

Prayer List

Sierra
Gene
Veda
Judy
The Williams' Family
Ophelia

Services:

Sunday

Bible Class 9:00 a.m.
Assembly 9:50 a.m.
Assembly 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday

Bible Class 7:00 p.m.

Pinole Tidings

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Vol. 14, No. 33 - May 26, 2013

Elders:

Brad Behrens - bradbehrens@pinolechurchofchrist.com
Michael Odom - MichaelOdom@pinolechurchofchrist.com
Ernie Sprinkel - preacher@pinolechurchofchrist.com

This Week's Question:

What king suffered from an almost fatal illness but was promised fifteen more years of life by God?

Answer To Last Week's Question:

Jehu, who killed Jehoram and Ahaziah -
2 Kings 9:24, 27

Published by the church of Christ which meets at 755 Pinole Valley Road, Pinole, CA 94564, Phone (510) 724-1994, (Mailing address: church of Christ, P.O. Box 453, Pinole, CA 94564)

Living Under the Law of Christ

Eugene Britnell

FROM THE VERY BEGINNING, MAN HAS LIVED under law from God. That is why it was wrong for Adam and Eve to eat certain fruit, Cain to murder his brother, Nadab and Abihu to offer strange fire on the altar, or David to commit adultery. Where there is no law, there can be no violation of law (Romans 4:15).

The late Mr. John Austin, a celebrated authority in jurisprudence, gave the following definition of law: "A law, in most general and comprehensive acceptance in which the term, in its literal meaning, is employed, may be said to be a rule laid down for the guidance of an intelligent being, by an intelligent being having power over him" (International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Vol. 3, p. 1844).

Austin's definition of law contains three basic ideas: (1) Command, as the expression of a particular desire (as the will of God); (2) Duty or obligation, signifying that one is bound or obliged by the commandment to pursue a certain course of conduct (for God has the right to command); and (3) Sanction, indicating there will be punishment for disobedience (and blessings for obedience).

Other writers will deal more completely with the law of Moses, but it is important to our conclusions that we make brief reference to it from Christ's viewpoint. The Bible says that the law was a schoolmaster or tutor to bring man to Christ (Galatians 3:24). The word tutor is from a Greek word which means footman. It was the work of the footman to bring the pupil to the teacher. So the law

served as that footman to bring people to Christ that they might learn the truth that makes men free.

Christ taught respect for law. “For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled” (Matthew 5:18). This was the Lord’s way of saying that law is indestructible. The jot was the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet and stands for our letter “i.” The tittle was a horn-shaped character placed over a certain portion of a letter which determined its meaning. To put it in English, we distinguish the letter “c” from the letter “e” by the tittle inside the letter. This whole expression is proverbial in its nature and simply means the very smallest fraction of a thing—in this case, the law.

In order for Jesus to establish His law, there had to be an end to the old law (Matthew 5:17). He could have destroyed the law by preventing the fulfillment of the prophecies concerning Himself and the kingdom of God. This He did not do. Instead, He carried out their predictions and fulfilled all that was written concerning Him.

The way was then clear for Christ to replace the old law with His law—the new and better covenant. There is much error in the thinking of people concerning the laws. Some believe that we are yet under the law of Moses, while others seem to think that since the old law has been abrogated we are not under law at all. Both positions are false.

The Book of Hebrews begins by saying, “God, who at various times and in different ways spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son ...” Thus, the inspired writer sets forth the bold contrast between the preparatory revelation under the previous dispensations and the finality of the absolute revelation of Jesus Christ our Lord. His purpose was to prove that the old covenant has been superseded by the new order under Christ as king over His kingdom and head of His body, the church.

We live under the law of Christ. “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ” (Galatians 6:2). “There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and destroy ...” (James 4:12). James refers to Christ’s law as “the perfect law of liberty” (James 1:25). “For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (John 1:17). In speaking of his efforts to convert the Jews, Paul said, “To them that are without law (being not without law to God, but under the law of Christ), that I might gain them that are without law” (1 Corinthians 9:21).

How does the law of Christ teach? How may we know that we are living under the law of Christ and walking by His authority? We believe that we establish authority for a practice by one or more of three methods: direct statement or command, approved apostolic example, or necessary inference from that which is clearly implied in the Scriptures. These are illustrated by the statements and conclusions in a meeting in Jerusalem concerning a problem in the early church (Acts 15).

They were trying to establish whether they were living under the law of Moses or the law of Christ. They did so by all three methods mentioned above. They proved by a direct statement that the gospel was to be preached to all nations, including the Gentiles (verses 16 and 17). By example, they proved that they had done exactly that. “Then all the multitude kept silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul declaring what miracles and wonders God had worked among the Gentiles by them” (verse 12). By necessary inference, they proved that God willed that the gospel (law) of Christ be revealed unto and bound upon all people. “Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. And God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them, giving them the Holy Spirit just as He did to us, and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith” (verses 7–9). The conclusion was obvious: “Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from the Gentiles who are turning to God” (verse 19).

Let us all understand that we cannot reject the law of Christ with impunity. “He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day” (John 12:48, NKJ).

Jesus Himself recognized the binding authority of the law. He was subject to the law of the Father, and did the will of the Father who sent Him. In view of this, we certainly ought to feel bound to obey the law of God in our day. When we obey the teaching of the New Testament, we are living under the law of Christ.