

## Law And Spirit Together

Not Law or Grace; Law AND Grace

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Certain things just seem to go together, do they not? And after a while we do not even think of them separately anymore.

History has its classical pairs: Anthony and Cleopatra; Brandt and Whitte; Samson and Delilah; Victoria and Albert.

Entertainment has its classical pairs: Laurel and Hardy; Burns and Allen; Pen and Teller; Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers; Bob Hope and Bing Crosby.

Food and cooking has its classical pairs: Salt and pepper; beer and pretzels; wine and cheese; peanut butter and jelly; pancakes and syrup; bread and butter.

Commerce and industry are no different: Lea and Perrins; Johnson and Johnson; Arm and Hammer; Bosch and Lomb; Simon and Schuster.

Sports have their pairs: Ruth and Gehrig; Mantle and Marris; Montana and Wright; Boyce and Andretti; Nicholas and Palmer.

And the natural world is the same way: Flora and fauna; land and sea; sun and moon; hill and vale; beach and surf; lightning and thunder.

By now, I am sure that you get the point. Certain things just go together. Many things in our experiences just work together in pairs. Either one brings out the best in the other one, or the one moderates the other (sometimes both). But the main thing is, whatever the dynamics are between the two, they work best when they are in proper proportion to each other.

The same holds true in our Christian life, believe it or not. Some virtues work best when they are coupled in tandem with another virtue: justice and mercy. Too much justice will make you a hanging judge. Too much mercy makes you a revolving door.

Another pair would be, being teachable, along with holding fast. Also, there is bearing with one another in our sins, faults, and weaknesses while exhorting one another to mature and grow, and change and overcome. They might be opposites, but they work from opposite ends to produce a mature Christian. So, when each side of a pair is

balanced with the other, they produce godly fruit.

Now, the Day of Pentecost, which we will be celebrating tomorrow, has its own particular twosome, that we hopefully are using every day to good effect.

On this day, centuries ago, God delivered to His people two basic ingredients for proper spiritual growth and maturity. He did this strangely and with good reason in two installments. And they were about 1500 years apart too. The first was to the children of Israel about 3,450 years ago, and the second was to the fledgling Church of God 1966 years ago. If you have not guessed it yet, it is the giving of the law at Mount Sinai (Exodus 19 and 20), and the giving of the Holy Spirit at Jerusalem (Acts 2). Both the law and the spirit are wonderful gifts of God given to us by a tremendously benevolent and caring Father in heaven. They are tools that He designed that we are to use to attain godly character so we can enter His kingdom. And without these two tools, it would not be possible. They are good things. You remember the scripture, "Every good and perfect gift comes down from the Father of Lights, with whom there is no shadow of turning." (James 1:17)

Just like justice and mercy, which are two equally good virtues, the law and the spirit must be used together in proper proportion. That might seem strange to some, but please bear with me.

Now, I do not want to portray them as polar opposites. That would be a misunderstanding. They are not polar opposites. They do not work from a negative and positive standpoints. However, as they are practically applied by human beings, they produce opposite effects at times. They work at the same problem from different angles. In a way, it is something like conservative versus liberal where both sides (used to) have primarily the same goal in mind, but they come at it with different viewpoints and different strategies for getting there.

It is also similar to different coaching styles in football. On one hand, you have Joe Turner from Penn State being a fundamentalist guy—run, run, run, run, run, and we will win!—kind of guy. And he does. He ends up in a bowl game most every year, and he is often in contention for a national championship. On the other hand, you have Steve Sporyer and the wide open, pass dominated offense—get down the field as fast as you can—and he often ends up in bowl games most every year and is in contention for national championships too.

Which style is the best?

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Who knows? But what a powerhouse you would have if you could combine them effectively into the perfect offense that could not be stopped! You would score on nearly every possession. No one could stop something like that.

And that is the way that it is with the law and the spirit. When the law and the spirit come together, they produce an unstoppable and unbeatable set of tools for spiritual growth.

First we are going to look at the law alone, then see the spirit alone, and then see how people use them to produce two sides of this "sandwich."

First of all, what happens when law dominates a person's thinking? What happens when the law dominates a person's lifestyle? You may think this strange, but this is the situation that affects us in the United States of America right now. We might think that this is an extremely liberal society, and it is in many respects, but, we have a law-dominated society and government. They are all called laws, but it also includes statutes, regulations, codes, rules, and even covenants. Whatever it is, though, it is a law that covers every (minor) detail of your relationship with whatever it might happen to be. (Actually, America is the most highly regulated nation on earth, although some of the European ones run a close second.)

Most locations have a law that states how late kids can stay out at night. We have a law about how soon the kids can get driver's licenses. We have a law that states when that kid is an adult, or how soon he can vote, or how soon he does this or that. We have laws that cover handicapped parking, and access, and rails, and doors, and doorknobs! We have a regulation (believe it or not; this is ridiculous) in this country that says that if you have a pile of sand at, near, or in your factory, it must be labeled a hazardous substance. Why? Because, the quartz portion of the sand is silicon dioxide. Silicon is a hazardous material according to OSHA (yes, but only when ***it is not*** chemically bound with another material).

There is a law that says that if you have a protective railing in your factory, it must be 42 inches high and no lower, or the inspector will incite you for the infraction. And then there is something in the carpentry/building industry where they tell you that you must be "tied off" if you are working (on a ladder) over a certain height. Well, you know what they do, they tie them selves off—to the ground—and go about their business. They just make sure that they are "tied off." It is one of so many millions of these types of things on the books.

I have an 8 x 10 garden shed out in the backyard, fully regulated by the city of Charlotte, NC, and it must be fully inspected before I can declare my home finished. It is just a little

shed for my wheelbarrow, lawn mower, and tools. But, it must meet all the building codes of a typical house in Charlotte. I might as well live in it. Maybe if I get in trouble with my wife, I would live in it!

But there are so many laws on the books that what it has done is it has made each one of us a lawbreaker at some point. There is no way that you can live in this country for one minute it seems without breaking some law. And if there is somebody around who knows the law, and whose job it is to catch you with those laws, it does not take much to get you—except knowing what the laws are. That would be a full-time job in itself. Have you ever wondered why there are so many lawyers? Because there are so many laws.

Laws are not bad, necessarily. Some of them are very good laws. And it is good that we have these things to protect us with signs, notices, and such. It is better to know, than not. But many of them are absolutely unnecessary. Anybody with an ounce of common sense could say, "Of course! I am not going to eat sand."

In New York City, there was a man commissioned to refurbish a famous bridge that was soon to be 100 years old, and he had to make sure that his work was finished before the anniversary date, so they could have their ceremony and party, and what not. Well, this man was a city official, and knew all the regulations regarding asking for bids during a certain period of time, choosing the lowest bidder, and all that stuff. Well, he cut some corners by cutting the bidding time to 25% the normal length, but they did contact everybody urgently asking for their bids quickly. He also did a few other things that were not necessarily illegal, but just some other shortcuts to speed things along. He was able to schedule the work one crew right after the other. And they got the job done 30 days early!

He got fired from his job.

He got fired because he did not go by the rules. Even though the repairs and refurbishing were done to code according to the books, the process by which he got everything done was not according to regulation. So he got fired.

This happens all over, all the time. A situation happened up in Chicago a few years ago, where somebody inspected one of the tunnels underground and found cracks in the ceiling of the tunnel. And they knew that if the ceiling went, it would flood all the downtown area with water from Lake Michigan. Chicago basically sits on a swamp.

The inspector went back to the city and told them, "Look, we have got to repair these tunnels, shore them up, or we are going to be rowing home someday." The answer he

got was, "We do not have \$65,000 in the budget to do this." And the engineer said, "I do not think you heard me right. We are going to swim home if something is not done. All of Lake Michigan is going to be pouring into our 'basement' soon if we do not do something." They did agree to recalculate and come up with some funds. While waiting for the approval, that tunnel collapsed, and ended costing 2 billion dollars in damages to downtown Chicago, just because the city manager would not take the chance at first to approve \$65,000 to make the repair, because the rules said that they had to go through these certain channels, and he did not want to go through all the trouble.

That is what I am getting at. There are so many laws anymore, that we are afraid to act. Sure, the law provides structure, guidelines, and boundaries for organizations great and small. A kid's game must have rules, or it will not work right. Even the U.S. government needs laws to do its job to organize and run the country. Rules are good. Law is necessary. It is indispensable. But when laws dominate an organization, the result ends up being oppression, fear, claustrophobia, and rigidity. And what do we lose? We lose creativity, inventiveness, and initiative. The overemphasis of law ends up producing two different types of people. One is that it produces the "man in a gray suit" who is afraid to make waves; afraid of being smashed by the law. They are like little moles who go squeaking from here to there, because they do not want to be a lawbreaker. On the other hand, it produces a person who spends every waking minute trying to find a way around the law.

Of course, there are people in between these two ditches, but that is what it produces—a person who is afraid, or a person who is a schemer. Let us turn to Luke 11, and see some of this in the Bible.

This is Luke's version of Matthew 23 "scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" section. And, I turned to this section in part because it talks about scribes and Pharisees and lawyers:

**Luke 11:44-54** "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like graves which are not seen, and the men who walk over them are not aware of them." Then one of the lawyers answered and said to Him, "Teacher, by saying these things You reproach us also." And He said, "Woe to you also, lawyers! For you load men with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers. Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. In fact, you bear witness that you approve the deeds of your fathers; for they indeed killed them, and you build their tombs. Therefore the wisdom of God also said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and persecute,' that the blood of all the prophets which was shed from the

foundation of the world may be required of this generation, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah who perished between the altar and the temple. Yes, I say to you, it shall be required of this generation. Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge. You did not enter in yourselves, and those who were entering in you hindered." And as He said these things to them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to assail Him vehemently, and to cross-examine Him about many things, lying in wait for Him, and seeking to catch Him in something He might say, that they might accuse Him.

Did you notice the flavor of the life under the scribes and Pharisees and the lawyers? Did you notice the expression of the violence and hatred that Jesus describes here? They put burdens on people and would not help them one bit. That sounds like oppression to me. They killed the prophets. That sounds like violence to me. Remember what they were trying to do with Jesus? Sounds like hatred to me. This is what an overemphasis on law can produce.

I would like to key in on verses 44 and 46 because I think it shows something that we might not normally see.

In verse 44 where He says that men may step on graves and do not know that they are doing it, Jesus is referring to Numbers 19:16, which basically says that an Israelite becomes defiled if he touches a dead body in the city or out in the field. Now, what these Jews and lawyers and scribes and Pharisees did was they interpreted this to mean that one could become defiled if you step on the grave, even though you did not know it was there. Maybe there had been a battle there say a hundred years before, and they buried all the men in a common grave out in the middle of this field, and you had walked over it not knowing it was there, then you would be defiled (in their judgement).

Ironically, Jesus said, "Scribes and Pharisees, you are the grave. And do you not know that all the people who come in contact with you are defiled by the way that you are?" That is what He said.

An over-emphasis on law produces the silent, invisible, moral defilement. It may look good on the outside, and it could seem good, and even righteous; but underneath there can be a spiritual killer, because of the fear, hatred, and violence it can produce. But, if it is taken to the extreme that the scribes and Pharisees and the lawyers took it, that is what it will probably produce.

Now, in verse 46, the one where He tells them, "You load men with burdens hard to bear, but you will not touch them with your finger." The principle understanding of this verse is what you see at face value. The lawyers gave people difficult things to do, but they would not give them any help whatsoever. They were on their own.

But there is more to it than that. The "burdens hard to bear" were primarily the scribal interpretations and traditions that they took very seriously—so seriously, in fact, their Mishna says that it is more important to keep the scribal interpretation than the law itself. [Senhedrin Chapter 11, verse 3.] And listen to their screwy reasoning they give for this: "Because if it were bad to transgress the law, which is sometimes hard to understand, then how much more terrible it must be to transgress the interpretation which clarifies the law!"

Do you know what that means? It means that men are smarter than God! So they thought it most important to keep man's traditions before you keep God's law. And if you did not, they would come down on them.

And the next part, "And you do not touch the burden with one of your fingers." This is interesting. This has to do with finding a loophole for themselves to get around it. The lawyers figured out for themselves every single loophole in the interpretation. They were good at it. They knew the law. They could quote it to you. And this meant that the lawyers lived pretty well as they pleased. But the common man, though, the one's whose back was bent for all their burdens laid on them, did not know the loopholes in the interpretation. And the lawyers were not about to tell them about it either. That would make them equal to them, and they would lose control over the people.

For instance, the lawyers taught that on the Sabbath, "a man was not to carry a burden in his right hand or his left, nor in his bosom, or on his shoulder." Aha! But the lawyers knew the interpretation, "A man may carry something on the Sabbath on the back of his hand, or with his foot, or in his mouth, or with his elbow, or his ear, or in or on his hair, or in his wallet, or between his wallet and his shirt, or in the hem of his shirt, or in his shoe or sandal."

So, the poor man, the one who did not know, could not carry (using a modern example) his Bible to church because he usually carried it in his hand, or in a satchel on his shoulder, or would train it up against his chest; but the lawyer could. He could affix it to the back of his hand, or put a rope around it and carry it from his elbow, or put it on his head so it would appear to be in his hair, or put it behind his wallet in his shirt, etc. See what I mean? He could make a huge hem around his robe or shirt, and carry it in this "pocket." This is a ridiculous example—but a true one! Look it up in Shabat 10, verse 3

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of the Mishna. It is there. But this overemphasis on law resulted in a people whose livelihood consisted of beating the law in any way that they could. And then, these same people used the law to oppress the rest.

I am not knocking God's law at all. But, I do knock their interpretations of it.

Turn to Deuteronomy 29, where God admits that He left a vital element out when He gave the law to Israel.

**Deuteronomy 29:4** "Yet the LORD has not given you a heart to perceive and eyes to see and ears to hear, to this very day.

The reason they overemphasized the law is because they had nothing else. They saw what they had, and they used it past the fullest. And then, they ended up making a society that was a burden to just about every one of them. The Israelites had the best law possible—the Pharisees had the best law that has ever been given to any people on this earth—and they misused it.

But, they did not have that missing ingredient that would have helped them perceive, and hear, and heed the true way of God. Of course, that element is God's Holy Spirit. But, they are going to have it someday. When they rise in the second resurrection, they will have a chance to redo what they did. They get to try again.

**Ezekiel 36:24** "For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.

They are going to have the same law, but now, they will also have the Holy Spirit of God to guide them. Look at what it says,

**Ezekiel 36:27-28** "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God.

Even though they did it wrong the first time in creating a horrible society for the common man, they will have a chance to do it again, and do it right.

Let us go on to the Spirit.

Obviously, in a truly spiritual context, this Spirit is the mind, power, and guidance of God. But, in order to see how it balances out the law, we are going to look at spirit in a more mundane, common, conventional sense, because God's Spirit is always good. It does not do things wrong. And I want to look at this from the idea of spirit in its more common applications and get the other side of this, so we can be able to see it a bit easier.

When we say that someone has "spirit," or is a very "spirited" person, we mean that the person is full of energy; he is animated. He is cheerful. He is enthusiastic. And this type of person is one of those we like to be around, because they are fun and have a lot of energy. It is contagious and you want to do whatever with this person, with as much energy too as possible. We just want to forge ahead.

However, many of these people who are spirited have a downside to them. Many of them do not like to be constrained by any sort of structure. We even have a term for them, "free spirit." These are the folks that basically do whatever they want, and flit around here and there, and not constrained by the normal constraints of society. They have their own thing, and they just do. They tend to chafe under restriction and structure. Usually such people are very independent. They work for the present, and do not care a whole lot about the future. Long on enthusiasm, but short on structure.

Now, a modern day religious example of this is our modern day Protestants, who are quite a spirited group without a lot of law, without a lot of constraint, especially those folks who tend toward Pentecostalism.

I do not know if you are aware of this, but Pentecostalism is the fastest growing segment of Protestantism in the world at this present time (1997), expecting much growth in the future.

Now, they say that they live in the spirit. And, many of them try to get "the spirit" just as often as they can. But it is not God's spirit. It is definitely a spirit, and I can show it to you in Ephesians 2.

**Ephesians 2:2** ...[talking about sin] in which you once walked according to

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the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, [and listen to this!] ***the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience***,...

It is a spirit that produces disobedience. Well, what is disobedience? It is not obeying law. They have a spirit whose main attributes, according to this verse, is disobedience—rebellion. He is not constrained by law. He has a lot of power. The Prince of the Power of the Air. But it produces disobedience.

Now, the reason I want to bring this up is because this spirit gives people a power similar to and a will to act similar to what God's Spirit does to us. But it produces very different results. Satan uses his spirit just like God uses the Holy Spirit. Satan is not as powerful, and its end is very different. But it is a spirit that guides and gives power to, and the will to act in and the emotion too, and gives attitudes to those who receive it.

I mean, look at the Pentecostals. Look at the Protestants. There is not a more enthusiastic group of so-called Christians in the world. They are so zealous for God, they say. They do so much in the community. They just want to spread Jesus all over the world. They are so sincere. Do not ever accuse them of being unconverted, you might just get a fist in your nose, they are so enthusiastic. They are number one in evangelizing and spreading Jesus to the uttermost parts of the earth. They lead the biggest trend in Protestantism at this present time, because they go everywhere. They have huge churches in Asia, as the people over there just seem to take to Pentecostalism easily. "All you have to know is Jesus' name, and confess Jesus, and you are saved," they say. "Come to the altar-call, raise and wave your hands, and be healed!" They burn with enthusiasm! They play lots of music and their services seem wonderful. They got the spirit.

What about obedience? The spirit who drives them leads them to disobedience. What about character growth? What about producing fruit? What about becoming perfect and mature? "Well, that is there, but this other is so much more fun once you get in the act."

What about pleasing God? What about coming to the measure of the stature and fullness of Christ? What about being transformed by the renewing of your mind? What about putting on the new man? I am sure that they give lip-service to these things. You can read about them in their magazines. They talk about it all the time.

But do you know what? They are not banking on that. They do not think that if they keep the law that it is going to help them in their trek toward the Kingdom of God. They do not believe in the Kingdom of God. They even believe that they are going to heaven! They

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are banking on God's mercy, that God loves them. "He will accept me just as I am." ... They are banking on their confession of Christ. They are banking on their sincerity and enthusiasm for God. "Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so..." "Gentle Jesus, meek and mild..." "The Old Rugged Cross..." "And if we sing all those good hymns on Sunday, God would surely want us on His cloud."

It is kind of subtle, but it is there. That is the way that they think. I am sure that there are a lot of very sincere Protestants out there, but the spirit that is driving them leads them to disobedience. Lots of sentimentality, but little or no obedience to law. It is an overemphasis on the other side.

Turn to Ezekiel 28 and we will look at this spirit again.

**Ezekiel 28:12-13** "Son of man, take up a lamentation for *the king of Tyre*, and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God;

He identifies who this really is. He was in Eden. That boils down quickly to Adam, Eve, or Satan the Devil. I do not think that any of us think that Adam or Eve were the seal of perfection or full of wisdom. And then especially the next line,

**Ezekiel 28:13** ...Every precious stone was your covering:...

Adam and Eve were not covered with precious stones. They were buck naked.

**Ezekiel 28:13** ...The sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created.

This created being could only be one person: Satan.

**Ezekiel 28:14-18** "You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; you were on the holy mountain of God; you walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, until iniquity [sin, lawlessness, disobedience] was found in you. By the abundance of your trading you became filled with violence within [another trait from the other side], and you sinned; therefore I cast you as a

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profane thing out of the mountain of God; and I destroyed you [from being a] covering cherub, from the midst of the fiery stones. Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor [a lot of vanity there]; I cast you to the ground, I laid you before kings, that they might gaze at you. You defiled your sanctuaries [another common attribute of the other side].

Remember the Pharisees and their defiling from overemphasizing law—that you might step on a grave, even though you do not know it, and thereby become defiled?

**Ezekiel 28:18** "You defiled your sanctuaries by the multitude of your iniquities, by the iniquity of your trading; therefore I brought fire from your midst; it devoured you, and I turned you to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all who saw you.

The spirit that works in modern Protestantism is a rebellious spirit. You just saw many of those attributes right here in this passage. And like Jesus said to the Pharisees, in John 8, "You do the work of your father." They cannot help it. This is the spirit is driving them.

This covering cherub's name in Hebrew was Hilel, and he became Satan the Devil. He is a perfect example of the spirit of the imbalance on the "spirit side." The spirit part I put in quotes because it is not God's Holy Spirit.

God created him [Hilel, Satan] as perfect as He could. He gave him everything He wanted him to have—tremendous power, authority, a spectacular musical talent; the finest created being throughout the whole of the universe. He had everything going for him.

But.

I recently was in conversation with some folks, and I was always saying "but." There seemed to be always another side of the issue that needed to be brought up.

Satan had all these good qualities—all this enthusiasm, all this drive, all these wonderful gifts from God—but he rejected God's law. He rejected God's governing of him. He rebelled against the boundaries, and therefore he is now against the guidelines that God had set out to be the true way to salvation and holiness. Satan placed his will, his power, his desires, his emotions, his mind, above the what God had ordained.

And what did God do about it? He cast him away like a dirty rag. He is not going to have that in His presence. He is not going to have defiled things near or covering His throne. Satan's spirit became an evil spirit. And he has been in opposition to God, God's plan, and God's people ever since the beginning.

Think about it! The spirit he had was from God. And he defiled it and misused it. And now, it is an evil thing, because of what he became.

Turn to Acts 8 and we will see this in the physical realm too. Thankfully this person in this example never received the Holy Spirit. This is the Simon Magus section.

**Acts 8:14-24** Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, for as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, saying, "Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit." But Peter said to him, "Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money! You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent [there was sin involved] therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity." Then Simon answered and said, "Pray to the Lord for me, that none of the things which you have spoken may come upon me."

Stupid man! "I do not want to pray to God for this, but maybe you could do it for me." He did not want to be bound by the restraints that God had placed upon receiving His Holy Spirit. He just wanted to use the spirit for his own ends.

If you would like to later, drop down to Acts 19:13-16, and there you will find that there were others who wanted this same power. And this time, they appropriated Jesus' name. These Jewish exorcists were using Jesus' name to cast out demons. And they got it. Those demons turned on them because their heart was not right. The demons said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know, who are you? You do not fit with the spirit you are claiming to call upon!"

Now, God's intent and purpose can be accomplished if we use His law and His spirit together as God intended for them to be used. This is very difficult because we humans tend to fall into one ditch or the other. We have such a hard time staying in the middle of the road—staying balanced—that we often veer off, and careen wildly on this road to the Kingdom of God. Sometimes we are too strong in the law, sometimes we go off on the other side. We have got to learn to use them both—the law and the spirit—in the proper balance that God intended. We have to be constantly evaluating our approach to our lives, and our worship to make sure that we are balanced in the requirements of the law, and in our freedoms to choose the right way under God's grace.

Jesus was the perfect example of this. Remember what happened when His disciples went out into the fields on the Sabbath day, being hungry all day, working and doing their part with Christ, preaching the message of God on the Sabbath? Jesus had the proper balance. There was the law on the one side that said not to do any work on the Sabbath day. But on the other hand, there was the Spirit guiding Him and telling Him that it was more loving to allow these men to get some nourishment so that they could continue in the work.

What's the proper balance between the requirements of the law and use of God's spirit to know what is right in any given situation? Remember that the law is a guide that gives boundaries. And God gives us His Spirit so that we can know and come to a decision as to what is allowable within these boundaries to whatever situation comes around. We have got to learn how to apply that principle and use that spirit in the proper balance to the law.

We can be thankful of one thing, here.

**Acts 5:32** "And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him."

We can be thankful that God does not give His Spirit in a willy-nilly fashion. We can be thankful that He gives it only to those who obey Him. And those who cease to obey Him, may have it taken away from them. We do not know when. We do not know all the dynamics of that. But, it can be lost. It is a sad thing to think about. But, God is not going to continue to give His power to someone else who will become another Satan.

Turn to John 4 and get a different view of this. This is from the lips of our Savior. He is using a bit of a different term, but He says,

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**John 4:23-24** "But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth [as law]; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

The Holy Spirit is the will, and the power, and the ability to act that God gives us; it includes our feelings, desires, and attitudes; all those things that can be influenced by the Holy Spirit. And hopefully they are.

Truth, of course, means God's truth. And God has encapsulated that into His law—His revealed way of life. Jesus says that our worship must contain both of them to be valid before God. Notice that He does not say, "Those who worship God *should* worship Him in spirit and truth. He used "must"—a much stronger word. You must be balanced.

The apostle Paul spent a lot of time in the book of Romans trying to explain how these two work together. We do not have time to look at it all, but I want to peruse chapters 7 and 8.

**Romans 7:6** But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.

When we repented of our sins, were baptized, and received the Holy Spirit, it became possible to serve or worship God in the spirit. It is a totally new way. It was absolutely unavailable to those under the Old Covenant, except for those very few who God called and picked out to carry His truth forward, such as Moses, David, and the prophets.

But what he says here, now, is that we have been delivered from that overemphasis on the law that we had before we were converted, and now we have the opportunity to follow that same law, but in the spiritual intent not in the letter only.

**Romans 7:7** What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, "You shall not covet."

Paul is defining what the law is, here. He is showing the purpose of the law under the spirit. It is the guidelines and boundaries. It tells us what proper Godly behavior is. It is

absolutely indispensable for spiritual maturity.

**Romans 7:12** Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.

**Romans 7:14** For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin.

Paul is not minimizing the law in the least! He is just showing us its proper place—it is the boundaries. Those boundaries are holy. That means that they have been set apart for a specific use. He says that those laws are just, righteous, and upright. They tell us what right doing is. And they are good. Remember in James 1:17, they are a gift of God; and all gifts from God are good. And it is good because following the law leads to life eternal, blessings, and good relations with everybody. That is why they are there.

They are holy, just, and good. We need them. They are spiritual. They are not physical things. They go into the depths of our mind, our desires, and our attitudes. They show us how to bear it.

**Romans 7:22** For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man.

Paul looks on the law entirely different than those poor people back in the first century under the Pharisees. They thought it was a burden. Paul said that he delighted in it as he was keeping it in the spirit (spiritual intent) according to the inward man. "It is not a burden—I love it!"

Jesus said His yoke was easy, and His burden was light, because living it according to the spirit opens up all sorts of avenues of freedom. Freedom of choice. Freedom to ask. Freedom to consider and decide. Freedom to do good. And it is a delight.

Isaiah said that if you make God's Sabbath a delight...it is not a burden to keep the Sabbath! It is a delight. Look at how much we benefit from it! Every week we are allowed to have this great blessing—fellowship, blooming and growing, enjoying one another, bearing with one another, learning how we can help one another—and resting! Boy, am I glad we can rest on the Sabbath! The week is almost too long. How much longer would it be without the delight of the Sabbath?

See? We look at it spiritually now. We look at it in proper balance. It is not a burden. It is

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a good thing. It is a holy thing. It is a righteous thing. It is a spiritual thing.

**Romans 8:1-2** There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

See? Now he is free from that overemphasis that only leads to sin and death.

**Romans 8:3-4** For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Do you know what he said there? He said that God sent His Son into the world to live righteously, to die, to be resurrected, and then ascend, ***to send His Spirit back to us so that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us.***

Do you still think it is impossible to keep the righteous requirement of the law? No. Now we have God's spirit. Now we can keep the law (in its intent). Like was said in the sermonette earlier today, we can become complete, we can be perfected now that the two ingredients are combined in us—the law of God, plus the spirit of God, balanced, and heading for the Kingdom of God. And, that only happens when we walk according to the spirit.

**Romans 8:5-7** For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. [And Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong loved this next verse because it explained so much:] Because the carnal mind is enmity against God;

The mind of man does not like God. It hates God. It is the spirit that works in the children of disobedience. It is not subject to the law of God.

**Romans 8:7** ...for it is not subject to the law of God,...

It is rebellious!

**Romans 8:7** ...nor indeed can be.

Even if it wanted to, it cannot be subject to the law of God because it lacks the true spirit of God Himself. It has a different spirit.

**Romans 8:8** So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

It is impossible. They do not have the tools. Someday, it will be given to them, but right now they cannot.

Before, the law only produced death because we could not keep it. But now, God, through the life, death, and resurrection of His Son makes it possible to keep the law by the spirit. This gives us a whole different mindset. We do not think any more about all those fleshly things. We are thinking in spiritual terms now. Not, "what would this do to me, if I do it?" but, "how does this relate to the Kingdom of God?" Not, "how will this gratify my flesh?" but, "what would God think if I do this?"

We have a whole different mindset. The goals and desires are spiritual not physical. And our lives are no longer to be for death, but life and peace with one another, and ourselves, all because of God's spirit.

Now we can keep the law in its original spiritual intent, not just in the letter.

**Romans 8:9** But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.

Plain and simple!

**Romans 8:10** And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

That is an interesting word to stick in the middle of talking about the spirit! It just simply means, doing the right thing. How do you know to do the right thing? Well, Paul said in

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chapter 7 above, it is because the law tells us what it is.

**Romans 8:11** But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

Now this really shows how important the gift of the Holy Spirit is. Without it, we are not God's child. Without it, we have no righteousness. Without it, we have no hope of the resurrection to eternal life. It is that important.

The law alone cannot do these things for us. But, coupled with the Holy Spirit, they all become possible. Now I say possible, because, just because they are there does not mean that they are going to be used. They must be used.

Pentecost is tomorrow. Have you been thinking as I have been speaking about how these things fit in to the Pentecost theme?

The theme of Pentecost—its focus—is the maturing and reaping of the Church of God. On Pentecost, God gave two vital elements that we need to complete that task—the law, and then the Holy Spirit. One provides the boundaries and guidelines, while the other provides the power, the attitude, the desire, and the understanding to live like God does, and to please Him. We must use both together to fulfill the Day of Pentecost in each one of us.

Thank God He has given us the tools to succeed!