

Present Truth

2 Peter 1:12

Dear Readers,

April 2010

“Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (Philemon 1:3). It was refreshing to study, pray and fellowship with my brothers and sisters in Christ at the Florida camp meeting. There was a general desire for a deeper experience with the Lord and more of God’s Spirit in our lives so that we can be prepared for Christ’s soon return. I pray that each of you would share the same desire.

2010 West Virginia Camp Meeting: It will be held at the Smyrna Chapel in Welch, West Virginia, June 15-19. Call 304-732-9204 for more information.

E-mail Reminder: Let us know if you would like *Present Truth* by e-mail.

The Kingdom of Heaven

by Lynnford Beachy

“Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 3:1-2). This was the message of John the Baptist as he prepared the way for the Lord Jesus to begin His ministry. When Jesus began to preach He said, “Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 4:17). Later, when Jesus sent out His disciples to preach He said, “As ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 10:7).

As you can see, the message, “The kingdom of heaven is at hand” was the message to be given when Christ came 2,000 years ago. But what could this message mean? It would appear that this message meant that Christ was about to set up His kingdom. The Jewish people were expecting the Messiah to come and set up His kingdom on earth. When Jesus made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem riding on a donkey, the multitude cried

out, “Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord” (John 12:13). They were expecting Jesus to set up His kingdom on the earth and break the power of the Roman armies that had invaded Jerusalem. They didn’t realize that Jesus was actually headed to the cross to die for our sins.

Even after Jesus died and was resurrected, His disciples asked Jesus, “Wilt

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thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6). Jesus responded, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power" (Acts 1:7). The disciples, along with the Jewish people, were confused about the kingdom.

What is the Kingdom?

So, what was Jesus talking about when He said, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand"? It has been 2,000 years since this message was given, and still we have not seen Him ruling this world as an earthly king. So did His kingdom come, or not? Was His kingdom really at hand 2,000 years ago? What was Jesus talking about?

Jesus said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness" (Matthew 6:33). It is hard to seek for something if you don't know what it is. Jesus said to a scribe, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God" (Mark 12:34). This scribe died long before God's eternal kingdom was set up, yet he was not far from the kingdom of God. What kingdom was near for him?

Jesus gave an interesting and revealing answer that sheds light on this question. "When he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:20, 21). Here Jesus explained that the kingdom of God is not something we should be looking to come outwardly, but inwardly. The kingdom of God must come to us inwardly before we can safely expect to receive the kingdom of God outwardly.

It is true that an outward kingdom will come. After explaining some of the

events in the last days, Jesus said, "When ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand" (Luke 21:31). Here Jesus was referring to a time when He would set up His kingdom in an outward manner (Daniel 2:44). Yet, this kingdom will only be enjoyed by those who have experienced His kingdom within.

"Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people" (Matthew 4:23). Jesus preached the gospel, or "good news," of the kingdom. He said, "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matthew 24:14). God's kingdom within is good news. It is something we are told to seek first, before anything else.

Jesus told us to pray, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10). Notice the connection between God's kingdom, and His will being done. God's kingdom coming in us, will result in His will being done in us just as thoroughly as it is done in heaven.

Jesus warned, "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" (Matthew 7:21). Unless God's kingdom has been established in our hearts, where His will is done in us, then we will not be able to enter His kingdom when it is set up at Christ's return.

An Undivided Kingdom

Jesus explained, "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to

desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand” (Matthew 12:25). If we are to have the kingdom of God come within our hearts, then we cannot be divided in our obedience. Jesus said, “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (Matthew 6:24). Paul advised, “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? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness” (Romans 6:16-18).

Jesus said, “The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it” (Matthew 13:44-46). Having the kingdom of God in our hearts requires a total commitment. Our old habits, our old man, old life, must die so that Christ can live and reign within.

Jesus admonished, “No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:62). This illustration brings to mind Lot’s wife. Angels from heaven were sent to rescue her and her family from Sodom before it was destroyed. Even though they were told to flee and

not look back, Lot’s wife turned to get one last glimpse of the city she so loved, “and she became a pillar of salt” (Genesis 19:26). Her body was physically outside of that wicked city, but her heart longed to return, so she perished just as much as those who stayed inside the city. Jesus reminded us to, “Remember Lot’s wife” (Luke 17:32). Don’t let your heart get tied up in the things of this world, which are only temporary. “A double minded man is unstable in all his ways” (James 1:8).

A New Birth

One day Jesus’ disciples came to Him, asking, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:1-4). The disciples had been contending for the highest position in God’s kingdom, thinking that their abilities or service would earn them a high rank. Yet, Jesus explained that conversion and humility are the qualifications for greatness in God’s kingdom.

Jesus told Nicodemus, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). He continued, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:5). Being born again is a prerequisite to entering God’s kingdom. It is not optional, but mandatory.

Jesus explained, “Unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto

Doing the Will of God

shall I resemble it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it. And again he said, Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God? It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened" (Luke 13:18-21).

God's kingdom is likened unto a small seed placed in the ground that becomes a giant. The most massive tree in the world, the giant sequoia, has a seed that is much smaller than a pea. God's kingdom starts from within. Just as a seed can lie underground undetected, so, when God begins a work in you, it may not be detected by others, but it will soon spring forth and bear fruit. Jesus also likened the kingdom of heaven to leaven that was hid in meal that made the whole lump leavened. God's kingdom is that way. It starts out small, but soon affects every part of your life.

God be praised "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Colossians 1:13). This is something that has already happened for those who have been born again. Christ is our King and Lord. As our King, He has the right to tell us what to do. Yet, far too often, those who call themselves God's children would rather do what they want to do rather than what Jesus asks them to do. Jesus asked, "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46). The term, "Lord," means "Master." It doesn't make any sense to call Jesus our Master and then disobey His instructions. Those in His kingdom are to be ruled by His bidding.

Jesus said, "I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me" (John 5:30). When Jesus was about to do something, He did not consult what He wanted to do, but sought to do the will of His Father. Fortunately, most of the time His will was identical to His Father's will, for He said through David, "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart" (Psalms 40:8). I said that His will was the same most of the time, because there was at least one time when His will was at variance with His Father's will, but He submitted to His Father. When Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane, He pleaded with His Father three times to remove the bitter experience of bearing the weight of the sins of the world. Each time, He ended His prayer, "Not my will, but thine be done" (Luke 22:42). At times it was difficult to yield to His Father's will, but Jesus did it every time.

Jesus always submitted to His Father's will. He said, "He that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him" (John 8:29). For Jesus to make the claim that He did always the things that please His Father means that He always knew the things that pleased His Father. He always knew the will of God for His life, and He knew this because He sought for it.

Have you every sought for something? Suppose you lost the keys to your car, and you have to go to an appointment. Would you sit on the couch and wait for the keys to fall on your head? Certainly not! Instead, you would actively look for them. Seeking is an action.

It cannot be accomplished by doing nothing. To seek for God's will, we must be searching to find out what pleases God. Too often we neglect to seek God's will in simple everyday life, but only seek His will when it comes to major life-changing decisions, like whether to sell your house, take a new job, or move out of state. These decisions have the potential to damage one's future, so we, as Christians, want to make sure it is God's will. Yet, why do we only seek His will in the big decisions? Doesn't God want to direct every aspect of our lives? He did this for His only begotten Son.

Jesus said, "For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak" (John 12:49). The instructions Jesus received from His Father were so particular that He said He did not speak a single word except at His Father's direction. He also said, "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works" (John 14:10). According to Jesus, everything He ever spoke and everything He ever did was at the direction of His Father. He did not dare step outside of His Father's will, even for a moment.

Should we be any less diligent in seeking God's will for our lives? Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me" (John 10:27). Did you know that Jesus is talking to all of us, but often times we are too busy to hear Him? Jesus said, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (Revelation 3:20). He is

calling out to everyone, and He wants us to listen to His voice.

I heard a sermon once, and the preacher asked, "Does anyone hear voices?" Most of the people in the audience kept their hands down, but I raised mine. Then the preacher proceeded to say, "If you're a child of God and you don't hear voices, there's something wrong with you, because Jesus said, 'My sheep hear my voice.'" I am not talking about an audible voice, even though that can happen, as it did for Samuel the prophet. I am talking about receiving an impression from the Lord so strongly that it is as if someone spoke it to you. I am sure all of us have heard that voice at some time in our Christian experience. The Bible says, "Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left" (Isaiah 30:21). God still wants to communicate with His children.

Lessons from the Apostles

Notice how precisely the Lord led His early church. The Bible says of Paul, "When they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not." (Acts 16:6-7). The Spirit of God gave specific instructions to these early Christians, telling them where to go and what to do.

"The angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great

authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet. Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.” (Acts 8:26-31). After some instruction, this man was baptized.

Here, specific instruction was given to Philip. He didn’t know why he was to go toward the south, but he went. After he arrived, he was told to go to the chariot. Not knowing why, he ran to the eunuch, and found him needing instruction. I am amazed by this story, and challenged. If God led His early church in such a precise manner, and His church today is not having this experience, who has changed, God or His church? The answer is obvious. God wants to instruct us in just as precisely a manner, but many of us are too far removed from Him that we do not recognize when He speaks to us. We are too busy doing our own will that we do not know what God’s will is for us.

Jesus said that He sought the will of His Father, and He did this every moment of every day. We are told, “Pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17). If we are not constantly seeking God’s will, then we cannot possibly do God’s will all the time.

Often we think, like the rich young ruler, that if we avoid killing people, stealing from them, etc., then we are doing the will of God. But when Jesus

asked the rich young ruler to sell everything he had and give to the poor, he refused. (Matthew 19:16-22). This man was not accustomed to seeking and doing the will of God in a detailed manner. He thought that as long as he kept God’s written commandments he was okay. Friends, God wants a much closer relationship with us than that.

When Philip was asked to go to meet the eunuch, if he had refused, it would have been sin, even though he was not directly violating any of God’s Ten Commandments. He would have been violating God’s spoken command. Jesus said, “It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” (Matthew 4:4). That word includes any instruction that God gives you.

Jonah was told to go to Ninevah and preach. He refused, and got on a ship to Tarshish instead. Normally it is not a sin to take a ship to Tarshish, but at this time it was.

Confident Faith

Jesus explained that “great faith” is depending upon the word of God only to do what that word says (Matthew 8:5-10). True faith must be based upon God’s word. A story from Paul’s life illustrates this fact.

“A vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.” (Acts 16:9). Paul and Silas, immediately went to Macedonia, not knowing what would happen. After arriving there Paul and Silas were arrested. “When they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: Who, having received such

a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.” (Acts 16:23-25). Paul and Silas could confidently sing and praise God in this situation because they knew that they were doing the will of God, and that He would work things out. It would have been easy to be discouraged if they had not known that this was the will of God. An amazing thing happened. A “great earthquake” shook the jail and all the doors opened, and all the chains were loosed. The jailor, awakened and, thinking his captives had escaped, prepared to kill himself, but was stopped by Paul, then the jailor and his whole family were baptized that night. Amazing!

When you are doing the will of God, and you know it, you can rejoice in any situation, because you can be certain that God will work it out for good. Even if you are killed, if you know it is the will of God you can go to your death singing, knowing that something good is going to come out of it.

Sometimes we say something like, “I have faith that my old car is going to get me to California.” But if God did not instruct you to go to California, how can you be so sure the car will make it? However, if you know that it is God’s will that you go to California, then you can be confident that God is going to work things out. Then you can have faith that is vibrant and strong.

I have often thought about Elijah. He gathered “all Israel” and the prophets of Baal at Mount Carmel to demonstrate something. He told them that the God who answers by fire is the true God. After the servants of Baal tried all day to get

their god to answer by fire, Elijah built an altar, soaked the offering with water, and prayed to God, saying, “I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again. Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.” (1 Kings 18:36-38).

That was a bold thing to do. I have often thought how great it would be to have some demonstration like this to help convince people about God, but I have never been bold enough to try it, and if I did, I didn’t know if it would work. Elijah gave the key to His success. He said to God, “I have done all these things at thy word.” If God directly told me to do it, I could be sure that it will work, but if not, I better not attempt it.

Conclusion

God has a kingdom, and He wants you to be a part of it. He wants you to live with Him forever. His kingdom starts right now, within you. Jesus assured us, “Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom” (Luke 12:32). God wants this experience for you, and if you cooperate with Him, let Him come into your life and reign, your life will be so much better than you can imagine. Jesus said, “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (John 10:10).

I pray that you will decide to let God’s kingdom come within you, and pray as Jesus instructed, “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10).

The New Covenant and the Law - Part 2

by Joseph Emilio Lahud

(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 Highway 32 SW, Fertile, MN 56540, or by calling 218-474-0204, or by e-mail at lahudcraft@gvtel.com. Visit his website at www.revelationmessengers.com.

Editor)

There are a few places where the new covenant is mentioned in the New Testament. First, let us look at the only ordinance Christ gave to His New Testament church—the communion service. “And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament [covenant] in my blood, which is shed for you” (Luke 22:19, 20). Please notice that Christ just declared the new covenant is “in His blood,” no longer by the blood of animals. “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). And in another place we read: “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).

Those who twist the sacred writings and attempt to make them say something which they do not say (regarding the passage we have just read) will try to tell you that this is referring to God’s moral law—the Ten Commandments. It is not;

the passage we just read is speaking of the ceremonial law and its attendant ordinances and statutes. How could the first commandment contained in the moral law be contrary to us—the one that commands us not to have any other gods before the true God? (Exodus 20:3). How about the fourth, the one that begins with the words, “Remember the Sabbath...”? This is the one that condemns those who reject it, as they callously try to convince themselves, and others, that this is the commandment we should forget—the one with the attached promise that, if we keep from defiling it, God will “cause” us “to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed” us “with the heritage of Jacob [Israel]” (Isaiah 58:13; see also v. 14).

Remember, the new covenant is made only with the house of Israel. Now let us examine the language in the new covenant: “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” (Hebrews 8:10). Paul has just quoted, word for word, what God spoke through His prophet Jeremiah (Jeremiah 31:33; see also vs. 31, 32). And again, God speaking through the apostle Paul declares the same words found in the Old Testament: “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; [notice He adds something] and their sins and iniquities

will I remember no more” (Hebrews 10:16, 17).

As surprising as it may be to many sincere Christians, the new covenant is made only with the “house of Israel” and to no other people. In the Old Testament, at Mount Sinai, a covenant was entered upon with the twelve tribes of Israel (representing God’s Old Testament church), and was ratified by the blood of animals representing the blood of the Lamb of God (1 Peter 1:19; Revelation 13:8). At the last supper, before His humiliation and crucifixion, Christ entered into a covenant with the twelve Hebrews representing the New Testament church, and ratified it with His own blood. This is the New Testament church—spiritual “Israel,” God’s true children. “But he is a Jew [spiritual Jew], which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit...” (Romans 2:29). So what of us Gentiles? How do we fit in to God’s master plan?

The Adoption *

It was God’s design to make the family of Adam as His own, the common head and father of the human race; but we find that at the end of the age, prior to the flood, only eight souls feared the God of heaven. After the flood, only one family remained; the family of Noah became the second head of the human race. This family, grounded in divine truth, should have become the heritage of the Almighty; but when men began to multiply upon the face of the earth, they again forsook God, and set their hearts upon sin and rebellion. Just four hundred years after the flood, only but a handful of godly people remained. Now comes

Abram, who, upon entering into covenant with God, became Abraham—the “father of many nations” (Genesis 17:4). God said that He knew Abraham, and that Abraham would command his children in the way of the Lord (Genesis 18:19). To preserve this family from ruin through the adulterous influences that surrounded them, God does something. He adopts this family of Abraham, His friend, and separates them by the rite of circumcision and the ceremonial law, from all the rest of mankind (Genesis 17:10).

Note that this was five hundred and fifty years before Israel stood at the foot of Mount Sinai! Those who claim that the giving of the law was only to the Jews at Mount Sinai are in error, for Abraham had been given the law, and kept it. “Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws” (Genesis 26:5). Abraham thus becomes the third grandfather of the human race; not the father of the whole human race, as was Adam and Noah, but the father of the people of God. This is the adoption; through faithful Abraham, God establishes His people. The rest of mankind is given up to idolatry and atheism, not because God desired that any should perish, but because they would not obey His voice. “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise [to restore the heavens and the earth], as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9).

As He adopted Abraham’s family—through whom the nation of Israel

* Much of this section was adapted from the booklet, *The Two Covenants*, by J.N. Andrews, available on our website at www.presenttruth.info/newsletters/PresentTruth/2004/pt_e_may04.htm.

would come forth—He did not fully reject the rest of mankind, for if they, through the Hebrews, would become circumcised and unite with Israel in His service and worship, they too would be adopted. This adoption was just and necessary, for by this means God preserved upon the earth the knowledge of the one true God and His worship. The Hebrew people, therefore, had a great privilege; they had the adoption, the two covenants (plural, see Romans 9:4), the giving of the law, the service of God (the Levitical priesthood), the fathers, the promises, the prophets, the ark of the covenant, the temple, and the knowledge and future hope of the coming Messiah. Paul declares that the Jews had much advantage for to them were given the oracles of God (Romans 3:1, 2). “For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required” (Luke 12:48).

Sadly, this nation of Israel—to whom was entrusted the proclaiming of the one true God and the coming of the Messiah to all the heathen nations of the world—apostatized. Their darkness became so great that, after the time when Christ was baptized of John in 27 A.D. and entered into His ministry, the Jewish leaders—while possessing for centuries the prophecies that pointed to Christ as the Messiah—utterly rejected Him as the promised Savior. Further, they even falsely accused Him of healing by the power of the devil when He healed the blind and dumb man (Matthew 12:22-24). Apostasy is a dish best served cold.

Until the time for the nation of Israel was fulfilled, our Lord confined His ministry to the Jewish people, declaring that He was not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matthew 15:24).

In this account, the Canaanite woman, a Gentile who petitioned the Lord for the healing of her daughter, even after the Lord’s gentle rebuke, her petition was granted. Why? The Lord gives us the answer: “O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt” (v. 28). Faith is the golden key that unlocks the heart of God (Hebrews 11:6). But, dear brothers and sisters—whether Jew or Gentile—obedience is the fruit of faith and repentance. When Christ sent out the twelve during His ministry, He “commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matthew 10:5, 6). After the Lord’s ascension, the ministers of the Word preached the gospel “to none but unto the Jews only” (Acts 11:19). Again we ask, “What of us Gentiles?”

We Gentiles have nothing to boast about; we came in as poor beggars. We became spiritually rich by sharing with the Hebrews the blessings that God had, for long ages, preserved in their hands. To the Jews was committed the worship of the one true God centuries before the Gentiles ever took notice of God. Nevertheless, the prophecy would be fulfilled; God had given Israel a set time before which they, as a nation, would cease to be His chosen people; and this had been spoken to Daniel the prophet—a 490-year probation. This is found in Daniel 9:24-27 where God says (to Daniel), “Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people [the Israelites] and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint

the most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.”

The “seventy weeks” is a prophetic time period; therefore we must apply the prophetic conversion rule, where one “day” equals one “year” (Ezekiel 4:6; Numbers 14:34). There are 7 days in one week; 7 multiplied by 70 (the “seventy weeks” prophesied) equals 490. So then, “seventy weeks” is 490 days, which prophetically speaking is 490 years. In 457 B.C., Artaxerxes I Longimanus, king of Persia, in the sixth year of his reign, gave to Ezra “the scribe” the “commandment” or decree to rebuild Jerusalem. Add 490 years to 457 B.C. and you arrive at 34 A.D. These were the years allotted for Daniel’s people—the nation of Israel—to “make an end of sins.” However, rather than receiving Christ with repentance and rejoicing, they slew Him. At this time, 34 A.D., Stephen is stoned, and the way is opened for the Gospel to be offered to the Gentiles. God’s prophetic clock is precisely on time.

It is at this period that the work for Gentiles is opened by the conversion of Paul (Acts 9; 26:17). The Gentiles were “made partakers of the spiritual things” (Romans 15:27) which God had wisely and justly placed in the hands of Israel. “For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away

ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins” (Romans 11:25-27). Notice that Paul now refers to the Hebrews and the Gentiles as all “Israel.” Receiving salvation by faith through the blood of Christ, Paul says of those who were Gentiles in times past—but not now—that they are “no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God” (Ephesians 2:19; see also vs. 13, 14, 18-22). Thus they are no longer Gentiles, but “Israelites.” They became sharers in the name, the promises, and in the riches, of Israel. “That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel” (Ephesians 3:6).

It is by this adoption into the commonwealth of Israel that the Gentiles become sharers in the blessings of the new covenant. This is spoken of by the prophet Jeremiah and the apostle Paul as we examine the following passages: OF THE JEWS—“The LORD called thy name, A green olive tree, fair, and of goodly fruit: with the noise of a great tumult he hath kindled fire upon it, and the branches of it are broken” (Jeremiah 11:16). OF THE GENTILES—“And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest

he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?" (Romans 11:17-24).

The good olive tree is the family of Abraham, as adopted by the God of the whole earth, when He gave up the rest of mankind to their chosen idolatry and wickedness. It is "a green olive tree, fair, and of goodly fruit." To this olive tree pertains the covenants of promise. The first covenant is made with the people represented thereby; the new covenant is made with the same people that the first covenant was made with. The breaking off of many of the branches of the tree is because that God's ancient people continued not in His covenant. "They are turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers, which refused to hear my words; and they went after other gods to serve them: the house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken my covenant which I made with their father" (Jeremiah 11:10).

Remember that the ceremonial law attended the first covenant—the same law that was given to Adam, Noah, and Abraham. This sacrificial system was a shadow; it was symbolic, pointing forward to Christ. The ritual and ceremony of the sacrifice was to teach the people, in the infancy of their faith, the great sacrifice that was made on their

behalf—that of God giving His only begotten Son. Of the new covenant it is written: "But now hath He obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises" (Hebrews 8:6). Those promises are that in the new covenant, God promises to "put His laws into our minds, and write them in our hearts." But notice that it is still only with the house of Israel—of which the Gentiles have been adopted by being grafted into the green olive tree.

"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." (Hebrews 8:10). The Gentiles then, through adoption, have become spiritual "Israel" through "Abraham's seed." "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:28, 29). "Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision [Jews] in the flesh made by hands; that at the time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace, who hath made both one [Jews and Gentiles], and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us... And that He

might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through Him we both [Jews and Gentiles] have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye [Gentiles] are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone” (Ephesians 2:11-20). The foundation that God builds His people upon is Christ who produces obedience to His voice and obedience to His laws.

The Law Abolished at the Cross?

“Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances [ceremonial laws]; for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace” (Ephesians 2:15). Regarding the rite of circumcision, from the pen of Paul we find: “Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God” (1 Corinthians 7:19). Dear friends, this is just one example of the ordinances that pertained to the ceremonial law. It was the ceremonial law that was abolished at the cross (Colossians 2:14). The moral law is eternal.

Let us briefly glance at some examples of this fact. Isaiah 66:23 portrays the restored creation; God, speaking through Isaiah His prophet, declares, “And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath [the seventh day] to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD.” “All flesh” is going to come before God

in the restored creation and worship Him on the day He designated as His holy day; the day He set apart at creation commemorating His work. The seventh day is God’s sign and emblem as the sovereign God, Creator, and by whom we are sanctified (Exodus 31:17; Ezekiel 20:12, 20). This is why He placed His Sabbath commandment in the very center of His moral law. This commandment is explicitly mentioned in the New Testament in Hebrews 4:1-11. He attaches great importance to this, for the fourth commandment begins with these solemn words of Fatherly counsel: “Remember the Sabbath.”

In the last book of the Bible titled “The Revelation of Jesus Christ,” we also find further evidence. “And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in His temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail” (Revelation 11:19). Remember what was put in the ark? His moral law, the law He wrote with His own finger (Exodus 25:21). Moses was given a “pattern” for the building of the tabernacle and the ark; this had to do with the priestly office of man ministering before God in the earth. Christ, after His ascension, is ministering before God on man’s behalf in heaven, in the heavenly sanctuary. “For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us” (Hebrews 8:24).

If the earthly was but a pattern of the heavenly, and God instructed Moses to place the moral law, written by God’s own finger, inside the ark, under the mercy seat, this is a “copy” of the genuine that exists in heaven. “And after that I

looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened” (Revelation 15:5). Notice the apostle John, under inspiration, is referring to the heavenly sanctuary as the tabernacle “of the testimony”—in other words, the tabernacle “of the law.” (Compare this with Numbers 1:50.) “And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it” (Exodus 25:8, 9). “And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee” (Exodus 25:21). This “testimony” is the tablets of stone written by the finger of God—the Ten Commandments. Also, “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus” (Revelation 14:12). This verse describes that those “saints” which have the “faith of Jesus” are keeping God’s moral law, His Ten Commandments. This is just prior to the seven angels pouring the seven vials of the wrath of God upon the earth (Revelation 16:1), for an angel comes out of the temple in heaven crying with a loud voice declaring before Christ—who is sitting on a cloud (Revelation 14:14)—“for the harvest of the earth is ripe” (Revelation 14:15).

It should be understood that keeping God’s commandments is not necessarily trying to gain salvation by works, but simple obedience! Salvation is only through faith in Christ! Repentance is the fruit of faith; repentance of what? Of sin! And what is sin? “Sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4). What law; the ceremonial law? No, for that law was abolished in 31 A.D. It is the moral law,

which is eternal. “But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust” (1 Timothy 1:8-11).

Paul was speaking of the moral law, for he is speaking in regards to the content of the Ten Commandments. Compare this passage with Galatians 4:8-11, where he speaks of the ceremonial law; where he referred to the “weak and beggarly elements.” Adam, Noah, Abraham, Paul, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, James and all the other servants of Christ—they all kept God’s covenant and law, and taught others to honor it, as Christ taught them: “If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments” (Matthew 19:17). If we allow the Bible to speak for itself, it will correctly interpret its message and will always be found in harmony. “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16).

Today, in our age, you will find pious Jews in their synagogues on the Sabbath, “according to the commandment” (Luke 23:56), as they profess to honor and worship God the Father by keeping His law while, at the same time, they reject His Son. Conversely, you will find sincere Christians in church on Sunday, not according to the commandment, as they

profess to honor and worship Christ while rejecting His Father's law.

The most fatal delusion of the Christian world in this generation is, that in pouring contempt on the law of God they think they are exalting Christ. It was Christ who spoke the law from Sinai. It was Christ who gave the law to Moses, engraven on two tables of stone. It was His Father's law; and Christ says, "I and my Father are one" (John 10:30). The Pharisees held the reverse to the modern position, but were in just as great an error. They rejected Christ, but exalted the law. And it makes little difference which position is taken, so long as we ignore the true one—that faith in Christ must be accompanied by obedience to the law of God" (James White, *The Law and the Gospel*, p. 22).

Christ magnified the law in His sermon on the mount, according to the prophecy in Isaiah 42:21.

Are we Christ's? Then we are Abraham's seed (Galatians 3:29). Are we in covenant with God, or are we just pretending? What is the measure for this rule? "Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men" (Isaiah 29:1; Mark 7:6, 7). To those who persist in their claim, that the new covenant is void of the law of God, the question must be asked, "Is there sin in the world?" "But sin is not imputed when there is no law" (Romans 5:12).

"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God" (Galatians 6:15, 16).



You May Freely Eat?

by Jim Raymond

(Brother Jim Raymond has been a food scientist for many years, and has agreed to share some of his knowledge with us.

Editor)

Ingredient Watch: BPA

Name: Bisphenol A (BPA). Not a true ingredient, but through food contact this stuff makes its way into many of the things we eat and drink. BPA was originally produced for use as a synthetic hormone in 1936.

Production and Usage: Worldwide production of BPA exceeds seven billion pounds annually, with demand growing from 6-10% each year, making BPA one of the highest production volume chemicals in the world.

Today BPA is most commonly used as the building block of polycarbonate (PC) plastic for a great number of products. Food related PC products include such items as cups, baby bottles, water bottles, food storage containers, white dental sealants, and coatings that keep the metal cans from imparting taste and odor, and protect the can from corrosion (all of which enhance the quality and usable life of canned foods). BPA makes PC plastic ware (including bottles and food containers) clearer, less breakable, and able to withstand higher temperatures. It is also an additive in other types of plastic used to make children's toys.

Potential Problems: BPA may leach into the food it is supposed to be protecting. BPA mimics estrogen and is implicated in multiple maladies at very low levels. According to scientists at the USA's National Toxicology Program (NTP), which is part of the National Institutes of Health, BPA exposure, at levels currently measured in the human population, could affect the brain, behavior and prostate gland in fetuses, infants, and children. The NTP also has concerns about BPA's ability to bring about abnormal breast development, premature puberty in girls, birth defects and reproduction problems in adults.

Research suggests that, in the case of BPA, low doses seem to be able to do the most harm over the lifespan. Low levels may sneak under the bodies' detoxification defense mechanisms and thus appear able to cause worse damage than higher doses. One example is that exposure of fetuses or very young offspring to BPA can possibly increase their risk of developing cancer in later life.

Avoiding BPA: Rather than argue the good and bad of BPA, let's look at how to minimize our gastronomic exposure and related risks. Avoid BPA containing PC food containers. Several media sources recommend avoiding all food containers bearing the SPI Recycle Number 7 as a way to do this. I *do not* agree with taking this easy way out. SPI Recycle Number 7 is the code designated for "Other" plastics. BPA containing PC items share this diverse miscellaneous category with many other plastics which *do not* contain BPA.

For instance, there is a newer class of plastics composed of biodegradable plant-based compounds, and which are

good for the environment, that are also listed in this "Other" group. These new compostable plastics are also used to make food containers and service ware. It is better to be more selective within this "Other" group. Avoid the BPA containing PC food and water containers for sure. Because not all plastics in the "Other" category contain BPA, consider the benefits of the items in this category by reading label descriptions which usually will promote the biodegradable plastic items as: "biodegradable" or "compostable". Even the labeling message, "dishwasher safe in top shelf only" may be a clue that the product is degradable because these new plant-based plastics will not (as of yet) withstand much heat, but PC plastics will take the heat (some are used in baking). If the label seems unclear as to the "healthfulness" of the item then talk with the retailer, or the manufacture to determine if the product is degradable or contains BPA. Here is a good internet site for more information on all seven of the SPI Recycle Numbers and the types of products covered under each: www.thedailygreen.com/green-homes/latest/recycling-symbols-plastics-460321.

Use caution when buying metal reusable water bottles as they are often lined with a BPA containing coating. Buy uncoated stainless steel or glass lined bottles. On all other bottles, look for a "BPA Free" declaration on the product description label. Some of the items that claim to be "Leach Free" define "Free" loosely and BPA has been found in the contents.



Consider eating less canned foods: Testing shows that BPA leaches from the inner coating into the food itself. Beverages appear to contain the smallest levels of BPA, with canned pastas and soups containing the highest. Using less canned food may be especially important for pregnant women and children. This also applies to canned liquid formula, so avoid canned liquid formula. Choose powdered formula which may not have BPA in packaging and which is diluted with water. If liquid formula is needed look for brands sold in BPA free plastic or glass containers. Better yet breast feed your babies!

Move away from canned food brands, or product lines, that use BPA in the inner coatings. The best way to know if BPA is in your favored brands, and to motivate the manufacturer—packer or canner—to remove BPA from their product lines is to call or write their customer service departments to find out if they use BPA. Let them know your preference for zero BPA. Be nice! Keep in mind that the people who will deal with your concern did not make the decision to use BPA, and they may be equally as upset as you are if their company does use BPA. If you call, once you mention BPA, you may be transferred to a corporate lawyer. This has happened to me, so if this happens to you, don't lose your nice spirit even if you, too, are treated as an interruption or worse. Either way (customer service, or law firm), make your position known that you prefer their product but will seek alternatives until they remove BPA from their processes. Ask them to take your name and address so they can contact you when they drop BPA.

One canned food processor has already moved to BPA-free canning

processes. Eden® Foods started using BPA free cans for their non-acidic canned products in 1999. They pioneered the return to a resinous plant based enamel coating (various evergreen trees). To my knowledge, they remain the only multi-product line canner to do so. At 14 percent more for non-BPA cans, it costs them hundreds of thousands of dollars more each year to do this. Interestingly, they didn't promote this change until people started looking for BPA free items. They made the change, "because it was the right thing to do." This is amazingly altruistic behavior for a member of an industry that is exclusively motivated by profits. Glass packed items are also good alternative "canners" because only the lids would be coated so BPA migration to the food contents should be much less.

Microwaving? Avoid the use of any plastic container to heat food in microwaves. If you use a microwave, then use only ceramic, glass, or other impervious dishware specifically microwaveable. Not all "china" qualifies as microwaveable. Some contain minerals which are not transparent to microwaves and this causes the dish to get hot. When the dish collects the heat there is less energy available to heat the food item.

Completely eliminating exposure to BPA may not be possible, but you can reduce your personal and family exposure to some of the known endocrine [hormone] disrupting plastics by strategically changing what you buy, how you use it and how you live your daily life.

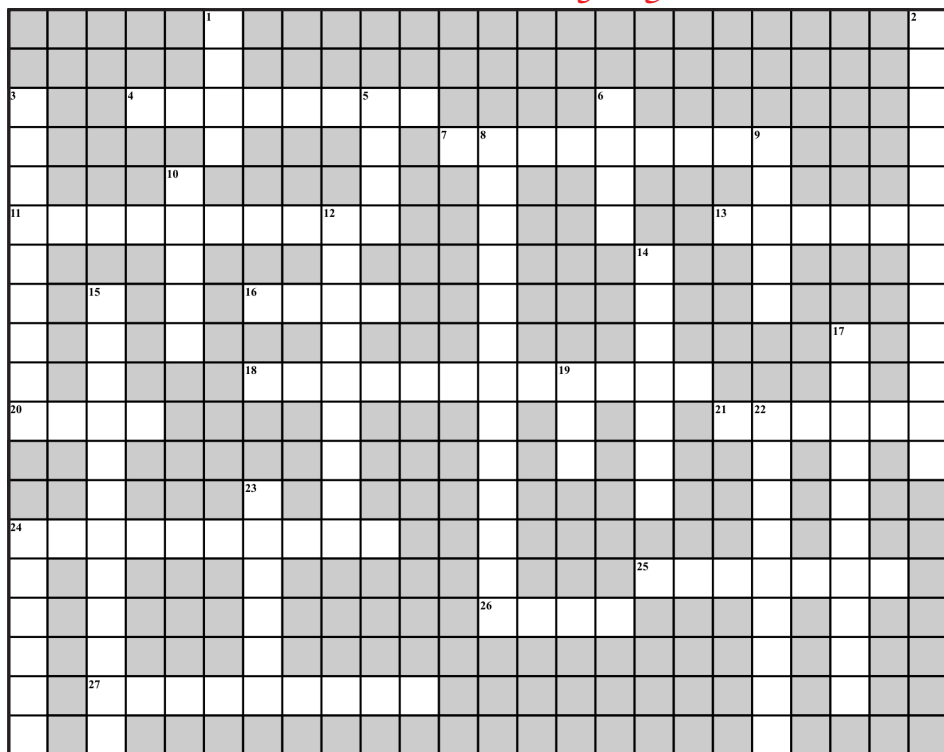
Do you have an ingredient you would like reviewed? Let me know. You can interact with me by letter (see the return address) or by email: jim@presenttruth.info.

Blessings! JR

Present Truth
Something for the Young at Heart

We would like to give you an interesting and easy way to study the Bible, so we are including a crossword puzzle for you. 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 KJV is required.)

The Law that Brings Life



Answers will be printed on the back page of next month's issue

- Not the hearers of the law are just... but the ____ of the law shall be justified. Romans 2:13—**9 Down**
- Anyone who looks and continues in the perfect law of ____ will be blessed. James 1:23-25—**25 Across**
- Circumcision is nothing, ...but the keeping of the ____ of God. 1 Corinthians 7:19—**2 Down**
- For this is the ____ of God, that we keep his commandments. 1 John 5:3—**5 Down**
- Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the _____. Revelation 22:14 (3 words)—**11 Across**
- The law is ____, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Romans 7:12—**16 Across**
- The law of the LORD is ____, converting the soul. Psalms 19:7—**14 Down**
- The law is good, if a man use it _____. 1 Timothy 1:8, 9—**4 Across**

Note: There is a right and a wrong way to use the law.

- By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be _____ in his sight. Romans 3:20—**3 Down**
- We must not be found in our own _____, which is of the law. Philippians 3:9—**8 Down**
- If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is _____ in vain. Galatians 2:21—**20 Across**
- If there had been a law given which could have given _____, righteousness should have been by the law. Galatians 3:21—**6 Down**
- Israel sought righteousness not by faith, but by the _____ of the law. Romans 9:31, 32—**10 Down**
- If _____ were by the Levitical priesthood, then what further need was there for another priest? Hebrews 7:11—**17 Down**
- The priesthood being changed, there is made of _____ a change also of the law. Hebrews 7:12—**27 Across**
- There is verily a _____ of the commandment... Hebrews 7:18—**15 Down**

Note: The commandment, or law, that was changed was not the Ten Commandments, for they had nothing to do with priests. The laws that had to be changed when the priesthood changed are ordinances concerning the sacrificial system, the priests, and the earthly sanctuary service.

- The _____ made nothing perfect. Hebrews 7:19—**19 Down**
- The law can never make the _____ thereunto perfect. Hebrews 10:1—**23 Down**
- It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away _____. Hebrews 10:4—**26 Across**
- By one offering he hath _____ for ever them that are sanctified. Hebrews 10:14—**22 Down**

- God said His new covenant is, “I will put my _____ into their hearts. Hebrews 10:16—**1 Down**
- The law of the _____ in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. Romans 8:2 (3 words)—**18 Across**

Note: The two laws mentioned here are natural laws, similar to the law of gravity. There is a law in nature that says, “What goes up must come down.” This law works the same every time. Unless another law is introduced that counteracts this law, everything must come down. There is another law that says that helium must go up. When helium is in a balloon, then the balloon will go up. Jesus Christ introduced another law into humanity that counteracts and makes us free from the law of sin and death.

- What the law _____, ... God sent His own Son to do. Romans 8:3 (3 words)—**24 Across**

Note: The law could not make anyone perfect. Perfection is what God desires, and the law could not accomplish it, so He sent His Son to get the job done, to bring us perfection.

- God did this so that the righteousness of the law might be _____ in us. Romans 8:4—**12 Down**
- The _____ mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God. Romans 8:7—**24 Down**
- God sent forth the _____ of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Galatians 4:6—**21 Across**
- We are to know that our old man is _____ with him so that we should not serve sin. Romans 6:6—**7 Across**
- Likewise _____ ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Romans 6:11—**13 Across** ✍

The National Sunday Law (Part 16)

by Alonzo T. Jones

(The following is a portion of an argument of Alonzo T. Jones before The United States Senate, December 13, 1888, opposing the Blair Bill that promoted a Sunday law. *Editor*)

Senator Blair: There is a good deal of humbug about the dictates of one's own conscience. If a man is to set up his conscience against the obligations to do what is right and to perform his duty toward society, an unintelligent and uninformed conscience of that kind might be allowed to destroy all society. It is not conscience always.

Mr. Jones: I beg your pardon, sir. The rights of conscience are eternally sacred. There is no conscience in regard to the State, however; conscience has to do with God, and with what he has commanded; and a man reads in the Bible what God commands. I here adopt the words of the present Associate-justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, Hon. Stanley Matthews, in his speech in the case of the Cincinnati School Board vs. Minor et al. He says:

"We may call the eccentricities of conscience, vagaries, if we please; but in matters of religious concern we have no right to disregard or despise them, no matter how trivial and absurd we may conceive them to be. In the days of the early Christian martyrs, the Roman lictors and soldiers despised and ridiculed the fanaticism that refused the trifling conformity of a pinch of incense upon the altar, erected to the Caesar that arrogated to himself the title and honor of 'divine,' or a heathen statue. History is filled with the record of bloody sacrifices which holy men who feared God rather than men, have not withheld, on account of what seemed to cruel

persecutors but trifling observances and concessions.... Conscience, if your honors please, is a tender thing, and tenderly to be regarded; and in the same proportion in which a man treasures his own moral integrity,—sets up the light of conscience within him as the glory of God shining in him to discover to him the truth,—so ought he to regard the conscience of every other man, and apply the cardinal maxim of Christian life and practice, 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so unto them.'"

Senator Blair: Should those who conscientiously believe in free love be allowed to indulge in it?

Mr. Jones: There is no point in that. Where is there any conscientious conviction in free love? I cannot discover it. There is no room for any.

Senator Blair: But there must be laws which prohibit immorality?

Mr. Jones: I ask you to define what immorality is, and then I will answer your question.

Senator Blair: If you do not know what the expression means, I shall not undertake to enlighten you.

Mr. Jones: I know what it means.

Senator Blair: Then why do you ask me to define it? Why do you not answer the question?

Mr. Jones: Because there are modified meanings of the word which make it refer to crime. Immorality is itself a violation of the law of God, and civil government has no right to punish any man for a violation of the law of God as such. I do say, therefore, that that which, properly speaking, is immorality, the civil law cannot prohibit, and that it has no right to attempt it. Morality is defined as follows:

"Morality: The relation of conformity or non-conformity to the true moral standard or rule.... The conformity of an act to the divine law."

As morality is the conformity of an act to the divine law, it is plain that morality pertains solely to God, and with that, civil government can have nothing to do.

Again: Moral law is defined as:

"The will of God, as the supreme moral ruler, concerning the character and conduct of all responsible beings; the rule of action as obligatory on the conscience or moral nature. The moral law is summarily contained in the decalogue, written by the finger of God on two tables of stone, and delivered to Moses on Mount Sinai."

These definitions are evidently according to Scripture. The Scriptures show that the ten commandments are the law of God; that they express the will of God; that they pertain to the conscience, and take cognizance of the thoughts and intents of the heart; and that obedience to these commandments is the duty that man owes to God. Says the Scripture:

"Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man." (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

And the Saviour says:

"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment; but I say unto you that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca [vain fellow, margin], shall be in danger of the council; but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire." (Matthew 5:21, 22).

The apostle John, referring to the same thing, says:

"Whosoever hateth his brother is murderer." (1 John 3:15).

Again, the Saviour says:

"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery; but I say unto you that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." (Matthew 5:27, 28).

Other illustrations might be given, but these are sufficient to show that obedience to the moral law is morality; that it pertains to the thoughts and intents of the heart, and therefore, in the very nature of the case, lies beyond the reach or control of the civil power. To hate is murder; to covet is idolatry; to think impurely of a woman is adultery;—these are all equally immoral, and violations of the moral law, but no civil government seeks to punish for them. A man may hate his neighbor all his life; he may covet everything on earth; he may think impurely of every woman that he sees,—he may keep it up all his days; but so long as these things are confined to his thought, the civil power cannot touch him. It would be difficult to conceive of a more immoral person than such a man would be; yet the State cannot punish him. It does not attempt to punish him. This demonstrates again that with morality or immorality the State can have nothing to do.

But let us carry this further. Only let that man's hatred lead him, either by word or sign, to attempt an injury to his neighbor, and the State will punish him; only let his covetousness lead him to lay hands on what is not his own, in an attempt to steal, and the State will punish him; only let his impure thought lead him to attempt violence to any woman, and the State will punish him. Yet bear in mind that even then the States does not punish him for his immorality, but for his incivility. The immorality lies in the heart, and can be measured by God only. The State punishes no man because he is immoral. If it

did, it would have to punish as a murderer the man who hates another, and to punish as an idolater the man who covets, and to punish as an adulterer the one who thinks impurely; because according to the true standard of morality, hatred is murder, covetousness is idolatry, and impurity of thought is adultery. Therefore it is clear that in fact the State punishes no man because he is immoral, but because he is uncivil. It cannot punish immorality; it must punish incivility.

This distinction is shown in the very term by which is designated State or national government; it is called civil government. No person but a theocrat ever thinks of calling it moral government. The government of God is the only moral government. God is the only moral governor. The law of God is the only moral law. To God alone pertains the punishment of immorality, which is the transgression of the moral law. Governments of men are civil governments, not moral. The laws of States and nations are civil laws, not moral. To the authorities of civil government pertains the punishment of incivility, that is, the transgression of civil law. It is not theirs to punish immorality. That pertains solely to the Author of the moral law and of the moral sense, who is the sole judge of man's moral relation. All this must be manifest to every one who will think fairly upon the subject, and it is confirmed by the definition of the word civil, which is this:

“Civil: Pertaining to a city or State, or to a citizen in his relations to his fellow-citizens, or to the State.”

Thus it is made clear that we owe to Caesar (civil government) only that which is civil, and that we owe to God that which is moral or religious, and that to no man, to no assembly or organization of men, does there belong any right whatever to punish immorality. Whoever

attempts it, usurps the prerogative of God. The Inquisition is the inevitable logic of any claim of any assembly of men to punish immorality; because to punish immorality, it is necessary in some way to get at the thoughts and intents of the heart. The papacy, asserting the right to compel men to be moral, and to punish them for immorality, had the cruel courage to carry the evil principle to its logical consequence. In carrying out the principle, it was found to be essential to get at the secrets of men's hearts; and it was found that the diligent application of torture would wring from men, in many cases, a full confession of the most secret counsels of their hearts. Hence the Inquisition was established as the means best adapted to secure the desired end. So long as men grant the proposition that it is within the province of civil government to enforce morality, it is to very little purpose that they condemn the Inquisition; for that tribunal is only the logical result of the proposition.

Thus much on the subject of morality and the State in the true and genuine sense of the word morality. But as I said at the beginning, there is an accommodated sense in which the word morality is used, in which it is made to refer only to men's relations to their fellow-men; and with reference to this view of morality, it is sometimes said that the civil power is to enforce morality upon a civil basis. But morality on a civil basis is only civility, and the enforcement of morality upon a civil basis is the enforcement of civility, and nothing else. Without the Inquisition, it is impossible for civil government ever to carry its jurisdiction beyond civil things, or to enforce anything but civility.

But it may be asked, Does not the civil power enforce the observance of the commandments of God, which say,

"Thou shalt not steal." "Thou shalt not kill," "Thou shalt not commit adultery," and "Thou shalt not bear false witness"? Does not the civil power punish the violation of these commandments of God? I answer: The civil power does not enforce these, nor does it punish the violation of them, as commandments of God. The State does forbid murder and theft and perjury, and some States forbid adultery, but not as commandments of God. From time immemorial, governments that knew nothing about God, have forbidden these things. If the State is to enforce these things as the commandments of God, it will have to take cognizance of the thoughts and intents of the heart; but this is not within the province of any earthly power.

By all these evidences is established the plain, common-sense principle that to civil government pertains only that which the term itself implies,—that which is civil. The purpose of civil government is civil, and not moral. Its function is to preserve order in society, and to cause all its subjects to rest in assured safety, by guarding them against all incivility. Morality belongs to God; civility, to the State. Morality must be rendered to God; civility, to the State. Immorality must be punished—can be punished—only by the Lord. Incivility must be punished—and no more than that can possibly be punished—by the State.

Here, then at the close of my remarks, we are brought to the enunciation of the eternal principle with which I began, upon which we now stand, and upon which we forever expect to stand,—the principle embodied in the United States Constitution forbidding religious tests, and forbidding Congress to make any law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,—the principle established by Jesus Christ: Render therefore UNTO CAESAR the things which are CAESAR'S; and UNTO GOD THE THINGS THAT ARE GOD'S.

To be Continued...

(This article was taken from pages 146-152 of the book entitled, *The National Sunday Law*, by Alonzo T. Jones. Some editing was done for this publication. Editor)

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Answers to Last Month's Crossword Puzzle

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