

# G R A C E

... it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace ... Hebrews 13:9

Issue 158 June 2009

## Studies in Galatians—Part Twenty-Six

John G. Reisinger

In our last study, we saw that the Galatians, true to form, were ready to misuse their liberty in Christ. Paul cautioned them against using freedom as an opportunity to serve themselves rather than as an opportunity to serve each other. Freedom from the law meant that they could ignore the identity markers that had formerly separated Jews and Gentiles; it did not mean that they were free to ignore Christ's command to love each other. John Brown has keen insight concerning liberty and its misuse.

There is a strange disposition in mankind to misrepresent the meaning and tendency of religious truth however plainly stated, and to turn it to purposes which it was never intended to answer, and which, when rightly understood, it obviously appears it was never intended to answer. The Apostle was well aware of this tendency, and accordingly he often connects with a statement of Christian doctrine a caution against its abuse.<sup>1</sup>

We started our study of Galatians by showing that Paul addresses three major issues in his letter: (1) the issue of authority, (2) the

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<sup>1</sup> John Brown, *An Exposition of Galatians*, Willim Oliiphant & Sons, (Edinburgh, Scotland, 1853) 283

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## The Resurrection of Lazarus

### Conclusion

Dr. Philip W. McMillin

*And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Loose him, and let him go" (John 11:44)<sup>1</sup>.*

In our last lesson we studied the voice that raises the dead. We looked in John 5:24-29 and in verse 26 we saw how the glory of God was manifested in this event in our text. Christ said, "For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself." Remember John 7:37-39, which is another cry of Jesus, another message in a loud voice, lest even one elect soul might not hear: "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He

who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.' But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified."

Do you remember Ezekiel 37 when the Spirit of the Lord carried Ezekiel and set him down in a valley full of dry bones, bones that the prophet said were very dry! God told the prophet to speak to the bones, prophesy to them the Lord's word. God promised to put sinews on them and flesh, to cover them with skin and to put life and breath in them. As the prophet spoke there was a rattling noise and the bones came together, bone

<sup>1</sup> All Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Version of the Holy Bible.

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issue of salvation, and (3) the issue of victory over sin. His goal in the letter was to reveal to his readers the impotence of the Mosaic law to aid them in gaining victory over sin and self and in living a God-honoring and satisfying life. Paul pointed out that he, as an apostle sent by Jesus Christ and God the Father, had the authority to tell his readers what they ought to believe and how they ought to live. He told them that they ought to believe the gospel he had brought to them, because salvation comes only by grace through faith. Any other message of salvation is a false gospel. He used Abraham to support this claim. They needed to live in a manner that reflected faith in Christ rather than faith in the law. We now come to the section in the letter where Paul deals specifically with victory over the flesh. As Paul addresses the issue of victory over personal sin, he implicitly raises and answers three questions: How do we attain true victory over sin and self? How can we control our selfish and sinful desires? How can we be happy, loving, sharing, godly people? His answers apply in practical ways such as establishing and maintaining lasting and meaningful relationships, building happy homes and marriages, and avoiding fighting, demanding our own way, and being egocentric.

I remind you here of what we said at the beginning of this study. Are not the issues that Paul addresses still with us today? He raises real ques-

tions that define our contemporary problems, as well as those of his first-century audience. Are not these three basic problems the subjects of many books, conferences, seminars, retreats, and experience-oriented meetings? I list them again. First: The question of *authority*—who has the right to tell me what I can and cannot do. Second: The question of *salvation*—peace of mind about my relationship with God. How I can be sure I am justified before God and sure of heaven? Third: the question of *victorious living*. These things are the stuff of which real life is made.

*Why is Galatians such a good book to use to answer these momentous questions?* The answer: Paul, writing as an inspired apostle, demonstrates the necessary relationship between the three questions, specifically in the aspect of cause and effect. You cannot begin with question number three, that of victory over self and sin. This is the reason that so many attempts to solve these problems actually make the problems worse. They start at the wrong end. Nor is this approach confined to those outside of Christ—many Christians are unable to answer these problems correctly. They start with trying to discover how to live victoriously without first being certain why they are not already living victoriously. Too often, we start with personal happiness. People talk about “finding themselves,” “being fulfilled and really happy,” “having their needs met.” Starting at this point, however, only intensifies the problem of selfishness, and delays our finding the only real answer to victory over self and the flesh. Starting with our personal happiness—with ourselves—only feeds the selfishness that created the despair and frustration in the first place. That is a lesson we should have learned from studying Ecclesiastes as well as Galatians.

Humanity’s foremost problem is

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# Scripture as the Word of Christ

## A. Blake White

What should followers of Christ think of ‘red-letter Christians?’ Whether it is political activists, homosexuals, the emergent church, new agers, or evangelical feminists, the teachings of Jesus are often pitted against the other apostles and Paul in particular. “I like Jesus, but don’t bother me with Paul,” is often heard today by immature or confused Christians. In our postmodern context, spirituality is “in” and some vague notion of Jesus is usually thrown in the mix. Sadly, the church is influenced by the culture and begins to downplay the canonical Scriptures and rely on their own subjectivity. We need to spend our lives as ministers calling our churches back to the biblical Text. Believers in Christ must submit to his Lordship, and do so by submitting to the canon of Scripture as a whole, not just the red letters. This article will show that to depart from the apostolic Word is to depart from Jesus. It will do this by examining Scripture’s teaching on Christ as our prophet, his relationship to the apostles, and the implications for how we approach the Bible.

### Christ Our Prophet

The Old Testament anticipated an eschatological prophet to come. Deuteronomy 18:15-18 says, “The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen—just as you desired of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God or see this great fire any more, lest I die.’ And the LORD said to me, ‘They are right in what they have spoken. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put

my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him” (ESV). Moses is here referring to a sequence of prophets and one final unique prophet who will be like Moses. YHWH said of Moses: “If there is a prophet among you, I the LORD make myself known to him in a vision; I speak with him in a dream. Not so with my servant Moses. He is faithful in all my house. With him I speak mouth to mouth, clearly, and not in riddles, and he beholds the form of the Lord” (Numb 12:6-8). Moses was the inaugurator of the Old Covenant and the pinnacle of the prophetic institution. Deuteronomy 34:9-12 sets out an eschatological expectation for the coming Moses-like prophet: “And there has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, none like him for all the signs and the wonders that the LORD sent him to do in the land of Egypt” (v.10-11).

The prophetic institution reached its culmination in Christ. The New Testament presents Jesus as the one to whom the prophets pointed. Luke 24:27 says, “Beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself” (cf. Lk 24:44-47, 1 Pet 1:10-12). Jesus claimed that Moses wrote about *him* (Jn 5:46). Jesus is the chief and last prophet typified in the Old Testament. This is why the priests and Levites respond in the way they do, and ask, “What then? Are you Elijah?” He said, ‘I am not.’ ‘Are you the prophet?’ (Jn 1:21). After feeding the five thousand, the people said, “This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the World (Jn 6:14, cf. 1:25, 45, 7:40). When Jesus, Peter, John, James, Moses, and Elijah are on the mountain, “a voice came out

of the cloud, saying ‘This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him’ [*autou akouete*] (Lk 9:35)!” Note the allusion to Deuteronomy 18:15 where YHWH said the people *would listen* to the prophet to come [*autou akousesthe* LXX]. The reader is not left to allusions though because Acts 3:22 and 7:37 applies the Deuteronomy passage to Jesus as the eschatological prophet.

This prophet, however, is much greater than any Old Testament prophet. Scripture presents Jesus as greater than Moses. In Matthew, Jesus is the new Moses who goes up on the mount to give the new covenant law (Matt 5-7). While Moses was a faithful *servant* in all God’s house, Jesus is the faithful *Son* over God’s house (Heb 3:1-6). Hebrews 1:1-2 says, “Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son” (*en hiō*). Theologian Robert Letham writes, “In the mind of the author of Hebrews Jesus Christ, God’s Son, is a prophet, the greatest prophet and the final definitive prophet, since he is superior to prophets, angels, Moses and all other possible competitors.”<sup>1</sup>

All throughout Jesus’ ministry, he is referred to as a prophet (Matt 13:57, Mk 8:28, Matt 21:46, Lk 7:16, Mk 14:65). He spoke as one with authority (Matt 7:29), and it was on his own authority, unlike the prophets who only spoke with authority when under the influence of the Spirit. Hence, Peter tells Jesus that he has the words of life (Jn 6:68). “Jesus’ words are the foundation of the church and of the Christian life. Without them we are lost.”<sup>2</sup> In the antitheses of Matthew 5:21-48, Jesus says “You have heard that it

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1 Robert Letham, *The Work of Christ* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 95

2 John M. Frame, *Salvation Belongs to the Lord* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2006), 54.

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not our inter-personal relationships (human to human), but our relationship to our creator and judge (human to divine). The first chapter of Romans clearly shows that we become “ungodly,” that is, we first have a wrong attitude to God, and then become “unrighteous” in our attitude to our fellow creatures. Our treatment of our fellow creatures grows directly out of our knowledge of, and attitude toward, the true and living God—our creator. Our knowledge of, and attitude toward, the true and living God is in direct proportion to our knowledge of, and attitude toward, the Word of God, the Bible! Nothing we do, think, decree, or imagine can ever change that reality.

We start at the wrong end when we only want to talk or think about how to feel good about ourselves. The wrong end ignores truth, doctrine, theology. How often do victorious-living seminars focus on theology? More often than not, self-help advice minimizes the importance of *what we believe*. All that matters is that we are *sincere* in what we believe, regardless of the *content* of our faith. Behavior, not belief, is the target of change. To accomplish this goal, someone will study us and treat us as *animals*; that is, they will attempt to change our behavior by using methods akin to training animals in a Skinner box. This methodology follows logically from a commitment to evolution. Granted, many people acknowledge that a human being is the highest form of animal, but nonetheless, a human being is still *only* an animal, produced by some unknown *natural* cause, and not by a creative act of a Creator God. Behavioral change fails to consider human beings as *spiritual beings* made in the image of God.

We certainly agree that people must be sincere in what they believe, but it is just as important that they be *correct* in what they believe. We shall

go even further and say that when the content of belief is wrong, sincerity becomes dangerous. A zealot with a machine gun is a dangerous monster—but he is surely sincere! A professor in college or superintendent in a high school who rejects the authority of God’s Word is potentially more dangerous to a society than are bombs and missiles. Bombs can send you to the grave, but the rejection of God’s Word will send you to hell.

Approaching life and its problems by starting at the wrong end ignores the reality of sin and of a sinful nature. It ignores the basic need of fallen humanity—to know God and to be at peace with him. It refuses to accept the full and clear revelation of God in his Word, and thus rejects the only clear explanation and answer to humanity’s deepest needs and problems. This refusal and rejection is nothing less than a human being pretending that he is God.

We simply must see the relationship between the problems of authority, salvation, and victory. Until we do so, we can never expect to receive lasting help with the last problem. Lasting happiness and joy will not come until we achieve victory over self and sin. Real and lasting peace of mind concerning our relationship with God cannot come to us until we *know* that God himself is satisfied with our personal salvation. This glorious reality of assurance of acceptance with God will be our personal possession the moment we understand and believe the doctrine of *justification by faith*, but we will never grasp this soul-liberating truth until we understand, believe, and personally apply the gospel of God’s saving promise to our hearts and lives. Justification before God is by *faith*, and faith that is to be genuine must have *truth* (the promises of God) as its foundation.

The book of Galatians is clearly God’s answer to the vital questions of *authority, salvation, and victory over*

*personal sin*. The apostle Paul does answer the question of victory and happiness, but he does so by answering the other two questions first. He begins to address the issue of victory over personal sin and selfishness in 5:16-26. As you read these verses, notice Paul’s emphasis on the Holy Spirit and the nature of holiness produced in believers by the Spirit.

*This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another. (KJV)*

The only way to conquer the flesh is by walking in the spirit. Paul uses several phrases that need careful explaining. He talks about “living by the Spirit,” “walking in the Spirit” and “being led by the Spirit.” Look at his uses of the word *spirit* in chapters 4 and 5. Sometimes he is referring to the Holy Spirit and other times to the new spiritual frame of mind given to believers in regeneration (as opposed to the mind of the flesh).

- 4:6 God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts.

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# How to Use the Law Lawfully to Bear Fruit for God<sup>1</sup>

John Piper

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*But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. For some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion, wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions. But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully, realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted.* 1 Timothy 1:5-11

The question crying for an answer after the recent messages on Romans 7 and 8 is how Christians should use the law of God revealed in the Old Testament. The reason this question is crying for an answer is that Paul has said things about the law that show its weakness and powerlessness to justify us and sanctify us. Romans 8:3, “What the law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh ...”

## **Review: Law-Keeping Cannot Justify You**

I have argued in the most recent messages that law-keeping can't justify us in the courtroom of God: If his verdict changes from guilty to not guilty, it will be because we trust in Christ's righteousness and death, not in our law-keeping. And if our hearts are changed from rebellious to submissive it will not be owing to law, but to the Spirit of Christ at work in our hearts. Again and again I have

directed your attention to Romans 7:4, “Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God.” In other words, if we want to bear the fruit of love in our lives - and we will bear this fruit, if we are children of God - then we must pursue it in a way that does not treat the law as our first or chief or decisive means of change.

## **What Then Shall We Do with the Law?**

But this continual reference to dying to the law has raised the question for many of you: What then shall we do with the law? Are we to read the books of Moses? Are we to read the Ten Commandments and the other laws in the Old Testament? What are we to make of the saints of the Old Testament who said things like, “But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night” (Psalm 1:2). “The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. ... They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb” (Psalm 19:7, 10). “O how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day” (Psalm 119:97).

And even here in Romans we have the same spirit. In Romans 7:22 Paul says, “For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man.” And in Romans 7:25 he says, “I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.” This delight in the law and this “serving the law of God” does not sound as absolute as “death to the law.”

Not only that, look with me at Romans 3:20-22. Paul makes clear first (in v. 20) that “by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.” In other words, “law-keeping” will never change our verdict from guilty to not-guilty and will not be the ground of our acceptance in the last judgment. My one plea now and then for acceptance with God is that I have trusted not in my own law-keeping or my own imperfect, blood-bought, Spirit-wrought sanctification, but in Christ's blood and righteousness. That is my one perfect plea in the courtroom of heaven now and always. “By works of the law no flesh will be justified.”

That is Paul's conclusion so far: There is none righteous, no not one. But now what is our hope? Where does it come from? He says in verse 21, “But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, (22) even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe.” The hope of unrighteous people like us and all our friends and enemies is that God has brought about a righteousness that is possible for us to have that is not based on works of the law but based on Jesus Christ. He calls it “the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ.” We can be reckoned righteous because of Christ's life and death if we will trust in him as our Savior and Lord and Treasure.

## **The Testimony of the Law**

But notice one crucial phrase at the end of verse 21: “being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets.” This other

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- 4:29 Born according to the Spirit.
- 5:5 Wait through the Spirit
- 5:16 Walk [live] in the Spirit.
- 5:17 Flesh lusteth against the Spirit (and vice versa).
- 5:18 Led by the Spirit.
- 5:22 Fruit of the Spirit.
- 5:25 Live in the Spirit.
- 5:25 Walk in the Spirit.

(1) To “live in the Spirit” is the same as saying we have been born of the Spirit and have spiritual life. It is the same as saying that we are Christians. Every Christian lives in the Spirit in that he has been born of the Spirit and has spiritual life.

(2) “To walk in the Spirit” is to live out, in day-to-day conduct, the new life given to us at conversion. We will look at both of these phrases carefully when we come to verses 24 and 25.

(3) “To be led by the Spirit” is a little more difficult. It has something to do with living under the New Covenant because Paul contrasts “being led by the Spirit” with “being under the law” (verse 18: “*But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.*”) John Brown’s comments on this passage are excellent.

The introductory formula, “This I say,” [v. 16] is obviously intended to mark the Apostle’s sense of the importance of the sentiments he is about to utter. “To walk” is a common figurative expression for conduct. “To walk in the law of the Lord” is to regulate our conduct according to its precepts. To “walk in the Spirit” is to act like spiritual persons—to follow to their fair practical consequences those views and affections to which, through the faith of the gospel, by the agency of the Holy Spirit, that were formed—to live habitually under the influence of the faith of Christ, and those dispositions that it naturally inspires. Deliver yourselves up to the native force of those new views and affections, and you will

not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

“The flesh,” as we have just remarked, the mode of thinking and feeling which is natural to the man in the present state of human nature; and the “lust of the flesh” are the desires which naturally rise of this mode of thinking and feeling. From experience and observation, as well as from Scripture, we know that this mode of thinking and feeling is depraved. Every man may truly adopt the apostle’s language, “In me, that is, in my flesh, dwells no good thing” (Romans 7:18). The desires of the flesh then are foolish and criminal desires; and to “fulfill” these desires is to endeavor to gratify them, to adopt the course of conduct to which they naturally lead.

The apostle’s statement, then, is this, ‘The best way of opposing the criminal biases of our depraved nature, is to yield ourselves up to the practical influence of that new and better mode of thinking and feeling into which we are brought by the faith of the gospel. This will put a more effectual check on the desires of the flesh than the most rigid observance of Mosaic ceremonies. Nothing mortifies pride, malignity, and impure desire, these lusts of the flesh, like walking in the Spirit.’ Clear views of Christian truth, accompanied by corresponding affections, followed out to their practical results, will do more to deliver a man from the power of vicious habits than the most minute, laborious series of external service or ritual observance.<sup>2</sup>

Brown assumes that we want to oppose and indeed are engaged in opposing “the criminal biases of our depraved nature.” It is important to realize that when we were converted, we went to war against sin. Both Galatians 5 and Romans 7 describe a spiritual war that began the day the life of God was planted in us. The combatants in this war are the flesh—our carnal nature, and the spirit—our new spiritual nature. Or you can say that it is battle between the devil and the Holy Spirit. In this war with sin and the flesh, the Christian loses

many battles, but does not, yea, cannot, lose the war. Likewise, no matter how fierce the battle, the true child of God will not give up the fight and quit the battlefield, nor will he sit down at a conference table and negotiate peace terms. The flesh is the avowed enemy of the spirit. The Christian life is one of unrelenting warfare.

In this war with the flesh, the law of God takes the side of sin and gives the child of God no help. This is a greatly misunderstand truth. Paul makes two statements in this context that are vital to understanding our war with sin. The first one is verse 18, “*But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law*,” and the second one is verses 22 and 23, “*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.*”

According to verse 18, it is impossible to be led by the Spirit and to be under the law at the same time. This is an either/or situation. If you are motivated by the Holy Spirit, then you will automatically manifest the fruit of the Spirit. Just as the sap in a tree rises when the sun shines, so the fruit of the Spirit always appears when we are motivated by the love of Christ. Likewise, when the flesh is motivating us, the works of the flesh are in evidence. Works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit are the evidences of being under the law or being led by the Spirit. We must be delivered from the law before we can produce the fruit of the Spirit. Paul says the same thing in Romans 6:14; “*For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.*” That is not a promise that you claim by faith, this is a reality experienced by every child of God. It is impossible for sin to have dominion over a Christian! No matter how badly he fared in a battle with temptation, nor how wounded in that battle, the child of God will not quit

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 292, 294

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righteousness that is not by works of the law is witnessed to by the law. The law testifies to it. That is one clear reason why Paul can delight in the law and why we do not want to throw the law away. The law itself told us that law-keeping cannot justify and pointed us to another “righteousness” that would one day be revealed.

So when Paul gets down to Romans 3:28, he says, “For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law” - just like verse 20. But then again in verse 31 he asks, “Do we then nullify the Law through faith?” And he answers, “May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law.” So the law itself was pointing to a goal that it could not accomplish for us or in us, but when we attained this goal (of justification and sanctification!) through faith in Christ, the law itself would be fulfilled and established. “The goal of the law is Christ for righteousness for all who believe” (Romans 10:4, own translation).

So it’s plain that we do not die to the law in every conceivable way. We rejoice in the law in some ways (Romans 7:22), and in the law we see a witness to the “righteousness of God through faith in Christ” (Romans 3:21), and we establish the law through faith in Christ (Romans 3:31); the goal of the law is Christ.

So to clarify how we should lawfully use the law, let’s go to another passage in one of Paul’s letters where he addresses this question directly, 1 Timothy 1:5-11.

### **1 Timothy 1:5-11: The Lawful & Unlawful Uses of the Law**

Notice first the key sentence in verse 8: “But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully.” So here Paul alerts us to the fact that you can use the law lawfully or unlawfully. My guess is that failing to die to the law will result in an unlawful use of

the law. But let’s see what the context says here.

In verses 5-7 Paul says what his goal is in all his preaching and ministry and why certain people have failed in reaching this goal by the way they are using the law. He says, starting in verse 5, “The goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.” There’s the goal, and how to get there. Notice the path to love is not works of law. In other words the way to pursue love is by focusing on the transformation of the heart and the conscience and the awakening and strengthening of faith. Love is not pursued first or decisively by focusing on a list of behavioral commandments and striving to conform to them. That is what we must die to.

### **Law Teachers Who Do not Lawfully Use the Law**

Then Paul introduces us to some men who are making a mess of the law, and not arriving at the goal of love either! Verse 6: “For some men, straying from these things [that is, “a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith”], have turned aside to fruitless discussion, (7) wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions.”

These “law-teachers” do not understand that the goal of the law, which is love, is pursued not by “works of law” but by inner spiritual transformation which the law itself cannot bring about. They don’t get it. Paul says they do not know what they are talking about. They are trying to teach the law, but they are turning aside from matters of the heart and conscience and faith. And that means they are not using the law lawfully. And that is why they are not arriving at the goal of love.

Oh, how we need to take heed here! There are hundreds of people

today who put themselves forward in America as teachers of the law - marriage law, child-rearing law, financial-planning law, church-growth law, leadership law, evangelism law, missions law, racial-justice law. But here’s the key question: do they understand the gospel dynamic for bringing about the change they seek? I say this only to alert you.

Are the radio programs you are learning from and the articles and books you are reading permeated by a lawful use of the law? Do the speakers and writers understand the dynamic of dying to the law and belonging to Christ by faith alone as the essential means of becoming the people of love that we ought to be? Who today would Paul speak these words over: “[They want] to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions”? In other words, they just don’t get it. They don’t understand the gospel way that human beings are changed in a way that glorifies Christ. We need to be prepared and able to assess these things. That’s why Paul wrote this to Timothy.

### **The Lawful Use of the Law: Realize It Is not Made for the Righteous**

Well, what then is the lawful use of the law in this text? Follow his thought from verse 8: “But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully.” What is that? Verse 9 explains. First it involves “realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious ...” etc. He lists fourteen examples of law-breaking (following the outline of the ten commandments, the first three pairs summing up the first table of the Decalogue and the rest summing up the second table).

So the law, Paul says, is not made

Reisinger—Continued from page 6

the field, but will surely rise again and fight, and win, another day.

How can we be so sure that sin cannot possibly have dominion over the Christian? The verse says: because the Christian is “*not under the law but under grace.*” It is sin that gives the law its power or dominion over us. It is the law that justly condemns us in our sin. But the law cannot condemn sin if the sin has already been punished—and our sin debt has been fully paid by Christ. The child of God is forever free from the law’s authority. It cannot touch him. It is the law that gives sin its strength (1 Cor. 15:56) and it is sin that gives law its power or dominion. You must see the law totally satisfied in order to be free from both the authority of the law and power of sin. Our Lord’s complete atoning work both fulfilled and satisfied the law and also freed us from its power and tyranny. We can now cry out in victory with Bunyan, “When this law with its thundering threatenings doth attempt to lay hold on thy conscience, shut it out with a promise of grace; cry, the inn is took up already, the Lord Jesus is here entertained, and there is no room for the law.” (From: *The Law and the Christian*, Bunyan’s Works, Baker Edition, Vol. 2, p.388). We can sing with John Newton, “He has hushed the law’s loud thunder, He has quenched Mount Sinai’s flame; He has washed us with his blood, He has brought us nigh to God” (John Newton, 1774).

The “lust of the flesh” in 5:16, 17 is, unfortunately, usually associated with sexual lust. This is wrong. Actually the specific things the flesh desires are not necessarily evil in themselves. The Greek word means *strong desire*. What Paul is saying is this, “the flesh sometimes feels a strong desire for something and is tempted to satisfy that desire in a way which is against the clearly revealed will of God.” Of course, there are times when

the person’s lust is after something that is sinful in its self, but that is not necessarily the case. The Holy Spirit does not sin when he ‘lusteth after righteousness’ (verse 17).

There is no middle ground or basis for compromise in our war with sin. The principle of sin and selfishness is an indelible part of our old nature that will not be totally eradicated until we land in heaven. The Spirit and the flesh are totally contrary to each other. It is impossible for this antagonism to not have a direct bearing on our personal conduct. The flesh keeps us from doing the things we would like to do. In Romans 7, Paul says the same thing, “The good that I would, I do not.” The apostle is not saying he is one bundle of frustration and defeat and never obeys God in anything. The “good” in Romans 7:19 is the same as the “things he would, but cannot” in Galatians 5:17—sinless perfection. Paul lusts after perfection, but cannot attain it because of remaining sin. He is resigned to do battle with the flesh until faith gives way to sight and he is delivered from this body of death. He fights with the assurance he will ultimately gain the total victory.

But what about today? Is our only hope for the future when our Lord returns? Paul, in Galatians 5, is talking about the time before the return of Christ. There is a present victory over the flesh. It is not a total victory, nor is it a constant victory, but there is a true victory over sin and self. Anyone whose life is being described in Galatians 5:22, 23 surely cannot be classified as spiritually defeated. Paul’s entire exhortation in this section emphasizes walking in the Spirit and not fulfilling the desires of the flesh.

In verses 19 through 23, Paul compares the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit. After listing the works of the flesh, he adds, “and the like” to show his lists are not exhaustive. The works list can be divided into four categories—sexual activity,

religion, society, and drink.

1. In the category of sexual activity, Paul lists *immorality, impurity, and licentiousness* (verse 19).
2. In the category of religion, he lists *idolatry and sorcery*. It should be noted that idolatry is just as much a work of the flesh as is immorality.
3. In the category of society, the apostle lists eight examples of inter-personal relationship breakdowns. Again, these things are just as much works of the flesh under the curse of God as are sexual impurity and drunkenness. The New English Bible translates ‘quarrels, a contentious temper, envy, fits of rage, selfish ambitions (or temper tantrums, and canvassing for office), dissensions, party intrigues, and jealousies (verses 20, 21).
4. In the category of drink, he lists drunkenness and carousing (or drinking bouts and orgies, verse 21).

Paul’s warns in verse 21 that they who do these things will not enter the kingdom, but he does not mean that doing any one of these things even once will cause a person to be cast out of the kingdom. It is possible for a person to commit a grievous sin in a given instance after he is converted. David is a clear example of this. However, it is not possible for a Christian to have a lifestyle *dominated* by any of these works of the flesh. The Greek verb tense denotes a habitual practice and not a single instance of succumbing to temptation.

In verses 22 and 23, Paul lists nine Christian graces. John Stott’s comments are excellent.

Here we have a cluster of nine Christian graces which seem to portray a Christian’s attitude to God, to other people and to himself.

*Love, joy, peace.* This is a triad of general Christian virtues. Yet they

## The 2009 Providence Theological Seminary Doctrinal Conference August 5-8

**Colorado Springs, Colorado**

The theme of the conference is:

*This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; hear Him.* (Matt. 17:5).

The featured guest speaker is Dr. Tom Nettles, Professor of Historical Theology, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville. He will speak three times, once each night, on the historical origin, influences and theological challenges to Sovereign Grace Baptist Theology.

The doctrinal purpose of the conference is to demonstrate the need for a more accurate way to interpret the Bible than that which is found in the theological systems of Dispensational Theology and Covenant Theology.

Each of the seminary's resident faculty will present one message:

Dr. Gary D. Long, Faculty President  
Professor Dwight Brown, Dean of Students  
Dr. Frank Gumerlock, Professor of Historical Theology  
J. William Dorman, Professor of OT Literature and Exegesis

Also, five seminary Board of Directors members will present one message each:

Jackson Boyett, Pastor of Dayspring Fellowship in Austin, TX  
J. David Gilliland, M.D., Chairman of the Board, Providence Theological Seminary  
Joe W. Kelley, D.Min. Candidate and longtime pastor of Killeen Bible Church, Killeen, TX  
William W. Sasser, Pastor of Grace Church in Franklin, TN  
Richard A. Smith, Elder, Dayspring Fellowship in Austin, TX

Six Conference sessions will be held with two messages each starting on Wednesday evening followed by morning and evening sessions on Thursday and Friday and concluding on Saturday morning.

The afternoons will be free to visit the many attractions in the beautiful Pike's Peak region of the Rocky Mountains. See the seminary website ([www.ptsco.org](http://www.ptsco.org)) for message titles and presentation times. Discussion times are scheduled and a Book Table is planned.

Sign-in for the conference will be from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, August 5th.



### REGISTRATION FOR THE 2009 PTS DOCTRINAL CONFERENCE Wednesday to Saturday, August 5-8, 2009

The registration fee before July 1st for adults for all 12 conference messages is \$100 (after July 1st, \$120); for the accompanying spouse, \$80 (after July 1st, \$100); no fee for high school children attending with their parents. Individual adult message fees including accompanying spouse: \$10 per person per message. College-age students \$60 for all 12 messages or \$5 for each message attended. Drink refreshments will be provided during the message breaks. Daily meals are attendee responsibility; they are **not provided** at the conference site.

A **Registration Form** with complete instructions is available on the PTS website ([www.ptsco.org](http://www.ptsco.org)).

All conference sessions will be held at **5210 Centennial Blvd., Colorado Springs, CO, 80919**, which is the facility of **Front Range Alliance Church**. The Seminary phone # is 719-434-4872 and the Seminary Email address is [info@ptsco.org](mailto:info@ptsco.org).

**Refund Policy:** There will be a full refund for cancellations made no later than July 1. There will be a \$25 refund fee for each cancellation after July 1.



### MOTEL ACCOMODATIONS

Special arrangements have been made with **Quality Inn & Suites** located at 555 W. Garden of the Gods in Colorado Springs. It is near the church facility. Several restaurants are located within a block or two of the motel. Conference attendees must make their own room reservations—**make them early**—by calling the motel at 719-593-9119. **Tell the motel desk that you are attending the Providence Theological Seminary Conference.** See the seminary website ([www.ptsco.org](http://www.ptsco.org)) for details about the rooms and the rates offered.

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God is wonderful in His design and excellent in His working. Believer, God overrules all things for your good. The needs-be for all that you have suffered, has been most accurately determined by God. Your course is all mapped out by your Lord. Nothing will take Him by surprise. There will be no novelties to Him. There will be no occurrences which He did not foresee, and for which, therefore, He has not provided. He has arranged all, and you have but to patiently wait, and you shall sing a song of deliverance. Your life has been arranged on the best possible principles, so that if you had been gifted with unerring wisdom, you would have arranged a life for yourself exactly similar to the one through which you have passed. Let us trust God where we cannot trace Him.

C. H. Spurgeon, *A Feast for Faith*, Isaiah. 28:29.

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to bone. Sinews and flesh came upon the bones and skin covered them, but there was no breath. Then God told Ezekiel to prophesy to the breath (wind or breath of life) “breathe on these slain that they may live” (Ezek 37:9b). He did as he was commanded and a great, living army stood before him. Then he was told to preach this: “Behold, Oh My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. Then you shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up from your graves. I will put My Spirit in you and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken it and performed it, says the Lord” (Ezek 37:12b-14).

The great elephant hunters who went to Africa in the 1800’s and grew wealthy on the ivory they collected, told of elephant graveyards, some of them extremely large, perhaps containing bones centuries old. Sometimes as they approached one of them, there would be an elephant there with the barest breath of life left in him. Sometimes the elephant swayed like a tree in the wind and suddenly fell and never moved again.

What a transformation came on the world when Adam trespassed against his creator. “. . . through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and this death spread to all men, because all sinned” (Rom 5:12). Now man loves his sin and every day his condemnation increases. There is a graphic picture of it in Romans 2:5: “But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring [storing] up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.” I see there a miser, a man or woman who each day goes out to the markets of Vanity Fair to sell and

buy, and when home, takes up a board from the floor and counts his wealth and adds to his store, a greedy smile lighting his countenance. He says himself, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.” But God says to him, “Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided. So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God” (Luke 12:20-21).

That person, that miser that hoards up for himself the wages of sin will one day hear the hoof beats of the pale horse turn down his street and stop at his door. He will try to lock the door against death, but just as he followed sin into Eden, he will burst through all his defenses and lay claim to him body and soul.

The passage in Ezekiel 37 is a glorious picture of the totality of God’s redemptive work, of which Christ spoke so completely in John 5:24-29.

The wind is the Holy Spirit. The bones are both those yet dead in sin and elect, and they also represent the children of God who sleep in the Lord in their graves. They must be born again spiritually and they must be born again physically at the resurrection.

Our Lord said to Nicodemus: “Most assuredly I say to you, unless one is born of water [the washing of regeneration] and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘you must be born again.’ The wind blows where it wishes [in the valley of bones so dry], and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit” (John 3:5-8).

Every dead soul upon whom that wind blows is quickened from death in trespasses and sins, (cf. Eph 2:1).

“God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)” (Eph 2:4, 5).

That must occur in order for on the day of resurrection our corruption can put on incorruption and our mortal can put on immortality, see 1 Corinthians 15.

But in Ezekiel’s prophecy we also see these people come out of graves opened by God, and it is an event aimed by God at bringing them into the land of Israel, alive with God’s Spirit in their own land. That is the ultimate proof that what God has spoken, he performs. This is the second resurrection as well as the first. This is the kingdom people, the Israel of God. A multitude like the stars in the sky, innumerable as sand on the seashore. They died in faith, seeing the promises far off, embracing them. They confessed themselves strangers, pilgrims on earth. They sought a homeland, refused to go back to the country [the world] they left. They desired a heavenly country and God is not ashamed of them, to be called their God, and he has prepared them a city (cf. Heb 11:13-16). That country, that city is Ezekiel’s “Israel, their own land.”

And in John 11:44 we see a literal prefiguring of this triumphant working of the “. . . exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power” (Eph 1:19).

1] *And he who had died came out...* How merciful of God to give us John’s eyewitness account of this event. It is a graphic and open public demonstration that the words of the Lord in verses 25, 26 of this chapter are true.

He is the resurrection and life and we see through John’s eyes the unvar-

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## Quotes from the 2009 John Bunyan Conference

### compiled by John T "Jack" Jeffrey

#### Gary George, "Whitefield, God's Oracle"

"It's not Whitfield, it's not Wesley, it's the Word of God!"

#### John G. Reisinger, "Why Call It the 'John Bunyan' Conference?"

"You can't go to heaven unless you read *The Pilgrim's Progress!*" (quoting his brother, Ernie). You may laugh; but if I were you, I would not take a chance.

#### Gary George, "Calvinistic Evangelism"

"There are three kinds of 'Christians': 'Christians' by reasoning, 'Christians' by ritual, and Christians by revelation. Which one do you think is the real Christian?"  
"Let us not give up on the Gospel! We don't need the gimmicks!"

#### John G. Reisinger, "Imputation"

"Nixon's problem was that he only wiped out twenty minutes of the tape. He should have destroyed the whole thing. God didn't do that. He destroyed the whole thing!"  
"When our Lord cried out on the Cross, 'My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?'" He was never more precious to His Father than He was at that moment."  
"Our Lord is the only lawyer who can practice in heaven! He's the only lawyer I know who never lost a case! He's the only lawyer I know who makes you publicly admit you're guilty, and then gets you off scot-free!"  
"The man Christ Jesus has the earned authority to forgive sinners."

#### David Morris, "For Whom Did Christ Die, Part I"

"I am a recovering Arminian. I have been in remission for some time."  
"Did Christ in His redemption secure that which redemption is?"  
On Ephesians 1: "...what redemption must bring in its train. There is nothing hypothetical here!"  
"I started to talk back to the radio. I hope that's a sign of intelligence!"  
On Genesis 15:12 - "Abraham is on the side asleep, and he's not a somnambulist either!"

#### David Morris, "For Whom Did Christ Die, Part II"

On Isaiah 53:10 - "You can't separate the act from the purpose!"  
"The Bible sheds a whole lot of light on those commentaries!" (quoting an unnamed brother).  
David quoted John Nelson Darby's hymn, *And Is It So, I Shall Be Like Thy Son?* (see below).  
"The Lamb got what He paid for!"

#### David Morris, "Does God Have Two Wills?"

"God does what He pleases, and He is pleased with what He does!" (quoting Vance Havner)

Don McKinney's question to a lawyer: "If you were God, how would you run things?" The lawyer's response to Don McKinney: "If I were God, I'd run things lock, stock and barrel!" Don McKinney's rejoinder to the lawyer: "That's exactly what we believe!"  
"Biblical metaphysics throws philosophical metaphysics out the window!"

#### Kirk Wellum, "Matthew 5:17-20 and the New Covenant"

"Anybody who takes 300 pages to explain one Greek word has an axe to grind!"  
"I believe that I keep the Sabbath by fleeing for refuge in Him. I believe that anyone who doesn't keep the Sabbath in this way will be cut off from the Covenant."  
"There is no life found in the Old Testament Scriptures if they don't bring us to Jesus."

#### Kirk Wellum, "Matthew 9:14-17, 'Wineskin Patches'"

"The coming and the going of Jesus not only introduced personal change, but also introduced covenantal change."  
"Because the Old Covenant is old it cannot be patched, but must be replaced with something new."  
"It's time to start moving in the direction of the freedom of the Holy Spirit in the New Covenant."  
"Haven't we learned by now that the Lord delights in variety?"

#### John G. Reisinger, "Imputation and Limited Atonement"

"Log these things in, and push the 'save' button!  
Sin is always punished by God.  
Death is the punishment for sin.  
Wherever you find death, you will also find sin and guilt before God.  
All men die without exception only because they sin and are guilty before God."  
"Did Adam, in his transgression, make it possible for us to become sinners, or were we constituted as sinners in his offense?"  
"If you can't grasp the imputation of Adam's sin, then you can't grasp the Gospel!"  
"Adam is the only person who was made to be a sinner by sinning."  
"If you don't think you had anything to do with that, then why do you act just like your Grandpa?"  
On Romans 2:12-21 - "You can't introduce 'possibility' in any sense into this text!"  
"Every argument against limited atonement is an argument against sovereign election!"

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Reisinger—Continued from page 8

seem to primarily concern our attitude towards God, for a Christian's first love is his love for God, his chief joy is in God and his deepest peace is with God.

Next, *patience, kindness, goodness*. These are social virtues, manward rather than Godward in their direction. 'Patience' is longsuffering toward those who aggravate or persecute. 'Kindness' is a question of disposition, and 'goodness' of words and deeds.

The third triad is *faithfulness, gentleness, self-control*. 'Faithfulness' (AV *faith*) appears to describe the reliability of a Christian man. 'Gentleness' is that humble meekness which Christ exhibited (Mt. 11:29; 2 Cor. 10:1). And both are aspects of the 'self-mastery,' or 'self-control', which concludes the list.<sup>3</sup>

The 'works' of the flesh (verse 19) is plural and the "fruit" of the Spirit is singular. Not all unbelievers manifest all of the works of the flesh, but all Christians manifest the fruit of the Spirit. Not all Christians manifest the fruit of the Spirit to the same degree, but they do have the seeds of the fruit

3 John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Galatians: Only One Way*, BST (Leicester, England: IVP, 1988), 148

in their hearts. The contrast between 'works' and 'fruit' is deliberate. The flesh literally works hard to produce its efforts, but the Holy Spirit produces his fruit without our efforts. The works of the flesh are the product of our work, and the fruit of the Spirit is the product of the Spirit working in us, "both to will and to do."

After listing specific examples of fruit, Paul adds, "Against such there is no law." We have already seen that when the Spirit leads us, we are not under the law. Paul now adds that there is no need for a law when we are led by the Spirit. Can you imagine making a law saying you are not allowed to show too much love? How about a law restricting kindness? Martin Luther said, "Love God with all of your heart and do as you please." Theoretically, Luther was correct. Paul, in 1 Corinthians 13, describes how a person who loved God with all of his heart would live. When Paul says, "Love is kind" he does not add, "because that is what the law demands." Love is kind just because it is the nature of love to be kind. If you made a law that forbade being kind, love would break that law and still

show kindness.

Having said all that, we must add that it is impossible for redeemed and regenerated sinners to love God *perfectly*. We need objective definitions of right and wrong, because without them, we would abuse love by turning it into lust for our own ends. The problem is not the weakness of love, but the depravity of the sinner, even the reborn sinner. And having said that, we must add that the answer is not to bring the law into the Christian's life as a means to combat that depravity. One thing Paul is emphatic about in both Romans and Galatians is the inability of the law to conquer sin, whether it be in the lost person or the saved person. The law is like a big club that can be used to control a lion. However, you would be advised not to turn your back on the lion. Preachers can use the law to cower a congregation into subjection, but how effective is the law when the preacher is absent? No, no, my friends, the threat of the law cannot tame the wildness in a heart. Walking in the Spirit is the only answer. We will see this spelled out in 5:24-26. Ω

## LETTERS

Brothers,

Thank you for the latest material from W. Sassar. And please let Don S. thank you as well.

You guys at SOG have been such a Godsend these last years. I am so thankful for all the issues and other items as well as your prayers and thoughts. I always lift you up in prayer, and all at SOG including John Reisinger. I pray he is well. Keep up the good work for our Lord.

Your Brother in Christ, SB

P.S. Many in here are touched by SOG

The magazine has been very good. The writers are doing some great teaching; which I needed.

Love & Prayers, FS

Prague, April 27, 2009

Dear Jakob E. Moseley

This is Pavel Steiger of Prague, Czech Republic, HCJB missionary to Czech and Slovak Republics. Some three years ago, New Covenant Media assisted us [financially] to publish *Tables of Stone* in Czech. It has been displayed on our web page for two years. Just last month it was published in paperback in the same format as our Christian Journal that is in NCT spirit. I am mailing you two copies of the recent *Tablets of Stone* (circulation 3000) and *Abraham's Four Seeds* (circulation 5000). The country has only 10,000,000 people and about 20,000 evangelicals. Please forward a copy to John G. Reisinger.

In His Sovereign Grace,

Paval Steiger

Piper—Continued from page 7

for a righteous person, but for the lawless and rebellious. This sounds very much like Galatians 3:19. Paul asks, "Why the Law then?" Why was it added 430 years after Abraham was justified by faith? He answers, "It was added because of transgressions." He does not say that it was added because of righteousness. It was added because of these kinds of things we read in this list in 1 Timothy 1:9-10. The law had a special role to play in setting a rigorous, detailed standard of behavior which functioned, Paul said, to hold people imprisoned (Galatians 3:22) or under a guardian or tutor (Galatians 3:24) until Christ came and justification by faith could be focused on him. The law commanded and condemned, and pointed to a Redeemer who was to come. Then Paul says, in Galatians 3:25, "But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor."

This, it seems to me, is what Paul is saying in 1 Timothy 1:9, the "law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless." In other words, if the law has done its condemning and convicting work to bring you to Christ for justification and transformation, then it is not made for you any more - in that sense. There may be other uses you can make of it, but that's not what this text is about. The main point here is that the law

has a convicting, condemning, restraining work to do for unrighteous people.

But for the righteous - for people who have come to Christ for justification and come to Christ for the inner spiritual power to love, this role of the law is past. From now on, the place where we seek the power to love is not the law of commandments but the gospel of Christ.

I think we see this powerfully in verses 10b-11. Notice how Paul sums up all that the law must be against and restrain: "whatever is contrary to sound teaching, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God." So where does behavior come from that is not "contrary to sound teaching," and is "in accord with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God?" Answer: it comes from that gospel. It comes from the clean heart and the good conscience and the sincere faith that this gospel calls into being. The law does not produce a life of love that accords with the gospel. The gospel produces a life of love that accords with the gospel.

Justification by faith alone apart from works of the law, and sanctification by faith through the power of the Spirit - these produce a life of love that accords with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God. And woe to

those who try to fix your personality or your marriage or your children or your finances or your vocation or your church or your mission or your commitment to justice, but do not understand this gospel dynamic, and turn counsel in to new law.

**What Then Shall Those Who Are Justified Do with the Law of Moses?**

Read it and meditate on it as those who are dead to it as the ground of your justification and the power of your sanctification. Read it and meditate on it as those for whom Christ is your righteousness and Christ is your sanctification. Which means read and meditate on it to know Christ better and to treasure him more. Christ and the Father are one (John 10:30; 14:9). So to know the God of the Old Testament is to know Christ. The more you see his glory and treasure his worth, the more you will be changed into his likeness (2 Corinthians 3:17-18), and love the way he loved - which is the fulfilling of the law (Romans 13:10).

I say it again. What shall you do with the law - you who are justified by faith alone apart from works of the law? Read it and meditate on it to know more deeply than you have ever known, the justice and mercy of God in Christ, your righteousness and your life. Ω

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McMillin—Continued from page 12

nished truth of his assertion. He commanded death to release his captive, “and he who was dead came out...” Never again should our faith waver; like Abraham, we should believe in him “... who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did” (Rom 4:17b). If Abraham, contrary to hope in hope believed, when God promised him a son when the flesh was dead, will we be ‘Sadducees’ when we see a man rise from the dead? Read Romans 4 for an account of Abraham’s great faith.

When Christ gave sight to the man blind from birth, the Pharisees said this to him who was blind about Christ: “We know that God spoke to Moses; as for this fellow, we do not know where He is from” (John 9:29). The man who could now see replied, “Why this is a marvelous thing, that you do not know where He is from; yet he has opened my eyes! Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind. If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing” (John 9:30, 32 & 33).

After the Jews cast him out of the Synagogue, Christ found him and asked: “Do you believe in the Son of God? He answered and said, ‘Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?’ and Jesus said to him, ‘You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you.’ Then he said, ‘Lord, I believe!’ and he worshipped Him” (John 9:35b-38).

Christ was despised when he preached in Galilee in Nazareth, and Mark 6:6 states that he marveled because of their unbelief.

Have we truly believed? As we see this man who was dead walk out of his tomb with the power of the living, do we believe in the Son of God? Do we see the glory of God in this man who raises even the dead? If not, our unbelief is ‘marvelous’.

2] *Bound hand and foot with grave clothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth.* The picture of the man who had been dead, yet walked out of the tomb still totally wrapped in grave clothes, illustrates the wonder of regeneration or the new birth.

As the infant is born without knowledge and must learn, the Spirit must first quicken, or regenerate, or we could say give life to a dead soul. Dead men do not see, do not hear, cannot think and so they believe nothing. Then like the infant, the child of God begins in a relative ignorance and must learn. And in Romans 10:17 Paul tells us that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. Peter speaks of our birth and new life like this: “having been born again, not of corruptible [perishable] seed but of incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever” (1 Pet 1:23).

As the infant craves its mother’s milk, so God puts an appetite for his word in all who are truly saved. “Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be filled” (Matt 5:6). But at first we are very ignorant of God’s word, cannot understand the deep things of it. We are bound hand and foot in the grave clothes of this old tomb of flesh. We know little more than the things of a man. We are “as newborn babes, [to] desire the pure milk of the word, that [we] may grow thereby” (1 Pet 2:2).

However, many seem to have a dangerous lack of appetite for God’s word, an anorexia. When enough time has passed for them to teach others they need to be taught the first principles of Scripture again. They are babes, using only milk, unskilled in the word of righteousness. Their senses dull, unexercised, they cannot discern between good and evil. They appear as spiritual skeletons walking.

This is dangerous, fatal if it is a life-long pattern. Those who have no use for the things of God in time will choke on them in eternity.

3] Christ said of Lazarus, *loose him, and let him go.* His head was bound in a napkin and he couldn’t see or hear. His body was encased in and tightly bound by wrappings so he could hardly turn his head, bend his elbows or use his hands. He was alive, but virtually helpless.

So is the newborn babe in Christ. To the Spirit of God, the Master says: “loose him and let him go.”

“And if Christ is in you, the body is dead, because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these [and these alone] are the Sons of God” (Rom 8:10-14).

I fear for ‘Christian America’; whose sons are they? Ω

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The law is not opposed to grace by preparing for it; it is only opposed to it if we stay in it after grace has come.

A. Lukyn Williams

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White—Continued from page 3

was said. . . . But I say to you.” Jesus is the new lawgiver. His teaching is authoritative because he speaks just as the Father taught him (John 8:28, cf. 5:24-27).

### Christ and His Apostles

The relation of Christ and His apostles is a tight one; much tighter than many would like. Jesus appointed apostles to continue his prophetic ministry. He set apart twelve men for this task (Matt 10:1, Mk 3:13-19) and commissioned them as representatives and ambassadors (Acts 10:41). The Lord gave them their authority. This was similar to the *shaliach* in Judaism. In the Jewish legal system, the *shaliach* was given legal power to represent another person, and “so unique was his relationship to the one he represented that the *shaliach* was regarded as that person himself.”<sup>3</sup> So Jesus can say to them, “The one who hears you hears me, and the one who rejects you rejects me, and the one who rejects me rejects him who sent me” (Lk 10:16, Matt 10:40, Mk 9:37, Jn 13:20, 17:8). John 14-16 are crucial chapters in this regard. Jesus tells his disciples: “These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you (14:25-26) . . . But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning (15:26-27). . . . When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to

come” (16:13). Jesus is clear here, that He would ascend and then send the Spirit to guide the apostles (Jn 7:37-39). Robert Letham writes, “Through this appointment the apostles received the authority of Christ and became his ambassadors, representing him in the church and in the world. Hence forth, their teaching was to be Christ’s own teaching, no less.”<sup>4</sup>

Therefore, the authority of the apostles, now found in the New Testament, is bound up with the authority of the risen Christ himself. The prophets and apostles are the foundation of the church (Eph 2:20). The Apostle Paul can say, “Assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God’s grace that was given to me for you, how the mystery was made known to me by revelation. . . . the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit” (Eph 3:1-5). Paul did not receive his gospel from people, but received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal 1:11-12). The Thessalonians received the word of God from the apostles “not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God” (1 Thess 2:13, cf. 1 Cor 2:12-13). In his high priestly prayer, Jesus prays, “I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word” (Jn 17:20). Jesus and the apostolic word are inextricably bound together. This is why the early church was devoted to the apostle’s teaching (Acts 2:42). Also, Paul can tell the Ephesians, whom Jesus never visited, that Jesus “came and preached peace to you” (Eph 2:17). First John 4:6 says, “Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us.” The consequence of this teaching is that those who want to be faithful to Christ must be faithful to the New Testament Scriptures which presuppose the authority of the

Hebrew Scriptures. As Letham says, “There can be no dichotomy between Jesus and the apostles. We are offered Christ clothed with the apostolic gospel. That is the way God intended and executed it. No other option is given us.”<sup>5</sup>

### Implications for the Doctrine of Scripture

In the introduction, it was noted that there are a growing number of Christians who think Jesus is “cool,” but who think Peter and Paul in particular are too “primitive” for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It has been shown that the self-contained Christ is the chief and last prophet who continues his prophetic ministry through the written Word. Jesus Christ has been given all authority in heaven and on earth (Matt 28:18). His identity determines his authority. He is the King and rules his people through his Word. The world will be judged by the risen Christ’s words; John 12:47-50 says, “If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day. For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak. And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me” (cf. Lk 9:26).

How then does the church obey their eschatological prophet today? The answer is through the Word of God written. Scripture’s “origin is from the Holy Spirit. The Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. Thus the production of Scripture can ultimately be traced back to the triune God.”<sup>6</sup> Just as with the Father, one cannot separate the Son from the

3 Herman Ridderbos, *Redemptive History and the New Testament Scriptures* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1963), 14.

4 Letham, *Work of Christ*, 96-97.

5 Ibid., 99.

6 Ibid., 101

Spirit (2 Cor 3:18, Rom 8:9-11). Ridderbos writes, “God’s revelation in Jesus Christ continues by the operation of the Spirit.”<sup>7</sup> It was prophesied in the Old Testament that the bearer of the Spirit would become the bestower of the Spirit (Isa 11, 42, 61) and we have seen from John 14-16 that this is what Jesus does. Second Timothy 3:16 and 2 Peter 1:21 teach that the Spirit carried men along with the result being a God-breathed Text. Letham writes, “Thus, the apostles’ teaching was to be derived from the Holy Spirit and, in consequence, from Christ himself. In practice, the apostles’ teaching was to be what Jesus would have taught in person if they had been able to receive it at the time.”<sup>8</sup> If we claim to follow Jesus, we cannot pick and choose which parts of Scripture we will or will not obey. The Word of the Lord is determined by the Lord of the Word.

7 Ridderbos, *Redemptive History and the New Testament*, 14.

8 Letham, *Work of Christ*, 97.

Jeffrey—Continued from page 13

This is the hymn that David Morris quoted:

***And is it so! we shall be like Thy Son***

by John Nelson Darby (1800-1882), 1872

Tune: *Eventide*, by William H. Monk (1823-1889), 1861

And is it so! we shall be like Thy Son,  
Is this the grace which He for us has won?  
Father of glory! (thought beyond all thought)  
In glory to His own blest likeness brought.

O Jesus, Lord, who loved us like to Thee?  
Fruit of Thy work, with Thee, too, there to see  
Thy glory, Lord, while endless ages roll,  
Thy saints the prize and travail of Thy soul.

Yet it must be, Thy love had not its rest  
Were Thy redeemed not with Thee fully blest;  
That love that gives not as the world, but shares  
All it possesses with its loved co-heirs.

Not we alone, Thy loved ones all, complete,  
In glory round Thee there with joy shall meet,  
All like Thee, for Thy glory like Thee, Lord,  
Object supreme of all, by all adored.

The heart is satisfied, can ask no more;

If we claim to obey Jesus, we will not dismiss Joshua’s conquests, or disregard Paul’s teaching on homosexuality and gender.<sup>9</sup> To disobey any part of the Bible is to disobey the risen Christ. To depart from the apostolic word is to depart from Christ himself.

**Conclusion**

We live in a pluralistic and post-modern society where objective truth is considered a thing of the past. Sadly, this has affected Christ’s churches. The loss of an objective

9 Some object to the notion that Paul had the authority as Jesus by appealing to 1 Corinthians 7:10, 12, and 25 where Paul distinguishes between his teaching and the teaching of Jesus. However, careful exegesis of these passages shows that Paul is merely distinguishing between what the historical Jesus addressed and what he did not. Paul’s apostolic teaching is no less authoritative than that of Jesus. See Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 291-92.

word does not just affect the realm of ideas. Francis Schaeffer has taught us well that “ideas have consequences.” With the loss of objective truth comes the loss of morality in the churches. The “red-letter” movement doesn’t help matters. The need of the day, as always, is a return to canonical faithfulness. This paper has shown that Jesus Christ is the greatest and final eschatological prophet that the Old Testament foreshadowed, who continues his prophetic ministry through appointed apostles. The implication for the Bible is that it is the Word of Christ. Genesis through Revelation should be considered “red-lettered.” One cannot pit any one author against another because they were all guided by the Spirit whom Christ sent (Jn 14-16). Hence, to depart from the apostolic Word is to depart from Christ. There is no true following of Jesus apart from following the canon of Scripture. Ω

All thought of self is now forever o’er;  
Christ, its unmingled object, fills the heart  
In blest adoring love—its endless part.<sup>1</sup>

1 *The Believers Hymn Book*, rev. ed. (London: Pickering & Inglis, n.d.), 366. Meter: 10.10.10.10. Darby is remembered as the founder of the movement referred to as the “Plymouth” Brethren. Other tunes this hymn has been set to are as follows: *Ellers*, by Edward J. Hopkins (1818-1901), *Glaston*, by Evans, and *Chilton Foliat* by George C. Martin (1844-1916), 1897. This hymn is found with some variations in punctuation and pronouns elsewhere, often with the fifth verse left out. E.g., *Hymns of Worship and Remembrance* (Belle Chasse, LA: Truth and Praise, Inc., 1950), 195; *Little Flock* (1881), 18A, [http://www.stempublishing.com/hymns/data/Dv1881\\_8.htm#18A](http://www.stempublishing.com/hymns/data/Dv1881_8.htm#18A) [accessed 9 MAY 2009]; *Hymns for the Little Flock* (1903), 247, <http://www.wattpad.com/27062-And-is-it-so-we-shall-be-like-Thy-Son> [accessed 9 MAY 2009]. A sixth verse is mentioned in some places as “original”:

“Father of mercies, in Thy presence bright  
All this shall be unfolded in the light;  
Thy children all, with joy Thy counsels know  
Fulfilled; patient in hope, while here below.”

“This hymn was a favorite of Jim Elliot (1927-1956), one of the five American missionaries martyred in Ecuador.” <http://www.wattpad.com/27062-And-is-it-so-we-shall-be-like-Thy-Son> [accessed 9 MAY 2009].

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## Were I to Define a Christian

### From the letters of John Newton

Were I to define a Christian, or rather to describe him at large, I know of no text I would choose, sooner than Galatians 5:17, “The sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other—so that you do not do what you want.”

A Christian has *noble aims*—which distinguish him from the bulk of mankind. His leading *principles, motives, and desires*—are all supernatural and divine. Could he do as he desires—there is not a angel before the Eternal Throne, that would excel him in holiness, love, and obedience! He would tread in the very footsteps of his Savior, fill up every moment of time in His service, and employ every breath in His praise!

This he *would* do—but, alas! he cannot! Against these *spiritual* desires, there is a *contrary* desire and working of a corrupt nature, which meets him at every turn! He has a beautiful copy set before him in the Scriptures—he is enamored with it, and though he does not expect to equal it, he writes carefully after it, and longs to attain to the nearest possible imitation. But *indwelling sin* and *Satan* continually jog his hand, and spoil his strokes!

Therefore, the most spiritual and gracious people confess themselves as vile and worthless! One eminent branch of our holiness, is a sense of shame and humiliation for those evils which are only known to ourselves, and to Him who searches our hearts!

In proportion as the Lord enables you to live more simply upon the blood, righteousness, and grace of the Mediator—you will possess a more stable peace. **The nearer you are brought to Him**—the more lively sense you will have of your vileness and worthlessness; and your continual need of Him. Thereby your admiration of His power, love, and compassion, will increase from year to year.

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