

Commanding the Blessing

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Romans 8

⁷ The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

BUT when the enmity is slain by the cross, the carnal mind dies,¹ and the new man, created in true holiness,² delights in the law of God.³ He finds in it no irksome and narrow restrictions,⁴ but a perfect law of liberty,⁵

Psalm 119

⁹⁶ ...exceeding broad.

No human mind can conceive the freedom offered, or rather enjoined upon us by the law of God. Being His commandment, however, the privileges it sets before us may not be slighted. Because God has commanded the blessing on His people, they may not go unbled.

Psalm 68

²⁸ Your God has commanded your strength:

–therefore it is a transgression to be weak.

God's covenant with Abraham was rich in promises of blessing, but no richer than His law. God's commands are promises, and His promises are commands. It is just as wrong to slight His promises as to disobey His commands. In either form we have the will of God.

In *Psalm* 105:8-10, we learn that the covenant and the law are identical.

¹ *Romans* 6:6.

² *Ephesians* 4:24.

³ *Psalm* 119:16, 35.

⁴ *1 John* 5:3.

⁵ *James* 1:25.

Psalm 105

⁸ He has remembered His covenant for ever, the word which He commanded to a thousand generations.

⁹ Which covenant He made with Abraham, and His oath unto Isaac;

¹⁰ And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant.

God's covenant "of life and peace"⁶ was not merely submitted to Israel as an offer, to be accepted or not at their pleasure. It was also commanded as a law, so that no one could fail of the covenant with Abraham without becoming a transgressor of the law. The measure of privilege is always the measure of responsibility. To whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required. We cannot take any of God's gifts and be free from the obligation to honor Him in the use we make of them.

On the other hand, the fact that God *commanded* the blessings of the covenant was proof to all of His earnest purpose to bless them. No one could decline that gift on the plea that he was unworthy, and that it was not meant for such as he, for the very fact that the law declared him guilty showed that that law, which was likewise the covenant of promise, applied to him. In this way, God took away all excuse for doubting the promises, and made it plain that even where by the entrance of the law, the offense was made to abound, the grace of the covenant also entered and did much more abound.⁷

But there is another side to this. While the covenant was commanded, it was shown that the law was also of the nature of the covenant. A law may be issued arbitrarily by a despot, but a covenant implies a mutual relationship, a bond of fellowship. A law may be binding only upon those to whom it is given. A covenant binds all who enter into it.

⁶ *Malachi* 2:5.

⁷ *Romans* 5:20.

Therefore since God's law is also His covenant, we may know that He intends all obligations of the law to be mutual. He will ask nothing from His people which He is not willing to render to them. The commanding is not to be all on one side.

This opens up a wonderful range of privilege before those who enter into God's covenant, and keep His commandments. It then becomes their right to command Him.

Isaiah 45

¹¹ Thus says the Lord, the Holy One of Israel and his Maker,...concerning the work of my hands, command me.

Christ told His disciples,

Luke 22

²⁷ I am among you as he that serves,

–and when His people are gathered home, He has promised to serve them there.⁸ If when we were strangers to the covenants of promise,⁹ we made God to serve with our sins, and wearied Him with our iniquities,¹⁰ much more, when we choose the things that please Him, will He do for us...

John 16

²³ ...whatsoever you shall ask the Father.

Psalms 20

⁵ ...the Lord fulfill all your petitions.

⁴ Grant you according to your own heart, and fulfill all your counsel.

It is no wonder that the Old Testament believers who, like David and Abraham, rejoiced to see the day of Christ and gloried in His salvation, should delight in the law of God. It was not as an abstract statement of perfection that David loved to meditate on

⁸ Luke 12:37.

⁹ Ephesians 2:12.

¹⁰ Isaiah 43:24.

it. The personal element endeared it to him. It is not “*the law*” but “*your law*” that he loves.¹¹

Christ is the sum and substance of the covenant with Abraham, and since that covenant was commanded to Jacob for a law, the life of Christ becomes the law for men, perfect in righteousness, but mighty to save,¹² appointed to judge the world,¹³ but reconciling the world unto himself.¹⁴ And in the close of the New Testament, describing the remnant of His people, God joins together...

Revelation 14

¹² ...the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

Romans 3

³¹ Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

¹¹ *Psalm 119:97.*

¹² *Isaiah 63:1.*

¹³ *Psalm 96:13; Psalm 50:4; John 5:22, 27.*

¹⁴ *2 Corinthians 5:19.*