FREELY GIVEN, FREELY GIVE

by

Alan Navarre
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Santa Fe, New Mexico
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Preface

I drafted most of the material in this book from 1992 to 1994, and just when I was ready to publish several years later I heard John Anderson’s “The Voice Of Reason” radio program, in April 2002, and I knew that I had a steep eschatological learning curve to scale before publishing anything.

Then another broadcast catalyzed me to publish Freely Given, Freely Give. In November 2007, I heard Rory Moore interviewed on ZephNet.com about his recently published book The Tithe That Binds. In August 2007 Kurt Simmons’s elucidating article on the law of sin and death provided the penultimate stimulation to publish.

Freely Given, Freely Give comprises the chiefly non-eschatological chapters of my original manuscript.

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Introduction

It may be true that what some people believe is not based on facts, evidence, or objective reality. It may be said that such people exist in a different reality. Or such people may be likened to a fish in a long narrow aquarium which swims nose-on into a clear pane of glass halfway down the aquarium, time after time after time after time, as if the pane were not there. The fish, of course, does not remember the pane, it does not learn that there is a pane there, and swims into it again and again and again ad infinitum. A fish, unlike a human being, does not have the capacity to remember or to learn. A human being does. Thus is might be said that a human being who does not learn demonstrates a fish-like characteristic. Whereas actually it is a person’s will, or volition, which overrides reason in a situation where the person rejects facts, evidence, or objective reality in favor of his or her willful belief.

The case in point in this book is a person who is told something untrue but believes it to be true despite all evidence, facts, or objective reality to the contrary. For instance, this may be a person who goes to church and believes everything a priest, pastor, minister, etc., says without studying the Bible for him or herself. After a sufficiently long indoctrination period, such a person will be programmed to believed what he or she has been hearing, including untrue things, so much so that at a relatively late-enough point in the process it will be virtually impossible for the person to be deprogrammed, i.e., for such a person to alter his or her belief if somebody comes along and says, “The Bible doesn’t say that. Have you read it? Have you studied it, meaning, the Greek? Have you researched the historical context?”

By this point, of course, the person will be aghast at such questions and may have dismissed the questioner with false indignation.

But is this not what Jesus of Nazareth did? Did he not confront people who were believing in falsehood, “fables,” as the Bible
Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith. (1 Tim 1:4)

But refuse profane and old wives’ fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness. (1 Tim 4:7)

And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. (2 Tim 4:4)

Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth. (Ti 1:14)

For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. (2 Pt 1:16)

The Pharisees had believed in something and Jesus came along and, in so many words, asked them if what they believed was based on what the Scriptures say. The Pharisees’ way of life was based on what they believed, but what they believed was not based on what the Old Covenant (or Testament) Scriptures say. Jesus told the Pharisees that what they believed was false, which meant that their entire existence was false: their way of life was spiritually opposed to what the Scriptures say.

Not much has changed.

Upon my conversion to New Covenant spirituality in 1982, I started going to church. Within a year I was discerning that much of what was being said and done in church was not based on what I was reading in the Bible. I thought the problem must be the pastor, so I hopped to another church. Several years and a dozen churches later, I realized the problem was not the pastor but the religion of Churchianity itself.

For the next few years I struggled over the fellowship issue, based on my inaccurate interpretation of Hebrews 10:23-25:

23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)
24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto
love and to good works:
25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another.

I had not yet understood that what this passage describes was not actually occurring in church, in Bible studies, in anything to do with Churchianity. I knew one person who understood this before I did and took action. Another co-laborer in Christ and I barely hung in there by debriefing ourselves exhaustively after each ecclesiastical encounter. This was going on nine years since my conversion, and I had been delving aggressively into concordances, lexicons, and Greek. My friend and I thought that another reason to go to church was to minister to individuals with whom we had personal contact after church, etc., but we ran into brick walls mainly.

The one person who understood my reproof of Churchianity’s false doctrines and false practices is the woman I would eventually marry. She had grown up in the church, and the contrast between that experience and what the Biblical text says was stark and clear to her.

Is there any good to be gleaned from Churchianity?

We have a niece who grew up in the church and who has virtually never been kissed. She is (as of this writing) a freshman in university, and her campus-related church and youth group provide her with a moral alternative to the morally unsavory activities taken up by many other university students.

A friend who read the manuscript version of this book reacted by saying that she liked her church, meaning her church experience, what she got out of it, the people, while at the same time she agreed with this book.

True doctrines may be heard in some churches, reflecting Paul’s saying that whether Christ is preached in pretense or in truth he rejoiced (Phi 1:18).

The problem is that Churchianity is not based on the New Testament. Just like the religion of the Old Covenant during Jesus’ natural lifetime, today the religion of the New Covenant is based on the tradition and commandments of men (Mt 15:1-9, Mk 7:8,
Col 2:8). This does not have to be so, but so it is. Churchianity is based chiefly on the vain striving of men to serve both mammon and God, which Jesus said is impossible to do (Mt 6:24, Lk 16:13). But such men reject the Scriptures and insist that they be given money as if it were a commercial enterprise to be a pastor, minister, etc. They “reject the commandment of God, that [they] may keep [their] own tradition. . . . Making the word of God of none effect through [their] tradition.” (Mk 7:9,13)

Paul wrote: “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men . . . and not after Christ” (Col 2:8); and:

Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us. (2 Th 3:6)

“Tradition” in 2 Thessalonians 3:6 refers to the gospel of Christ, the New Covenant Law, the New Covenant spirituality itself as it was “received of” Paul’s and other New Covenant saints’ ministries.

As the chapters of this book endeavor to communicate, our niece, our friend who likes her church experience, and many others can reap the spiritual benefits which they currently do, and many more – but in a way in which the Scriptures themselves set forth. It is possible to serve God – but one cannot serve God if one serves mammon to any degree, extent, or order. May God give the readers of this book ears to hear what the Holy Spirit is saying to them.
Chapter 1: Ministry, Money, and Giving

In the late 1980s, Love of God Ministries founder Norman Sher was offered a full-time ministry position at Hope Chapel Kihei, Hawaii, on the island of Maui. According to Sher, after associate pastor Jason Spence had made the offer, Sher said that he didn’t feel right ministering the gospel of Christ for money, which he had never done; albeit he had, with Love of God Ministries, received unsolicited gifts in the form of lodging, food, and cash which paid for ministry expenses barely.

But Spence offered an alternate way of looking at it: according to Sher, Spence said that he doesn’t go for people’s wallets; he goes for their hearts; once he’s got their heart, he’s got their wallet. Sher wasn’t persuaded, and still declined the offer.

From the Bible’s way of looking at it, who was right?

Mark 11:15-18 says:

And they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves; And would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple. And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves. And the scribes and chief priests heard it, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the people was astonished at his doctrine. (Cf. Mt 21:12-13; Lk 19:45-47)

Jesus also said: “Freely ye have received, freely give” (Mt 10:8); and Paul wrote:

Now we have received, not the spirit of the world,
but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. 13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. (1 Cor 2:12-14)

He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he [God the Father] not with him also freely give us all things? (Ro 8:32)

Another thing Jesus said on the same theme is: “[U]nto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required” (Lk 12:48). Are you freely giving what is required of you?

“New Testament Tithe”

The New Testament does not express that the New Covenant equivalent of the Old Covenant Levitical priesthood are pastors, evangelists, etc., but rather that every New Covenant saint is equally a priest and as such owes no material support to any other saint in the same way in which under the Law of Moses the other eleven tribes owed tithes to support the Levitical priests.

The Law of Moses commanded that the other Israelite tribes pay tithes in order to provide materially for the Levites, whose lot was not to inherit any land in Canaan but instead to minister the Law of Moses (see Dt 14:27-29; Lev 27:30-33; Num 18:24-32; Dt 12:6-11, 26:12). Tithes were mandatory, they were owed, and penalties were added to late payments.

Jesus’ death abrogated the Law of Moses, however, and his resurrection enacted the Law of Christ, or New Covenant Law (see Chapter 5, “Law of Moses, Law of Christ”). Of the many passages establishing the foundation of the New Covenant priesthood, Hebrews 7:11-10:29 is the most comprehensive, 7:24 saying: “But this man [Christ], because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.”

This is the priesthood after the order of Melchisedec, superseding the priesthood after the order of Aaron the Levite.
The following passages establish that every member of the New Covenant spirituality is equally a priest:

1 Peter 2:5: Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 2:9: Ye are . . . a royal priesthood.

Revelation 1:5-6: Jesus Christ . . . hath made us a kingdom of priests.

Revelation 5:10: And hast made us unto our God priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

Revelation 20:6: Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ.

Every member of the New Covenant spirituality is equally a priest, and within this priesthood there are no socio-economic dichotomies or classes, no one owing another material support in the same way in which the other eleven tribes owed tithes to support the Levites. Simply put: no Law of Moses, no Levitical priesthood, no tithes to pay.

Of the nine occurrences of the words “tithe” or “tithes” in the New Testament, two are in the context of Jesus rebuking the hypocritical scribes and Pharisees (Mt 23:23; Lk 11:24); one is in the context of another reproof of a Pharisee (Lk 18:12); and the six instances in Hebrews 7:5-9 are also with reference to the Law of Moses. There is no such thing as a “New Covenant tithe.”

Bring Ye All the Tithes into the Storehouse

One of the most abused passages in the entire Bible is Malachi 3:8-11, and the abusers thereof have reaped ill gotten gains of, and their victims have lost, trillions of dollars or more — the actual amount can only be imagined. Ignorance of the law is no excuse, and the fleeced sheep bear a portion of the responsibility in this; but the wolves in sheep’s clothing who have perpetrated
the false doctrine and practice of the “New Testament tithe” — theirs will be the greater damnation (cf. Mt 23:14, Mk 12:40, Jn 19:11).

First, Malachi 3:10 merely reiterates the Old Covenant commandment of paying the tithe, and the longer passage (vv. 7-12) sets the context of this verse in the Old Covenant aeon:

Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return? 8 Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. 9 Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. 10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. 11 And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts. 12 And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the LORD of hosts.

The intended recipients of the prophecy were Israelites and the topic was their disobedience of the Law of Moses (v. 7). Malachi uses tithes and offerings as an example of the Israelites’ violation of the Law of Moses. Then he says that the Israelites are a cursed nation. Then he says, conversely, if the Israelites will return to the LORD by obeying the Law of Moses, then all nations shall call the Israelites blessed. The passage excludes every entity other than Israelites, who were bound to obey the Law of Moses but who violated it instead. The historical situation was occurring long before Jesus’ death, which abrogated the Law of Moses; Jesus’ shed blood cancelled the Old Covenant and originated the New Covenant; and Jesus’ resurrection enacted the Law of Christ (see Chapter 5, “Law of Moses, Law of Christ”).

It is normal and natural that some “New Testament tithers” will deny all of the foregoing, in an attempt to justify their ignorance of the Law of Christ and consequent loss of money — and for some people, this may be a woefully great sum. But the
measure of healthy, successful people is not how much they bewail their fate, but how well they rebound from their mistakes and resolve not to commit the same mistakes again. For the maxim is true that: "Those who are ignorant of the past are condemned to repeat its mistakes."

Ministry and Remuneration

Regarding specifically New Covenant ministry and remuneration, Peter stated peremptorily:

The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. (1 Pet 5:1-3)

The usage of “lords” is in the sense of a landlord, who generally collects money from people to whom he leases property. This kind of literal rent money per se might not be filthy lucre — but the passage emphasizes that the money collected for ministering the gospel of Christ is filthy lucre.

Paul concurs: “A bishop then must be blameless . . . not greedy of filthy lucre” (1 Tim 3:2-3). Paul also stated that he and Barnabas did not charge money for ministering “lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ” (1 Cor 9:12) and so that “I abuse not my power in the gospel” (1 Cor 9:18). Related statements by Paul include:

... we ... labour, working with our own hands. (1 Cor 4:11-12)

Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ. For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you. (1 Thes 2:9)

Neither did we eat any man’s bread for nought; but
wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you. (2 Thes 3:8)

The kind of “labour” referred to in the above three passages is commercial, money-gaining activity, not ministering the gospel of Christ for material recompense. Paul, Acquila, and Priscilla were tentmakers, as was Apollos, presumably (1 Cor 4:6-12). Peter, Andrew, James and John were fishermen. Matthew had been a tax collector. Although the source of his material sustenance is unknown, Barnabas did not receive money for ministering. Paul sums it up thus:

“. . . work with your own hands, as we commanded you; That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing” (1 Thes 4:11-12).

While Peter’s and Paul’s injunctions against ministering for remuneration are straightforward, on the surface certain verses within 1 Corinthians 9:4-18 may appear to contradict these injunctions. First, what is clear, is that Jesus’ death abrogated the Law of Moses and enacted the Law of Christ. Second, 1 Corinthians 9:12 and 9:18 agree with 1 Peter 5:1-3 and with all the other contextual passages thus far referenced in this chapter. Third, Paul’s epistles are rife with figurative language, and 1 Corinthians 9:4-18 is no exception, wherein Paul asks several rhetorical questions, here listed by verse and followed by comments:

4 Have we not power to eat and to drink?
5 Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?

In verses 4 and 5, Paul endeavors to establish a commonality of normal life activities between himself (and Barnabas) and the other apostles.

6 Or I only and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working?

In verse 6, Paul suggests an economic similarity between all the apostles and the Levites.

7 Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges?
who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?

In verse 7, Paul establishes a commonality of normal life activities between all apostles and all non-apostles. But he also intends the figurative reference to spiritual sowing and reaping.

8 Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also?

Paul here attempts to connect what he has said about commonalities of everyday life activities with the Law of Moses.

9a For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn.

In the context of the Law of Moses having been abrogated, Paul cannot be invoking the Old Covenant Law literally for its application to his present-time situation, during the New Covenant period, under the New Covenant Law.

9b Doth God take care for oxen?
10 Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope.

In verses 9b and 10, Paul clarifies that he has invoked the Law of Moses figuratively: does God care for oxen or for the disciples of Christ? Plowing corn in hope, and threshing in hope and partaking in hope is a figure for plowing the gospel of Christ, hoping for converts, and rejoicing in the harvest of converts. Of course, a specific detail of Paul’s argument in this passage is the legitimacy and authority of his and Barnabas’s apostleships, with part of their proof being the converts in Corinth themselves.

11 If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?
12 If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ.

Paul knew that the Judaizers had been swindling certain groups of
converts, commanding tithes of them. Not so Paul and Barnabas (nor Peter, whom Paul cites, as “Cephas,” in verse 5): the New Covenant law commands against ministering for money; doing so is an abuse of authority and a hindrance to the gospel of Christ: doing so is self-defeating.

13 Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? 14 Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.

The same comments on verses 9-10 apply here. Paul invokes the Law of Moses figuratively, composing a variation on the theme of the earlier passage. Churchmen have mistranslated 1 Corinthians 9:14 in an effort to justify getting money by preaching the gospel, as evidenced in the following modern English versions of the Bible:

NKJV: Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel.

NASB: So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel.

NIV: In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.

Contrast the above to the Authorized Version’s accurate translation:

Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel. (1 Cor 9:14)

The phrase “live of the gospel” is translated from the Greek phrase ἐκ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ζῆν. The key word of the phrase is ἐκ, which the Authorized Version translates accurately as “of” – hence, “live of the gospel” – which correlates semantically with the Greek sense of ἐκ in the passage being “of the underlying rule or principle; according to, in accordance with” (Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich, Danker). Thus, expanding on the passage emphasizes the meaning: “to live according to, or in accordance with, the gospel of Christ” – which coheres with the context of 1 Corinthians 9:4-18 and with all the other contextual passages under examination in this chapter. Whereas the above-referenced modern English versions render ἐκ in the sense of “of the source, from which something flows” (BAGD), which contradicts the context.
15 But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me: for it were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void.
16 For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!
17 For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me.

The same comments on verses 11-12 apply to verses 15-17, where Paul repeats the earlier point with hyperbolic emphasis.

Paul concludes his argument in verse 18:

What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel.

Paul could not minister for material recompense, and no one ought to: indeed, he said it would be better for him to die than to do so.

Death might not be the necessary consequence of teaching and practicing false doctrines under the Law of Christ, but hypothetically if a New Covenant tribunal were to convene on such spiritual crimes, then charges, indictments, and convictions may result.

Elders

As demonstrated further above, the tradition of churchmen has been promulgating and practicing a false doctrine of payment of a 10 percent “tithe” in the New Covenant age; and indeed 1 Timothy 5:17-18 requires close examination respecting whether under the New Covenant law there is an excepted class which may be compensated materially for ministering the gospel of Christ:

17 Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.
18 For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward.

Prior to examining 1 Timothy 5:17-18, it is essential to note that the context of the longer passage of 1 Timothy 5:1-19 is the comprehensive care, spiritual and material, of elderly male and female true disciples of Christ, coherent with the commandment:

Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. (Eph 1:2-3)

With this precept thus in mind, it is clear that the tradition of churchmen has misinterpreted 1 Timothy 5:17-18 (as well as 5:8, q.v.), because the context has been ignored.

Does 1 Timothy 5:17 refer to remuneration for ministry? “Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour.” The word “honour” is translated from the Greek word *times*, whose meaning must be discerned from its context. The possible senses of *times* in the passage are as follows:

1) a valuing by which the price is fixed
  1a) of the price itself
  1b) of the price paid or received for a person or thing bought or sold
2) honour which belongs or is shown to one
  2a) of the honour which one has by reason of rank and state of office which he holds
  2b) deference, reverence (1-2b from Strong)
3) honour appearing in the rewards of the future life (Thayer)
4) Honor, respect, reverence, esteem; generally as rendered or exhibited towards a person or thing – to God, specifically, in 1 Timothy 5:17.
5) Compensation, remuneration, that which is paid in honor of another’s work.
  5b) In 1 Timothy 5:17 “double honor” probably refers to an honorarium or wage. (4-5b Zodhiates)

Note: Zodhiates says that “double honor” in 1 Timothy 5:17 probably refers to an honorarium or wage, but he offers no evidence, basis, reason, or any other support for his “probably,” which is logically equal to “probably not,” considering all the textual evidence against ministering for money that weighs in
6) Honorarium, compensation — which BAGD deduce from other ancient texts and “so perhaps” apply this to 1 Timothy 5:17, but within the same subdefinition they say that “also possible” is the meaning “the respect that one enjoys, honor as a possession” — but not a material possession.

Next, the word “double” is translated from διπλέσσο, for which Strong gives the sense of “twofold, double.” One key to understanding this term may be found in 5:18:

For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward.

The first part of the verse, 18a, is identical to the first part of 1 Corinthians 9:9, and the sense is the same: Paul could not have been invoking the Law of Moses literally. 1 Timothy 5:18b is a direct quote of Luke 10:7, Jesus’ commissioning his disciples. The key word in 18b, “reward,” is translated from μισθοῦν, for which Strong gives the following senses:

1) dues paid for work
   1a) wages, hire
2) reward: used of the fruit naturally resulting from toils and endeavours
   2a) in both senses, rewards and punishments
   2b) of the rewards which God bestows, or will bestow, upon good deeds and endeavours
   2c) of punishments

1 Timothy 5:17-18 agrees specifically with 1 Corinthians 9:9-12 as well as with the entire passage of 9:4-18, in that the spiritual labourer is worthy of his spiritual harvest, and that therefore one sense of “double” of 1 Timothy 5:17 is spiritual honoring: the enjoyment of both the fruit of the elder’s converts and the respect or deference due to a mature, wise, and well-studied spiritual father — i.e., he is approved unto God, a workman who needeth not be ashamed, but rightly dividing the word of truth. Such spiritual honour is actually commanded in 1 Timothy 5:19: “Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses”; and in 5:1: “Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father.” Confirming this is the spiritual honor likewise commanded for elder women or widows, of 1 Timothy 5:2: “[Entreat t]he elder women as mothers”; and in 5:3: “Honour
widows that are widows indeed": the terms “elder women” and “widows” being synonymous within the context.

Next, the material honoring afforded for both the male and female elders obtains from their chronological status, as stipulated by 5:9: “Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old.” Sixty years of age (and older) is taken to apply also to the males, within the context of observing the identical language being applied to both sexes: fathers and mothers; elder men and elder women (or widows). Material honoring of female and male elders is also commanded in 5:8: “But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel”; and in 5:16: “If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the called-out ones be charged; that they may relieve them that are widows indeed.” (See the “Giving” section further below.)

1 Timothy 5:17 refers to male saints who are aged sixty or above, all of whom are worthy to be honored materially if they are in legitimate need; and only the ones who “rule well” are worthy also to be honored spiritually: hence their being “counted worthy of double honour.”

One further requirement of material honoring of elders male and female is adherence to the general precept of 1 Corinthians 16:1-3, that they must have a legitimate material need (see the “Giving” section further below).

It can only be assumed that Paul was aged sixty or above and was destitute because he was ill or for another legitimate reason – his “affliction” – when he received material support from others: . . . your care of me hath flourished again . . . ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction. . . . For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. . . . I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you. (Phil 4:10-18)

Examined further above are such passages as 1 Timothy 5:14: “I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.” Female, and male, saints under sixty are not to be honored materially because of their age, only assisted temporarily if they have a legitimate need.
Also examined further above are questions such as, Does the New Covenant law command against any disciple giving of his or her material substance to any other disciple whomsoever and for whatsoever reason?

Giving (and Receiving)

While the preceding section address specifically the doctrine and practice of charging for ministering the gospel of Christ, here the focus is on giving and receiving, in terms of both the general principles and specific situations found in the New Testament.

First, 1 Corinthians 16:1-3 establishes the New Covenant precept for giving or the exchange of money and other material goods between and among the disciples:

> Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the called-out ones of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem. And if it be meet that I go also, they shall go with me.

Several passages, including 1 Corinthians 16:1-3, establish the doctrine of giving under the Law of Christ:

1 Timothy 6:17-18: Charge them that are rich in this world . . . that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute.

Romans 12:13: Distribut[e] to the necessity of saints.

1 Corinthians 16:17: I am glad of the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus: for that which was lacking on your part they have supplied.

Galatians 2:10: . . . remember the poor.

Ephesians 4:28: Let him that stole steal no more: but
rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

The Law of Christ commands the disciples who are materially better off to give to the destitute saints in order to help the latter survive until they can become economically stable and viable.

The two foci of 1 Corinthians 16:1-3 are verse 2: “let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him”; and verse 3, “bring your liberality unto Jerusalem.”

Historically, at least one famine had ravaged Judaea in the very recent past, and in addition to that, the Jewish religionists had persecuted the disciples in Jerusalem by murdering them, imprisoning them, or otherwise undermining their entire socio-economic networks. The disciples were destitute, and Paul commanded that the more prosperous ones elsewhere must share their prosperity with those in need. Also, the material need must have a legitimate cause: impossibility of working caused by persecution such (as aforementioned), illness, permanent impairment, etc. Acts 4:34-35 provides an example of how such legitimate needs were filled in ancient Jerusalem:

Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, And laid them down at the apostles’ feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.

Again historically, Christ had prophesied that Jerusalem would fall within the disciples’ lifetime; the land would be worthless; and so the disciples who owned land, sold it immediately.

All of the disciples referred to in Acts and 1 Corinthians knew exactly where their assets were going. Giving under the New Covenant is from disciples to disciples, not just to any fund or cause that advertises in the media or under the aegis of a religious organization. As 2 Corinthians 8-9 expounds, the doctrine of giving under New Covenant Law prohibits giving blindly or squandering. Sowing bountifully, giving cheerfully, etc., is based on the commandment that the materially abounding disciples give money, food, clothing, etc., to disciples who have less than they need, as exemplified further by the following three passages. Romans 15:25-26:
But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.

2 Corinthians 8:11-14:

Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have. For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not. For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened. But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want.

2 Corinthians 9:12-13:

For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God; While by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men.

God communicated details so specific or special as those described by Paul in 1 Timothy 5:14-16:

I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house . . . If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the called-out ones be charged; that they may relieve them that are widows indeed.

The decree of 1 Timothy 5:14-16 relieves disciples of supporting others for reasons other than legitimate need (cf. 2 Cor 8:13): a younger woman who can work must do so – if she refuses to do so, other saints are under no obligation to support her. The same goes for a younger man who can work. Whereas the Law of Christ mandates material support for elder men and women who have a legitimate need for such support (1 Tim 5:1-20; see the “Ministry and Remuneration” section further below).
While all of the above establishes the basis of giving under the New Covenant, 2 Corinthians 9:6-7 goes further:

But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

The passage exhorts the materially prosperous saints not merely to give to the destitute saints, but to give “according as he purposeth in his heart.” It is here as well as in other New Testament passages where the personal depth of the Law of Christ contrasts the superficial black letter of the Law of Moses.

Jesus also said, “Give to him that asketh of thee” (Mt 5:42; cf. Lk 6:30). Is the statement an absolute decree or, like many of the proverbs, a general precept, requiring spiritual discernment? The sunburnt, homeless pregnant woman nearing labor on a city street corner begging for money might not be a saint; but should a New Covenant saint give money to profane persons seeking the high esteem of men in a political office?

Meditations

Was Norman Sher right to decline the offer to minister the gospel of Christ for filthy lucre, when by accepting the offer he would have hindered his very ministering of the gospel of Christ?

Is it fair of Sher to ask the question, What would Jesus do with 22 million dollars? According to Sher, the decision-makers at Hope Chapel Kihei in recent years spent 22 million dollars on exorbitantly priced land and a brand-new, luxurious den of thieves for the moneychangers and them that sell doves.

Ramifications

The Greek New Testament comprises no information contrary to the above-referenced passages which would indicate that ministering, exchanging material or the means of exchange, etc., should be altered in any way beyond Christ’s parousia.
Chapter 2: “Church,” Worshipping, and Assembling Together

John 4:21-24 records Jesus as saying to a Samaritan woman:

The hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

... But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

Jesus’ prophecy above decentralized the phenomena of worshipping and assembling together. At the moment of the prophecy, Jesus’ impending death would soon abrogate the Law of Moses, rendering the Old Covenant temple activities defunct. The prophecy, furthermore, even preempted that: “But the hour cometh, and now is” — Jesus had already advanced the εὐαγγέλιον — the glad tidings and good news of holy salvation — beyond Judaea — he was in Samaria when he spoke the prophecy — and the good news included the new paradigm of worship and assembling together. The Samaritan woman recognized the Savior.

John 4:21-24 provides an irrefutable injunction against popular “church” concepts and phenomena — i.e., false doctrines and false practices — related to assembling together. As the passage communicates, Jesus prophesied a new phenomenon of worship which reproves what the tradition of churchmen has promulgated throughout the centuries since Jesus had uttered the prophecy. Just as Jesus is also referred to as ηρόλογος, or “the word,” the focus of the New Covenant true worshippers must be the words of the Holy Scriptures.

For instance, except in Acts 19:37, every other occurrence of the word “church” or “churches” in English-language Bibles is a mistranslation of the Greek word εκκλησία or a form thereof. Εκκλησία is combined from εκ, meaning “out,” and a derivation of καλέω, meaning “to call.” Thus, the accurate English translation
of ἐκκλησία is “called-out ones” — a term which is synonymous to “true worshippers,” “the Israel of God,” “the [New Covenant] saints,” etc.

A similar example is that in Acts 19:37 the phrase “robbers of churches” is a mistranslation of the Greek word ἡμεροσύλους. The root of ἡμεροσύλους, ἡμερ, signifies a sacred place, a sanctuary of a temple, or a temple. The longer passage of Acts 19:1-20:1 refers to the temple of Artemis in the city Ephesus in Asia Minor (now Turkey). Therefore, the correct translation in Acts 19:37 of ἡμεροσύλους is “robbers of temples.”

As for the called-out ones, in 2 Corinthians 6:17 they are the people whom the Lord calls out: “come out from among them and be ye separate.”

What English translations of the Greek New Testament refer to as “the church,” for example, in ancient Corinth are the called-out ones who were dwelling in ancient Corinth. ἐκκλησία does not refer to a material structure, a legal entity, or a religious business corporation in ancient Corinth or anywhere else.

The occurrence of ἐκκλησία in reference to Laodicea in Revelation 3:14, however, would either present a paradox if the congregation were wholly apostate, which is what the text suggests, or here is where another Greek word such as κυριακόν might have done in place of ἐκκλησία, because apostates are not called-out ones; thus the use of ἐκκλησία in Revelation 3:14 could only be figurative.

Why the mistranslation of “church” from ἐκκλησία occurs in the Authorized Version is known from the translation rules which King James decreed to his Bible translators; specifically, Rule Number Three:

The Old Ecclesiastical Words to be kept, viz., the Word Church not to be translated Congregation &c.

Some scholars have proposed that the word “church” was derived from the Greek words κυριακόν, which occurs in 1 Corinthians 11:20 and is translated “of the Lord,” and κυριακῆ, which occurs in Revelation 1:10 and is translated “Lord’s”; but philologically this is untenable. (These are the only two occurrences of the word used genitivally.) The chief objection to this derivation of “church” is that the Greek word from which “church” is translated is, again, ἐκκλησία, and this is the etymological root which passed into Latin (hence “ecclesiastical”) and all the Romanic
and Celtic languages. Semiotically, the word “church” cannot refer to New Covenant saints.

Also contrary to what the tradition of churchmen has propounded over the centuries, Jesus – not Peter – is the Rock upon which Jesus established his body of called-out ones. Matthew 16:18 records Jesus saying to Peter: “Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church.” In this passage, “Peter” is translated from the Greek word πέτρος, which is like a pebble that has eroded off a boulder or one of many pebbles into which a boulder has been pummelled; “rock” is translated from πέτρα, which is a large rock, such as a boulder: obviously the figurative usage here is apropos. Furthermore, when Jesus said, “and upon this rock,” he could not have been referring to Peter, because he was speaking to Peter; and by Jesus’ use of the definite adjective ταύτη τῇ, which means “this” – and because it is extremely doubtful that Jesus was pointing to a boulder – Jesus was referring to himself as the Rock.

Also obviously, when Jesus said that he would build his “church,” translated from εκκλησίαν, “called-out ones,” he was not envisaging a material structure. As a cross-reference to Matthew 16:18, BAGD give “1 Peter 2:5: ‘like living stones let yourselves be built up (pass.) or build yourselves up (mid.).’” BAGD add that Paul “refers to a religious point of view as a building, and speaks of its refutation as a tearing down (καταλαμβάνω), and of returning to it as a rebuilding (Gal 2:18)” – figurative usages, not literal material structures.

In reference again to John 4:21-24, prior to Jesus’ death and the shedding of his blood, the worshipping of God the Father had been centralized in the temple at Jerusalem, pursuant to the Law of Moses. (The Samaritans had built a rival temple on Mount Gerizim, which is the reference of “this mountain” in John 4:21.)

Upon Jesus’ death, the rending of the veil to the holy place inside the temple symbolically and practically decentralized worship of God the Father for the living, earthly spiritually faithful to God. Approximately forty years later, the Romans annihilated the temple along with the entire city of Jerusalem, as well as other cities in Judaea.

In concordance with John 4:21-24, Acts 17:14 records Paul saying: “God . . . dwelleth not in temples made with hands.” In this passage the word “temples” is translated from the Greek word ναόις, which signifies a material structure such as a building.
Whereas the doctrines of some religious organizations dictate that the only place where their members must pray, for example, is inside a specific material structure, Acts 17:14 expounds that a ναός embodies no spiritual significance, and along with John 4:21-24 establishes the fact that the assembling together of religionists inside a designated material structure such as a "church building" contradicts Jesus’ prophecy of decentralization of the worship of God the Father — in fact doing so is an attempt to reinstitute the Old Covenant Jerusalem-temple model pursuant to the Law of Moses and in rejection of Jesus’ death, resurrection, and origination of the New Covenant.

How to Assemble Together

While Hebrews 10:23-25 appears to be the New Covenant commandment to the saints to assemble themselves together (verbatim, “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together”), what exactly is assembling together?

In his article “Abandoning Our Assembling: Reflective Analysis of Hebrews 10:25” Al Maxey says:

The Greek word translated “forsake” in Hebrews 10:25 is enkataleipo, which means “to leave behind, forsake, abandon.” The word is used by Paul when he said, “Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me” (2 Tim 4:10). He uses the word again just a few verses later: “At my first defense no one supported me, but all deserted me” (v. 16).

When we abandon our brothers and sisters in Christ, we are guilty of forsaking the Family of God. . . . [O]ne may actually “go to church” faithfully, and yet still be guilty of habitually violating the teaching of Hebrews 10:25. . . .

[T]he Greek word employed in the text for “assembling together” . . . only occurs twice in the entire New Testament. . . . It is the word episunagoge, which really conveys the concept of the gathering together of the whole. When an entire family is united . . . gathering itself together as a whole . . . we find the thought behind this word. . . .

The other occurrence of this word is quite instructive. It is found in 2 Thes 2:1 – “Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of
our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to Him." Here we see the apostle Paul speaking of the Parousia, and the assembling together of ALL the children of God for that great family reunion! It is a gathering together of the WHOLE family of our heavenly Father, not just a portion of it.

... Hebrews 10:25 is not LAW. There is no command to “go to church” in this passage, contrary to the teaching of many in the religious world today. (http://www.zianet.com/maxey/reflx174.htm)

Jesus said:

For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. (Mt 18:20)

Where two or three assemble together in Jesus’ name constitutes assembling together. Then 1 Corinthians 14 sets forth the procedures, rules, and expectations for assembling together presumably with a greater number of called-out ones:

How is it then, brethren, when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation? Let all things be done unto edifying. (1 Cor 14:26)

1 Corinthians 14:27-33 lists the rules and procedures for speakers in unknown tongues and interpreters thereof, and for prophets and judges:

If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church [among the called-out ones who are assembled together];

Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by [the other who will judge], let the first hold his peace. For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches [groups of called-out ones who
assemble together so].

The above three passages stipulate the following:

(1) If there is any speaker in an unknown tongue:
(a) there shall be two or three of them (not one);
(b) there shall be an interpretation of every instance of speaking in an unknown tongue:
(c) if there is no interpreter, there shall be no speaking in an unknown tongue;
(d) there shall be one, and only one, interpreter per speech in an unknown tongue;
(e) there shall be one, and only one, person speaking in an unknown tongue at a time;

(2) As for prophets:
(a) there shall be two or three (not one);
(b) after one prophesies, another shall judge, or comment on the prophecy;
(c) while one is judging a prophecy, neither the deliverer of the prophecy nor anyone else shall interrupt the one judging;

(3) The reason for the abovementioned orderliness: “God is not the author of confusion (or disorderliness), but of peace” (v. 33); and verse 40 confirms: “Let all things be done decently and in order.”

(See Chapter 5, “Holy Spiritual Gifts,” for more on speaking in unknown tongues.)

The two items in the above passage which have not yet been addressed are “psalm” and “doctrine” of verse 26:

How is it then, brethren, when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine?

First of all, the general issue that applies to the entire passage is orderliness versus confusion. For if “every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine,” etc., and makes utterance simultaneously, there would be confusion indeed if the appertaining rules and procedures were not imposed. The particulars (in verse 26) are psalm and doctrine, on which Paul did not expound. Yet, a reasonable inference to be drawn is that the rules for speakers in unknown tongues and prophets must be observed: two or three reciters of a psalm and two or three preachers of a doctrine — not one — as is the case in all
“churches” today, were the one is fleecing the flock and guilty of ministering the gospel of Christ for filthy lucre, whereby the gospel is being hindered (see the “Ministering” section further below).

Women

Respecting women and assembling together, 1 Corinthians 14:34-36 commands the following:

Let your women keep silence in the groups of called-out ones: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak among the called-out ones so assembled together. What? came the word of God out from you [women]? or came it unto you [women] only?

1 Timothy 2:11-14 corroborates and confirms the above passage:

Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.

(Cf. 1 Corinthians 11:8-9: For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.)

Simply put, while assembling together, women must neither teach nor exercise authority over men, nor speak.

In the light of Titus 2:1-5, however, women may teach other women, in the presence of women only:

But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine: That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may
teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children. To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

In his article “Christian Woman’s Headship Veiling” (The Sword & The Plow, Newsletter of the Bimillennial Preterist Association, Vol. IX, No. VII – August 2007), Kurt Simmons interprets 1 Corinthians 11:5-16 as saying that women in Christ shall wear a material head-covering in public, including during assembling together. Here is the pertinent portion of the passage:

But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven. 6 For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered. 7 For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. . . . 13 Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered? 14 Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? 15 But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering.

This passage is nearly inscrutable or contradictory, unless the passage in the autograph (i.e., the original epistle scribed by Paul) was corrupted at some point over the centuries by a copyist.

It is very difficult to interpret the passage as saying that the “covering” is either a material head-covering or long hair. The passage appears to argue both points. Because the passage resolves the way it does, by differentiating men’s and women’s hair lengths (and what that might signify in the eye of the beholder), this latter appears to be the intention of the passage, with verse 7 meaning that a man in Christ shall not grow his hair long enough to confuse him thereby with a woman.

As is the situation today, perhaps in the past lesbians have striven to differentiate themselves from heterosexual women in as many ways as possible, including hair length. Was it a fashion of Paul’s time for heterosexual women to wear short hair, even as it is today? A woman-in-Christ's hair being too short would confuse her with a lesbian?
Another potentially confusing point of the passage is the mention of women praying and prophesying, which, if the reference is to assembling together, contradicts every other related passage in the New Testament. No one can marshal the passage in making a case for women praying or prophesying during assembling together, however. In the light of the same epistle, this language of the passage makes no sense.

Or by praying or prophesying was Paul referring to women-in-Christ ministering ad hoc or spontaneously in public?

Whatever the covering is, the passage intends, as Simmons interprets, that the covering applies to all appearances in public and not only to assembling together in someone’s home.

Finally, of assembling together, 1 Corinthians 14:37 says:

> If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.

The rules and procedures for assembling together which 1 Corinthians 14 sets forth are commandments under the Law of Christ. This of course would include any other appertaining rules and procedures which the New Testament sets forth.

Worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth

Ultimately, where did the first-century disciples assemble together? Jesus established that worshipping the Father shall be done in spirit and in truth, unconnected to any religious material structure (see John 4:21-24). Acts 5:42 reports on the disciples' beginning to manifest this precept and commandment of Christ:

> And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.

“Daily in the temple” means daily in the outer court of the temple at Jerusalem, which was essentially a public market place. The phrase does not mean that every Sunday morning the disciples in Jerusalem gathered in a designated material structure or space.
These earliest converts in Jerusalem were proclaiming the gospel of Christ in an open public area, then teaching the newest converts as much as they could immediately upon their conversions, and then assembling together in each other’s homes. 1 Corinthians 16:19 says:

The groups of called-out ones of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the called-out ones who are in their house.

Acts 2:46 reports:

And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house . . .

While the earliest disciples were indeed assembled together during their public ministering activities, the location for assembling together in the sense of 1 Corinthians 14 is in the homes of saints.

Ramifications

The Greek New Testament comprises no information contrary to the above-referenced passages which would indicate that assembling together, worshipping, ministering, etc., should be altered in any way beyond Christ’s parousia, except as may be conditioned elsewhere in this book, e.g., in Chapter 4, “Holy Spiritual Gifts.”
Jesus said, “No man can serve two masters... Ye cannot serve God and mammon (Mt 6:24; cf. Lk 16:13). Yet in sheer apathy, ignorance, or rejection of this precept, people are evidently attempting to serve both God and mammon. The result?

In her article “Executive Order 13397 — Church As Governmental Agency,” Nancy Levant reports that the separation of church and state was “gone with the stroke of a pen.”

As of March 7, 2006, our nation’s leader signed another Executive Order, which tied the Department of Homeland Security to our leader’s “faith-based” churches. Okay, all you non-profit churches out there — you now serve the federal government’s primary spying agency. That is now your primary function. You are now and officially an organized den of thieves.

I would feel sorry for the pastors, ministers, priests... except for the fact that I just can’t and won’t. How stupid and positively corrupt can you possibly be to take money in exchange for manipulating your flocks of idiot sheep to the national slaughter? And will you also spy on your flocks and provide reports to your new master?

In exchange for money, have you agreed to pacify and organize your flocks in the event of a national emergency? You certainly have, for you have been ordered to do so. And have you been ordered to offer your buildings, your resources, and your labor forces called congregations to serve your newly declared administrator?

I try to come up with words to describe how I feel about this Executive Order and the churches that have “partnered” themselves to this system. The words don’t come minus the fact that the church has completely and irreversibly fallen to the lowest and
darkest common denominator, which is the total betrayal of the souls of the faithful. I would pray for your forgiveness, but I don’t want to.

Nor do I want to write about this sickening topic. But, I appeal to Christian people to 1) ask your church leaders if they are “faith-based” funded, and 2) to leave those churches and start home-based churches with your friends and family members. Do not support Executive Ordered, Department of Homeland Security churches with your presence or your money. You are being manipulated and reported upon – guaranteed.

You are being told what to do when more “crisis” hits the nation, and will hit the nation, as all is now planned down to our “weather emergencies,” which are providing the training and relocation exercises for the real crisis to come – the one that permanently collapses Constitutional America.

The church needs to regroup and gather in homes, where faith is restored, private, and truth is real. Forget the church leadership. They are padding their pockets and socially re-engineering your mind with think tank religion and crisis management, and they’re getting paid to do so – much like the public schools and mass media.

Raise your churches in your homes. All you need is a Bible – one will do. Save yourselves and your souls and leave your new and improved church buildings, fancy organs, fundraisers, and colorful windows behind.

As in all Communist countries, the church will survive underground, so to speak, and with genuine prayer. And serve your Constitutional America. Don’t give up on freedom – even as it dissolves before your eyes. Be courageous in truth and gather together in truth. (25 July 2006, http://www.newswithviews.com/Levant/nancy51.htm)

Internal Revenue Code 501(c)(3)

In 1954, the Internal Revenue Service began offering Protestant churches the newly-created Internal Revenue Code 501(c)(3) religious corporation status, and banks began lending churches money – that is, if such a church corporation:
. . . does not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distributing of statements), any campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office.

Prior to 1954 – which is to say, prior to the creation of IRC 501(c)(3) – the government had not attempted to prohibit churches from criticizing the government. IRC 501(c)(3) changed all that. Evidently, IRC 501(c)(3) was created and proffered in a quiet attempt to bind churches’ First Amendment rights (to free exercise of religion and speech) to an ersatz tax-exempt status. Also in the early 1950s, IRC 501(c)(3) enabled churches to sell bonds to church members in their efforts to construct church buildings.

Essentially all Protestant churches operate as business entities; their operators solicit and receive money from their patrons and live off that money – and if they obey the government they do not have to pay taxes.

It is of interest to note that religious entities of Judaism and the Roman Catholic Church in America are not incorporated under IRC 501(c)(3) and have remained tax exempt. Why have only the Protestant entities incorporated?

Willie Martin expands on IRC 501(c)(3) and churches in America, listing “35 things the IRS contends are prohibited of . . . Christian churches and ministries:

A pastor or ministry leader who violates the guidelines of the IRS on these 35 prohibitions can have his church or group’s tax exemption revoked and be dealt with harshly by the IRS. These 35 prohibitions on churches and ministries demonstrate how the IRS and the federal government now control churches and insure politically and religiously “correct” behavior.

Liberal Judeo-Christian churches and false religions such as Hinduism, Witchcraft, and Scientology are not affected by these rules; only Bible-believing, Christian ministries and churches. Also, keep in mind: These 35 things are not prohibited by law nor by the Constitution. The IRS considers itself above the law and the Constitution.

According to the IRS . . . Christian churches,
ministries, and organizations may not:

1). Expose conspiracies.
2). Criticize the New World Order.
3). Say or publish anything negative about any politician, Republican or Democrat.
4). Criticize government agencies and bureaus – the IRS, FBI, BATF, CIA, EPA, DEA, OSHA, DOJ, etc.
5). Criticize an institution of government such as the White House, the Congress, the Federal Reserve Board, or the Supreme Court.
6). Encourage citizens to call or write their congressman, senator, governor, mayor, or other public official.
7). Criticize any proposed or pending bill or legislation that would take away the rights and freedoms of the people.
8). Make disparaging remarks about, or criticize, any other faith group, cult, or religion.
9). Expose or criticize the New Age Movement.
10). Support or encourage a law-abiding citizen’s militia.
11). Support or encourage the Second Amendment, the right of the people to keep and bear arms.
12). Discourage young women from getting an abortion, or endorse the pro-life movement.
13). Teach that abortion, especially partial birth abortion, is murder and is the killing of innocent babies.
14). Identify homosexuality as a sin and an abomination to God.
15). Express an opinion on any subject or issue.
16). Appeal to peoples’ emotions by employing an evangelization method (such as “fire and brimstone” preaching) not considered a “reasoned approach” by the IRS.
17). Discuss or identify threats to Christianity.
18). Discuss subjects or topics the IRS deems “sensationalist.”
19). Criticize well-known public figures or institutions the IRS deems “worthy,” such as the super-rich elite, international bankers, the Hollywood movie industry, etc.
20). Publish or broadcast information on any topic without giving credence to the opposing viewpoints of Christ’s enemies.
21). Publish and offer books, tapes, or products that expose the elitist plot against humanity and God.

22). Criticize the Pope or the Vatican, or contrast the New Catholic Catechism with the truths found in the Holy Bible. (Note: only liberal churches are permitted by the IRS to criticize the Catholic Church).

23). Criticize the United Nations or such globalist groups as the Council on Foreign Relations, the Bilderbergers, and the Trilateral Commission.

24). Criticize the Masonic Lodge, the Order of Skull & Bones, or other Secret societies.

25). Highlight or otherwise bring attention to immorality of public officials or corruption in government.

26). Complain of government wrongdoing or injustice, such as happened at Waco, Ruby Ridge, and elsewhere.

27). Criticize the Jewish ADL or other Jewish lobby groups.

28). Say anything positive about the “religious right” or the “patriot movement.”

29). Support home schooling, home churches, or unregistered churches.

30). Spend money on missionary projects or charitable causes not approved by the IRS.

31). Promote or encourage alternative healthcare (herbs, vitamins, etc.).

32). Expose false teachings of any kind by anyone.

33). Support or encourage persecuted Christians suffering under anti-Christian regimes in Red China, Cuba, Russia, Israel, Saudi Arabia, the United States, and elsewhere.

34). Ordain a pastor whose training or qualifications are not approved by the IRS.

35). Advocate or teach any Bible doctrine that is politically or religiously incorrect, or is inconsistent with any “public policy” (abortion, feminism, gay rights, etc.) currently being enforced by the IRS.

Please examine the above list of 35 prohibitions on Christian free speech and activity by the IRS, and decide for yourself: Are conservative Christian ministries and churches being selectively

For all their relevance, the above reports merely reflect the effects of misinterpretation of the Holy Scriptures; the propagation and perpetration of false doctrines and false practices.
Chapter 4: Holy Spiritual Gifts

This chapter examines what, if anything, happened upon the destruction of Jerusalem in ca. A.D. 70 (or ~1,000 years later depending on the chronology observed) with regard to the Holy Spiritual gifts, or more accurately Holy Spiritual manifestations (see the “Holy Spiritual Manifestations” section further below).

The first section examines the function of “tongues” and the determination of what such tongues were during the First Generation after Jesus’ death and resurrection. The second section explores the issue of a First-Generation fulfillment of Old Covenant prophecies relating to tongues.

Holy Tongues

What was the Holy Spiritual gift of tongues? Acts 2:4-11 expounds that tongues were languages which the speakers thereof could naturally neither speak nor understand if they heard someone else speak them; thus they were natural languages used by humans for natural communication:

And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about
Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.

1 Corinthians 14:8-11 corroborates the above passage:

For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? 9 So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air. 10 There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification. 11 Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me.

First-Generation Fulfillment of Tongues?

Regarding a First-Generation fulfillment of Old Covenant prophecies and the function of tongues, 1 Corinthians 14:21-22 says:

In the law [of Moses] it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord. 22 Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not.

The above passage refers to the prophecy of Deuteronomy 28, of which verses 49-51 say:

The LORD shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand; 50 A nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor shew favour to the young: 51 And he shall eat the fruit of thy cattle, and the fruit of thy land, until thou be destroyed: which also shall not leave thee either corn, wine, or oil, or the increase of thy kine, or flocks of thy sheep, until he have destroyed thee.
The entire chapter of Deuteronomy 28 states eight times that Israel would be destroyed, and contains such details that could only describe both the dissolution of the ethnicity of Israelites and the destruction of the city of Jerusalem in ca. A.D. 70 or in ca. 1070 (see also Amos 5:1-2).

Isaiah 28:11-18 concurs, where tongues signal impending judgment upon Israel:

For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. 12 To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear. 13 But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken. 14 Wherefore hear the word of the LORD, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem. 15 Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves: 16 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste. 17 Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place. 18 And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it.

“For with stammering lips and another tongue” did God “speak to this people” Israel again during the First Generation, confirming the prophecy and signalling its fulfillment in the impending judgment on the incorrigibly and interminably rebellious Israelites.

Would the Holy Spiritual gift of tongues cease upon the ultimate fulfillment of their prophetic purpose? 1 Corinthians 13:8 says:
Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail [vanish away]; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.

The passage clarifies that tongues would cease; but when? Upon God’s final judgment on Israel, which tongues signalled? “Knowledge,” which can be taken as “word of knowledge” of 1 Corinthians 12:8, would vanish away, as would prophecies. Moreover, the passage contrasts the temporary nature of these three Holy Spiritual gifts to the permanent nature of charity, or ἀγάπη.

Did God inspire Paul to state that only these three Holy Spiritual gifts would cease and the rest continue beyond Christ’s parousia? Or, as is the logic in other compared New Testament passages, does the mention of some of the items of a category include all of the items of the category? Whether only these three or all of the Holy Spiritual gifts are intended, an examination of these three must suffice.

First, respecting prophecy, consideration must be given to the possibility that by the point of completion of the entire body of New Covenant scriptures, the purpose of the gift of prophecy was fulfilled. Paul said:

> Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil [to fill up, to complete] the word of God. (Col 1:25)

Of the above passage, Jerry Bernard says:

> The Word of God is now filled to the full. Nothing can be added to that which is full. If the Bible was completed, we need no further revelation of Him and His words. The revelation was achieved and finished by the time that Paul wrote [finished writing] Colossians. The finisher [Paul] of the Word of God declares:

> Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: 27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.
Bernard further states:

The indwelling Spirit (Rom 8:9,15; 1 Cor 6:19; Gal 4:6; 1 Jn 2:20) would use them [the writers of the New Testament] to give us the Word of God. . . . The Word of God was completed when the Acts-period Comforter was gone. The reason is because His work was perfectly done. (Op. cit., pp. 22-23.)

In their book The Gift of Acts 2:38-39, Wayne Price and Ron Cosby shed light on the logical connection between the intended audience of Peter’s speech (which includes Acts 2:38-39) and the period of time during which the Holy Spiritual gifts would be in operation: the generation living at that moment and their children, a period of time which would culminate approximately 40 years later in the destruction of Jerusalem. Price and Cosby say:

[T]he New Testament writers used the phrase “your children” seven times, and in each instance, reference was made to the next generation, not to their posterity for ages to come (cf. Mt 7:11, Lk 11:13 and 23:38, 1 Cor 7:14, Eph 6:4, Col 3:21). (Pottersville: Scaggs Publication. 2005; p. 17)

Price and Cosby also say:

One might ask, why would Peter purposely use terms that indicated that Joel’s promise would be limited to his [Peter’s] present generation . . . and to the next generation only? . . . The obvious conclusion is that such gifts of the Spirit were given to confirm revelation then being given (Mk 16:20; Heb 2:3-4). . . . This should not appear strange since the cessation of such gifts was a matter of Old Testament prophecy. (Joel even prophesies the fall of Jerusalem [Joel 2:31]. See also Mic 7:15; Zec 13:1-2). (Op. cit., p. 18)

Also pointed out by Price and Cosby is that all 30 occurrences (esp. Acts 2:39, 13:2, 16:10) in the New Testament of προσκαλεσθαι refer to a specific calling or appointing of certain First-Generation saints to perform special tasks, including miraculous ones.
Holy Spiritual Manifestations

Dispensationalism’s perhaps most comprehensive scholar, Arnold Fruchtenbaum, claims that the Holy Spiritual manifestations of apostleship and prophecy ceased to exist upon the completion of the New Covenant writings: the apostles were to lay the foundation of “the church,” which had been done at the point at which the New Covenant writings were completed. (The Gifts Of The Holy Spirit, pp. 12-13; Tustin: Ariel Ministries; 2005.) Fruchtenbaum also articulates, however, that all of the other Holy Spiritual manifestations continued beyond the First Generation, because after “the church” foundation had been laid, there was yet the constructing of “the church” to take place, which, according to Fruchtenbaum, is still taking place to this day.

Fruchtenbaum also isolates the “ministries” of the Holy Spirit, one in particular being illumination, which he defines thus: “to understand the truth. . . . The indwelling Holy Spirit gives believers the ability to understand the Scriptures” (The Ministries Of The Holy Spirit, p. 2; Tustin: Ariel Ministries; 2005). This statement, of course, is accurate, but Fruchtchenbaum extrapolates this beyond what can be found in the text of the New Testament, describing how this occurs (continuing the preceding quote): “. . . in two ways: by illuminating the believer’s mind, during personal Bible study, and by means of giving the gift of teaching to certain believers who, in turn, help other believers to understand the Word.”

Fruchtenbaum cites the following three passages as grounds for his exegesis on the Holy Spiritual gift of illumination: Nehemiah 9:20, 1 Corinthians 2:14-16, and Ephesians 1:15-18; but an observation of these passages exposes Fruchtenbaum’s false association of illumination to “the gift of teaching” being operative beyond the First Generation:

Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them, and withheldest not thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst. (Neh 9:20)

But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 15 But he that is spiritual
16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ. (1 Cor 1:214-16)

Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, 16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; 17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: 18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints. (Eph 1:15-18)

What does any of these three passages say about the First-Generation Holy Spiritual manifestation of teaching or its continuing to function beyond the cessation of the manifestations of apostleship and prophecy? How does a person of outstanding intellect such as Fruchtenbaum say that a passage says something which it doesn’t say? This exemplifies, however, how Dispensationalism has spread from its inception in the mid-to-late 1800s to the present moment – by parroting. Fruchtenbaum attended the superb Dispensationalist Dallas Theological Seminary, he listened to what he was told that the Scriptures say, and when he graduated he carried on that tradition of men (Col 2:8). That is not to say, though, that there is not more going on here than what meets the eye. For, moreover, this example of Fruchtenbaum is only one of many such instances of the hermeneutical sleight-of-hand tricks played by Dispensationalists – in this instance, starting with an established and obvious truth – viz., that the Spirit of God illuminates the Biblical text – and then purporting to tie that truth to the error of the Holy Spirit manifestation of teaching continued to function beyond the First Generation of the New Covenant aeon – as the continuing exegesis below will clarify, such is not the case according to the text of the New Testament.

Holy Spiritual Manifestations continued

If all of the Holy Spiritual gifts fall under the same category as prophecy, tongues, and word of knowledge, then not all of them would have to be listed in order for all of them to cease upon the
cessation of the three that are listed. Further, that the essence and being of all the Holy Spiritual gifts do in fact fall under the same category, appears to be attested by 1 Corinthians 12, which describes, along with gifts, “administrations” and “operations”:

Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. 6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

While the phrase “diversities of gifts” merely refers to the existence of more than one gift, the passage continues, listing “gifts” or items without categorizing them, and subsuming the subheadings of gifts, administrations, and operations under the one heading or category of “manifestation”:

But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. 8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; 9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; 10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues.

Beginning at verse 27 the passage further differentiates the manifestations:

Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. 28 And God hath set some among the [called-out ones], first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? 30 Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?

Ephesians 4:11 corroborates part of the above list of manifestations:

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.
Ephesians 4:12 continues with an exposition of the purpose of the Holy Spiritual manifestations:

For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

The above passage resolves into God’s conclusive purpose for the manifestations, in Ephesians 5:26-27:

That he [Christ] might sanctify and cleanse it [ἐκκλησίας, the body of ἐκκλησία, or called-out ones] with the washing of water by the word, 27 That he might present it [the body of called-out ones] to himself a glorious [body of called-out ones], not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that [the body of called-out ones] should be holy and without blemish.

This passage refers metaphorically to Christ and his bride, or the body of called-out ones, upon Christ’s parousia. Then Ephesians 5:31-32 expounds on the “mystery” of Christ and the called-out ones:

For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. 32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the [called-out ones].

If the purpose of the manifestations of the Holy Spirit were to prepare the called-out ones for Christ’s parousia, then upon Christ’s receiving his bride these manifestations would have ceased, having fulfilled their purpose. If the Holy Spiritual manifestations ceased to exist upon Christ’s receiving his bride, ever since then any pretension to such a manifestation is impious, false, and erroneous.

Dispensationalism’s contention that the Holy Spiritual manifestations of apostleship and prophecy ceased at the close of the First Generation but that the remainder have continued in operation, is based solely on the dogmatism that Christ’s
parousia did not occur when the Holy Scriptures say it was going to occur — viz., within the generation of the human beings living at the time of Jesus’ death and resurrection — and thus these continuing Holy Spiritual manifestations are yet functioning in order to prepare the called-out ones for Christ’s “Second Coming.” This conclusion is illogical vis-à-vis the Holy Scriptures, as demonstrated above: all of the Holy Spiritual manifestations constituted one category of phenomenon: either they were all in operation or they were all not in operation. Paul’s mentioning some items of a category representing all items of the same category is a rhetorical device common to literary communication of Paul’s time. Fruchtenbaum’s ripping two Holy Spiritual manifestations out of the entire domain of the category exemplifies the abject absurdity and desperation of Dispensationalist propaganda.

In Sum

As demonstrated above, God created the Holy Spiritual manifestations for a purpose, and that purpose was to prepare the saints for Christ’s parousia, in order, among other things, to consummate the Old Covenant paradigm. While the topic of Christ’s parousia extends well beyond the scope of this chapter, here is at least an introductory adumbration of the event, including, first, several of many prophets and prophecies inhering in the phenomenon:

Jacob-Israel (Gen 49:10)
Moses (Dt 28)
Isaiah (ch 28)
Daniel (8:24, 12:7)
Joel (2:31)
Amos (5:1-2)
Jesus (Mt 16:28; 21:43-44; 23:38; 24:1-3, 33-34)
Writer of Hebrews (Heb 9:27-28)
John of the Revelation (ch 19-20)

Of Paul’s many related prophetic passages, one that adds a unique perspective to Christ’s parousia is 1 Corinthians 11:25-26:

After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. 26 For as often as ye eat this
bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come.

“[T]ill he come” refers to Christ’s parousia. The grammar of the above passage indicates that Paul and the intended recipients of his letter believed it would occur in their lifetime. One reason they believed that is that they were aware that Jesus had told the original twelve disciples:

[W]hen ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. 34 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. (Mt 24:33-34)

Jesus had told the disciples this because they had asked him:

[W]hen shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? (Mt 24:3)

First, in Matthew 24:3, “world” is a mistranslation of αἰών, which means aeon (eon), or age, or epoch; it does not mean the cessation of life on Earth.

More important is that the Scriptures are consistent throughout that Jesus said, and his audience and every writer of the New Testament understood, that Jesus’ coming at the end of the Old Covenant aeon would occur during the lifetime of the First-Generation called-out ones. Jesus said:

There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom. (Mt 16:28)

This again refers to Jesus’ parousia. What else would occur at that point?

Matthew 24:1-2 reports:

And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. 2 And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.
From the passages thus far examined, at least three phenomena would occur simultaneously, or Jesus’ *parousia* would cause instantaneously at least two events. First:

> And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. 64 Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. (Mt 26:63-64)

Again, Jesus stated to his audience that they would see at least evidence of his *parousia*.

The Pharisees understood exactly what Jesus meant, by his figurative language similar to that of the Old Covenant prophets when prophesying the Lord’s pending judgment against nations. Only this time, they understood it to be the terminal judgment against the nation of Israel (represented at the time by the house of Judah and chiefly the tribes of Judah and Benjamin in Judaea).

So thorough were the terminal prophetic dynamics, that the Pharisees cursed themselves in exchange for Jesus’ death:

> His blood be on us, and on our children. (Mt 27:25)

Thus here is yet another reference to the contemporaneous generation.

Another consequence of Jesus’ *parousia* would be the cessation of the Holy Spiritual manifestations; yet another would be, as several ancient historians verify, the annihilation of the temple, indeed of Jerusalem, and the destruction of many other cities in Judaea.
Chapter 5: Law of Moses, Law of Christ

The familiar term “law of Moses” occurs many times throughout the Bible, but the less familiar term “law of Christ” appears only once, in Galatians 6:2:

Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

Synonymous to the New Covenant Law, the Law of Christ also equates to the following terms:

- law to Christ (1 Cor 9:21)
- law of faith (Rom 3:27)
- law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus (Rom 8:2)
- law of liberty (Jas 1:25, 2:12)
- royal law (Jas 1:25, 2:12)

As James characterizes it, the Law of Christ instructs the disciples of Christ on how to be free, especially the converts from the Old Covenant religion to be free of the psychological bondage of the Law of Moses.

There is also the term "the law of God," occurring in Romans 7:22, 7:25, and 8:7, which could only be synonymous with "the law of Christ," especially in the light of the expositions of Romans 6:14, 7:4-6, and 8:2.

Abrogation of the Law of Moses

There are more than a dozen passages in the New Testament which expound that Jesus’ death abrogated the Law of Moses and consequently and simultaneously enacted the Law of Christ:

1. Acts 15:10: Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke [law of Moses] upon the neck of the
disciples [of Christ], which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?

2. Rom 6:14: For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law [of Moses], but under grace.

3. Rom 7:4-6: Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law [of Moses] 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 [of Moses], that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter [law of Moses].

4. Romans 10:4: For Christ is the end of the law [of Moses] for righteousness to every one that believeth.

5. 1 Cor 9:21: To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ [law of Christ],) that I might gain them that are without law.

6. 1 Cor 14:37: If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord [commandments under the Law of Christ].

7. 2 Cor 3:6: Who [God] also hath made us able ministers of the new testament [which comprises the Law of Christ]; not of the letter [law of Moses], but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

8. 2 Cor 3:7-11: But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones [law of Moses], was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory
was to be done away: How shall not the ministration of the spirit [Law of Christ] be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.

9. Gal 2:21: I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law [Law of Moses], then Christ is dead in vain.

10. Gal 3:13-28: Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law [of Moses] . . . Wherefore then serveth the law [of Moses]? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed [Christ] should come to whom the promise was made . . . 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 [law of Moses] (v. 24-25).

11. Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. (Gal 5:1)

12. Gal 6:2: Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

13. Eph 2:15-16: Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances [law of Moses]; 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. (Cf. Gal 3:28)

14. Col 2:14: Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances [law of Moses] that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.
15. Hebrews 7:11-10:29 (7:11-17 listed here): If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law [of Moses],) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment [law of Moses], but after the power of an endless life. For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment [law of Moses] going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the law [of Moses] made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God.

16. Hebrews 13:10-16: We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. 11 For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. 12 Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. 13 Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. 14 For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. 15 By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. 16 But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.
Initiation of the Law of Christ

The Law of Christ, or New Covenant Law, evolved or was gradually legislated over a relatively long period of time. For instance, during his ministry Jesus introduced many decrees of the Law of Christ, which, however, would not become enacted until his death; for Jesus was bound to fulfill the Law of Moses, which law remained in force until Jesus’ death. Three such decrees are found in Matthew:

Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment. 22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. (Mt 5:21-22)

Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: 28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. (Mt 5:27-28)

Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man. (Mt 15:11)

The above three instances exemplify a moral contrast of the Law of Moses to the Law of Christ, where the latter intensifies the former: under the Law of Moses, a physical act was prohibited or the commission of a physical sin drew a physical penalty; under the Law of Christ, the commission of a sin can occur psychically, in the conscience, cutting to the heart, as it were (and such corrupt cognition also result in the form of spoken words).

As late as 15 years after Jesus’ death, a major conflict over the two great bodies of law erupted. Acts 15 and Galatians 2 record the vehement reproof which the apostles and elders at Jerusalem brought against the Judaizers, or false brethren, for attempting to impose the Law of Moses onto the Gentile disciples of Christ. By this time, the situation of Judaizing had become so serious that Paul and Barnabas convened to address it along with the other apostles and elders at Jerusalem, where, as Acts 15:10 records, Peter rebuked the Judaizers:

“Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke [law
of Moses] upon the neck of the disciples [of Christ],
which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?"

No longer had Jesus’ death and resurrection broken the yoke of
bondage of the Law of Moses than the same religionists who had
perverted the Law of Moses up to that point were attempting to
corrupt the Law of Christ. (See Chapter 6, “Council at
Jerusalem.”)

Other evidence of the evolution or gradual legislation of the Law
of Christ can be seen in Paul, James and other elders’ confusion
over observance of the Law of Moses subsequent to Jesus’ death and
resurrection in Acts 21:18-32. (See Chapter 6, “Council at
Jerusalem.”)

Core of the Law of Christ

The very core of the Law of Christ inheres in the following
statements of Jesus himself as recorded in the Gospel According To
John:

If ye love me, keep my commandments [14:15]. . . . He
that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is
that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved
of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest
myself to him [14:21]. . . . If a man love me, he
will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and
we will come unto him, and make our abode with him
[14:23]. . . . If ye keep my commandments, ye shall
abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s
commandments, and abide in his love [15:10]. (Jn
14:15,21,23; 15:10)

The four passages above taken together as a whole seem to present
God’s love as conditional and convoluted relative to verses such
as 1 John 4:19 – "We love him, because he first loved us" – and
John 3:16 – "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only
begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish,
but have everlasting life" – but the referents of God’s love in
these latter two passages are unbelieving persons, who could not
love God. John 3:18-21 clarifies this in terms of unbelieving
persons loving darkness and hating the light – or not loving God:

. . . he that believeth not is condemned already,
because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

When a person believes, he or she “cometh to the light,” or comes to God, and is now able to love God, by virtue of the Holy Spirit’s immanency; the believing person has within himself or herself Christ’s commandments as well as the ability to obey them; and hence the aforementioned passages in John 14 and 15 encourage the New Covenant saint to love God because he or she can love God, and ought to love God.

Yoke of Unbelieving Bondage

An example of the heaviness, of not the Law of Moses, but of the very guilt of condemnation of unbelief per se, is found in the testimony of one Gasparo Contarini, a Venetian, who reportedly in 1511 experienced a very similar metanoia to that of Martin Luther in relation to the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith alone:

. . . I began to think to myself what that happiness [spiritual regeneration] might be and what our condition is. And I truly understood that if I performed all the penances possible, and even many more, even if they were all taken together, they would not be enough to make up for my past sins, to say nothing of meriting that felicity [of spiritual regeneration]. And having seen that that infinite goodness, that love which always burns infinitely and loves us little worms so much that our intellect cannot fathom it, having only by its goodness made us out of nothing and exalted us to such a height . . . We must attempt only to unite ourselves with our head [Christ] with faith, with hope, and with that small love of which we are capable. As regards satisfaction [reconciliation] for sins committed, and into which human weakness falls, His passion is sufficient and
more than sufficient. Through this thought I was changed from great fear and suffering to happiness. I began with my whole spirit to turn to this greatest good which I saw, for love of me, on the cross, with his arms open, and his breast opened up right to his heart. This I, the wretch who had not had enough courage for the atonement of my iniquities to leave the world and do penance, turned to him; and since I asked him to let me share in the satisfaction [reconciliation] which he, without any sins of his own, had made for us, he was quick to accept me and to cause his Father completely to cancel the debt I had contracted, which I myself was incapable of satisfying [performing sufficient penance for]. (Jedin, “Ein ‘Thurmerlbenis’ des jungen Contarini,” p. 117 and Dermot Fenlon, “Heresy and Obedience in Tridentine Italy.” p. 8.; in “The Role of the Venetian Oligarchy in the Reformation, Counter-Reformation, Enlightenment and the Thirty Years’ War,” by Webster Tarpley; The American Almanac, 22 March 1993.)

Law of Sin and Death

In his article “Does Max King’s Covenant Eschatology and the Corporate Body View Tend to Universalism?” Kurt Simmons expounds on the law of sin and death, the phrase occurring at Romans 8:32:

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

In his article, Simmons reproves the false doctrine that essentially sin did not exist before the Lord inspired the Old Covenant books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Simmons persuades thus:

The basic assumption of [Max] King and those who follow him is that from Adam to Moses there was no law, and sin was not imputed (reckoned) against man by God. Sam [Frost] says, “In the world, before Jesus, the death and the sin ruled through the law given to Adam and later given to Moses. Even when there was no law, the death and the sin ruled because of the law given to Adam.” A little later he states that “between Adam and Moses no sins were reckoned to
one’s account.” Thus, according to Frost, there was a
time when the world was without law, and sin was not
reckoned to man’s account. This is absurd. If sin was
not put to man’s account from Adam to Moses, why did
God flood the world and destroy Sodom? Were the
Sodomites and those that perished in the deluge
saved, because there was no law condemning them? I
think we all know that they were not saved; indeed,
Peter and Jude affirm they were not (I Pet 3:19,20;
II Pet 2:5; Jude 7). This is conclusive evidence that
God in fact reckoned sin against man, and that
[Frost] is wrong.

There has always been law and always will be. This
law was not always expressed orally or in writing; it
didn’t need to be. God equipped man with a conscience
that told him right from wrong. Man is also equipped
with reason and can judge what is right by the
exercise of moral and mental faculties. Does it take
an express statement from God for man to know that
copulating with beasts is wrong? That to kill another
man is wrong? That to enslave and oppress is wrong?
No, obviously not. Paul alludes to this when he says,
“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.” (Rom
2:14, 15)

All during the period from Adam to Moses men
recognized, and God punished, sin. However, because
of the hardness of man’s heart and darkness of his
mind, man’s conception of sin was imperfect and much
that is immoral became accepted practice. Men made
slaves of other men; men took multiple wives; men
lived by piracy, war, robbery, and oppression. Men
did not impute sin to themselves where there was no
divine law expressly condemning their acts. That is
the meaning of Romans 5:13 [“For until the law sin
was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there
is no law”]. Most, including [Frost] and King, assume
that it means that God did not impute sin to man
before the law of Moses, but this wrong. The
destruction of Sodom shows this. No, it is man that
did not reckon, impute, or take account of his own
sin without the written law. Oh, they imputed some
sins to themselves, but not all. Man’s conscience became corrupt; idolatry, fornication, and homosexuality were acceptable among Pagan man and not viewed as sinful.

Hence, the Mosaic law entered to teach man his sin (not “the sin” as [Frost] would have it). The Mosaic law did not create sin; it merely codified the sin that existed in man from the time of the fall, so man could know sin and the judgment of death it brings down from God. Thus, the notion that there was a “gap” from Adam to Moses when there was no law and God did not reckon sin is wrong – and is part of the architecture which allows Universalists to revive that same sinless period post-A.D. 70 when that law was purportedly removed. (*The Sword & The Plow, Newsletter of the Bimillennial Preterist Association, Vol. IX, No. VII – August 2007*)

As his exegesis on the law of sin and death relates to the Law of Moses and the Law of Christ, Simmons continues:

The law of sin and death was subsumed by and underlay the Mosaic law, just as it underlies the moral law today, but ultimately it was not the Mosaic law that condemned man. . . . The Mosaic law was invested with no especial power of sin and death that is not present in the moral law binding upon all men today.

Additionally, in his statement of faith, prefacing the above-referenced article, Simmons states:

Christ died to save man from the bondage of sin under the law of sin and death, not the Mosaic law; annulment of the ceremonial law was irrelevant in terms of accomplishing man’s salvation; removal of the Mosaic law was not necessary to defeat sin and death. . . .

The law of Moses also included the ceremonial law, consisting in types and shadows that pointed to Christ. Thus, where the moral law condemned, the ceremonial law offered man the hope of redemption. The ceremonial law has been removed, but not the moral. The moral law still convicts man of sin. To
commit adultery was sinful before Moses (see Gen 20:6; 39:9), and is still every bit as unlawful today ("whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" - Heb 13:4). . . .

Second, the priestly and ceremonial law has been done away, but the moral law and law of sin and death remain.

The usage of the phrases "the moral law today," "the moral law binding upon all men today," "annulment of the ceremonial law," and "priestly . . . law" indicates Simmons’s oversight of the Law of Christ, or New Covenant Law, which, as with the Law of Moses, differentiates neither a "moral law," a "ceremonial law," nor a "priestly law" within the context of its body of law itself. James says:

For whosoever shall keep the whole law [of Moses], and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the [whole] law. (2:10-11)

The enumeration of the Law of Moses into 613 rules, regulations, observances, etc. (attributed to one Maimonides, ca. A.D. 1135-1204), does not signify any differentiating of the Law of Moses into two or more separate divisions such as moral, ceremonial, and civil, as has been most commonly expostulated: the Law of Moses constitutes one indivisible body of law categorically — and, as expounded further above, Jesus’ death abrogated the entire body of the Law of Moses.

The Law of Christ also constitutes one body of law categorically, comprising no divisions. Realizing that enumerating the rules, regulations, observances, etc., of the Law of Christ is not the point of the New Covenant Law or the New Covenant itself, the present author abandoned the task after compiling a list of a thousand items.

Simmons’s oversight of the Law of Christ extends to his specific instance of invoking Hebrews 13:4 ("whoremongers and adulterers God will judge") to illustrate that adultery is still sinful after the abrogation of the Law of Moses, when Matthew 5:27-28 is the clear and natural example of Jesus himself decreeing the New Covenant Law’s contrast to and intensification of the Old
Covenant Law’s penalty for adultery:

Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: 28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

By “But I say unto you” Jesus was emphasizing the difference between the Law of Moses and his law.

As Simmons elucidates in his article, Max King et al. do err when they equate the law of sin and death with the Law of Moses; but Simmons’s “ceremonial law” does not equate to the Law of Moses either.

It is of great visceral moment that Simmons brings to light the concept and essence of the law of sin and death as consisting in God’s law under which human beings have always existed, from Adam to the present. Especially pertinent is Simmons’s insight that:

The Mosaic law did not create sin; it merely codified the sin that existed in man from the time of the fall, so man could know sin and the judgment of death it brings down from God.

Of course this is not all that the Law of Moses did, but it is essential to understanding the continuum of the law of sin and death.

Again, without acknowledgment of the Law of Moses and the Law of Christ, Simmons in his article does not attribute to Paul the apostle’s force of argument relating to Jesus’ death having abrogated the Law of Moses and Jesus’ resurrection enacting the Law of Christ and providing a means of spiritual salvation for human beings. For example, Simmons writes:

It is the law of sin and death that imperiled man, not Moses. Thus, Paul says “Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death” (Rom 8:2; cf. 7:23). He does not say “Christ hath made me free from the law of Moses.” . . . When Paul says “the strength of sin is the law” (I Cor 15:56), again it is not the law of Moses he has in view (except perhaps incidentally), but the law of sin and death.
Simmons rightly has the entire law, sin, and death discourse in mind, i.e., Romans 6:6-8:14, along with related passages from Romans and other New Testament books. Through the long passage in Romans, Paul shifts freely from the law of sin and death, to the Law of Moses, to “a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me . . . [and, or] . . . “another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members” (Rom 7:21,23). Thus with Paul juggling at least four different laws, it may not be immediately clear which law Paul is referring to and when.

As a congenital descendant of Jacob-Israel, Paul was as aware as anyone could be of the bondage to the Law of Moses under which he lived until his spiritual conversion and sufficient transformation – i.e., he was also well aware of the antipodal liberation which the Law of Christ brought to him and any other congenital Israelite who had been converted to the spirituality of Christ. Merely the usage of the word “Christ” in reference to Jesus of Nazareth was an admission to the Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth; Paul’s use of “Christ” in his writings seems as familiar to him as the back of his hand.

Paul was similarly aware of the law of sin and death, and of the intersection of that law with the Law of Moses and with the Law of Christ; Paul made no mistakes in his handling of the different laws in Romans 6:6-8:14, as he was an amanuensis of God finely tuned to the inspiration.

Paul’s writings also evince that the apostle was perfectly aware that the observance of the Law of Moses was not salvific, and that it is faith in Christ which saves – and that this faith was operative prior even to God’s transmission of the Old Covenant Law to Moses.

Again, Paul was aware of “another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members” . . . “a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.”

Thus, Simmons’s following assertion is perhaps too narrow that 1 Corinthians 15:56 does not refer to both the law of sin and death and the Law of Moses:

When Paul says “the strength of sin is the law” (I Cor 15:56), again it is not the law of Moses he has in view (except perhaps incidentally), but the law of
sin and death.

Another example of Simmons’s perhaps disacknowledgment of the differentiation of the law of sin and death and the Law of Moses is the following:

Men did not impute sin to themselves where there was no divine law expressly condemning their acts. That is the meaning of Romans 5:13 ["For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law"]. Most, including [Frost] and King, assume that it means that God did not impute sin to man before the law of Moses, but this wrong. The destruction of Sodom shows this. No, it is man that did not reckon, impute, or take account of his own sin without the written law.

Simmons’s invoking Romans 5:13 without reference to its context of at the least 5:8-21 causes the oversight that in 5:13 Paul by his use of “the law” is referring to the Law of Moses. For in his next sentence, Paul says, “Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses”: death reigned because sin reigned, from Adam to Moses – meaning, sin was in the world from Adam to Moses (as Paul states in Romans 5:13), but the Law of Moses was not applied to the Israelites until Moses – i.e., until God transmitted the Old Covenant Law to Moses – in this last instance it was as if God took the Israelites by the collar, showed them the Old Covenant Law, and said: “This is what you’ve been doing, stop doing that, and start doing this.”

Also it appears, in his article, that Simmons assumes that the Israelites, once they were instructed in the Law of Moses, they obeyed it – as contrasted to the preceding aeon, when the Israelites were not confronted by the Law of Moses of course they could not obey it – as Simmons says:

No, it is man that did not reckon, impute, or take account of his own sin without the written law.

By “the written law” Simmons could only be referring to the Law of Moses, whereby by “man” he could logically only be referring to the Israelites. Simmons continues:

Hence, the Mosaic law entered to teach man his sin (not “the sin” as Sam [Frost] would have it). The Mosaic law did not create sin; it merely codified
the sin that existed in man from the time of the fall, so man could know sin and the judgment of death it brings down from God.

Now it appears Simmons is contradicting himself and convoluting his categories of “man” and “Israelites.” In the above passage Simmons asserts states that “the Mosaic law entered to teach man,” but elsewhere in his article Simmons denies that the Law of Moses applied to non-Israelites:

This is another huge misinterpretation of King and his followers. They assume that the Mosaic law condemned all men and hence that its removal was necessary for man [or, “all men”] to be justified. . . . But, this is mistaken. It is the law of sin and death that imperiled man, not Moses.

Of course it is true that the same sin existed in all human beings, not only Israelites; but that because of the obvious congenital constrictions, the Savior had to be born of some human ancestry; this is why the specific genealogy was irrelevant and dissolved beyond God’s purpose for and his significance of the Israelites, as God had inspired Old Covenant prophets to prophesy and as God fulfilled in his final judgment of the Israelites in the annihilation of Jerusalem and dissolution of the physical nation of Israel a thousand or two thousand years ago (see Anatoly Fomenko, History: Science or Fiction?, Vols. 1-3, for an accurate updating of historical chronology.)

Simmons cites rightly the following erroneous assertion made by Max King: “The Mosaic law was done away for all men for all time in A.D. 70.” The chronological problem notwithstanding, as expounded earlier in this chapter, more than a dozen passages in the New Testament establish that Jesus’ death abrogated the Law of Moses, not the annihilation of Jerusalem and dissolution of the Israelites approximately forty years later – the obvious referent of “A.D. 70.”

While congenital Israelites were still recognized by God as such during the first generation of the New Covenant aeon, the Israelites were no longer custodians of the Old Covenant Law because that Law had been abrogated along with the termination of the Old Covenant itself, as Jesus’ shed blood had established the New Covenant:

For this is my blood of the new testament [διαθήκης,
same word translated “covenant” elsewhere], which is shed for many for the remission of sins. (Mt 26:28; cf. Mk 14:24, Lu 22:20, 1 Cor 11:25)

Paul contrasts the New and Old Covenant Laws:

Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter [Law of Moses], but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. (2 Cor 3:6)

But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ. (2 Cor 3:14)

The writer of Hebrews continues Paul’s theme:

By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament. (Heb 7:22)

But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. 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: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. (Heb 8:6-10)

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. (Heb 8:13)

And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption
of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. (Heb 9:15)

Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? (Heb 10:29)

And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant. (Heb 12:24)

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant. (Heb 13:20)

Because at the time God inspired the writing of the Epistle to the Hebrews Jesus was the mediator of the New Covenant (Heb 12:24), the New Covenant was at that time in existence, the Law of Christ in force. Yet, it is a general, widespread misconception that the Law of Moses was in force subsequent to Jesus’ death and resurrection, based primarily on two passages, Matthew 5:17-18 and Hebrews 8:13, the latter first:

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. (Heb 8:13)

The mistaken claim that the above passage as a whole means that the Old Covenant itself was “ready to vanish away” subsequent to Jesus’ death and resurrection, and that, according to Preterist theology, Christ’s parousia, approximately 40 years later, resulted not only in the annihilation of Jerusalem and the dissolution of the Israelites but also in the abrogation of the Old Covenant and the Law of Moses.

Most Preterists overlook that the significance of the first statement, that, because the New Covenant was in existence at the time that Hebrews was being written, “first” refers to the Old Covenant, and “hath made the first old” means that the Old Covenant was defunct at the time of writing of the epistle.

The second statement of the passage clarifies that the physical,
material manifestations of the Old Covenant paradigm were about to pass out of existence — not the Old Covenant itself (for it had already passed at the shedding of Jesus’ blood). Expounding on Hebrews 8:13, Jerry Bernard says:

The Greek word *palaioo* [παλαιούμενον] was well known in Jerusalem [in the first generation subsequent to Jesus’ death and resurrection] because it was used in the papyri for a temple and a wall that had become old and obsolete and needed repairing (s. Preisigke II, 224; MM). . . . I have interpreted the verse from the Greek like this: When He says “new,” He makes the “old” or “first” thing as being made old and what can grow old (like physical bodies and buildings) with the covenant is near vanishing. . . . What vanished away at the Parousia were the “things” connected with the [old] covenant. (Bible Study, 19 September 2004; http://www.jerrybernard.com)

The writer of Hebrews understood that the Pharisees’ self-inflicted curse, crying for the guilt of Jesus’ death to come upon them and upon their children, would occur within a period of time of one generation. The writer knew when the sands of the curse had begun running, and that the time of this generation had almost run out: “Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.” The writing occurred prior to the annihilation of Jerusalem executed by the Romans — the epistle warns the intended recipients, in Judaea, to flee — before the fulfillment of Jesus’ prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem commenced. Thus the writer knew that the Old Covenant edifices would soon pass completely out of existence upon the fulfillment of Jesus’ prophecy.

As for Matthew 5:17-18, the accurate interpretation may depend on Jesus’ use of the phrase “one jot or one tittle”:

For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. (Mt 5:18)

If Jesus’ usage was figurative, then in stating that “one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law” Jesus was referring to the letter of the Law of Moses as opposed to the spirit of the law — the form, not the substance. Jesus’ figurative use would indicate that beyond his death, the Pharisees would continue to perform the temple rituals and observe the Law of Moses to the
extent that they did — but all of those activities would be inefficacious, meaningless, and mechanical. With the annihilation of Jerusalem, including the temple, the vain rituals would cease: and with their ceasing would be satisfied the requirement that “Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law” — the former caused the latter — in that “heaven and earth” signified the temple at Jerusalem. Jeremiah prophesied in the context of divine judgment against the Israelites:

Moreover the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying, Considerest thou not what this people have spoken, saying, The two families which the LORD hath chosen, he hath even cast them off? thus they have despised my people, that they should be no more a nation before them. Thus saith the LORD; If my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth . . . . (Jer 33:23-25)

The phrase “ordinances of heaven and earth” refers to the Law of Moses and its place of observation, the temple at Jerusalem. Other passages confirming that the figurative usage of “heaven and earth” refers to the temple are the following:

We will go into his tabernacles: we will worship at his footstool. (Psa 132:7)

Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? (Isa 66:1; cf. Acts 7:44-50)

How hath the Lord covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud in his anger, and cast down from heaven unto the earth the beauty of Israel, and remembered not his footstool in the day of his anger! (Lam 2:1)

But I [Jesus] say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God’s throne: Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool. (Mt 5:34-35)

Another related point is whether the New Covenant might have actually begun earlier than the shedding of Jesus’ blood, for according to Luke:
The law and the prophets were until John [the Baptist]. (16:16; cf. Mk 1:1-11)

Considered in the light of related passages, and because John the Baptist died prematurely, however, Luke’s phrase “were until John” could only be interpreted as some point during John’s generation, or normally expected lifespan, during which, of course, Jesus died — and, as Jesus hung on the cross, a Roman soldier pierced his side with a spear, and shed his blood . . . of the New Covenant.

Ramifications

The Greek New Testament comprises no information contrary to the passages referenced thus far in this book which would indicate that the rules, regulations, observances, etc., under the Law of Christ should be altered in any way subsequent to Christ’s parousia, excepting in one case, and that is that the Lord’s Supper should no longer be observed, as Paul discourses:

. . . the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come. (1 Cor 11:24-26)

If Paul communicated to the called-out ones that by observing the Lord’s Supper “ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come,” the statement implies that the observance would be in vain after the Lord had come. Because Paul anticipated Christ’s parousia to occur within his lifetime or generation, he stipulated that the observance of the Lord’s Supper should occur in order to remember the Lord’s death till he come — until Christ’s parousia. In other words, to observe the Lord’s Supper subsequent to Christ’s parousia would be inefficacious; doing so would not sanctify. That is identical in concept and essence to the observance of any defunct feast of the Law of Moses. The ecclesiological point is that the Lord’s Supper was both efficacious and mandatory during the first generation of the New Covenant aeon. The
ecclesiological point is that although the Lord’s Supper was a New Covenant observance, it would, nonetheless, no longer be efficacious or mandatory subsequent to Christ’s *parousia*. Consider the confusion inhering in post-parousia attempts to do so – most stridently, the Roman Catholic Church’s “magical” transubstantiation version. Or, à la 1 Corinthians 11, are people becoming ill and even dying because of post-parousia observance?

Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. . . . For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. (1 Cor 11:27-30)

Or did 1 Corinthians 11 apply only to the first generation of the New Covenant aeon?

On a personal note, I (the present author) in the recent past visited a Catholic church (in the U.S.A.) where some friends attended, and during the mass one doctrine went like this: when the bodies of Catholics die, their spirits do not ascend into Heaven because Christ has not returned yet, and, presumably, will do so when Christ returns. Thus Catholic theology is consistent in relation to John 14:1-3 and Hebrews 9:28, in that if Christ has not already returned, there are no righteous souls in Heaven. Contrast that to the Dispensationalist doctrine that Christ has not returned, but there are righteous spirits are in Heaven (and continuously ascend into Heaven upon biological terminus). Of course an error common to both Catholic and Dispensationalist theologies is the assertion that Christ’s *parousia* has not already occurred (see e.g. *The MacArthur Study Bible: New King James Version*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson. 1997; notes on Hebrews 9:28).
Chapter 6: Council at Jerusalem

Although during his earthly ministry Jesus had proclaimed several commandments of the Law of Christ (which upon his death and resurrection would become enacted), it would not be until approximately 15 years later that any of these would be codified, at the Jerusalem Council. The motivation for the convention was the imperative to quell false doctrines and practices which certain Pharisees were promulgating among the groups of new converts established by Paul and Barnabas in Galatia. The event was perhaps the only time when all the living apostles and elders were ever congregated in mutual physical presence. Acts 15 and Galatians 2 record some of the Council’s “minutes.”

First, the Epistle to the Galatians exposes a false gospel which had been propagated to the intended recipients of the letter (Gal 1:6-9) and it identifies the perpetrators as “false brethren” (Gal 2:4), or Judaizers. Galatians 2:14 comprises the term ἴουδαιζεῖν, which provides the root for the English derivations “Judaizers,” “Judaizing,” and “Judaization” (cf. Gal 4:17).

The Judaizers propagated specifically the false doctrine that salvation is obtained only by a combination of faith in Christ, observation of the Law of Moses, and circumcision (for male converts).

The account of Paul and Barnabas’s visit to Jerusalem (Gal 2:1-10) emphasizes the Judaizers’ demand of circumcision (vv. 2:3, 6:12-13). Yet, as a result of the Council, the Gentile saint Titus, who had accompanied Paul and Barnabas, was not compelled to be circumcised. Thus one commandment of the New Covenant Law was established: circumcision shall not be required of Gentile converts – which is consistent with the precept that in Christ there is neither Jew (Israelite) nor Gentile (Gal 3:28). Christ’s parousia would render this commandment redundant along with an ethnical distinction between Israelites and non-Israelites, whereupon the nation of congenital Israelites would be dissolved (Dt 28; Isaiah 28:11-18; Jer 33:23-25; Dan 8:24).
Another New Covenant commandment recounted in Galatians 2:1-10 is that of James, Cephas, and John exhorting Paul, Barnabas, Titus (and possibly others) to “remember the poor” (2:10; cf. 1 Cor 16:1-3).

In addition to reproving the false brethren so that “the truth of the gospel might continue” (Gal 2:3-5), Paul and Barnabas visited the apostles at Jerusalem also to communicate “unto them that gospel which” Paul was preaching “among the Gentiles . . . lest by any means” he “should run, or had run, in vain” (Gal 2:2). Thus the Epistle to the Galatians records three specific results of the Council at Jerusalem:

(1) The apostles countermanded the Judaizers and did not compel Titus to be circumcised (v. 2:3);

(2) James, Peter and John exhorted Paul, Barnabas, and Titus and possibly others who had accompanied them from Antioch to “remember the poor” (Gal 2:10);

(3) James, Peter, John (and possibly others) “saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision [i.e., to the Gentiles] was committed unto [Paul], as the gospel of the circumcision [i.e., to the Jews] was unto Peter; and James, Peter, and John gave [Paul] and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that [Paul and Barnabas] should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision” (Gal 2:7-9).

The congenital distinction of Israelites was still recognized as such by God until the annihilation of Jerusalem in ca. A.D. 70 (or ~1,000 years later, depending on the chronology observed). Particularly poignant about the ethnically distinct missions of Peter and Paul is that the population of the Gentiles comprised descendants of the former, post-Solomonic ten-tribed nation of Israel – the faithful remnant of whom – during this historically unique generation – would convert from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant spiritually.

Jesus himself had said to a woman of Canaan who had requested that he deliver her daughter of an affliction: “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel [i.e., all the Israelite tribes]” (Mt 15:24); but because the Gentile woman recognized who Jesus was he granted her request: “O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. (And her daughter was made whole from that very hour).” There is no doubt but that Jesus was clarifying and establishing – for all to see – that righteousness
obtains not from genealogy or culture, but from the spirit: “great is they faith.”

Upon the conclusion of the Council at Jerusalem the participants composed a letter and sent copies to all the saints in Galatia. The letters contained the following decrees:

abstain from meats offered to idols,
and from blood,
and from things strangled,
and from fornication:
from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. (Acts 15:29)

Regarding circumcision and the observance of the Law of Moses, the letter also included a pronouncement against Judaizing:

Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law [of Moses]: to whom we gave no such commandment. (Acts 15:24).

This passage concurs with Acts 15:10, a report of earlier proceedings of the Council:

And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. 8 And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; 9 And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. 10 Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke [law of Moses] upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? 11 But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.

Whether Paul first heard this doctrine at the Council or he had already been enlightened of it, he would codify it in his (later) writings (see further below).
Further Evidence of Gradual Legislation

Further evidence of the evolution or gradual legislation of the Law of Christ (introduced in Chapter 5) can be seen in Paul, James and other elders’ confusion over the observance of the Law of Moses — even after the Council at Jerusalem:

And the day following Paul went in with us unto James [at Jerusalem]; and all the elders were present. 19 And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry. 20 And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law: 21 And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. 22 What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come. 23 Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them; 24 Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law. 25 As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication. 26 Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them. 27 And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him, 28 Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place. 29 (For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus
an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.) 30 And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut. 31 And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. 32 Who immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them: and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul. (Acts 21:18-32)

Without understanding the chronological context of the above event it may be disturbing to think that Paul could be so hypocritical or double-minded regarding the Law of Moses and the Law of Christ. Paul’s transformation evinced in the text of Romans suggests that the writing of this epistle occurred subsequent to the events reported in Acts 21 – especially the following four passages:

What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin. (Rom 3:9)

Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also. (Rom 3:29)

Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? (Rom 9:24)

What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. (Rom 9:30)

It appears that in the light of Romans 1:16 (below), Paul had transformed to the point of perfect understanding of the difference between the Old and New Covenants, where, in the context of the entire New Testament, Romans 1:16 indicates that the phrase “to the Jew first” concurs with Jesus’ statement that “salvation is of the Jews” (Jn 4:22), simply meaning that Jesus of Nazareth’s mother and step-father were congenital Judahites, that the Savior had to be incarnated of some human ancestry, and alas it was of this one (see also Mt 15:24):

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that
believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

When Paul follows this with Romans 2:10, the winds of transformational vacillation seemed to be blowing:

But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile.

In this passage, the reference of “the Jew first” appears to turn Romans 1:16 on its head, and confer transformational primacy to Galatians.

Yet, adding to Paul’s spiritual merits, the apostle rebuked Peter, Barnabas and other converted congenital Israelites for their wavering with regard to a regressive observance of the Law of Moses, in stark contrast to the accord reached at the Council at Jerusalem:

But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? (Gal 2:11-14)

Paul rebuked Peter directly and Barnabas and others indirectly for their hypocrisy. He also judged rightly in this controversy with Barnabas:

And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do. And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark. But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so
Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus; And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches. (Acts 15:36-41)

Paul was most probably right about John Mark, as he was about Barnabas at Antioch.

Again, Paul himself wavered by becoming embroiled in the events at Jerusalem described in Acts 21 — when that fiasco could have been prevented had Paul’s spiritual character been sufficiently more excellent when God warned him not to go to Jerusalem in the first place:

And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus. 11 And when he was come unto us, he took Paul’s girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. 12 And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem. (Acts 21:10-12)

The warning could be trusted, for Agabus had proved his veracity as a prophet when he had rightly prophesied “that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar” (Acts 11:28).

No human being has a crystal ball to the past, and the perhaps most accurate deduction which can be made with regard to the chronology of related events under discussion is that Paul had written Galatians at some point between the Council at Jerusalem and the subsequent debacle in that city. Romans is generally considered to have been written later, but Galatians parallels Romans in points relating to the differences between the Old and New Covenants, and, as expounded further above, may evince a more advanced New Covenant theological transformation:

I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain. (Gal 2:21)

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond
nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. (Gal 3:28; cf. Col 3:11; Rom 3:9, 3:29, 9:24, 9:30)

Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. (Gal 5:1)

Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. (Gal 6:2)