

# CONFUSION AND REJECTION

“.....because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me.....”

Hosea 4:6

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When having a conversation with a former minister of the WCG, [him doing most of the talking], it did not mean that I agreed with all that he said, but I noticed that he no longer has God’s spirit, so arguing with him would only lengthen his stay. They are now “born again” Christians and believes he will go to heaven when he dies. He said that to absorb the new truth, he followed the advice to forget all that Mr. Armstrong taught. He said that keeping the Sabbath is indeed a burden. He added that the coming of Christ makes obsolete the keeping of the commandments citing Galatians 3:24, “Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.” When they said good-bye, he thought that I was convinced.

It would seem that my former minister had confused Law and Grace. As a preaching elder he should have mastered this doctrine, or he really forgot everything he had learned. He should have remembered that God gave man His law because of love. God is love (1John 4:8). I presume this is understood by all who read this article. Remember the definition of Grace: receiving what we don’t deserve. Mercy: not receiving what we do deserve. The Bible is the ultimate source of spiritual definitions!

God is much more than mere feeling— much more than a warm, fuzzy idea. God has lived forever (Psalm 93:2), is all powerful (Psalm 147:5), has the greatest mind (Isaiah 55:8 1Corinthians 2:16) and loves mankind (John 3:16). Our mind can’t grasp how great He is!

The problem of man is that he had acquired a natural hostility to God! From the very first human in the Garden of Eden to the more than 7 billions alive today, not a single one naturally desires to surrender his or her life to the God of love. God wants you and me to be happy, to have a zestful, fulfilling life and be able to share with others — that’s love (John 10:10, 3 John 2). To direct us toward this way that leads to happiness, God defines love: “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments” (1John 5:3).

When asked what the greatest of the Ten Commandments were, Jesus Christ boiled them down to their two basic essentials: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind,’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:37-39).

Consider this: The first four commandments revealed in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5, show us how to love God. The last six reveal the way we are to love our neighbor. But how does the natural, unconverted mind view this? “The mind that is set on the flesh [material, physical things] is hostile to God!

Sin does not submit to God’s law, indeed it cannot; and those who are in the flesh cannot please God” (Romans 8:7-8, Revised Standard Version). Man in his natural state wants little to do with God. And since God is love, man unwittingly rejects the true love that would bring happiness.

The importance of the Commandments shows God's way of life as expressed in 10 summary points called the Ten Commandments — a living force. When you break these points, there is a penalty. Physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually, you and others suffer. But man says: "I don't want to obey God's law. I reject it. I make my own rules!" So men and women by the millions suffer needlessly.

God, of course, does have the power to stop man from going the way of sin. But that is exactly what man doesn't want God to do! And God, as part of an ongoing plan, has allowed man 6,000 years to make his own decisions, to experience firsthand the pain and suffering that result from following man's own imperfect way.

The penalty for not going God's way is not just physical suffering, but "death" (Romans 6:23). But how does this concern us? Unless we obey God's law we are a walking dead person, even as we read this article! We have no claim to eternal life. We may think we have not broken any of the Ten Commandments, but we have. "For all [including you and me] have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

As a sinner— a transgressor of the law— we have come "under the law," that is, subject to its penalty: death. For breaking the Ten Commandments, we are now subject to what the Bible calls "the curse of the law" (Galatians 3:13). We have no hope of eternal life.

But there's good news. Someone has paid the penalty in our stead. Our very Creator, in our place, has paid the penalty of our transgressions of God's law. God created all things by Jesus Christ (Ephesians 3:9). As the Creator of the human race, Jesus Christ died to become the ultimate sacrifice for sin.

But we still have to seriously acknowledge this sacrifice. We cannot casually accept the body and blood of Christ as atonement for our past sins. One has to be sure he had properly obeyed God's command to Moses that we keep the Passover on the right 14<sup>th</sup> day of Abib. God wants, first, to see a change of attitude from hostility to submission in obedience! "Repent and let everyone of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38).

To repent means to change our life. Instead of going our own way (which is actually the way of Satan) we must begin to obey God — to love God by keeping His commandments (1John 5:3). But we not only have to repent, we must believe God (Mark 1:15). We must believe what He says — and that means to believe the message He sent by Jesus Christ — the good news (gospel means "good news") of the soon – coming Kingdom of God. This is followed by immersion in water (baptism), which is physical proof of our inward faith in Jesus Christ. Upon baptism, we officially begin the way toward salvation.

My former minister erred in saying that we are saved by grace alone. In accepting Jesus Christ as our Savior, we come under unmerited grace. Our previous record of sins is forgiven. Our past sins are totally covered by the blood of Christ's sacrifice (Hebrews 9:12, 14), forgotten forever.

Upon receipt of God's Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38, Romans 8:9), we become an heir (not yet an inheritor) of the Kingdom of God. We are now a begotten son or daughter of God. But this does not mean that God's laws are no longer in force. No! We are saved from past sins by grace (Ephesians 2:8)— something we cannot ourselves earn. But we must now, in a repentant state of mind, begin to keep all the commandments, lest we again come under the death penalty! Notice: "Being justified [that is, forgiven of past sins] freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.....because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed" (Romans 3:24-25).

We cannot earn forgiveness. That comes from grace – free, unmerited pardon – from God. Grace covers our past sins. We are justified by faith (verse 28). But the law that defines sin – that makes plain right from wrong — retain its power of life and death over us! This is not hard to understand and remember!

Consider: "Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish [Greek: continue] the law" (verse 31). The law defines sin. It cannot forgive sins. Only Christ can do that. But once we are forgiven of sin — forgiven of having broken the law — we are expected to quit sinning, to begin keeping the law. "For not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be

justified” (Romans 2:13).

So now it all fits into place,. After we have been converted and have accepted Christ’s sacrifice, our past sins are forgiven and we no longer are cut off from God (Romans 5:10). Receiving His Holy Spirit, our minds are renewed and we begin to become more like Him (Ephesians 4:23), imbued with the spirit of love, joy, patience, peace.

Yet we occasionally stumble and break God’s law. As we see the sin in us (James 1:23-25), we are to immediately repent and ask that Christ’s sacrifice be applied to us upon repentance and prayer for forgiveness (Matthew 6:12), our sins are forgiven. Remember, grace is not license to freely break God’s law (Romans 6:15).

As a bona fide Christian keeping God’s law, we grow in spiritual maturity. Understand, though this is not of our own strength alone, but Jesus Christ living in us through the Holy Spirit– imbuing us with power to fulfill His law.

As Paul aptly stated, “I have been crucified with Christ [that is, in baptism]; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me” (Galatians 2:20).

As we grow by following the holy and spiritual law of God (Romans 7:12, 14), our hostile nature is gradually replaced by the mind of Christ (Philippians 2:5). We find ourselves filled with divine love — concerned about our fellow-man, wanting the best for others, striving to serve, filled with proper humility. It doesn’t happen all at once. It is a lifelong process of moving from a carnal beginning to a goal of complete conversion. The Ten Commandments guide us to the very righteousness of God that is in Jesus Christ (Psalm 119:172).

We should pray for forgiveness for those doing away with God’s law. It is not obsolete! The ‘new truth’ being practiced by those who say the law is done away–is not actually new. This is the teaching that we left behind before being called into God’s truth.

“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children” (Hosea 4:6). This is GOD speaking. 📖

The late– Sotero Sonza