



Storming Fortresses

For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh,
but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.

2 CORINTHIANS 10:4

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Thought Provoker:

So then, the matter to which Moses now returns is this: that having showed us how it is the Lord who withdraws all manner of blessing from us, how it is He who curses our possessions and the fruits of the earth, how it is He who sends vermin and storms and tempests to destroy all, how it is He who gives power to our enemies, he then shows why all this is done: It is because we have rebelled against Him, because we have despised His law. That is the very reason why these plagues of wrath do so pursue us.

**John Calvin,
The Covenant Enforced.
p.198.
Editor, James B. Jordan.**

Twin Towers, Symbol of Hypocrisy

Part 5: Saith the Lord, "But I have a few things against you!"

Cont'd.

by

Murray McLeod-Boyle

Covenant

Closely related to the doctrine of sin is the doctrine of the covenant. As noted earlier, these two doctrines go hand in hand. It comes as no surprise, then, to find that where there is a denial of one, there is a denial or down playing of the other. If we deny the doctrine of sin, it will not be long before the doctrine of the covenant becomes expendable and vice versa. If you look at our society and, dare we say it, our local churches, you will see this.

Alright, having said this the onus is upon us to

prove and explain our case. So without further ado, let us look at the subject.

We have posited that the doctrine of sin is, as the proverb says, as rare as hen's teeth, in our day. The doctrine of sin is easy for people to grasp. It deals with the fall, the corruption of Man, and, in general, explains why Man has a penchant for evil—or for flying aircraft into high rise buildings!

Essentially, when we talk of sin, we are talking about the cause of the break in the relationship between Man and God and the resultant condition of

Man. It was sin that caused the rent and condemned Man to an existence of sin and futility. However, for a complete understanding of the subject before us, we must understand the mechanics and mechanisms involved.

Of necessity, we must understand the concept of covenant. To this end, it must be stated that the idea of covenant *is* Biblical. It is hard to turn to a page of Scripture and not find the word or theme mentioned. The problem within Christendom is not whether or not the idea of covenant exists, it is how this idea is understood and portrayed.

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In other words, the debate really revolves around the understanding of the term.

Many understand the covenant as an agreement between two equal parties. This line of thought views the Biblical concept of covenant as similar to an agreement you might sign to borrow money or to hire a car. Although this view is extremely common, it nonetheless is lacking and does not in anyway do justice to the Biblical concept.

God's covenant is more than a contract in that it is based in law and has a promise attached to it. Now, let us pull this apart in order to show what we mean.

Firstly, we will deal with law. Any contract has a legal aspect to it. What sets God's law apart is that it is ethical and based in the character of

God Himself. In other words, God's law is an expression of Himself or His being. Thus the law that forms the basis of the covenant is intimate and bound up in the very person of God. Therefore, the transgression of this law is a personal affront to God and as such is dealt with internally. The offender must make recompense on the say so of the One offended. There is no third party to which an offender may appeal. This you do not find when you sign a contract with a bank or a hire company. In these cases you are simply signing a legal contract. In no way is the ethical nature or the personhood of the bank portrayed and if a breach takes place the matter is referred to a legal source external to the contracted parties.

Secondly, we look at the idea of promise. Unique to the Covenant is the promise. Obedience will bring reward and disobedience will bring a curse. So, in essence, God says, "Here is my law. Obey it and you will live in prosperity. Enemies will be defeated. Bugs will not infest your crop. Sores will not afflict your skin." (Deut. 28 ff.) Now the point here is that each of these actions is supernatural. God will, by a sovereign act of power, order these things. They will be a free gift from His hand and they will be beyond a man's expectation and abilities.¹

Parallel this with your agreement with the bank or hire company. Here there is but a simple exchange of goods—your money for their product. At the end of the contract, you either pay out your loan or return the hired item in good repair. The question is, what do you have? Say you borrowed money for a home. After

you have repaid your loan, what do you have? You have a house. If you had an agreement with a hire company, say, for a sander, you will have a sanded floor (if you unpacked and used the item. Otherwise you simply have a hole in your budget). Nothing more, nothing less.

Although you have obeyed all the rules and legally fulfilled your obligation, the bank or hire company do not then shower you with splendid *gifts of grace*. There is no promise that the house will never burn down or the lawns become weed infested. The bank manager cannot, by sovereign fiat, declare such things to be so.

A second aspect is that God's covenant extends beyond the first party. When you sign a contract, it stops with you. As we have seen, there are no promises. In God's covenant of salvation, He includes the offspring of the believers. Moreover, He gives a promise to successive generations. (Gen. 17:9; Acts 2:39)

This is just a simple explanation, but from this it can be seen that the idea of contract does not do justice the Biblical concept of covenant.

With this explanation we now need to look at the mechanisms mentioned earlier. To put it differently, we now look at the relationship between sin and covenant.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth and, behold, it was absolutely marvellous. The Creator brought forth a universe in perfection. He placed fish in the sea, birds in the air, and Man upon the earth. Man (Adam as federal head—

¹ Man cannot bring rain. God can. Man is helpless in the face of a plague of locusts. God can snuff them out in an instance. The lesson is simple. A man may work diligently and faithfully. He ploughs, weeds, sows, yet without refreshing rain this toil is in vain. This is where the covenant comes to the fore. We plough, weed, and sow in faith (believing in and taking God at His word) trusting that having been faithful in our duty to till and guard the earth, that God will in turn bring the rains in accord with His promise.

a covenantal concept in itself) stood as God's vice-regent. He was given charge. However, as a true deputy he did not rule according to his own desire, he ruled according to God's standard.

The act of creation meant that Man (Adam) stood in relationship to God. The question that must be answered is, What was the nature of that relationship? Was it a simple contract? Was it a slave/master relationship? It was neither. It was a covenantal relationship!

God's law, His standards of ethical behaviour in word, thought, and deed, formed the basis of this relationship. However, there was one important ingredient that was added. That ingredient was the "promise" and it is this that makes the relationship truly covenantal. God did not just give law. He did not simply give Man a bunch of harsh draconian rules to follow, as many moderns would posit. No, God gave a covenant. Yes, He gave the law, but the law was accompanied by promise. Obedience brought life and disobedience brought death.

Here, we must understand the relationship between sin and covenant. Sin is, as we have seen, lawlessness. When Adam transgressed the covenant he became lawless. He had thrown off God's law in an attempt to self-law (self-govern). From that point Man could no longer be considered to have a relationship with God. He was under the curse of death for his rebellion against God. Being in a state of sin, Man could no longer meet the covenantal standards.

In summary, the covenant refers to God's righteous standards. The standards that any man must meet in order to fellowship with God. Sin, then, refers to the transgression of those standards and the resultant state

of death, which renders obedience an impossibility.

So how does this manifest itself? What does it have to do with September 11? As we have seen, the denial of the doctrine of sin has led to the erroneous belief that Man has no guilt or dysfunction at the core level. He is simply a bit messed up by his environment.

The corollary to this, as far as covenant is concerned, is seen in the cry for tolerance and the murder of truth. "Covenant" cannot be allowed to stand because it asserts without compromise that there is a Creator God who cares for His creation and who insists that His standards alone be those by which Man lives.

You cannot uphold the covenant and invite a Muslim or a Buddhist into God's house and speak as though you believe in the same God. You cannot hold to the covenant and then stand full of pride and announce that yours will be the victory simply because you belong to a particular nation.

We go even further. Aside from September 11, the lesson is for those denominations who deny covenant by denying the Lordship of Christ. These denominations speak a lot of Jesus as "saviour," but at every turn they deny Christ as Lord.

These are those who opened their doors to the Muslims, Buddhists, and the ungodly in general and without hesitation in the aftermath of September 11. These are those who held hands with falsehood and got so cosy that they ended up sleeping together.

An example. Just the other day we had a trainee driver accompany us. He is getting married to a girl of Roman Catholic persuasion. He himself does not seem to have any conviction,

but goes to church with her. Over lunch one day we discussed some issues. He turned and said, "I heard this really good sermon the other day. It was about tolerance. You know, we should not hate the Muslims and others like that because of what some of them did. It was really good." He then went on to say how right it was and that it was something we should all take to heart.

Yours truly was in a spot. Keep the peace or risk a "Big Mac" in the head. As we have quoted Luther in recent days, it seemed appropriate that we forgo peace for truth. Thus we agreed that it sounded like a nice sermon, but that it was one we could not agree with. This of course brought the response, "Why?" Simple answer, Do you believe in truth? As this trainee was over the age of thirty, it was a fair thing that he would answer 'yes' to the question. This he did. Once the proposition of truth was put to this chap, he was able to understand the ridiculous nature of the sermon. Philosophically and ethically, all roads do not lead to Rome!

To reduce this further into a digestible piece, we can simply say that a priest in a supposedly Christian denomination has just explained Christianity to an unbeliever, and his conclusion is that Christianity is irrelevant. This priest has stated that Christianity has no distinctives that would separate it from any other religion. Moreover, he has stated categorically that there is no covenant, no covenantal God, and therefore no objective standard by which to measure anything.

In short, this priest has subscribed to the "God is dead" bandwagon. We would also posit that a conversation with said priest would probably reveal a denial of the doctrine of sin.

You see, we have denied the cov-

enant by denying that Man is sinful. There can be no covenant if man has not transgressed anything or indeed was never held accountable to God's standard in the first place. So, being non-transgressors, we cannot be sinners. If we are not sinners and have not transgressed, then there can be no objective standard to which we must attain. Man truly becomes the measure of all things.

Brethren, we would implore you to think about these things. Look at the Church today. Look at the issues related to music and worship. Look to the issues of homosexuality and adultery. Look at the heresy that abounds in our midst and the few, if any, who would cry out against it. Listen to the voices of reason and tolerance who cry out against those who assert a Biblical position.

In the early Church there were a number of heretics and heresies which were condemned:

A. The heretic Marcion denied the Old Testament. Central to his heresy was the belief in two gods. The first was a vindictive, law giving god who essentially took pleasure in condemning people. This god can be found in the Old Testament. The second god, kind, gentle and loving was revealed to us by Jesus. It may also be worth noting that his canon comprised of a modified Luke and the majority of Paul's letters, nothing else.

B. The heretic Arius denied that Jesus Christ was coeternal with the Father. He posited that Jesus was the first and supremely created object by God.

C. A third heresy concerned the Docetics. The Docetics take their name from a Greek term which means, "it seems." Within this group we find such people as the Ebionites and the Sabellians. Central to their belief system was a denial of the incarnation of Christ. In particular, they posited that Christ "seemed" to have a body. The degree of this belief differed from group to group, but the essence remained the same.

D. Pelagianism was condemned for its emphasis upon free will and denial of original sin. Basic to this system were the beliefs that we were not in any way affected by Adam's sin and that we retained the ability to choose right apart from divine grace.

E. Montanus was a heretic from the second century who came to prominence because of his claim to ecstatic gifts. He, along with Prisca and Maximilla, claimed to have new revelations. The New Dictionary of Theology states:

Montanus began to utter prophecies in a state of convulsive frenzy. He and his supporters claimed that his ecstatic condition was a sign that he was totally possessed by the Holy Spirit, who was inaugurating a new dispensation of divine revelation.²

This is but a short list of the possible candidates. Our point here is for you to look at any similarities that you may see in our day.

The denial of the covenant leads to an unholy tolerance precisely because God's right to rule, as the Creator, is effectively denied. So what unholy practices do we tolerate today?

Have you encountered an emphasis on free will to the extent that the Lordship of Christ and/or the sovereignty of God has been impugned? Hint: A good place to look is at those Christians who push a "positive thinking" bandwagon or the hippy "set free" type of Christianity. Grace without law is the common flavour.

Have you encountered any theoretical or practical denials of the Old Testament? Hint: Do not look too hard you may be dismayed at how often it occurs.³

Have you encountered Marcion's heresy of late? We would be surprised if you have not. It has raised its ugly head several times of recent. Granted, it may not be as forceful as Marcion would have put it, but it is the same concept.

As an example, take the minister who addressed a children's gathering and spoke of god, the judge, who appears in the Old Testament. This speech was accompanied by a man dressed in a judge's outfit just for effect. As the minister continued, he spoke of how this god in the Old Testament wanted to be loved, but every time he came out in public he seemed to burn somebody to a crisp because they had sinned. No matter how much he tried he just kept burning people. Hence, the people feared this god and did not love him.

Like a man with uncontrollable flatulence this god became a public nuisance and quickly assumed the title of "recluse." Suffering in silence, it seems that this god became trapped by his own law and standards which he set.

² Sinclair B. Ferguson Ed, s.v. Montanism.

³ At this point we have in mind such denials as those that relegate the Old Testament to a mere witness of how people in former time wrestled with God. A college professor spoke of the need to avoid viewing the Old Testament as a case of "examples to follow and sins to avoid." Yet, for the most part, this is exactly how it is viewed.

However, all was not lost, because a new revelation of this god came along in the man Jesus. He came to show us that god was love and that he, frustrated as he was, did not always want to burn people!

This from someone who would claim to be a Bible believing evangelical. Marcion is alive today. Make no mistake.

Have you encountered ecstatic gifts? How about prophecy? Maybe some dressed-up prophecy that amounts to extra-Biblical revelation? What about utterances in a convulsive or frenzied state? Hint: The dictionaries list *laughter* as a convulsive state.

In highlighting some of these beliefs, we will, no doubt, be treading on some toes. It may mean that this addition is taken to the little house and employed in a practical rather than educational manner. It may mean that some no longer wish to subscribe. Nonetheless, the point remains. The early Church realised the error and the danger in these beliefs and formed creeds to counter them. Yes, that is right. Our creeds are born out of testing times. They are born out of controversy. They are a written account of the Church standing up and saying, "This is what we believe; this is what the Scriptures teach."

Therefore, when error was advanced the Church gathered to define and defend its belief:

I believe in God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth...⁴

No room for evolution or 'Gap' theories here!

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made....⁵

Creation? Yes! Is Doceticism present? Not on your life. What about Arianism? Did the Fathers believe that Christ was the first created?

Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the catholic faith; Which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. And the catholic faith is this:⁶

Do all roads lead to Rome (God)? Not according to the Fathers.

What does God enjoin in the first commandment? That I, as sincerely as I desire the salvation of my own soul, avoid and flee from all idolatry, sorcery, soothsaying, superstition, invocation of saints, or any other creatures; and learn rightly to know the only true God; trust in him alone, with humility and patience submit to him; expect all good things from him only; love, fear, and glorify him with my whole heart; so that I renounce and forsake all creatures, rather than commit even the least thing contrary to his will.⁷

Did the Fathers believe there was standard for worship, a standard by

which we conduct our lives to the praise of God?

Did the Fathers believe in the Covenant? Yes they did. Note well the words used. After learning and practising obedience we are to "expect" good things from God's hand. The Fathers understood the principal of covenant well.

In rejecting certain errors the Congregation of Dordt dismissed those:

Who teach: That in the election unto faith this condition is beforehand demanded that man should use his innate understanding of God aright, be pious, humble, meek, and fit for eternal life, as if on these things election were in any way dependent. For this savors of the teaching of *Pelagius*, and is opposed to the doctrine of the apostle when he writes:...(Eph. 2:3-9).⁸

In defending the doctrine of the Trinity, the Belgic Confession states:

All this we know as well from the testimonies of Holy Writ as from their operations, and chiefly by those we feel in ourselves. The testimonies of the Holy Scriptures that teach us to believe this Holy Trinity are written in many places of the Old Testament, which are not so necessary to enumerate as to choose them out with discretion and judgment....

In all these places we are fully taught that there are three persons in one only divine essence. And although this doctrine far surpasses all human understanding, nevertheless we now believe it by means of the Word of

4. Brannan, Rick; Editor, *Historic Creeds and Confessions*, (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems) 1997. Apostles Creed. All creeds from this source unless otherwise stated.

5. Nicene Creed

6. Athanasian Creed

7. Heidelberg Catechism. Question and answer 94.

8. Canons of Dordt. First Head. Rejection; Paragraph 4. Italics added.

God, but expect hereafter to enjoy the perfect knowledge and benefit thereof in heaven. Moreover, we must observe the particular offices and operations of these three persons towards us. The Father is called our Creator, by His power; the Son is our Savior and Redeemer, by His blood; the Holy Spirit is our Sanctifier, by His dwelling in our hearts.

This doctrine of the Holy Trinity has always been affirmed and maintained by the true Church since the time of the apostles to this very day against *the Jews, Mohammedans*, and some *false Christians* and *heretics*, as *Marcion, Manes, Praxeas, Sabellius, Sarnosatenus, Arius*, and such like, who have been justly condemned by the orthodox fathers. Therefore, in this point, we do willingly receive the three creeds, namely, **that of the Apostles, of Nicea, and of Athanasius**; likewise that which, conformable thereunto, is agreed upon by the ancient fathers.⁹

Read this last paragraph again. It is fairly self explanatory, but we must ask, Would the framers of the Belgic Confession hold hands with the Buddhists and Islamics in the wake of September 11?

It is also noteworthy that the Fathers delineated the offices within the Trinity. This may seem trivial, but it is not. Too often in our day the roles of the Persons within the Trinity are blurred and the correct distinctions left out. This happens because Marcion, Montanus and a few other unsavoury types have been welcomed into the fold.

The Westminster Confession, speaks to those who revel in the idea of free will:

Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation: (Rom. 5:6, Rom. 8:7, John 15:5) so as, a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, (Rom. 3:10,12) and dead in sin, (Eph. 2:1,5, Col. 2:13) is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto. (John 6:44,65, Eph. 2:2-5, 1 Cor. 2:14, Tit. 3:3-5)¹⁰

For the Marcionites:

Therefore it pleased the Lord, at sundry times, and in divers manner, to reveal Himself, and to declare that His will unto His Church; (Heb. 1:1) and afterwards, for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the Church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan and of the world, to commit the same wholly unto writing: (Prov. 22:19-21, Luke 1:3-4, Rom. 15:4, Matt. 4:4,7,10, Isa. 8:19-20) which maketh the Holy Scripture to be most necessary; (2 Tim. 3:15, 2 Pet. 1:19) those former ways of God's revealing His will unto His people being now ceased. (Heb. 1:1-2) Under the name of Holy Scripture, or the Word of God written, are now contained all the books of the Old and New Testaments, which are these...¹¹

The sources quoted here span some 1500 years of Church history. They speak with one voice to issues that plague our day. Now the question must be asked, Why were these aberrations labelled as heresies prior to the 1700s, but now form part of acceptable doctrine?

The answer is simple. Those prior to the 1700s were convinced of Sin

and Covenant. They knew Man was corrupt and they knew that the God of eternity had set a standard to which man must attain. These people were not deluded by romantic ideas and the filth of humanism. Sin and Covenant held pride of place and like a rudder these doctrines helped steer a straight course.

We, in the enlightened age, somehow know more than the great Councils of Christendom. We have set out to destroy or ignore Sin and Covenant and as a consequence we are tossed about by every wind of doctrine. Heresy is embraced under the guise of personal choice, tolerance, the extension of love, and a celebration of humanity. In truth, these are nothing less than the kindling used to ignite the fires of God's wrath.

To say this in our modern day will no doubt attract criticism. The moderns will accuse us of being judgmental. They will say that we are holding a brother or sister in the Lord to account. They will say that we must love and not judge. They will say that Christ was tolerant and that we too must be tolerant. We will be labelled as a fundamentalist, harsh, unloving, vicious and intolerant.

To this we say, More clichés! More labels! Away with them. They are error. Christ did not tolerate everything. He overturned tables when the people turned His Father's house into a den of robbers (Matthew 21:13-13; Mark 11:15-18; Luke 19:45-46; John 2:13-17). The Holy Spirit did not tolerate the deception of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11). Christ rebuked His disciples for being slow to understand (Mark 8:17;

⁹. Article 9 Belgic Confession.

¹⁰. Westminster Assembly, *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.) 1995. Chapter 9, Section 3.

¹¹. Westminster Assembly, *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.) 1995. Chapter 1; Articles 1 and 2. The list contained is the 66 books of the Bible with no Apocrypha.

33; Luke 24:25).¹²

The modern concept of tolerance is nowhere countenanced in the Scriptures. It is a travesty to apply such inane criteria to our God.¹³ God loves us. He rebukes. He chastens. He shows forth grace. He is real and has a splendid array of attributes in His character—many of which are evidenced in us, His creation. To reduce God to the all tolerant being of the moderns is to rob Him of His character and to reduce Him to a being with the interest and concern of a potato.

Think about this for a moment. It is stupidity to believe that God tolerates all. If this is so, then God is not just and there can be no justice. There is no right or wrong. Punishment is forsaken. Reward is abolished. Love and hate become equals. All is brought to nought, for there is nothing worthy, nothing splendid, nothing to aspire to and nothing to hope in.

God is a covenantal God and it is at times such as this that this beautiful truth comes to the fore. God deals with mankind according to His covenantal document—His Law and Promise. He expresses in that law those things which are acceptable to Him and those things which are not. In that law we learn that we need a covering for our sin. In that law God's grace shines through, for we

see that He provides a means by which we might be covered and fellowship with Him restored.

This covenant provides the key by which we may understand events like September 11.

Brothers and Sisters, if you have not grappled with this splendid truth, may we urge you to do so. This covenant is not a mere agreement between Man and God. This covenant is not a set of proposals by God that requires assent from man before they can be ratified. No. This covenant is an attestation by God Himself as to what and who He is. It is a declaration of the standard that He expects from His creatures. It is a statement of life and death. It is law. It is grace. It is unilateral.¹⁴ It is given by God alone. Man is not required to ratify it. He is required to believe it, heed it, and obey it.

This is the covenant to which the Scriptures testify. This is the covenant by which God operates. This is the covenant in which God's will is revealed. He who gives the covenant says, through His servant Moses:

“See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, and death and adversity; in that I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that you may live and multiply, and that the LORD your God

may bless you in the land where you are entering to possess it. “But if your heart turns away and you will not obey, but are drawn away and worship other gods and serve them, I declare to you today that you shall surely perish. You shall not prolong *your* days in the land where you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess it (Deuteronomy 30:15-18).

The Covenantal God of the Scriptures cares. He does not turn a blind eye. He cannot be bribed (Deut. 10:17). He most certainly does not tolerate all.

If you believe in a God of all tolerance, please, do not call yourself a Christian or give this title to our God. It is a title He will refuse to wear.

In contrast to modern opinion, the Scriptures state that our God makes serious differentiations. Speaking through the Apostle Paul, He says:

Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things. The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace shall be with you (Philippians 4:8-9).

Speaking through His Son, Jesus Christ, He says:

12. Note the severity of Jesus' displeasure in the record given by John. Jesus was so tolerant of these merchants that He made Himself a whip and drove them from His Father's house. Jesus Father is our Father. It is sad that we do not have a similar level of tolerance today.

13. Understand this as incorporating the Trinity.

14. Many see the covenant as a bilateral agreement between man and God. Now, whilst man is not excluded from the process, this is very different from saying that man has any say in the actual stipulations or the execution of the covenant. In Genesis 15:17-18 Abram had a vision. He was present. He heard the terms of the covenant. However, it was the Lord who made the covenant. It was He who passed through the rent pieces. It was He who swore that these things would be. It was unilateral. Abram was a mere witness and recipient of the promise. Similarly, in Genesis 22:16 the Lord swears by Himself that He shall bless Abraham. Referring to this event the writer to the Hebrews notes that: “For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself.” (Hebrews 6:13)

“But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. “And all the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will **separate** them from one another, **as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left. “Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. ‘For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.’ “Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You drink? ‘And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? ‘And when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ “And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, *even* the least of them, you did it to Me.’ **“Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry, and you gave Me nothing to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink; I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.’ “Then they themselves also will answer, saying, ‘Lord, when****

did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?’ “Then He will answer them, saying, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.’ **“And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life (Matthew 25:31-46).”**

These two texts show that God is not tolerant of all behaviour. He gives a standard. He can be pleased *precisely* because He differentiates between acceptable and unacceptable. To deny this is in essence to deny God Himself.

Finally, we would like to reinforce this point by making reference to the subtitle of this and the last article—Saith the Lord, “But I have a few things against you.” These words are taken from the book of Revelation where our Lord, Jesus Christ, addresses Himself to seven local churches.

Of the seven churches addressed, five begin with the phrase, “I know your deeds.” These five are all denounced for their failings. Of these five, three are told directly that Jesus has something against them. The other two are not commended for anything. One is told to “Wake up!” The other is told it is about to be “spit out.”

The basic point here is that seven churches were weighed by Christ, the

Lord of the Church. One was told it would suffer tribulation and then asked to persevere. One was told it would be spared tribulation. Then there were the two who were denounced. Last we are left with the three who did good things, but who needed to lift their game.

The math, friends, is very simple. Two out of seven were commended. Five out of seven had a case to answer before the Head of the Church, Jesus Christ. Where does your church stand? Would it be commended or condemned? The same is true for denominations on the one hand and for individual belief on the other.

The covenant God of Scripture does not tolerate everything. He does not abide the attitudes and deceitfulness of the world and He certainly will not accept those attitudes being displayed in His Church.

God cares for His people. He has given them a way of life. He has given them rules for life. Why then do we deny His covenant by trying to import the principles of the world into the Church?

In conclusion then, we urge you Brethren in light of God’s mercies to resuscitate Sin and Covenant and help restore them to their rightful place, knowing that this action will lead to the glorification of our triune God and the taking of all things captive to Christ.