

# *The Keys Of The Kingdom*

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***Editor: J.F. Miller***

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# Contents

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<i>Our Staff</i>	<i>Pg: 3</i>
<i>Editor's Note</i>	<i>Jim Miller Pg: 5</i>
<i>Purgatory Pt. 2</i>	<i>Tim Bench Pg: 10</i>
<i>Legalism, Law, and Love</i>	<i>Dub McClish Pg: 14</i>
<i>Learning To Give An Answer Pt: 12</i>	<i>John Mabrey Pg: 19</i>
<i>Review of Robert Waters' Teaching on Adultery Part: 4</i>	<i>Howard Denham Pg: 23</i>
	<i>Doug Post Pg:</i>

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Jim Miller: Preacher at the Gray, church of Christ semi -retired, publisher, writer, editor. A member of the Lords church since 1985. Preached in NC, TN, Ky, and Maine. Two years Co-hosting Bible Talk Radio. Owner of Keys Of The Kingdom magazine and website.

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**Doug Post**

Doug Post: Has been in full time ministry for 15 years, preaching in Indiana and Connecticut. Received his BA in Communications, UCONN; MA in Biblical Studies, Southern Christian University; New Testament Theology and New Testament Greek, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Theological University of America. Doug is married to Debbie, his wife of 22 years.

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**If you would like to be a guest writer for TKOTK you may contact me at [jfmiller61@gmail.com](mailto:jfmiller61@gmail.com).**

**To announce up coming events like Gospel Meetings, Lectures, Singing events etc... Just use the email link above to contact me.**

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**[May God Bless You. Jim and the Staff](#)**

## **Evangelist Needed**

There is a real need for a good man willing to start a new work out in Washington State. This preacher would need to be self supporting to start out. There is a couple already in the town of Ellensburg who would like to see the Lord's church established there that will be sound and follow the scripture. This will be a daunting task as the churches around the area have gone into apostasy. If you believe you are up to such a challenge please use the contact information below for more in site and information.

Thank you  
Jim Miller

### ***Contact Information***

**Chuck Verkist, 906 East 2nd ave. Ellensburg, Wa. 98926  
(509) 925-2593 or [cverkist@kvalley.com](mailto:cverkist@kvalley.com)**

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## **Editor's Note**

By Jim Miller  
Gray, Maine

We are sorry to see Eric Farrior leaving us. He has been a fine contributor to our efforts. We wish him the best in his endeavors to preach and teach the Gospel.

For those interested I continue to recover steadily thank the Lord. I am grateful for every day that I wake up. I think most folks that have major surgery look at the big long scar they are left with as something ugly, but not me I will always look at this scar as a blessing and proof of how much the Lord God loves me. You see folks the scars maybe long and ugly to most but those of us who have them can look on them as signs of God's mercy and His way of saying I have more for you to do.

Editor: Jim Miller  
Gray, Maine.

### ***Will You Stand Against Error?***

Phony love and redefining the teachings of the Bible will lead you straight to hell. The liberals are outstanding at redefining things. They redefined love they redefined baptism they have even redefined heaven and hell. They do all this to deceive you into believing their lies and in doing so they pave the road to hell with your soul. The sad thing is you allow it.

I am not just speaking to those outside of the church I am speaking to everyone. This new definition of love will not point out you are a sin or rebuke you for it. It will not seek to bring you to the truth but rather those that wield this new love want to comfort you and make you feel good about yourself and when those that show true Godly love and care for you and really seek to save your soul come along they are accused of being mean and outdated old hypocrites. Those who show true love are often hit with the good old stand by comment "who are you to judge".

Well, I will tell you who I am. I am a God fearing man who puts his faith in the word of God. One who is sick and tired of watching his fellow man be deceived

and led like sheep to the slaughter. I am a man who strives to live by the principles of scripture and teach those principles to others and yes any and all my righteousness is as a filthy rag before God Isa\_64:6 But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

I beg you and others every day to get up put on the whole armor of God and stand against the wiles of Satan. I try to write something each day here to motivate you to stand for the truth and put away from you the teachings of the wolves who have entered in among us. Folks it is YOU who have to stand strong in Gods word for far to long we have allowed the spread evil and the twisting of scripture.

Peter tells us what we are to be....1Pe\_2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: In Titus we are told Tit 2:11 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Tit 2:12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Tit 2:13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Tit 2:14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Tit 2:15 These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.

Time and time again we are told to come out from among the wicked and deceivers to be different. 2Co\_6:17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, 2Co 6:18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

This feel good gospel of deception and acceptance of sin and lies from the pulpit have to be stopped. This cancer that has been growing for so long needs to be treated with the truth and YOU have to be the one to do it. Folks do not tell me you can't because as I taught my children when they were growing up I can't never has and never will. YOU CAN and if you love the Lord and your fellow man YOU Will.

Stop being afraid of what people will think of you. Stop being afraid to hurt someones feeling or to step on toes. You have the complete written word of God the sharpest sword ever made to do battle with. Stop being sucked in to the PC religion of those who seek to carry you astray and put you in bondage to sin.

Stop following those who are paving the way to hell with your very soul.

The Lord said Mat\_10:28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Luk\_12:4 And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.

2Co 6:14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? 2Co 6:15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? 2Co 6:16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Are you Gods people or not?

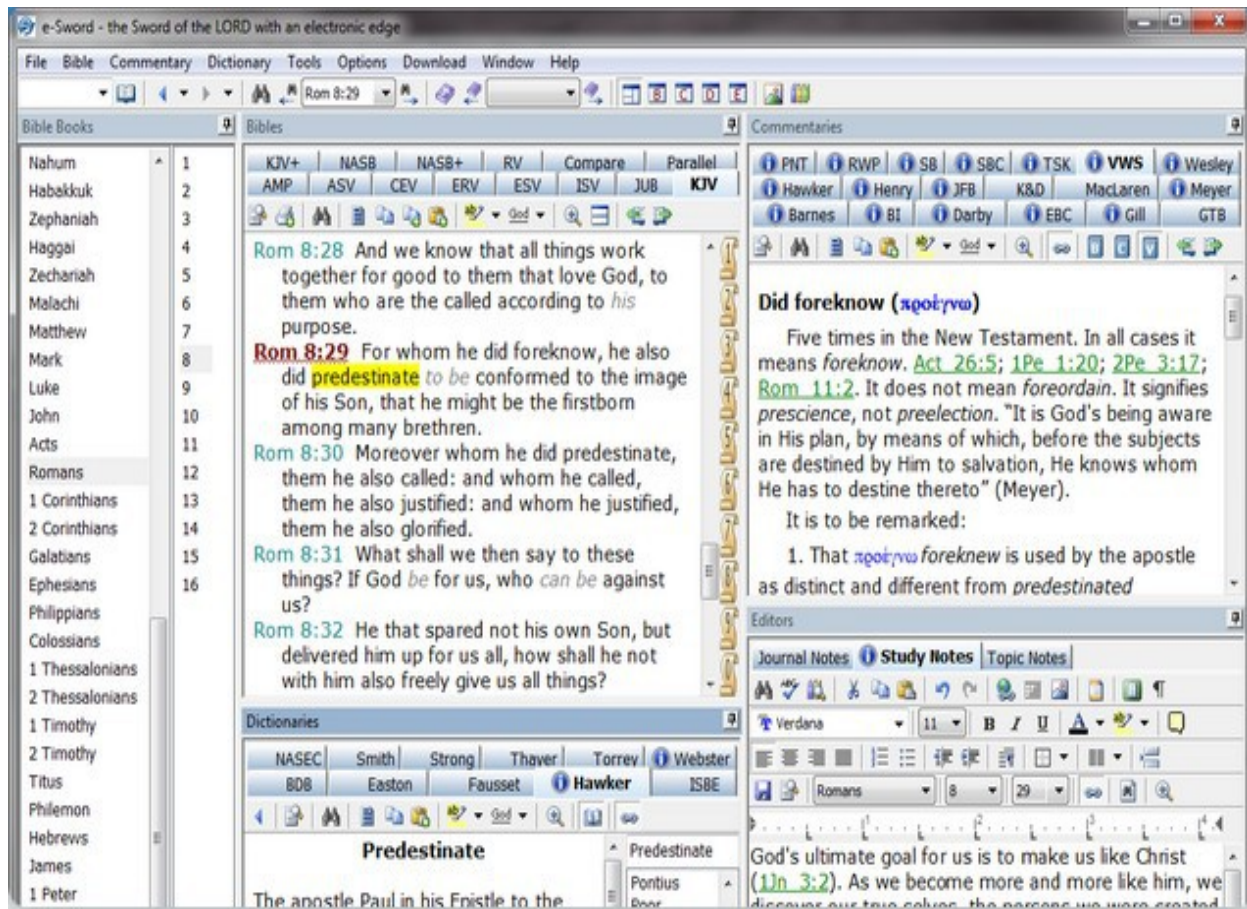
Brethren WAKE UP PLEASE

Put away the childish nonsense get off the milk prepare for the battle and GO out teach others the truth bring back those gone astray. Remember the words of James, Jas 5:19 Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Jas 5:20 Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

Friends strive to be as Paul when he said I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God..... Act 20:27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Act 20:28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. Act 20:29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Act 20:30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Act 20:31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. You can not sit apathetically in the pew any longer going through the motions of worship. You have to stop letting what others might say or think effect your duty to spread the truth. Someone somewhere at one time planted the seed with you now I implore you be the fertile soil grow in Gods truth. Truly love those who need salvation or to be brought back to God. Show true love but stand on Gods word and putting away the fables and false love and teaching of those who preach and teach only the smooth things that tickle the ears. Mat 12:30 He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.

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<http://falsedoctrinesofman.com>

Contact me at [jfmiller61@gmail.com](mailto:jfmiller61@gmail.com)

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*Cloyd Frock*

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<https://www.facebook.com/groups/466657760042906/>

# Purgatory

## Part Two of Three

Tim Bench  
Abilene, Texas

“O Loving Jesus, meek Lamb of God, I a miserable sinner, salute and worship the most Sacred Wound of Your Shoulder on which You bore Your heavy Cross, which so tore Your Flesh and laid bare Your Bones as to inflict on You an anguish greater than any other Wound of Your Most Blessed Body. I adore You, O Jesus most sorrowful; I praise and glorify You and give You thanks for this most sacred and painful Wound, beseeching You by the crushing burden of Your heavy Cross to be merciful to the souls in purgatory and to me, a sinner, to forgive me all my mortal and venial sins, and to lead me on towards Heaven along the Way of Your Cross. Amen.” from “Devotion of St. Bernard to the Shoulder Wound of Jesus” (“Releases many souls from purgatory each time it is prayed”, as per [www.holysouls.com](http://www.holysouls.com)).

“O gentle Heart of Jesus, ever present in the Blessed Sacrament, ever consumed with burning love for the poor captive souls in Purgatory, have mercy on them. Be not severe in Your judgments, but let some drops of Your Precious Blood fall upon the devouring flames. And, Merciful Savior, send Your angels to conduct them to a place of refreshment, light and peace. Amen.”  
from “A Prayer for the Souls in Purgatory”.

“Saint Gertrude had a deep empathy for the Church suffering, the Holy Souls in Purgatory. At every Holy Communion she beseeched Jesus for His mercy to be bestowed on them. During one Holy Communion she experienced the descent into Purgatory with Our Lord. She heard Him say: "At Holy Communion I will permit thee to draw forth all to whom the fragrance of thy prayers penetrates." After Holy Communion Our Lord customarily delivered more Souls than she had dared to ask for.

One time when Gertrude was praying with great fervor for the Holy souls, she asked Our Lord how many Souls His mercy would release, He answered: "My love urges Me to release the Poor Souls. If a beneficent king leaves his guilty friend in prison for justice's sake, he awaits with longing for one of his nobles to plead for the prisoner and to offer something for his release. Then the king joyfully, sets him free. Similarly, I accept with highest pleasure what is offered to Me for the Poor Souls, for I long inexpressibly to have near Me those for whom I paid so great a price. By the prayers of thy loving soul, I am induced to free a

prisoner from Purgatory as often as thou dost move thy tongue to utter a word of prayer!"

Excerpt from "St. Gertrude and the Holy Souls".

**"A PRAYER TO FREE 1000 SOULS FROM PURGATORY: PROMISE PRAYER...A Prayer Which Would Release 1,000 Souls From Purgatory Each Time It Is Said:**

Our Lord told St. Gertrude the Great that the following prayer would release 1,000 Souls from Purgatory each time it is said. The prayer was later extended to include living sinners as well.

"ETERNAL FATHER, I OFFER THEE THE MOST PRECIOUS BLOOD OF THY DIVINE SON, JESUS, IN UNION WITH THE MASSES SAID THROUGHOUT THE WORLD TODAY, FOR ALL THE HOLY SOULS IN PURGATORY, for sinners everywhere, for sinners in the universal Church, those in my own home and within my family. Amen."

APPROVAL AND RECOMMENDATION: M. Cardinal Pahiarcia at Lisbon, Portugal, March 4, 1936."

"As we enter Heaven we will see them, so many of them coming towards us and thanking us. We will ask, who they are, and they will say a poor soul you prayed for in Purgatory." Archbishop Fulton Sheen (1895-1979).

"The Holy Souls are eager for the prayers of the faithful which can gain indulgences for them. Their intercession is powerful. Pray unceasingly. We must empty Purgatory!" Padre Pio Pietrelcian (1887-1968).

"Yet how quickly we could empty purgatory if we but really wished to."

"The fire of Purgatory is the same as the fire of Hell; the difference between them is that the fire of Purgatory is not everlasting.

St John Vianney (1786-1859).

Catholic Facebook posting at "Traditional Roman Catholic"... "Don't forget the souls in Purgatory. Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord and let perpetual light shine upon them. Amen. (300 days indulgence for the souls in Purgatory)".

Many will argue that the concept of "Purgatory" is no longer a facet of Catholic theology, and is a mere remnant of long ago abuses. Those who hold such views might be well-served to take note of the following....

“In an effort to modernize one of the oldest practices of the Roman Catholic religion, the Vatican is offering indulgences—a reduction of time spent in purgatory—to those who will follow Pope Francis next Monday on Twitter during World Youth Day.

The offering of indulgences has continued throughout the ages, and has evolved in a variety of ways—including the Vatican’s latest addition to the pitch, to grant a reduction of time in purgatory to those who follow the Pope on Twitter during World Youth Day. The offer is only one of a number of accepted tasks, and the Twitter proposition was presented to in order to include those who could not attend the event in Brazil in person.

But there is a stipulation.

“[Y]ou must be following the events live,” a representative of the Vatican’s apostolic penitentiary told The Guardian. “It is not as if you can get an indulgence by chatting on the internet.”

from “Vatican Offers Time Off ‘Purgatory’ for Following Pope on Twitter During World Youth Day”, [www.christiannews.net](http://www.christiannews.net), July 18, 2013.

“Purgatory”, or even any related concept never appears once in the Old or New Testament. For “scriptural justification” of Purgatory, Catholics will cite the Apocrypha, considered non-canonical by nearly all Protestants in the modern world....

“Judas, the commander of the forces of Israel, making a gathering . . . sent twelve thousand drachmas of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead, thinking well and religiously concerning the resurrection (For if he had not hoped that they that were slain should rise again, it would have seemed superfluous and vain to pray for the dead). And because he considered that they who had fallen asleep with godliness, had great grace laid up for them. It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins.” (2 Maccabees 12:43-46).

The concept of “Purgatory” directly lead to arguably the greatest and most egregious doctrine on all of Roman Catholicism; the sale of “indulgences”, wherein a person could expedite the departure of their loved one's soul from the torturous agonies off Purgatory in exchange for a payment to the Catholic Church. This would become a massive source of revenue for the Catholic Church in the Middle Ages, and one which the Papacy was seemingly all too happy to promote (the sale of indulgences would fund the St. Peter’s Basilica (the second largest church in the world) and would also help fund artwork from the likes of Michelangelo) 2.

“New St. Peter’s Basilica is the second largest church in the world and considered by many to be the most beautiful. Built mainly during the sixteenth century, it took over a century to complete, and withstood corruption, wars, the Reformation, the Counter-Reformation, good popes and evil ones, and inched its way toward completion in 1626.

The main funding for the early stages of building New St. Peter’s came from the sale of indulgences...the abusive means of selling indulgences, including lies from priests and the papacy about their efficacy, resulted in an uprising... Indulgences also paid for some of the most exquisite art in the world.”

from “The Role of Indulgences in the Building of New Saint Peter’s Basilica” by Kim Dennis.

Purchasing “indulgences” from the Catholic Church could allow one to keep a mistress, or more often, to purchase the salvation of a loved one’s immortal soul. Try to imagine the guilt, fear, angst, etc. when told that a loved one was suffering the agonies of hellish torment, and the only remedy for your loved one was a substantial payment to the Catholic Church. In short order, the Catholic Church's most famous villain, Johann Tetzel, would begin the mass selling of indulgences to fill both the Catholic coffers, as well as his own pockets, playing on the entrenched belief of “Purgatory” among the masses. A typical sales plea from Tetzel clearly illustrates the terror he would inflict upon the peasants regarding their deceased loved ones, suffering in torment in “Purgatory” .....

“Do you not hear the voices of your dead relatives and others, crying out to you and saying ‘Pity us, pity us, for we are in dire punishment and torment from which you can redeem us for a pittance’ ? And you will not?”

“Will you not then for a quarter of a florin receive these letters of indulgence through which you are able to lead a divine and immortal soul safely and securely into the homeland of paradise?”

from *Luther the Reformer: The Story of the Man and his Career* by James Kittelson, page 103.

We will conclude this study in our next edition.....

# LEGALISM, LAW, AND LOVE

Dub McClish  
Denton, Texas

## Introduction

Is obedience to the Christ optional, unnecessary? Are belief in and “love” toward the Christ the only things required of sinners to be saved? Some (the *we-are-not-under-law-but-under-grace* crowd) would have it so and thus teach. To them the New Testament is but a collection of “love letters” from God that are bereft of any authoritative or “legal” content. Who would even consider denying that the New Testament—with its incomparable glad tidings of salvation for sinners—is the revelation of the incomparable (and all but incomprehensible) love of God and His son for fallen man? Having said this, it is nonetheless utter folly to deny that this New Testament “love story” is also God's **law** for all men, for all time, since Calvary.

Paul recognized the existence of “the law of Christ” and even identified one of its precepts (Gal. 6:1–2). He knew that he was “under law to Christ” (1 Cor. 9:21), which he elsewhere described as “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:2). James twice referred to the New Testament as the “law of liberty” (Jam. 1:25; 2:12). Besides these explicit statements, there are numerous implicit statements and principles that demand the conclusion that (1) the New Testament of Christ is God's law for the Christian Age and that (2) all men are amenable to it.

## Are We “Legalists”?

Liberals, who do not want to be bound by Divine law—the New Testament, often hurl *legalist* into the teeth of those of us who emphasize obedience to New Testament commands. We will do well to examine this term and the accusation made concerning it. *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* defines legalism as “a strict, literal, or excessive conformity to the law or to a religious or moral code.” Webster notwithstanding, I question the possibility of “excessive conformity” to Divine law (the expression has almost a pejorative connotation). “Strict, literal... conformity” to His will is exactly what the Lord requires of those who would be saved (Mat. 7:21–23; Heb. 5:9; et al.).

Men who specialize in taking liberties with God's Word (i.e., liberals) actually

pay us a compliment when they call us “legalists”, by at least part of Webster's definition. First, to be a legalist implies belief in the existence of law. I freely confess my conviction that the New Testament is the Divine law under which we live and which will be the final standard of our judgment (John 12:48). Second, I am quite willing to “plead guilty” to insisting upon a strict adherence to that law.

Perhaps what the accusers hope to do by calling us “legalists” is to class us with the first-century scribes and Pharisees. Most certainly, the Master scathingly rebuked them on more than one occasion, but did He ever rebuke them for “strict conformity” to God's law? No—not once! Rather, He chided them for elevating human opinion, precept, and tradition to the level of Divine law, thus making their own religious law (Mat. 15:3, 6–9). Further, He condemned them for overemphasizing parts of God's law while utterly rejecting and/or neglecting other parts of it (23:23), which also had the effect of creating their own laws. The scribes and Pharisees were thus simultaneously legalists and liberals, demonstrating the worst elements of both practices. Likewise, those who today thus behave deserve to be called “legalists” and “liberals” in the worst sense. As did the Christ, so should we condemn and expose them.

### **“Legalism” and Obedience**

While admitting the existence of legalism as demonstrated in the scribes and Pharisees, I hasten to emphasize the clear distinction between their behavior and the Scriptural doctrine of strict obedience to Divine law. There is no clearer principle in the entire Bible than this: Man's paramount duty is to obey God. In much of his life Solomon miserably failed to honor the pivotal conclusion he finally reached, but it remains nonetheless true: *“This is the end of the matter; all hath been heard: fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man”* (Ecc. 12:13). King Saul “learned the hard way” that an outward show of religion in offerings and sacrifices is no substitute for obedience. Samuel sharply reproved him with words that ring true in every age—including ours:

*Hath Jehovah as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of Jehovah? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams* (1 Sam. 15:22).

On the other hand, from the beginning, disobedience of God's law has been synonymous with sin—and it still is. The disobedience of Eve, and then Adam, was the very vehicle upon which sin entered the world (Rom. 5:12, 19). Their sin

resulted in loss of fellowship with God and expulsion from Eden (Gen. 2:15–17; 3:22–24). The penalty of physical death came upon mankind because of sin (v. 12). Moreover, the perfect holiness of God demanded (and demands) the far worse sentence of eternal spiritual death—separation from God in Hell—for sinful men: “*For the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord*” (Rom. 6:23). *Sin* and *disobedience* are synonyms, hence one does no violence to Paul’s words to substitute *disobedience* for *sin* in the foregoing passage: “*The wages of disobedience is death.*” The fact that disobedience results in damnation further emphasizes the necessity of obedience.

### **Ever-Present Divine Law or Universalism?**

There has never been a time when man was not accountable to a law system from God. The concepts of sin and law are inseparably bound together (no law, no sin [Rom. 4:15]; no sin, no law [5:13]). “*All have sinned*” from the very beginning (3:23a; cf. 5:13–14), therefore all have been under some system of Divine law from the beginning. Moreover, all continue to “*fall short*” (3:23b). [Note: *have sinned* is an aorist tense form, referring to past completed action, while *fall short* is a present tense form, indicating present and continuing action.] Only if mankind has always been (and ever will be) under law from God can it be said that men have always been (and ever will be) sinners. It is impossible to conceive of sin in the absence of law. John succinctly expressed this principle that has no exceptions: “*Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law*” (1 John 3:4, KJV; cf. 5:17). If, as some now allege, men are no longer under law to God, what shall we conclude about sin? What a heinous chain of heresy such antinomian thinking begets, including the following links:

- The only ones whom the death of Christ benefited were those who lived before Calvary.
- God simply abrogated the law systems He had formerly enacted and did not replace them with another.
- It is therefore impossible for anyone living in the Christian Age to sin.
- Hence, the death of Christ was unnecessary and inapplicable with respect to those who have lived since that event.

In the absence of sin there is no condemnation. Thus those who argue that “*grace*” in the Christian Age frees us from Divine law imply that, since the cross,



the egregious doctrine of unconditional universalism has been in effect! Liberals must face the fact that it is impossible to disobey nonexistent law.

Rather than being free from condemnation by the absence of law (per the liberals), we are actually freed from it by the power of law! That which Paul said was true concerning himself is true of all: *“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death”* (Rom. 8:2). We correctly identify this law with *“the truth”* which makes us free (John 8:32; cf. 17:17) and the *“perfect law of liberty”* (Jam. 1:25; cf. 2:12). Upon His return, the Lord will render *“vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus: who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might”* (2 The. 1:7–9).

### **What About Love?**

If love (see opening paragraph) is Scripturally defined, then, indeed love of Christ is all that is required of sinners for salvation. Alas, liberals do not seem to comprehend its Scriptural meaning! Where is the liberal who knows (or who will acknowledge) the inseparable connection between loving and obeying the Christ? To the liberal, “love of Christ” appears to have more to do with shadow than with substance. It involves such things as getting emotionally worked up, saying, “praise the Lord,” or maybe singing loudly some “contemporary Christian song” about loving God or His Son. Yet the Bible is explicit and clear in its declaration of this union. (Lest I be misunderstood, I am not saying we should not be emotionally involved in our worship, that it is wrong to utter the phrase, *praise the Lord*, or that singing contemporary songs is somehow inherently unscriptural.)

The Bible goes far beyond mere emotion and words—both of which can be very fickle and deceitful—as indicators of love for the Lord. Love for Christ brings us right back to the Bible emphasis on obedience to Divine law. According to Christ Himself, our obedience to Christ is the expression and proof of genuine love for Him:

*If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments.... He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him.... He that loveth me not keepeth not my words: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me.... If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love* (John 14:15, 21, 24; 15:10).

John states that the same standard of proof applies to one's love for the Father: *“For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous”* (1 John 5:3). If love of one another requires more than mere verbal expression, how much more the love of God and His Son (3:18)!

In light of the passages above, one must conclude that there is no way to demonstrate genuine love for the Son of God except by obedience to Him. Those who insist that we are under no system of spiritual law since the cross or that it is somehow “unspiritual” to emphasize “commandment-keeping” under Christ simply cannot be lovers of Christ by His own definition. Plainly put, careful obedience to Christ does not constitute legalism. Rather, it constitutes love!

The old Priscilla Owens spiritual song, “Give Me the Bible,” has had it just right all along: “Precept and promise, law and love combining.” Therein we see the beautiful Scriptural balance of law, love, and obedience. May we never allow ourselves to be intimidated by the liberals’ charge of “legalism” just because we insist that men must obey the commandments—the law—of Christ.

### **Endnotes**

1. All Scripture quotations are from the American Standard Version, unless otherwise indicated.
2. I wrote this MS for—and it originally appeared as—an “Editorial Perspective” in the June 2000 issue of *The Gospel Journal*, of which I was editor at the time.

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## Learning to Give an Answer (12)

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Last month we began a discussion involving the mission of the church, and we discussed such from the standpoint of the mission of saving souls. This month I want us to finish this discussion and so end the entire series of “Learning to Give an Answer.” In concluding this series, let us look at two other areas concerning the mission of the church: Strengthening the saved, and Benevolence.

*Strengthening the Saved.* There is a great need for edification in the Lord’s Church. Webster defines the word “edify” as: “to instruct in such a way as to improve, enlighten, or uplift morally or spiritually.” Many preachers forget this part of preaching. And many Christians are too busy running each other down with rumors, gossip, and idle conversation that they forget that “edifying” is part of their Christian mission. Please, let it not be said of us. We are to build each other up; not to tear each other down.

Peter wrote in First Peter 2:1-2—“*Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.*” And then in Second Peter 3:18 he says, “*But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.*” My friends, we cannot very well be a glory to our Lord Jesus if we are fighting, bickering, tale-bearing, and finding fault with one another. Look at the words of Paul in Ephesians 4:11-12 concerning the work of the church when it was in its infancy: “*And he gave some, apostles: and some, prophets: and some, evanangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, and for the edifying of the body of Christ:*” Who is to strengthen the saved? Once again, just as saving souls is to be done by both individual Christians, and the congregation, so is the work of edifying. Paul instructed the Roman Christians to each do this work. “*Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.*” (Rom. 14:19) Preachers are told to edify the congregation as we have already noted in Eph. 4:11-12.

As Christians, we are not to stay as “new born babes” but we are to grow in the

Christian graces, as outlined by Peter in Second Peter 1:5-8. If we do not grow, Peter tells us that we will be “unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (v. 8) But, in what areas are we to grow?

It was said of our Lord, that he “...increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.” (Luke 2:52) Most of us in the Lord’s church crave wisdom, and we want to be in favor with God. But have we really grown in favor with our fellow man? Social growth is very important, even though we may live in morally degenerate surroundings. In business, we need to conduct ourselves so that people know we are honest, and that people who are not Christians will want to do business with us again. If we work for others, we need to give our employers and honest days work for an honest days wage. We need to always set the example before them as Christians so that they will want to be like us. In the home, we need to learn to conduct our hearts and minds just as if we were in the assembly. Respect one another as husband and wife. Talk to your children with respect, but make sure they know that you are the parent. If you still live with your parents, treat them as your parents. Respect them not only with words, but be obedient to them “in the Lord.” This is where true “edification” begins. How can we fulfill our mission to edify one another? There are several avenues available to do so. You can have Bible classes in your home. We as a congregation can conduct special training groups: personal work programs, preacher training classes, teacher training classes, and some congregations have even started singing classes. And of course there is always the printed word in articles such as this one that you are reading right now. Let us “build up” one another; and not tear down. There is always a place for every Christian to edify one another.

*Benevolence.* In addition to our mission to save the lost, and to edify one another, the Lord has given us a mission to serve the suffering. Our Lord said in Matthew 26:11—“*For ye have the poor always with you, but me ye have not always.*”

But why should we help the poor? First of all, it is a command. Galatians 6:10 says, “*As we have therefore opportunity let us do good unto all men especially unto them who are of the household of faith.*” In view of the judgment, we need to help those that are less fortunate than ourselves. Turn your Bibles to Matthew 25 and read verses 34-46.

Because of promised blessings, we need to help all men whenever the

opportunity arises. Second Corinthians 9:9 says, *(As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth forever.)* If we are to follow Jesus then we will take care of others. Peter wrote of this concept in First Peter 2:21—*“For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps.”* Jesus left us an example in all things, and it was written of him, that he “went about doing good.” (Acts 10:38) If we love God, then we will also love our fellow man, and will help him (her) by any means that we have available. John testifies of this in First John 3:17 when he says, *“But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?”* If we are going to claim to be religious, then we must practice benevolence because it is a part of “pure religion.” James 1:27 states, *“Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.”* If we turn our backs on the poor and unfortunate, we are not practicing pure religion.

Just as the other areas that we have studied, this can be practiced by both individuals and congregations alike. First Timothy 5:16 denotes individual responsibility to care for widows, under certain circumstances, that the congregation not be burdened in doing so. *“If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be burdened; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed.”* However, there is great example in the scripture for congregational participation in the doing of good. Paul identified the Macedonian brethren as going “above and beyond” in their giving. *“And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.”*(II Cor. 8:5)

Well, how is this to be done, and when do we know what is an individual responsibility and a congregational responsibility. There is no rule of thumb here, but much depends on the circumstances. The ability of the church, the nature of the case, and the law of the land may very well determine methods to be employed. For example: **A family has lost everything in a fire.** Any individual may donate clothing to that family that they might be able to use. The congregation may investigate to see if they can help to provide shelter till another place of residence can be attained. **Are there orphan children in the community?** School supplies may be provided by an individual or by the congregation. Clothing is always a necessity of life. Perhaps a pair of shoes that they can wear, or a coat to keep them warm in winter can be provided by the

church. **A man is sick and unable to work.** An individual can certainly go by and see if his lawn needs to be mowed, or if meals need to be provided. The church may want to provide financial assistance until the man gets back on his feet. There is a place for all of God's people to serve in this area.

*“Unto Him be glory in the church. (Eph. 3:21)* Whether it be in the area of saving souls, edifying one another, or serving the suffering; we all need to be involved in the mission of the church. God is glorified in the church when the church is faithful to its mission. We sing a song from time to time that goes like this: *“I will work, I will pray, I will labor every day in the vineyard of the Lord.”* Let us truly sing that song, and mean it!

*\*All scripture references are from the KJV unless otherwise noted.*

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# ***Review of Robert Waters' Teaching on Adultery***

## ***Part IV***

Howard Denham  
Florida,

I. Thus, with his perverting of the text of Ezekiel 16:38 Robert Waters “arrives” at his conclusion that adultery is “1) A sexual act committed outside of a marriage relationship and against the marriage (John 8:4)”; “2) The act of ‘putting away’ and marrying another (Matthew 19:9)”; “3) A sin against one’s spouse, which is contrary to the marital vows (Mark 10:11)”; “4) Within the scope of marriage – the display of improper affection for another (Jeremiah 3:9)”; and “5) Ignoring the bond and considering oneself unmarried (1 Corinthians 7:15)” (“Biblical Definition of Adultery,” p.3). It is clear, however, that Ezekiel 16:38 does not imply this five-fold division for the meaning of the term, as Robert’s article asserts. In fact, he does not even list the text among the five-fold definition that he gives! There is little, if any, correlation of his misuse of the text to this contrived five-fold list.

1. As to his number 1) above, he is correct in this definition for “adultery,” as this is the proper, literal definition of the term, if he means by “outside of a marriage” he refers to someone having sexual intercourse with another other than his or her spouse.

2. As to number 2), we have already noted the textual problem he has with assigning this definition to Matthew 19:9. His distinction between putting away and divorce is contrived. It is patently false. Further, the adultery of the text is not a one-time act as he implies. He ignores the imperfective aspect of the verb *moichatai* and its obvious linear force here. Also, the adultery is not the putting away + the marrying another, but together the two actions produce the state of one living in adultery, as William Beck’s translation notes. Robert is attempting to make the adultery a singular act that consists of two parts: the putting away one’s wife (without really divorcing her) and the marrying another (while still bound to the put away woman).

3. As to his number 3), Mark 10:11 is an explanation of Matthew 19:9 and so deals with the same subject. Thus, the adultery here has the same meaning as in Matthew 19:9, despite Robert’s attempt to enumerate it as a separate and distinct definition from the latter.

4. As to his number 4), Robert asserts that Jeremiah 3:9 deals with “within the scope of marriage – the display of improper affection for another.” We have already examined this text and shown that it uses the word “adultery” to describe the unfaithfulness of Israel to God in figurative language as “adultery.” It uses the sexual sin metaphorically to portray Israel as a wanton and promiscuous wife engaging, as it were, in sex with the “stones” and “stocks,” the nature idols of the Canaanite fertility cults of Baal and Astarte respectively. [NOTE: Anyone who has studied Canaanite worship, as well its cousins among the Celtic peoples, are aware of the use of polished stone in the form of a phallic symbol/idol that was used by women in the orgiastic rites. In fact, in some ancient sites special rocks were set up in the shape of a phallus where women would openly simulate copulation with Baal. Thus, the imagery was quite appropriate.]

5. As to his number 5), 1 Corinthians 7:15, which had not previously been cited in his material thus far, does not use the term “adultery.” I suspect that he is again alluding to his flawed assertions on 1 Corinthians 7:8-9, even though the term “adultery” does not occur here either. Once more he ignores the immediate context and especially the significance of verses 10-11, which refer back to the Lord’s teaching on divorce and remarriage (cf. Matt. 5:31-32; 19:9; Mark 10:11-12; Luke 16:18). If he is seeking to imply anything relative to “adultery” from these texts, it is contextually limited to the Lord’s teaching by Paul and so we do not have any basis for yet another definition for adultery, despite Robert’s implication.

6. Of the five definitions he gives, only two pan out, at least in part: 1) the literal definition as seen in John 8:4 and 2) the figurative definition of Jeremiah 3:9, and the latter does not really bear any semblance to what he wants it to mean even there! This conclusion accords with the findings of the dictionaries, lexicons, and the word studies that Waters sought to discredit a priori at the beginning of his article.

7. There are then two basic meanings – the literal, sexual one that relates to physical marriage between a man and a woman and the figurative, spiritual one that relates to spiritual marriage between God and Israel in the Old Testament and between Christ and the church – spiritual Israel, Galatians 6:16 – in the New Testament. The former is denotative, and the latter is connotative.

8. Clearly, this figurative meaning or use of adultery terminology does not fit Matthew 19:9. That text is not discussing spiritual unfaithfulness to the Lord, but violation of a literal marriage relationship. The specific crime of adultery is ascribed by the Lord to the one who divorces without just cause and marries



another after having done so.

9. It is fascinating that the position taken by Robert Waters implicitly leads to the conclusion that the view held by the Pharisees that they had a right to divorce and remarry at will was actually, for all practical considerations, correct, despite the Lord's obvious opposition to the practice! The only difference is that Robert would have folks say "I'm sorry" at some point after having divorced and remarried unscripturally all the while continuing to live together. That is the only essential difference in his view and that of the Pharisees. Of course, Robert will quibble that divorce is not contemplated in the txt, but that is a red herring.

10. If one practices what Robert teaches, then he can divorce and remarry as many times as he chooses and keep the new "wife" each time, which practically speaking was precisely what the Pharisees were practicing and seeking to defend. If Robert had been there, he would have argued with the Lord that the practice was scriptural but their premise was flawed! Yet it is obvious that the Lord does not so reason! His declaration is an unequivocal condemnation of the practice of divorce for any cause other than fornication – otherwise "except" does not mean "except."

11. The context of Jeremiah 3:9 shows beyond dispute that the prophet of God is using the sexual crime of adultery as a metaphor for the idolatry of Israel and Judah. Verse 1 begins with a question based on the divorce text of Deuteronomy 24:1-4, which concerns the matter of a divorced woman possibly returning to her original spouse. As in the divorce text, Jeremiah affirms that for the husband to take her back after such is to pollute the land. He also rebukes the nation, saying, "thou hast played the harlot with many lovers." This is a clear allusion to sexual sin as a metaphor for the nation's idolatrous acts. But God was still willing to take back His wife, if she would return unto Him and be faithful. What was expressly forbidden in the literal marriage relations of the Jews was permitted by Jehovah in His spiritual relation to Israel. Jeremiah in verse 3 describes the nation as having "a whore's forehead," yet another striking allusion to sexual infidelity for emphasis! Verse 6 charges that "she is gone up upon every high mountain, and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot" (cf. Jer. 2:20; 3:13). In verse 8 Jeremiah stresses that "Israel committed adultery" and so God "put her away, and {gave} her a bill of divorce," but also Judah had now "played the harlot also" despite seeing this. It is at this juncture that the text of Jeremiah 3:9 is given by inspiration. Verse 10 then declares that the behavior of Judah toward God was "treacherous" (bagohd, as also in verse 7), which language is used in Malachi 2:14-16 (bagahd) of the actions of the Hebrew males in seeking other wives and even putting away the wives of their

youth (cf. Jer. 3:8,11,20, bagahd)! {cf. Englishman's Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance, pp. 184-186}. It is the reality of sexual infidelity that gives the imagery of Jeremiah its vivid force!

12. One should note the definition of na'aph in the Hebrew–English Lexicon of the Bible, which reproduces principally the work of Friedrich Leopold (Lexicon Hebraicum et Chaldaicum in Veteris Testamenti, ordine etymologico compositum of 1832). This work was most recently re-published by Schocken Books, a leader in publishing works on Judaica and the Hebrew Scriptures. It has also been a recognized standard work published for many years by S. Bagster. The lexicon defines na'aph as “I. committed adultery. – II. worshipped false gods, Jer. 3:9...” (p. 156). One should note that Prof. Leopold, a genuine Hebrew scholar, renders the word as used in Jeremiah 3:9 as “worshipped false gods,” and thus considered the idolatry to be the adultery understood in the text!

13. Another excellent reference work is that of Semitic scholar Marcus Jastrow, which work is titled A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalim, and the Midrashic Literature, originally published in 1903. Of the word na'aph, it has the following notation: “Na'aph (b.h.) to be unchaste, voluptuous, esp. to have illicit intercourse; to commit adultery. Lev. R. s.23 (ref. to Job XXIV, 15)...” (p. 866). Of the masculine noef, it gives the rendering “adulterer, paramour,” and similarly for the feminine, “adulteress” (p. 866). Jastrow's work not only expresses the proper meaning of the term na'aph and its cognates in the Biblical text but also the commonly understood meaning of them in Hebrew texts from the Inter-testament period onward, and which, if not completely parallel to that of the Bible concerning time, nonetheless gives the meaning as understood by those who in our earliest records commented or exegeted the texts of the Bible in which these terms are found in their own native tongue.

14. As the Lord and the writers of the New Testament, who were also Hebrews after the flesh, utilize the moich-forms to express the same concepts in the first century A.D. and most certainly did so using them with the same meaning clearly understood by their contemporaries, it is clear that moicheia did not take on some other meaning as to its essential idea distinct from that of na'aph, from whence it etymologically sprung. It is an axiom of linguistics that the meaning of terms is generally presumed to coincide in any disputed text with the meaning(s) or use(s) of said terms contemporary with the text. Alexander Campbell appropriately appeals to this principle in his celebrated lecture on Demonology, as also does J.W. McGarvey in his comments on that subject. Standard works in the field of hermeneutics in like vein appeal to the principle in the matter of the

definition of words. Terry, Lockhart, Dungan, Carson, Silva, Mikkelsen, et al. could be cited to this end. The principle simply decrees that the meaning of terms in any disputed passage ought to be taken, at the very least, with that generally held by the original auditors or readers in their native tongue. The purpose of oral or verbal communication, whether spoken or written, is to express one's thoughts in a form that can be grasped by the hearer or reader. Words are the vehicles of that expression, and must be understandable in order for the thoughts to be properly grasped. Prof. Jastrow's scholarly work exhibits what the essential idea or ideas involved in na'aph actually were in the age contemporary with Christ and the apostles and thus provides substantial evidentiary value on the subject of MDR, which evidence is contrary to the assertions of brother Waters. cf. Jeff A. Benner – "Na'aph, Adultery: to commit adultery; KJV 'break wedlock'" (The Ancient Hebrew Lexicon of the Bible: Hebrew Letters, Words, and Roots, p. 373).]

15. Ironically, Waters chides those who do not accept his theories for the supposed failure to practice good hermeneutics, while he acts totally contrary to this very basic canon of hermeneutics (the science of interpretation) recognized in virtually every major work on the subject.

II. Robert also states: "Scholars who define adultery as 'sexual relations outside of marriage' are not in error. However, if or when a 'scholar' limits 'adultery' to a sexual matter or say {sic} sex is ALWAYS involved...they {sic} are mistaken."

1. Talk about hedging one's bets! Robert, who just demonstrated from John 8:4 that there is a sexual meaning involved in the word "adultery" in certain contexts is compelled to admit that the scholars are not wrong in assigning this meaning to the word.

2. Yet, while he admits that the scholars are not wrong in assigning this meaning to the term "adultery," he opines that "if a 'scholar' – note the quote marks that he placed around the word "scholar" – "limits 'adultery to a sexual matter or say {sic} sex is ALWAYS involved," then he is wrong.

3. Robert implies that one ceases to be a scholar at that point, and thus the only way to qualify to be a scholar is for one to believe that Robert's concept of adultery is the right one across the board.

4. But there is no scholar who maintains that literal, physical sex is always the central idea contextually where the word is used. The statement by Robert is yet another red herring. The linguists, lexicographers, and grammarians are agreed

that there are both a literal and a figurative (or metaphorical) use of the word in the Bible. The word denotes the literal idea that Robert has admitted relative to John 8:4-5. It denotes “the act of sexual intercourse of a married person with someone other than his or her spouse.” Figuratively, it connotes the idea of unfaithfulness to God or Christ, depending upon the context by using marriage imagery for force and vividness. The unfaithful are thus depicted as if they were committing adultery with another lover (e.g. the pagan deities of the Canaanites, hence “stones” and “stocks,” as we have noted; or even the world, Jas. 4:4), rather than to their rightful Spouse to whom they hold a spiritual relationship that is described in marriage terminology.

5. However, none of them support his five-fold theory. None! And while literal sex is not necessarily involved in this unfaithfulness, the sexual imagery suggested by the term “adultery” is nonetheless present to give the metaphor its substance.

III. Robert once more resorts to special pleading, by writing: “Those who reject the Biblical definition of adultery (whether ignorantly or defiantly) and engage in the practice of breaking up marriages and ‘forbidding to marry’ (1 Timothy 4:1-4; 1 Corinthians 7:2; 8,9 {sic}) are on dangerous ground. This ungodly and destructive practice is based on the assumption that adultery is nothing but sex in a second marriage, which really does not exist, and that it is continuous or takes place with each act of sexual intercourse. This is not true because a state of adultery exists even if the physical act is never committed” (pp. 3-4).

1. He simply has not proven his case, but acts as though he has done so, despite the multiple problems of his theory. Thus, the dire consequences that he warns against for not accepting or operating by his strictures are just so much balloon juice.

2. The texts that he cites, 1 Timothy 4:1-4 and 1 Corinthians 7:2, 8-9, refer to legitimate marriages. Robert must prove that divorcing for any cause other than fornication and then remarrying inevitably produces such marriages. He has not even set out any logical case to that end. An assertion is not an argument.

3. If it is not sinful to call upon people to come out of adulterous relationships (and clearly it is not, 1 Cor. 6:9; et al., then it must be the case that such is neither “ungodly” nor “destructive” in an evil sense. Robert himself forbids certain marriages (e.g. same-sex, group, and polyandrous marriages). He has admitted elsewhere that it would not be innately evil for God to require at least some people to live celibate lives. If so, then if God has implied in certain

circumstances that some are to live celibate lives, then recognizing and teaching that does not constitute forbidding the kind of marriages contemplated in these texts. This straw man quibble from Robert, however, is one of his most common attacks on brethren opposing his view.

4. It also is not based on, as he wrongly asserts the “assumption that adultery is nothing but sex in a second marriage, which really does not exist.” Rather there is no assumption involved. It is based on the literal meaning of the verb *moichatai*, which indicates an ongoing action (whether continuous, habitual, or iterative depending on the nature of the activity itself or the context bearing on the verb). The use of the term plus the Lord’s own words in Matthew 19:6 show that no real marriage in the sight of God stands. The word “marries” is used accommodatively to reflect the outward appearance of things based on social custom or civil law. Further, the verb *gameo* implies the occurrence of sexual intercourse in the act of marrying.

5. Robert had earlier defined adultery as limited to the act of putting away plus the act of remarriage, but now he calls it a “state of adultery.” Here he meets himself coming back! He cannot have it both ways. A “state of adultery” implies a continuing, ongoing condition! The present tense verb can express, contextually, either the idea of an abiding, continuing state (in the sense of continuing or living in adultery, which of course would have been entered into upon the remarriage) – and thus simply as ongoing, or it can express the idea more vividly of the habitual or iterative action of the specific occasions of the sex act in the relationship. Neither idea suits Robert’s definition. In even making this objection, he logically forfeits his own position! [

6. As to why the Lord did not choose the perfect tense over the present to stress the idea of a state could be due to the more progressive idea involved in the present tense, especially as contrasted with the aorist tense verbs *apolusee* and *gameesee*. Or it could simply could be the case that a state of adultery, which the Lord treats as involving the sex act (as such was the very intent behind the divorce for any cause view of the Pharisees which He was refuting), is not what is being stressed as much as the actual sex itself. The force would then be that every time the Pharisee so divorced and remarried came together and cohabited with his new ill-gotten “spouse” he was guilty of adultery. Robert has tried to raise the specter of a couple unable to have sex but getting unscripturally divorced and remarried and asserting that they most assuredly could not be guilty of the sin of adultery as contemplating sexual activity. This supposedly refutes the force of Jesus’ words. But Robert fails to remember that the Lord is dealing specifically with the practice of the Jews and their abuse of the Law of

Moses in divorcing for any cause so they could obtain a new wife at will so they could have sexual intercourse with the new woman!

While the text then lays down the general framework for MDR cases, it does not specifically address all possible situations directly. Other cases must be addressed on the basis of the IMPLICATIONS of the text in view of the totality of Bible teaching on MDR. While a couple which is unable to have sexual intercourse cannot technically commit adultery through the sex act, it does not follow then that their relationship can ever be legitimized in the sight of God. If so, by what authority? Where are they authorized to marry (Col. 3:17)? Most certainly it is not in the texts that Robert has thus far cited – 1Timothy 4:1-4 and 1 Corinthians 7:2, 8-9, which make no mention of such a relationship. The latter texts are clearly limited in scope by the force of 1 Cor. 7:10-11, where the divorced woman is not given the option to form a new marriage.

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