

• The Law of Christ and Its Proper Application: Part 1

INTRODUCTION:

- 1. As Christians we serve God under the **law of Christ**.
 - A. Paul spoke of this relating to his evangelistic efforts (1 Cor. 9:19-21 – “For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I may win more. ²⁰ To the Jews I became as a Jew, so that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law **though not being myself under the Law**, so that I might win those who are under the Law; ²¹ to those who are without law, as without law, **though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ**, so that I might win those who are without law.”).
 - B. Note that Paul states that as a Christian:
 - i. He was *not under the O.T. Law*. So, the O.T. is not our today.
 - ii. The law of God he lived under is the **law of Christ**.
- 2. As Christians, like Paul we live and serve God under the law of Christ.
 - A. So, it is very important that we:
 - i. *Know what Christ’s law is*. What would you say if someone ask you what it is?
 - ii. *How to properly apply it*. For, a law not properly applied causes serious issues.
 - B. This subject requires a great deal of thought and consideration because the normal answers to the first question, like “It is Jesus’ words,” or “It is the New Testament/Covenant,” although true, leave us wanting when it comes to answering the second question about how to properly apply it.
 - C. I say this because the New Testament/Covenant is not just one book of law personally penned by Jesus’ hand, but a conglomeration of different kinds of writings with different purposes.
- 3. With these things in mind, I want to talk about the law of Christ and how to properly apply it.
- 4. My hope in doing so is to get each of us thinking more about the word, the gospel, in different ways than what we are accustomed to so that we might appreciate it more and be encouraged as we start this new year to be more dedicated to reading it and making it a part of our lives.

BODY:

- **I. The law of Christ:**
 - A. The law of Christ is called this because:
 - 1. God has spoken through Jesus (Heb. 1:1-2 – “**God**, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, ² **in these last days has spoken to us in His Son**, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.”).
 - 2. He is God’s lawgiver today!
 - a. His words are to be taught to and obeyed by all (Matt. 28:18-20 – “And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “**All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth**. ¹⁹ Go therefore and **make disciples** [followers] of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ **teaching them to observe all that I commanded you**; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”).
 - b. As God’s Christ and promised redeemer and prophet (Deut. 18:18-19), failure to obey Him means God’s wrath (Acts 3:19-23 – “Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; ²⁰ and that He may send **Jesus, the Christ appointed for you**, ²¹ whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time. ²² Moses said, ‘The Lord God will raise up for you **a prophet like me** from your brethren; **to Him you shall give heed to everything He says to you**. ²³ And it will be that **every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people**.’”).
 - B. The process of Christ’s words becoming our law by inspiration.
 - 1. Christ’s law/testament/covenant was not personally written down by Jesus, but was fully revealed for all by inspiration through Jesus’ disciples, just as Jesus promised.

- a. John 14:25-26 – “These things I have spoken to you while abiding with you. ²⁶ 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 said to you.**”
- b. John 16:13-16 – “I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. ¹³ But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, **He will guide you into all the truth;** for He will not speak on His own initiative, but **whatever He hears, He will speak;** and He will disclose to you what is to come. ¹⁴ He will **glorify Me,** for **He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you.** ¹⁵ **All things that the Father has are Mine;** therefore I said that He takes of Mine and will disclose it to you.”
- 2. Process:
 - a. While on earth Jesus taught the apostles, but had more to say that they could not bear.
 - b. Jesus promised the Spirit of truth would come and guide them into all the truth, **speaking what he hears,** and reminding them of what Jesus had taught them (14:26; 16:12-13).
 - c. Thus, the Spirit would glorify Christ by taking His words, which were the words of the Father, and revealing them to the apostles and prophets of Christ.
- 3. The chain of inspiration and authority: 1) Father’s words, 2) Spoken by Jesus, 3) heard by Spirit and revealed to the apostles, prophets 4) spoken and written down for all by the apostles and prophets
 - a. The apostles **spoke** God’s word (1 Cor. 2:9-13 – “but just as it is written, “Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him.” ¹⁰ **For to us God revealed them through the Spirit;** for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. ¹¹ For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. ¹² **Now we have received,** not the spirit of the world, **but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God,** ¹³ **which things we also speak,** not in words taught by human wisdom, but **in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.”**)
 - b. The apostles **wrote** God’s word (1 Cor. 14:37 – “If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the **things which I write to you are the Lord’s commandment.**”).
- 4. Defined: The whole truth from God, spoken through Jesus, revealed by the Holy Spirit to the apostles and prophets, and spoken and written down for us in the N.T.
- C. Yet, this causes certain questions that arise concerning the content of Christ’s law and how it applies to us. For, by the work of the Spirit Christ’s law/will was revealed and written down:
 - 1. As **history,** seeing the gospels and Acts are histories of the life of Jesus and the beginning and growth of the church. *So, how does history have authoritative application in my life?*
 - 2. As **letters/epistles** to various 1st century churches generally concerning specific issues faced by those churches. *So, how do 2000-year-old letters written to various church for specific purposes have authoritative application in my life?*
 - 3. To communicate God’s will for those people’s lives. *How is Christ’s law communicated, and how do we properly apply those forms of communication to our lives?*
- **II. The law of Christ and history:**
 - A. The first five books of the N.T. are history.
 - 1. As far as the gospel’s go, Luke’s words show this to be true (Acts 1:1-2 – “The **first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach,** ² **until the day when He was taken up to heaven,** after He had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen.” Luke, like the others, recorded the history of Jesus’ life.
 - 2. The book of Acts, also written by Luke, is recorded history detailing the beginning and growth of the N.T. church through the work of Peter and the apostles and the apostle Paul.

3. Again, that these books are history begs the question concerning their authority and their proper application in our lives.
- B. The gospels: How can the history of Jesus' life authoritatively affect my life?
 - 1. The divinely recorded history of Jesus carries much weight concerning our **faith** and **eternal life** (Jn. 20:30-31 – “Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but **these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.**”).
 - a. God's design is that saving faith come directly from reading the history of the life of Jesus Christ.
 - b. One cannot be saved without knowledge of Jesus and His power revealed in the gospels!
 - c. We make a mistake of trying to convince people about baptism before we all God's word in the gospels to convince them about Jesus!
 - 2. Jesus preached the gospel of the kingdom of God.
 - a. Jesus **preached the gospel** of God and **the kingdom of God**.
 - i. Matthew 4:23 – “And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and **proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom** and healing every disease and every affliction among the people.”
 - ii. Mark 1:14-15 – “Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, **proclaiming the gospel of God**, ¹⁵ and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and **the kingdom of God** is at hand; **repent and believe in the gospel.**”
 - iii. This is significant because we as Christians are saved by the gospel and serve God today in that kingdom.
 - b. Jesus preached the **requirements** for **entering** that kingdom.
 - i. Matthew 7:21 – “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter.”
 - ii. Matthew 18:2-3 – “And He called a child to Himself and set him before them, ³ and said, “Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.”
 - c. He preached the hope one has through the gospel (Mark 10:29-30 – “Jesus said, “Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and **for the gospel's sake**, ³⁰ but that he **will receive a hundred times as much now in the present age**, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and **in the age to come, eternal life.**”)
 - d. If you and I want to know about Christ's kingdom, about who we must be if we hope to be a part of and remain in that kingdom, about the hope we have through the gospel, **we must read and know the gospels, the history of Jesus.**
- C. The Book of Acts and the history of the church?
 - 1. How can the history of the beginning and growth of the church authoritatively affect my life?
 - 2. We must understand that Acts is **instructive/teaching** history.
 - a. For, its history is intended to instruct us on matters of salvation, the church, etc.
 - b. How? Acts concerns the **works of the apostles in preaching** and **applying** Christ's truth revealed by the Spirit concerning salvation, the church, and the kingdom.
 - c. When we read Acts, we need to be asking how Christ's truth revealed and applied by the apostles can apply to my salvation and my relationship to the church.
 - 3. The history of Acts carries authority concerning how to be saved (Acts 2).
 - a. At Pentecost the apostle reminded the Jews of the **faith-giving history of Jesus** and convicted them of their sin (2:22-24 – “Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, **a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him** in your midst, **just as you yourselves know**— ²³ this

- Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, **you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.**”).
- b. The apostles preached the **gospel of the kingdom** and **Christ its risen king** (2:29-35 – “Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. ³⁰ And so, because he was a prophet and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath to seat one of his descendants on his throne, ³¹ he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that He was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh suffer decay. ³² This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. ³³ Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear. ³⁴ For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says: ‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, ³⁵ until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.””).
 - c. The apostles preached **Christ’s truth** concerning sinners’ salvation (Acts 2:36-41 – “Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that **God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified.**” ³⁷ Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brethren, what shall we do?” ³⁸ Peter said to them, “**Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins;** and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.” ⁴⁰ And with many other words he solemnly testified and **kept on exhorting them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation!”** ⁴¹ So then, **those who had received his word were baptized;** and that day there were added about three thousand souls.”).
4. How does this relate to me?
- a. If you have **sinned**, your disobedience to God’s will is the reason **Jesus was crucified**. So, you are in the same lost condition as those Jews at Pentecost.
 - b. **Being in the same condition as them**, if you will be saved, you too must **repent**, or change your mind about sin, and **be baptized** to be **forgiven of your sins!**
 - c. For, **baptism** is **what those who receive the apostles’ words**, the revelation of the law of Christ given them by the Spirit, **do** (2:40-41).

CONCLUSION:

1. Though I have more to say in the future about the role of history in the N.T. and its application to our lives, as well as other types of literature in the N.T., I will stop here.
2. In doing so, however, I hope I have presented more than enough for anyone here who knows Jesus came to earth, died for your sins on the cross, and has been raised for your hope and salvation to respond in faith and obedience to the gospel!
3. Will you come to Jesus in F-R-C-Bp?