

The Spirit is life

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The curse of the Law

- Adam and Eve fell from fellowship with Yahweh in the garden of Eden when they disobeyed God and ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They ate this fruit in an endeavour to become the source of their own life and expression.
- This *self-centred* desire to have life according to their own knowledge of good and evil was contrary to the law of love which describes the fellowship of Yahweh. 1Jn 4:7. It became 'another law' within their hearts and within the hearts of every person who would be born after them. Rom 7:23.
- Having transgressed God's Royal Law, mankind came under '*the curse of the Law*'. As Paul noted from the writings of Moses, 'Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the Law, to do them.' Gal 3:10.
- The curse of the Law was the expression of God's judgement on Adam and Eve's disobedience. Because Adam had rejected the headship of Christ by heeding the voice of his wife, the Lord God said to him, 'Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return.' Gen 3:17-19.
- The curse of the Law includes the suffering caused by time and chance, and by the inevitable deterioration of one's mortal body as they age. As King Solomon said, 'Time and chance happen to them all.' Ecc 9:11. Solomon described this as the vanity of life 'under the sun'. Ecc 1:2-3.
- Fundamental to the curse of the Law was the limit placed on mankind's access to the tree of life, preventing them from eating the fruit of the tree of life in their corrupt condition. They were sent out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which they were taken. The Lord God placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.

The law of sin

- Having been cut off from life in the fellowship of Yahweh, and now pursuing life through the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes and the pride of life, mankind was now in bondage to *the law of sin and death*. 1Jn 2:16. Rom 7:23.
- The law of sin describes the way of living that belongs to fallen mankind, who compete with each other for the limited resource of life. Coveting life is the most fundamental expression of the law of sin, giving rise to all manner of sinful and destructive actions. We note, in this regard, the teaching of the apostle James. 'Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for

pleasure that war in your members? You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war.’ Jas 4:1-2.

- The fruit of bondage to the law of sin is death. Or, as Paul said, ‘The wages of sin is death.’ Rom 6:23. The suffering of death, under the law of sin, is the consequence of people’s endeavours to have life at the expense of others. In other words, it is the pain that is caused by the sin of others against us, and the pain that we cause to others because of our sin.
- Cain came under the law of sin when he refused to accept the name and works that God had prepared for him, and failed to make offering at the gate of Eden according to His direction. Instead of ruling over sin, Cain was brought into bondage to the law of sin, the fruit of which was the murder of his brother, Abel.

An offering for sin

- Jesus was ‘the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world’. Joh 1:29. He fulfilled this work when, in obedience to the Father, He was made to be an offering for sin. 2Co 5:21. Isa 53:10.
- Jesus Christ became the *full embodiment of sin* when the Father made every son and daughter of man to be members of His body. This happened when Jesus drank the cup that the Father gave to Him in the garden of Gethsemane. Luk 22:42.
- It is most important to note that although Christ was the embodiment of sin, He was *not* made a slave of sin. Accordingly, He did not die as a consequence of living by the law of sin. The law of sin is the way of life that belongs to the *sons of disobedience*. The death that Jesus died was because of His *obedience*. Jesus Himself testified, ‘No-one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.’ Joh 10:18.
- Jesus experienced in His mortal body the sufferings of death resulting from every person’s bondage to the law of sin, under the curse of the Law. The curse of the Law was God’s judgement on sin and death. As Christ journeyed from Gethsemane to Calvary, He was being progressively cursed and cut off from God. By this means, sin and death were being destroyed in His flesh and in our flesh. In other words, sin and death were being ended as He was dying.
- This work culminated in Christ’s seventh wound. His heart was broken, rupturing under the stress and grief of bearing the Father’s reproach, which was the curse of the Law. This moment was marked by His cry, ‘“Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?” that is, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” ’ Mat 27:46. The grief, or sorrow, which broke His heart, was caused by mankind’s rejection of God’s fatherhood, which brought them under the curse of the Law.
- As Christ’s heart was broken, the *body of sin*, and its fruit, were completely cut from Him and left in the sea of God’s forgetfulness. Mic 7:18-19. In this moment, the Father was near to Him. Psa 34:17-18. He reached down and drew the Son out of the waters of judgement. Psa 18:16. The Son was brought forth as the Firstborn from the dead; the Head of a corporate new creation.
- With the death of sin, nothing was left but God and life. This outcome demonstrated that the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; and the life that He lives

through this crucifying event, He lives to God. Rom 6:10. More than this, through Christ's righteous offering work, accomplished in each wounding event that He suffered, He multiplied the life of God so that it became resurrection life.

- Resurrection life is life that has power over death. Jesus Christ gives this resurrection life to us in the fellowship of His offering death. This life brings us back, with Him, from our death caused by sin. We are raised from the dead with Christ to live with Him as members of His body.
- Through the offering of Christ, the Law of God was satisfied. The curse of the Law destroyed sin; and the righteous offering work of Christ fulfilled the Law, bringing life and immortality to light. 2Ti 1:10. This life and immortality is now available to all, through the gospel.
- The Law was meant to give life. Rom 7:10. It did so, through the offering of Christ. Having been nailed to the cross with Christ, the Law is now part of the law of the Spirit of life, guarding Christ's life. The Law is now no longer contrary to us, for we are nailed with it to the fellowship of Christ's dying on the cross.
- Through fellowship in the offering and sufferings of Christ, we are delivered from living under the law of sin. It is no longer our master. Rom 7:6. It no longer causes us harm; nor are others harmed through us. Rather, we now live by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Rom 8:2. However, if we walk after the flesh, sin revives in us and regains control over us. Rom 7:9. If we walk after the Spirit, Christ is our Lord and Master. Rom 7:25. The law of the Spirit of life that is in Christ Jesus continues to deliver us, freeing us from the law of sin and death.
- In summary, the new proposition for every Christian is that, if we walk 'after the flesh', we will die under the judgement and condemnation of the Law. However, if we walk 'after the Spirit', we will live. Rom 8:13. This way of life, which belongs to the sons of God, is expounded in Romans Chapter 8.

The fellowship of Christ's death and life

- In the fellowship of Christ's suffering, death and resurrection, *our body is dead* because of sin, but *our spirit is alive* because of righteousness. Rom 8:10. This means that our sufferings are the sufferings that Jesus experienced in His mortal body. 1Co 11:26. The life that was in His blood, which was shed through these sufferings, is making our identity alive through the Holy Spirit. Moreover, we are able to fulfil the obedient works that belong to our sonship, which Christ has already finished through His righteous work on the cross.
- Reiterating the point: our body is joined to Christ's dying body. What is happening to Him, is happening to us. This is not a vicarious action; rather, it is *fellowship* with Him. Php 3:10. We die this death with Christ. In this way, our 'old man', which is the fallen 'first man', is crucified with Christ so that the body of sin might be done away with. Rom 6:6. With the destruction of the old man, the suffering and death caused by sin is also ended and destroyed.

The dimensions of redemption

- From the Scriptures we can identify four key dimensions of redemption:

1. We are redeemed from the curse of the Law. 'Christ has *redeemed us from the curse of the Law*, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree").' Gal 3:13.
2. We are redeemed to receive sonship. 'But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, to redeem those who were under the Law, *that we might receive the adoption as sons.*' Gal 4:4-5.
3. We are redeemed and enabled by the blood of Christ to live a godly culture. 'Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.' 1Pe 1:18-19.
4. We are redeemed through baptism, which is the fellowship of Christ's offering death, from the realm in which we have fallen and continue to fall, so that we will never fall again. 'Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will *never stumble*, for so *an entrance will be supplied* to you abundantly into the *everlasting kingdom* of our Lord and Saviour.' 2Pe 1:10-11.

The apostle John witnessed the fulfilment of this dimension of redemption. In the book of Revelation he recorded, 'Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, "Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there".' Rev 11:1. Once a person has been measured within the sanctuary, they will never fall from there again.

- Every person who has received their new creation life, name and sonship through redemption must then proceed to recover their predestination by joining with Christ in the emptying, dying process that is an essential element of offering. Php 2:5-8.
- This virtue is essential in negating any self-centred motivation that would only result in sin, causing us to fall again.
- New creation life functions only through the fellowship of offering. It dies with Christ for the purpose of revealing others.
- In the fellowship of Christ's offering death, we move beyond the realm of sin; it can never happen again in our lives. It is eternally finished and dead once we have joined with Christ in His statement, 'It is finished!' Joh 19:30. We are then measured to that statement as those who are part of the sanctuary of the true temple.

The effect of the curse

- The curse is the curse of the Law, causing sickness, fatigue and death. This is the effect of sin and death in our body and spirit; that is, in our *house*. The law of sin also has its destructive effect upon our life. The curse of the Law, and the deprivations caused by sin, demonstrate that we are living in a carnal manner and are under the judgement of God. 1Co 11:31. As the apostle Paul announced, 'For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgement to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep.' 1Co 11:29-30.

- The curse is active on the ground, or place, where we live and toil and seek for blessing and prosperity. This is the ground from which we were made, and to which we return because of the curse. Gen 3:17-19.
- Christ's headship was crowned with thorns. This was the reproach and curse of the Law upon Him. As we considered earlier, He suffered this reproach for the purpose of redeeming us from the curse of the Law. He also suffered the effects of the law of sin upon us because of our disobedience. This includes Satanic oppression, suffering, death and fear.
- The Scriptures teach us that that redemption from the curse of the Law is only possible when we are being delivered from sin, and when 'the righteous requirements' that the Law demands are being fulfilled in us. Rom 8:3-4.
- This redemption becomes possible in our lives when we believe the gospel, and become adopted sons of God through faith, and then receive the Spirit of the Son and Holy Spirit into our lives, who give to us the life and nature of God the Father, which is the divine nature. This is what it means to be 'born of the Spirit' as sons of God.
- The condemnation and judgement of the Law upon us and in our lives is only alleviated when we live and walk after the Spirit, and not after the flesh. Forgiveness is not the final basis upon which we are delivered from judgement and eternal death. Manifesting our sanctification by walking blamelessly is the only solution.

Tribulation and affliction because of the word

- If we do not heed the chastening of the Lord, and become offended at the word, we will become condemned with the world.
- We come under the curse when we level reproach against Christ and His messengers, who are His 'little ones'. This curse then enters the house of those who initiate the reproach, and of those who receive and embrace its communication, particularly when they presume to do this in the name of the Lord. Zec 5:4.
- This cursing reproach, with all of its Satanic energy, then consumes the life of the person, with their house. This is sin being active. It destroys them right down to the very foundations of their house. Zec 5:4.
- The Scriptures describe the conversation that rejects the messenger and promotes an alternative to the gospel of sonship as words that eat like 'gangrene'. Note the words of the apostle Paul, 'But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. And their message will spread like cancer [canker, or gangrene].' 2Ti 2:16-17. Paul directed Timothy, and the presbytery of which he was part, to exclude those who speak in such a manner.

Idolatry is iniquity

- Ezekiel the prophet was told to judge Jerusalem and to show her citizens the abominations that they had committed under the Old Covenant. Eze 22:1-2. In particular, the Lord declared that the people were guilty of violating the fellowship of offering because of *idolatry*.
- The Lord defined idolatry as 'a defiling iniquity'. Eze 22:3. The destructive effect of iniquity, upon oneself and others, was the outcome of an idol that had been set up in

their heart. The person who set an idol up in their heart was said to have stumbled, or fallen, into iniquity.

- The use and abuse of others to achieve their self-projected ambitions was described by the Lord as ‘shedding innocent blood’. They were defiled by what they were doing to others. Their defilement was upon them as a judgement, causing them to become sick under Christ’s judgement, and to die before their time. Eze 22:1-4. Eze 14:1-11.
- Jesus testified that He was *crushed* by the iniquity of the idolatrous hearts of the Israelites. Eze 6:9. Furthermore, the prophet Isaiah declared that Christ ‘was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised [crushed] for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed’. Isa 53:5.
- However, because of the Lord’s judgements upon them, a remnant of those who were scattered among the nations would remember Him. They would look on Him whom they had crushed and pierced, and would begin to mourn in repentance for this wounding. Zec 12:10.
- Addressing the subject of redemption under the New Covenant, the apostle Paul taught that Christ gave Himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity and to purify us from our self-centred projections and ambitions. Jesus Christ did this so that we would be able to live soberly as sons of God in this world, doing the works of sonship that belong to our name, serving the Father as priests in His temple. Tit 2:11-14.
- The apostle John concluded his first epistle by warning that if we are to possess our eternal life as sons of God, we must keep ourselves from idols. Specifically, he wrote, ‘Little children, keep yourselves from idols’. 1Jn 5:21.
- In his first letter, the apostle Paul addressed the Corinthians as ‘babes in Christ’ because of their immaturity and their ignorance regarding Christian culture and life. He then confronted them in relation to their carnality, or iniquity, which was evidenced by their disobedience to the commands of Christ.
- Paul then explained what a Christian’s attitude and practice should be in relation to idolatry. To this end, he instructed the Corinthians to ‘flee from idolatry’. 1Co 10:14. He said that when we idolise something in our heart, we are doing more than worshipping an idol; we are sacrificing to demons and are not fellowshiping with God. 1Co 10:19-20.
- Let us summarise what we have said so far:
 1. We are unclean when we set up idols in our heart.
 2. Idols that are created and worshipped are nothing. 1Co 8:4. 1Co 8:9-13.
 3. Unclean spirits accompany idols in the heart. 1Co 10:20. Fellowship on the basis of idolatry is fellowship with demons, or unclean spirits. We cannot fellowship with Christ ‘at His table’, and in His house, and then make ‘the table’ in our house the place where we fellowship with demons. 1Co 10:21. This will bring the wrath of Christ upon us. 1Co 10:22.
 4. When discussing this subject of ‘fellowship with demons’, Paul was not referring to meals with non-Christians, such as business meals or school lunch breaks. 1Co 5:12. He was addressing fellowship with those who *claim* to be Christian, but who are evidently sexually immoral, covetous or idolatrous; or are a reviler, a

drunkard or an extortioner. Paul said that we were not even to eat with such people. 1Co 5:11.

Furthermore, Paul said that we should not make these people our friends, writing, 'Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits." Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God.' 1Co 15:33-34. If we embrace people who delight in uncleanness, we will be overtaken by the unclean spirit that is oppressing them, and will be corrupted and destroyed.

5. We are exhorted by Paul to 'keep the feast of unleavened bread' by avoiding leaven, including the leaven of sexual immorality. Paul was not only saying that we are to avoid this behaviour ourselves, but also that we should not be puffed up with pride, thinking that we can handle these matters in our own wisdom. He warned that spiritual oppression and destruction in the lives of individuals and families is the consequence of this leaven. 1Co 5:1-8.
- If you are oppressed by an unclean spirit and have been overtaken by the power of its darkness, ask yourself, 'What is the nature of my idol, and what is my uncleanness?' 'What is the image of myself that I am creating as an idol in my heart, and how am I endeavouring to verify this identity of my own making?' We must repent of these things, for the Lord is addressing us on these matters in this present season.