

THE NEW TESTAMENT DOCTRINE THAT THE LAW OF MOSES IS WRITTEN ON THE HEART

For a work that is fond of blood both human and animal and spews hateful aspiration after hateful aspiration the Law of Moses is greatly esteemed in the New Testament. Jesus in Matthew 5 said that we must not water it down and let it into our hearts so that our following it beats the scribes and the Pharisees.

If the Law of Moses depends on a rational morality that cannot be done away then it would be true to say that it is written on the heart of every person on earth. They might refuse to see the truth of the Law but it is still written on their hearts.

In Romans 2, the apostle Paul wrote that even those who do not have the written Law have its principles written on their hearts. This is a response to the prophecy of Jeremiah 31:33 and Ezekiel which speak of God writing the Law of Moses on the hearts of his chosen people in the future. In their time, they were just written in books but not in hearts for nobody was interested in sincerely keeping them.

He means they know it by thinking for God can't make them believe in the Law if the Law is beyond reason.

Commentators prefer to believe that Paul means that some of the principles of the Law are engraved on their hearts and not all. They are happy to say that all people know stealing and adultery are wrong. But they deny that the laws about cleanness and about the Jewish God ordering the people to put people to death for certain crimes could be written on the heart.

But the lines before give a different interpretation. All the way up to this verse the word Law means the full Jewish Law. In verse 9, 10 he says that the Jew will be punished for not keeping all the Law. When the same word keeps turning up like that we can only take it to mean the same thing: the full Law. Paul already said in Romans 1 that the pagans knew by reason or deep down about God's existence and that God was opposed to homosexuality and a lot of other things many pagan codes found acceptable. He denied that the pagans just knew the commonsense stuff in the Law and nothing more. They knew the whole Law by the power of God. He says they knew too that homosexuals deserved death. That says it all. The New Testament sees the Law of Moses as eminently reasonable so it could not be done away. To abolish it would be to abolish morality.

The text saying that the written law kills and the spirit of the law lives in us is only saying God makes us live the law so it does not have to be a matter of forcing us. Cranks have used that text to argue that we can break the law in the name of living its spirit. That is totally absurd.

WORKS CONSULTED

- Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible, John W Haley, Whitaker House, Pennsylvania, undated
- Christ and Violence, Ronald J Sider, Herald Press, Scottsdale, Ontario, 1979
- Christ's Literal Reign on Earth From David's Throne at Jerusalem, John R Rice, Sword of the Lord, Murfreesboro, Tennessee, undated
- Early Christian Writings, Editor Maxwell Staniforth, Penguin, London, 1988
- Essentials, David L Edwards and John Stott, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1990
- Eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven, Uta Ranke-Heinmann, Penguin Books, London, 1991
- God A Guide to the Perplexed, Keith Ward, OneWorld, Oxford, 2003
- God's Festivals and Holy Days, Herbert W Armstrong, Worldwide Church of God, California, 1992
- Hard Sayings Derek Kidner InterVarsity Press, London, 1972
- Jesus the Only Saviour, Tony and Patricia Higton, Monarch, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, 1993
- Kennedy's Murder, John R Rice, Sword of the Lord, Murfreesboro, Tennessee, 1964
- Martin Luther, Richard Marius, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge Massachusetts, 1999
- Moral Philosophy, Joseph Rickaby SJ, Stonyhurst Philosophy Series, Longmans, Green and Co, London, 1912
- Not Under Law, Brian Edwards, Day One Publications, Bromley, Ken, 1994
- Radio Replies Vol 2, Frs Rumble and Carty, Radio Replies Press, St Paul, Minnesota, 1940
- Sabbath Keeping, Johnie Edwards, Guardian of Truth Publications, Kentucky
- Secrets of Romanism, Joseph Zacchello, Loizeaux Brothers, New Jersey, 1984
- Set My Exiles Free, John Power, Logos Books, MH Gill & Son Ltd, Dublin, 1967
- Storehouse Tithing, Does the Bible Teach it? John R Rice, Sword of the Lord, Murfreesboro, Tennessee, 1954
- Sunday or Sabbath? John R Rice, Sword of the Lord, Murfreesboro, 1943
- The Bible, The Biography, Karen Armstrong, Atlantic Books, London, 2007

The Christian and War, JB Norris, The Christadelphian, Birmingham, 1985
The Christian and War, Robert Moyer, Sword of the Lord Murfreesboro Tennessee 1946
The Encyclopaedia of Bible Difficulties, Gleason W Archer, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1982
The Enigma of Evil, John Wenham, Eagle, Guildford, Surrey, 1994
The Gospel and Strife, A. D. Norris, The Christadelphian, Birmingham, 1987
The Jesus Event, Martine Tripole SJ, Alba House, New York, 1980
The Kingdom of God on Earth, Stanley Owen, Christadelphian Publishing Office, Birmingham
The Metaphor of God Incarnate, John Hick, SCM Press, London, 1993
The Plain Truth about Easter, Herbert W Armstrong, Worldwide Church of God, California, 1957
The Sabbath, Peter Watkins, Christadelphian Bible Mission, Birmingham
The Ten Commandments, Herbert W Armstrong, Worldwide Church of God, California, 1972
The Truth that Leads to Eternal Life, Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, Brooklyn, New York, 1968
The World Ahead, November December 1998, Vol 6, Issue 6
Theodore Parker's Discourses, Theodore Parker, Longmans, Green, Reader & Dyer, London, 1876
Those Incredible Christians, Hugh Schonfield, Hutchinson, London, 1968
Vicars of Christ, Peter de Rosa, Corgi Books, London, 1995
War and Pacifism, Margaret Cooling, Scripture Union, London, 1988
War and the Gospel, Jean Lasserre, Herald Press, Ontario, 1962
When Critics Ask, Norman Geisler and Thomas Howe, Victor Books, Wheaton, Illinois, 1992
Which Day is the Christian Sabbath? Herbert W Armstrong, Worldwide Church of God, California, 1976

