

There is a Connection

By Aubrey Belue

Men are prone to make a difference between the importance of loving and serving God, and that of acting properly toward man and duty. In much the same way that the Pharisees of the first century “split hairs” between the temple and the gold of the temple, the altar, and the gift on the altar, etc. (**Matt 23:16-23**), we tend to stress “Godward” actions over “manward” actions ...and, often, even “Godward” INTENTIONS over “Godward” ACTIONS. Instead of realizing that there is an inseparable connection between “faith and works”, “love and obedience”, etc., we look for divine approval at the point of the mental consent (faith), BEFORE (and sometimes WITHOUT) the corresponding act (obedience) which grows out of it; we expect that the mere INTENTION to do God’s will stands for the obligation to actually COMPLY with it.

There is no such confusion or hair-splitting from God’s point of view! He has made it clear that He will only accept a life that contains both the intention and the response. In **Luke 6:46**, He says, “why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?” He does not say that this is to show MAN that he accepts Jesus as Lord, it is God’s own conclusion.

Thus, saying that Jesus is Lord is not enough! Only in responding to His Lordship by obeying Him can we truly recognize Him as Lord. Or, “loving” God apart from strict compliance with His demands is not acceptable. As He says in **1 John 5:3**, “This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments”...

In the same way, when it comes to our duty toward our fellow men, we cannot separate such obligation from serving God. Loving man is an expression of loving God! (**1 John 4:11-12, 20**)

Just so, when it comes to “serving” God and man, there is a connection. In **Matt 25:31-46**, Christ equates helping needy men with serving Him (“Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me..”) When servants serve their fleshly masters, they serve Christ (**Col 3:22-24**); Wives are to submit to their husbands, “as unto the Lord..” (**Eph 5:22**) Friend, there is absolutely no way we can love or serve God in a way He will accept without showing it in our actions toward our fellow men—THERE IS A CONNECTION!



Sunday 5:15
Kid’s Class at the Building

Sick			
Richard Wood (Melanie Smith's Uncle)	Eli Williams (Friend of Sarah Norman)	Frank Hand (Laura Humphrey's dad)	Sandlyn Fultz (Davis Fultz's Sister)
Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson (Toni Herd's Sisters)	Don Lanier (Father of Greg Lanier)	Johnny Welsh (Debbi Coleman's Cousin)	Stephen Freeman (Phillip Box's Friend)
Virginia Crawford (Hunter's Sister-In-Law)	Neal May (Manna Jones' Mother)	Easton Alexander (Phillip Box's cousin's baby)	Andrew Hagewood (Friend of Sarah Norman)
Gaylord Huffman (Jennifer Daniel's Grandfather)	Quinton Addison (April Jerkins Grandfather)	Betty Bradford	Arline Harkrider (Nichole Pender's Grandmother)
Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father)	Dave Brown (Friend of the Lanier's)	Dale Herd (William Herd's brother)	Carl Alexander (Hannah Alexander's Uncle)
Marty and Aubrey Meeks, Russell Dickerson (Toni Herd's Nephews)	Melissa Walker (Chuck Hahn's Cousin)	Roger Whatley (Daphne Whatley's son)	Marion Vanhal (Paula Davis' Uncle)

- May Birthdays
- 1 - Barrett Gilbert
 - 2 - Emily Anne Rouse
 - 3 - Paula Davis
 - 10 - Ian Norman
 - 11 - Caleb George
 - 11 - Scott Perkins
 - 12 - Daphne Whatley
 - 13 - Jana Hall
 - 13 - Anna Grace Long
 - 15 - Bryce Daniels
 - 15 - Kerri Pender
 - 16 - Shawna Harris
 - 19 - Madison Seals
 - 24 - Andy Roberts
 - 25 - Chuck Hahn
 - 26 - Fallon Hartsell
 - 28 - Candy Long
 - 29 - Rebekah Buchanon

News and Notes

- Our VBS will be on June 18-21. Be sure to have the registration forms for children attending to be turned in by May 18.
- Let us remember David Hartsell and his family in our prayers. He is making progress in his recovery!
- Let us remember our expectant mothers in our prayers, Candy Long and Terria Burton.
- We have printed VBS postcards in the foyer for you to use to invite others!
- Remember Greg Lanier’s father, Don Lanier, in prayers as he continues to receive chemo treatments.
- We extend sympathy to Mary Ann Roberts in the loss of her step sister on Wednesday.

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Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (**Matthew 5:16**)

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Thoughts to Ponder

Faith is the Christian's foundation, hope is his anchor, death is his harbor, Christ is his pilot, and heaven is his country.

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SCHEDULE OF SERVICES
Sunday
Bible Class9:30 AM
Worship10:20 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM
Wednesday
Bible Classes.....7:00 PM
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Larry Rouse
Evangelist and Editor

Is the New Testament a Law?
By Jonathan Perz

The Bible is undeniably divided into two key sections — the Old Testament and the New Testament. This division is described in the Bible in a variety of different ways, some literally and some figuratively. One such contrast is seen when the Bible refers to the Old Testament as the “Law of Moses” (**cf. John 7:23, et al**) and the New Testament as the “Law of Christ” (**cf. Gal. 6:2**).

For many, considering the idea of the New Testament as “a law” is a challenge. Such terminology flies in the face of those who prefer to view the New Testament as more of a history, or a set of guidelines and principles, and not as a binding law or set of obligations to be adhered to and followed. This idea is so abhorrent to some that those who would consider any of the New Testament as a law are often derided as “legalists.”

Therefore, we ask the question, is the New Testament a divine law given by the Lord that must be followed and obeyed?

I firmly believe that the New Testament should be viewed of as a law, with precedents and evidence that clearly must be adhered to. It may also be considered a history. There are clearly principles taught in it. It is

Yet clearly, it is a law unto those who would follow Christ (**Christians – Acts 11:26**), as the words of Moses were a law unto the Jews. This is not based on any subjective reasoning, but quite simply, the straightforward declarations of inspired men (**cf. 1 Pet. 4:11**).

also a set of doctrines. Yet clearly, it is a law unto those who would follow Christ (**Christians – Acts 11:26**), as the words of Moses were a law unto the Jews. This is not based on any subjective reasoning, but quite simply, the straightforward declarations of inspired men (**cf. 1 Pet. 4:11**).

To the brethren in Galatia, Paul wrote, “Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ” (**Gal. 6:2**). Whether this is in reference to a singular instruction of Christ or the whole of Christ’s instructions, it still refers to it as “the law” of Christ. Law comes from the Greek word nomos, which is used to refer to both the body of Christ’s

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teaching, general law and Moses' law. Even Christ Himself used this word to refer to the Old Covenant (particularly Moses' teaching—see **Matt. 5:17-18**). This tells us that context is critical to discerning what "law" is referenced in any given passage. We must discern which law a passage has in mind before drawing any conclusions from that passage, lest we wrongly divide the word of truth (**2 Tim. 2:15**). Paul's words to the brethren in Galatia also tell us that the Holy Spirit, through the inspired writers, thought of Christ's teaching as a law.

Much has been said to deny the existence of keeping a law from the book of Romans, however Paul also referred to Christ's doctrine as a law in and of itself within that body of writing. Contrasting the law of Moses with Christ's law, he wrote, "There is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death." (**Rom. 8:1-2**). Paul refers to Christ's doctrine as "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" and contrasts it from "the law of sin and death." Again, the Greek word translated law here is *nomos* and clearly has the New Testament in view.

Again, in contrasting the keeping of the law of Moses with Christ's teachings, Paul asks the rhetorical question, "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith?" (**Rom. 3:27**). What "law" does he have in view as he refers to "the law of faith" if not the "law of Christ" he referred to in other places?

James uses another term to describe Christ's doctrine, in contrast to the law of Moses. He writes, "If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you do well; but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. For He who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. So speak and

so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty." (**Jas. 2:8-12**). Observe that James referred to Christ's teaching as "the law of liberty" ... a reference he used earlier, reminding us to look into "the perfect law of liberty" and continue in it (**Jas. 1:25**). Not only does James refer to it as a law, he tells us we will be judged by it. Jesus Himself said, "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day" (**John 12:48**).

Writing to the brethren in Corinth, Paul said, "For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win the Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law: to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law; to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with you" (**1 Cor. 9:19-23**). Observe Paul's parenthetical aside where he plainly declares he is "under law toward Christ." What law does he have in reference? What law is he "under" if not Christ's law?

Time and again, the body of writing and teaching known as the New Testament is referred to as many things. Among those things, it is by inspiration referred to as a law. As being part of "all scripture," it is profitable for doctrine and instruction in righteousness, among other things (**2 Tim. 3:16-17**). To ignore the lawful, legal and binding aspects of Christ's covenant is one and the same as accepting Jesus as your Savior, but ignoring Him as your Lord. The two simply go hand-in-hand. If there was no law today, there would be no sin (**1 John 3:4**). So be careful to not merely view Christ's teaching as a set of guidelines, principles and mantras, but acknowledge it as the apostles and first century saints did — as the law that every citizen in the Kingdom of Heaven must obey. Let us be careful to rightly divide every passage that references the law, to be certain that we have the correct law in view as we understand what we are to follow and what we do not have to follow.



I am the True Vine

By G. K. Wallace

Isaiah used the vine as a type of Israel, planted and tended by the Almighty as the husbandman. (**Isa. 5:1**) Israel was not the true vine. Christ is the true vine. (**Jn 15:1**) In **John 14** the Lord had just said to the disciples, "Arise, let us go hence." He had just eaten the last supper with the apostles. He said that he would not drink of the fruit of the vine again on this earth. Likely on the table from which they had just risen was the fruit of the vine. And now he says, "I am the true vine."

In the first eight verses of **John 15** we find the following outstanding lessons about the vine and the branches.

1. That morality alone cannot save.
2. That there is but one true church.
3. That we should get in Christ, stay in Christ, and stay out of everything else or be lost.

Jesus said, "Apart from me you can do nothing." Morality alone cannot save. Men can be morally good apart from Christ. Yet apart from Christ they can do nothing. There is no spiritual life apart from Christ. Cornelius was a moral man apart from Christ but he was unsaved. (**Acts 11:14**) If morality alone can save then Jesus died in vain. There were just as good men morally to be found in the Mosaic age as there are now. If a man can be saved by his own goodness then Jesus died for no purpose at all. Why did he die if they could be saved by their own goodness? Let the moral man remember these words, "Apart from me you can do nothing." There is no spiritual life apart from Jesus Christ, the true vine.

Thus we see that one must get into Christ to be saved. Paul says that we are baptized into Christ. That makes baptism necessary to salvation in Christ Jesus. You cannot do anything apart from Christ but you can't get into Christ unless you are baptized. (**Gal. 3:27**.)

This "true vine" is the true church. The vine is the spiritual body of Christ. The church is His body. (**Col. 1:18**.) There is one body. (**Eph. 4:4**.) There is but one body. (**1 Cor. 12:20**.) Paul does not say "churches" but "the church." If one desires to be united with Christ let him obey the gospel and thus be added to the "one body," the church, the "true vine."

The objector says that Christ is the true vine and all the denominations are branches. Christ said, "I" am the vine and "ye" are the branches. "He" that abideth in me. Note the use of the personal pronoun. Do men refer to churches as "he" and "ye"? Is that the way they talk where you live? Is that the way your preacher talks? Would you say about the Baptist Church—he is a large church? The use of the

personal pronoun shows that Christ was talking to his disciples and not to "churches." Individuals are the branches and not organizations. But just suppose for a minute that the branches are churches. In what branch are you? You say that I am in the Baptist branch. Yes, but wait, Christ said abide in "me." You should not abide in a branch but in the vine. If you are in a branch you ought to get out of it and get in the vine. Get out of the branch and get in the vine. "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." Abide in the vine or be burned. Do not abide in a branch. You cannot abide in a branch. A branch is a disciple or a Christian. Individuals are the branches and not denominations.

Did God set denominations in the vine? If so, which ones did He put in? If God set denominations in the vine it is strange that He never said anything about it. If He did mention them will someone please tell where?

For one to claim that denominations are the branches is an apology for something they know that is not mentioned in the Bible and a rank perversion of the fifteenth chapter of John. Denominations came into existence hundreds of years after Christ. They are of human origin and no one has a Bible right to belong to any of them.

The "true vine," the church, was established by Christ and all Christians are members of it. (**Jn 3:5**.) The church is God's house. God's house is His family. (**1 Tim. 3:15**.) God has no children outside of His family.

From this chapter we learn that we must bear fruit to please God. "Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit; and so shall ye be my disciples." You cannot bear fruit apart from the vine. To bear fruit you must be in the vine. How does one get in the vine? He must believe. (**Mk. 16:15-16**.) He must repent. (**Acts 2:38**.) He must be baptized. (**Gal. 3:27**.) These steps put one into Christ. Yet it is not enough to get into Christ. In Christ the branch must bear good fruit. The fruitless branch (disciple) will be lost. He will be cast forth and be burned. (**Jn 15:6**.) Our duty in regard to this is clear. We must get in Christ, stay in Christ, and stay out of everything else.

Someone may ask, "Can a man be saved and go to heaven and stay out of the vine?" No, for Christ says, "Apart from me you can do nothing." It is Christ or nothing. It is the true vine or no vine. It is the true church or no church. Christ here teaches that you cannot be saved out of the church and you cannot be saved unless you stay in the church.—**Bible Banner, 1942**

