



# Open Face

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

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## The Everlasting Covenant

David Clayton



Most of those who receive this newsletter will recognize that we have been strong advocates of the teachings of E.J. Waggoner and in fact, at one point I was almost willing to unconditionally stand by all that Waggoner taught. However, as time has passed I have obtained a more comprehensive understanding of Waggoner's teachings and I have come to realize that while I am in agreement with him in his emphasis that Christ alone is our righteousness, I have to seriously disagree with him on some other, very significant points. I know that it is no light matter to disagree with E.J. Waggoner and that in the eyes of some, this is tantamount to apostasy, but honesty and loyalty to the truth of the Bible compels me to take that course. This is particularly true with respect to Waggoner's understanding of the Two Covenants.

### WHAT IS A COVENANT?

First of all, we need to understand what a covenant is. The common understanding is that a covenant is an "agreement between two parties." However this is where the first problem arises. If we limit our understanding of God's Covenant to this definition then we end up with a faulty understanding. This definition is limited and does not fit the descriptions given in the Bible of God's covenants. In Galatians and the book of Hebrews the apostle Paul makes it very clear that God's eternal covenant with His people is both a promise (Gal. 3:16,17) as well as a will, or testament (Heb. 9:17). The idea that it is "an agreement between two parties" does not fit in these cases because here, God presents His covenant as a one-sided commitment such as we find in a promise, or in someone's last will and testament.

The truth is that God's covenant with His people is much better understood as the means by which God establishes a *relationship* with His people. Sometimes a relationship is defined and established by the commitments of two parties, but in the case of God's covenants, it is clear that they do not always depend on the commitment of both parties. This is especially true of the everlasting covenant.

### THE EVERLASTING COVENANT

The everlasting covenant is the only covenant by which God will save man. In this, Waggoner and I are in full agreement. We both believe that this covenant was instituted in the beginning, from the moment that man sinned and that it will continue into eternity. We find the concept of the covenant in God's words to

the serpent in Genesis 3:15:

*And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. (Gen 3:15)*

Notice that in this statement the covenant is expressed as a promise. God promises to do something *in the future*. He will send a Seed who will bruise the serpent's head. This was not yet a reality at the time the promise was made.

However, Waggoner believed that this covenant was not only instituted, but actually implemented from the very beginning when man first sinned. He believed that everything which is to be made available to God's people by means of the everlasting covenant was fully available from the moment that man sinned in the Garden of Eden. All the benefits made available by Christ, were already ours from the very beginning. Waggoner believed this on the basis of Rev. 13:8 which says that Jesus was "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

### ONE COVENANT – TWO PHASES

This is the first place where I disagree with Waggoner and those who build on his teachings. I believe that this understanding is contrary to what Scripture teaches. While the everlasting covenant has always been God's way of saving

#### Also in this issue:

Dead to the Law .....	7
Christ in the Law .....	9
The Blessing of Gardening .....	10

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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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humanity, the implementation of that covenant has been a progressive process. It was not all done at the beginning when it was instituted. First there was the period when it was promised. Men then lived in hope of something which was to come, but which they could not experience in a practical way, because the elements of that covenant were not yet in place. The covenant was established *only* when Jesus arrived and from that point the benefits of the covenant have been available to humanity.

I will here quote a few Scriptures to demonstrate what I mean:

*For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth. (Heb 9:16-17)*

Where a testament exists, the one who makes that testament (or will) must die before it can be effective. This is the passage in which God's everlasting covenant is declared to be a will, and we are told clearly that it was of no force, it was not effective while the one who made it was alive. In other words, Jesus

needed to die before His covenant could be implemented. This is in direct opposition to Waggoner's belief that the covenant was in full force from the foundation of the world.

The verse in Revelation 13:8 does say that Jesus was "slain from the foundation of the world," but every intelligent person knows that Jesus was not slain until AD 31. He was PROMISED from the foundation of the world. He was under sentence of death from that time, this is what the verse means. On the basis of the promise, man received a probationary life and looked forward to the coming of the Messiah, but many of the benefits which are a part of the everlasting covenant were not available until Jesus actually became a human being. Those benefits are an inseparable part of the victorious life which Jesus provided AFTER He conquered sin as a man. They never existed before Jesus came. So from the fall of man until the incarnation of Christ, God's people had faith in the Messiah who was to come. The covenant was *promised*, but not *established*. It was the same everlasting covenant, but at one stage it was only a promise, while after AD 31, it became reality.

The ministry of Jesus on behalf of the human race centers around the sanctuary. As the Psalmist says, "Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary (Ps. 77:13)." This sanctuary ministry of Jesus is the means by which the benefits obtained by Christ are imparted to the human race. This is a vital point to remember. When Jesus lived here on this earth and died and was resurrected, all that He did was only done in one person; that person was Jesus Christ. However, *after* Jesus returned to heaven He began His ministry as our High Priest and the only reason for this high priestly ministry is that through this ministry, Jesus takes the benefits of the life which He lived, and actually imparts that life to His people. Let me repeat that: The only reason for the High Priestly ministry of Jesus Christ is so that He can impart the benefits of His own victorious life which He worked out as a man, to His people here on earth.

However, the Bible teaches very clearly that Jesus did not have a ministry in the

heavenly sanctuary until *AFTER* He had died and was resurrected.

*For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. (Heb 8:3).*

Notice, He was not a high priest until He had something to offer. What is it that the priest had to offer in the sanctuary? It was blood and Jesus had none to offer before AD 31 when He shed His own. Therefore the idea that Jesus was High Priest even before He came to earth is contrary to the teachings of the word of God. I am not quite sure where Waggoner stood on this point, but I know that many of those who embrace his teachings believe that even during Old Testament times Jesus was already Priest in the heavenly sanctuary.

*But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. (Heb 8:6).*

Take note of the word, "now." The apostle states that Jesus obtained this more excellent ministry, "now." During the time period in which the book of Hebrews was written. Not at the foundation of the world, but after the period of the incarnation, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It was at that time that Jesus obtained this "more excellent ministry," of the everlasting covenant.

*The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: (Heb 9:8).*

This statement is even more clear. If we read the passage in context we will see that Paul is saying that as long as the first, or the earthly tabernacle was still being used by God's people, the way of entry into the heavenly tabernacle was not yet available. In other words, the two tabernacles were not intended to co-exist, but they were intended to be sequential with one following after the other. The earthly tabernacle was an illustration of a *FUTURE* reality, not an illustration of a reality which was present while the earthly was being

used. Not at all. It was a symbol of something to come.

*And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. (Heb 9:15)*

Read this verse carefully. It says that the transgressions which were under the first testament (the old testament times) were not “redeemed” or cancelled until Jesus died! In other words, nobody was really saved until Jesus died, so nobody who lived before Christ had salvation in the true sense. All they had was a promise, while those who live after the cross do indeed possess salvation the moment they accept Christ. This is not just a matter of semantics. Paul says again,

*And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. (1Cor 15:17-18)*

So those who lived in the former age, lived in hope, not in reality. If Christ had not died and been resurrected, they would have been “yet in (their) sins.” The promise was not the reality, there is a difference and the next verse shows us in a very practical way how this makes a difference in the experience of those who live in the two ages (before and after Christ).

*Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted. (Heb 2:17-18).*

This is a very challenging passage, but we cannot avoid its meaning. It says that Jesus is ABLE to help and deliver (succor) those who are tempted BECAUSE He has also passed through the same experience as them. In fact the verse goes even further than that; it says that “it behoved him” or it was a

vital necessity for Him to become one of us in order that He might be able to be merciful and faithful in being our High Priest. We cannot avoid the implication that if He had not lived as a man and suffered temptation as a man, then He would not have been able to be our High Priest. He would not have been able to succor or help those who are tempted.

Certainly this means that before Jesus became man, during the time of the Old Testament He was not qualified to be High Priest and certainly had never suffered temptation, and therefore was not able to succor those who were tempted. We may not like this conclusion, but if we disagree we must blame the author of the book of Hebrews and accuse him of false teachings. We cannot honestly say that this is not what he teaches.

So to recap, Waggoner believes that the Everlasting Covenant has always been available with all its benefits from the beginning and it remains that way with no change into eternity. I disagree and believe that the Everlasting Covenant passed through two very distinct and different phases; the first phase when it was PROMISED but not yet a reality, and the second phase when it was fulfilled and promise became reality. In all cases, men could only be saved through the everlasting covenant, but while those who live after the cross do possess and experience that salvation, and in fact do possess in themselves eternal life, those who lived before Christ did not actually possess it, but lived in hope and expectation of receiving it in the future.

#### THE PROMISES TO ABRAHAM

In the book of Galatians the apostle Paul speaks of the everlasting covenant in connection with a promise God made to Abraham, but he does not actually use the word, “covenant,” instead he refers to it as “the gospel”. He says,

*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 3:8)*

Paul was actually referring to the promise made in Genesis 22:15-18

*And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: 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; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice. (Gen 22:15-18)*

Here, God repeated the promise made to Eve in the garden and informed Abraham that because of his faith and his faithfulness, he was going to be privileged to be the person from whose line this promised Saviour would come. Again, it was a promise of the establishment of the Everlasting Covenant. It was not the actual establishing of it, because such a thing was not possible until the Seed should arrive. Everything involved in this covenant depended on the coming Seed, so there was no possibility that it should have been in effect before He arrived.

Let us note that God made several promises to Abraham and God referred to more than one of these as a “covenant.” Among other things He promised that Abraham’s descendants would be like the stars of heaven for multitude (Gen. 15:5). He also promised to give the land of Canaan to the descendants of Abraham for an “everlasting possession (Gen. 15:13-18; Gen. 17:4-8). As a seal of this covenant between Himself and Abraham God gave him the sign of circumcision (Gen. 17:8-13). However, we should not confuse these promises with the everlasting covenant. Although Abraham was included in the line of those through whom the everlasting covenant would be established, we should remember that the covenant is “everlasting.” It existed before Abraham and was independent of Abraham, therefore the promises made which applied specifically to him and to his descendants could never be regarded as being a part of God’s eternal covenant. So the promises that Abraham’s descendants would



inherit the land of Canaan must be regarded as being a covenant *peculiar* to God and Abraham's family, and not a part of the everlasting, universal covenant. That eternal covenant involved *the Seed* of Abraham (singular) which is exclusively Jesus Christ.

The blessings of the everlasting covenant are not focused on the inheritance of land, it is not about real estate. Remember that this covenant was instituted in Eden when there was no Abraham, no land of Canaan. The only issue then was the great barrier which had arisen between God and man which resulted in the dominion of sin and Satan and the loss of eternal life. This is what the everlasting covenant deals with, it is not about the inheritance of physical property.

Paul emphasizes that it is focused on spiritual blessings which those who are in Christ already receive today. Notice what he focuses on when he speaks of the covenant inherited through the Seed of Abraham:

*That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. (Gal 3:14)*

Do you see the emphasis? The blessing of Abraham (the covenant in the Seed) is the inheritance of the Spirit! It is the inheriting of the life of Christ! This is the everlasting covenant and this is God's way of undoing the damage done at the beginning when man was alienated from God. Again Paul emphasizes that the covenant is Christ and Christ alone:

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. (Eph 1:3-6)*

Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the promise of the everlasting covenant. He Himself is God's covenant, God's way of reconciling man to Himself.

#### MOUNT SINAI

430 years after renewing the promise to Abraham, God instituted something which has been a source of great misunderstanding and much controversy over the ages. God instituted the system of the law. The system of the law is very significant and cannot be overlooked because it has a very prominent place in God's plans for His people and it appears everywhere in the Bible.

It is important to understand that the system of the law is regarded in the Bible as a complete system. Some commentators like to divide the law into sections and to view the different parts separately (for example, moral and ceremonial, civil, health etc.). Dividing up the law like this can be helpful at times, but it is important to understand first of all that the law was a single SYSTEM by which a relationship was established between God and the people. The term, "the law" most often refers to everything which was given at Mount Sinai. God gave the Israelites a comprehensive system of government which was a definition of how they should relate to Him and He to them.

Therefore the system of the law is referred to as a "covenant," a means by which a relationship was established between God and Israel. This is very clearly taught in the Scriptures. The Ten Commandments which were at the heart of the system are referred to as "the covenant" in several places:

*And the LORD said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel. And he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments. (Exod 34:27-28)*

If we read the chapter we will see that God gave Moses other rules besides the ten commandments. These are the words which God told Moses to write,

however, God Himself wrote the Ten Commandments. We see therefore that the covenant involved more than simply the ten commandments, but included all the commandments which God gave to Israel.

At this point an intelligent person will ask the question, "why did God make this covenant with Israel? Didn't He already have the everlasting covenant in place as the *perfect* means of establishing a relationship with mankind? Was not all the world awaiting the coming of the Seed, the one who would fulfill the covenant? Is not the everlasting covenant the *true* relationship which God wants to have and will have with His people? Why then this covenant of the law, a covenant based upon subjection to a system of rules, ceremonies, rituals, rather than union with God through His Son?" The apostle Paul follows this same exact line of reasoning and answers the question for us:

*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. 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. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise. 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 3:16-19)*

Paul says that the law was "added" until the arrival of Abraham's Seed (Christ). In other words, God has only one answer for the world, there is only one means by which God will establish a relationship with His people and it is Christ, **Christ ALONE!** There is no other way! The system of the law is not another way and was never intended by God to be another way. So why did God introduce the system of the law? Why did He "add" the law when the perfect plan (Christ) was already in

place? Paul explains that it was added because of transgressions. In other words, because the answer to the sins of men (Christ) had not yet arrived, there was need to find a way of restraining sin amongst God's people until the perfect way arrived. So God gave the law to:

- a. Restrain the effects of sin until the solution arrived.
- b. Help men to understand the nature of sin.
- c. Teach men of the great dangers of sin
- d. Teach men that there was a solution to sin.
- e. To educate, discipline and control a group of people so they could provide the right environment for the arrival of the Seed.

This was the purpose of the system of law. This is why God gave the law, this is why He "added" it to the plan which was already in place and which was already perfect. It was a stop-gap, a temporary measure put in place to maintain a certain level of order and discipline, to teach certain vital lessons in preparation for the coming of the Messiah.

When the Messiah arrived this system would no longer be necessary, the partial would give way to the perfect, the temporary to the permanent, the shadow to the reality. In Christ men would understand what sin really is, so they would not need partial definitions, they would understand the dangers of sin, so would not need to be threatened with stonings and executions in order to serve God, they would possess the perfect answer to sin in the spirit of Christ, so would need no ritualistic ceremonies to ritually cleanse them from impurity.

#### THE COVENANT FULFILLED

Let it be said again; Jesus Christ is God's everlasting covenant. He is the definition of the relationship which God wants to have and **will have** with His people. God declared this through the prophet Isaiah:

*I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine*

*hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; (Isaiah 42:6)*

Remember our definition of "covenant;" not necessarily an agreement between two parties, but more accurately, the terms of a relationship. In the garden of Eden, man became alienated from God. His relationship with his Creator was broken. Many of us have misunderstood the true nature of the problem because we think it was all about breaking a certain rule. But the rule was of secondary importance, God was not too concerned about losing a fruit! Many have become confused and embroiled in legalism because they think it was about the law. If the broken law was the issue, then the solution must be that we keep the law! This is why so many set out to fix the problem between them and God by keeping the law. A hopeless endeavor which produces only frustrated, empty, pharisaical religion.

But the real issue was a broken relationship where man had come to fear and distrust God. It was not the taking of the fruit which was the problem, but the self-seeking, self-oriented life which Adam and Eve had adopted which did not trust God. We can demonstrate the truth of this by asking a simple question: If Adam and Eve had believed the serpent, but had not actually taken the fruit, would there have been a problem? The answer is obvious, of course the problem would have been there! The real issue was a relationship broken by man's distrust of God and the new, self-centered nature which had resulted from his turning from God. This was the problem which God had to fix and His promise was that He would fix it through the Seed of the woman, through His Son, the One who is Himself, God's everlasting covenant! Through Jesus He would restore the relationship between Himself and humanity. That is exactly what He did through Jesus.

*And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto*

*them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. (2 Corinthians 5:18-19)*

*Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. (Ephesians 1:5-6)*

Let us read these passages again carefully and consider the marvelous gift that God has given to us in the new covenant. It has **nothing** to do with what we have done, what we do, or what we can do. It is all about what God did for us in His Son. He reconciled us to Himself by the death of His Son, He made us accepted in the beloved Son. There is no requirement of anything on our part, no rules that we must obey, not laws that must be followed. All He asks is that we believe the truth, that is all!!

The question may be asked, "are you saying that under the New Covenant we do not need to live by any standard of right or wrong? Are you saying that we can do as much evil as we choose and it does not matter?" The question is interesting and it is understandable, but the question itself demonstrates ignorance of what the new covenant really is. The truth is that our understanding of what God has done for man through Jesus Christ is far too limited. Many of us understand that Jesus died to "pay a price for our sins," and that this is where the gift of Christ stops. This is a very false idea. Jesus did not merely die to redeem our sins, but He gives His own life to all who will believe in Him and receive Him. Both Ezekiel and Jeremiah spoke of this coming fulfillment of the everlasting covenant. Jeremiah referred to it as the "New Covenant," but look at the emphasis of both these prophets:

*But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his*

neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. (Jeremiah 31:33-34)

A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. (Ezekiel 36:26-27)

Do you see the point? Neither of them speak of what man will do, or what man must do as a part of the covenant. In both cases it is all about what God will do. It is entirely about the promise of God. God says "I will put my law in their inward parts and write it in their hearts." He says, "I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes ..." It is not about God's people "keeping" the laws or "obeying" the commandments. It is all about God accomplishing a change in His people which is so revolutionary, so drastic that the end result will be that they will *naturally* walk in harmony with God's will. It will not be laws or rules which produce God's will in them, but the imparting of a new nature by the spirit of God.

Now remember that the spirit of God comes to us in the New Covenant as the Comforter, as the spirit of the victorious, resurrected Christ living in His people. It is "Christ in you," which produces this life which is in harmony with God, therefore Christ Himself is the new covenant or the everlasting covenant! Christ Himself is the definition of the new relationship with God. God accepts us because of Christ and for **no other reason**. Jesus Himself stated it very plainly:

*Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. (John 14:6)*

*Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the*

*Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. (John 16:7-11)*

Notice the significance of Jesus words. In the new covenant, the great replacement for the law would be the holy spirit, the Comforter, the one in fact who was the invisible presence of Christ Himself. Instead of the law, it would be the holy spirit who would convict men of sin – and notice the definition of sin - "because they believe not on me." Righteousness would not be understood to be related to a set of rules, but would be understood as being related to our faith in Christ. In Christ they would possess the very nature and character of God Himself, the very righteousness of God, therefore they would not need to be focused on ten rules in order to understand morality. They would possess this morality in themselves, implanted by the holy spirit.

#### A BRAND-NEW EXPERIENCE

Now we can begin to understand why the coming of Jesus was such a revolutionary event. It was the event of the ages, it was the moment in time when the history and the experience of the human race was changed forever.

The greatest tragedy is that many of us regard what Jesus did in the incarnation as simply the fulfilling of a legal obligation. This is one of the greatest false doctrines of all. It is believed that Jesus had to die to satisfy the demands of the law, or to satisfy the requirements of God as a legal requirement. This is all. So the emphasis in many religious circles is on being *legally* accepted by God. They do not see the life, death and resurrection of Christ as having any *practical* impact on their lives at all. As far as they are concerned, the religious experience is this:

"Christ died for my sins so that I can be forgiven. If I accept this forgiveness God will give me a clean slate. Now,

with His help I must go and keep that record clean. I must endeavor to keep the law and by this means keep my clean record."

Jesus Christ came to this planet to give us life, and this does not simply mean to say that He came to give us a legal right to be saved one day. No no, not at all. Jesus came to impart something extraordinary to our existence here and now, **today!** Look at these incredible promises and try to understand them.

*The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. (John 10:10)*

*I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. (John 14:18-20)*

Do we understand these amazing promises? Are these merely promises of the fulfillment of a legal requirement? Jesus said, "I came that they might have **life!**" Why would He come to give us something which we already possessed? Clearly, the human race did not yet possess this life, but Jesus came to impart this life to us. So He says to His disciples, "you will see me again, and at that day, because I live, because I am alive, you will live also." Amazing! This indicates that the disciples did not have life and would not have it until that day of which Jesus spoke (the day of Pentecost). Notice the rest of His words: On that day they would discover that He was in the Father, the Father was in Him and He was in them. Jesus was speaking of the coming of the holy spirit, the indwelling Comforter which was He Himself, coming back at Pentecost to live **within** His people. This is the means by which they would possess this life, this more abundant life. It was in reality, Christ Himself, the victorious, resurrected Christ coming to live His own life in them! This is the **New Covenant!** Can we not see the incredible wonder and beauty of this truth? This is exactly what Jesus was referring to when He spoke the following words:



*In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.) (John 7:37-39)*

“The holy spirit was not yet given because that Jesus was not glorified.” It is popularly believed that the holy spirit spoken of here, was always available to God’s people from the foundation of the world. But the Scripture is too plain to be misunderstood. Whatever is being spoken of here, was not available *until* Jesus was glorified. It was never available before. This manifestation of the holy spirit is the same as the Comforter which Jesus promised to send. Speaking of this Comforter Jesus said, “I will send you another comforter.” This Comforter was someone who had never been present before and who would only come after Jesus returned to heaven and sent Him. This is the same

as this holy ghost which was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified.

You see, this Comforter was not simply the spirit of God as it had always been manifested during old testament times, not at all. This Comforter was a brand-new entity which had never existed before. In actual fact this Comforter was a Being who was both divine and human at the same time. It was a person who had suffered temptations, who had been persecuted, who had experienced all the trials of humanity and who understood by personal experience, exactly what men must go through. This comforter was Jesus Christ Himself as He plainly stated (John 14:18). When Jesus died on the cross, this was the first time in the history of the universe that such a Comforter had ever existed; a divine/human person who had suffered all the trials common to humanity. This is the person who was exalted to the right hand of God, who was glorified on the day of Pentecost and by means of this glorification with the Father’s own life and power, was able to return to His people as a life-giving spirit (1 Cor. 15:45; Eph. 4:10), thus

imparting this life which He had promised them. It was then that the prophecy was fulfilled that living waters would flow from the bellies of those who believed on Christ.

This is the living reality of the New Covenant. The reality of the living Son of God who became one of us, living His own victorious life in us, being **Himself**, the New Covenant, the new relationship between God and men! It is not about legal transactions, it is about the transfer of life. It is about obtaining life and having it more abundantly. It is not merely about the blotting out of records from books, it is about living waters flowing out of the belly, and experiencing heaven on earth, here, now today. Those who enter into this new covenant experience do indeed have the laws of God written in their hearts and minds. That law is the living law, Jesus Christ Himself! There could never be a more perfect fulfillment of that promise. How wonderful it is! May God help us to believe it.



## Dead To The Law



### DEAD TO SIN

*“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?” (Romans 6:1-2)*

What does it mean to be DEAD TO SIN? The evident meaning is that we are at a place where we do not respond to sin. Just as a dead person cannot be

induced to respond to the attractions of life, so, a dead person cannot be induced to commit sin. This is Paul’s point in these verses and he makes sure that we understand a few verses later when he says,

*“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin.” (Romans 6:6-7)*

So in order to be free from sin, we need to be dead to sin. This is Paul’s point; when one is dead to sin, then the problem of sin is at an end. God provided this death in Christ and when by faith our life is united to the life of Christ, we are “crucified with Christ,” and in His death we find freedom from sin.

*“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.” (1 Peter 2:24)*

So it is easy to understand what the phrase, “dead to sin,” means. There is no way that we can misunderstand its meaning.

### DEAD TO THE LAW

However in another place we see the same exact phrase being used, but one word is replaced:

*“Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become **dead to the law** by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that*

*we should bring forth fruit unto God.” (Romans 7:4)*

This time it says we are DEAD TO THE LAW. In the verses mentioned before it said, DEAD TO SIN. The word “SIN” is replaced by the word, “LAW.” Now let us be consistent. If being dead to sin means that we do not respond to sin, then what does it mean to be dead to the law? Obviously it must mean that we are not RESPONSIVE to the law. It does not mean that the law is abolished, just as my being dead to sin does not mean that sin no longer exists. It just means that as far as I am concerned, there is no response to sin. In the same way, as far as the law is concerned, there is no response in me to the law. I am dead to the law.

This statement is sure to cause outrage among some, but at the same time, there is no way to escape the simple biblical truth. Everything becomes clear when we understand that what this means is that we are no longer UNDER THE LAW. We are no longer governed by the law, that system of government is no longer the way by which God governs His people. Our reason for behavior is not the law, we do not respond to the law. Paul puts it this way:

*“All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.” (1 Corinthians 6:12)*

Can we see what he is saying? His point is that the law cannot forbid him to do anything because he is no longer governed by the law. He says, “*all things are lawful for me!*” Therefore, as far as the law is concerned he can do *anything* or *all things*, because the law is no longer our governor. This is comparable to a son or a daughter who has left home and is no longer under the jurisdiction of the parents. Mother and father can no longer dictate what this person must do, his behavior is not because of what his parents command. He is now free from that system of government. But does Paul take advantage of this freedom? Not at all. He says, “I will not be brought under the power of any.” He is controlled and directed by the spirit of God. This is a far higher

rule than the law. The governor dwelling within, the holy spirit, will not allow him to become a slave to what is not good so he says, “I will not be brought under the power of any.”

So is the law bad? Is the law sin? Not at all. God did not give the Israelites something to govern their behavior which was not good. But the government of the law did not produce righteousness, it did not make anything perfect, therefore that SYSTEM of government could never produce good people and it could never fulfill the desires of God’s heart.

*“Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.” (Galatians 3:21)*

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

This is why that system of government had to change. This is why, in fact, God had never intended that it should be a permanent system. The Bible teaches clearly that it was only a temporary system put in place to govern the people until the coming of God’s perfect system of government.

*“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.” (Galatians 3:19)*

That system of the law ended with the coming of Christ. When Christ returned as the Comforter on the day of Pentecost to dwell in God’s true Israel forever, this was the fulfillment of the new covenant. This was the implementing of God’s *new system* of government, the government of the new heart, the government of the new creation, the government of the spirit rather than the law.

So just as Christ now lives a life wholly dedicated unto God which is not governed by rules, but by the principles of a pure and righteous nature, so those

who partake of His very life are governed by the same principle. So we are delivered from the law (the system of the law). We are dead to the law (we no longer live our lives under its control). Our focus is the living Christ living within us, this is our reality and this is how our lives are directed and lived.

#### DOES IT WORK?

Those who do not know Christ will say, “it is not possible to live like that, we must have rules or else there will be chaos.” This is because we know only the ways of the world, not the ways of the spirit. In the world, dealing with carnal people, it is true that we must have rules. Carnal people must be controlled by rules, enforced by strict penalties. Is this God’s perfect way? Is God’s perfect rule a system where He says, “obey or be punished?” Sadly, this is the way in many “Christian” churches, sadly it is the only way that some who claim to be Christians know. They see no possibility of serving God without the rules. This is because Christ is not a reality to them, they do not really know what it is to have Christ, as a living reality, living within. But the truth is, the government of the law was never God’s perfect plan for humanity. That is the way to treat carnal people, that is the way to treat slaves, but it is not the way that God governs the sons of the kingdom.

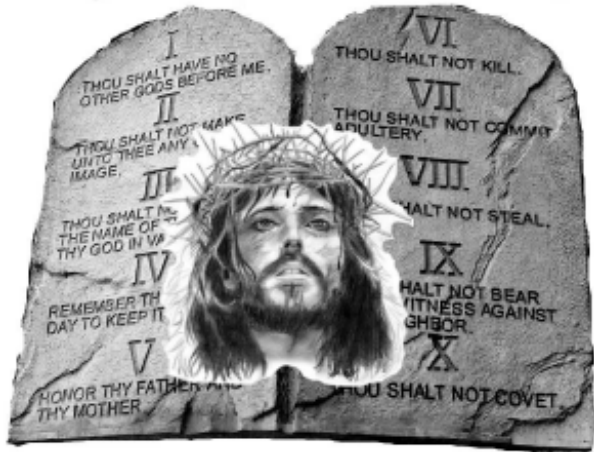
God’s perfect way is the way of the new creation. By putting His spirit in us, He Himself produces what He wants. He does not command us to do, but rather, He creates in us the conditions which produce what He desires. This is a system of government which is perfect, this system produces what God wants because it is He Himself through His Son producing the goods. This is the new covenant and this is what we receive in Christ.

May God help us to understand. Those who continue to embrace the way of the law will never produce anything more than the righteousness of the law, nothing better than what the Scribes and Pharisees had. The tragedy is that such persons always tend to believe that what they have is good enough.





# Christ in the Law.



In one of my recent sermons I stated that, “the greatest enemy of righteousness by faith is the law.” One sister asked me to explain more clearly what I meant by that statement, particularly in light of the fact that Ellen White counseled that we must “*preach Christ in the law,*” rather than preach *against* the law. I want to share my response to that question since I believe there are others who might have the same question in mind.

When I said that “the greatest enemy of righteousness by faith is the law,” I was making a comment based on the major conflicts which have arisen in the Christian Church over the ages. What I was stating was a historical fact. This was the conflict which almost split the Adventist Church in 1888, but it was just a repetition of what happened when Christ was here on earth and also during the times of the apostolic church. It was a conflict which might be aptly described as “Christ versus the law.” But let me explain what I mean when I talk about “The Law.”

First of all there are the two great concepts of the law:

- a. The Letter of the Law
- b. The Spirit of the Law.

The letter of the law refers to the commandments given to Moses on Mount Sinai, it refers to what was written. I am not referring specifically to the 10 commandments, but to all the commandments, everything which came on Mount Sinai. On the other hand, the

spirit of the law refers to the *principles* behind those laws and which are really the principles found in the nature of God Himself.

I believe that God does not govern His people today by the letter of the law and I believe that the letter leads to a legalistic, hopeless religious experience which is dishonouring to God. This “letter of the law,” refers to everything

which was given on Mount Sinai. This includes the 10 commandments. This, first of all, is what I am against - not the commandments themselves, but the LETTER of the law, and it is what I mean when I say that it is the “enemy of righteousness by faith.” It is the written definition of rules which cannot make people better and which were given in order to make people become more conscious of their sins. I believe this is what the apostle Paul is referring to most of the time when he speaks negatively of the law. Speaking about the letter, he says:

*Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? (2Cor 3:6-8)*

*But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. (Rom 7:6)*

Notice, we serve in the *spirit*, not the *letter!* The *spirit* of the law is based on the same principles underlying the letter of the law, but the *spirit* is a greater

and more perfect version of the law which is administered in a different way. The ten rules were written on stone, outside of us, so they could not make us better. But the true law, the spirit of the law, is written on our minds by the indwelling spirit of God which produces the nature and behaviour of God in us. This version of the law is much better than what was written on stone. The law on stone says, “thou shalt not kill.” But the law in my heart produces a love for all men which would never think of hurting men, much more killing them. It is greater than the letter by far. The letter told me not to commit adultery, not to sleep with another man’s wife, but the spirit of the law in me makes me hate the thought of hurting another person, makes me hate the thought of sleeping with somebody who is not my wife, so I don’t need the written rule, because I have a greater rule in my heart. This is what I believe and teach.

Secondly, there are sub-categories to the letter of the law. Even when speaking of the letter, the Bible is not always referring to the same thing all the time. There are at least five different things which could be referred to when one spoke of the law.

1. Sometimes it referred to the 10 commandments.
2. Sometimes it referred to the ceremonial laws of rituals and types.
3. Sometimes it referred to the entire system of rules given to Moses on Mount Sinai.
4. Sometimes it referred to the first five books of the Bible, the Torah.
5. Sometimes it referred to the entire Old Testament writings.

So the phrase, “the law”, had different meanings at times, and in addition, sometimes the same law was referred to in different ways. Sometimes it was called:

- a. The law
- b. The law of Moses

**Continued on page 11**

# The Blessing of Gardening

Lenworth Frankson



The Bible tells us in Genesis chapter two that God made a beautiful garden and in it he placed man to live. He also instructed them to work it and take care of it.

*And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food ... (Genesis 2:8-9)*

*And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. (Genesis 2:15)*

Let us keep in mind that God did all this before Adam and Eve sinned. It is therefore reasonable to deduce that physical work was designed to be a blessing, not a punishment as a result of man sinning.

The number of consumers who are not only concerned about the quality of their food, but who also recognize the physical, mental, and even spiritual benefits of connecting with nature is increasing every day. Modern living has driven a wedge between us and the natural world but many of us are starting to see the connecting of the dots. We are recognizing that a connection with the land is important for *health, fitness, happiness, and our overall well-being*. There are many healthy benefits associated with gardening, spanning from stress relief to improved brain health, better nutrition and, of course, exercise.

## FITNESS BENEFITS

Gardening is indeed good for us. The

human body needs perpetual motion to function optimally and gardening is one way to stay active when we might otherwise be sitting still. It is believed that those who engage in community gardening projects have considerably lower body mass index (BMI) than non-gardeners. This would strongly suggest that an active lifestyle indeed translates into improved weight management. Fitness researchers have found that when you exercise *outdoors*, you exercise harder but perceive it as being easier than when exercising indoors, which can have significant health benefits as it will encourage you to work out harder than you might otherwise.

## EXERCISE BENEFITS

Korean researchers have confirmed that gardening counts as moderate-to-high-intensity exercise for children, but it can certainly be intense exercise for adults as well. Depending on what type of work activity you are engaged in, gardening could be classified as a moderate-to-vigorous activity. Lifting and carrying 40-pound bags of mulch, stretching into hard-to-reach places to do weeding or pushing a lawnmower around demonstrates that gardening can be a physically demanding workout.

One research article suggested that a person weighing 150 pounds can burn about 300 calories per hour by gardening at moderate intensity. Higher-intensity activities such as briskly stirring compost, raking leaves, turning over the soil manually with a garden fork, spreading soil amendments, or digging holes can burn up to about 400 calories an hour. I can personally say that preparing the soil for gardening that includes removing tree stumps and roots, is one of the most heart pounding, back breaking, profusely sweating, energy consuming and calorie burning workout I have experienced. This type of work is physically demanding; be warned!

According to the *Korean Hort Technology* study, the following gardening tasks constitute moderate intensity exercise, based on energy expenditure

evaluations in children: Weeding, raking, digging, mulching, sowing seeds, planting, hoeing, watering and harvesting. Another task that can certainly turn gardening into a high intensity exercise is adding soil amendments such as wood chips, which can miraculously transform your soil by serving as food for earthworms. This kind of exercise does not require any expensive investment. What is strongly recommended is the following:

- Maintain proper spinal alignment while you work. This will help absorb shock, and allow for proper weight distribution and optimal range of motion
- Avoid over-reaching by keeping objects and work surfaces close to your body
- Whenever possible, work at waist height with elbows bent and arms comfortably at your sides
- When planting or weeding at ground level, make sure to bend your knees and squat or kneel, rather than stooping forward with your legs straight. Alternatively, use a gardening stool.

## MENTAL HEALTH BENEFITS

There are many notable benefits to be obtained besides simply getting exercise. For example, gardening can also help relieve depression. Researchers have found that digging in the soil may affect your mental health via the microorganisms in the soil! CNN Health reported that:

*“In a study conducted in Norway, people who had been diagnosed with depression, persistent low mood, or ‘bipolar II disorder’ spent six hours a week growing flowers and vegetables. After three months, half of the participants had experienced a measurable improvement in their depression symptoms. What’s more, their mood continued to be better three months after the gardening program ended...”*

According to a survey by *Gardeners’*

*World* magazine, 80 percent of gardeners reported being “happy” and satisfied with their lives, compared to 67 percent of non-gardeners. This feeling of wellbeing can have other more far-reaching implications for your physical health as well. According to a recent research from Johns Hopkins, having a cheerful temperament can significantly reduce your odds of suffering a heart attack or sudden cardiac death.

#### STRESS RELIEF AND BRAIN HEALTH

Researchers in the Netherlands have found that gardening is one of the most potent stress relieving activities there is. In their trial, two groups of people were asked to complete a stressful task; one group was then instructed to garden for half an hour while the other group was asked to read indoors for the same length of time. Afterward, the gardening group reported a greater improvement in mood. Tests also revealed they had lower levels of the stress hormone *cortisol*, compared to those who tried to relax by quiet reading. A CNN report also referred to research showing that gardening may even help reduce your risk of dementia:

*“Two separate studies that followed people in their 60s and 70s for up to 16 years found, respectively, that those who gardened regularly had a 36 percent and 47 percent lower risk of dementia (a mental illness that causes someone to be unable to think clearly; the deterioration of intellectual function such as memory) than non-gardeners, even when a range of other health factors were taken into account. These findings are hardly definitive, but they suggest that the combination of physical and mental activity involved in gardening may have a positive influence on the mind.”*

#### IMPROVE YOUR NUTRITION

One of the easiest ways of ensuring access to a healthy diet that contains adequate nutrients is to produce many different kinds of foods in a home garden. This is especially important in rural areas where people have limited income-earning opportunities and poor access to markets. Home gardens are also becoming an increasingly important

source of food and income for poor households in urban areas as well.

A well-developed home garden has the potential to supply most of the non-staple foods that a family needs every day of the year, including roots and tubers, vegetables and fruits, legumes, herbs and spices, as well as animals and fish if desired. Roots and tubers are rich in energy especially the well known “Jamaican Yellow Yam”. Legumes are also important sources of protein, fat, iron and vitamins. Green leafy vegetables and yellow- or orange-colored fruits provide essential vitamins and minerals; particularly folate, and vitamins A, E and C. Vegetables and fruits are a vital component of a healthy diet and should be eaten as part of every meal. Vegetables and protein are especially important in small children’s diets to ensure normal growth and intellectual development.

Most of us are not farmers and do not do much farming, but creating a garden is not as difficult as some might think. Yes flower gardens are beautiful and do enhance the beauty of any home if well maintained and nurtured but even more important, in my opinion, is creating a vegetable garden that produces nourishing sustainable food.

Food grown in your own garden is overall fresher, more nutritious, and tastes better than store-bought food. Urban gardens are also helpful in saving energy, protecting water quality and topsoil, and promoting biodiversity and beautifying the community. As I mentioned earlier gardening may also hold the key to improved mental health, stress relief, and our awareness and relationship with the Creator. When gardening we are exercising which is badly needed in a world where so many of us spend our days sitting in front of computers or at our desks in artificially lit rooms. The Bible tells us that in the beginning God created man and placed him in a garden, where there was sunshine and fresh air, to work and take care of it. He knew that by doing this mankind would be blessed and the earth would benefit.

I personally have been blessed from gardens that I have invested my time and energy in. Having fruit trees, veg-

etables, and herbs growing on your property and being able to enjoy their yield is one of the most pleasing and rewarding experiences I have had.

Serious times are ahead of us; it should not be difficult for those who are watching to see that this is a fact. I am encouraging everyone, at this time, to start gardening. Soon home-gardening may no longer be an optional pleasure, but a vital necessity if one is to survive. However, that aside, it really is one of life’s great pleasures to be able to walk out the door of your home and pick from your garden fresh and healthy quality food, even if it grows in a pot. “*A garden is a grand teacher. It teaches patience and careful watchfulness; it teaches industry and thrift; above all it teaches entire trust*” (Gertrude Jekyll)



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## Christ in The Law

*Continued from page 9*

- c. The law of the Lord
- d. The law and the prophets
- e. The Old Covenant

But whatever it was called, it was all a part of the system of THE LETTER. A system that was not complete and that could not bring righteousness. there were different divisions to this system which had to do with various aspects of how God related to the governing of these people.

1. A part of this system had to do with morality, this was the 10 commandments and associated rules.
2. Some aspects of the system had to do with shadows and types representing future realities in the ministry of Christ. This had to do with the sacrificial system the feast days, the meat and drink offerings etc.
3. Some aspects of the law had to do with the governing of the people as a group of humans living together who needed civil rules to control how



they lived as a society.

4. Some aspects of the law had to do with a health care system to ensure that they were in good health.

But with all its different parts, this entire system was THE LETTER of the law. It was God's way of relating to the people before Christ came and this entire system was called the Old Covenant, or the old relationship - God's stop-gap for interacting with the people until the true WAY, Jesus Christ, arrived. This entire system was only a representation of something greater, a greater system of government by which God would produce true righteousness in His people. That better system was the government of Christ by the holy spirit. In this new system God would put His own life into His people, He would give them of Himself so that they would be like

Him by nature. He would no longer govern them from the OUTSIDE by the system of rules and ceremonies and types and representations. Now it would be the REAL thing. This is the only way to bring righteousness, this is the only way that God could make His people into what He really wanted them to be. So we are told,

*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)*

The entire law, in fact, was a representation of Christ. When Jesus Christ came, we no longer had need of the representation because we had the reality. So when we preach the law, we must show how it was an expression of Christ, a tool to represent the Messiah until He, the true law of God arrived.

So when Ellen White said that we must preach "Christ in the law," there is only one thing which she could have meant. She must have meant that we must preach Christ in the SPIRIT OF THE LAW, not the letter. Since the spirit of the law is Christ Himself, the living reality of the law, then we can only preach Christ in the law when we teach that the true law of God is not the letter, not what was written on stone, but the very life and character of Christ Himself written in the hearts and minds of His people. This is true righteousness. This is the only way that we can be like Christ. This is the message which all the world needs to understand.



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