

# **The Baptismal Regeneration / Believer's Baptism Debate**

A theological and historical overview of the most contested  
subject of the church age.

**Dr. J.O. Hosler**

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ISBN 0-7414-0590-3.

Published by [Infinity Publishing.com](http://InfinityPublishing.com)

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## Chapter Two

### Where Does *Law* Factor into Christianity?

Observation has been made, and will be expanded upon in the next chapter, to the fact that forgiveness of sin and eternal life were in all ages bestowed by the imputed righteousness of Christ when God's grace was received by faith. Thus, there never was a time when the Mosaic Law, or any other law obeyed by man, could give life or take away sin. Paul was not just speaking of a change in the terms of salvation when he spoke the words:

And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses (Acts 13:39).

He was speaking of the way salvation had always been. To prove his argument he pointed to the fact that the Mosaic Law could not have justified in the time of David:

And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David (Acts 13:34).

Moving backwards, the Law could not justify from the days of Paul to the time of David, nor from David past Moses through the time of Abraham. Paul connects David with Abraham in his argument against work's for salvation when he says:

For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God (Romans 4:2)

Then Paul applies the same precept to David when he wrote:

Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin (Romans 4:6-8).

David was describing a salvation stemming, not from the righteousness of the law, but from the imputed righteousness of Christ. The writer of Hebrews traces the gospel of imputed righteousness all the way back to Abel (Hebrews 11:4).

The Judaizers would love to enter the argument at this point and contest that, of course the law alone could not save, but faith plus law would. This is when they would need to see Paul's point unmistakably as he affirms:

But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness (Romans 4:5).

The Apostle wanted all to know that if salvation could be even partially earned by man then it was a debt God owed him and not a gift of grace—

Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt (Romans 4:4).

What is meant by the term *law*? The Bible often takes one term and uses it in a number of totally divergent applications. If one combines them all into one usage and application he can lose his focus on the whole Word of God. A prime example is the word *law*. This term can refer to the *Tora*—the first five books of Moses (Luke 24:44; John 1:41; 8:5). *The Law* sometimes refers to all the books of the Old Testament. John 10:34; 12:43; 15:25 quote the book of Psalms, but calls it *the law*. Sometimes the term refers to the general doctrines of the Scriptures (Psalms 19:7). It may refer to the Gospel itself in reference to the Messiah (Isaiah 2:3; 42:4). The doctrine of the imputed righteousness of Christ is called the *law of faith* (Rom. 3:27).<sup>1</sup> Sometimes it refers to the whole body of Mosaic Law as distinct from the gospel, as John wrote: *For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ* (John 1:17).

The Mosaic Law had three divisions: the ceremonial, the judicial-civil, and the moral law. The ceremonial law concerned priests, sacrifices, feasts, fasts, washings, distinguishing clean from unclean creatures, and circumcision. It was the ceremonial law that veiled the gospel in types and figures. Priests foreshadowed Christ and heavenly things—

And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them (Hebrews 7:23-25).

Sacrifices foreshadowed the crucifixion of the Savior—

For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself (Hebrews 7:26, 27).

The burnt, meal, and peace offerings were to maintain fellowship with God (Leviticus 1-3). The sin and trespass offerings were to restore fellowship to God (Leviticus 4-5), but they never did give life.

The holy feasts spoke of God's work of redemption. The Feast of Passover spoke of Calvary; Feast of First Fruits spoke of the resurrection; Feast of Pentecost ultimately became the occasion of the coming of the Holy Spirit; Feast of Trumpets spoke of the

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<sup>1</sup> "Where *is* boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith" (Rom 3:27). Paul demonstrates a play on words where he uses *law* as the standard by which God excludes human works of any kind. Therefore, *faith* can be called God's standard but faith is not a meritorious work. God's standard is *faith* (Jn. 6:29). In 6:29 Jesus refers to *belief* as a work (singular). The term *work* in this case means *requirement* and faith in Christ is what God requires of man. But, this faith is not a meritorious work of righteousness, cf. Rom. 4:5.

second coming; Feast of Atonement spoke of the tribulation; and Feast of Tabernacle spoke of the Millennium (Leviticus 23, 25).

The Tabernacle was a preview of Christ. The Brazen altar (Exodus 27:1-8; 38:1-7) pictured the slain Lamb of God (John 1:29). The Brazen Laver (Exodus 30:18; 38:8) spoke of the water of life (John 4:14). The table of shewbread (Exodus 25:23-30; 37:10-16) pointed to the bread of life (John 6:35). The lampstand (Exodus 25:31-40; 37:17-24) introduced one to Christ as the light of the world (John 9:5). The altar of incense (Exodus 30:1-10; 37:25-28) represents the great prayer of Christ (John 17). Finally, the mercy seat (Exodus 25:10-22; 37:1-9) speaks of the witness of Christ our mercy seat (I John 2:2). The washings foreshadowed cleansing by the blood of Christ (Revelations 1:5; 7:14).

The whole served as a schoolmaster to the Jews until Jesus came. But when the object of their faith came they were no longer under the schoolmaster. It was disannulled (fired as the schoolmaster) because of its weakness and unprofitableness, having its fulfillment and accomplishment in Christ. It was not disannulled as a giver of life because it never was such. It was not done away as a giver of righteousness unto salvation because it never was such. It was fired as God's ordained means to illustrate the finished work of Christ and educate us about salvation, as Paul wrote:

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster (Galatians 3:24, 25).

We still learn this by reading the Law, but God does not require us to obey it in order to learn the object of its foreshadowings.<sup>2</sup>

The judicial law concerns civil government in Israel and consists of statutes and judgments upon which political rulers in Israel governed the Jews and passed sentence upon lawbreakers (Deuteronomy 17:8-11). Its categories related to injuries to person or property, and to punishment of violations. The judicial law describes a theocracy—a government ruled by God's law. Even when there were kings and judges, they were to enforce only God's laws. God alone was the author of these laws and they were for Israel and no other nation.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> In a Roman home the *schoolmaster* was the *paidagogos* (Child leader). He was a slave or a servant who had charge of the children in the house. It was his job to feed, dress, bathe, blow the noses, spank, lead by the hand to school. The Law took us by the hand and led us to Christ and turns us over to Him so that we are no longer under the old *paidagogos*— (Gal. 4:1-5) “Now I say, *That* the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons (Gal. 4:1-5).

<sup>3</sup> Christians, on the other hand, are under human government and are to submit to manmade ordinances for the sake of the Lord and their consciences (Rom. 13:1-7; Titus 3:1; I Pet. 2:13,14).

The weekly, seven-year, and fifty-year Sabbaths not only spoke of God's great work of creation (Revelation 4:11), but also of Christ's rest from the finished work of salvation as well as the saint's rest from the idea of salvation by works. As the writer of Hebrews states: *For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his* (Hebrews 4:10).<sup>4</sup> And again:

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. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard *it*. For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he spake in a certain place of the seventh *day* on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works (Hebrews 4:1-4).<sup>5</sup>

The moral law is mostly in the Decalogue—or Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:3-17). Christ reduced both the judicial and moral tables of law into two capital ones—to love God whole-heartedly and to love neighbor as self (Matthew 22:36-40). The Apostle went further and reduced these two into *love* (Romans 13:8), which would fulfill the whole law. If anyone ever loved that much he would be in perfect obedience to the Law of Moses—a point which no man but Christ has ever achieved. Even the Law of Love condemns the best of mankind. God was the author and giver of the moral law and wrote it with His finger on tables of stone. Moses administered it from God; it was spoken by angels (Psalms 68:17; Acts 7:53; Hebrews 2:2); and ordained by angels as it was mediated in the hands of Moses when he stood between God and the people (Galatians 3:19).<sup>6</sup>

Next, it must be understood that the Mosaic Law was a covenant with the Jewish state and with no other political entity. It pertained to their continuance in the land of Canaan until the Messiah would come—

The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be (Genesis 49:10).

The law of inheritances would cease, alienation of inheritance by marriage would cease, restoration of inheritance at the year of jubilee would cease, marrying a brother's wife

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<sup>4</sup> The only qualification for entering eternal rest is belief and the only disqualification is disbelief—“Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief” (Heb. 4:6).

<sup>5</sup> Not only was the Sabbath a picture of resting from works for salvation but was also a picture of entrance into the Promised Land—“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: Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God” (Heb. 4:5-9).

<sup>6</sup> Dr. Harold Willmington lists 613 commandments in the Mosaic Law. Dr. H. L. Willmington, *Wilmington's Guide to the Bible*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1984), p. 940.

when he died without issue would cease – the design of which was to keep the tribes distinct until the Messiah came, so that it might be clearly known from what tribe He came forth. There was a cessation of laws regarding release from debts; letting the land rest every seventh year; of laws regarding lending on usury; of leaving a corner of the field for the poor, and the forgotten sheaf; of laws concerning divorces, and the trial of a suspected wife; and of the cities of refuge to flee from the avenger of blood. These would cease when Jewish polity ceased but they were never binding on other nations.

A primary example of the Jewishness of the Mosaic Law is the Sabbath day. It was given uniquely to the Jewish people (Exodus 16:29, 30). The whole decalogue was a covenant with the Israelites only, made with them when they were in the wilderness, giving them preference over all other nations and even their fathers before them (Deuteronomy 5:2-21; 4:6-8). This is also confirmed by the Psalmist when he said:

He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for his judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the LORD (Psalms 147:19-20).

Paul also supports the same conclusion as he writes:

...my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises (Romans 9:3b, 4).

The fourth commandment is for Israel only—

And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you (Exodus 31:12, 13).<sup>7</sup>

Nehemiah spoke of the Sabbath as God's covenant with Israel, which had not been made known to them before the wilderness. He mentions this along with other precepts, statutes and commandments:

And madest known unto them thy holy sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant (Nehemiah 9:14).

God spoke through Ezekiel saying:

Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD that sanctify them. But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness (Ezekiel 20:12,13a).

The Bible never charges anyone but Jews for breach of the Sabbath (Ezekiel 20:20-24). In Nehemiah's time the Tyrians sold fish to the Jews on the Sabbath and were threatened,

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<sup>7</sup> The same is repeated in vss. 16, 17.

shut out of the city and prohibited from entering with their goods. But it was the Jews who brought them into the city on the Sabbath in the first place and it was the Jews who were charged with the profaning of the Sabbath (Nehemiah 13:15-20).

This brings us to the fundamental question regarding law and order for Gentiles. If the Mosaic Law is for the earthly nation of Israel, then how can law and order exist in Gentile nations? Gentile nations are ruled by natural law, which has the same God as its author. It is inscribed on the heart of every human by the Creator. Herein God reveals His nature and the nature of moral good and evil—

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed *it* unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse (Romans 1:18-20).

The natural law of God is also perfect but, because of the fallen nature of man, Adam's posterity can only discern it imperfectly. Yet, by God's common grace, natural man discerns it enough to create law and order in a godless society—

For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and *their* thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another (Romans 2:14,15).

Now, the moral laws of Moses are the same in substance as divine-natural moral law. This is why the heathen can have law, order and decency without the establishment of a theocracy and a particular religion. Paul describes the unregenerate as *holding the truth in unrighteousness* and as knowing God but glorifying *Him not as God* (Romans 1:18,19, 21). Paul is not giving unregenerate man meritorious credit for his intellect but attributes understanding of natural law to God's sovereign, yet common, grace upon all flesh. We see traces of divine-natural law in the code of Ur-Nammu of ancient Sumer (c.2113-2006 B.C.) where the king was concerned that orphans did not fall prey to the wealthy and that the man of one shekel did not fall prey to the man of sixty shekels.<sup>8</sup> Natural law can be observed, though imperfectly, in the code of Hammurabi of ancient Babylon (c. 1792-1750 B.C.), whose purpose was: *to cause justice to prevail in the land, to destroy the wicked and the evil, to prevent the strong from oppressing the weak...and*

*to further the welfare of the people.*<sup>9</sup> The Ancient Hittite empire (after 1450 B.C.) had a similar code, but differed in prescribing more humane punishments. Instead of retaliation (*an eye for an eye*), the Hittite code made greater use of restitution and compensation. In 450 B.C. Roman law was inscribed on twelve tablets of bronze (called The Law of the Twelve Tables) and set up publicly in the Forum. When Justinian commissioned

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<sup>8</sup> S. N. Kramer, *From the Tablets of Sumer* (Indian Hills, Colorado.: The Falcon's Wing Press, 1956), p. 50.

<sup>9</sup> R. F. Harper, *The Code of Hammurabi* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1904), p. 3.

scholars to compile the mass of Roman laws into a unified Justinian Code, it became formally titled *Corpus Juris Civilis*. It was replete with traces of natural laws of right and wrong, virtue and vice, and justice and wrath. The Napoleonic code was completed in 1804. It was a great Civil Code written with precision and clarity. It guaranteed many of the achievements of the French Revolution, such as religious toleration and the abolition of elite privilege. It had a marked influence upon the laws of many other countries. It would be too tedious here to speak of ancient African laws; Aztec laws, Chinese laws; Germanic folk law; Japanese laws, and Russian laws. Suffice it to say that, without the Mosaic system or established Christianity, pagans have always held the truth of God in unrighteousness and understood His righteousness and wrath from their collective conscience (Romans 1:18-19).

Gentiles do not know in their hearts to keep the Sabbath because its law is not of a moral nature. Otherwise it could not have been dispensed with in that God does not dispense with natural law. But the Sabbath has been abolished (Matthew 12:1-12), so that the Apostle Paul could say to the Colossians:

Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath *days*: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body *is* of Christ (Colossians 2:16, 17).

When considering Natural Law it is essential to remember it also cannot bestow life on the one who would follow its precepts—

Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe (Galatians 3:21, 22).

Both Mosaic and Natural laws serve to restrain, forbid, and punish men for offences. But primarily, they serve to make the offence abound so that men may see themselves as exceedingly sinful and worthy of God's condemnation—*Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound* (Romans 5:20). And again:

Wherefore the law *is* holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful (Romans 7:12, 13).

So, the severity of the Law convinces man that he is lost and leads him to the grace of Christ—*Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith* (Galatians 3:24). When a bearded man looks into a mirror it will show him that he needs a shave, but it will not shave him. And when an unregenerate man looks into the Law it will show him his need to be saved, but it will not save him.

The Mosaic Covenant was not a pure covenant of works. However, many self-righteous Jews turned it into one, and sought for life and righteousness by it. Thus, it became bondage and a killing letter. Though not the plan of salvation, it was partially a covenant of grace in that it was given as a distinguishing favor to the nation of Israel—

But ye that did cleave unto the LORD your God *are* alive every one of you this day. Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the LORD my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it. Keep therefore and do *them*; for this *is* your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation *is* a wise and understanding people. For what nation *is there so* great, who *hath* God *so* nigh unto them, as the LORD our God *is* in all *things that* we call upon him *for*? And what nation *is there so* great, that hath statutes and judgments *so* righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day? (Deuteronomy 4:4-8).

He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation: and *as for his* judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the LORD (Psalms 147:19, 20).

Who are Israelites; to whom *pertaineth* the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service *of God*, and the promises (Romans 9:4).

There is much mercy and kindness to be observed within the Law of Moses. The moral law begins with a declaration of Jehovah being the God of Israel, Who had, in His great goodness, delivered them out of the land of Egypt (Exodus 20:2, 6, 12). The Mosaic system pointed to Christ Who was made under the Law and became the surety of His people—

But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons (Galatians 4:4, 5).

Christ became the fulfillment of the righteousness of the Law (and all righteousness)—

And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness (Matthew 3:15).

And again: Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil (5:17).

He became the end of the law or the object at which it aimed—

*For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth* (Romans 10:4).

The Mosaic law was *perfect* (Psalms 19:7)<sup>10</sup>, spiritual (Romans 7:14)<sup>11</sup>, holy (Romans 7:12); just (Romans 7:12; Deuteronomy 4:8; Psalms 19:9), and good (Romans 7:21, 22). And, though it did not give life, it would give great reward for those who at least sought to live by its commandments for the right reason. One such reward being peace of conscience (Psalms 19:11; 119:165). Thus, the law was good *if a man use it lawfully* (I Timothy 1:8). The Law is used unlawfully when a man seeks to obtain life and righteousness before God by it—

For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them (Romans 10:2-5).

But the Law is used lawfully when one attempts to obey its moral precepts faithfully, from a motive of love, with a view of eternal reward and inheritance; but most of all, to glorify God.

Even though the Law is no longer the schoolmaster and is helpless to give life, it is not altogether useless. The Law convinces us of sin (Romans 3:20; John 16:8), condemns and punishes sin (I Timothy 1:9, 10)<sup>12</sup>, and restrains from sin (Romans 13:3).<sup>13</sup>

The moral law of God, though it does not give life, becomes a rule of life to the believer in Christ and is therefore of great use to him also. It points out the Christian's duty to God and man and what is to be avoided (Psalms 119:105; Romans 12:1, 2). Therefore, though believers are freed from the Law, yet we are *not without law to God, but under the law to Christ* (I Corinthians 9:21). Christians approach the Law not at Sinai but in Christ. It is a mirror by which the saint constantly reminds himself of his own imperfection when compared to the imputed righteousness of Christ. The Psalmist said:

I have seen an end of all perfection: but thy commandment is exceeding broad (Psalms 119:96).<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> When Paul looked into the mirror of the law he saw himself *carnal, and sold under sin* (Rom. 7:14).

<sup>11</sup> This refers to the moral law in that the ceremonial law was a *carnal commandment* which stood in *carnal ordinances* (Heb. 7:16; 9:10).

<sup>12</sup> The law accuses of sin, charges with it, brings evidence of it, stops the sinner's mouth from pleading his own cause, pronounces guilty before God, curses, it is the ministration of condemnation and death, and its sentence takes place where the righteousness of Christ is not imputed.

<sup>13</sup> This is accomplished by the laws of men making civil magistrates the terrors to evil doers (Rom. 13:3).

<sup>14</sup> The commandment is broad, to which the imperfect works of the saint are not commensurate.

The Law is not only a glass to magnify our sin, but the righteousness of Christ is a glass to magnify the Law and make it honorable. Therefore, the saint's desire is to be found in Christ, as Paul proclaimed:

And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith (Philippians 3:9).

In the sense we have just described, the Law continues today. It is in this sense that Christ did not come to destroy the Law or to loosen our obligations to its moral

demands. These obligations have not been nullified but neither do they give life. What has been nullified is the Law's power to condemn the believer when he sins. In that sense it has been *done away*, and saints are *delivered* from it – *that being dead wherein they were held*, as in a prison; they *become dead to it by the body of Christ*, that is, by His obedient suffering under it—

Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, *even* to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not *in* the oldness of the letter (Romans 7:4-6).

The Law does not continue as a covenant of works for salvation because it never was such, though it was a covenant of works for Israel's possession of the Promised Land. The Jews turned it into a covenant of works for salvation and sought righteousness and life by it. But God has never made a covenant of works for salvation since the fall of man because it never was in the power of man to meet such conditions.

So, in what sense is the Mosaic Law abrogated and the New Covenant inaugurated? First, the old administration was only intended to continue for a time, until a period called *The time of reformation* (Hebrews 9:10), when there would be a reform from burdensome rites and ceremonies. The ceremonial law was the schoolmaster until Christ came, which was when—*the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law* (Galatians 4:4). This was agreed upon by the council of the Trinity before the foundation of the world, so that Jews would no longer need their ceremonial schoolmaster (Galatians 3:24, 25).

Secondly, the Mosaic Law, in its course of time, was limited to Jewish People in the Promised Land, worshipping at a specified place, and sacrificing on the same altar (Psalms 147:19, 20; Romans 3:1, 2; 9:4). All their males were obligated to appear at Jerusalem three times a year and worship together. Their offerings and sacrifices were to be presented on the altar there, and no where else (Deuteronomy 12:11, 14; 16:16). The people of all nations could never have been convened into one country, and worshiped at one place, and have sacrificed on one altar.

Thirdly, it was foretold that Mosaic sacrifices would cease, and be no more acceptable to God.<sup>15</sup> These offerings never were in as high esteem with God as the true condition of the heart—

Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams (I Sam. 15:22).

I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving. This also shall please the LORD better than an ox or bullock that hath horns and hoofs (Psalms 69:30, 31).

For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings (Hosea 6:6).

Jeremiah 31:31, 32 prophesied that the Old Covenant would be replaced by the New and is reiterated in Hebrews 8:13:

In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.

David said it when he proclaimed:

Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me (Psalms 40:6, 7).

The writer of Hebrews affirmed the same words (Hebrews 10:5-7).<sup>16</sup>

The Scriptures give several reasons why the Mosaic system must cease. First, it was a covenant of types for a people who were a type of the true spiritual people of God, both Jews and Gentiles. The works, duties, and services required of them with so much strictness, rigor, and severity, were typical of the obedience of Christ. The blessings of the Mosaic system were typical shadows of good and spiritual blessings that were to come by Christ (Hebrews 9:11; 10:1). The land of Canaan was a type of their eternal inheritance on the same land.<sup>17</sup> The city of Jerusalem was a type of the New Jerusalem

<sup>15</sup> If you are a millennialist you will see that there is a ceremonial/sacrificial system there but its details are definitely not Mosaic. There will be a temple (Ez. 40:39, 40). There will be a priesthood and an altar at this temple (Ez. 43:18-27; Jer. 33:16-18). There will be offerings for the Sabbath (Ez 46:1-5; Isa. 66:23). There will be offerings for the New Moon (Ez. 46:6-8). There will be Millennial sacrifices (Isa. 56:7). There will be Levites with new job descriptions (Mal. 3:2-4). There will be Gentile worship (Zech. 14:16). And there will be funerals (Isa. 65:20). But all of this is not the Mosaic system that was abrogated. These rituals will serve the Millennial saints as Baptism and Communion serve Church Age saints. They are the testimonies of believers pointing retrospectively back to the Cross of Christ as the object of faith.

<sup>16</sup> The Prophet Jeremiah prophesied the same thing in 3:16.

<sup>17</sup> Though the Promised Land was a land of milk and honey, the curse was still there; weeds were still there; poisonous snakes were still there and carnivorous predators were still there. It was good but it was only a type of the prophetic Promised Land with the curse lifted (Isa. 11). And this is a type of the Christian who is delivered from bondage and condemnation and now possesses eternal life. This is better than being lost and condemned but he is still in a physical body that is under a curse. He is quickened but

which, *hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God* (Hebrews 11:10).<sup>18</sup> The sacrifices, the priests who offered them, the garments they wore, were only examples and shadows of heavenly things (Hebrews 8:4, 5; 9:23). Moses, the mediator of the old covenant, was typical of Christ,

the mediator of the New Covenant. The blood of the Mosaic sacrifices was typical of the blood of Christ—called: *the blood of the everlasting covenant* (Hebrews 9:18; 13:20). When the Antitype of all these came, the types ceased—*Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ* (Colossians 2:17).

The Mosaic system must pass away because it was faulty—

For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah (Hebrews 8:7, 8).

It did not exhibit Christ in Person but only in figure, promise and prophecy. It pointed to salvation in Christ but did not offer salvation in itself. It could not make propitiation, reconciliation, or satisfaction for sin, nor redemption from it (Romans 3:25; Hebrews 9:15). The sacrifices were imperfect, and, for some sins, there were no sacrifices appointed, such as for sabbath-breaking, murder, and adultery. The sacrifices that were appointed could not take sins away. They sanctified only *to the purifying of the flesh* but could not clear the conscience to purge it from dead works. Only the blood of Christ could do that (Hebrews 9:13, 14).

The old system was faulty in its being a state of darkness and obscurity. But, in reality, most Israelites *could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished*, (i.e. the ceremonial law, II Corinthians 3:13:b). Most Jews could not see the end and design of the ceremonies, rituals and ordinances. Though there were promises of grace, they were covered with the veil of ceremonies of which the veil on the glory of Moses' face was only a type (II Corinthians 3:7, 13).

The old system was faulty because it was a state of bondage, as signified by Hagar the bond-woman (Galatians 4:30, 31), and by Mount Sinai, which tended to bondage and answered to Jerusalem (Galatians 4:3, 24, 25). They, through fear of physical death, were all their lives subject to bondage (Hebrews 2:15).

The Apostle Paul calls the old rites and ceremonies *weak and beggarly elements* (Galatians 4:9) and therefore they were disannulled because of their weakness and unprofitableness—

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he waits for the quickening of his body (Rom. 8:11). He is redeemed but he groans with all creation and waits for the redemption of his body (Rom. 8:22, 23).

<sup>18</sup> The Old Jerusalem waiting for the New Jerusalem illustrates the redeemed saint in a corruptible body waiting to put on incorruption; a mortal body waiting to put on immortality (I Cor. 15:51-58).

For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God (Hebrews 7:18,19).

They could not take sin from the conscience nor from the sight of God, so that there would be no more remembrance of them. Notwithstanding the morning and evening sacrifices, in addition to all others, there was an annual remembrance made of sin again on the day of atonement (Hebrews 9:9; 10:1-4).

The abrogation of the old system was signified by the rending of the veil between the holy place and the holy of holies at the death of Christ, because Christ is now our way into the holiest. And now, with boldness and freedom, we enter in to the holiest of all by the blood of Jesus, a new and living way, consecrated through the veil of His flesh, of which the former veil was a type—

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 (Hebrews 10:19-20).

The ceremonial law enclosed the court of the Israelites in the temple, over which the Gentiles might not pass.<sup>19</sup> The abrogation of the old system broke down *the middle wall of partition* which stood between Jews and Gentiles (Ephesians 2:14-16). This is also called *a blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us*, in which Christ nailed it to His cross, where the wrath of God was poured out and where the justice and holiness of God were satisfied (Colossians 2:14).<sup>20</sup>

Now, it must be observed that the abrogation of the old system and the inauguration of the new were both accomplished in Christ, but implemented gradually and in stages. A misunderstanding of this could lead to great confusion. The writer of Hebrews suggests as much when he says:

In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away (Hebrews 8:13).

The old system began to decay at the Babylonian captivity and under the second temple. The old temple was burnt, temple worship and service ceased, and the vessels of it were carried to Babylon. During the return when the temple was rebuilt and worship restored, the ark and many other things were not there. The sect of the Pharisees arose and set up

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<sup>19</sup> Paul was falsely accused of taking Greeks into the court of the Israelites and thus defiling the temple (Acts 21:28, 29). But what if he had? For Paul knew that such had been abolished—“For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, *so* making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby” (Eph. 2:14-16)

<sup>20</sup> This is signified by the fleeing away and disappearance of *shadows*. When the Sun of Righteousness arose, these shadows fled. Cf. Cant. 2:17; 4:6.

their own traditions on a level with the written word, if not above it, and there was great confusion when the priesthood and civil government became blended together. The

priesthood was often obtained by corruption and bribery. Then came John the Baptist saying: *Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world* (John 1:29)—which the Mosaic sacrifices could not do. Yet the Law continued during John’s ministry. Jesus himself was circumcised on the eighth day, at twelve years of age He went up to Jerusalem with His parents to keep the Passover, and, upon entering His public ministry, He attended synagogue and temple worship. When He healed the leper, He sent him to the priest to offer his gift. He kept the Passover with His disciples. But at His death, all Mosaic ceremonies ceased, as Luke expressed it:

For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end (Luke 22:37).

For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth (Rom. 10:4).

Yet *they of the circumcision* had such strong influence over weak minds that it was thought advisable to continue the ceremonies into the new dispensation even after it was known by Peter and others that they were no longer in force. Because of the many “thousands” of Jewish converts, who were still zealous for Mosaic ceremony, it was judged proper that compliances should be made (Acts 21:23-29). But the saints were exhorted to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free, and not to be entangled again with the yoke of bondage (Galatians 5:1). Indeed, the Jews continued these sacrifices and ceremonies until the destruction of Jerusalem [70 A.D.], which put an historical end to them, for the law specified that sacrifices could only be offered upon the altar at Jerusalem. The Epistle to the Hebrews was written just shortly before Jerusalem’s destruction. This is why there is such an emphasis on the decay of the old covenant as waxen old and *ready to vanish away* (Hebrews 8:13).

It is also important to notice that the New Covenant is gradually introduced. Did it begin at the birth of Christ, the ministry of John the Baptist, the death of Christ, His resurrection, His ascension, the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, or during the Millennium as Jeremiah prophesied?<sup>21</sup> At the birth of Christ *the fullness of time* was come for the redemption of His people from the law and from their enemies. It was on that day that the Gospel was preached by the angels to the shepherds, but later even more clearly by John the Baptist, then by Christ and finally by His apostles. Mark notes the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God to be with the ministry of John the Baptist (Mark 1:1-3), which agrees with what Christ said:

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<sup>21</sup> The New Covenant is everlasting (Isa. 55:3), of peace (Ez. 34:25), of life (Mal. 2:5), God is its author (Eph. 2:4), God’s love is its cause (John 3:16), Christ is its Mediator (I Tim. 2:5), it originated in eternity past (Rom. 8:29,30), it was introduced when man fell (Gen. 3:15), it was realized at Christ’s death (Eph. 2:13-22), the apostles were ministers of it to both Jews and Gentiles (II Cor. 3:6), it has promises just to the Jews (Heb. 8:8), it replaces the Old Covenant (Heb. 8:13), it will be consummated in the millennium and into eternity future (Eph. 2:7).

The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it (Luke 16:16).

And yet grace and truth came by Jesus Christ more clearly and fully than ever before (John 1:17). He not only preached that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, as John did, but that it had already come (Luke 17:20-21), though not with the pomp and victory that will be displayed at His second coming and during the millennium. By His death and shed blood, the New Covenant was sealed, ratified, and confirmed by Himself as its Testator. Therefore, His blood is called: *the blood of the New Testament*, and *the blood of the*

*everlasting Covenant* (Matthew 26:28; Hebrews 13:20). But the new covenant appeared even more clearly at the ascension and at the baptism of the Holy Spirit, for Christ ordered them to not yet begin carrying out the great commission (Matthew 28:18-20), but instead, to tarry at Jerusalem until they were endued with the power of the Holy Spirit. Yet again, Jeremiah 31:31-34 speaks of aspects of the New Covenant that will be fulfilled only during the Millennium.<sup>22</sup> The plan of salvation is complete in Christ and is integral to the New Covenant, but the New Covenant is more than just the plan of Salvation, in that it contains millennial promises as well.<sup>23</sup>

In the New Covenant, Christ is the author and finisher of our eternal salvation (Hebrews 12:2; I Timothy 1:15; 3:16). This gospel was first spoken by Christ in the clearest and fullest manner; and then by His apostles, confirmed by signs and miracles (Mark 16:19; Hebrews 2:3, 4). And the New Covenant with its plan of eternal salvation is seen in ordinances more spiritual than the old ordinances, the latter of which are called *carnal*. Baptism and the Lord's Supper do not teach us about the gospel but are our testimony of what we already know. They are not our schoolmasters but our testimonies of what we are already assured that Christ has accomplished in order to save us eternally.

Some of the reasons why Old Testament Jews stumbled over Christ, the *Stumbling Stone*, were: their inability to distinguish fleshly seed of Abraham from the spiritual seed of Abraham, ritual circumcision from spiritual circumcision, present Palestine from eternal Palestine, and corporate Israel from spiritual Israel.

Many Jews believed that they were saved eternally by the heredity of Abraham's physical seed. John the Baptist confronted them regarding this when he said:

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<sup>22</sup> The O.T. saints, and even angels, only understood the ancient prophecies of the coming New Covenant to anticipate one advent of the Messiah. This is why the wise men, the shepherds, and even the angels thought that the birth of Christ was the beginning of the millennium. The Angels sang: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Lk. 2:14), but Christ said: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword" (Matt. 10:34). The New Covenant for Israel in the Millennium will make teachers obsolete in that the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord. This is not true of the Church Age (Jer. 31:31-34).

<sup>23</sup> In the plan of salvation (which is integral to the New Covenant) there is neither Jew nor Greek (Gal. 3:28). And yet the New Covenant contains promises that pertain only to Judah and Israel being recombined as one in a day when no one will need to be taught and when the grace of God will cause saved Jews to obey and follow God's statutes (Jer 31:31-34; Isa. 11:9; Hab. 2:14). The New Covenant promises the preservation of the nation of Israel as a key element (Jer 31:35-37).

And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham (Matthew 3:9).<sup>24</sup>

They did not think they had a need for salvation if they were Abraham's seed—

And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? (John 8:32,33).

The Apostle Paul tried to show the Jews the difference when he said:

Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent (Acts 13:26).

Paul knew that they relied on being of the stock of Abraham to save their souls. If any Jew is going to inherit the Promised Land forever by simply being Abraham's stock then the Abrahamic promises are cancelled—

For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect (Romans 4:14).

There are two kinds of Jews and only one of the two inherit forever—

That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed (Romans 9:8).

In fact, there will come a day when uncircumcised believers will stand in judgment of lost circumcised Jews—

And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law? For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God (Romans 2:27-29).

Many Jews were certain that ritual-fleshly circumcision and spiritual circumcision were one and the same and therefore on that premise they claimed the eternal promises made to Abraham. Moses taught them differently than this from the very beginning when he wrote: *Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked.* (Deuteronomy 10:16). Only when the Jewish heart becomes circumcised can he claim the eternal promise in the Abrahamic covenant—

...if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity: Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant

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<sup>24</sup> See (Ez. 33:24, 25; Jn. 8:39-44, 53; Rom. 9:7, 8).

with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land (Leviticus 26:41b,42). Cf. Deut. 30:6.

Jeremiah warned the Jews that failure to learn this truth would provoke God to take their Promised Land from them—

Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem: lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings (Jeremiah 4:4).

Jeremiah taught circumcised Jews that if they did not experience heart circumcision they would experience the same judgment of God reserved for uncircumcised pagans—

But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I *am* the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these *things* I delight, saith the LORD. Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will punish all *them which are* circumcised with the uncircumcised; Egypt, and Judah, and Edom, and the children of Ammon, and Moab, and all *that are* in the utmost corners, that dwell in the wilderness: for all *these* nations *are* uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel *are* uncircumcised in the heart (Jeremiah 9:24-26).<sup>25</sup>

Many Jews of Ezekiel's day thought that fleshly circumcision was all that qualified them to commune with God in His sanctuary but the prophet taught them differently:

In that ye have brought *into my sanctuary* strangers, uncircumcised in heart, and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in my sanctuary, to pollute it, *even* my house, when ye offer my bread, the fat and the blood, and they have broken my covenant because of all your abominations. And ye have not kept the charge of mine holy things: but ye have set keepers of my charge in my sanctuary for yourselves. Thus saith the Lord GOD; No stranger, uncircumcised in heart, nor uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter into my sanctuary, of any stranger that *is* among the children of Israel (Ezekiel 44:7-9).

Even though Christ was ritually circumcised and ritually baptized, His crucifixion is also called His circumcision and His baptism. It is this latter circumcision and baptism that saves us for eternity—

In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of

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<sup>25</sup> Jeremiah describes the unreceptive, haughty and proud as having an uncircumcised ear (Jer. 6:10).

ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross (Colossians 2:11-14).<sup>26</sup>

But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished (Luke 12:50)

But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? (Mark 10:38)

Physical circumcision has nothing to do with becoming a new creature in Christ Jesus—*For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature* (Galatians 6:15). Those who understand this rule are the true spiritual seed of Abraham—

And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God (Galatians 6:16).<sup>27</sup>

There is only one plan of salvation for circumcised Jews and uncircumcised Gentiles—

Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith (Romans 3:30).

Gentiles are made partakers of the eternal salvation of the Abrahamic covenant, not by ritual, but by the blood of Christ—

Wherefore remember, that ye *being* in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ (Ephesians 2:11-13).

The only way a Jew or a Gentile can lay hold of eternal life and promise is through the same faith that Abraham possessed before he was ever circumcised—

*Cometh* this blessedness then upon the circumcision *only*, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which *he had yet* being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which *he had* being *yet* uncircumcised. For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, *was* not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith (Romans 4:9-13).

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<sup>26</sup> “Buried with him in baptism” does not mean that we were baptized to get with Him, but that we were already with Him when we were buried in water. This concept will be discussed with more detail in chapter nine of this present work.

<sup>27</sup> See (I Cor. 7:18, 19; Gal. 5:2-4).

We know that the same faith, prior to and distinct from outward ritual, is the only assurance of our own salvation—

Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him;  
But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that  
raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our  
offences, and was raised again for our justification (Romans 4:23-25).

This chapter may have been difficult for some Christians to read. It might seem to have been an exercise in beating a dead horse because no one in Christendom has argued for circumcision in the plan of salvation for over fifteen hundred years. But, when “Christendom” proclaimed that baptism replaced circumcision, all of the arguments for circumcision became arguments for baptismal regeneration. Particularly was this true in the baptism of infants. Thus, to this very day, millions of professed Christians believe that regeneration, illumination, salvation, and entrance into the spiritual body of Christ are created by, or at least imparted by or through, the ritual of water baptism.<sup>28</sup> The same is believed regarding the Lord's Supper. Both are considered a means of saving grace. It will be the ultimate purpose of this present study to demonstrate that this idea is the old circumcision error with a different name.

So, how does one receive the eternal promise of salvation? First, the sin of Adam is imputed to all mankind. Second, mankind also commits sins. Third, man's sin is imputed to Christ. Fourth, Christ goes to the cross to receive the just wrath of the Father upon His own body in payment and satisfaction for man's sin. Fifth, by God's common grace and His Word, man sees his moral and spiritual bankruptcy before God and may accept forgiveness and eternal life as a one hundred percent free gift from God. Sixth, the righteousness of Christ is imputed to the sinner pronouncing him sinless before God—

For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might  
be made the righteousness of God in him (II Corinthians 5:21).

In the next chapter we will demonstrate that there has been only one plan of salvation throughout all ages, dispensations, and under all the various covenants of the Bible.

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<sup>28</sup> Stephen J. Wellum defines the paedobaptist position in *The Compromised Church*, John H. Armstrong, Editor (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 1998), p. 161—“Those who advocate a paedobaptist position admit that even though there is no explicit command in the New Testament to baptize infants, the practice is still legitimate...Since infants were included in the Old Covenant through circumcision, which was an outward sign of entrance into the covenant community, and since circumcision has been replaced by baptism in the New Covenant, then believing parents are required to administer the New Covenant sign—baptism—to their children...”