



Open Face

The Promise vs The Law

David Clayton



The more we study the subject of Righteousness in Christ, the more we realize how important it is that we correctly understand the purpose of God in giving the law, and the place which it has in the experience of the Christian. Misunderstanding of this has certainly led many to an experience in which Christ has been shut away from them and Christianity has become a hard religion of painful drudgery.

As we examine this subject once again, our focus will be on Galatians Chapter three where the apostle Paul gives us a different perspective on salvation in Christ. But let us begin with Genesis 17: 7 where God says,

And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. (Gen 17:7)

God made this promise to Abraham, but to whom did it apply? Did it apply

to Abraham alone? No, it applied also to his seed, and the promise was, "I will be a God to you, and your seed after you." Why did God make this promise to Abraham? From time to time, God renewed this promise, but we can find the real reason why He made it in Genesis 15:5,6.

And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. (6) And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness. (Gen 15:5-6)

What did Abraham do in order to become righteous? He believed God. God said, "I will make your seed like the stars of heaven." It was not dependent on Abraham producing the seed, or producing the stars of heaven, all he did was believe what God said, and it was counted to him as righteousness.

In Genesis 22:18 we find God once again promising to bless the nations in Abraham's Seed:

And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice. (Gen 22:18)

Did Abraham have to do something in order for this promise to be fulfilled? In Genesis chapter 22:16,17, it says that God blessed Abraham, because he offered his son Isaac. But as we have seen, God's promise was originally made only because of Abraham's faith. The offering of his son did not change the terms of that promise, it only revealed and reinforced Abraham's faith. It "perfected" his faith as we are told

in James 2:22. But his faith in God was the only reason why this promise was made to him.

DOUBLY CERTAIN

Notice how strong God is in making this promise. He says in Genesis 22:16,17,

.... By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: (17) That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; (Gen 22:16,17)

Now, God does not tell lies, so when He says something you can depend on it. Nevertheless, God is very strong in this statement, He not only says He will do it, but He swears an oath. When men want to establish something, they make an oath. Men sometimes tell lies, but when they take an oath, you can depend on it more. Here we see God, who never lies, makes His statement, and then He backs it up with an oath

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Open Face is dedicated to the promotion of the truths committed to the Advent movement, as believed and taught by the early Adventist pioneers. In particular to the restoration of those truths which have been cast down to the ground and trampled underfoot by the papacy, and adopted by her daughters.

Our purpose is to motivate our readers to commit themselves wholly to the task of personal preparation for the coming of the Lord, and to the taking of the final warning message to every nation, kindred, tongue and people.

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(see Heb. 6:14-18). So we have a double certainty that the world is to be blessed in Abraham's seed. Let us see how Paul comments on this in Galatians 3:15.

Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto. (Gal 3:15)

Now Paul says, let us consider the way men operate: When a man makes a will (a testament or a covenant), and it is confirmed, if that man dies, can it be changed? Can you add something to it? If a millionaire leaves his money to his cat, his brothers and sisters may be very upset, but they cannot change the will. Once it is confirmed, you cannot add to it or take away from it.

ONE SEED

Paul continues in verse 16:

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. (Gal 3:16)

Now Paul says, God confirmed something, "to Abraham and his seed," and then he says something striking. He emphasizes that God did not say "seeds," as though he was talking about many, he said *seed*, singular, because he was talking about one, He was referring to only one person just like He was in Genesis 3:15, when He said that the seed of the woman would bruise the head of the serpent.. Who is that one seed? It is Christ. These promises were specifically intended to apply to Christ.

NOTHING ADDED

In Galatians 3:17 Paul continues his argument. He says,

And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. (Gal 3:17)

First God made this promise to Abraham, then four hundred and thirty years later He gave the law. Did the law add anything to the promise? The answer is no. Did it cancel the promise? Absolutely not. After the law was given, the situation did not change so that now men were blessed through both the seed and the law.

Now according to the promise, we are to be blessed in Abraham's seed. That is what the promise says, "in your seed, all nations shall be blessed." This cannot be changed. This is the very point Paul is dealing with and he says that the law could add nothing to the promise which was confirmed four hundred and thirty years before.

So of course the question arises, why then did God give the law? But before we come to that question, let's take a brief look at verse 8 of Galatians 3.

And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. (Gal 3:7-8)

Recently I was reading this verse, and

I was blessed. For years I tried to understand and to express what the gospel is in a nutshell. All of us know it has to do with Christ, but exactly what about Christ? Some people say it is everything about Christ, but this verse puts it in a nutshell for me. It says, Abraham had the gospel preached to him in this one sentence, and what was the gospel? **All the world is to be blessed, in one Person**, that is the good news! The world is not to be blessed by what the world does, not by hard trying. The blessing is in one person, that is the gospel, and this was revealed and available to Abraham and to all who understood, four hundred and thirty years before the law was given.

The law cannot change the gospel, and in the gospel salvation was firmly established in Abraham's Seed by an oath. So to try to obtain salvation by the law is foolish. In fact, look at what Paul says in verse 10.

UNDER THE CURSE

For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. (Gal 3:10)

He says, those who seek salvation by the law, are cursed. they not only are unable to find salvation when they seek it by the law, but they obtain a curse as well! Now that is amazing. Here they are seeking righteousness, they are seeking salvation, but instead, what they obtain is a curse? Why? Because they are seeking in the wrong way. Does that sound unreasonable? This is exactly what happened to the Jews, as Paul explained in Romans 9:30-32.

According to the book of the law you are cursed if you do not do **everything** which the law requires. If it is your plan to be saved by keeping the law, then go ahead and try. If you are going to obtain righteousness by the law, fine, but you must make sure that you do

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The Place of The Word

From time to time across the centuries there have been movements which have arisen which have emphasized the truth that salvation is in Christ and Christ alone. Usually this emphasis has come into focus in response to a time or a system where much emphasis has been placed on man, on human works, and on rules and regulations. One such outstanding movement which comes to mind is the reformation of the sixteenth century. Another one, of course, is the 1888 message/movement in the SDA Church, which was initiated by elders A.T. Jones and E.J. Waggoner.

TWO EXTREMES

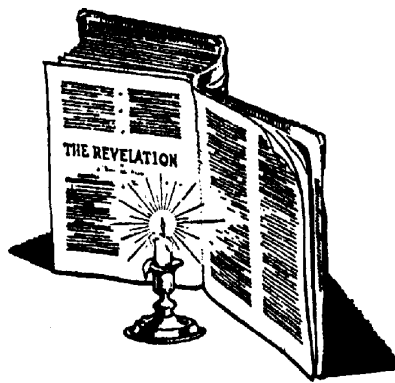
There is a danger which always seems to accompany such movements. There always has been and there always will be. It is the danger that as the emphasis is placed on Christ and on the reality of His life in us people may begin to think that there is no more need of the written word, now that we actually have, and live the very life of Christ. This was the thinking of the fanatical munsterites who arose in the days of Luther. Their cry was "the Spirit, the Spirit." They concluded that since they now had Christ Himself there was no longer any need of the written word and that Christ Himself through the Spirit would lead them to automatically know, and to do what was right. Having cast away the word of God they depended on their feelings to direct them and of course the result was that they drifted into fanatical and disorderly behaviour. We see much the same thing happening in the Pentecostal churches today.

On the other hand, perhaps as a safeguard against such extremes, there are many who speak about righteousness in Christ, who refuse to emphasize the reality of His life in us. Their main focus is on what Christ has done for me, but they say very little of what He does in me. The consequence is a religion in which there is a great deal of talk about Christ and justification, but very little manifestation of the life of Christ.

Righteousness in Christ is a wonderful truth. In fact, it is all truth wrapped up

into one. When we understand it, not only do we see man's deliverance as a simple, complete thing but we are filled with admiration and love for God and His Son. But the question must be asked, and especially as we are now seeing Christ with clearer vision, how can we escape these two extremes? One which throws us into the fires of fanaticism and the other which leaves us stranded on the ice of formalism?

In every case, faulty knowledge leads to wrong beliefs and of course wrong beliefs lead to wrong experience. We



see then that the foundation of Christian experience is correct knowledge (Rom. 10:14). It is true that knowledge in itself will not benefit a person, but at the same time there is no development, no change without knowledge. If people will believe when they learn the truth, the result will be seen in lives in which Christ is revealed. So as we move forward in the experience of the life in Christ let us be certain that we proceed with correct knowledge and understanding. This is the only way to ensure that we are shielded from the pitfalls into which others have stumbled.

EXPERIENCE CONTRARY TO TRUTH

Christ Himself lives in the believer. This is a truth which the Bible clearly, emphatically and repeatedly teaches. This life of Christ in us gives us complete victory over all sin. This is also something about which there can be no question if we accept what the Bible says. Yet in spite of these facts, we still very much need the Bible. Why? Will not Christ Himself teach me personally? Will I not automatically know

to do what is right since it is Christ who lives and not I? What need do I still have of written words if I actually have the living word inside of me?

Questions such as these are the reason why it is vital that we understand what is involved in true Christian experience.

First of all, let us settle this matter: All things, absolutely all that we need or will ever need have already been provided. All things are already ours (1 Cor. 3:21,23). God took everything which man could ever need – wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption, power, life etc. (1 Cor. 1:30; Col. 2:3; 1 John 5:11) and He put them all in Jesus Christ. There they exist as a reality independent of our experience. Whether we want them or not, whether we believe or not, they are there. When a person receives Christ, then all these things are His, because they are Christ's and he and Christ have become partakers of the same one life (1 Cor. 12:13). In Jesus there dwells the fullness of the godhead bodily and we are complete in Him. All that He is and has is what we are and have.

But why is it that we see so little of the life of Christ in so many Christians, even in those whom we believe to be honest and sincere? If we do indeed have the life of Christ with all these qualities, why is it that the theory and the reality are so far apart?

THE WRITTEN AND LIVING WORD

In order to answer this question we must understand the place of the word of God in the experience of the Christian. Consider the following verses

Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. (1 Pet 1:23)

Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. (John 17:17)

Now it is true that a person may read these verses and conclude that the words themselves, the actual phrases and sounds are what actually accom-

plishes these things in us but this would contradict the passages which teach us clearly that it is Christ Himself by means of His spirit who actually lives and works in us. The key to understanding this is to see the relationship between the work of Christ, the living word, and the Bible, the written word.

Generally speaking, God does not act in us outside of our will and consciousness. Christ's life in us is manifested in our conscious and willing submission to His will as it is revealed to our minds. In other words, the life of Christ in us is manifested by a cooperative, conscious intelligent response to the truths which He reveals to us. It is not usually God's way to take control of a person's body or mind and induce him to behave in a certain way outside of his conscious intelligent choice.

KNOWLEDGE PRECEDES FAITH

When we understand this then we can see that no matter how much God has given us, we can receive only as much as we **consciously** know and therefore believe. We may be kings, but ignorance will keep us living like paupers.

It is through the word of God that our eyes are opened. It is by the word that the life of the spirit, already ours, becomes known to us, thus enabling us to experience it. In other words we already are inheritors of all things, but we do not know it. We receive little, because that is what we expect to receive.

I would compare it to a man who has inherited a book from a millionaire friend, which is written in a mysterious code. As far as he knows the only thing which he has inherited is this book. But as he studies the book day after day, he gradually begins to understand the code. Finally he deciphers one page and learns that there is a certain bank account set up in his name with a million dollars!! All this time he was a millionaire but did not know it. Now that he knows he can begin to spend. But he is eager to get to page two because who knows what other treasures are waiting to be discovered!

The thing is, he was just as rich on day

one, as he was on the day when he deciphered the code, but he did not know it, so could not benefit. This in a way illustrates the relationship between our experience and the word of God. Already given all things, yet we need to know and to believe. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. (Rom. 10:17).

The life of Christ in me changes my nature, but does not supernaturally educate me. It is still by the word that Christ reveals his will to me. So though in Christ, I have a perfect spiritual nature - the nature of Christ, I still only have human knowledge and can only live that perfect nature in harmony with what I know to be right. Therefore Christ continues to educate me through His word, enlightened by His spirit so that day by day, already perfect in Christ, I become more mature and more perfectly manifest the image of Christ in my behaviour.

So all things have already been given to the Christian. In fact the Bible states that "the world," has already been reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5:19). But it is only by means of the word that we can enter our inheritance. Without the word of God we may just as well have nothing, for how can we believe if we do not know (Rom. 10:14) and if we do not believe we cannot receive. So Paul tells us that the gentiles are "alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them." (Eph.4:18)

The written word reveals the truth, it does not make the truth. It reveals the reality of Christ who is the truth, the living word, Himself the fulfillment of all the word of God, all it promises and requires.

For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us. (2 Cor 1:20)

FAITH RECEIVES LIFE

But the written word, accepted by faith is a vital key. Although all things are already ours in Christ, the Christian life is lived ONLY by faith. Faith accesses all God has given, but unbelief receives nothing. All the omnipotence, all the blessings, all the might and grace of

God mean nothing, avail nothing for the person who does not believe. It is the key which unlocks, releases, accesses all the infinite resources of God which have already been given to us in Christ, but of which we are so ignorant. The written word produces faith (Rom. 10:17) which receives the living word. But how much of the living word do we receive? Only as much as we expect to receive. Only in proportion to our faith Which is based on the written word.

So it is clear that as we learn more of the written word of God and believe in that word, there will be a corresponding increase in our experience in Christ, the living word. But let us consider, it is not because we have not ALREADY been given all things in Christ from the very beginning. No, it is only because our understanding and faith are limited and are only gradually being enlightened by the word of God.

This is why the apostle Paul prayed for the Ephesians that the eyes of their understanding would be enlightened so that they could come to appreciate how much they had been given in Christ.

GIDEON'S STORY

The story of Gideon is a good illustration of this point. Gideon lived in Israel at a low point in their history. It was a time when they had been overrun and subjugated by the Midianites. Their condition had become so desperate that whenever they reaped their crops the Midianites simply came and collected the fruits of their hard work and there was absolutely nothing they could do about it.

One day Gideon was threshing his wheat. He was not threshing it at the threshing floor, he was threshing it at the wine press, hoping to deceive the Midianites and so preserve some of his precious crop from their piracy. Gideon lived in a nation of dispirited and defeated people. He was just like them, a man without spirit or hope. All he could hope was that by changing his habits and hiding from the Midianites he might be able to obtain enough food to live.

Suddenly he was startled to hear a voice behind him which said,

“The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?” (Judg 6:12-14)

Gideon looked around in amazement to see who this person (an angel) was talking to. Surely it could not be him because he certainly was not a mighty man of valour! But when it dawned upon him that it was indeed he to whom the angel was speaking he replied,

“Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father’s house.” (Judg 6:15)

Basically Gideon was saying, “my Lord, you are wrong. I am not a mighty man of valour. My father’s house is little in Manasseh (which is one of the small tribes in Israel) and I myself am the littlest, the weakest, the least significant in my father’s house. So basically, I am nobody and I have very little might or valour!”

Now who was right? Was it the angel, or was it Gideon?

If God said that Gideon was a mighty man of valour, was Gideon a mighty man of valour? Of course he was! God cannot lie. Even if it were not true before, as soon as God said so it became true. However, the fact is that in spite of the fact that he was a mighty and valiant man, Gideon could only live like a weak, puny wimp because that is what he believed himself to be!! All the might which was already his was of no avail unless he believed it. So God had to do something to strengthen his faith (not to increase his strength – he already had all the strength he needed). He put out the fleece two nights to prove God. On one night it was wet all

around but dry on the fleece, on the other night it was dry all around but wet on the fleece (Judges 6:36-40).

Finally Gideon believed the word of God because God was gracious enough to give him some evidence. But long before he received the evidence, Gideon was already a mighty man of valour, the problem was that he did not know it. When he finally believed, God did nothing to him that He had not already done. The only difference was that now, Gideon believed and because he believed he was able to live the reality of that life of might and valour. He went out with three hundred men and totally devastated the army of hundreds of thousands of Midianites. Because he finally believed.

When a person believes, God needs to do nothing to accomplish his salvation which He has not already done. It was already done before He believed, but now, because he believes, he is able to access the reality, to realize and experience what was already true before he believed.

We can see then the true meaning of the phrase, “grow in Christ.” This is not saying that we should become more like Christ, but that we should receive more of Christ by believing more (as the word reveals more of Christ to us). We expand and increase in the life, privileges, authority and power of Christ as the word leads us from faith to faith (Rom. 1:17).

A GUIDE OF RIGHT AND WRONG

While the word reveals the life of Christ and all the glories present in that life, all given to us in Christ, it also reveals more perfectly God’s character and standard of righteousness. Though we are already complete in Christ, partakers of His righteous nature, victorious over sin, yet again it must be em-

phasized, we do not have perfect knowledge. It is possible to be one hundred percent obedient to God and yet still to be doing something which is not in harmony with His perfect will! A genuine Christian desires only to please God. He only wants to do good because he has the nature of Christ and this is how the nature of Christ reveals itself – in a desire to do only good. However, he does not have all the knowledge of Christ and so his concept of right and wrong may still be faulty. He may do something wrong, sincerely believing that he is doing right. This does not mean that Christ is not living in him, but simply that he is a babe in Christ. A baby has the nature, the life, but not the knowledge of an adult.

God does not count such faulty ignorant behaviour in a Christian as sin – no more than we would regard it as sin if a baby of two years old, in imitating an adult used a bad word, or bowed before an idol. However, such faulty behaviour certainly misrepresents God’s character and it is not God’s plan to leave any of his children in such a condition. So there we see again, the vital place of the word of God in educating us, in revealing God’s character, and His will to us so that we may not only live the life of Christ sincerely, but that we may also live it perfectly.

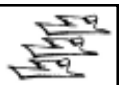
There is perfect balance, harmony and interdependence between the written and the living Word. Often we become unbalanced on one side or the other and we set these agencies against each other. We say “the spirit, the spirit,” or “the word, the word.” But in the proper understanding of the place of both, a wonderful beauty emerges and we find that the various elements of God’s work come together in perfect harmony.



1. On the last Sabbath of January, 2007, the brethren who meet in Spanish Town will be having a convention. All are encouraged to attend. We expect it to be a day of good fellowship with many blessings poured out. Make plans to attend now.

2. Sister Andrea Coach from the St. James group was suddenly hospitalized in December. She was suffering from appendicitis and had to be operated on immediately. Thankfully she has since made a good recovery. When the doctors went in, they wanted to remove her gall

News on The Homefront



bladder as well (!!) which they claimed was inflamed, but brother Coach would have none of it.

Sister Coach is presently being treated for the gall bladder inflammation by natural means. She appreciates your prayers.

Sinners on Probation

Ayon L. Baxter

What is grace?

The Webster's New World Dictionary has several definitions; Its 7th definition is:

- a) A period of time granted beyond the date set for the performance of an act or payment of an obligation; temporary exemption and,
- b) Favour shown by granting such a delay.

The same dictionary also give theological definitions for the word as follows:

- a) The unmerited love and favour of God toward mankind
- b) Divine influence acting in a person to make the person pure, morally strong, etc.
- c) The condition of a person brought to God's favour through this influence
- d) A special virtue, gift, or help given to a person by God.

Let us apply these definitions to salvation to see what we can learn of God's grace towards mankind.

Before Adam and Eve sinned God warned them that in the day they should eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil they would surely die. In actual fact they did not immediately die physically when they ate the fruit, but a sentence of death came upon them the moment they disobeyed God. So, by Webster's 7th definition, they were granted grace, that is, a period of time beyond the day they should have died as a payment for sin. They were temporarily exempted from death. A favour was granted in this delay, and (d) a gift of special virtue and help was made available to them. Why? It was because of the unmerited **love** and favour of God toward mankind (definition 8.a).

"But how was God able to do this?" You may ask. Jesus had not yet died,

so how was justice satisfied?

The answer lies in the foreknowledge of God and we see it explained in the book of Revelation. In Revelation chapter 13 and in the last part of verse 8 we read,

"...whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world".

Jesus was slain from the foundation of the world! That is, before the world was made, he was reckoned slain! Jesus, as far as his Father was concerned, was already slain for mankind. God had already given Jesus to die as a propitiation for mankind. This was an absolute, unchangeable certainty, and so, this sacrifice, reckoned as being done, made the way for grace to be granted to humanity so that Adam could be given probationary time, and could receive through faith, this grace along with all his children. In helping the pair to understand the nature of sin and its consequences God killed an animal and used the skin to cover them both, symbolizing that through Jesus' death and resurrection, the covering of his righteousness was made possible.

ON PROBATION?

The same dictionary defines, "probation" in the following way:

"the suspension of a sentence of a convicted but not yet imprisoned, on condition of good behaviour and regular reporting to a probation officer".

Adam should have died the moment he sinned but he was granted a stay of that punishment; a probation, and as God demonstrated to them by the sacrifice of the animal, the death of Christ, they looked forward to, and accepted by faith, the atoning gift of the righteousness of Christ.

Although the heavenly justice system is not exactly represented by the

earthly, it gives a reasonable view of what God has done for us through His grace. When Adam sinned he was placed on probation and every child



which is born into this world is given a life of probation because of what Jesus did at Calvary.

Because Jesus died the death that Adam, and all men should have died, he has claimed the right to resurrect all, the repented, saved sinner, as well as the impenitent. The righteous will be resurrected to everlasting life and sinners will also be resurrected. But in the case of sinners it will be to face the consequences of rejecting the opportunity to be saved. It will be to face the consequences of not believing on the only begotten Son of God who came to give life and give it more abundantly. In other words they would have violated their probation as it were, and so the original sentence of death is "unsuspended." The original sentence must be carried out because they violated the terms of their probation which were simply that they should accept the life granted in Christ.

This is brought out in the parable of Jesus, of the unmerciful servant; who, when his master had forgiven him of a

huge debt, found a fellow servant, who owed him a small amount of money, and required him to repay in full. But when the fellow servant could not repay him, he cast him into prison until he was able to repay. When his master heard what had happened he called him and said;

“O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.” (Matt. 18:32-34)

In this case even though his master had forgiven him and suspended his punishment, because of what he did after-

wards, his punishment was unsuspended. It seems he was on probation and he blew it.

Today we have the opportunity to accept life instead of death. It is only wisdom that we should all accept the free gift of God in Christ Jesus. He knows that we cannot help ourselves because we are born with this thing called Sin which has condemned us to die. But while we were in this helpless state Jesus Christ sacrificed and laid down his life in our stead, and in exchange for ours he offers his pure righteous life.

If you have not yet experienced this new life, will you not now accept His free offer? He is eagerly waiting for you to come unto him. His arms are stretched out to you right now. If you recognize your helplessness, right now,

he is able to help you.

It matters not how many times you have failed trying to do the right, trying to be righteous by your own efforts, trying to keep His laws. If you have now come to understand that you cannot do it while you are in Adam with sin reigning over you, then, confess to Him all that burdens you and he will forgive and save you right now. Jesus will, in exchange for your worthless depraved life, live his righteous life in you and save you from eternal death. You will be a new creation; born again of the spiritual Adam, Jesus Christ. The door is opened unto everlasting life and Jesus is that open door, the way, the truth and the life and you are invited to come in and sup with Him.



Understanding Life in Christ

Jerry Zuk

RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH

Our righteousness, our sanctification is Christ and is received only by faith immediately upon conversion. This righteousness is wholly complete apart from and before anything we do, and is therefore recognized to be righteousness by faith only (1 Cor. 6:11; 1 Thess. 5: 23.; Heb. 10:10; 1 Cor 1:30; Acts 26:18; Heb. 2:11; 2 Thess. 2:13, Rom. 3:22; Heb. 4:11). Christ is our righteousness (Rom. 10:3,4, Rom. 8:9,10, 1 Cor. 2:16). We are God’s workmanship. The substance, the evidence of this, is faith itself. Because we believe, it is reality (Eph. 2:10; Heb. 1:11).

UNRIGHTEOUSNESS BY UNBELIEF

The only thing that separates us from God and his righteousness is unbelief, which results in unrest, in striving by our own efforts against sin (Rom. 4:4,5; Heb. 3:12; Heb. 4:6,10,11; Gal. 5:4). The work is finished, Jesus condemned sin (Rom. 8:2,3), he put away sin once and for all by the sacrifice of himself for all men (Heb. 9:26; 1 John

2:2), but the finished work is only accessed by faith, by those who believe (1 Tim. 4:10; Rom. 3:22). “Whatsoever is not of faith is sin” (Rom. 14:23). The fate of the unbelieving is destruction because unbelief is sin’s origin (Rev. 21:8).

MATURITY IN CHRIST

We confuse our sanctification with our education and maturity process. Education may put us more in harmony with God’s plan, but that does not make us any more righteous. Maturity may come with discernment, but that does not make us anymore righteous, because education and maturity are not the source of righteousness. Christ is the source of righteousness/sanctification. We are saved no differently than the thief on the cross. Just as he was, we are sanctified (set apart unto God) and justified immediately upon conversion (1 Cor. 6:11).

Our perfection is relative to our maturity, meaning a person in Christ is not immediately perfectly mature, but he is all that is expected of him at that

stage. God does not expect any more of him and that is, effectively, perfection. He is sanctified, complete, pure as far as the heart is concerned (1 Tim. 1:5).

Our maturity develops through openness to what God reveals so we become knowledgeable of His will (Phil. 3:15; Heb. 6:1). Ignorance and unintentional error are not sin because they are not problems of the heart, they are just a part of our education and maturity process. God’s concern is the heart, the mind. When our heart, our mind is right our actions will be right, – end of story – because we are reborn with a right heart, right mind, new nature, “partakers of the divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4). “We have the mind of Christ” (1 Cor. 2:16). We become a part of Christ, the Seed (Eph. 5:30; 1 Cor 6:15-17; Gal. 3:16,29), and committing sin is not an issue anymore because “*whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he can not*

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The Promise vs The Law

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every single detail of that law, because the same law says that if you do not do everything which it requires then you are cursed. And Jesus explained, that if you are even angry with your brother, you are already a murderer.

So when you set out to obtain righteousness by the law, make sure that you can keep it perfectly! God is perfect, and nothing but absolute perfection can meet His eye. James says, if you keep the whole law, but offend in one point, you are guilty of all (James 2:10). So it doesn't matter that you never stole, killed or coveted your neighbour's house, because here on the Sabbath, you just spoke one word pertaining to your own business, and now you are a murderer, a thief an adulterer, a liar. All these things are piled up against you in spite of all your efforts, because you transgressed on one tiny point.

But if you are guilty of all, how far does that put you from God? As far as sin is from righteousness, as far as death is from life, as far as heaven is from hell, in actual fact, an infinite distance away! So when you set out to obtain righteousness by the law, or God's blessings by the law, you're cursed, because you put yourself away from God as far as east is from the west, and there is no greater curse than that.

CHRIST BORE THE CURSE

Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: (Gal 3:13)

What does it mean that Christ became a curse for us? It says that the man who tries to be justified by the law is cursed and we have seen that this curse is separation from God. Here it says that Christ became a curse for us. This means that He was separated from God for our sakes. Our sin was placed upon Him and the essence of that sin

is separation from God. That is what happens to the sinner and that is what happened to Christ. Ellen White says He felt in His own soul the awful separation that sin makes between the soul and God, and it was this that broke the heart of The Son of God. (*Steps to Christ, p.13*)

WHY THEN WAS THE LAW GIVEN

Since the law cannot provide righteousness, it cannot give salvation, and it cannot contribute to the salvation already given in Christ, then what was its purpose? Paul knew that we would have this question because he asks the very same question in verse 19.

Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. (Gal 3:19)

Do we see what he is saying? There was a promise, and salvation is in the promise. Since salvation is what we need and we already have it in the promise of the seed, why did we need the law?

He answers the question by saying, it was added **because of transgressions**. Let us look at that verse carefully. There is something there which makes us know that the administration of the law was a temporary thing and not intended by God to last forever. It says it was added, "till," or **until**. When you do something **until**, then you know that there comes a time when its authority comes to an end.

If the kitchen pipe gets broken off, someone might take a piece of wood and push into the line until he can repair it properly. The piece of wood might stop the leaking partially, but it is not satisfactory to leave it like that. What he has done is a temporary measure, until he can do something more perfect.

Now that's exactly what the Bible says God was doing with the law, He brought in a system, which demanded that men should work and behave in a certain way, to be under a certain discipline. He knew that the system could never save men, He knew they would not keep that law perfectly, so it was not a system that was intended to last forever. But until Christ came, there were certain purposes it had to serve.

Of course, the moral law is good and perfect and remains as a standard of right and wrong forever. But the entire system of government where we are controlled by law is not satisfactory, because law can only tell us how to behave, it cannot enable us to behave in the way that it commands.

A WAY TO GOVERN CHILDREN

At the age of 10, a child still needs to be governed by her parents' rules. When she is 19, they will have far less rules for her. What about when she is 30? She will then be free from their rules. However, this does not mean that her life will be disorderly. If the rules did their job when she was a child she will have a good understanding of good and bad when she is grown and she will walk more perfectly in harmony with those rules than when they governed her life, even though she is now free from those rules.

This illustrates why God gave the Jews the law. They were spiritual children, they could not understand God's principles. For four hundred years they had been slaves, all they knew was the rod and the curse. They could not think for themselves, and so God put them under law to keep them disciplined until they could come to the place where they could understand the gospel.

Now of course there were individual people who understood the gospel in Israel. All who will ever be saved must have had a basic understanding of the gospel, for nobody was ever saved by the law, it was always the gospel. But

the fact is that most of them never found the gospel, and God was trying to bring them to that place where they all would understand and live by the gospel.

When Christ came, the moment had arrived that the law had fulfilled its purpose as a system. God's people were now grown up and so they were ready for the real thing.

So now, we understand what it means to be under law. It means to be governed by rules. To be free from the law, means that it is no longer rules that govern me. The reason for my behaviour is a changed nature – not because rules keep me under discipline.

So Galatians 3:24,25 tells us,

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. (25) But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. (Gal 3:24,25)

ABRAHAM'S SEED

Let us consider finally what verses 26-29 say.

(26) For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. (27) For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. (28) There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is nei-

ther bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. (29) And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Look carefully at what it says in verse 29. It says that if you belong to Christ, you are Abraham's seed. Does it say *seed* or *seeds*? It says, "*Seed*," (singular). Who is the seed of Abraham? Jesus Christ is that Seed.

In verse 15, Paul, made a big point about the singular number of the word "seed." He said God did not say "*seeds*," God said "*seed*" so God was talking about one, not several persons. This same Paul, in this same chapter, says, "if you are Christ's *you* are Abraham's *seed*" (singular). What is he saying?

By Paul's reasoning, if God had said "seeds," who would He have been talking about? He would have been talking about the Jews. But He said "seed." He was referring to the one seed of Abraham and who is this? This seed is Christ. If you belong to Christ, who are you? You are Abraham's seed, which is Christ! Obviously He is equating us to Jesus Christ.

I know we are afraid to say it, because it sounds like blasphemy if we don't understand the point he is making. Of

course there is only one Christ, but what he is saying is, you have become so closely united to Christ that you are a part of Him. As the same Paul says in Ephesians 5:30, "we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones." He is trying to get our dull minds to understand, God has made us a part of His son.

God's name is love, and God is full of grace. It is His way to do the best for the worst, this is the nature of grace. Our God has placed us in an infinitely high place, He has made us a part of His own son's life, and that is who we are. We need to believe it, so that we may live it.

So that the next time you go to your work, it will be Christ who goes there. When you go home to your wife or husband, it will be Christ they will greet as you come through the door. And when Satan tries to tempt you, it will be Christ that he is dealing with. Knowing who we are is an empowering thing, because the reality is that we are a part of the existence of God's own son. If the Bible had not said it, I would never have dared say such a thing, but when God's word says it, I must believe it and so I will preach it.

I pray that you will believe also.



Available Materials



Our last two tapes/audio CDs on the subject of Righteousness by Faith were entitled, "**The Two Covenants**" and "**Being Faithful to the Faith**." Those who are on our regular tape mailing list should have received these, as well as the others in the series on Righteousness by Faith. If you are interested in receiving any of these truth-filled tapes/CDs, please let us know and we will happily send it to you.

As you will understand, tapes and CDs are more costly to send out than the newsletter, therefore, as a general rule we only mail them to those who specifically indicate that they

would like to receive them.

Our message to be mailed out in February will be entitled, "**Amazing Grace**." If you would like to have a copy of this uplifting and enlightening presentation, but you are not on our regular tape-mailing list, then write to us or call and we will be sure to include you in our next mailing.

From Jamaica call: (876) 603-0821

From elsewhere call: (304) 932-4543

Some Fundamental Principles of Righteousness

WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

1. The gospel is that all the world is blessed in one man (Gal. 3:18; John 3:16)
2. The good news is that one does all that is necessary for salvation, for everyone else so **we** don't have to do it! We have only to receive it by believing it. How wonderful to be given everything we need with the only requirement being that we believe it is true!
3. We receive salvation, we do not produce it. It is a package given to us. The name of this package is Christ Jesus. All things which we need are already in this package only waiting to be experienced through faith. When we have Christ we already have all things (1 Cor. 3:21-23)

WHAT IS MAN'S PROBLEM?

4. All men are born condemned (Rom. 5:18; John 3:3). Man is born in a lost state.
5. Adam's sin condemned the entire human race to death, not because they were guilty, but because they were unfit to live (Rom. 5:12,19).
6. Adam's sin caused us to inherit a sinful nature, that is, a degenerate body and a depraved corrupt mind (Rom. 7:14-18). The sinful corrupt nature of this mind, makes us only fit to die (Rom. 8:7-8).
7. Our sinful bodies are not our main problem. The problem is the carnal mind which we are born with (Mark 7:21-23). This is what condemns us and makes us sinners by nature. Jesus was born with our degenerate body, but not our carnal mind.
8. This carnal sinful mind always produces sinful actions (Rom. 8:7). Sinful actions are the result of our being sinners by nature (that is, we have by nature a carnal mind), they are not the reason why we become sinners.
9. Man's great need is a change of nature, not a change of actions (Ezek.

36:26,27). Of course when nature changes, actions will naturally change.

WHAT IS SIN?

10. Sin is the transgression of the law (1 John 3:4)
11. Sin is also described in the Bible as being more than an action. It is regarded also as an irresistible power in the carnal man (John 8:34; Rom. 7:17,20), or a state of being, because the very nature of the carnal man is opposed to God and His law.
12. The root and the source of all sinful action is separation from God (John 15:15). The source of all such separation is the choice to let self rule rather than God.

WHAT IS RIGHTEOUSNESS?

13. Righteousness is a state, a quality of nature which exists inherently, only in God (Matt. 19:17; Rev. 15:4; Rom. 3:22)
14. Fundamentally, righteousness is not something which a person does. It is not an action or a series of actions. (Isa. 64:6; Rom. 3:20)
15. Righteous actions appear when a person is righteous (1 John 3:9). They do not make a person righteous, but they reveal that he is righteous (Gal. 5:22, 23) because the righteous one (Christ) is living in him (Rom. 8:10,11)
16. Righteous actions are always and only and totally the work of God (John 15:5; Rom. 7:18; 1 Thess. 5:23,24)
17. God does not become good by doing good. He does good because He is good. The same is true of those who are in Christ.

HOW TO BECOME RIGHTEOUS?

18. Righteousness is a gift from God which is given to all men in Christ Jesus. (Rom. 3:22; 2 Cor. 5:21)
19. This gift is received only by faith. (Rom. 4:16; Eph. 2:8)
20. All that man needs, whether forgiveness, justification, sanctification

etc. are already given to all humanity in Christ (Eph. 1:3,7,11; Col. 2:9,10). These things belong to every man, but need to be accepted and received personally by faith in Christ. (2 Cor. 5:19; Rom. 5:10)

21. Righteousness as a total gift includes sanctification as well as justification. (1 Cor. 6:11)
22. Man's works contribute nothing to either justification or sanctification. Both are entirely gifts of God's grace in Christ. However, growth in Christ (sometimes referred to as sanctification) is a process which God accomplishes with man's continued cooperation. This process continues for all of the Christian's lifetime whether he lives for two years or nine hundred and sixty-nine.
23. When a person has biblical faith in Christ it means that He has become a part of the very life and existence of Christ as His spirit is united to Christ's spirit (1 Cor. 6:17; Gal. 3:26,29; Rom. 8:9; Eph. 5:30).
24. This union with Christ is the key to everything in Christianity. Because we are united to Christ and are a part of His existence, all that He is and has is ours and is what we are. We are accepted "in the Beloved." (1 Cor. 3:21-23; Eph. 1:6)
25. This is not a theory. This is an actual reality and is our true experience the moment we truly believe. This means that every blessing which God has to give (including the gift of the holy spirit) is ours, to be received, not by hard laborious effort, but simply by faith (Gal. 3:2,5). Available to us at this very moment, because these things already belong to Christ. It is impossible for us to be denied them because we are a part of Christ (Rom. 8:32).
26. This union with Christ is what produces perfect harmony with the law, not because of our laborious efforts, but because Christ is the one who is living and Christ is not the minister of sin (Phil. 2:18; Rom. 8:2-4).

SURRENDER

27. Man’s place in the whole plan is to yield or to surrender to Christ. To choose to have Christ live instead of himself (Rom. 6:1-18; Luke 14:26-27). This surrender, sometimes described as death in the Scriptures is the result of faith in Christ. True faith recognizes that only Christ is fit and able to live, therefore yielding unconditionally and entirely to him is the logical result.

HUMAN EFFORT?

28. This leads to the conclusion that our efforts must be to obtain faith and to maintain faith in Christ (1 Tim. 6:12). When Christ lives in us He will defeat sin in us (Rom. 8:3). When we have a struggle with sin, it is because we are still alive and Christ is not in control (Rom. 6:7).

IMMEDIATELY RIGHTEOUS?

29. This concept views the Christian

life as a total and immediate change (2 Cor. 5:17; 1 John 3:19), rather than a gradual change which takes place through hard struggles. The idea is that what we need is one single act of commitment where I choose that Christ shall live and not I (Rom. 6:6; Luke 14:33). My life in Christ is the maintaining of that position (Gal. 5:16; Col. 2:6). This is what death to self means. I do not have the option of making any personal choices when I have made that choice that Christ shall live instead of me. So the yoke is “easy,” for sin is not difficult for Christ to overcome.

30. In Christ the nature becomes good **immediately**. It is Christ who lives and not I (Gal. 2:20). However, the person in Christ can only live the life of Christ in harmony with the knowledge which he has. Christ does not hijack a person’s will or supernaturally give him perfect knowledge. We are still educated by the word of God. So while a person may have a perfect nature

(mind - the mind of Christ), yet he may still be a babe in that he still has a lot to learn concerning God’s will (1 Pet. 2:2). As a result he may even still be worshipping on Sunday for example. However, this is not counted as sin by God (John 9:41) because his nature is in perfect harmony with God’s nature, even though he is not perfectly educated.

31. We may understand this concept better if we consider that when Jesus was a child of four, His obedience to God was perfect, but only insofar as He had knowledge of God’s will (Luke 2:52). His nature desired only to obey, but He could only obey in harmony with the light which He had. When He was twenty His actions and His lifestyle were a more complete revelation of God’s character than when He was four, but at every step, He was perfect because His nature was perfect.



Letters

I believe you continue to rejoice in the truth of righteousness by faith, in fact there is no greater truth at this time. I have just been reading the latest news letter, and thanks be to God my heart rejoices even more. Loads of questions initially sprang into my mind, but as I read things were made clearer. I still have a few questions, and sometimes I wish we were there just to have a discussion on this all important matter face to face.

One thing that made my heart glad, was the article on THE MEANING OF THE CROSS. All through my Christian years, (19 years maybe) I always heard about the cross, the glory of the cross, to love the cross and so on, but believe me I did not half comprehend the meaning until now.

.... Now it just appeared so simple, and a lot more texts that previously I found difficult to understand, make a lot more sense. I know there is lots more for me to understand, but I just thank God now for what He has been teaching me/us and pray that as He

reveals more of Himself He will give us a receptive heart to follow. We were looking at the text in Gal. 2:20 and that seems to summarize nicely the message of the cross

We might not have a lot of opportunity to share as we would love to, but we are aware our lives are the greatest testimony to have, and I thank God for the transformation in my life as each day He helps me to submit to Him, so that I can live His life for that day.

Keep us daily in your prayers as we do the same for you. Greet the brethren, remain faithful, it wont be long until our faith will be a reality. (England)

I received your CD. It was so, so, so, so good. (USA)

Enclosed is a gift for your ministry. I thoroughly enjoy your messages. Please help me to understand the message of Righteousness by faith in a childlike way. I believe it is the key to God preparing His people for the final

days. (USA)

I would like to know how to obtain more of your tapes, CDs or DVD videos. Please send me that information. I appreciate the literature which you sent. (USA)

Would it be possible for you to send some of your tracts and books Please keep my Daughter and me in your prayers. I am realizing just how totally wrong I have been and am. Thank you for your God Given Time and prayer. (USA)

Hope this finds you well and full of courage in the Lord. Received the CDs and Cassette tapes on Righteousness by Faith. Thank you. I truly think they are light from heaven. I believe they hold the keys to the kingdom. (They) have filled my soul as nothing else has. I have passed them on to a lady that is hungry for this message. (USA).



UNDERSTANDING LIFE IN CHRIST

Continued from page 7

sin, because he is born of God” (1 John 3:9).

A HIGHER STANDARD

Now we are no longer concerned with the letter of the law because “the letter killeth but the spirit giveth life... Now the Lord is that spirit and where the spirit of the Lord is there is liberty” (2 Cor. 3:6-17). “Now we are delivered from the law” (Rom. 7:6), to a higher standard, “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ” (Rom. 8:2). Our focus is to be on Jesus the source of righteousness, not the law, the definition of righteousness. It is easy to get drawn into self righteous defending of the

good law, into legalism and away from Jesus. But the law only describes righteousness, it cannot produce righteousness. God did not give us a false description of righteousness in giving us the law, but we must always ask ourselves, “what is the source of righteousness?” The answer will always be, Jesus (His spirit - 2 Co.r 3:17; Rom. 8:9,10) is our source of righteousness received by faith only. We are fully God’s workmanship (Eph. 2:10). This is righteousness by faith apart from the law for those who believe (Rom. 10:4).

We are ministers of the new Testament, not the old, because the letter killeth (spiritually) and the spirit (Jesus)

giveth life (2 Cor. 3:6). The law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ (Gal. 3:24,25), after that we put on Christ (the new man/nature), we (our old man/nature) dies (daily) and Christ lives in us (Gal. 3:27; Eph. 4:24; Rom. 6:6,7; Gal. 2:20; 1 Cor. 15:31).

Now all is fulfilled by Christ’s righteousness as revealed by his higher standard. We use our liberty by love to serve one another and so fulfil the “law of Christ” (Gal. 5:13&14, Gal. 6:2, Matt. 5:17).



Open Face

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