

Law Righteousness and Faith Righteousness

*“The promise, that
he should be the
heir of the world,
was not to
Abraham, or to his
seed, through the
law, but through
the righteousness
of faith.”
—Romans 4:13*

CONSECRATED BELIEVERS

during this Gospel Age are not developed under a Law Covenant—neither the old Mosaic Law Covenant, nor the promised New Covenant. Nevertheless, these footstep followers of Christ are being measured by God’s divine law standard. As the Apostle Paul

says, “That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”—Rom. 8:4

The Jews under the Law Covenant were unable to be justified—that is, made righteous—because they could not keep the letter of that law. Additionally, Moses, the mediator of the Law Covenant, had no

merit or grace to contribute to the people which would excuse them from the letter of the law and make the spirit of that law available for their justification.

The New Covenant, like the old one, will require obedience to the letter of the law of God, and not merely to its spirit. For this reason, we may refer to it as the New “Law” Covenant. The rule of that covenant will be consistent with the old: “The man which doeth those things shall live by them.”—Rom. 10:5

What advantage will accrue under the New Covenant beyond that which the Jews enjoyed under the Mosaic Law Covenant? We answer that the New Covenant will be a “better covenant” because of its superior Mediator—Christ, together with his faithful footstep followers of the present age. This Mediator will have the authority during the Messianic kingdom to instruct, chasten, reward, assist, and uplift all who will be obedient. By the close of this kingdom, all who desire eternal life, and who love righteousness, will have been brought up to full perfection, mentally, morally, and physically. Adam enjoyed this condition, but lost it through sin. Christ redeemed Adam and his race by the sacrifice of himself. Thus, his “blood of sprinkling . . . speaketh better things” to come than was possible under the arrangement in which the “blood of bulls and goats” was shed.—Heb. 8:6; 12:24; 10:4

At the conclusion of the mediatorial work of the kingdom, Christ will deliver “up the kingdom to God, even the Father,” and the world of mankind will be turned over to his jurisdiction. (I Cor. 15:24)

They will be delivered up perfect, as Adam was before he sinned, plus having had the experience received through the reign of evil, and subsequently the reign of righteousness, they will then fully “know good and evil.”—Gen. 3:22

Under the New Covenant arrangement of the Messianic Age, Christ will stand—or mediate—“between God and men,” having the ability to cancel the sins that are past, to take away man’s “stony heart,” and by a restitution process give him a “heart of flesh.” (I Tim. 2:4-6; Ezek. 11:19,20) As part of this process, Christ will instruct and educate mankind to the point where they can, if they will, keep God’s divine law perfectly, both in letter and in spirit. Isaiah prophesied of this time, when “the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.”—Isa. 26:9

God’s purpose for man’s ultimate instruction and blessing under the “better” New Covenant has been lost sight of by most professed Christians. The Scriptures reveal that the object of the present Gospel Age is not the conversion of the world, but the selection and development of a “little flock” to be associated with Christ as the future Mediator of the New Covenant. (Luke 12:32) This Bible truth became obscured not long after the death of the Apostles, and the teaching of a future age for the blessing of Israel and the world was abandoned.

OUR COVENANT IS DIFFERENT

As prospective members of the aforementioned “little flock,” we are under the Abrahamic Covenant. Under this arrangement, we are being developed as part of the Christ, Abraham’s “seed,” which

was typified by Isaac, the seed long-promised to Abraham and Sarah. (Gal. 3:16,29; 4:28) The Abrahamic Covenant had no law provision, and no mediator. It was made with one who believed God, who was reckoned as righteous by his faith, and his demonstration of that faith by obedient works to the extent of his ability. To faithful Abraham, God gave the great promise, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 22:18) This was the Covenant promise to which was added the "oath for confirmation." It is our "strong consolation" and "anchor of the soul," because we have become united to Christ as his members—members of the spiritual seed of Abraham. (Heb. 6:13-19) It is this "seed" which is to bless Israel and the world by the New Covenant in the Messianic kingdom.

Christ is now accepting us, not under the Law, but "under grace," on the condition of faith and obedience to the extent of our ability. (Rom. 6:14) The righteousness of the Law is counted as fulfilled as we walk after the spirit of the law, because we thus give evidence that if we had perfect ability, we would keep God's law perfectly. In addition, we have entered into a covenant "by sacrifice" as respects our earthly nature, and to be copies of our Redeemer to the extent of our ability—in heart, in will, and so far as possible, in deed.—Ps. 50:5

After our testing, if we are found "faithful unto death," God will accept us fully and grant us a "crown of life" like unto our Redeemer's. (Rev. 2:10) The Christ class, head and body members, will be the spiritual seed of Abraham, the great Mediator,

Priest, King, and Judge of mankind. During the Messianic Age, under the New Covenant, which has already been “made a surety,” Christ shall establish righteousness in the earth, and lift up the willing and obedient of humanity out of sin, degradation, and death, to harmony with God and everlasting life.

Under what Covenant are we presently, as the “little flock,” or “seed” class, justified or made righteous in God’s sight? Our justification, like that of Abraham, is by faith, not by a covenant of laws. Paul wrote, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. . . . Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.”—Rom. 4:3,23-25

In verses 9-13 of this same passage, Paul points out that Abraham was not justified because he kept specific laws, such as circumcision. Rather, he was justified by faith and reckoned righteous before he was given the “sign of circumcision.” Likewise, he was not justified by the Covenant made with him, but the Covenant was made with him because of his faith, and his justification through faith. Therefore, it is also so with all of us who are counted as Abraham’s seed. “Being justified by faith,” we are granted the privilege of becoming “dead with Christ,” as “members of his body”—the spiritual seed of Abraham, whose “circumcision is that of the heart.”—Rom. 5:1,2; 6:8; Eph. 5:30; Gal. 3:29; Rom. 2:29 ■