14 Across**

- He continued, "...hath committed adultery with her already in his ____." Matthew 5:28—**4 Down**

- "For as he ____ in his heart, so is he." Proverbs 23:7—**7 Down**

Note: "When the thought of evil is loved and cherished, however secretly, said Jesus, it shows that sin still reigns in the heart. The soul is still in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity. He who finds pleasure in dwelling upon scenes of impurity, who indulges the evil thought, the lustful look, may behold in the open sin, with its

burden of shame and heart-breaking grief, the true nature of the evil which he has hidden in the chambers of the soul. The season of temptation, under which, it may be, one falls into grievous sin, does not create the evil that is revealed, but only develops or makes manifest that which was hidden and latent in the heart." (Ellen White, *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 60).

"The man who attempts to keep the commandments of God from a sense of obligation merely—because he is required to do so—will never enter into the joy of obedience. He does not obey. When the requirements of God are accounted a burden because they cut across human inclination, we may know that the life is not a Christian life. True obedience is the outworking of a principle within. It springs from the love of righteousness, the love of the law of God. The essence of all righteousness is loyalty to our Redeemer. This will lead us to do right because it is right—because right doing is pleasing to God." (*Christ's Object Lessons*, p 97).

- "But ____, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you." Ephesians 5:3—**1 Down**
- Adultery and fornication are some of "the works of the ____." Galatians 5:19—**11 Down**
- "That they which do such things shall not ____ the kingdom of God." Galatians 5:21—**9 Down**
- When David committed adultery and then murder ____ was raised up against him and his house. 2 Samuel 12:9-11—**15 Across**
- Because of David's sin it gave the enemies of the Lord great occasion to _____. 2 Samuel 12:14—**8 Down**

➤ David prayed to God, “_____ all mine iniquities.” Psalms 51:9 (2 words)—**5 Across**

➤ David continued, “Create in me a _____ heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.” Psalms 51:10—**10 Across**

Note: David recognized that erasing the record of his sin alone was not enough. He needed a solution for the sin in his heart, so the problem would not come back again. A new heart is the only solution to this problem, and it is

something man is powerless to perform. Please read Ezekiel 36:26, 27.


“There are many who try to reform by correcting this or that bad habit, and they hope in this way to become Christians, but they are beginning in the wrong place. Our first work is with the heart.” (*Christ's Object Lessons*, p 97).

➤ After David confessed his sin, God forgave the _____ of his sin. Psalm 32:5—**9 Across**

Note: David's sin was great, especially considering his position of trust. He was forgiven of his sin, yet the results of his sin lingered on for years.

➤ He that _____ to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption.” Galatians 6:7, 8—**12 Across**

➤ “Let the wicked _____ his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts.” Isaiah 55:7—**18 Across**

➤ Whoever “confesseth and _____” his sins “shall have mercy.” Proverbs 28:13—**3 Across** 

(Waggoner on Romans, continued from page 9)

God desires to be known and remembered, and so we read his words, “Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep; for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the Lord made heaven and Earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.” (Exodus 31:13, 16, 17). God is the God of Israel. True, he is the God of the Gentiles also, but only as they accept him, and become Israel through the righteousness by faith. But Israel must keep the sabbath. It is the sign of their connection with God.

CHAPTER 16

Two-thirds of the last chapter of Romans consists of greetings: “Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus.” “Likewise greet the church that is in their house.” “Greet Mary, who bestowed much labor on us.” “Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen.” “Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord.” “Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved.” “Salute Trypena and Tryphosa, who labor in the Lord.” “Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nercus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them.”

And so the list runs, including both men and women impartially. Let one but read that blessed list, realizing that it shows not only the largeness and heartiness of Paul's sympathy, but also the special care which the Holy Spirit has for each individual member of the household of faith, singling them out by name, and there will be no questioning as to why such things were written.

A Significant Omission—But one thing is very significant, and that is the fact that there is no mention of

Peter, who is claimed to have been “the first Bishop of Rome.” We may sometimes learn as much by what the Bible does not say as by what it does say. From what is not said in this place we may learn that so far from being Bishop of Rome, Peter was not in Rome at all when Paul wrote, and that if he was ever in Rome it was after the Epistle to the Romans was written, and long after the church was established and flourishing there.

It is most certain that in saluting the members of the church by name Paul would not have omitted the name of the chief person in it, whose hospitality he had once shared in Jerusalem for fifteen days. Of course there is abundance of the most positive evidence that neither the church of Christ nor the church of Rome was founded upon Peter; but if there were no other, this testimony of the sixteenth chapter of Romans would be sufficient to settle the matter.

In Conclusion—Romans 16:24-27

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.”

What a Magnificent Conclusion!—It reaches from eternity to eternity. The gospel of God is the thing of the ages. It was kept secret in the mind of God from times eternal. Christ “was foreordained before the foundation of the world.” (1 Peter 1:19, 20). But now the mystery is “made manifest.” Not simply is it made manifest by the preaching of the apostles, but “according to the commandment of the everlasting God,” “by

the scriptures of the prophets” it is “made known to all nations, for the obedience of faith.”

The gospel plan originated in the mind of God in the eternity of the past. Patriarchs, prophets and apostles have worked in unison in making it manifest; and “in the ages to come” it will be both the science and the song of the redeemed “of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues,” who shall gather with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of God, and will say, “Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”

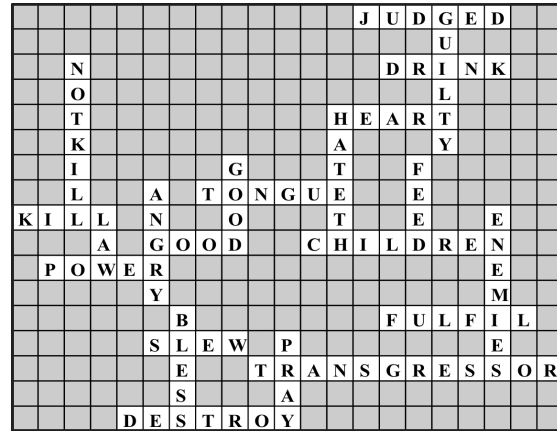
Conclusion

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Editor)

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Answers to Last Month's Crossword Puzzle



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