

The Better Way

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SPRING CHURCH OF CHRIST

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SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

SUNDAY

Bible Study.....9:00 a.m.
Worship.....10:00 a.m.
Afternoon Worship.....1:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Bible Study.....7:30 p.m.
(via Zoom Meetings)

ELDERS

David P. Brown
Ken Cohn
John West

DEACONS

Bret Bailey
J. D. Gunter
Eric Paluka

EVANGELIST

David P. Brown

SECRETARY

Sonya West

UNDER LAW OF CHRIST

J. Noel Merideth

The apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “... to them that are **without law, as without law, not being without law to God, but under law to Christ, that I might gain them that are without law**” (1 Cor. 9:21). The “**them that are without law**” in the text refers to the Gentiles. The Gentiles were without law, that is, in the context, they were without the law of Moses. To the Gentiles Paul is without the Mosaic law, not because he is actually without any law, but because he is accommodating himself to the conduct of those who are not bound to the Mosaic law so he may convert them to Christ. At this point a misunderstanding might arise, for the Gentiles might not only refuse to be subject to the Mosaic law but also reject any commandment of the true God. Therefore, Paul adds, “ ... **not being without law to God, but under law to Christ.**” Paul is not only subject to God, but having been redeemed by the blood of Christ, he is also a bondservant to his Saviour. The law of Christ, while freeing Paul and all other Christians from the law of Moses and sin, did not leave him free to do as he pleased. It restrained him, and kept him from wandering to other objects than the service of God. So Paul is very clear in his teaching that we are “**under law to Christ.**”

It is becoming more popular these days to hear speakers affirm that we are under no law of any kind. Some say we are not under the law of Moses nor are we under any other kind of law. Such statements are absurd, inconsistent, and violate the teaching of the New Testament. It is absurd to say that man is under no law of any kind. No one has absolute freedom, there is no unqualified freedom. Man is not self-sufficient, he is a creature. We all yield to something and whatever we yield ourselves to, we become bondservants to that. All of us are either bondservants to sin or unto righteousness (Rom. 6:16-18). Furthermore, those who say we are under no laws or rules are inconsistent, for they have the law that there is no law, the rule that there are no rules, which is an inconsistency. Surely we realize that if there is no law at all then there could be no sin for sin is the transgression of the law and where there is no law there is no sin (Rom. 4:15; 1 John 3:4).

Isaiah predicted that “**in the latter days**” the “**mountain of Jehovah’s house**” would be established on the top of the mountains and “**all nations shall flow unto it.**” Since “**all nations**” would flow into it the reference must be when Jews and Gentiles would be in the government of the kingdom of Christ which is His church. Isaiah said, “ ... **for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem**” (Isa. 2:2, 3). So Isaiah predicted that the “**law**” or the “**word of Jehovah**” would go forth from Jerusalem. It did exactly that

on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). So all the nations would have the “**law**” of the Lord.

Moses predicted that God would raise up a “**prophet**” like unto him and God would put...

words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him (Deu. 18:18, 19).

This of course was a reference to Christ as is seen in Acts 3:23; therefore, Christ would give God’s *commands* and those who did not hearken would be punished.

Jesus said, “**If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments**” (John 14:15). Now a “commandment” is “a command; order; mandate; precept; law.” Jesus says if we love Him we will keep His commandments or laws.

The apostle John says we must keep the commandments.

And hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoso keepeth his word, in him verily hath the love of God been perfected (1 John 2:3-5; cf. 2 John 9).

Paul writes in Romans 3:27, “**Where then is the glorying? It is excluded. By what manner of law? of works? Nay: but by a law of faith.**” Paul is arguing in these verses that man is not justified by a law system of meritorious works (Cf. Gal. 2:21-3:14). No man could devise his salvation and perform works so as to get God in his debt whereby God owed a man salvation (Eph. 2:1-9). Rather, we are saved by a “**law of faith,**” that is, we are saved by a faith system whereby God in His grace provides a scheme of redemption for man and man accepts this salvation on the conditions of faith and obedience. “Laws” are “the rules of conduct established and enforced by the authority.” The contrast here is that we are saved today by the manner of law that is the “**law of faith,**” not the law of works of the Mosaic system.

Romans 8:2 says, “**For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death.**” As we have seen, “law” is a *rule of action*. The “**law of the Spirit of life**” is the rule of action—the standard of conduct—which the Spirit imposes. The Spirit here is the Holy Spirit. It is the law of the Spirit “**of life,**” because its edicts, when faithfully obeyed, produce life. The law of the Spirit is set

out in the New Testament. (2 Tim. 3:16, 17; 2 Pet. 1:21.) Obedience to this law makes one free, it delivers one, from the law “**of sin and death,**” that is, a law which led to death. The law of Moses which, by itself, made no provision for the complete removal of sin, ultimately led to death (Cf. Rom. 8:3). In Christ we enjoy justification, being delivered from the condemnation which the law imposed, through the gospel of Christ.

Galatians 6:2 says, “**Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.**” The idea is that we should help each other with the overloads of life. In doing so, we fulfil or fill full the law of Christ, that is, we properly discharge the law of Christ. It is thus the law of Christ or Christ’s rule of action that we help each other bear our burdens.

James 1:25 says:

But he that looketh into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and so continueth, being not a hearer that forgetteth but a doer that worketh, this man shall be blessed in his doing.

The rule under which the Christian lives is: (1) a *law*; (2) a *perfect* law; and (3) it is a law of *liberty*. It is law, because it is “**a rule of action**” the design of which is to govern our lives. It is a perfect law because it is without defect and it is all-sufficient to accomplish the purpose for which it was designed. It is a law of liberty, because obedience to it sets one free from the bondage of sin, Satan, and spiritual death. The Holy Spirit through James saw no difficulty in speaking of our *law* and our *liberty*. Indeed, there can be true liberty only where we are under law to Christ.

But we are told that we are under a “covenant” arrangement and that this rules out law. It is true we are under the New Covenant, but this does not rule out law. Hebrews 8:8-12 points out that we are now under the New Covenant. But of this New Covenant it is said,

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and on their heart also will I write them: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people (Heb. 8:10.)

So the New Covenant has “laws” and these “laws” are in our mind. Under the New Covenant our “duty has become our desire” because we keep the commandments from a heart of love.

But an objector says that Paul declared that children of God are not under law, but under grace (Rom. 6:14) therefore, we are under no law at all. But the statement, “**Ye are not under law, but under grace,**” is limited in contextual significance; and Paul is continuing his thesis that Christians are not under the law of Moses, but are, in this dispensation, amenable to Christ through the system of the gospel. Children of

God have been, by the precious blood of Christ, redeemed from the curse of the law of Moses. Paul says, we “**were called for freedom; only use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh, but through love be servants one to another**” (Gal. 5:13). We will be judged by the law of liberty (Jam. 2:12). By this rule or law, let us ever walk (Gal. 6:16). ~

Deceased

THE NECESSITY OF GROWTH

Rex A. Turner, Sr.

“**But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ**” (2 Pet. 3:18). The necessity for the spiritual growth of each Christian—for every responsible person in fact—is grounded in the free moral agency of man. God is a benevolent social being, and this fact accounts for His having created man in His own image. Some people, when contemplating the possibility that an individual may be consigned to the lake of fire, somewhat innocently ask: “Why did God create man in the first place?” They should ask themselves, however, why they, themselves desire to have children of their own. Such a desire for offspring on the part of man stems from the fact that he has been created in the likeness of God.

After all, man is far more like God in nature than he is unlike God. There are other people who boldly charge God with injustice for having created man so that he can sin and be eternally lost. Such defiant reprobates should ask themselves if they would like to have their children to be born without sufficient intellect and freewill to disobey and blaspheme them. What father or mother is there who has desired or prayed before the birth of the child that the child would be a mere imbecile or moron? The case is that had God created man so that he could not sin, then man would be, necessarily, on par with the creatures of the animal world—that is, animals without intellect, emotion, and volition.

While God is omnipotent, or all-powerful, the case is that God cannot create a being whose very essence will be infinitely sinless and perfect. Created or derived beings—whether angels or men—are finite beings and no finite being is absolutely perfect. Perfection can only be found in the infinite—that is, in deity. God cannot, therefore, arbitrarily force perfection or sinlessness upon His created beings. When He

created rational beings—that is, beings with intellect and freedom of volition or will, as in the case of both angels and men—He necessarily created beings who had the capacity and freedom to defame and disobey Him, as well as to love, honor and obey him.

God, as a benevolent social being, longs and desires to have beings of His own nature within His own company, communion and fellowship; and He created man so He could shower upon man His divine love and benevolence. The case is, however, that God is absolute in holiness and He cannot, therefore, enter into full fellowship with rational beings unless they are holy; but then true holiness is based on a free and voluntary choice of that which is right in preference to that which is wrong. In short, in the absence of freewill coupled with responsibility there could be no holy man. The creation of man in his own image and also as a mortal being—that is, spirit housed in a mortal body—was God’s means of providing for man a soul training program wherein man through free will coupled with trials and suffering could be confirmed in true holiness. Such a confirmation true holiness in is man’s course or means for His being qualified to enjoy the fellowship of the infinite—that is, God the Father, Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit the Comforter.

God devised this wonderful scheme for man. He made the scheme of redemption possible through the sacrifice of the life of Christ in the place of the life of sinful man. God is infinite in righteousness and justice, but He is also infinite in mercy. As a just and righteous God, He could not pass over a single demand violated without His first requiting that demand. Through the death of Christ, God could himself “**be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus**” (Rom. 3:26).

The place and position of mortal man upon the earth is to the end, therefore that many may have the means of his being confirmed in true holiness. He enters upon his training for true holiness as a babe, and his growth is imperative; else he can never attain unto a state of true holiness. Peter emphasized the imperative necessity of growth when he wrote:

Putting away, therefore, all wickedness, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes, long for the spiritual milk which is without guile, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation (1 Pet. 2:1,2).

Emphasis should be put on the clause **“grow thereby unto salvation.”** In short, there is no point in the life of a Christian when he can justifiably cease to grow.

The newborn cannot grow in the absence of milk, nor can the newborn Christian grow in the absence of the sincere milk of the word. The case, however, is that the newborn infant, even when he has grown into a state of manhood, cannot long survive without the intake of food; and just so, the full-grown Christian must continue an intake of the **“meat of the word.”** The person who ceases an intake of spiritual food—that is, a spiritual study and practice of the Word—will soon die of malnutrition. Thus, the spiritual growth of a Christian is of imperative necessity.~

Deceased

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- **Sunday, April 28th:** Monthly meal
- **Tuesday, April 30th:** Ladies' Bible Class
- **Saturday, May 11th:** Graduation Banquet
- **Saturday, May 25th:** Fish Hatchery Rd Lectureship (Part #2)
- **Mon-Wed, July 15th-17th:** VBS at Spring
- **Saturday, September 28th:** Fall Fellowship
- **Saturday, October 26th:** Fish Hatchery Rd. Lectureship (Part #3)
- **Saturday, November (TBA):** Chili Cook-off

THOSE TO SERVE

SUNDAY, APRIL 7, 2024

Announcements J.D. Gunter
Scripture Reading Joshua West
Rev. 12:7-12

Song Leader Bret Bailey
Prayer Joshua West/Gary Blasingame (AM)
 Eric Paluka/Joshua West (PM)

Speakers David Brown

Lord's Table (AM)
 (Matthew 26:59-66)

Steven Johnson Gary Blasingame
 Andrew Paluka Ken Cohn

Lord's Table (PM)

Joshua West Ben Gunter

Audio/Video Monitor Jonathan West
Camera/Door Monitor Stephen Cohn

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10, 2024

(via Zoom Meetings)

Announcements J.D. Gunter
Speaker Steven Johnson
Bible Class Teacher David Brown

FOR APRIL

Prepare Communion Bailey
Lock Buildings Nero
Prepare Bulletin Board TBA

IN NEED OF PRAYERS

Arline Family, Lynne Humphrey, Noah Hackworth, Daughter of Dr. Kathryn Ziegler, Josie Contreras, Maddie & Cohen Young, Edith Young, Bob Terry, Glenda Hackworth, Zack Nero, Cynthia Jackson, Elnora Oxendine, Bernice Hastings, Charles & Ann Nero, Nathaniel Rimmer, Chuck & Nancy Verkist, Freda Smith, Orlinda Chumbley, Carmen Hardy, and Roelf & Janice Ruffner.

TEST YOUR BIBLE KNOWLEDGE

Who buried John the baptizer?

Answer to last week's question:
 Elisha; Luke 4:27