

Burning Bush International Bible Institute Online Bible College Curriculum

Excerpts from some of our first year curriculum:

Secrets of Time – Dr. Stephen E. Jones

PREFACE

The overall purpose of this book is to portray the Sovereignty of God in history. If that goal is reached, you should conclude the reading of this book by saying, “*What a great God we have!*” Or, as Paul would say, “*O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!*” (Romans 11:33)

My secondary purpose is to give you an overall view of the structure of history as viewed from a Biblical perspective. Everything is orderly. Nothing happens by accident. Men do not determine history; God does. Nations rise and fall according to His decrees, as Nebuchadnezzar discovered the hard way in the 4th chapter of Daniel. No monarch stands above the Law of God, nor can he withstand the irreversible judgment of God when the day of his visitation has arrived.

A third purpose—and certainly not the least important—is to instill within your heart a burning desire to know God more, to be more fully conformed to His Image and Likeness, and to catch the vision of the Feast of Tabernacles.

We stand today at the threshold of the Tabernacles Age. The Passover Age began with Israel’s Exodus from Egypt on the day of Passover and ended at the Cross. The Pentecost Age began in the 2nd chapter of Acts and ended 40 Jubilees later on the day of Pentecost, May 30, 1993. We are now in the transition into the great Tabernacles Age, which will last a thousand years. It is the great Rest Year, the Sabbath Millennium, during which time there will be an overcoming Remnant who exercise great authority in the earth, whose Word will fully reflect the Mind of their heavenly Father. (See Appendix C.)

I hope that you will be challenged and inspired to seek to press into that place of full Sonship and Daughterhood, leaving behind that which we have seen and known in the past, looking only to Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith.

— Dr. Stephen E. Jones
April 17, 1996

The Purpose of Law and Grace:

The Purpose of Law and Grace

By Dr. Stephen E. Jones

The purpose of the divine law is to set the standard for right and wrong. In other words, the law defines sin. It was never meant to save or justify anyone except those who are sinless. Since “*all have sinned*” (Rom. 3:23), it is plain that the law cannot be used for purposes of salvation. Yet it still retains its usefulness in informing us of what God thinks sin is. “*By the law is the knowledge of sin,*” Paul says in Rom. 3:20.

When God gave the law to Moses and to the Israelites, He began with the Ten Commandments. These Commands were to be obeyed, and so they represented the test of obedience. That is, no Israelite could claim to be obedient to God if he worshipped other gods, dishonored his parent, stole from his neighbor, or committed adultery. These laws were the first written revelation of the character of God and what He expected from man.

Who Gave the Law to Moses?

There are some who have claimed that the law was given to Moses by Satan. This is ludicrous and even blasphemous, and yet it serves us occasion to show the origin of the law. The lawgiver called Himself Yahweh at the burning bush. This was a new name not revealed to Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob. Ex. 6:2, 3 says, literally,

² And God spoke further to Moses and said to him, I am Yahweh; ³ and I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as El Shaddai, but by My name Yahweh was I not known to them.

This is the Lawgiver identified in Ex. 20:2 in the prologue of the law, where He says again, “*I am Yahweh your God.*” It is God’s practice to reveal Himself by different names for different purposes. Abraham knew Him as El Shaddai, as we read in Ex. 17:1,

¹ And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, Yahweh appeared to Abram, and said to him, I am El Shaddai . . .

God’s Law on Restitution:

God’s Law on Restitution

It is a well-known principle of natural law that labor is our most basic property right and is the source of all lawful wealth. We are born with a certain amount of inherited wealth (which represents the labor of our forebears) and a capacity to labor, representing potential property, or wealth.

Theft is taking property that belongs to another, or using it without the consent of the rightful owner. Theft is the opposite of labor, and thus, in Scripture, labor is the antidote to theft.

History of Modern Prisons

It occurs to few people that there might be an alternative to the modern practice of handing out prison sentences for property crimes. And yet, strange as it may seem, this practice is only about 200 years old. Our modern penal system is the most expensive and perhaps the least effective method of handling crime in the history of the world. It is also far from humane by biblical standards, though we admit that it was certainly more humane than the way it was usually handled in Europe prior to this time. Putting a man in prison for stealing a loaf of bread in America was far better than hanging him in Europe. Even so, the Bible has a far better solution.

Prisons have existed for thousands of years, but rather than using them to warehouse criminals as we do today, they were used almost exclusively to detain political prisoners. In 1776 Massachusetts had a law that thieves be whipped or fined for their first offenses. On second offenses the thieves had to pay three times the value of the stolen property to their victims as restitution and forced to sit on the gallows for an hour with the rope around their necks. On their third offenses they were hanged.

William Penn, the founder of the state of Pennsylvania, is the father of the modern penal system, although Queen Anne prevented him from implementing his ideas in Pennsylvania. A century later, however, after the Revolutionary War, there was a reaction against the excessive and cruel penalties being meted out in the name of “justice.” (This was also a reaction against what was considered to be “British thinking.”) Unfortunately, the most influential reformers were more schooled in the philosophy of the Humanist Enlightenment than in Bible Law.

The Laws of Wormwood and Dung..

The Laws of Wormwood and Dung

The Hebrew word for “wormwood” is Lahanaw. According to Strong’s Concordance, the word means “to poison.” Its root word means “to curse.” Other passages use phrases like “bitter as wormwood” (Prov. 5:14) and “drunken with wormwood” (Lam. 3:15). This shows us that whatever this substance is, it is something bitter that people may consume orally, and it makes people “drunk.” However, it is not wine or fermented drink of any kind.

Pinpointing the precise meaning would be quite difficult, if it were not for the fact that is usually associated with “gall.” The Hebrew word translated “gall” is Rosh. (See Strong’s Conc. #7218 to 7220.) Rosh is the **poppy plant**. It literally means “head,” a reference to the “head” of the plant -- its conspicuous red flower.

Poppies were cultivated in Sodom and Gomorrah, and apparently this was one of their main sources of income. We find in Deut. 32:31-33 that poppies are called “the grapes of Sodom.”

³¹ **For their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves *being* judges.** ³²
For their vine is of the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah: their grapes
are grapes of gall [poppies], their clusters *are* BITTER: ³³ **Their wine is the poison**

of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps.

In Revelation 22:15 we find that those who deal in this drug trade will not be allowed into the Holy City. They are called “sorcerers.” The Greek word is Pharmakos, from which we get our English word “Pharmacist,” or druggist. These will not be classed as Overcomers.

The Bible often speaks of “the water of gall” (Jer. 9:15). This is the sap or juice from a certain part of the poppy that contains **opium, which is wormwood**. It is very bitter in taste, and it makes people drunk, or “high.” Opium was used to deaden pain, both mental and physical. They tried to give Jesus some of this to drink (Matt. 27:34) while He was on the cross. It would have deadened the pain, but Jesus refused it.

In the Old Testament, wormwood became one of the themes of the prophets to decry the people’s false sense of security. Judgment was coming, but the false prophets were saying, “Peace, Peace” when there was no peace (Jer. 8:11). Spiritually speaking, the prophets and priests were using this drug to heal the hurt of Israel slightly, but this only treated the symptoms, not the cause. The nation had a brain tumor, and the false prophets were masking the real problem by just giving them opium, or wormwood, to dull the pain. Jeremiah was astonished at this, and asked in 8:22,

²² Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?

God’s verdict was that He would give them MORE OF THE SAME. If they wanted a drug, rather than the true Balm of Gilead, He would give them a “belly full.” Jeremiah 9:15 says,

¹⁵ Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will feed them, even this people, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink.

Again, in Jeremiah 8:14 we read,

¹⁴ Why do we sit still? assemble yourselves, and let us enter into the defenced cities, and let us be silent there: for the LORD our God hath put us to silence, and given us water of gall to drink, because we have sinned against the LORD.

“Wormwood” and “the water of gall” (Jer. 8:14) would be their judgment for disobedience to His law. Their life would turn bitter as foreign armies would invade and occupy their land.

The Law of Tithing:

The Law of the Tithe

by Dr. Stephen Jones

The tithe is meant to be the nation's tax system to support God's Kingdom government on the earth. However, in a time of captivity, such as when Judah was taken captive to Babylon, the law can only be applied a little differently. Also, God's Kingdom has not had a political manifestation for many centuries. And so we must apply the law of tithing a little differently according to the spirit of the law.

First, the law of tithe is based upon God's ownership of the earth, which He created in 6 days. Genesis 1:1 says, "*In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth.*" Because God created all things, He therefore OWNS everything that He created. When God set up His kingdom under Moses and Joshua, giving Canaan to the tribes of Israel, He said in Lev. 25:23,

²³ **The land, moreover, shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine; for you are but aliens and sojourners with Me.**

God does not really give anyone land. God merely gives men the privilege of inhabiting His land and working the land to produce food or other things. Their privilege is conditional upon their obedience to His laws. If they violate those conditions, God has every right to disenfranchise them and to bring others in as laborers in His land. For this reason, God disenfranchised Israel (745-721 B.C.) and later Judah (604-586 B.C.). Judah was allowed to return after 70 years, but again it was under God's terms and conditions.

When God disenfranchised Judah, He expected them to submit to His judgment. Jeremiah 24 speaks of "good figs" and "evil figs." The good figs were those of Judah who submitted to God's judgment and went to Babylon. The evil figs were those who decided to fight God's judgment. But Jer. 27:5 says,

⁵ **I have made the earth, the men and the beasts which are on the face of the earth by My great power and by My outstretched arm, and I will give it to the one who is pleasing in My sight. And now I have given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, My servant. . . .**

We know from Nebuchadnezzar's dream that is recorded in Daniel 2 that this "Babylonian captivity" is actually an extended captivity. It includes Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome, along with a "little horn" extension of Rome that takes us even to the present day. In essence, this captivity put Babylon into the position of responsibility to rule the Kingdom under divine law. Of course, they have not done so, and for this reason God is even now bringing judgment upon that system, disenfranchising them at the end of their time.

Meanwhile, the Babylonian tax system takes from us far more than the 10 percent tithe, but that is their responsibility before God. Since God has sold us into the hands of Babylon for the past 2,600 years, legally speaking, the tithe is part of the tax system of each nation. There is no law that tells us to pay more tithe to a church or religious organization. If money is donated to a religious organization, it is technically not a tithe, but an offering.

What Income is to be Tithed?

As we stated earlier, the tithe is based upon the fact that God created and owns the universe. In essence, God provides us with land, sun, rain, etc. by which we may grow crops and produce things directly from His labor. As a return on His labor, He wants a 10 percent return, while we get 90 percent as payment for *our* labor.

The tithe is a tax on all production where men use God's labor (creation) directly. The tithe is on the increase of the fields and of the flocks and herds. Lev. 27:30 says,

³⁰ **Thus all the tithe of the land, of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's; it is holy to the Lord.**

Verse 32 continues,

³² **And for every tenth part of the herd or flock, whatever passes under the rod, the tenth one shall be holy to the Lord.**

We see, then, that 10 percent of the crops, the fruit of the trees, and the flocks and herds is to be tithed. The principle behind this is the fact that God wants a return on His labor. So 10 percent ought also to be paid when people harvest trees for lumber, fishing, and electricity. This is what the local or state government is authorized under God to collect as its tax revenue. Ten percent of that is to be sent to the federal, or national level.

The Laws of the Second Coming:

CHAPTER 1

ISRAEL'S PROPHETIC SPRING FEASTS

Any serious study of Bible prophecy should begin with the feast days of Israel that are found in the law. The feast days provide us with the basic outline of the plan of God of salvation for the individual, as well as an outline of God's plan (as Paul states) to "*put all things under His feet*." Too many books on Bible prophecy show very little understanding of the feast days, resulting in some popular but misleading views. The purpose of this book is to give the reader an understanding of Israel's prophetic feast days first, and then build upon that foundation with other laws that prophesy about Christ's second coming. In correlating the New Testament teachings with these lesser-known--but very important--laws of the second coming, the coming of Christ takes on new clothing.

After Jesus' resurrection, He appeared to two disciples on the road to Emmaus and explained to them the meaning and purpose of Passover and why He had had to be crucified on that day. Luke 24:27 says,

²⁷And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.

Later, Jesus appeared to His disciples and explained to *them* how the law of Passover had prophesied of His death and resurrection. Luke 24:44 and 45 says,

⁴⁴Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me *in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.*" ⁴⁵Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.

There is no doubt that Jesus explained to these people how He had been crucified in order to fulfill the Feast of Passover and how He had fulfilled the wave-sheaf offering in His resurrection. It is likely that He also gave them some understanding of the Feast of Pentecost before telling them to tarry in Jerusalem (Luke 24:49).

We who have been endowed with 20/20 hindsight often marvel at how the people of Jesus' day--including the disciples--could have had so little understanding of the real meaning of Passover. As Christians, the prophetic significance of this feast seems so clear to us now. But even today these things are not at all clear to those whose eyes are blinded by traditional Judaism. Even more astounding is that there are so few Christian books outlining the autumn feast days, showing how they prophesy of the second coming

of Christ. As a result, the end-time Church today is, generally speaking, as blind to the prophecies of His second coming as the people of Judah were to His first coming--because they do not understand the meaning of the biblical feasts.

This book is written to explain the second coming of Christ, *beginning with Moses*. Even as Passover, the wave-sheaf offering, and Pentecost were fulfilled in the first coming of Christ, so also the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles prophesy of events surrounding the second coming of Christ. But before we discuss the autumn feasts and the second coming of Christ, we must give a brief teaching on the spring feasts and how Jesus might have explained them after His resurrection.

Jesus Crucified at Passover

Jesus was crucified on the fourteenth day of the first month of the Hebrew calendar. This was the day Israel was to slay the lambs and put the blood on the lintels and door posts of their homes (Exodus 12:6, 7). The law in Exodus 12:6 specified that the people were to kill a lamb or a goat in the afternoon between noon and sundown, or "*between the two evenings*" (literal Hebrew text). The first evening was at noon, when the sun began to go down; the second was at sundown, when the sun actually set. In his book, The Temple, Alfred Edersheim says on page 211,

"According to the Samaritans, the Karaite Jews, and many modern interpreters, this means between actual sunset and complete darkness (or, say, between six and seven p.m.); but from the contemporary testimony of Josephus, and from Talmudic authorities, there cannot be a doubt that, at the time of our Lord, it was regarded as the interval between the sun's commencing to decline and his actual disappearance. This allows a sufficient period for the numerous lambs which had to be killed, and agrees with the traditional account that on the eve of Passover the daily evening sacrifice was offered an hour, or if it fell on a Friday, two hours, before the usual time."

The people were not to kill their lambs prior to the evening sacrifice in the temple. The evening sacrifice was normally killed at 2:30 p.m. (in the middle of the ninth hour of the day) and offered to God an hour later at 3:30 p.m. However, on the eve of Passover (Abib 14) the evening sacrifices were killed an hour earlier, unless this day fell on Friday, the preparation day for the Sabbath, in which it was killed at 12:30 p.m.

In our next section we will show from early Church writings that Jesus was crucified on a Friday. This is disputed by some, but we mention this here only to show that the evening sacrifice at the time of Jesus' crucifixion was to be killed two hours early--that is, about 12:30 p.m. This was normal practice when Abib 14 fell on a Friday. Only then could the Passover lambs begin to be killed. Yet the lambs certainly also had to be killed by mid-afternoon in order to have them fully cooked by sundown, for all had to be in their houses by that time. Exodus 12:22 tells us,

22 And you shall take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood which is in the basin, and apply some of the blood that is in the basin to the lintel and the two doorposts; and none of you shall go outside the door of his house until morning.

This law settles the question men have had about the timing of the last supper that Jesus ate with the disciples. There are some who teach that the Last Supper, which Jesus ate with His disciples, was the Passover meal and was eaten on the night of Abib 14 after all the lambs had been killed. That view teaches that Jesus was crucified the following day, Abib 15. This view is based on Jesus' statement in Luke 22:15, "*I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.*" It was, indeed, a Passover meal, but it could only have been eaten on the evening after Abib 13, because after this meal, they

sang a hymn and then went outside to the Mount of Olives (Mark 14:26), where Jesus was arrested. If they had eaten the Passover meal on the night after Abib 14, it would have been unlawful for them to leave the house.

The Glory of the Stars – by E. Raymond Capt:

Gazing upon the multitude of stars that shine in the nocturnal heavens, one might despair of reading anything intelligible in their design - they seem to be so scattered, so entirely without order, spread with such confusion over the face of the sky.

As we behold these twinkling points of light, shining down from their serene heights, we recall the words of the Psalmist.

"The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament sheweth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge., .Their line is gone out through all the earthy and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun" (Psalm 19: 1-4).

Having declared that the heavens reveal God's glory, the Psalmist informs us that the heavens declare a message in a language that is understood by all peoples. These starry worlds, as such, do show forth His *"handiwork"**, but explain little about the *"glory of God"*. How then can the stars be made to speak, in a language everyone can understand?

The answer is quite evident. Pictures speak in all dialects. They speak a universal language, to all peoples everywhere. Somewhere in the earliest ages of human existence the visible stars were named. Certain ones were arranged into groups by someone thoroughly familiar with the laws of astronomy. Those names and groupings were at the same time included in certain figures, natural or imaginary, but intensely symbolic and significant. Today we know them as the Constellations.

Twelve constellations make up the Zodiac. These major stargroupings form a belt which circles the sky close to the plane of the earth's orbit around the sun. Modern atlases list them in the following order: Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius and Pisces.

It is well known that the ancient races drew charts of these Zodiacal Signs; that ancient astrology was actually the father of astronomy. Astronomers sometimes denounce the Zodiac as unnatural and confusing, yet they have never been able to brush it aside or to substitute anything better or more convenient in its place. The Signs of the Zodiac are part of the common universal language of astronomical science.

The Zodiac is found in religious faiths and pagan superstitions. Astrology is based upon it. The Bible is replete with it. The Companion Bible tells us that all the verbs in the second half of Psalm 19 are of an astronomical nature. The written words of Scripture parallel the words written in the heavens and preserved in the Signs of the Zodiac.

Authors of books on astronomy, when referring to the figures associated with the constellations, speak of the antiquity of their origin. Without exception they are unable to give the source of the inspiration which resulted in the naming and meaning of the pictorial groupings. The existence of Zodiacal figures have been traced in all ages and among all nations, with all their features settled and fixed from the most distant periods. Learned antiquarians of modern times have searched every page of heathen mythology, ransacked all the legends of poetry and fables to answer the question, Who framed this system? Investigations of all the religions, sciences, customs and traditions of every nation, tribe and

people have failed to discover who first so accurately observed the celestial bodies and so sublimely wove them together into one great scheme. What the stars were meant to signify, over and above what is evidenced by their own nature, interpreters have been at a loss to tell us.

Were such wonderful creations of almighty power and wisdom without purpose or meaning? Was there some original, divine science connected with the star designs? Is there evidence to show it was the will of the Eternal God and that His sons and daughters enjoy His handiwork and understand His glory?

The purpose of this study is to present the findings of past eminent scholars, together with those of modern scientific investigators, in order to show the stars do reveal "*words written in the heavens*"*- words that declare the "*glory of God*".

THE STARS

*"And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: He made the stars also".**
Genesis 1:16

The stars are suns, heavenly bodies shining by their own light and generally so far away from us that, moving rapidly, they seem fixed in their position. Although several thousand stars are visible on the clearest night, a telescope reveals multitudes more. The total in our universe may run into billions, but even so, space is almost empty. The nearest star, our sun, is a mere 93 million miles away. The next nearest star is 26 million-million miles distant, nearly 300,000 times farther than our sun.

Semester 2:

Old Testament History

Old and New Covenant Marriage:

Chapter One God as Male and Female

Men and women are not only different but incomplete in themselves. They need each other in order to know the mind of God. It has been this way ever since God separated Adam and Eve into two individuals. Why did God separate them? Would it not have been more advantageous to leave male and female together and thus have both perspectives in every person? To answer this question is to discover some fundamental principles of marriage as God sees it.

The Names of God

Most people who study the "name" of God focus on the name YHWH (Yahweh) and its various sub-categories, such as Yahweh-Nissi (My Banner) or Yahweh-Rapha (Healer). It is not our purpose here to study each of these revelations of the character of Yahweh, but rather to compare the name of Yahweh with the name of El Shaddai. God spoke to Moses in Exodus 6:2, 3 and explained to him these two names,

² God spoke further to Moses and said to him, I am the Lord [literally, "Yahweh"]; ³ and I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as God Almighty [literally, "El Shaddai"], but by My name, Lord [Yahweh] I did not make Myself known to them.

This is a most important revelation of truth. The name of Yahweh was revealed first to Moses many centuries after Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Since Moses was the writer of the first five books of the Bible (the Torah), we see that he often inserted the name of Yahweh throughout the book of Genesis. Yet this was not to imply that the name of Yahweh had been revealed in those days, but rather to show that Yahweh was *active* during that time. The first occurrence of the name of Yahweh appears in Gen. 2:4,

⁴ This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God [Yahweh Elohim] made earth and heaven.

Hence, we know that Yahweh, usually reflected as *Lord* or *God* in biblical texts, was the Creator of heaven and earth, even though He did not reveal Himself by this name for the first 2,500 years of Adamic history. Then in Gen. 17:1 we find a very unique verse,

¹ Now when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord [Yahweh] appeared to Abram and said to him, I am God Almighty [El Shaddai]; Walk before Me and be blameless.

Note that *Yahweh* told Abram, “*I am El Shaddai.*” This tells us that El Shaddai is also Yahweh. They are the same God, but God uses both names, depending upon the occasion. Let no one think that there are two Gods. There is only one God, but He uses more than one name and has more than one manifestation.

El Shaddai is the name God uses to manifest the divine character of motherhood. The Hebrew word *shad* means “the breast of a woman or animal,” according to Strong’s Concordance, word #7699. Thus, the name shows the feminine, or mothering, side of God’s character.

The Hebrew word *El* is usually translated “God,” but more literally, the word refers to one who is in power over others. For example, God told Moses in Ex. 7:1, “*See, I make you as God to Pharaoh.*” This simply means that God had given Moses spiritual authority over Pharaoh. Pharaoh was, in effect, the servant or subject of Moses, though Pharaoh would not have admitted this. In its plural form, *Elohim*, the word is sometimes used of the judges in Israel. (See Ex. 21:6; 22:8, 9.)

So *El*, or *Elohim*, refers to one who is in power, or “almighty.” The name of El Shaddai, then, presents God as the Almighty Breasted One, the God who gave birth to creation and the nourisher and protector of her children, particularly during their youth. Therefore, this is the name by which God was revealed in the early days of man’s history—when man was yet “young.”

After about 2,500 years, however, God called Moses and revealed Himself under a new name, Yahweh. God had “changed hats,” so to speak. He was now revealing Himself as Father, rather than as Mother, because this “child” had grown to the place where he needed the firm hand of discipline from his Father. And so we find that Yahweh is the Lawgiver. Paul tells us in Gal. 3:24,

²⁴ Therefore, the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith.

The purpose of the divine law is a tutor to teach us the difference between right and wrong, between sin and righteous behavior. Without discipline, a child will be handicapped in his character and will never learn to respect the rights and property of other people. A parent spends much time acting as a judge to referee the countless disputes between their children. Each time a parent renders a verdict, the child is shown the meaning of the law’s justice, by which that child will know how to treat his fellow man for the rest of his life.

Divorce and Remarriage:

Divorce and Remarriage

is NOT Adultery

Church opinion has long favored the teaching that remarriage after divorce is adultery, based upon what we believe to be a single mistranslated word in Matthew 5:32 and a few incorrect assumptions. The result? A great many people today who are divorced and remarried are being expelled from their churches. Others are being refused leadership positions or are being plied with a load of guilt for “living in constant adultery.” It is tragic, and so very unnecessary. Many times it turns people away from God all together, either in rebellion against what they feel is an injustice in Scripture, or else through discouragement over their own inability to remain single for the rest of their lives.

In order for us to gain a better understanding of the entire question, we must go back to the beginning, to the days before God gave His holy law to Israel. We shall look first at the ancient Babylonian law Code of Hammurabi and then compare it with God's law in this matter of divorce and remarriage.

But first we must make it clear that this is not intended to be a book on marriage counseling. We have limited our focus to the question of whether or not God forbids remarriage after divorce. This book should not be used to encourage divorce, for the Bible makes it clear that God intended from the beginning for married people to make a life-long commitment to each other. On the other hand, it takes two to make a marriage, and it is often the case that only one marriage partner really wants to make the marriage work.

The fact is, in today's world there are many, many people who are divorced, and many of them are now happily remarried. Some counselors have actually suggested that these should be divorced and seek to remarry their former spouse. We will show from the divine law that such counsel is not of God, for God defines such remarriage to a former spouse as a sin. Such counsel only underlines the importance of our present book.

Hammurabi is the Biblical Nimrod

The oldest known law code from Mesopotamia is the Code of Hammurabi. Historians date this king of Babylon between 2400 and 2100 B.C. The book of Jasher 27:2 identifies him with Nimrod “the rebel” and dates him from 1908-2123 years from Adam, which is 1987-1772. B.C. (See our [Chronology of History](#).) According to Prof. A.H. Sayce, Hammurabi was mentioned in Genesis 14:1 under the name of Amraphel, one of the kings who helped the king of Elam conquer Sodom and capture Lot. In his book, [Monument Facts and Higher Critical Fancies](#), page 60, we read:

“Khammu-rabi, like others of his dynasty, claimed divine honours, and was addressed by his subjects as a god. In Babylonian *ilu* is ‘god,’ the Hebrew *el*, and *Ammu-rapi* would be ‘Khammu-rabi the god.’ Now *Ammu-rapi ilu* is letter for letter the Amraphel of Genesis.”

The war with Sodom took place during a time when Babylonia had been conquered by Chedorlaomer, the Elamite king of Gen. 14:1. Nimrod, or Amraphel (Hammurabi), was subject to Elam for many years. When Nimrod finally overthrew the Elamite yoke, he drew up his famous law code. Sayce tells us in [Monument Facts](#), p. 67, 68:

“The compilation of the code marked the overthrow of the Elamite domination, the recovery of Babylonian independence, and the establishment once more of a Babylonian empire.”

Hammurabi's Law on Divorce

According to Hammurabi's Code, a marriage was a simple contract, valid only if it was written, sealed (signed), and witnessed (Par. 128). Divorce was allowed, but treated in various ways, depending on which party broke the contract. If the wife were guilty, he could divorce her with the words, "I put her away," and he could send her away empty-handed (Par. 141). In the book by Stanley a. Cook, M.A. entitled, The Laws of Moses and the Code of Hammurabi, page 120, he quotes from paragraph 141 of the Hammurabi Code:

“If the wife of a man who is living in his house has set her face to go out, and has acted extravagantly, ‘has wasted her house’ (*bit-za u-za-ap-pa-ah*), and has neglected her husband, one can bring her to justice, and if her husband formally divorces her, with the words ‘I repudiate her’ (*e-si-ib-sa*), she goes her own way and receives no *uzubu*. If the husband does not pronounce this formula, and takes another woman (*zinnistu*), she remains in his house as a maid-servant.”

The wife too had the right to divorce her husband, if her husband had violated the marriage contract. However, this was a risky thing to attempt to do, because if the court should find HER to be the guilty party, she was thrown into the water and drowned (Par. 142, 143). Thus, another serious consideration for her was whether or not she could obtain justice in the court.

When the husband was at fault, the law was quite generous with her and took pains to provide for her support. If she had no children, her husband was to give her her dowry and the equivalent of her bride-price as she left the house (Par. 138). The dowry was the portion of her father's wealth given to her when she was married. Although she brought the dowry with her into her husband's house, it was tied to her for life and was never considered to be the property of her husband. It was her security in case of disaster or divorce. After her death, it was to be divided among her children, but never to go to her husband, even if he outlived her.

Bible Laws on Righteous Judgment:

Bible Laws on Righteous Judgment

“Thou shalt not bear false witness

against thy neighbor.” (Exodus 20:16)

The ninth commandment (above) is a summarized statement, a brief heading under which we find a number of laws governing court procedure. More specifically, this commandment regulates such things as slander, perjury, lying, double witnesses needed to convict anyone of any sin, and the principles of justice and mercy in general. Knowing these laws are critical in order to discern correctly and render righteous judgment, both in the divine court and in our personal lives.

Slander

⁵ Whoever secretly slanders his neighbor, him I will destroy; no one who has a haughty look and an arrogant heart will I endure. (Psalm 101:5, NASB)

In general, slander is falsely accusing another with the intent of destroying his reputation. It is usually done when the slanderer has no real proof of his victim's guilt. (If he did have proof, he would not be afraid to follow the biblical procedure, in which case, it would not be slander at all.) Thus, he tells others his opinions of that person in hopes that others will come to share his opinion. By definition, slander is always wrong because (1) it is accusation that is implemented improperly, and (2) it is devoid of love and is not intended to restore the victim in any way to full fellowship.

Dr. Dungoody, pastor, had a problem. A Bible teacher in his congregation was getting too popular, a little too popular, due to his knowledge, eloquence, and personality. The problem was that if he were ever to disagree with the pastor, a large share of the congregation might agree with him, and there could then be a danger of splitting the church.

Fearing a church split over an issue in the future that might arise, Pastor Dungoody viewed this Bible teacher with some suspicion and jealousy, watching him for signs that might indicate trouble.

It was not long before this Bible teacher committed an offense. The pastor immediately seized the opportunity to protest against the teacher. He got up into the pulpit the following week and "exposed the sin in the camp," complete with Scripture and denunciation, and all the tears and "love" that he could muster.

The Bible teacher was shocked by the fact that he had been given no private hearing, but was accused in public first. The lack of love left him hurt and embittered, and so he left the church never to return again. The pastor was then delighted to give a follow-up sermon entitled, "Wolves in Sheep's Clothing Never Repent."

This is the story of many people outside the Church today, people who felt the full "wrath of God" pronounced upon them by an unloving church whose philosophy was to "cut the cancer from their midst," with no real desire to restore the sinner or come to any understanding with the offender or sinner.

This is but one example of slander that occurs far too frequently today in churches that preach love but know not how to put it into practice. Such preachers (and others) disguise their slander with Scripture and hide their true inner motives—in this case, fear—by masking it with concern for the church.

The purpose of God is that all sinners should be brought back into full fellowship with God and men. As God sees it, the real purpose of the law is to teach righteousness. Isaiah 26:9 says,

⁹ . . . For when the earth experiences Thy judgments, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness.

Thus, the divine law is to be implemented in a positive way to bring about the *restoration* of the sinner. This can be done only when the law is applied by one motivated by the spirit of love and meekness. Gal. 6:1 says,

¹ Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; *each one* looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted.

The slanderer is malicious in that he aims to provoke his victim into outright rebellion. Our Pastor Dungoody was bright enough to realize that if he approached the problem scripturally and restored him, the Bible teacher would remain in the church, be a better person for the correction, and would continue to gain in popularity. Thus, the pastor's problem would still be there. But if he could provoke the teacher into reacting to the false accusation, the law would then have

grounds by which to judge him. And so the obvious solution was to attack him from the pulpit by slander, knowing that his victim would then react to this lack of love by fighting back in like manner.

Slander cannot bring God's lawful judgment upon the victim of slander. But when the victim's reaction to the slander is unlawful, he too falls into condemnation to some extent, and the slanderer rejoices in his heart for a job well done, while crying outwardly for the benefit of the public.

Most of the people, though hurt, remain unaware of the underlying motives and political games that are being played in their midst, using them as pawns.

The Laws of Spiritual Warfare:

The Laws of Spiritual Warfare

By Dr. Stephen E. Jones

Chapter One: The Maturing Process

"But speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up into all aspect of Him, who is the Head, even Christ."

Ephesians 4:15, NASB

Hearing God's voice produces faith in us (Rom. 10:17). But for what purpose? Is faith an end in itself? When we stand before God, will He use a heavenly faith-ometer to measure our faith and give us rewards based upon how many words we heard from God or how much faith we have accumulated? No, the practical consequence of faith is spiritual authority and with it comes many responsibilities. Hence, men will be judged according to their works (Rev. 20:12), which is their *obedience* to the word that they had heard.

When one receives a word from God, that word carries with it the responsibility to be obedient. If anyone questions whether or not he has the authority to do what God says to do, let it be known that the word itself gives the authority to do it. Whether or not the person is obedient, the person is accountable before God. For this reason, we ought primarily to seek to know for certain whether a word is from God or not. This may involve seeking a double witness, which, according to the divine law (Deut. 19:15), is what establishes all truth and divine revelation. Once we know for sure, we are accountable to Him to be obedient.

Next, we must seek the Father's heart to know how to fulfill the word in the manner that Jesus would have done. The method of obedience is nearly as important as the obedience itself. For example, one may receive a word to give some criticism or correction to a brother in Christ. An immature Christian might go to that person and beat him with that word. A more mature Christian might correct the brother gently and with meekness, as Paul counsels in Gal. 6:1.

Love: The Measure of Spiritual Maturity

As we learn to utilize the authority by the mind of Christ, we mature spiritually as well. Maturity is measured primarily by our capacity to love. In the Greek language of the New Testament, there were three or four Greek words that were all translated “love” into the English language. Each word, however, has a distinct application of love that is not set forth in the English word “love.”

The first, *eros*, does not actually appear in the New Testament. It means physical attraction and is the lowest form of love—a selfish kind of love that is more like “I need you” than “I love you.” A baby has no ability to modify his demands according to the situation. A baby does not care if the mother is tired at night—or even if she is dead! The baby only knows its own need and demands that it be met.

The second, *phileo*, means brotherly love. It is a greater form of love that is depicted by brothers and sisters in a family. It is a legal type of love, where people treat each other with equal justice toward all. Yet it is a 50/50 relationship, a conditional love that incorporates the idea of fairness. When children are being raised in a family, everything must be fair. That is the kind of love we find in *phileo*.

The third, *agape*, is the kind of unconditional love that God shows through Jesus Christ. It is most characterized by the statement in Rom. 5:6-10, where the love (*agape*) of God is manifested in that Christ died for the ungodly and reconciled His enemies. He did not do this after they became godly and friends. He did this while they were yet ungodly and enemies. This is what characterizes the mature believer, the overcomer.

A new believer who has experienced Passover by being justified by faith in the blood of the Lamb is called a Christian. But in that stage of his spiritual development, his relationship with God is generally that of a baby to its mother. The baby does not really know how to love its mother. The baby *needs* his mother. The baby is entirely self-referencing, and the mother responds to its needs. When Christians make demands upon God or others, it shows immaturity.

When a Christian begins to mature and to learn obedience, he is like a child who reaches the age when he is capable of learning to be obedient. He begins to learn the meaning of NO. The biblical term is “Thou shalt not.” Like a child who is learning to respect the property of others (particularly siblings), Christians in this stage of spiritual development also must learn the law. The law teaches people to respect the rights of others in a judicial relationship. This is *phileo* love. This is also the experience of Pentecost, which was the biblical feast celebrating the giving of the law at Mount Sinai.

When a Christian reaches some level of spiritual maturity and has learned to hear and obey the voice of God, he starts to enter the experience of the final feast of Israel, that of the Feast of Tabernacles. This is the realm of *agape* love. Overcomers are forgivers (Matt. 6:12 and 18:21-35.) They do not hold grudges, for the Lev. 19:18 says,

¹⁸ You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the Lord.

They have learned from Deut. 32:35 that “*to Me [God] belongeth vengeance and recompense.*” In Rom. 12:19 the apostle Paul quotes this and adds in verses 20 and 21,

²⁰ But if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head. ²¹ Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

The average Christian does not truly comprehend this principle. It takes real spiritual maturity to live by it. Any religion can teach men to love a good man. Jews are taught to love Moses and even to die for him. And they would be happy to take some of Moses’ enemies with them.

Muslims are taught to love Mohammed, and many would die for him, because they believe he was a good man and a great prophet. And they would be happy to take some of Allah's enemies with them. Many Christians would die for Jesus, because they believe that He was God in the flesh or at least a good man. And, unfortunately, they would be happy to take as many of Jesus' enemies and other heretics with them.

In Moses' day, the magicians of Egypt could match a few of Moses' miracles (Ex. 7:11, 22; 8:7, 18), but there came a point where they fell short (Ex. 9:11). Even so, all the religions of the world can teach men to love others, but they can go no further than *eros* and *phileo*. None can match the love of Christ, the love called *agape*. Such love is not rational.