

Lesson 8: Covenant Law

Rightly understood, the famous Ten Commandments (“Don’t do this!” or “Don’t do that!”) which people have long thought spoil our fun, turn out to be ten categories of Good News if we understand why God gave them. This discovery is lifting heavy burdens from tired hearts all over the world.

For example, when the commandment reads, “You shall not steal!” what it actually says is that God will save you from ever stealing even a shoelace! You’ll never have a problem, even if you’re alone in the treasurer’s office with a million dollars on the desk. God will save you from stealing.

And when it reads, “You shall not commit adultery!” what it actually says is that God will save you from ever falling into that deceptive pit, no matter how alluring a sexual temptation might be. “The mouth of an immoral woman is a deep pit; he who is abhorred of the Lord will fall there” (Proverbs 22:14). The misery you will escape is enormous! The Ten Commandments become what most people have never dreamed of: ten messages of miracles of joyous Good News.

This discovery of unexpected Good News is quite recent. It is the talked-about topic in some of the highest placed circles of Bible scholars. As the Internet is a discovery that has revolutionized modern electronic communications, so this discovery of Bible

truth revolutionizes the preaching of the gospel worldwide. People are waking up as from a dream; the Ten Commandments have become Good News!

Now at last we can experience the freedom that the Bible has been telling us but which seemed so difficult to understand: “Oh, how I love Your law! [not many of us have ever felt that way!] It is my meditation all the day [boring, we have thought!]. You, through Your commandments, make me wiser than my enemies.... I have more understanding than all my teachers.... I understand more than the ancients.... How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! [this will be a miracle!] Through Your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way” (Psalm 119:97-104). Most people have never begun to discover this joy.

Even church goers have usually had a love/hate relationship with the Ten Commandments. The law has seemed like a heavy burden, ten precepts carved in cold stone, heavy prohibitions that crush out all the joy of life. Everything that was fun doing seemed to be, “You shall not!” The Ten Commandments seemed like roadblocks in the highway of happiness.

Yet deep in our human hearts we have realized that it's wrong to break them; suffering must be the result either in this life or in the next. Yet we just couldn't know how to keep them, let alone love them. They seemed too hard.

Now comes this fantastic revelation: They are actually ten assurances of victory. And what we have to do is different than the “Do this or else!” rules we have thought them to be: our job is to believe the Good News that God has embedded in them. Then faith will work to produce a loving obedience.

First comes an astounding disclosure: probably we have been misquoting the Ten Commandments, without realizing what we’re doing. Whoever taught them to us since we were kids usually has inadvertently left out one verse that God put in at the very beginning before any of the prohibitions. Leave it out and the ten indeed become Bad News, a “yoke of bondage.” Many, even preachers and teachers, have not seen the importance of that preamble verse. Even some who claim to specialize in preaching “the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus” have not seen it.

Here it is—the missing verse that belongs at the beginning of any true version of the Ten Commandments: “And God spoke all these words, saying: ‘I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage’” (Exodus 20:1, 2).

There are some dynamite-like truths implicit here that can shake the earth:

First, God tells us what His true name is: “The Lord.” In Hebrew that is Jehovah, or Yahweh, a name

that has something very special built in to it. It denotes God in His unique relation to fallen mankind. The name of Jesus in Hebrew means, “Jehovah saves.” Thus God is telling us who He is—“the Savior of the world” (John 4:42). In other words, before we even hear the Law itself, He impresses us with gospel Good News. He is not saying, “I am your Judge; your severe taskmaster, your Lawgiver who will punish you for any infraction you do!” A thousand times, No! He tells us, “I am your Savior. I am your Friend. I am on your side. Here is something good for you!”

Second, this neglected verse tells us that He is everybody’s God, “I am the Lord your God.” The “you” is you, right where you are. You may say, “Sorry, I have never worshipped Him. I am a pagan, or an atheist, or a bad sinner. I don’t deserve Him to be the Lord my God, or to have Him tell me any Good News, any more than if He told me I have a million dollars in the bank.” Well, He says to you, “I am ... your God. I belong to you, even though you have never known Me, and even though you have acted as My enemy. I am ‘the God of all flesh,’ and when people crucified Me, I prayed, ‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.’” That prayer of His included you. He forgave you before you asked Him.

Before God even spoke the first commandment of His law, He preached the gospel in those preamble words, “I brought you out of the house of bondage.” When Jesus taught us to pray, “Our Father which art

in heaven,” He meant for all of us, no matter how bad, to think of His Father as our Father. Here is special Good News: Pray that prayer from your heart, and your life will be changed.

Third, in His preamble God tells us that we don’t belong in spiritual Egypt. That’s true even though we were all “born” there. The land of darkness is not our real home. He speaks in the past tense: “I brought you out of the land of Egypt.” I have already delivered you; you are like a prisoner huddled in your jail cell not knowing the doors have been opened. The message says, “O Lord, truly I am Your servant; I am Your servant, the son of Your maidservant; You have loosed my bonds” (Psalm 116:16). Know this, and believe it, before you start worrying with do’s and don’ts.

Fourth, God has already delivered you “out of the house of bondage.”

Just as He chose Israel to be His “child,” so in Christ He has already chosen you. (Israel never truly were “slaves” in Egypt. The Egyptians made them think they were slaves, and they believed it, and thus they served mistakenly as slaves, but all the while they were a free people waiting for Moses to tell them the truth, “Leave! Get out—to freedom in your own land”).

What the world is waiting to hear is the full truth of God’s past message of freedom. The Father sent His Son with an express mission: save the world! Just

before He was crucified, He prayed to His Father, “I have finished the work which You have given Me to do” (John 17:4). How could He say that if He had failed to save the world?

The Samaritans were the first to believe the truth, for they confessed that He is “the Savior of the world” (John 4:42). John said that His sacrifice is a propitiation for the sins of “the whole world” (1 John 2:2). Paul said He is already “the Savior of all men” (1 Timothy 4:10), and that He has already brought salvation “to all men” (Titus 2:11). He died the final death, “the second death,” “for everyone” (Revelation 2:11; Hebrews 2:9). All of that includes you!

Fifth, such Good News is true because the Son of God became incarnate.

It’s very simple. Just as our first parent, Adam, the head of the human race, brought “condemnation” upon “all men,” so now our second Adam, Christ, has brought a “judicial ... verdict of acquittal” upon all men (Romans 5:15-18, NEB; all responsible translations say virtually the same). That doesn’t mean that “all men” will automatically go to heaven; it means simply that when Christ died on His cross, He died for “all men,” and unless they disbelieve and throw away the salvation God has already given them “in Christ,” they will be saved eternally. The life we already enjoy is a gift from Him, and He has always intended that it should be the beginning also of eternal life.

When God named Adam, He gave the same name to the entire human race. Not one soul on earth was born on the planet Mars. We are all by nature “in Adam.” But the Father sent His Son into the world to become our new Adam, to fire the first Adam and take his place. God cannot disown His own Son! Therefore it follows that He has adopted the entire human race “in Christ.”

It's like Jesus brings us home with Him to dinner, and the Father says, “Fine, bring them all in; I adopt them all.” We see this from the story of Jesus' baptism. When He was baptized in the River Jordan, a voice was heard saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17). That same Voice embraced you at the same time! All this is included in God's preamble to the Ten Commandments. It's past tense! I brought you out of the house of bondage. Perhaps you have been in “Egypt” all your life and didn't know your true freedom in Christ!

SECOND QUARTER 2021
SABBATH SCHOOL INSIGHT #8
MAY 22, 2021
“COVENANT LAW”

Memory Text:

“Know therefore that the Lord your God is God; He is the faithful God, keeping His covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love Him and keep His commandments” Deuteronomy 7:9, NIV

Our lesson today is an area that, of course, elicits a great deal of discussion, debate, and statements to the effect:

- 1) The Law was nailed to the cross.

- 2) The Ten Commandments are Old Covenant Legalism, part of a “law” covenant.
- 3) The Two Great Commandments to love replaced the Ten Commandments.
- 4) The New Covenant Law is not the Ten Commandments.
- 5) The Ten Commandments bring death.
- 6) We are not under Law, but under Grace.
- 7) Stressing obedience is legalism.
- 8) Etc.

And –

Final Generation Theology is incorrect.

Man cannot stop sinning.

If you speak of perfection, you are speaking perfectionism and discouragement.

Jones and Waggoner had difficulties later on, so their message was false.

On that last point, we are told “If you reject Christ’s delegated messengers, you reject Christ.” Testimonies. Vol. 1, p. 72

So let us study and see this most precious message, for the issue of the Covenant Law really is a good springboard for the entirety of the 1888 Message and God’s final message to earth in the Third Angel’s Message of Justification by faith, the faith of Jesus.

Any discussion of any part of the issue of the Covenant should begin with what our memory verse presents, namely, the faithfulness of God, Who died for us, Who Keeps His Covenant, with those who are His covenant people. I also believe that it is vitally important to remember the reason why mankind was created.

Isaiah 43:7. “Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.” Mankind was created for fellowship and intimate relationship with their Loving Creator, and to reflect His character of love in their own. This verse, of course, is in the Old Testament, and thus the Old Testament people would also be included in that goal, which of course was interrupted in a sense by sin, and is still, of course God’s goal in the restoration of man from sin to reflect the image of God and to partake of the divine nature.

The concept that the Law of God can be changed is an impossible one. Why? Because in God’s creation, all of His laws reflect how the Universe was constructed, how it is all founded on His character of Love, both the laws

of character and moral behavior, as well as all the laws of science, nature, physiology, etc. We would say we have changed the “Law of Gravity”, but jump off a cliff, and you will find the truth of that immutable law.

God is our loving Creator; He built all reality to operate in harmony with His character of love. Being out of harmony with God’s creation is sin—defined as the “transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4) which the Bible says brings its own punishment (James 1:15). God is not seeking to punish you! He is seeking to heal and restore all His children back to His goal for your life.

The first Law of the Universe is Love. The first Law of the Universe for growth and change is not to focus on “righteousness.” It is to focus on Jesus. Romans 10:4 tells us that Christ is the “end of the law for righteousness” for all who believe. The word “end” does not mean “termination”. The word is “telos” and means the focal point, the goal, or in colloquial terms, Jesus is where you go to obtain the righteousness, He desires for us to have, for it is “His Righteousness”, “The Lord our Righteousness”, the “Merits of Jesus”, the “Life of Christ in us”, and other related terms.

The Matchless Charms of Christ

The righteousness of Christ...How easily we miss the focus and emphasis. Jesus, the Person, the Christ, is the heart and theme of Christ our Righteousness. Justification and sanctification are the results, the products of His great work on our behalf. But the Producer, the Active Agency is Jesus, the Christ. The theme must always be on Christ; then secondarily, what He accomplished for us. (The Matchless Charms of Jesus Christ, Bill Lehman.)

Many lovingly regard the 1888 General Conference session as a watershed moment in which Adventists received a most precious message, which was intended to prepare mankind for translation, and was the beginning of the “Loud Cry and the Latter Rain”, and to draw our eyes fully onto Jesus. We study the writings of E. J. Waggoner and his associate A. T. Jones to unearth the true message of 1888, as well as Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy. When Ellen White was asked shortly after the session what she thought of the new light presented by those young ministers, she replied, “Why, I have been presenting it to you for the last 45 years—**the matchless charms of Christ**. This is what I have been trying to present before your minds.”¹ in her view this message did not constitute new theology. (Ellen G. White, manuscript 5, 1889, in Ellen G. White, Sermons and Talks (Silver Spring, Md.: Ellen G. White Estates, 1990), vol. 1, pp. 116, 117.)

“Elder E. J. Waggoner had the privilege granted him of speaking plainly and presenting his views upon justification by faith and the righteousness of Christ

in relation to the law. **This was no new light, but it was old light placed where it should be in the third angel's message.** What is the burden of that message? John sees a people. He says, "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Revelation 14:12). — p. 187

Waggoner did not believe in the Catholic idea of infused righteousness. He simply believed that God could and would make man, through faith, a keeper of the law which would place him in harmony with heavenly principles. The method, by which man was to receive this transformation, was based upon the experience of Christ here on earth.

"The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones. This message was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Savior, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world.... It invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which was made manifest in obedience to all the Commandments of God." Testimonies to Ministers, p. 91-92

BUT - The quote goes on. If we focus on obedience to the Commandments, we miss the essence of the 1888 Message, the Gospel and the Plan of Salvation, and the very heart of God Himself.

"Many had lost sight of Jesus. They needed to have their eyes directed to His divine person, His merits, and His changeless love for the human family. All power is given into His hands, that He may dispense rich gifts unto men, imparting the priceless gift of His own righteousness to the helpless human agent. This is the message that God commanded to be given to the world. It is the third angel's message, which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure.

The uplifted Savior is to appear in His efficacious work as the Lamb slain, sitting upon the throne, to dispense the priceless covenant blessings, the benefits He died to purchase for every soul who should believe on Him. John could not express that love in words; it was too deep, too broad; he calls upon the human family to behold it. **Christ is pleading for the church** in the heavenly courts above, pleading for those for whom He paid the redemption price of His own lifeblood. Centuries, ages, can never diminish the efficacy of this atoning sacrifice. The message of the gospel of His grace was to be given to the church in clear and distinct lines, that **the world should no longer say that Seventh-day Adventists talk the law, the law, but do not teach or believe Christ.**

“In Christ is the tenderness of the shepherd, the affection of the parent, and the matchless grace of the compassionate Savior. His blessings He presents in the most alluring terms. He is not content merely to announce these blessings; He presents them in the most attractive way, to excite a desire to possess them. So, His servants are to present the riches of the glory of the unspeakable Gift. The wonderful love of Christ will melt and subdue hearts, when the mere reiteration of doctrines would accomplish nothing. . . . Tell the people of Him who is [quoting Song of Solomon 5:10, 16] “the Chiefest among ten thousand,” and the One “altogether lovely.” The Desire of Ages, 826, 827.

The true Gospel flows from the truth of the Character of God, Who is loving, merciful, kind, gentle, tender, long suffering.

The True Gospel is the work of Christ, alone, in His life, death, and resurrection, accomplishing a legal justification, or redemption, of the human race (Romans 5:18; 1 Corinthians. 15:1-4; Ephesians 2:8-9.) This gift is received by faith alone. The Seventh Day Adventist Church, in its official Beliefs, and bolstered by the 1888 Message, believes completely in the Gospel of Grace as a free gift, a gift of Christ’s Righteousness and forgiveness of sins. We can do nothing to merit eternal life.

There is need of constant watchfulness and of earnest, loving devotion, but these will come naturally when the soul is kept by the power of God through faith. We can do nothing, absolutely nothing, to commend ourselves to divine favor. We must not trust at all to ourselves or to our good works; but when as erring, sinful beings we come to Christ, we may find rest in His love. God will accept every one that comes to Him trusting wholly in the merits of a crucified Savior. Love springs up in the heart. There may be no ecstasy of feeling, but there is an abiding, peaceful trust. Every burden is light; for the yoke which Christ imposes is easy. Duty becomes a delight, and sacrifice a pleasure. The path that before seemed shrouded in darkness becomes bright with beams from the Sun of Righteousness. This is walking in the light as Christ is in the light.” 1 SM, p. 343

“Christ came to the earth and made an offering of such value that He Redeemed the Race.” (Letter 67, 102.)

“No sin can be committed by man for which satisfaction has not been met on Calvary.” Selected Messages 1:343.

Contrary to those who state that the Old Covenant was a Law Covenant, and that salvation was, then, by working out one’s own righteousness, two very important verses express the truth.

Hebrews 4:2. “For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: (The Israelites in the wilderness) but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.” Thus, the OT Covenant was a covenant promising righteousness by faith.

1 Chronicles 16:15 Be ye mindful always of his covenant; the word which he commanded to a thousand generations;

1 Chronicles 16:16 Even of the covenant which he made with Abraham, and of his oath unto Isaac;

1 Chronicles 16:17 And hath confirmed the same to Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant.

The Abrahamic Covenant is the same Covenant as that at Mt. Sinai. They are both faith-based, gospel centered. The specificity of the Covenant made with a corporate people at Sinai was due to their long captivity, and God’s desire to clearly reveal the depths of the call to holiness, thus inspiring a full dependence upon Him for the grace to obey.

“And He declared unto you His covenant, which He commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and He wrote them upon two tables of stone” (Deut. 4:13)

God desires to be in relationship with His creation, to be our God and we to be His people. His promise, and thus the reason for the presence of the Ten Commandments in the Everlasting Covenant, is to restore us from the fall, to recover His desire for the human heart. Grace is not license to sin, it is the mercy we need to experience forgiveness, and the power to live a new life.

Israel was elected by God, but for what purpose? To work out their own righteousness through obedience to the Law? No. Romans 9:30-10:4 is clear that in doing so, they did not submit unto the Righteousness of God. Isaiah 49:6 is clear that they were called to be a “Light unto the Gentiles”, and bring “**Salvation** to the ends of the earth.” Thus, they had to have the true Gospel given to them, in order to bring salvation to others. Legalism would save no one, and God has not given more than one Everlasting Gospel.

Dale Retzlaff, an objector to Adventism, says that righteousness for Israel was to be found in Deuteronomy 6:25 “And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the LORD our God, as he hath commanded us.” Thus, in his view, the “Old Covenant” was righteousness

through human obedience, whereas we now have righteousness by faith in the New Covenant. Yet in Deuteronomy 5: 29 “O that there was such a heart in them, that they would fear Me, and keep all My commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children forever!” God wanted faith and heart obedience, through His grace. Psalms 40:8. “I delight to do Thy will, oh my God, yea, Thy law is WITHIN MY HEART.”

Moreover, in the New Testament, it states, in 1 John 2:29 “If ye know that He is righteous, ye know that every one that **doeth righteousness is born of Him.**” And 1 John 3:7 says, “Little children, let no man deceive you: **he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.**” Righteousness by faith is an abiding relationship with Christ, and He with us, resulting in bearing the fruit of righteousness, not to merit salvation, but as the reality of the truly born-again experience, through the Power of Love, in the Holy Spirit. John 15:5, Romans 5:5.

“The people did not realize the sinfulness of their own hearts, and that without Christ it was impossible for them to keep God’s law; and they readily entered into covenant with God. Feeling that they were able to establish their own righteousness, they declared, “All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient.” Exodus 24:7. PP p. 372.

The moral law has certain crucially important functions but there is one function the law cannot do, in fact, it was never intended to do. What is it the law cannot do? ·In the Plan of Redemption, the law cannot justify, sanctify or perfect the believer because saving righteousness and spiritual life do not come from the moral law or any other law.

Read Galatians 2:16; Romans 3:20; Galatians 2:21; Galatians 3:21. **The moral law cannot give righteousness. The moral law cannot give life.**

What are the three (3) functions of the moral law of God?

The moral law.

(I) The first function of the law is written down in 1 John 3:4 and Romans 7:7. The law defines sin, points out sin, and gives knowledge of sin.

(II) The second function of the law is written down in Galatians 3:23, 24. The law as our “schoolmaster” shuts us up in guilt and condemnation allowing us no way of escape until it brings us to Christ that we might be justified by faith.

(III) The third function of the law is written down in Romans 3:21. The law bears witness, or confirms, that the gift of the righteousness of God in Jesus

Christ which is received by faith is the very righteousness written down in and demanded by the law.

E.J. WAGGONER

“Is the law then against the promises of God?”—Not by any means. Far from it. If it were, it would not be in the hands of a Mediator, Christ; for all the promises of God are in Him. 2 Corinthians 1:20. So we find the law and the promise combined in Christ. We may know that the law was not and is not against the promises of God, from the fact that God gave both the promise and the law. We know, also, that the giving of the law introduced no new element into the covenant, since, having been confirmed, nothing could be added to or taken from it. But the law is not useless, else God would not have given it. It is not a matter of indifference whether we keep it or not, for God commands it. But, all the same, it is not against the promise, and brings no new element in. Why? —

Simply because the law is in the promise. The promise of the Spirit includes this: “I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts.” Hebrews 8:10. And this is what God indicated had been done for Abraham when “He gave him the covenant of circumcision.” Read Romans 4:11; 2:25-29; Philippians 3:3.

A.T. JONES Adventist Review and Sabbath Herald, Oct. 23, 1900

“In the matter of duty to keep the Commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, it is not to be understood that the two for a moment can be separated. The commandments cannot be kept acceptably to God except by faith in Jesus Christ. And faith in Christ amounts to nothing is dead unless it is manifested (made perfect) by good works: and these good works consist in keeping the commandments of God.... These are made righteous ONLY by faith in Him.”

Instead of saying, “All these things we will do”, the correct covenant response of a truly faithful people is in Jeremiah 11.

Jeremiah 11:2 Hear ye the words of this covenant, and speak unto the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem;

Jeremiah 11:3 And say Thou unto them, thus saith the LORD God of Israel; Cursed be the man that obeyeth not the words of this covenant,

Jeremiah 11:4 Which I commanded your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, from the iron furnace, saying, obey my voice, and do them, according to all which I command you: so, shall ye be my people, and I will be your God:

Jeremiah 11:5 That I may perform the oath which I have sworn unto your fathers, to give them a land flowing with milk and honey, as it is this day. Then answered I, and said, **so be it**, O LORD.

We respond with faith in God and belief in His promise, and trust Him to do what we cannot do for ourselves. Salvation is a miracle of grace. It produces a fruit.

“While true faith trusts wholly in Christ for salvation, it will lead to perfect conformity to the Law of God. Faith is manifested in works.” RH, Oct 5, 1886. As Galatians 5:6 says, “Faith works by love.”

“Justification by faith and the righteousness of Christ in relation to the Law” is the divine summary that EGW gave on what the 1888 message was. Christ in the Law, Christ in us, the Hope of Glory, the Life of Christ, or Love, filling our hearts.

“The power of Christ alone can work the transformation in heart and mind that all must experience who would partake with Him of the new life in the kingdom of heaven. “Except a man be born again,” the Savior has said, “he cannot see the kingdom of God.” John 3:3. The religion that comes from God is the only religion that can lead to God. In order to serve Him aright, we must be born of the Divine Spirit. This will lead to watchfulness. It will purify the heart and renew the mind, and give us a new capacity for knowing and loving God. It will give us willing obedience to all His requirements. This is true worship.”—Testimonies for the Church 9:153-156, 1909

“The Savior’s promise is given on condition. “If ye love Me,” He says, “keep My commandments.” He saves men, not in sin, but from sin; and those who love Him will show their love by obedience.

All true obedience comes from the heart. It was heart work with Christ. And if we consent, He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses. The will, refined and sanctified, will find its highest delight in doing His service. When we know God as it is our privilege to know Him, our life will be a life of continual obedience. Through an appreciation of the character of Christ, through communion with God, sin will become hateful to us.

As Christ lived the law in humanity, **so we may do if we will take hold of the Strong** for strength. DA, 668-669

The third angel's message is the proclamation of the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus Christ. The commandments of God have been proclaimed, but the faith of Jesus Christ has not been proclaimed by Seventh-day Adventists as of equal importance, the law and the gospel going hand in hand. I cannot find language to express this subject in its fullness.

"The faith of Jesus." It is talked of, but not understood. What constitutes the faith of Jesus, that belongs to the third angel's message? Jesus becoming our sin-bearer that He might become our sin-pardoning Savior. He was treated as we deserve to be treated. He came to our world and took our sins that we might take His righteousness. Faith in the ability of Christ to save us amply and fully and entirely is the faith of Jesus. Christ is faithful.

A. T. Jones best stated what the two of them meant:

And in this word "faith" I mean not a mere theoretical notion, but "faith" in its only true meaning of the will submitted to Him, the heart yielded to Him, and the affections fixed upon Him ...

And "Obey"? —Of course, they (the angels) obey. But the obedience is not an outward compliance, or of law; but **the free-flowing service of love, which is the only true obedience in heaven or earth.** And in this obedience, of course, they live; for it is the very expression of the life and righteousness of God which is the faith of Jesus Christ through the grace of God. Jones, "God's Everlasting Covenant," p. 19.

Revelation 14:12. Keeping the Commandments, and the Faith OF Jesus.
(quoting Ellen White from Mount of Blessing, p. 161) "But in Heaven service is not rendered in the spirit of legality. When Satan rebelled against the law of Jehovah, the thought that there was a law came to the angels almost as an awakening to something unthought of. In their ministry, the angels are not as servants, but as sons. There is perfect unity between them and their Creator. Obedience is to them no drudgery. **Love for God makes their service a joy.**
...

Again, note the sentence that "in heaven service is not rendered in the spirit of legality." A holy angel, of his own choice, rendering service by the law would be "legality." But for angels to be constrained by bargain and "compact," upon "condition," and proviso, to render service by the law and in order to get life or to have life—that would change it from "it" to "ism" and make it only legalism. And for sinful man to render service by the law is also only legalism. Ibid., pp. 25, 26

Waggoner and Jones were convinced that the new or everlasting covenant was based upon **a heart relationship that resulted in obedience to all of God's commandments**. This went for angels in heaven and it was the case for all men. When Christ became a man, He too served God according to the everlasting covenant and not out of a sense of legality. And the fact that He truly took our fallen sinful nature, without yielding to sin, gives every sinner the same method of overcoming sin, namely, true faith. Understanding these men's definition of faith clearly shows they were not espousing a perfectionism which would be a life of ever striving to reach a standard by one's self by performing perfectly. They sought to establish righteousness by faith upon the principle that one was converted from sinful ways by believing and appreciating God's power to keep His promises of salvation. There are several articles that have been compiled in a book, Lessons on Faith, in which both men explain this concept repeatedly. A.T. Jones and E.J. Waggoner, Lessons on Faith.

The law, alone, of course brings death. Galatians 3:11 is clear, that no man is justified in the sight of God through an attempt to keep the law. We have all sinned and are continually coming short of the glory of God, and thus all would be condemned except for the merciful love of God to a fallen world.

God openly acknowledges Abraham's faithful obedience to "my commandments, my statutes, and my laws" (Genesis 26:5). It is implied that God expects such a lifestyle from His human partner in the covenant.

Christ came to magnify the law and make it honorable. Isaiah 42:21. He showed that it is based upon the broad foundation of love to God and love to man, and that obedience to its precepts comprises the whole duty of man. In His own life He gave an example of obedience to the law of God. In the Sermon on the Mount, He showed how its requirements extend beyond the outward acts and take cognizance of the thoughts and intents of the heart."—Ellen G. White, The Acts of the Apostles, p. 505.

Jesus was a living representation of the Law, revealed in His character.

A "New Commandment", Love others AS I have loved you. Jesus is the ultimate revelation of what love means, and is thus the fullest understanding of His character, goal, and work. Romans 13:10 is clear that Love is the fulfilling of the Law. Romans 13:9 is clear that the Ten Commandments are "summed up" in Love. Jesus did not come to do away with the Law, but to "fulfill it." Why? Romans 8:3-4 makes this very clear.

Romans 8:3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

Romans 8:4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Jesus united His divinity with our fallen human nature, to crucify and condemn that sin in the flesh, that we might receive His life, His righteousness, His healing from the ravages of sin and selfishness.

Matthew 5:17 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

Matthew 5:18 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.

The words fulfill, and fulfilled, in the two verses are NOT the same Greek word.

The first is pleroo, meaning to complete, to fully accomplish, to fill up completely. The second is ginomai, meaning, till all happens.

The Law was not nailed to the cross. Jesus took our sins, our fallen human nature, united with His divinity, to the cross and won the victory over sin and death itself. His victory is then ours.

“This is the testimony that must go throughout the length and breadth of the world. It presents the law and gospel binding up the two in a perfect whole.....These have not a mere nominal faith, a theory of truth, a legal religion (we HAVE to obey), but they **believe to a purpose**, appropriating to themselves the richest gifts of God.” Testimonies, Vol. 1, p. 72.

Robert Wieland was correct in his statement that motivation is the bottom line in the entire message and experience.

“If you love Me, keep My commandments.” John 14:15.

We cultivate that love by beholding Jesus. Beholding Christ means studying His life as revealed in His Word.

“Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith means the contemplation of Christ, beholding Christ, ever cherishing the dear Savior as our very best and honored

Friend, so that we would not in any action grieve and offend Him. We have always this promise to comfort and help us: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." Special Testimonies, Series A, p. 975

Many have lost very much in that they have not opened the eyes of their understanding to discern the wondrous things in the law of God. On the one hand, religionists generally have divorced the law and the gospel, while we have, on the other hand, almost done the same from another standpoint. We have not held up before the people the righteousness of Christ and the full significance of His great plan of redemption. We have left out Christ and His matchless love, brought in theories and reasonings, and preached argumentative discourses. FW, p. 15 We are to see Christ IN the Law.

One theme will swallow up every other theme. Christ Our Righteousness. In the 1888 emphasis, linkage was further made between the results of a personal application of salvation by faith and the closing work of Christ in the Most Holy Place. The link was between the cross and the High Priestly ministry. The Link was complete between justification and sanctification, thus placing it beyond the Righteousness by Faith understanding in the Reformation. Christ not only removes the guilt of sin, He places His character, His law, into our hearts. Hebrews 8:10.

Romans 5:3 We REJOICE in the HOPE of the Glory of God, or His character. We long for full healing and restoration, and our goal is to cooperate with God in that purpose.

Hebrews 12:4. We have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.

We would rather die than commit a known sin.

2 Corinthians 7:1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

You may say that you believe in Jesus, when you have an appreciation of the cost of salvation. You may make this claim, when you feel that Jesus died for you on the cruel cross of Calvary; when you have an intelligent, understanding faith that His death **makes it possible for you to cease from sin, and to perfect a righteous character through the grace of God**, bestowed upon you as the purchase of Christ's blood. The eyes of fallen men may be anointed with the eye salve of spiritual comprehension, and they may see themselves as they really are, —poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked. They may be

brought to realize their need of repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. RH, July 24, 1888

Through true faith, which alone pleases God, we are freed from the condemnation of the law, we are no longer “under the law”, which means to be under its dominion and power, but under grace, which is both mercy, and power to help in time of need. We don’t need the schoolmaster, for we have been led to Christ, He lives in our hearts by faith, we have peace, and we are being changed, day by day into His image, and thus, are seeing the completion of God’s purpose and our destiny.

We stand before God as though we have never sinned, and moreover, He changes the heart.

The Lord Jesus has given man an example in His own life. For the selfish heart of sin, He gives the new heart of love. He changes the heart, and produces an entire revolution in the soul. He brings light out of darkness, love out of enmity, and holiness out of impurity, that those who believe in Christ may represent Christ's life and character to the world. Says the Apostle, “We are labourers together with God; ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.”—Letter 28, 1892

Galatians 5:16 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

“Christ died to make it possible for you to cease from sin, and sin is the transgression of the law.” Review and Herald, August 28, 1894.

“To everyone who surrenders fully to God is given the *privilege* of living without sin, in obedience to the Law of Heaven.” Ibid, September 27, 1906.

We will have to contend with “a strange power opposed to the idea of attaining the perfection that Christ holds out.” SDA Bible Commentary, Vol. 6, 1098.

The answer – Looking Unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith.

I encourage you to look to Jesus, to behold His incredible love, mercy, the beauty of His character, and to allow God to take your heart, to give you the gift of full surrender, and to experience all that God offers in His Covenant promise to man. “Look and live.”