

The Old Paths

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“God’s Changeable (?) Law”

Jarrod Jacobs

To listen to some, we might think that God’s law can be changed when it does not suit what we like. There are countless examples we could cite of people (Christians and non-Christians) trying to change God’s word when it does not suit them. One example that comes to mind was something I read in November of last year. Back in November of 2002, my wife pointed out a “Dear Abby” column wherein some wrote to “Abby” (Jeanne Phillips) in response to a woman’s letter stating that she was living in a “loveless” (second) marriage and did not know what to do. Two “reverends” (one man and one woman, see: I Tim. 2:11-12) wrote to “Abby” encouraging the woman to divorce, telling her that God does not want anyone to be sad, but happy, loved, and in a good marriage. Both encouraged the woman to divorce her second husband, and marry again so that both parties could be happy with someone else.

Can you believe this? What blatant disregard those people have for the Bible. First, I do not know why the woman was in a second marriage, but anyone who respects the word of God knows that the only Biblical reasons a married person can have for entering into another marriage is because of the death of a spouse or for fornication (Rom. 7:2-3; Matt. 5:32, 19:9). There is no question God wants His creation to live happy lives, but isn’t one the happiest when he/she

follows the Lord’s will? (I Pet. 3:10)

Unfortunately, this attitude which says that God wants no one to be unhappy, feeds man’s selfish desires. If one’s happiness is the standard, then if something ever causes “unhappiness,” then it is time to quit that and try something different. After all, God doesn’t want me to be unhappy!! True, God loves us (Jn. 3:16; I Jn. 4:19), and yes He wants the best for His creation; but this does not mean that He will allow men to avoid the consequences of their bad decisions and sins! In fact, there are occasions in the Bible where God promises punishment on His own people because they had sinned against Him. Just as it was not pleasant for the people, it brought God no pleasure, either. But, the consequences of their actions could not be avoided.

Let us consider some Biblical examples of folks who had to live with the consequences of their decisions when their “happiness” conflicted with God’s will.

Adam And Eve

Adam and Eve were placed in the Garden of Eden wherein they could have potentially lived in happiness and peace indefinitely. THIS was God’s intention!! Yet, after their sin, they were cast out of the Garden, and had to live with the consequences (spiritual and physical) of their sin from that time forward (Gen. 3:16-19, 23-24). It is interesting to take note of the fact that in the Garden, part of Satan’s temptation was to say God did not want Adam and Eve “happy” or that He was holding them back by not allowing them to eat of the forbidden fruit (Gen. 3:4-5). Yet, today

Satan’s tactic is reversed. He would have folks believe that happiness is everything, and God allows us to do as we please in order to find this “happiness.” How ironic!

David

David was called a man after God’s own heart (I Sam. 13:14). Yet, he still had to abide by the will of God. He was not above sin, nor did his position as king allow him to take liberties with God’s word. When David sinned, though he had been personally chosen by God to be king, he still had to live with the consequences of his sin with Bathsheba (II Sam. 12:8-14). He would later write, “*my sin is ever before me*” (Ps. 51:3). God’s will did not change simply because the one chosen to be king had sinned.

Judas

Judas was called “*one of the twelve*” (Matt. 26:14, 47; Mk. 14:20, 43; Lk. 22:3, 47; Jn. 6:71). Yet, did this lofty position grant him immunity from sin, or the “right” to go and pursue his own happiness? No! Judas betrayed the Lord for money. Yet, in the end he was so distraught after his betrayal of Christ that he went out and hanged himself, and went “*to his own place*” (Acts 1:25).

Conclusion

Countless others could be named who suffered just as much or more than these. Why did this happen? Why were certain ones not spared or allowed an “out” when things went bad? It is because God’s will cannot be changed. Even though God wanted them to be happy, He would not spare them from the consequences of their decisions they made — right or wrong.

In like manner, people today must respect the word of God or face the consequences of their decision! Jesus said, “*As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent*” (Rev. 3:19). God’s law is settled, therefore conform to His will today (Rom. 12:1-2)!

“Let The Bible Speak”

Jarrod Jacobs

[Editor's Note: Below is a letter sent to me asking a question on I Corinthians 13:10 and my response. It is included here in the hope that this will help all our dear readers in your Bible study.]

Dear Jarrod:

I have a question for you. I know I've heard the answer before, but refresh my memory please.

In I Cor. 13:10 (part of our readings for this week), it says that the gifts of the Spirit will be done away with when *that which is perfect has come*. From the verses above I can tell that this means the word of God, or the Bible, but how do we refute those who believe that this means the 2nd coming of Christ? I can see how one might very easily make that assumption.

My Response:

Hello,

Thanks for writing, and I hope you're having a good day.....

Concerning I Corinthians 13:10, I'll try to answer your question by stating something obvious, first. One main reason we can know that Paul was not talking about the 2nd coming was because neither Jesus nor the 2nd coming is in the context of this passage. Seems like if Paul had this in mind (as he did in I Thess. 4:13-18; II Thess. 1:6-9; etc.) he would have used some words or phrases relative to Jesus and/or the 2nd coming. But, he did not do that. If I was talking to a person about this passage, this is where I would begin. To say "that which is perfect"

automatically means Jesus is to jump to the wrong conclusion.

Further, look at the contrast between v. 9 and v. 10. It is a contrast between what is "in part" and what is "perfect." Remember, the Biblical word "perfect" does not mean sinless, but it means complete, mature, or of full age. So, Paul is contrasting what is "in part" with what is "complete" in verses 9-10, on down to verse 12. Paul here is not speaking of two different things, but of the same thing. Therefore, the "in part" was just a "part" of the "perfect/complete." In other words, whatever the "in part" was, it would have the same characteristics as the "complete." (Like a pie: one slice of pecan pie came from a whole, or "complete" pecan pie, not from an apple, cherry, chocolate, etc.!) Therefore, if the "complete" is Christ, would the "in part" be part of Christ? Or if the "complete" was the 2nd coming, would the "in part" be part of the 2nd coming? That position makes no sense.

At that current moment in time in I Corinthians 13, Paul said they: 1) know in part; 2) prophesy in part; 3) understand/speak as a child; 4) see through a glass darkly; 5) know in part. But, Paul was looking forward to the time, and it was obviously not too far away, when those things were no longer true, but that Christians would: 1) speak/think as a man; 2) put away

childish things; 3) see clearly (face to face); 4) know as are known.

All such things point, not to a person, but to a completed revelation. Paul said during this time of miraculous spiritual gifts, they currently knew/prophesied (would this not be God's word they knew and were prophesying?) "in part," they understood like children, and couldn't see clearly. Yet, when those things "passed away," "failed," and "ceased," there would only be three things abiding: faith, hope, and love.

How can men have faith today?
Through the word (Rom. 10:17).

How can men have hope today?
Through the word (Ps. 119:49, Rom. 15:4; Col. 1:23)

How can men learn of true love?
Through the word (I Jn. 5:2; Jn. 14:15).

In connection with these things and thinking about that word "perfect," don't forget that James spoke of "the perfect law of liberty" (Jas. 1:25).

Thanks again for the question. God bless.

Brotherly,
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Wednesday Evening Bible Study ————— 7:00 pm

Don't forget the call-in radio program on **WBIO, FM 94.7**, Sunday afternoon from 12:30-1:00 pm. **Call: 683-5200** with your Bible question.

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