

WHAT FOLLOWS THE GOSPEL?

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INTRODUCTION.

When people first become Christians, it is not long before many have questions about whether or not any part of the Old Testament Law of God has any place in their new life. Whilst they are told an interpretation of, "We are not under Law, but under Grace", they know at the same time they cannot steal, lie or murder, all of which are against parts of God's Law. Ask these same people twenty years later about this matter, and find there has been absolutely no lessening of confusion over the twenty-year period. The tender conscience of first love has become hardened over this period, and in many aspects of practical living there is little obvious difference in the way they live from that of their "unsaved" neighbours, especially in economic decisions, financial applications of borrowing and lending, political decisions and involvement, property responsibilities, criminal law, inheritance laws, health requirements, duties in regard to government. Even the area of pre-marital sex, divorce and adultery there is often little difference that can be seen. In remaining untaught as to what follows on from the Gospel, denominational Christians often become, "*spotted by the flesh*"-[Jude 23], through the superficial doctrine that has been presented to them. The great thing both the supposedly "saved" and the "unsaved" have in common is denial, or ignorance, of the Law of God. In this both are humanistic.

This paper is an effort to give some understanding as to how and when God's Law has place in a Christians life, which life is pictured as being a journey, or what Jesus terms a "way". This is only one of several pictures that could be painted.

Look at this illustration. If a car restorer selects a damaged vehicle for restoration, the damaged car must first be paid for in full. This is a picture of the payment Jesus made to redeem His people. Being paid for, or "*bought with a price*", as a wreck does not complete the restoration of a car. The Purchaser has to do a lot of restoration work on that car, and it may take a long time before the work is finished. Jesus has paid the price for us as damaged vehicles, and thus has "saved" us from being totally scrapped. But being "saved" does not immediately make us fully restored. This is why the, "Once saved, saved for ever" doctrine is totally deficient and blinds understanding in the way it is presented. Churches infer by doctrine that the restoration work is optional. We remain "saved" only whilst remaining "*in Christ Jesus our Lord*", a safe place along the "way" where nothing can then separate us from the love of God.- (Rom. 8:29).

This picture is what follows through the Bible. It is about a journey by God's chosen people, the Israelites, which parallels a car's rescue from the scrap heap. It is a pictured in the journey of the Israelites after being "saved" from slavery, and their subsequent journey to the Promised Land, by which time the work of restoration could have been completed. We read of judgement upon the Israelites for not working in with the Restorer and of them being "cast off"- (Rom.11:22), and even being denied further restoration (perishing in the wilderness). We are told something about the tools used in this work in the fourth chapter of the Book of Ephesians. But if these tools are not available, or are not being allowed, there can be little progress along the "way". Failure to consider this progression is the cause of many misunderstandings people have about the application of certain passages of the Bible, especially in regard to the application or non-application of God's Law. The starting point of the Christian journey is believing the "Gospel", and each person is designed to continue from that point "unto perfection"- [Heb. 6:1]. But like most of the Israelites who perished in the wilderness, many never "arrive" at the designed end.

THE "GOSPEL".

There are 306 references to "gospel" in the New Testament, the prime message being about the "Kingdom of Heaven" (over Israelites), and "The Kingdom of God" (God's sphere of authority over everything). The "Kingdom" is not the aspect that this paper is addressing. Galatians 1:9 speaks about "any other gospel" where "other" = *para* (or alongside). This runs parallel to the true gospel and thus looks something the same. Because of this one person may question whether or not another person believes the same Gospel as he does.

Both people may say they both believe what is often described as "the Gospel of the free Grace of God", and indeed they may both start there. But they diverge on what follows on from that. How?

One group considers the Gospel to be both the beginning and the end without having to start on a journey. They are led to believe that they have arrived, that all responsibility has been taken out of their hands, and that, "God still loves you unconditionally no matter what you do". This group does not believe that the following can happen, "*The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire*" -[2 Peter 2:22]. These are the pathetic sugar-puff members of popular churches, who

follow entertainment, the latest trends in 'pop Christianity', fads such as WWJD, 'Christian Rock', the prosperity purveyors, and excitement mongers such as Benny Hinn. Those who specialise in just one emphasis fall in this group also, as do all the many Pastors who regularly view pornography.

The other group believes, "*Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it*" - [Matt. 7:14]- that is, they believe that the Gospel is the beginning of a pathway that can end in eternal life. These are the real seekers.

We can easily see whether the first group have "arrived" or not in the following verses.

John 8:31, "*If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed*".

1 Peter 1:9 "*Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls*".

In the latter verse, "end" = *telos*, or the final point. Jesus said, "*I am the way*" (John 14:6), where "the way" = *hodos*, which is about travelling from one place to another destination. Jesus said, "*I am the door*" as the entrance to the "way" that leads = *apago* (an active-present verb) unto "life" = *zoe*.

This word "way" is still "hodos" in:

Heb. 10:19-20 *Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;*

Then this passage carries on to tell us how to travel in practical terms. So with all the references to "way", it cannot be escaped that being a believer in Jesus starts at the beginning of a journey, and then continues by walking along a certain "way". Now we are not looking at specifics here at this time, but at the active principles that apply. We can do this through the analogy of marriage that there is to follow through the Bible. This "way" proceeds from being single, entering through the door, the journey, betrothal, and thence to marriage. God's special relationship with the Israelites presents us with this picture.

HOW DOES ONE BECOME "MARRIED"?

Speaking from the male point of view, as the Bible does, a single man cannot become married just by living as a married person does. He has to make a vow or confession before witnesses that he is going to "*take this woman to be my lawful wedded wife*". The woman then responds with a similar vow. There is no suggestion of good behaviour first, or of earning this position, on the part of the wife-to-be. It is entirely dependent upon the grace of the husband and his love for her.

Likewise, when there is a confession of Jesus as Saviour, there is no requirement to have first obeyed God's Laws. We start in a state of complete and utter hopelessness and dependence upon God. So our first step, or entry point, is our confession of faith in Jesus' sacrifice. Then come other "steps" along the "way" that "leads" to eternal life.

Betrothment and marriage properly are a response to love. When in love, it is no problem to say, "*I promise to obey*" on the woman's part. That is the commitment she makes biblically to a man who loves her enough to die for her. But without such love, no woman can say or do that. Likewise if we try to keep God's commandments without loving Him for His grace and mercy, we just cannot do it. This is what the meaning of "the letter" is...it kills...it is covering ourselves with filthy rags. It is a false (horrible) religion that says we have to be trying to earn "salvation" by keeping the Law. Such a marriage could not last. Why? It is because there is no love involved.

We can now look at the picture we see in Ezekiel 16, where God sought out His bride even when she was filthy and covered in blood.

And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live. I have caused thee to multiply as the bud of the field, and thou hast increased and waxen great, and thou art come to excellent ornaments: thy breasts are fashioned, and thine hair is grown, whereas thou wast naked and bare. Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I sware unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest mine. Then washed I thee with water; yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil. I clothed thee also with broidered work, and shod thee with badgers' skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk. I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain on thy neck. And I put a jewel on thy forehead, and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head. Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver; and thy raiment was

of fine linen, and silk, and broidered work; thou didst eat fine flour, and honey, and oil: and thou wast exceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper into a kingdom. And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for it was perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord GOD.

There is no suggestion that the bride was washed because she was keeping any of God's laws. Likewise we can never become washed first through keeping the Law. God requires a cleansed and purified wife first, and she is dependent on God who does the cleansing.

After marriage the wife has two options. Firstly she can respond to the One who loved, washed and clothed her, and keep her commitment vows, or she can break her vows. She can stay clean by "walking in the light".

1 John 1:7 *But if we walk in the light as He is in the light...and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin.*

There is this "if" condition about keeping clean. In God's plan we can see there is an object that she should take the wedding vows, and then following by keeping that promise to love and obey.

But on the other hand the bride can "do her own thing", and break her vows. From verse 15 of this chapter, this is what the Israelites did in playing the harlot. They (as the wife) broke the covenant. Then The Husband responds as in verse 35 on:

Wherefore, O harlot, hear the word of the LORD: Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thy filthiness was poured out, and thy nakedness discovered through thy whoredoms with thy lovers, and with all the idols of thy abominations, and by the blood of thy children, which thou didst give unto them; Behold, therefore I will gather all thy lovers, with whom thou hast taken pleasure, and all them that thou hast loved, with all them that thou hast hated; I will even gather them round about against thee, and will discover thy nakedness unto them, that they may see all thy nakedness. And I will judge thee, as women that break wedlock and shed blood are judged; and I will give thee blood in fury and jealousy. And I will also give thee into their hand, and they shall throw down thine eminent place, and shall break down thy high places: they shall strip thee also of thy clothes, and shall take thy fair jewels, and leave thee naked and bare. They shall also bring up a company against thee, and they shall stone thee with stones, and thrust thee through with their swords. And they shall burn thine houses with fire, and execute judgments upon thee in the sight of many women: and I will cause thee to cease from playing the harlot, and thou also shalt give no hire any more. So will I make my fury toward thee to rest, and my jealousy shall depart from thee, and I will be quiet, and will be no more angry. Because thou hast not remembered the days of thy youth, but hast fretted me in all these things; behold, therefore I also will recompense thy way upon thine head, saith the Lord GOD: and thou shalt not commit this lewdness above all thine abominations.

When God "married" Israel, what did God require of Israel? We have an abundance of references about the consequences of Israel's disobedience and deliberate wilful vow-breaking....it finished in divorce for ten of the Israelite Tribes.

But then all hope is not lost for the bride. This is the story we find in the book of Hosea where we read about divorce and remarriage to a cleansed wife who becomes "accepted in the beloved". It is also the story of the Gospel that leads ultimately to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb of God.

In all this we told that the moral laws continue, not as a means of having sins forgiven, but as a response to having been forgiven. Jesus said, "*I and my father are one*", and did not change the Father's moral Laws, saying:

John 14:15, *"If ye love me, keep my commandments"*

John 15:10, *"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".*

The Apostle John says:

2 John 6 *And this is love, that we walk after his commandments.*

Despite what churches say about these commandments being scrapped, Jesus commanded us not even to think this, saying in:

Matt. 5.17, *"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled".*

"Fulfil" carries the meaning of "to fill up", and earth has not passed away yet, has it? Jesus fulfilled the Levitical Law as the One sacrifice. Love is the fulfilment of that Law. But the moral law stays in place.

WHEN DOES “MARRIAGE” TAKE PLACE?

When does “marriage” in the marriage analogy take place? It starts at the time of betrothal -a time of making vows. The marriage supper of the Lamb is yet to come. In the Book of Deuteronomy there are some fifty-odd mentions of the phrase, “*this day*”, as the vow-making day. These are worthy of study. It is at a particular stage of the journey. In the verse below, I have capitalized the phrase, which summarises what is so important here.

Deut. 27:8-10 *And Moses and the priests the Levites spake unto all Israel, saying, Take heed, and hearken, O Israel; THIS DAY THOU ART BECOME THE PEOPLE OF THE LORD THY GOD. Thou shalt therefore obey the voice of the LORD thy God, and do his commandments and his statutes, which I command thee this day.*

Israel had wandered for forty years up to this point, cared for by God yes, BUT ALL THIS TIME THEY ARE NOT CALLED, “THE PEOPLE OF GOD”. Even when betrothed in Exodus 24:9-11 they are not yet termed “The people of God”.

The “*thou shalt therefore obey*” at the time of “this day” brought the issue of the blessings and the cursing of Deuteronomy 28 which were conditional upon obedience or disobedience to the Law, into view. At this time the Israelites made a commitment vow to obey the “commandments, judgements and statutes” part of the total law, and this is when they made the transit to become “*The people of God*”....or they became “betrothed”, we might say using the marriage analogy.

Now most people are wrongly taught to believe that when each person becomes a “Christian”, they become part of the Kingdom of God as “the people of God”, but what they have reserved for them is an “inheritance” -(See Acts 20:32, Eph 1:11, Col. 3:22 and 1 Pet. 1:4). The inheritance is the Kingdom..

Matt. 35:24 *Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you.*

Acts 28:17, *“To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me”.*

When the Israelites left Egypt, they had not yet reached their inheritance. From verses such as Rom.11:21-22, securing the inheritance is a matter of “*continuing in God’s goodness*” - so as not to be “cut off”, or disinherited. So what happened to those Israelites who perished in the wilderness is said in the New Testament to be an example of what can happen to all who start out on the journey.

Heb. 4:1 *“Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it”.*

The word “fear” here = *phobeo*, so we need to be phobic or careful about not arriving at the end of the journey.

God in His great mercy and love “saved” Israel from slavery in Egypt and tenderly cared and provided for them through their journey towards the Promised Land.... no doubt about that. They were “saved” in the correct application of this word, but not in the way popular evangelism presents that word. Just as Israel left Egypt having had faith to believe God about applying the required blood sacrifice, so the New Covenant requires faith and belief in the blood sacrifice of Jesus before starting out on the “way”. But faith and belief in “the old rugged cross” must continue all along the “way”.

But was, and is, being “saved” the beginning or the end? Israel had to journey from Egypt to the inheritance place, and on that journey God in his care and goodness “saved” the Israelites many times. God forgave Israel’s unbelief and disobedience ten times, but then said:

Num.14:22-3 *Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice; Surely they shall not see the land which I sware unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it:*

Thus there came a point in time when the great majority of Israelites, who had at one time been seeing God manifest His power, were barred from entering the promised land because they did not have the faith to believe and obey God as Abraham did-(Gen. 26:5)-“kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws”.

So where does God’s care and goodness lead us to?

Rom. 2:4 *“Not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?*

Here is the word “repentance”. So if we do not stop being lawbreakers, what then? We can only be considered to be unrepentant. The verse goes on to say, “*But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasures up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; Who will render to every man according to his deeds*”.

and,

Rom 11:21 *“Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off”*

This is where we have to, “*work out your own salvation with fear and trembling*”, (which follows on in this passage from, “*as you have always obeyed*”). So we can see there is an obedience factor in this “working out” along the journey.

Now the popular gospel as commonly taught emphasises the great grace of God in the wilderness, but in their law-denying doctrine this keeps people from entering into the potential “married” position. Outside of entering into the “married” state, there is only eventual death in the wilderness. The popular doctrine leads to people being “cut off” by God’s severity, as the Israelites were in the Old Testament pages.

So, when we talk about believing different gospels, in the above discourse it can be seen that the differences are in whether or not we move from the “single” to the “married” state. What is at issue is whether or not we come to make a covenant to obey “the commandments (*mitzvah*), “the judgments (*mishpat*) and the statutes (*choq*)”.

With the Israelites, the Law was not made a condition at the time when they started their journey, nor were they given the Law to obey when they left Egypt. The Israelites were “saved” from their slavery when they applied the sacrificial blood and left Egypt. They did not apply the blood to the doorposts and lintel just to avoid the angel of death and stay in Egypt. They had to have their shoes on ready to leave Egypt in haste for a journey. The “saved” Israelites did not immediately arrive either Mt. Sinai, or at the border of the Promised Land, the latter being the time of “this day” as mentioned earlier. They had to journey on to Mt. Sinai where they became betrothed to God. The marriage comes later.

The teaching that law keeping is not the entry point is quite right. It is “*not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us*”. No argument with that! But it is wrong to teach that we should tarry forever in the wilderness, never mind how much God looks after us there (for a time). The wilderness is where most Israelites died! And it is where perhaps most people in most churches will die! The denominations may teach and enjoy “coming out”, quite rightly, but in never proceeding further is their error. Churches promote an irresponsibility that precludes “entering in”. Church people are encouraged to be irresponsible by wrong doctrines. This ends in being cut off! Another aspect which is denied is the biblical change of status from being a “child” to becoming a “son”, but that is another subject.

SO, WHAT ABOUT THE “ENTERING IN”?

Heb.4:5 *“And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest. Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief”..... “Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief”*

Fall? Yes! What was required in the wilderness was to follow the cloud when it moved...it led them on a journey to a time called “this day”, as mentioned earlier. There came a later time when there was no cloud to follow. From then it was, “*If ye will obey*”....what were they to obey? It was the *mishpat*, the *mitzvah* and the *choq*. (We will look at the different components of the Law in due course).

So who only can “enter in”? It can only be those who came out. The whole Book of Hebrews is in the context of only this one people. The identity of the wife cannot change from that given through Scripture. It is still the Israelite people. The Law was given only to the Israelites as a covenant. It was Israelites who came out from Egypt. See these New Testament confirmations of who these people still are.

Acts 10:36 *The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ.*

Acts 13:32-33 *And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again.*

The “*us their children*” is the genetic/racial line, and “The children of Israel” does not include foreigners. Israelites alone have the opportunity to “enter in”. So in today’s world, just as there was when the Israelites were in the wilderness, there was a racially mixed multitude. There is the same in the churches today. None of the foreigners could attend the tabernacle in the wilderness, nor could they enter into the Promised Land. So should they enter our assemblies now? The promises made to the Israelites simply were not made to foreigners, and so cannot be fulfilled in them. Judge for yourselves whether or not foreigners should be meeting with Israelites.

CULTURE.

The popular church has developed some weird phrases, such as “*cultural accommodation*”, and “*cultural awareness*” that parallel the secular “*cultural sensitivity*”. Some things are acceptable today church-wise, and some more gross things may be acceptable tomorrow by “Christians”, some of whom are still in their wildernesses, with more having never come through the “door”.

Ancestor worship by many races, praying to the dead and singing, “*How Great Thou Art*”, almost in the same breath.

1. Gaelic French who are frog and snail eaters, worshipping Mary.
2. Samoans where incest is part of their culture, even in churches.
3. Red Indians dancing around totem poles, then singing hymns.
4. Koreans eating dogs, and then praying all night.
5. Cambodians with cruel superstitious medical practises.
6. Chinese serving aborted babies as a dish in restaurants.
7. Caucasian people eating swine’s flesh, even when in the “church”.

What is so wrong with those things?

Deut. 23:18 Thou shalt not bring the hire of a whore, or the price of a dog, into the house of the LORD thy God for any vow: for even both these are abomination unto the LORD thy God.

Is 66:17 They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the midst, eating swine’s flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the LORD.

“Shall be” means “shall be consumed” without exceptions. To try to eliminate the prohibition about eating swine’s flesh by saying, “We are not under the Law” would mean the Book of Isaiah would also have to be eliminated. This is not Isaiah’s only reference. Mixing cultures is like trying to worship God and Baal at the same time. The Roman Catholic Church specialises in this.

Yes, amongst church members are Israelites brought out by God in love and mercy indeed, but progressing no further, never entering in. It is one thing to “come out”, but it is another thing to “enter in”. Non-Israelites can never “enter in”, even if they travel with Israelites.

HOW DOES THE MARRIAGE ANALOGY HELP UNDERSTAND OF NEW TESTAMENT DOCTRINE?

If we were to draw an imaginary vertical line between the single and married positions, we can more easily see how some passages fit the single side, and some fit the married side of the line. Consider the following passage that is one that confuses many people.

Acts 15:24 Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment.

Here we find Paul and Barnabas going out on an evangelical trip to Antioch and Syria and Cilicia. Were they going to the single side of the line, or to the married side? Being an evangelistic mission to the single side, there is no suggestion about first imposing Law keeping. Those who said (and say) there was such necessity are rightly said to be subverting people’s souls. The only restrictions asked for were not to do certain things that might offend the religious beliefs of the hearers. Thus condemning those who were saying, “*Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment*” is absolutely correct on the “single” side of the line. But this in no way suggests there is no place for the Law of God as being applicable to the “married” side of the line.

We find the same position in the 21st chapter of Acts. Here in the 21st verse we can see the signals being wrongly read as is done today, in the words, “*And they are informed of thee*”, where “informed” means that they thought that Paul was falsely “charming” (GR) the hearers to “forsake Moses”. The Judaisers considered acts such as being circumcised or being baptized were the entry points, rather than faith in Jesus’ sacrifice. The heart of man is purified by faith, not by law-keeping or a Law Covenant.

Acts 15:8, "And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith".

Obedience to Law came later. It then gives the following "right".

Rev. 22:14 *Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life,*

And so all the Scriptures which are used to suggest God's Law is invalidated are resolved in a similar way by investigation whether they apply to evangelisation (the "single" side of the line) or to the "married" position.

WHAT IS THE EFFECT OF NOT UNDERSTANDING WHERE GOD'S LAW APPLIES?

Non-Israelites tend towards ethnic churches. God's Law prohibits foreigners ruling over Israelites. Is that not what Korean, Chinese, Negro and other foreign pastors seek to do in our country? So what do their churches have to confine their teaching to? It is about life in the wilderness. They have to avoid the Law of God, because they could not become "married" even if they wanted to. They cannot accept "married" responsibility, and so they make up a doctrine about God's Law being done away with. That also is what most denominations have to do too, because they are racially mixed. The non-Israelite cannot possibly comprehend anything further about the Kingdom of Heaven (over Israelites –Acts 1:6). Why not? Because when speaking to His Israelite disciples, Jesus gave us the reason, "*Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given*". It simply is not given to foreigners to know these mysteries, even if they may benefit by submitting to the moral Law of God.

Maybe some might now get a glimpse of what the present world-wide campaign against racism is about. Only Caucasian people can be attacked as being "racist"! What race is the anointed race that has the bands and cords of the Law of God?

Psalm 2:2, "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us".

Chiefly racist charges are made against people of Caucasian stock; although other white people suffer such attacks. In the United Kingdom, people are encouraged to say they are "British" as a national term, but it is said to be illegal to claim they are "English", as a racial term. The "Kings of the earth" are the authorities of World Government under their Noahite Laws, and their version of "Human Rights".

BACK TO "GRACE AND LAW".

It is popular to hear said that when "saved" we are no longer under the "works of the Law". But the subject here is justification in every one of the verses where this phrase is found-(Rom. 9:32, Gal. 2:14-16, 3:2-10). The record ("handwriting") of past sins (breaking the "ordinances") that was held against us is actively removed. When forgiven we are no longer subject to the wrath that the Law works for having previously transgressed that Law. This in no way hints that God's Law is somehow done away with from that point on in regard to future moral actions.

Differing gospel understandings engage what happens after we are justified purely through the grace and forgiveness of God. As sin is defined as "*the transgression of the Law*", then after justification, in Paul's words, "*Can we continue in sin that grace may abound?*" That is the question. Do we have to repent or not? Does not the word "repent" signify a change of heart from being a law-breaker to become a law-keeper? Do we have to agree with Jesus in, "*Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish*"? That is, there must be a complete change of mind.

Most denominations say in effect that we can continue to transgress the Law after being justified, and Paul says with emphasis that we cannot, "*continue in sin that grace may abound*". That matter of law transgression is the essence of the difference in what people believe about what follows the "Gospel".

BACK TO THE "MARRIAGE" ANALOGY.

Those who know that a wedded woman has promised to obey, what to obey is where people have differing understandings. Here we are all learners, or should be. As long as we hold a wrong stance about loving to obey the One who loves us and died for us, we will never have any understanding. The answer is in the subject and heart attitude as seen through Psalm 119. True, no one can keep the Law perfectly, because we do not know it perfectly. That is why we still need God's mercy, but what happens when we sin wilfully about what we do know?

Heb. 10:26. *For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery*

indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorcer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Has anyone heard this at a church lately - or ever?

What happened to the Israelite people"? Have a good think about Heb. 10:26, and then consider the continuation of the Matthew 5:17 passage above, where Jesus goes on to say:

"Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven".

Those who are meeting with people or churches who "teach men so", need to review their association with those people or churches, even if their teaching of the first part about the grace of God may be right for the "unmarried" person.

The churches today are almost totally lawless, and it must be questioned if they understand the "marriage" commitment implicit in, "Jesus is Lord". Love and faith, love and obedience are always joined together in Scripture. If we separate these, we "miss the bus". As 1 John 2:4 says, "*He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him*". And all such liars will burn, even if they have attended church every Sunday for years!

What God requires is an attitude of living willingness to learn. But it is an individual thing because each person is at a different stage. In this we must avoid group conformity and group control. To learn we need to all have an attitude, and a crying out, as that below from Psalm 119:

Teach me thy statutes. Make me to understand the way of thy precepts: so shall I talk of thy wondrous works. Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end.

"Statutes" are about legal things. Why want to understand? It is so we can please the One who gave Himself for us, that we might walk in newness of His Life.

Churches talk about a strange "Kingdom" where the laws of that Kingdom have no place. The Jehovah Witnesses busy themselves with the reverse – Kingdom Law without Love. Seventh-day Adventists think keeping one day and their own version of dietary laws are more important than all else.

SO WHAT ABOUT ATTITUDES?

Note the references to, "law", "commandments" and "testimony" in the verses below. Note again what the emphasised "and" joins together.

Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law. I have declared my ways, and thou heardest me:

Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight. Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.

And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, AND have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, AND the faith of Jesus. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

The churches in general teach something different. Look through the book of Malachi.... it has much about "but ye say". Nothing changes here overall in the way 'Christians' live, does it? Churches now are mostly "but ye say" institutions, with no understanding of the wedlock concept and what God says about it. That is one reason why nothing "happens".

Yes, there are all sorts of seeming word problems. People bandy words about without knowing what they mean. Can they tell the difference between, "sin", "iniquity" and "transgression"? Do they understand that there is a difference between "salvation" and "redemption", and what applies to whom? Do they have

any idea there are differences between, "commandments", "my charges", "laws", "judgments", "ordinances", "precepts", "testimonies", and "statutes"? These are not synonyms (except where translators have mixed them up). In recording how the Israelites were "saved" when God brought them out from Egypt, gives understanding how the word "saved" and "salvation" should be properly applied. Being "saved" did not mean that Israel had "entered in", did it?

There are probably hundreds of books that have been written on this subject of the Law and Grace, but each of us has to give his own account to God in the end. All of us can only each do what God has shown us individually as we are seeking, and that is what is required of us as learners (disciples). As Isaiah says, "*Seek ye out of the book of the LORD, and read: no one of these shall fail*". There is no "finding" without seeking in a very active way.

But there is a serious consequence if we do not "seek":

Amos 5:4 *Seek the LORD, and ye shall live; lest he break out like fire in the house of Joseph, and devour it, and there be none to quench it.*

Zeph 2:3 *Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD'S anger.*

Matthew 6:33, "*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you*", is considered by churches to be an optional matter that is about obtaining "blessings" or "rewards", rather than one of escaping judgment if they do not do this.

Now we can look at more technical aspects of the "way". In this we will depart from the KJV in places, using more accurate word meanings and translations.

WHAT DOES "RIGHTEOUSNESS EXCEEDING THAT OF THE PHARISEES" MEAN? (ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TO R.K. PHILLIPS OF SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA HERE).

Jesus said that unless our righteousness (that is, our keeping of the Law) exceeds that of the scribes and the Pharisees, we shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of The Heavens.

This word *righteousness* was originally spelt *rightwiseness*, or, as we might put it today, *right-mindedness*. It includes keeping God's Laws, but it is unattainable just by obedience to laws, or by works, or by any other condition than that of complete faith and belief in Jesus Anointed. It can be attained only by that conscious act of both mind and spirit – which is called *faith* and by submitting oneself to its control.

Keeping the Law

In Rom 6:6, Paul speaks of sin as being organised force acting through the members of our body. The seat of sin is in the Will, for which our fleshly body is the organ used for committing it. But the origin of sin is doubt and disbelief of God. Doubt or disbelief comes the Will to disobey, and then the action through the members of our body. Faith and belief is the 'seed of God's Spirit', which is also located in our Will, and acts through the members of our body. And God has given us freedom of Will to choose which one we will follow – as Paul states in Rom 6:16-23.

But when confronted with these facts, Christians usually say, "Oh, we are not under the Law, we are under Grace." Well then, if Christians are free from keeping the Law, does that mean they are at liberty to violate the Law? And to go unpunished when they do? Because this is what Christians are saying and also doing. For the alternative to Law is not Grace, but lawlessness.

If Christians are free to violate the Law because they are under Grace, then this gift of Grace becomes license to sin, for sin is simply violation of the Laws of God – any one of them.

Nowhere in Scripture is it stated that a Christian is free from the need to obey the Law. Now while Paul does state that Christians are not under bondage to the Law (Rom 6:14) we should note that the Law about which Paul is talking is that Levitical Law which was rendered obsolete, by the death of Jesus, along with the Aaronic priesthood that administered it. Paul was not talking about the Law of Deuteronomy, because, in His Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5, 6 & 7) Jesus states, that "*Till Heaven and Earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law till all be fulfilled*" (Matt 5:18).

Therefore, the Law of Deuteronomy must continue on right through the next (Kingdom) Age. For Jesus states (in this Sermon) that those Laws will be the Laws of the Kingdom of God on the earth; and that the position of Christians in that Kingdom will be determined by their attitude to those Laws during this present Age (Matt 5:17-20).

What then does this *exceeding righteousness* mean? Perhaps a modern illustration will clarify this point. Let us suppose that some authority had the power to grant exemption from the financial penalties of the traffic laws to the best one thousand motorists because of their exemplary driving, road courtesy and strict observance of the traffic code. Those one thousand drivers would, in effect, have been given exemption from being fined for breaches of the traffic laws. Having gained this honour, would those drivers then consider themselves free to violate every traffic law in existence and expect to continue to do so with impunity? They most certainly would not; rather would they strive to observe the rules of the road even more carefully lest they lose their honoured position and someone else take their place.

However, should a Christian falter and violate a law, then a physical penalty has to be paid just as any one of those exempted motorists would have to pay in physical suffering, or for the cost of car repairs, if he was involved in any accident which he caused by failure to observe a traffic law. There are no exemptions from the physical consequences of breaking the Law, for either Christian or motorist. But Jesus has offered to act as an Advocate with the Father on behalf of the Christian, to save him from the spiritual consequences of disobedience (eternal death) – provided that Christian is penitent, and strives to go on keeping the Law.

How low has the modern Christian fallen when he claims he is not under bondage to *any* Law? And also that he is free to violate all laws – health, military, marriage and economic – to his heart's content. He even claims, in spite of the evidence to the contrary all around him, that he is also free from the consequences of such disobedience. Not only that, but he quotes, or rather misquotes, every passage of Scripture which seems to support his claims to sin with impunity.

If we do not have to obey the Law, why is it that God states in Jer 31:33 and Hebrews 8:10,11 that He will make a New Covenant and write His Laws in our hearts? What is the point if we do not have to obey them?

Paul states, in Romans 6:14,15 – *Sin shall not have dominion over you for ye are not under the law (in bondage) but under Grace* (free from the Spiritual penalties). *What then? Shall we sin (violate the law) because we are not under the law but under Grace? God forbid.*

In Galatians 2:19 Paul said that he was dead to the Law, and in Galatians 3:19 he said, “*why serve the Law that was added?*” What Law was he talking about? It can't be those that are to be written in our hearts for evermore. The Laws that Paul said he was dead to, and not to serve, were the Levitical Laws which were added at Sinai because of the transgressions of those Commandments, Statutes and laws which Gen 26:5 states that Abraham kept (and would teach his descendants).

The Levitical Law

The faith of Israelites in those Levitical Ordinances, to atone for sin, had their purpose in suspending execution of that sentence of eternal death for those Israelites until the coming of a redeemer who could save them from that fate. Hence, with the crucifixion of Jesus for the Israelite's sins, those Ordinances ceased to have any further function as a means of saving the sinner – even temporarily. Jesus is now our only Saviour and Mediator. Therefore we are dead to, and should no longer serve, those laws that had a temporary reconciling function before the death of Jesus. We must, however, continue to obey the Commandments, the Statutes and the Judgements, for these go on forever. Therefore we must observe the whole book of the Deuteronomic Laws. For Jesus said (Matt 5:19): *Whosoever should relax one of the least of these Commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven.* Jesus was most emphatic about this. Remember His Words ... *Unless your righteousness (your keeping of the Law) exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees ye shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of the Heavens.*

Under Grace

What then did Paul mean by his statement that we (Christians) are *not under the Law, but under Grace*? To be under “The Grace of God” is the end-result of several independent actions, at different times and places, by God, by Jesus, by The Holy Spirit and by those redeemed, all of which eventually blend together to produce that final state. These actions and reactions cannot be understood without a working knowledge of the provisions of God's Law, which had to be met, and of the proper meaning of the terms that are used in Scripture to explain how this end-result was brought about.

The Death Penalty

Heb 9:22 states, unequivocally, that unless a death takes place, there can be no remission of sin. That is God's Law and, because God does not change, His Law must always be fully vindicated. However, God's Law does not require that the death penalty must be inflicted on the sinner himself. Hence, while

Heb.9:22 states that *unless blood is shed ... it does NOT specify the person from whom that blood must flow.* Therefore the fulfilment of this Law could be fully justified, in God's sight, by satisfying two conditions: If a kinsman-redeemer could be found who was willing to shed his blood on behalf of the sinners, and

If God considered the life of that redeemer to be of sufficient value to compensate for the sins committed.

Hence it is not the shedding of blood that is important but the worth of the redeemer who offers to shed it. However, to appreciate the true worth of this aspect of God's Law, we must understand, precisely, what the word *redemption* means, and what it involves.

Redemption -The Greek text uses three different words for this action.

- a. *Exagorazo* which means 'to buy out', particularly in reference to buying freedom for someone in slavery or in bondage;
- b. *Lutrosis* which means redemption in the sense of 'deliverance'; ,
- c. *Apolutrosis* which is a stronger form of the same word and means 'a releasing' (on payment of a ransom).

The first word is used metaphorically in Gal. 3:13 and 4:5, for the deliverance of Israelites from the curse of the Levitical Law. It should be noted here that the Law itself was not a curse. Paul states, in Rom 7:12-14, that the Levitical Law is both holy and spiritual, just and good. The curse was that the Law, by itself, could not save the sinner from eternal death – it could neither justify a sinner nor sanctify a believer. It could only suspend execution of the death sentence, temporarily, until a redeemer might be found. Hence, under the Levitical Law, the sinner was still under bondage to eternal death and needed deliverance from that fate.

The second word also means deliverance, but in the sense of paying a ransom, and is used by Jesus when speaking of Himself (Matt 20:28 and Mark 10:45) as *being a ransom for many*.

The churches quote 1 Tim 2:6 as saying that Jesus gave His life as a *ransom for all men*, but that is not quite correct. The reference is *for all* (Israel), for the Levitical Law was given to Israel only, and only Israelites accepted that Law at Mt Sinai and so were in bondage to death for breaking it. Therefore only Israelites can be delivered from that penalty of eternal death.

But we must take note of an even sharper distinction between the *all* of 1 Tim 2:6 and the *many* of Matt 20 and Mark 10. In the Greek text of 1 Tim 2:6, Paul was pointing out to Timothy that, in the first instance, Jesus died on behalf of all Israel by paying the ransom price. For until that ransom had been paid, NO Israelite was in a position to become reconciled to God. Therefore, it is not the *all*, but only the *many* of Matthew and Mark (above) who would accept God's conditions, both at that time and today, who will benefit from His death. The reason for this is hidden in the Greek words for *reconciliation* and *propitiation*.

Reconciliation and Propitiation

God Himself does not change; therefore it is not God who needs to be reconciled. For Paul states, in Rom 5:8,10, that while we were under bondage of the Levitical Law, we were, in actual fact, in a state of enmity towards God. It was only the death of Jesus which brought about a new state in which we, as individuals, could become reconciled to God. Paul explains this in 2 Cor 5:18,19, but most Bibles fail to translate these verses correctly. The Greek text of these verses state:

18. *and all things are from God, The (One) having reconciled us (Israel) to Himself through (the death of) an Anointed (One – Jesus) and having given to us (Paul and Timothy) the commission of The Reconciliation*

19. *that is, through (the death of) an Anointed (One – Jesus) God was reconciling (the Israel) Order to Himself; not reckoning to them their offences, and assigning to us the presentation of The Reconciliation.*

Furthermore, because God does NOT change, He cannot be *propitiated* by any act of man. In fact, God's love for His People is, and remains, so great that although they have all forfeited their lives on account of sin, He Himself provided the one and only way whereby eternal life could be restored to them.

In Rom 3:25 Paul states that God ordained Jesus, by the shedding of His blood, to be a propitiation – that is, to be the only ransom-price – great enough to release us from the curse of the Levitical Law; and, in addition, to provide for the new and infinitely better state of hope and expectation of eternal life which was brought about by that act of expiation. And all that is required of us – as the real sinners – is faith in the efficacy of that sacrifice by Jesus. For the saving power of that death to clear the way for The Reconciliation to begin, depended entirely on the fact that The One who shed His blood was the Son of God.

But the *Gospel* – the tidings – of these great acts of love for us bring about a reaction, through that Spirit of God within us, which is expressed in a resurgence of belief in God and the revelation of God's Word that Jesus brought to us. This response is proved and made evident by the growth of an ongoing desire to understand, and to put our trust in, all that Jesus said. Hence, just as those law-abiding motorists would strive to observe all the traffic laws in order to maintain their position of honour; so must we strive to observe all the Kingdom Laws, to the best of our ability, in order to be accounted worthy to be taken up and to be stood before our Lord and Saviour at His Second Advent. For it is He alone who judges whether our faith in, and our observance of, His Words, in this Age, are worthy of that honour.

Therefore whereas those motorists would only need to obey the traffic laws while they were using the roads, we must endeavour to have faith in Jesus, and show it by observing all the Kingdom Laws, in everything we do, every day of our lives. If we do that, and desire to do it willingly and wholeheartedly, then it is by God's Grace, that He accepts that faith and action on our part as sufficient justification for Him to set aside, or to blot out, our own sins; and to restore the hope and expectation of eternal life to us. Under God's Grace, therefore, our desire to obey ALL God's Laws becomes so in-wrought within us that it is a delight to carry them out. We then become completely divorced from the anarchy of self-will. And, finally, through that indwelling Spirit of God which all Israelites inherit at birth, that rightwisdom of the Law becomes fulfilled in us and makes possible our restoration as the Sons of God again at the resurrection. (Rom 8:23).

Sons of God

The great difference between this final stage and the previous one, of just being a believer, cannot be understood without understanding the great difference between being a *child of God* and a *Son of God*. In the Greek text, God uses two different words to express this difference. And it is of vital importance to take note of the way in which both Jesus and the Apostles use those words:

- a. The word *teknon* means a *child*, a literal descendant, and emphasises the fact of birth. Hence all Israelites are *children of God*, as Paul states in Rom 8:16.

Also, in John 1:12,13 the Greek text states that Jesus gave, to those Israelites who accepted Him, the right to become children (*tekna*) of God (again). The Authorised Version is wrong in using the word *sons of God* in verse 12.

- b. The word *huios*, on the other hand, means a *son* but places more emphasis on the relationship of offspring to parent, without reference to sex (Rom 9:26).

(1) It is used of those who are the sons of the Prophets and of the Covenant; the one which God made to Abraham concerning his descendants (Acts 3:25 – Families is *patriai*: descendants from a common tribe or racial ancestor – Abraham)

(2) It includes that destiny of becoming Sons of God at the Resurrection by doing God's Will during our life in this Age. (Luke 20:36)

(3) But most of all, it concerns the dignity of that mature relationship with God which is the result of keeping that THE FAITH once and for all delivered to the Saints (the Set-apart Ones – Israelites – Jude 3).

In John's Gospel, John never uses the term *huios Theou* (a Son of God) of the average Israelite believer; he uses it of Jesus only. And Jesus also uses it in a very pertinent manner in His Sermon on the Mount:

Matt 5:9: *Blessed are the peacemakers, (those living peaceably) for they shall be called the Sons of God.*

Matt 5:44,45: *Love your enemies (within Israel) and pray for the (ones) persecuting you, in order that ye may become Sons of YOUR Father, the (ONE) in (the) Heavens.*

In this Sermon, Jesus refers to God many times as the Father of all Israelites. He was teaching His disciples and those other Israelites who had gathered to hear Him, to do all these things. Not so that they might become children of God, but that (being children of God already) if they exercised their faith by doing all these things, they might then graduate to becoming Sons of God, at the Resurrection, in the full dignity and maturity of what that relationship with God means.

God states the same thing in 2 Cor 6:17,18. And, in Rom 8:14-21, Paul explains this difference between believers as *children of God* and believers as *Sons of God*. In this passage Paul is addressing ALL Israelites in Rome. In verse 16 he states that the Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children (*tekna*) of God (by birth). And as such – verse 17 states, in the Greek text *and if children, also heirs* (heirs to God's Covenant promises to Israel); *heirs on the one hand of God, (and) on the other hand, fellow-heirs of an Anointed (People – All Israel) since we suffer together with them now* (Heb 12:5-12) so that we may also be glorified with them (at the Second Advent).

These verses (Rom 8) emphasise the fact of Israelites being literal descendants of God. They are His children. But in verse 14, Paul states that as many as are led – by that inherited Spirit of God within us – these, and NO others, are Sons of God. For their exercising through The Faith of all of God's Laws, in their daily life, is the proof of their desire to work in harmony with His Will and this becomes the evidence of their true sonship. A status which Paul states (verse 19) will be revealed both to them and to all Israel at the Second Advent.

Conclusion

Therefore *being under Grace* means that, by God's Grace, He has accepted the ransom price which Jesus paid, as sufficient justification for the deliverance of all Israel – past, present and future – from the bondage of eternal death for their sins. It also means that He has extended an offer to all Israelites to become reconciled to Him again, through belief in the efficacy of that act of Jesus on our behalf.

But, having given His People free will to choose which way we wish to go, then the next move is up to each one of us. If now we do believe in Jesus, and in that deliverance wrought by His death, then we shall be accepted as children of God again, just as our ancestors, the children of Israel were, before they were cast off for idolatry and rejection of His statutes.

Unfortunately, most Christians seem quite happy to stop right there, in the immaturity of children. But that should be just the beginning. To grow to maturity, we need to proceed on from there by consciously allowing that Spirit of God within us to lead us on to start putting into practice all of God's Law. The faithful performance of His Laws, Statute.

So with all the references to "way", it cannot be escaped that God's way will then so mould our nature into harmony with the likeness of God's character, that we become truly His Sons. For the deep ethical truth behind Paul's statement in Rom 6:16, reads *Don't you know that what you make yourselves, that you become? The habit which you form (for evil or for good) ends by becoming your second nature.*

APPENDIX—WHAT IS FAITH

In Rom 3:22, Paul states that although the nature of our own righteousness is a gift that proceeds from God, nevertheless its roots spring from faith in Jesus. It is co-extensive in accordance with the faith of a believer.

That is to say: The Kingdom of God is a system in which righteousness is the basic characteristic. Therefore, to be a member of that Kingdom, we ourselves must become righteous. And that comes about only by full acceptance of Jesus as our Saviour and the Son of God. Paul calls this acceptance of Jesus as our Saviour *Faith*.

But to Paul, this did not mean just a single act. It was an on-going state of active devotion to Jesus and observance of all that He told us to do. It finds its expression in keeping all of the Deuteronomic Law which, in turn, develops into ardent and energetic service.

It engenders love, gratitude and devoted loyalty to Him, and brings the believer more and more under His influence. This finally leads to a gradual assimilation of our own life and will into that of our Lord. Paul describes that new relationship as if it were a state of actual union or fellowship with Him. But the agency which brings all this about is The Faith, which itself begins with that first step – acceptance of Jesus as our Saviour, the Son of God.

Therefore Faith is not just a substitute for righteousness, nor does it diminish the worth of righteousness. It is essential that our righteousness through Faith should be greater than that of the scribes and Pharisees.

Hence the transforming effect on our life that springs from true Faith, "*must needs be as much superior to that which proceeds from the works of the Law as the finest and highest personal devotion is superior to the narrow and mechanical performance of rules*" (Ellicott, Romans, Excursus E). It is only then that our Faith can be imputed to us for righteousness and that we can then be justified by that Faith.

NOTE: The author's book, "The Exclusiveness of Israel" as mentioned herein, is available from Christian Identity Ministries, P.O. Box 146, Cardwell, Queensland 4849, Australia. Telephone 00617-4066-146, for a suggested donation of \$US25-00, inclusive of postage. Federal Reserve notes are acceptable.