

# Church of God, The Eternal

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May 2007

Dear Brethren:

I pray that this letter finds you in good standing physically and spiritually. It sure is a busy world that we live in today and the physical cares of this world can literally choke the spiritual life right out of us if we are not careful.

Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful (Matthew 13:22) [*New King James Version* throughout].

As you know by now, my wife and I have decided to move to Maryville, Tennessee, to better serve the brethren there. In making this move though, we have been overwhelmed by all the problems it has created for us. It is not fun moving, and I am beginning to realize just how much work it is. We empathize with those of you who have to move. We have lived in this house for thirty-six years and it is amazing how much you can collect over that period of time.

We thought this move would simplify our lives and I am sure it will eventually, but in the meantime we have so much work to do that we have to struggle to keep our spiritual wits intact. In times like these it sure is hard to stay focused on the spiritual, yet we must continue to feed the Spirit of God in us if we are going to make it into God's Kingdom. To neglect the spiritual in times like these would be the biggest mistake we could make. We must continue to seek the Kingdom of God first if we are to survive spiritually and qualify to be a part of that Kingdom.

But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you (Matthew 6:33).

So how are we doing in our Christian growth? Are we getting our prayer and Bible study in regularly? If not, then we are resisting the administration of the Spirit in our lives through neglect; something we cannot afford to do if we are going to remain motivated in our spiritual walk with God.

Paul said in 2 Corinthians 3:7–9 that the administration of the Spirit was more glorious than the administration of death. Let us read that:

But if the ministry of death, written and engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which glory was passing away, how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious? For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory (2 Corinthians 3:7–9).

What Paul is saying here to the Corinthians is that the administration of death was a motivating force to the people to keep the law, the Ten Commandments. It motivated them by threat of death. If you broke the law, you died in most cases. This ministration of death was glorious because it accomplished two things:

1. It motivated the people to keep God's law—the Ten Commandments—more closely.
2. It proved that even with the threat of death the people still failed to keep the commandments on their own without the help of the Holy Spirit.

So to fix this we needed to have the ministration of the Holy Spirit which is more glorious because it is a powerful motivator, and it offers forgiveness and life instead of death.

Notice verse 9 says that it was a ministry of righteousness. The ministration of the Spirit then equals righteousness. So this ministration of the Spirit accomplished what the other ministration of death could not. This is why it was more glorious.

This was the truth that was revealed to Herbert Armstrong in the beginning, but false ministers crept into the Church, as it says in Jude 3–4, to deceive the people of God. They said that because the ministration of death was glorious and was engraved on stones (2 Corinthians 3:7), that it was referring to the Ten Commandments. They cannot understand how the ministration of death or condemnation can be glorious even though the Bible says it was glorious in verse 9.

For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory. For even what was made glorious had no glory in this respect, because of the glory that excels. For if what is passing away was glorious, what remains is much more glorious (2 Corinthians 3: 9–11).

I would like to emphasize that this glory which was to pass away could not be referring to the Ten Commandments because God's Ten Commandments are spiritual and eternal and will never pass away.

These false ministers who say that God's law—the Ten Commandments—was done away and use this scripture to prove it, are in error and do not love God's spiritual law. This is why they want to do away with it and they are also trying to convince others who do not love God's law and truth enough to hang on to it.

Let us understand that the Ten Commandments were written and engraved on stone, but they were tablets of stone, written by the finger of God and given to Moses to give to the Israelites.

And the LORD said to Moses, "Cut two tablets of stone like the first ones, and I will write on these tablets the words that were on the first tablets which you broke (Exodus 34:1).

These words the LORD spoke to all your assembly, in the mountain from the midst of the fire, the cloud, and the thick darkness, with a loud voice; and He added no more. And He wrote them on two tablets of stone and gave them to me (Deuteronomy 5:22).

And when He had made an end of speaking with him on Mount Sinai, He gave Moses two tablets of the Testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God (Exodus 31:18).

And Moses turned and went down from the mountain, and the two tablets of the Testimony were in his hand. The tablets were written on both sides; on the one side and on the other they were written. Now the tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God engraved on the tablets (Exodus 32:15–16).

This proves that God wrote the Ten Commandments on tablets of stone. These Commandments were spiritual laws that would never pass away.

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

Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away (Luke 21:33).

If the Law is holy and the Commandments are holy, just, and good, why would God cause them to pass away? Instead, God is going to magnify the Law and make it honorable.

The LORD is well pleased for His righteousness' sake; He will exalt the law and make it honorable (Isaiah 42:21).

Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. [Christ fulfilled the Law by living it.] For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled (Matthew 5:17–18).

Has all been fulfilled in God's plan of salvation? No! Then the law is still in effect. Only those who do not love God's holy, righteous Law—the Ten Commandments—would want them done away.

What then was the law that was to be done away? It was the law Moses wrote.

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write these words [the statutes, judgments and works of the law], for according to the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel." So he [Moses] was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he neither ate bread nor drank water. And He [God] wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments (Exodus 34:27–28).

What Moses wrote was called the Book of the Law, and it was kept in the side of the Ark, whereas the Ten Commandments written on the tablets of stone were placed inside the Ark.

So it was, when Moses had completed writing the words of this law in a book, when they were finished, that Moses commanded the Levites, who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying: "Take this Book of the Law, and put it beside the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there as a witness against you; for I know your rebellion and your stiff neck. If today, while I am yet alive with you, you have been rebellious against the LORD, then how much more after my death? Gather to me all the elders of your tribes, and your officers, that I may speak these words in their hearing and call heaven and earth to witness against them. For I know that after my death you will become utterly corrupt, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you. And evil will befall you in the latter days, because you will do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger through the work of your hands (Deuteronomy 31:24–29).

This Book of the Law was to be a witness against Israel because they would utterly corrupt themselves and they would also do it in the latter days, which applies to us today.

The Ten Commandments were written by God on tablets of stone which were cut and prepared by Moses (Exodus 34:1). Moses formed these tablets of stone before God wrote on them. The spiritual meaning, of course, is that we also must prepare the fleshly tablets of our hearts for God to write His spiritual Law upon.



... clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart (2 Corinthians 3:3).

We prepare our hearts by repenting of our own way of life and asking God to write or engrave His way of life (His Law, the Ten Commandments) on the fleshly tablets of our hearts and minds through the Holy Spirit. The ministry of the Holy Spirit will do this: engrave God's Law into our hearts, if we are willing, and motivate us to become righteous.

The ministration of death and condemnation which came later through Moses was also written on stones, but not on tablets of stone. These laws were written by Moses and passed on to the Levitical priesthood, and they were responsible for administering it to motivate the people to keep God's spiritual Law.

Moses was instructed to write the words from Exodus 34:10–26 in a book called the Book of the Law or the Law of Moses which was placed at the side of the Ark and not inside the Ark as the Ten Commandments were.

At that time the LORD said to me, 'Hew for yourself two tablets of stone like the first, and come up to Me on the mountain and make yourself an ark of wood. And I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke; and you shall put them in the ark.' So I made an ark of acacia wood, hewed two tablets of stone like the first, and went up the mountain, having the two tablets in my hand. And He wrote on the tablets according to the first writing, the Ten Commandments, which the LORD had spoken to you in the mountain from the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly; and the LORD gave them to me. Then I turned and came down from the mountain, and put the tablets in the ark which I had made; and there they are, just as the LORD commanded me (Deuteronomy 10:1–5).

The Law of Moses was added because of transgression of the Law of God.

For I did not speak to your fathers, or command them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices. But this is what I commanded them, saying, 'Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people. And walk in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you' (Jeremiah 7:22–23).

This Law of Moses was a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ.

What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator. . . . Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith (Galatians 3:19, 24).

It was to motivate Israel to keep God's Ten Commandments by threat of the death penalty if they broke them. This is what made this ministry glorious, because it accomplished a good thing, but it could not offer life to the people. We needed a new ministry of the Spirit to accomplish that. That is why the ministry of the Spirit was more glorious.

But if the ministry of death, written and engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which glory was passing away, how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious? For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory. For even what was made glorious had no glory in this respect, because of the glory that excels. For if what is passing away was glorious, what remains is much more glorious (2 Corinthians 3:7–11).

Verse 7 says that the ministry of condemnation and death was glorious to the point that it caused Moses' face to shine.

. . . unlike Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away (2 Corinthians 3:13).

Now it was so, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai (and the two tablets of the Testimony were in Moses' hand when he came down from the mountain), that Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone while he talked with Him. So when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him (Exodus 34:29–30).

This glory was to fade away in time and be replaced by a greater glory which is the ministry of the Spirit.

The Law of Moses was also engraved on large stones.

And it shall be, on the day when you cross over the Jordan to the land which the LORD your God is giving you, that you shall set up for yourselves large stones, and whitewash them with lime. You shall write on them all the words

of this law, when you have crossed over, that you may enter the land which the LORD your God is giving you, 'a land flowing with milk and honey,' just as the LORD God of your fathers promised you (Deuteronomy 27:2–3).

These large stones were plastered over with lime to make the engraving of the law clear and more readable. Also note that the words of this law were to be written by the people and not by God. Do not confuse these stones with the great altar stones mentioned in verses 5–7. These altar stones were not to be touched by any iron tool.

And if you make Me an altar of stone, you shall not build it of hewn stone; for if you use your tool on it, you have profaned it (Exodus 20:25).

The whole stones were used to build the altars for sacrifices only, and the great stones or pillar stones contained the writing of the Law of Moses—all the statutes and judgments to be administered by the priests—called the ministry of death (2 Corinthians 3:7). This law, or ministry of death, did not accomplish the real goal of making the people righteous. We needed another ministry of righteousness to accomplish that.

For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory (2 Corinthians 3:9).

It would be a ministry far more glorious because it would accomplish a glorious thing in the people of God; it would change their carnal natures into the image of Christ and give them life everlasting.

This transformation would take place from glory to glory.

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord (2 Corinthians 3:18).

The glory of the ministry of death to the glory of the ministry of Christ through the Holy Spirit by faith. Christ would redeem us all from the curse of the law, the Law of Moses.

For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them." But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for "the just shall live by faith." Yet the law is not of faith, but "the man who does them shall live by them." Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree") (Galatians 3:10–13).

Before faith in Christ we were kept under the penalty of the law that was added because of transgression of the Ten Commandments. This law served as a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. The ministry of the Holy Spirit then could motivate us through faith in Christ to become like Him and save us from the death penalty.

So the ministry of death was not written on tablets of stone (2 Corinthians 3:7) but on great stones (Deuteronomy 27:2); the ministry which was going to pass away and be replaced by a ministry of Christ through the Spirit from glory to glory (2 Corinthians 3:18)—from the glory of one ministry to the glory of another.

What was written on tablets of stone was the spiritual Law of God—the Ten Commandments—which would never pass away. They were preserved in the Ark along with Aaron's rod which budded (symbolizing the government of God) and the manna (symbolic of the spiritual food which would give life to those who would eat it every day).

Today, we as God's chosen, are under the ministry of the Spirit if we are feeding on God's Word. Eating the Word converts and transforms us into the image of God. If we are not eating the Word, how can we expect to be transformed? We are merely operating on our own righteousness, which is filthy rags to God and will not be accepted as the righteousness of God.

But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6).

Because our natures are carnal and hostile to God, the Father knows that we need help to keep His spiritual Law. This is why He has sent the Holy Spirit to be our helper.

If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. . . . But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you (John 14:15–18, 26).

But this promise is conditional! We must love Christ and obey Him to receive it.

If you love Me, keep My commandments. . . . Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him (John 14:15, 23).

Do you love Christ and want to obey Him? Then keep the Commandments and the Father will send you the Holy Spirit to help you become converted and qualify to be in His Kingdom.

Are you taking advantage of that promise? Or are you quenching the Spirit through neglect of the study of God's Word? Do not grieve the Spirit in you by neglecting to feed it. We cannot convert ourselves! Christ's Word in us along with the power of the Spirit given us at baptism is what converts us.

Do you ask God for His Spirit every day? We should! If we do, God is very willing to give it to us.

Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him! (Matthew 7:7-11).

The good gift God wants to give us is the Holy Spirit. So, if we continue to ask Him, God will freely give us that power to overcome our carnal natures and qualify to be in His Kingdom.

Love you, brethren.  
Have a great Feast of Pentecost,



Richard W. Litz



Jon W. Brisby