



Open Face

One interest will prevail, one subject will swallow up all others. Christ our Righteousness

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Understanding the Covenants

David Clayton



As I have had discussions with feast-keepers over the past 20 years or so, I have tried to understand first of all, the reason why feast-keeping is so attractive to some people and secondly, what are the reasons presented by feast-keepers in defense of the practice. Many feast-keepers speak of the wonderful “blessing and fellowship” they enjoy during the time of the feasts, however, personal feelings are a very poor way of determining what is true and what is false. I am sure many who go to church at Easter or Christmas get equally warm fellowship and “blessings,” as feast-keepers find during the feasts, but this does not mean that their practice is ordained of God. It is kind of similar to how many Mormons claim that they know the Book of Mormon tells the truth because when they read it they get a warm feeling in their bosom. I was urged to try it by some Mormons once, and wanting to be fair, I reluctantly agreed. When I read it, I did not get a warm feeling, but got a distinctly

cold feeling.

Of course feast-keepers, like everybody else, present Bible verses to support their views. Those of us who oppose feast-keeping read the same biblical evidence differently. Unless we understand the underlying principles behind what we believe, we will manipulate Scripture to make it say whatever we want.

TWO COVENANTS MISUNDERSTOOD

The heart of the confusion lies with the misunderstanding of the two covenants. Feast keepers lean to the interpretation of E.J. Waggoner. Waggoner taught that the two covenants were really the same one covenant, and that the only difference was in how people approached the covenant. In other words, there was not really an Old Covenant and a New Covenant established by God, it was how people responded to what God set up which made it either Old or New. So he taught that the covenant which God made with Israel at Mount Sinai is the same covenant which he made with Abraham and is the same covenant that we are under today, better understood as “the Everlasting Covenant.”

In his thinking, the covenant is really an agreement between man and God in which God promises to accept people and to bless them if they will be obedient to his laws. The terms of the covenant are the same in all ages - keep the law and you will live. According to him, the only difference is that at Sinai, the people promised to keep the law in

their own strength, while true believers in all ages depend on Christ to give them the strength to keep it. However, the terms of the covenant are the same - keep the law and you will live. The same law in all ages, the same terms, “obey and live.” If one depends on his own efforts, then it becomes the old covenant, if one depends on Christ, then it becomes the new covenant.

TWO TIME PERIODS

Let me say without hesitation or apology that this is absolutely not what the Bible teaches. It required a great deal of distortion of the biblical facts for Waggoner (and those who support his ideas) to arrive at this conclusion.

The **BIBLICAL** understanding of the two covenants is that they are two different systems by which God governed and taught people in two different **PERIODS OF TIME**. The period from the Exodus to the coming of Christ is the time of the Old Covenant. In this period of time, God interacted with his people through a legal system consisting of rules, ceremonies, rituals, sacrifices etc. which were shadows, types and illustrations of something to come in the future. The period of the New Covenant began with the death of Christ and extends on into eternity. In the new

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Open Face is dedicated to the promotion and the restoration of apostolic Christianity. 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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covenant God's people deal with the real things. These real things were represented in the Old Covenant system by ceremonies and rituals which were types and shadows. For example, the animal sacrifices of the Old Covenant were replaced by the sacrifice of Christ, the real sacrifice of God. This is the difference between both understandings of the covenants.

THE EVERLASTING COVENANT

It is true that the New Covenant is really the "everlasting covenant." This is the plan that God had in mind from times immemorial, it was the eternal plan from which man began to benefit from the moment that he sinned. This everlasting covenant was really God's plan, God's promise, God's agreement to bring humanity back to himself and to save humanity in Jesus Christ. This was God's eternal plan and from the beginning, all who believed in God were counted as righteous and had the assurance of some day, receiving eternal life

through Christ. However, while this was God's eternal plan, the plan was not actually implemented until Jesus came to earth as a human being. Before that time it was only a promise which had not yet been realized.

This is an important fact which we need to recognize. If a trustworthy person makes a promise, then it is certain that that promise will be fulfilled. However, it is obvious that a promise is not the same as the fulfillment of the promise. If somebody promises to give me a car, I can be happy today, I can make plans about how I will use the car, I can feel like a car-owner, but I cannot drive the car until I receive it. That is obvious. A promise is not the same as the fulfillment of the promise. Another example is that God has promised to take us to heaven, but none of us can walk on golden streets today. The promise is not the same as the fulfillment. When the promise is fulfilled, then we will actually walk on golden streets instead of just dreaming about it.

So the promise was not fulfilled, the everlasting covenant was not experienced until Jesus came and died in AD 31. Fifty days later he poured out his life upon his church, thus fulfilling the promise of the everlasting covenant by filling his people with the life of the new creation. This is the same covenant which was referred to as the "New Covenant."

But if this was the Everlasting Covenant, why was it called the "New Covenant" at this time? It was thus called, because for a time, before this Everlasting covenant was implemented, God made another, *temporary* covenant with physical Israel, which governed the relationship between them and him, while they waited for the fulfillment of the everlasting covenant. This temporary covenant was implemented BEFORE the everlasting covenant, though the everlasting covenant was promised long before. So when the everlasting covenant was finally fulfilled or implemented, this temporary covenant became an OLD covenant, no longer relevant or necessary and it was abolished. In light

of this, the everlasting covenant was labeled as the "New Covenant," in contrast to the old one.

In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away. (Heb 8:13)

THE SINAI COVENANT

Now it is important that we understand that the Old Covenant was associated with the system of government given at Mount Sinai, which defined the relationship which God had with the physical Israelites. This covenant was not a spiritual covenant and it was not intended to provide a way to everlasting life. It was a temporary relationship, which defined God's way of interacting with these Hebrews who were called his people, but who, by and large were carnal, worldly-minded and faithless. This covenant was made with the Hebrews, not with anybody else who lived before them, or with any other nation.

And Moses called all Israel, and said unto them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep, and do them. The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The LORD made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day. (Deut 5:1-3)

This covenant outlined a lifestyle based on conformity to rules and rituals and ceremonies which served several purposes. First, they were a means of restraining the carnal behavior of the people, but secondly, they served as teaching tools and illustrations which pointed to the future true kingdom of God when Jesus would come and set up the true covenant with the true people of God.

This old covenant involved all the rules, the rituals and ceremonies given at Mount Sinai. It was designed and established by God to govern the people and to serve as a teaching tool to prepare the way for the coming of Christ. This covenant was God's plan, God's idea,

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Did The Apostles Keep Feasts?



Most of, if not all the apostles kept feasts long after Jesus had established the new covenant and returned to heaven. It may be even more of a surprise to realize that they not only kept the feasts, but they also kept most of, if not all the other rituals and ceremonies associated with the law of Moses!

Unfortunately, in the early church a situation developed where there were two different standards for Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians. This may be hard to believe at first, but the evidence is unmistakable. Let us examine a few passages which reveal this fact:

And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present. And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry. And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law: And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come. (Acts 21:18-22)

This is a description of what happened on Paul's last journey to Jerusalem. It appears that James, the brother of Jesus, was the head of the church at that time because we are specifically told that Paul went in "unto James." It mentions also that all the elders were present, but it is significant that James is mentioned

by name.

These brethren were happy to hear about Paul's success in working for the Gentiles, but it soon becomes clear that their main concern is the work for the Jews. They tell Paul that there are "thousands" of Jews who believe (that is, they have accepted Christ)", but notice something about these Jewish Christians: "**they are all zealous for the law!**" Let us not be confused, they were not zealous for the ten commandment law, they were zealous for the law of Moses.

These elders are concerned about Paul's influence. They hear that he has been teaching the Jewish believers who live in Gentile lands that they should no longer practice the law of Moses and they are concerned that when they hear that Paul is present, these "Christian" Jews are going to gather together to make trouble. So they give him some advice:

Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them; Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law. As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication. Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them. (Acts 21:23-26)

Paul is to show these Jews that he also is a keeper of the law of Moses. He is to do this by joining four other Jewish-Christian believers who have taken a

Nazirite vow, which involved, among other things shaving his head and eventually offering a sacrifice.

Why would they ask Paul to do such a thing to satisfy "believing Jews?" It was because those Jews were "zealous for the law," and obviously were still keeping all the rituals and ceremonies of the law *including sacrificing animals!* It is obvious that these leaders of the church were in full harmony with this practice and were involved in it themselves.

Now notice what they say immediately after giving Paul this advice: "*As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing.*" The Gentile believers were specifically excluded from keeping the law of Moses. They should observe no such thing. Only four things were excepted. They were to keep themselves from, things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled and from fornication.

So it is very, very clear that while the Gentile believers had nothing to do with the law of Moses, the Jewish believers, including the apostles, continued to keep it, including the observance of feast days, and going so far as to still offer animal sacrifices!

This was a double standard in the early church and to some extent, we can understand it because it was difficult for Jews to simply abandon the system by which they had lived all their lives, and which was a part of their very identity. The Jewish religion was not simply religion to them, it was integrated into all aspects of their lives from birth to death and was as much a part of their culture and national identity as it was religion. This is why Paul, when writing to Jews in Rome, told them that if one person held one day as being more holy than another, they should not judge one another about it, but they should make

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Understanding The Covenants

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it was not the idea of the people. It was not they who established this covenant, it was God. I repeat, this covenant was not simply an agreement by the people to obey God, the covenant involved ALL the rules laid down in the law. It was a system by which God related to Israel. In other words, the covenant was limited by the terms which defined the relationship between God and the people. The people were to be his people if they lived by the system which God had set up to govern them. If they were faithful to it, he would grant them victory over their enemies, he would give them long life, he would establish them in the land. That was it. There was no eternal life promised in that covenant, no promise of heaven. It was a temporary covenant based on earthly things. It served a good purpose for a time, but it was impossible that it should last forever. When the true covenant was established, that temporary covenant with its temporary laws, its temporary ceremonies and rituals became old and vanished away.

But are we saying that God did not give those people the opportunity to be saved? Not at all. In all ages, no matter what system of government a person was under, those who had true faith in God had the assurance of salvation. Nobody was ever saved by the law, nobody was ever saved by his works. Whether it was Enoch, Abraham, Moses, or the people who lived during the time of the old Covenant, when a person had faith, it was "counted to him for righteousness (Gal 3:6,7)." All who died in faith had the assurance of being saved one day.

Nevertheless, the system of the law under which God placed the Israelites was not a system which provided salvation, that was not its purpose. Salvation was always ONLY through faith. The law was a system of government and a teaching tool, designed for one particular nation (the Hebrews) so that

they could fulfill God's purpose for them as a nation.

A SECONDARY APPLICATION

Let me point out that in a secondary sense, a person may apply the two covenants experience to himself. There may be a time when he chooses to approach God by the works of the law and then later he may approach God through Christ, so in a sense, he may be said to pass through the two covenants in his own personal experience. But the question is, is this what the Bible really refers to as the Old and the New covenant? Absolutely not!! The biblical understanding is that there are two ages, two periods of time with two very different systems of government. Two different ways in which God dealt with his people.

For those who hold to Waggoner's perspective, the laws which were given at Mount Sinai with the ceremonies, the rituals etc. were not limited only to the age before Christ. In their thinking the old covenant was the same as the new, so the laws and lifestyle are the same, the only difference being whether you chose to keep them in your strength or in Christ's strength. The rules were the same, regardless of whether it was the old or the new covenant. On the basis of this thinking, we can see that when we come to the New Covenant, there is really no need to put away the laws and the lifestyle given at Mount Sinai.

The only reason why most feast-keepers do not practice animal sacrifice and circumcision, is because those two things are specifically mentioned as done away in the New Testament. As far as they are concerned, everything else still remains relevant, still to be observed, because there is no difference between both covenants! We can see that there is no clear-cut principle which makes a division between what is still relevant in the law and what is abolished. There is no pattern or principle, so there is a hodge-podge of beliefs and practices. Some feast-keepers take the feasts, tithe-paying and the definitions of what food is clean and unclean, plus the Ten Commandments, from the law.

Others practice wearing tassels, burning incense, eating bitter herbs, blowing shofars and other rituals demanded in the law. This is the reason why it is so difficult to get feast-keepers to see the folly in feast-keeping. With a false concept of the covenants, there really is some excuse for feast-keeping. Underlying the problem of feast-keeping is the greater problem of a false understanding of the covenants.



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allowances and accept the person whether he felt one day was more holy than another, or vice versa (Rom 14:4-6)

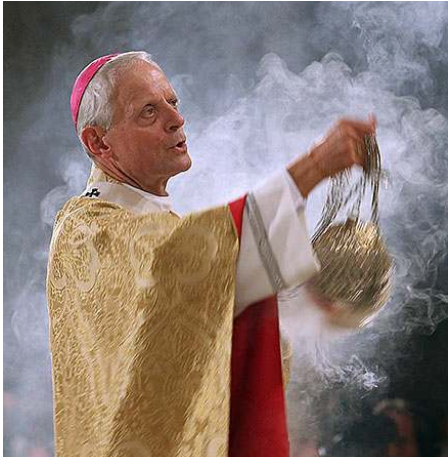
However, it is also clear that the Jewish Church leaders in Jerusalem (particularly James) were very strict about the Jews still sticking to the law of Moses. They were deeply concerned that the Christian faith which bypassed the law, would cause the Jews to lose their national identity. It seems that to many of them, being a Jew was more important than being a Christian. On one occasion when Peter went to visit the Church in Antioch, something happened which is very revealing:

But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. (Gal 2:11-13)

Here Paul relates a troubling incident. Peter and the other Jewish believers had fellowshiped with the Gentile believers in the true spirit of Christianity. The segregation between Jew and Gentile required by the Jewish religion was

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Justifying Feast-keeping



A PRE-ADVENT MINISTRY?

Many feast-keepers now make another claim for feast-keeping which goes further than any other claim in making the life, death and resurrected ministry of Jesus Christ of none effect.

Today we are living in the time when the true Passover has already been sacrificed, the true experience of Pentecost, the coming of the Comforter, has already been fulfilled. If we are living in the time of the reality, why should we practice the ritual shadow anymore? Why not simply leave the shadow alone and take hold of the real thing? These brethren claim that by practicing the ritual, this actually helps us to experience the real thing. In other words, the ritual is a necessary tool to help us to step into the true experience.

They say that this was always the purpose of the rituals, the keeping of feasts and the practice of the ceremonials of the law were not simply types or shadows, pointing to future realities. They claim that before the incarnation, Jesus was already our high priest and minister in the heavenly sanctuary, and that these rituals actually helped the people before Christ came, to experience the real events, and that today they still serve the same purpose. In other words, the antitypes of the feasts were already being experienced even before Christ fulfilled them! So the experience

represented by the Passover was already available to be experienced before Christ died. The experience represented by Pentecost was already available before Christ was glorified and the Comforter was given.

IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH

During the time of Jesus' ministry on earth, he said that the time had come for God to be worshiped in a different way. From that point, God was seeking for *true* worshipers who would worship in spirit and in truth. The worship of God's people up to that time involved rituals, ceremonies, types and shadows, it was centered on things and places limited to this earth. In fact, the apostle Paul refers to the practices of that system of worship as "carnal ordinances," and he referred to the temple associated with it as "a worldly sanctuary (Heb 9:10,1)." Most of the gatherings for worship centered around the temple and the city of Jerusalem. It was not spirit, and it was not truth. Jesus declared the end of that kind of worship:

Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. . . the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. (John 4:21-24)

The worship associated with that former system was not in "spirit and in truth." Worship which centers on worldly locations (Jerusalem) and on worldly ceremonies and ordinances and rituals, cannot be spiritual. Jesus said the hour had arrived for that kind of worship to come to an end. The Bible teaches specifically that this kind of worship had to do with the services of Moses' law.

For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus

Christ. (John 1:17)

John says: "Grace and TRUTH came by Jesus Christ." Here he is making a clear contrast between two things, the law given by Moses, versus the truth. The law of Moses was not truth, truth only arrived when Jesus came. John is not speaking of truth as a fact which is opposed to error He is not suggesting that Moses' law was false or erroneous. In this sense, truth means what is real, as opposed to what is a symbol, or an illustration. The law of Moses was only a "shadow (Heb 10:1; Col 2:16)," Jesus Christ came and brought what is truth, or what is real.

So when Jesus said, the hour had come when those who worship God must worship in spirit and in truth, what he was clearly saying was that the time had arrived when God was no longer to be worshiped through the types, shadows and symbols. The time had come when the TRUE worshipers would worship God in a real way, interacting with the real things rather than the types and shadows associated with Moses' law.

It is clear that in the religion which Jesus emphasized and established, rituals and ceremonies do not exist. Rituals and ceremonies have no value in themselves (except in paganism), they were used by God to enable the Israelites to learn of things which would happen *in the future*. In other words, they were teaching tools, illustrations to help people to learn of what God would do in the future. As Paul tells us, they were "shadows of things to come."

COMMUNION AND BAPTISM?

Yet, one may ask, don't we still practice the rituals of communion and baptism? Are these not simply rituals representing some greater reality? This makes it seem as though it is not really true that in the New Testament age, ritualism and ceremonialism have been abolished. If this is true, then we have a good reason for continuing to practice other rituals and

ceremonies (such as feast days).

But let us look more closely at the communion service and baptism; are these simply rituals and ceremonies? Are they simply outward practices pointing to some greater reality? There is a great difference between these two practices and the ceremonies of the law. The ceremonies of the law pointed to FUTURE realities. While they were being practiced, the realities to which they pointed did not yet exist. For example, when they killed a lamb, it was pointing to the death of Christ which had not yet taken place. As soon as Christ died as the reality, then the sacrificing of lambs (the type), was ended forever. From that point, all who sacrificed animals were pagans, not Christians. The same principle applied to the sanctuary service. As soon as Christ entered into his heavenly ministry the ministry in the earthly sanctuary, the type, was ended forever. It no longer has any relevance to God. The same principle applies to EVERY SINGLE ASPECT of the law with its shadows and types. Christ has come as the fulfillment of the law, the typical, shadowy law has no more relevance.

The communion service and baptism on the other hand, do not point to events to take place *in the future!* No, no. They focus on experiences *in the present.* They are doorways by which we enter into experiences which are available now, rather than in the future. They are in fact, portals, avenues by which we actually enter into those experiences of being born again and of partaking of the flesh and blood, the life of Christ. In case we think these are simply representative rituals, notice these words of the apostle Paul, speaking of the communion:

But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. (1Cor 11:28-30)

Amazingly, Paul says that if a person

partakes of the communion, but does not discern the Lord's body he is eating and drinking condemnation to himself! Because of this, people were actually getting weak and sickly and some were even dying!! This is astonishing, but it is clear that the communion service is not simply a ritual, but is an experience in which we actually do partake of the life of Christ. This is not to say that the bread and the wine are literally flesh and blood as the Catholics believe, but it is clear that they are intended to be a point of contact, a doorway by which we can experience the real thing, as we interact with the symbol. The same is true of water baptism, we enter into the death and resurrection of Christ through the experience of water baptism. Our faith is energized by these experiences to take hold of the realities.

So there is a clear difference between



the shadowy rituals of the law, and the communion and baptism which are not shadows of the future, but doorways to a present experience. It is because of this undeniable fact that feast-keepers have tried to say that the feasts are also doorways into experiencing the reality to which they pointed. This is an obvious fallacy however, because we are told plainly that the ceremonies of the law were shadows of things *to come*, (future things) not things present. Feasts could not help people to enter into experiences which were not yet present. It is clear that the realities to which the feasts pointed were not yet available when the feasts were instituted at Mount Sinai, because obviously, Jesus had not yet died, so there was no true Passover, the Comforter was not yet given so there was no true Pentecost etc. The feasts were nothing but representations of future things.

One other important point to note is

that there is only one necessity in the true Christian experience and it is to have Christ living within. Nothing else is required, this is all. While in the law, there were hundreds of necessary requirements, in the Christian experience, we are complete in Christ and need nothing other than him. We are complete in him (Col 2:9,10). This is why God has ordained the communion and baptism, because both these ceremonies are doorways to this single great experience. In baptism, we enter into Christ, we become members of his body, a part of his life, while in the communion service we partake of his life, through taking his flesh and his blood. It is all about the one great essential, experiencing the life of Christ.

A FALSE PREMISE

In order to defend feast-keeping, some feast keepers have begun to teach that the events represented by the feasts such as the death of Christ, the giving of the holy spirit, the atonement, the end of sin etc. were all available from the very foundation of the world. Everything was just as fully available as if Christ had already done it all, long before Christ actually came to earth!! This is where feast-keeping now attacks the work of Christ making it unnecessary and effectively making Christ irrelevant. If all that Christ came to do was already available four thousand years before he came, then obviously, his coming was unnecessary. But this is what feast-keeping teaches, because there is a need to show that keeping feasts was not simply a symbol, but was a doorway to a present experience, just like the communion and baptism.

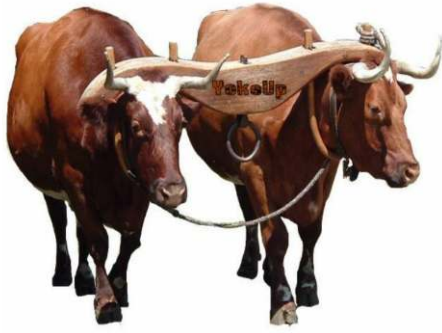
In other words, this is an attempt to make feast-keeping equal to baptism and communion so that as long as we see communion and baptism as still necessary, we will also hang on to feast-keeping.

Feast-keepers and other law-oriented people defend their position by quoting Revelation 13:8.

And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names

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The Yoke of Bondage



Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. (Gal 5:1)

The word, “bondage,” is often associated with slavery. Because of this, some people have concluded that when Paul speaks of “the yoke of bondage,” here in Galatians, Paul is cautioning the Galatians to not become entangled again with sin. Not surprisingly, I first heard this interpretation from a feast-keeper. Of course, those who keep feasts will not accept any evidence which demonstrates that the works of the law are negative and abolished. However, when we look at how the apostle Paul uses the word, “bondage,” and especially in the book of Galatians, it becomes very clear that Paul is referring to the law, when he speaks of “the yoke of bondage.” Let us look at the passage in context:

Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. (Gal 5:1-4)

A yoke is an instrument which is used to bind two animals (usually oxen) together in such a way that where one goes the other is compelled to follow. A yoke is not a bad thing if it binds you to something helpful and good. When

Jesus says we are to take his yoke, it is a good thing. To be bound to Jesus in such a way that where he goes, we go, is a wonderful goal. However, when we are yoked so something which is harmful, or which keeps us in a place of disadvantage, then a yoke is a bad thing.

When Paul speaks of the yoke of bondage, he shows that he is referring particularly to circumcision. In fact, anybody who reads the letter to the Galatians will be aware that this was the primary issue that led to Paul writing this letter. Paul had introduced these Galatians to the gospel, they had received Christ and been baptized with the holy spirit. However, later on some Judaizers had come along and persuaded these people that Christ alone was not enough. If they wanted to be accepted by God, they also needed to be identified with the nation of the Jews by being circumcised. This letter was Paul’s response to this heretical idea.

But circumcision was not the only issue, Paul declares that if a person is circumcised then he is duty bound to keep the whole law. He is a “debtor to do the whole law.” Was Paul correct in saying this? Does it follow logically that if a person practices religious circumcision on the basis of what the law requires, then he is also obligated to observe everything else in the law? The point is, if a person feels that God requires him to practice one part of the law, there is no logical reason to exclude the rest of the law because it was God who gave the entire system of the law. He did not just give one part, he gave all of it in a package at Mount Sinai, so if observing one part of it is still necessary, that very fact means that all of it is still necessary. This is the reasoning behind Paul’s statement that if a person is circumcised, “he is a debtor to do the whole law.”

It should be evident that this principle applies to all the requirements of the law and not just circumcision. If prac-

ticing circumcision puts a person under obligation to keep all the law, then practicing any part of the law has the same consequence - it makes one obligated to keep all the law. So when Paul says, “be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage,” he is not referring only to circumcision, but to the entire system of the law with all its rituals and ceremonies.

As we look at the other verses in Galatians where Paul uses the word, “Bondage,” it becomes even more clear that Paul is using this word “bondage,” to refer to the government of the law and not to the rulership of sin.

But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: (Gal 2:3-4)

This is the first place where the word is used in the book of Galatians. Look carefully at the context and we will see that Paul is speaking about what happened when he went up to Jerusalem with Barnabas to meet with the other apostles. The purpose of the visit was to clear up the issue of whether or not Gentile Christians were still required to observe the law of Moses, including being circumcised (See Acts 15:4,5). Paul says that the people who wanted to impose these laws of Moses on the believers were “false brethren,” who wanted to bring the believers into bondage! Notice that the bondage which they were trying to impose on the people was not the bondage of sin, not the bondage of lawlessness, no, it was bondage to the requirements of the law of Moses!

Galatians 4:1-3 is another place where Paul uses this word bondage. Now that we understand his meaning when he uses the word, it is much easier to understand the point he is making in this passage.

Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: (Gal 4:1-3)

It is hard to see how people can misunderstand this passage. Paul uses the example of a child who will one day become a ruler, maybe a king or some kind of Lord. While he is still a child, he is treated like a slave. Does this mean that he has to work hard like a slave? No, that is not the point Paul is making, the point is that he is not allowed to make decisions for himself and to do as he likes. He is under governors and teachers and he will continue in this condition until he comes of age. The father has appointed a time (maybe when he turns 21), and when that time arrives, this heir will enter into his inheritance and will no longer be treated like a child or a slave. He will be free from the governors and teachers and will then make his own decisions.

Paul says, “even so, we” He explains the meaning of his illustration. He is speaking of the experience of the people of God. He is speaking of “WE.” Who are the people to whom he is referring when he says, “we?” If he was referring to the Galatians, then he would have said, “you.” If we say he was referring to the Jews, then again we ask, why does he say “we,” when the Galatians were not Jews? It is clear that Paul is referring to the people of God, and that he is comparing the history of God’s dealings with his people to the history of a single person (the heir). Paul is comparing the life of a heir, to the history of God’s people.

So, God’s people at one time were “children.” In what sense were they children? They were spiritually immature and ignorant of the true nature of God and his ways. At that time they were placed under governors and tutors which Paul refers to as “elements of the world.” The question is, what were these “elements of the world,” which they were

under? As long as we are faithful in interpreting the illustration of the heir, we see that as the child was under governors and tutors, so God’s people were under these elements of the world. The elements of the world correspond to the governors and tutors.

Paul says “we” were in “bondage,” (there is that word again), under these elements of the world. Now from what we have seen, whenever Paul uses the word, “bondage” in the letter to the Galatians, he is referring to the law of Moses. Does it make sense to say that this is what he is referring to here as well? Is Paul referring to the law when he says that God’s people were placed under the elements of the world? Some people are outraged at the suggestion that the laws, given by God could be referred to as “elements of the world,” but there is absolutely nothing wrong in referring to the law in this way. Look at how Paul refers to the law in the following verses:

Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary. (Heb 9:1)

Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation. (Heb 9:10)

In these two verses Paul is referring to the sanctuary and the services associated with it. In Hebrews 9:1 he refers to the sanctuary as a “worldly sanctuary,” and in verse 10 he refers to the services as “carnal ordinances.” Clearly, these ceremonies and rituals of the law were only “elements of the world.” They had to do only with things of this world, there was nothing eternal or spiritual in the law. It concerned interaction with things of this planet and so were elements of the world. This is what God gave to his people at Mount Sinai because they were spiritual children. They were not yet prepared for the responsibilities of adulthood.

Notice that this is exactly what Paul said in the previous chapter of Galatians, chapter 3:

But before faith came, we were kept

under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. (Gal 3:23-25)

Paul says that before Christ came, before the faith of Jesus became a reality, we, the people of God, were kept under a schoolmaster (the same tutors and governors referred to in chapter 4). Now he says plainly that the schoolmaster was the law. This is what he refers to as “elements of the world,” in chapter 4. The purpose of this schoolmaster or tutor or governor, was to take us to Christ. His duty was to govern, teach, control the people of God until Christ arrived and faith became reality.

When we go back to chapter 4 we see that this arrival of Christ is the time when the child becomes an adult. It is the “time appointed of the father,” when the child is no longer to be governed by the tutors, but is able to make his own decisions. So Paul says very plainly,

But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. (Gal 4:4-5)

God sent his Son to deliver us from the tutors and governors who kept us as slaves. We were kept UNDER the law, UNDER the schoolmaster, UNDER the tutors and governors, UNDER the elements of the world. All these expressions refer to the same thing, they all refer to the bondage of the law. God sent his son to deliver his people from that kind of system so that God’s people, instead of being servants would now live as sons. They would enter into the inheritance appointed of the father because Christ came and his people graduated from childhood where they were treated like slaves, to the liberty of sons, where they are no longer under a schoolmaster, but are full-grown sons.

Again we see that when Paul refers to God’s people being under “bondage,” he is referring to being under the control

of the law. So when we come upon the word again in Galatians 4:9, it is easy to see that he is again referring to the works of the law.

But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? (Gal 4:9)

Paul is speaking to the Galatians as members of the people of God. In making his point so far he has been saying, “we.” It is clear that he is including himself in the points he has been making so he is speaking of the people of God as a whole. He has been looking at the history and development of God’s people from the time of Moses on down through the coming of Christ to the present. But now, instead of saying “we,” he changes and says, “ye.” Now he is referring only to the Galatians and their problem, he is not included. He says they are again turning to the “weak and beggarly elements,” and wanting to return to bondage.

Now some argue that the Galatians must have been turning back to pagan practices because Paul says they were turning “again,” this means that they were going back to something they had once done. As I examine the passage carefully, I have to disagree. There is really no indication anywhere else in this book that the Galatians have any problem other than a desire to practice the works of the law. In fact, Paul says it very clearly just a few verses later:

Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? (Gal 4:21)

He makes it clear that what the Galatians desired was to be under the law, to be governed by the law, to be under the schoolmaster. They were not desiring to return to pagan practices, they were desiring to be equal to their Jewish brethren by adopting their observance of the law.

Paul is again speaking to the Galatians as people of God. Now they (being now God’s people) want to turn back to the way of the law, the weak and beggarly

elements (elements of the world). They, as Gentiles were never under the law, but Paul is speaking to them as a part of the people of God who, as a whole, were once under the law. So they, as the people of God are turning again to that old way.

To illustrate my point, I am a Jamaican in my physical nature. As a Jamaican I can say our people were once under the rule of the British government. But I am also one of the people of God and as a child of God I can say, my people were once slaves in Egypt. As one of the children of God I might be said to be returning to the way of the law if I should start circumcising my children. I would be said to be “returning” to that way, even though as a Jamaican, my people never practiced it. It depends on whether I am speaking of myself as a child of God, or as a Jamaican. I have two identities and therefore two histories. It is the same with the Galatians, they had two identities and two histories. The question is, which identity is Paul addressing when he says that they were “turning again to the weak and beggarly elements?”

Up to this point, he has been viewing them as members of God’s people, he has been tracing their history as a part of the people of God. There is absolutely no reason to believe that he has changed his perspective here. In fact there is strong reason to conclude that he is continuing to see them in the same way as before. He speaks of them seeking to be in “bondage,” which, as we have seen, refers to being under the law. He refers to them turning to the “weak and beggarly elements,” and he has already identified the law as being, “elements of the world.” Now he simply adds the words, “weak and beggarly.”

There is absolutely no problem in seeing the law as weak and beggarly. All that it means is that the law had nothing to offer, it was weak, and it was helpless to make the people any better. The word translated as “beggarly,” simply means to be poor and to have nothing to offer. This exactly describes how effective the law is in helping us to obtain what we need. It was weak and helpless.

For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God. (Heb 7:19)

And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. (Acts 13:39)

For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh. (Rom 8:3)

Finally, we will look at one more passage in Galatians where the word “bondage” is used and not surprisingly, it again refers very plainly to the bondage of the law.

In Gal 4:22-31, Paul uses the illustration of Sarah and her son Isaac, and Hagar and her son Ishmael. He says that these two women with their sons, represent the two covenants. Hagar and Ishmael represent the covenant of the flesh, while Sarah and Isaac represent the covenant of the spirit.

Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. (Gal 4:24-26)

Notice, he says the covenant from Mount Sinai (the law) “gendereth to bondage,” or gives birth to bondage. Furthermore, earthly Jerusalem (which operated on the basis of the law) is in bondage with her children. Again Paul is emphasizing that if the Galatians seek after Sinai, or the practices of Jerusalem, what they are doing is putting themselves back under the system of the old covenant, and the end result will be bondage. Let us take heed, the same thing remains true today.



Are You Drinking Enough Water?

Lenworth Frankson



Are you drinking enough water? It is a known fact that we need water, but for one reason or another, we often fail to make it a priority. Drinking enough water is so important that if our bodies start to become dehydrated we very likely will begin to notice changes in our physical health.

The average person is made up of between 55-60 percent water. This percentage is a clear indication as to why it is so important to keep hydrating and replenishing the body with water throughout the day. If we become dehydrated it is important to do everything to get our hydration level back to where it needs to be as soon as possible.

We have all heard that we are supposed to drink at least eight 8-ounce glasses of water daily. That is almost a full 2-liter bottle. For many folks, like myself, this is indeed a daunting task but in fact, it's a bit misleading. The fact is that fluid requirements vary among individuals based on age, sex, activity level, and even where we live. Our personal fluid requirements can vary each day, depending on the things we are doing, like eating, and drinking. We should also keep in mind that some foods we consume such as fruits and vegetables, are higher in water content than others.

The Institute of Medicine recommends that women get about 2.7 liters that is about 11 cups of water per day. Notice

they, “recommend” not that, “you need to drink” 11 cups of water a day. They are recommending 11 cups, which would, include all sources of water.

Here are some symptoms associated with not drinking enough water.

DRY SKIN

Dry skin very often lacks sebum (oil) and should respond to the application of a good oil-rich skin product. However in some situations, applying a generous amount of moisturizer or lotion won't make much of a difference. If your skin stays dry and chapped despite the application of lotion, it could mean that you are not drinking enough water.

DRY STICKY MOUTH

If you are not drinking enough water your mouth and tongue may become extra dry and sticky. There are some situations however where dry mouth happens to be a side effect of the medication a person is taking. Also being excessively thirsty is actually a symptom of dehydration. In any case, drinking water will help replenish fluid loss. One of the negatives of a very dry mouth is that it can cause a serious case of bad breath. Keep in mind that a dry mouth and increased thirst can be a sign of something more serious and if hydrating your system doesn't improve these symptoms after a few days of focused rehydration, you should probably speak to your doctor.

HEADACHES

We all have experienced some type of headache at some time. Headaches are not pleasant and can be caused by many different things. Headaches can make it hard to concentrate and even focus. Fortunately, drinking more water is often enough to not only prevent these painful episodes, but also cure them.

According to the National Headache Foundation, headaches are actually a common sign that someone is experi-

encing mild to moderate dehydration. In fact, an inadequate intake of water can trigger a migraine headache. Drinking a lot of water when experiencing headaches as well as avoiding sugary or overly salty beverages, which can worsen dehydration, is a wise and simple approach to cure the problem.

TIRED ALL THE TIME

Without enough sleep our bodies will experience lethargy and tiredness. Fatigue can seriously affect our wellness and the ability to concentrate. This of course can leave you feeling weak, clumsy and even prone to accidents. If you are resting well but still feel sluggish and tired all the time, you might be dehydrated. If there are no other issues that could be creating this continuing tiredness then you should consider this possibility. By simply sipping on the right amount of water throughout the day this problem should easily disappear.

GAINING WEIGHT

Drinking little or no water could combine with other health issues to cause weight gain for some folks. Studies have shown that drinking as little as 500ml (about 17 ounces) of water can boost your metabolism by up to 30%. Many health and wellness professionals recommend that an increase in water consumption can help in losing weight. Some experts also believe that even mild dehydration can send mixed signals to the brain and make you think you are hungry when what you really need is water. Drinking one to two glasses of water about half an hour before meals, as well as when you have the urge to eat but really not hungry, can reduce the hunger urge. What your body really needs is water.

CONSTIPATION

In many cases, continuous dehydration can lead to constipation. From a bio-

logical stand point; our bodies need fluids, especially water, in order to pass waste through our digestive tract. When we are not drinking enough water, the food we eat will move slowly through our digestive tract and could cause a “backing up”. In fact, dehydration is a leading cause of chronic constipation. The best thing one can do is get into the habit of drinking plenty of water throughout the day to prevent many digestive issues. One of the best suggestions that I personally would recommend is drinking one to two glasses of water with lemon juice shortly after getting up each morning. Eating foods high in fiber like fruits and vegetables will also improve the elimination of the body’s digested waste. Increasing the intake of water should improve your bathroom activities but if there are no noticeable improvements, check with your medical professional.

URINARY TRACT INFECTION

Bladder infections, or urinary tract infections are caused by bacteria that make their way into the urethra, and eventually overwhelm your body's natural defense causing an infection in the bladder. Dehydration can make you more susceptible to getting a bladder infection, especially if you are prone to them. Some women seem to get them over and over again. It is important to drink plenty of fluids, especially water, to help flush any bacteria or germs out of the urethra. If your UTI symptoms increase, be sure to see your doctor. If this infection is left untreated, it can develop into a kidney infection which is a much more serious condition. Unsweetened cranberry juice has been shown to help fight bladder infections. Some warning signs that water intake is too low include dark colored urine or a decreased need to urinate.

IRRITABLE AND MOODY

A group of scientists have discovered that dehydration affects cognition, concentration and the general ability to think clearly and control mood. Researchers from the University of Connecticut’s *Human Performance Laboratory* found that even mild dehy-

dration alters a person’s mood, energy levels and mental function, reasoning and learning ability. It was discovered that mild dehydration, particularly in young women, caused headaches, fatigue and difficulty concentrating. The study also showed that alterations in mood were greater in women, both at rest and during exercise but young men on the other hand, experienced difficulty in mental tasks, especially in areas of vigilance and memory, as well as anxiety and tension.

MUSCLE CRAMPS

A muscle cramp occurs as the muscle locks into an awkward and sustained spasm because of that contraction. Although the calves are the most likely sites for a cramp, any muscle in the body is vulnerable. Medical specialists are not 100% sure what causes cramps, but they have recognized several factors that are associated with them. Muscles that are overworked, injured or exposed to extreme temperatures may be more likely to succumb to a cramp. Other factors that can contribute to cramps are dehydration, electrolyte imbalance and mineral deficiency. A dehydrated body can make muscles more vulnerable to cramps so drink plenty of fluids, mostly water, during the day, especially if you exercise.

GETTING ENOUGH?

According to the Institute of Medicine's adequate intake guidelines, 13 cups for men and nine cups for women should be sufficient. Obviously, if you are sweating you should increase your water intake and use common sense. If it feels like you've had enough water, respect your body and don't over do it. Remember that if you feel thirsty, you are probably already mildly dehydrated. If your mouth feels parched, you are most likely dehydrated so grab one or two bottles of water and drink, drink, drink until you get back on track! Water is known as the liquid of life for a very good reason. Get into the habit of drinking lots of it to keep your body’s cells happy and healthy.



Did The Apostles Keep Feasts?

Continued from page 4

ignored as Christians fellowshiped together. But then some other visitors arrived. Paul says specifically that these visitors “*came from James.*” It seems these were people who were in some way especially connected with James.

What is amazing is the fact that when these visitors arrived, Peter’s attitude immediately changed! Now, he no longer sat to eat with the Gentiles but segregated himself from them! Not only this, but the other Jewish believers, including Paul’s companion Barnabas, followed his example. Why did Peter do this? Clearly, he did not want news to get back to James that he Peter, was not following the law! This fear of offending James was so great that Peter was willing to be a hypocrite and offend his Gentile hosts rather than offend James! It is very clear that there was a great emphasis on maintaining the observance of the law of Moses by the Jewish believers, including the apostles. But what is also clear is that James seemed to be the main person who insisted on keeping this distinction between Jews and Gentiles. This was not a healthy situation.

This double standard was inherently a denial of the faith of Jesus Christ, which Paul opposed, but he was a lonely voice and in his final visit to Jerusalem, they finally got him to compromise.

Today as we see feast-keeping again making inroads among Christian believers, let us take note of what happened in that early church. Observance of Moses’ law was not something which was required of Christians, it was wholly a relic of Judaism, maintained by Jewish Christians because of their national identity. It is a retrograde step when Christians today turn back to Moses by practicing the observance of feast days or any other aspect of the law of Moses.



Justifying Feast-keeping

Continued from page 6

are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (Rev 13:8)

On the basis of this verse they claim that Jesus was effectively sacrificed from the foundation of the world, and that therefore, every benefit to be obtained by his death, resurrection and heavenly ministry, was already available since the foundation of the world. The reason that as long as there was faith, it was possible to obtain these benefits, even though Christ had not yet fulfilled them, because in God's mind they were as good as done. This reveals a terrible misunderstanding of what Jesus really did for humanity when he came to earth as a man.

First of all, careful examination of Revelation 13:8 reveals that this is not what the verse is really saying. This is a mis-

understanding on the part of the KJV translators which resulted in this faulty translation. First, look at what the New American Standard Bible (and most other translations) says, and then I will explain why the KJV is wrong and the others are right.

All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain. (Rev 13:8 - NASB)

Notice that now, it is not Christ who has been slain from the foundation of the world, it is the names of the saved which have been written since the foundation of the world. The meaning changes. This is the correct translation and this can be demonstrated by looking at another place where the same phrase appears.

The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the

bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. (Rev 17:8)

Here we see clearly that what happened at the foundation of the world, was that names were written in the book of life, not that Christ was slain at that time. It is clear that as long as the shadows were relevant and accepted by God, the reality had not yet arrived. Today, the reality has arrived, the shadows are no longer relevant.



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