

Rom. 14:19  
So then let us  
follow after  
things which  
make for  
peace, and  
things  
whereby we  
may edify one  
another.

John 8:32 And  
ye shall  
know the  
truth and the  
truth shall  
make you  
free.

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# THE LENEXA EDIFIER

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## IS THE GOSPEL LAW?

by Ken Green

A brother has posted a comment to the effect that the gospel is a law; that the two terms constitute “a distinction without a difference.” Like a number of our different perspectives which create dissensions and contentions among us, this is likely, to some extent, a difference in how we define words. There is always a danger of falling into *“disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, useless wranglings...”* Yet, if we hope to have understanding we must try to properly define words.

The word “law” in the Bible means many different things. I believe its basic meaning is God’s requirements in human lives. The “Torah” was not understood by the Jews as embracing only the precepts and prohibitions of the Decalogue and other Old Testament Scriptures that deal in codified laws, but also the narratives that provide the context of the giving of the law and exemplify its execution and enforcement.

Using this basic definition of law, we would understand that the commandments and words of Jesus Christ would certainly be law although Jesus did not use this term to describe His teaching. But after all, He is the Sovereign King and possesses all authority in the universe. His word is law. Grace does not eliminate the need of law in the lives of Christians as antinomians conclude. Jesus said, *“If you love Me keep My commandments” (John 14:15)*. We see here that in the system of Christ, obedience must flow from love. Love is the foundation and fountain of obedience; obedience is the fruit of love (to mix metaphors horribly). Love provides the needed motivation for obedience.

Later in the passage He said, *“If anyone loves Me he will keep My word...He who does not love Me does not keep My words (v. 23-24)*. His words, it would seem,

go beyond His commandments. This involves the deep desire to please Him. If we love another, we seek ways to express this in our actions. I remember something Irvin Lee said in a sermon several years ago regarding baptism: “It would seem that if Jesus had only said, ‘I would just like for you to be baptized. It’s not required, but I just wish you would be,’ that this would be enough if we want to please the Lord.”

Last week I just happened to mention that I hadn’t had a homemade hamburger for awhile and that it would sure taste good. Peggy soon drove to the grocery and got some hamburger meat, returned and prepared what she knew would please me. I did not command her to do this. If I had, she would have done it. But it would have been out of fear (insert smiley face). But she did it out of love.

A list of dos and don’ts (and the Bible contains such lists) apart from love will seek to bring us into outward conformity, but it cannot change the heart. And the heart is where the Lord operates. This is why love must reside at the center of our being, not law.

Now, is the gospel of Christ the law in some sense? There are Biblical passages from which such may be argued. **Rom. 8:3** surely speaks of the gospel as *“the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.”* The context here, however, seems to use “law” in the sense of two principles, one leading to life, the other to death. But, in my judgment, to say that there is no distinction between law and gospel is to overreach the evidence. Jeremiah prophesied a new covenant which would be *“not according to”* that Mosaic covenant... (**Jer. 31:31f**). I fear that we have managed to turn the covenant of Christ very much into something according to the old covenant.

*“For the law was given through Moses, but grace*

*and truth came through Jesus Christ” (John 1:17).* It has been a deep concern of mine that the way we have interpreted the Scriptures there was often more grace under Moses than there is under Christ. The covenant of Abraham was based on promise. The covenant of Moses was based on law. The covenant of Christ is based on grace.

The word gospel means “good news.” Law is not good news. It is bad news because we transgress the law (**I John 3:4**). *“The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (I Cor. 15:56-57).* Paul says in the great Roman letter that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation. Then he proceeds to announce the bad news. He doesn’t expound on the good news until we get to **Rom. 3:21f**. And, when he speaks of law he does not refer only to the Law of Moses. He speaks also of the Gentiles who were never under the Law of Moses (**2: 14-15**).

Law is not gracious. Law is not lenient. Law shows no mercy. By the law David should have died for his sin. By the law the woman taken in adultery should have been stoned (despite all ifs and buts, this is what the law demanded). By the law the prodigal son should have been delivered to the judges and killed as a rebel. It was grace that Jesus illustrated in His wonderful story.

## Why the church of Christ?

To add to previous studies, another reason is that we believe and teach that a Christian can sin and lose their salvation. The vast majority of religious people do not believe in this possibility. It is at the core of most protestant denominations. Most modern community churches subscribe to these same protestant doctrines. Regardless of what the masses believe, it does not make it so though. When looking for the Lord’s church, we must make sure it teaches what God’s Word says. So, what does the Bible say about this issue?

•**In the garden** – Eve told the serpent the consequences for breaking God’s law. What was the devil’s reply? *“You will not surely die” (Gen. 3:4).* Either he was lying or God was lying. We know who the liar was. Those who teach that a Christian can sin and still be in fellowship with God are saying the exact same thing the devil was all those years ago (**1 Jn. 1: 5,6**).

•**In the Old Testament** – All of Israel came out of bondage. All passed through the Red Sea. All ate and drank, partaking of Christ. Yet, how many of them made it into the promised land (**1 Cor. 10: 1-5**)? So, were they saved from bondage or not? Yes, they were saved. Then they were lost. The point the Corinthians passage is making is that the same thing could happen to them. *“Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you...” (10: 11,12).* Wait a minute! Most believe that temptation cannot overtake someone who has obeyed. The Corinthians had believed and obeyed. They had been washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus (**6:11**). Could they fall? According to Scripture they could.

•**The parables** – Multiple parables point toward the possibility of falling away. In the sower, we see two kinds of people who receive the word, but they fall away (**Matt. 13: 20-22**). In the tares we see the possibility of the wheat being uprooted (**Matt: 13:29**). In the unforgiving servant we see a man who was forgiven (**Matt. 18:27**) being unforgiven (**Matt. 18:34**). Surely these are enough to see that falling away is a real danger!

•**The apostles** – Paul would say, *“I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified” (1 Cor. 9:27).* Is Paul saying he would just lose the joy of his salvation? No. The disqualified receive no prize. Peter would say concerning those who fall away, *“For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them” (2 Pet. 2: 20-22).*

**Why are they lost?** The end is worse for them than the beginning. The sow, having washed, returns to her wallowing in the mire. Those who teach the false doctrine of once-saved-always-saved usually engage in revisionist history, saying the backslider was never saved to begin with. Examine all of our passages and see what the Bible actually says.

**The wages of sin** are still death (**Rom. 6:23**). Protestantism denies this. Universalism denies this. Those who deny the future judgment deny the possibility of apostasy, claiming that spiritual death has already been abolished and destroyed. That has not happened yet. People still die physically and spiritually. They have since the beginning. This is what God’s Word says.

**John Hines**

## “The (Spiritual) Compound Effect”

A number of years ago I read a book written by Darren Hardy entitled, “The Compound Effect” in which he pointed out that most people, the vast, vast majority unfortunately, go through life pretty much doomed to failure. Why? Well, the answer is as simple as it is profound (as most important truths are).

No, it's NOT because God 'predestined' them to failure from all eternity. Many folks prefer to blame God for their lot in life rather than accept any responsibility for their own situation. That's the fool's way out.

The simple truth is most people go through life looking for a “silver bullet” which will give them success or prosperity or happiness in an instant, rather than go through the long arduous process of building it through daily small improvements over time. By doing this they cheat themselves out of everything they say they want: Satisfaction, Growth, Dignity and yes, Success. Making small but regular and frequent progress toward a goal achieves startling results! I ran into this while I was selling investments. People would say they had nothing to invest, I was wasting my time with them. But we would start small, very small and after a year or two they would remark about how much they had accomplished. Then things started to snowball. Even Einstein was impressed by the effects of compound interest. It's Aesop's Fable about “The Tortoise and The Hare” all over again!

The same thing is true in the spiritual realm. There is no 'silver bullet' which will give you supernatural spiritual growth and success. It comes in small daily doses. Isaiah was ridiculed for his preaching to the people of his day, *“So the word of the LORD to them will be, “Order on order, order on order, Line on line, line on line, A little here, a little there,” That they may go and stumble backward, be broken, snared and taken captive.” (Isaiah 28:13)* In the New Testament the Christian life is described as a 'walk', one step after another. Both Peter and Paul (**1 Corinthians 3:2 & 1 Peter 2:2**) describe immature Christians as newborn babes needing milk before meat. Peter also says, *“but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” (2 Peter 3:18)* God's plan is for us to grow over time. Of course there are the occasional spurts! But that's not a constant state, that's why they're called 'spurts' in the first place.

Do not let Satan discourage you because of slow growth, God has a plan and it always includes slow growth to maturity.

**Cleveland Reddinger**

## God has Blessed us with all Spiritual Blessings!

*“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3).*

The Bible clearly indicates that every good thing comes from God. God blesses with health, food, family and the many good things in this world. However, Jesus did not come to earth and die on a cross so that every person could have three good meals each day. In fact, Jesus indicates that, to be true disciples, we need to deny our things, our family and even our lives **(Luke 14:25-33)**.

Do not seek God in order to have a more comfortable life here on earth. Seek the Lord because it is right - it is the purpose for which we are created. He is due our praise. Seek Him for the spiritual blessings that come in a relationship with Him. God has blessed His true children with *every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ*.

What do you hope to gain by a life of faithful service? Note a list of things God offers in **Ephesians 1:4-12**: to be holy and without blame, to be adopted as children, to be accepted in Christ, redemption through Christ's blood, forgiveness of sins, His grace (favor), to know the mystery of His will, to obtain an inheritance and to be to the praise of His glory.

If you are seeking God for the good things in and of this world, you are stopping short of the great and wonderful treasures of God. Do not insult the work and sacrifice of Christ by pursuing the things of this world. Look to the spiritual blessings in heavenly places.

**Don Bunting**

***We offer either in home studies in person or by way of Correspondence Courses.  
Call me, Jim Stauffer at 913-620-0563, Evangelist at the Lenexa church of Christ  
We believe in worshiping and serving the Lord as He has instructed in His word.***

**Things people do not believe that are taught in the Bible!**

**Did you know the Bible teaches Christ's kingdom has already come instead of teaching**

**He is coming to reign on earth?**

**See Mark 9:1; Colossians 1:13,14**

**Please call us to study the Bible.  
It is refreshing.**

**Psa. 1:1** Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.

## HOURS OF WORSHIP

Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study

Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship

Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

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Denese Goring, Pat Gaines,  
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Young, Judy Root and Leta  
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#### Bible Classes:

**Sunday Morning - Hebrews -**  
Jim Stauffer

**Wednesday Evening - 1&2**  
**Peter and Jude - Ron Peck**

**Sunday Sermon:**  
*Wages and Gifts*



## What Must I Do To Be Saved?

**Hear** the gospel - Romans 10:17

**Believe** in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

**Repent** of sins - Acts 17:30

**Confess** Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

**Be Baptized** for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

**Be Faithful** unto death - Revelation 2:10