

The Law of Moses and the Gospel of Christ (4)

Spiritual Adultery

By Cecil Willis

For the past few weeks we have been diligently trying to learn what the scriptures teach concerning the relationship between the Law of Moses and the Gospel of Christ. The danger of confusing the two 'laws is one of the most persistent problems confronting the religious world, both in our generation and the _New Testament period. Some might think that we are spending too much time on this particular problem, but if one will reflect on the errors in modern denominational churches which arise because they confuse the Law and the Gospel, he will then decide that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to overemphasize the importance of this study. Again this week we want to select some instances in the scriptures in which this particular problem is discussed, and analyze them as best we can in this brief study.

A Spiritual Marriage

By our title, we are implying that those who choose a part of the Old Covenant to graft into the New Covenant are guilty of spiritual adultery. Paul said that they are married to two husbands. Carefully follow these inspired words from the pen of the great apostle Paul, as recorded in Romans 7:1-6: "Or are ye ignorant brethren (for I speak to men who know the law), that the law hath dominion over a man for so long time as he liveth? For the woman that hath a husband is bound by law to the husband while he liveth; but if the husband die, she is discharged from the law of the husband. So then if, while the husband liveth, she be joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if the husband die, she is free from the law, so that she is no adulteress, though she be joined to another man. Wherefore, my brethren; ye also were made dead to the law through the body of Christ; that ye should be joined to another, even to him who was raised from the dead, that we might bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were through the law, wrought in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we have been discharged from the law, having died to that wherein we were held; so that we serve in newness of the spirit, and not in oldness of the letter." If one will consult the context of this passage, he will see that Paul's purpose was to show the relationship between the Law of Moses and the Law of Christ. In fact, the first five chapters of the book of Romans deal with the problem of how one is justified. Paul undertakes to show that one is not justified by the Law of Moses, but by the system of faith.

Then in Rom. 7, Paul spoke of one's relationship to Christ as a marriage. In a number of other passages, our connection with Christ is declared to be a marriage. In Eph. 5:22-23 Paul thoroughly discussed marriage, and then said, "This mystery is great, but I speak in regard of Christ and the church." In Rev. 22:17, the apostle John spoke of the church as his bride. Paul said in 2 Cor. 11:2, "For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy; for I espoused you to one husband, that I might present you as a pure virgin to Christ." So, Paul used God's truths concerning marriage to apply to a spiritual marriage, the wedding of the Christian unto Christ, or of the church's being married to Christ.

He tells us that God's marriage laws say that the woman is married to the man for so long time as he liveth. In the Gospel accounts, Christ stated that the only legitimate reason for one to leave his or her mate was if one left his mate for any cause other than fornication, and married again; then he should be called an adulterer. Our society has so degenerated that divorces are granted for any or no cause, and promiscuous or no marriages are very common. Yet, from the beginning, it hath not been so. God's law relating to marriage still says; "For the woman that hath a husband is bound by law to the husband while he liveth; but if the husband die, she is discharged from the law of the husband. So then if, while the husband liveth, she be joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if the husband die, she is free from the law, so that she is no adulteress; though she be, joined to another man" (Rom. 7:2, 3). Good people, that law of God is, yet binding upon all men and women, and God makes no exceptions to it. The mere fact that our government may recognize a marriage is no indication that God approves it. When a man and a woman are joined together in marriage, only death is to separate them.

Christians are spiritually married to Christ, and men were at one time married to the Law of Moses. The only way in which men are permitted to be married to Christ is for the first husband, Moses, to be taken away. "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also were made dead to the law through the body of Christ; that ye should be joined to another, even to him who was raised from the dead, that we might bring forth fruit unto God" (Rom. 7:4). In the physical marriage relation, one cannot be married to two husbands at one time. Men were at one time married to Moses, but they now are to be wed to Christ. Before one could be married to husband No. 2, Christ, husband No. 1, Moses, had to die. When was man made dead to the Law of Moses? Paul tells us in no uncertain terms: "wherefore, my brethren, ye also were made dead to the law, through the body of Christ" (Rom. 7:4). So when Christ died on the cross to take away the Law of commandments written in ordinances that were against us, referring to the law of Moses; it then became possible for us to be joined to another. But we could not be joined to the Law of Moses and the Law of Christ at the same time, for if we are married to two spiritual husbands at the same time, we are spiritual

adulterers, and we know that no adulterer hath eternal life abiding in him.

Yet, there are millions of people who want to remain married to the Law of Moses. They want to continue to obey the decrees of the Mosaical Law, yet they want to wear the name of Christ. Paul denounced this practice as adulterous, and condemned those who practiced it. Friends, you may think that this is plain language, and that I am abusing people, but if you will just turn and read Romans 7:1-6, you will see that this is exactly what Paul said, and woe be unto me if I preach not the Gospel. Let me encourage you not to take only my word for these statements, but take your own Bible and study them. If we understand the Bible at all, we will understand it alike, so search the Scriptures daily to see whether these things are so, for the truth shall make you free. Error can never be substituted for truth.

Now what is the conclusion of this matter? We cannot live under the Law of Moses and the Law of Christ at the same time. So under which are we living? Here is the conclusion of the whole matter, stated in the inspired words of Paul: "But we have been discharged from the law, having died to that wherein we were held; so that we serve in newness of the spirit, and not in oldness of the letter" (Rom. 7:6). What relation do we sustain to the Law? Paul says we have been discharged from it. No person amenable to God can misunderstand what Paul meant when he said that we are discharged from the law. Some may not believe it, but they, too, understand, what he says.

2 Corinthians 3

After our lesson, this article, we are going to discontinue this particular phase of our study on the Law and the Gospel. This is now four weeks in which we have done nothing but study plain statements of Scripture showing that the Law was abrogated. If this truth is not now established, no amount of testimony from the Bible would establish it. However, we would like to study just one more passage.

The entire third chapter of Second Corinthians is a contrasting of the Law of Moses and the gospel of Christ. The superiority of Christianity is pointed out. Notice how Paul showed that the Law, the ministration of death, passed away, and the Gospel, the ministration of glory, remains. He said, "Being made manifest that ye are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in tables that are hearts of flesh" (2 Cor. 3:3). This shows definitely that Paul spoke of the Law, for he called it that which was written on tables of stone, which of course, was the Ten Commandments which God wrote with His own finger. Then Paul went on to speak of that Law, and said that it was done away: "But if the ministration of death, written, and engravers on stones, came with glory, so that the children of Israel could not look

stedfastly upon the face of Moses, for the glory of his face; which glory was passing away; how shall not rather the ministration of the spirit be with glory? For if the ministration of condemnation hath glory, much rather doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For verily that which hath been made glorious hath not been made glorious in this respect, by reason of the glory that surpasseth. For if that which passeth away was with glory, much more that which remaineth is in glory" (2 Cor. 3:7-11). Paul said the Law, was glorious, but the Gospel is more glorious. The Law passed away, was nailed to the cross, but the more glorious system of the Gospel remaineth.

Paul went on to say, "Having therefore such a hope we use great boldness of speech; and are not as Moses, who put a veil upon his face, that the children of Israel should not look stedfastly on the end of that which was passing away: but their minds were hardened: for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remaineth, it not being revealed to them that it was done away in Christ" (2 Cor. 3:12-14). I do not know what words Paul could have used that would have been plainer than those he used here to tell us that the Law was done away. He said that there were some people who still felt that the Law was binding, but it had not been understood by them that the Law, the one written on stones, the Ten Commandment Law, was done away in Christ. Now let him who says that this Law is yet binding on man produce the evidence that it is, and explain what Paul has said in this passage.

Conclusion

We want to see thousands of people cease to try to be saved by a law done away in Christ, and obey the Law of Him who nailed the Law of Moses to His cross. Those who try to live under the Old Testament Law are no worse than those that have tasted the preciousness of the Gospel, and yet want to go back to that Law for certain items which they prefer, which are omitted in the Gospel. We exhort you to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, repent of your sins, confess your faith in Him, and be buried with Christ in baptism into death, for the remission of your sins. This is the teaching of the Gospel of Christ, and is no part of the Old Testament Law. This may easily be your last opportunity to become a Christian. Use it! "For what is your life? It is but a vapor that appeareth for a little while, and then vanisheth away" (Jas. 4:14).