

## ARE ALIEN SINNERS AMENABLE TO THE LAW OF CHRIST?

A. The question of amenability to the law (gospel) of Christ is of special importance to brethren since some in the church seek to justify divorce and remarriage for any cause prior to baptism on the grounds that the law of marriage and divorce in Matthew 19:9 applies only to Christians. To justify this position it is argued that aliens are not amenable to any law from God or Christ.

B. In the **Warren-Fuqua Debate** Thomas Warren stated Fuqua's position as follows: "(1) The World is under Civil law **exclusively** and will be judged **solely** by that law; (2) The World is **not** under any law from God or Christ on **any subject**, and so cannot violate any law or instruction of Christ; (3) The salvation of a man in the World does **not** involve his repenting of specific sins, and so he does not have to sever 'sinful relationships' (as viewed by the law of Christ) which were entered while he is (or was) in the World" (p. 10). Fuqua agreed that this was his position (p. 25).

C. In this study one basic argument will be developed in an attempt to show that the Bible teaches that alien sinners are amenable to Christ's law, some objections will be briefly answered, and some necessary conclusions if the alien sinner is not amenable to the law of Christ will be drawn.

### II. THE UNIVERSALITY OF CHRIST'S SUPREMACY DEMANDS THAT ALIENS BE AMENABLE TO CHRIST'S LAW.

A. Christ is Lord of all, Acts 10:36.

1. All things delivered unto him, Matt. 11:27.
2. All power given to him in heaven and in earth, Matt. 28:18.
3. All things under his feet, Eph. 1:22.
4. Head of all principality and power, Col. 2:10.
5. Put all things under his feet (with God excepted, the only instance where an exception is stated), 1 Cor. 15:27.
6. All things in subjection under his feet, Heb. 2:6-8.

B. What does "all things" include?

1. The material universe, as well as inferior animals, Heb. 1:3; 2:6-8.
2. Angelic beings: Good, Eph. 1:21; 1 Pet. 3:22; Heb. 1:6; Heb. 1:14; Rev. 5:1, 12; Luke 16:22 and Matt. 24:31. Bad, Matt. 8:28; Luke 10:17, 18; Col. 2:15; Rev. 20:10; 1 John 3:8.
3. Human beings.
  - a. The nations.
    - (1) The nations are subject to Christ.
      - (a) Ps. 2:10-12 with passages like Acts 4:25; 13:33; Rev. 2:25-29.
        - Kings and princes are the subjects.
        - They are called upon to "serve," the kind of service that servants owe to a superior being.
        - They are called upon to "kiss" the Son,

expressive of loyal subjection to a reigning prince (cf. 1 Sam. 10:1).

- (b) 1 Sam. 7:13, 14, nations serve him.
- (c) Rev. 11:15.
- (d) Christ is the prince of the kings of the earth, Rev. 1:5, as Jehovah was the King of nations in the O. T. period, Jer. 10:6, 7.
- (e) Christ is Lord of lords and King of kings, Rev. 17:14; 19:16.
- (f) The nations derive their existence from Christ and are therefore subject to Christ's law.
- (g) Civil government is both an ordinance of God and an ordinance of man, Rom. 13:2; 1 Pet. 2:13. But "of man" only in the sense that it is the **right** of people to fix the constitution to put rulers in positions of authority, and to revise and amend the system under which they live.
- (h) Civil government is equally the ordinance of God, both morally and providentially. God both sanctions civil government and gives the principles by which its formation and management are regulated. Vengeance is brought upon those nations that disregard God's law (Ps. 2:5; 110:5, 6). "If nations are not bound by the word of God, they are not responsible or punishable for acting contrary to it, but may at pleasure, revel with impunity in the violation of every branch of revealed truth; -a degree of licentious indulgence which, however agreeable to the taste of the infidel, cannot fail to shock the mind of every Christian" (Symington, **Messiah, The Prince**, p. 238).

b. Individuals.

- (1) Every creature is a gospel subject, Matt. 28:18, 19; Mark 16:15, 16, and is therefore amenable to the law (gospel) of Christ.
  - (a) All have sinned, but sin is a transgression of Christ's law which brings death, Rom. 3:24; 1 John 3:4; Rom. 6:23. (b) Yet one cannot break a law to which he is not amenable, Rom. 4:15.
- (2) Every creature must obey the gospel or be lost, Mark 16:15, 16; Rom. 10:13; 2 Thess. 1:8-9. Yet one is not required to obey a law to which he is not amenable, Rom. 3:19.
- (3) All men (under the gospel dispensation) will be judged by the gospel of Christ, John 12:48; Acts 17:31; Rom. 2:16; Heb. 1:1, 2; 2 Cor. 5:10. Are men to be judged by a law to which they

are not amenable?

### III. OBJECTIONS.

A. Christ does not rule over the world which has its own "god," "prince," "spirit," "wisdom," "kingdoms," "care," "children," "fashion," "conversation," etc. (E. C. Fuqua, **The Warren-Fuqua Debate**, pp. 22, 23).

ANSWER: This argument confuses right and acknowledgment. An unlawful usurper may be acknowledged when he does not have the right to rule, or acknowledgment may be refused to one who has the right to rule. Because the world (aliens) refuses to acknowledge Christ's right over them in no way proves the world is not amenable to his law. The fact that all men will acknowledge him in the judgment shows they have been in rebellion against him during their lifetime (Phil. 2:8, 9). But how can one live in rebellion against one to whose law he is not amenable?

B. The alien sinner is not under law to Christ in taking the essential steps (belief, repentance, baptism) any more than the Briton is under the law of the United States when taking steps necessary to naturalization (Fuqua, **Warren-Fuqua Debate**, pp. 25, 26).

ANSWER: The parallel will not hold because the United States does not have a universal law to which "every creature" in the world is amenable, but the gospel of Christ is a universal law (Mark 16:15, 16). Romans 8:1, 2 clearly says that "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" makes one free from the law of sin and death. Other passages affirm the same thing, Rom. 6:17, 18; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; 1 Pet. 4:17. Besides, a Briton must obey American law in order to become an American citizen.

C. Romans 2:14 shows alien sinners are a law unto themselves and are in no way subject to a law from God or Christ. "The World, while possessing laws of their own enactment, and those due to their own individual conscience, *have no law from Christ or God*" (Fuqua, **Warren-Fuqua Debate**, p. 88).

ANSWER: This passage describes the Gentiles *while the law of Moses was operative*, and the Gentiles were not then, nor are they now, amenable to the law of Moses. Moses' law was not a universal law. But the gospel is a universal law to which both Jews and Gentiles are amenable (Mark 16:15, 16) in the gospel dispensation.

D. The world and the church are amenable to different laws, the world to civil law, the church to divine law. "The proclamation of the gospel to the lost; or observing the Lord's Supper (which is commanded of all the disciples of Christ), has not been commanded of the World; therefore, the World in not observing those Christian duties, cannot sin against Christ regarding them" (Fuqua, **Warren-Fuqua Debate**, p. 88).

ANSWER: "For the conclusion to be valid, it would necessitate the following major premise: 'All

instructions which men are not instructed to obey at any point in their lives are instructions to which those men are not amenable.' Now let us try that on faith and baptism. Is an unbeliever instructed to be baptized? 'Oh, no,' someone says. 'Mark 16:15, 16 plainly shows that one must be a *believer* in order to be baptized.' Then if the above contention be true, unbelievers are not amenable to the instructions of Christ to be baptized. This would mean that no one out of the church is to be baptized since they all, at one time at least, were not believers. And since they already have pointed out that the church is not to be baptized, perhaps they will tell us just who it is that *is* amenable to the instructions of Christ to be baptized. The truth is: it is a matter of *qualification*. One cannot believe until after he has heard (Rom. 10:17); one cannot repent until after he believes (Acts 2:37; Rom. 2:4) - neither can he confess until after he believes (Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:9, 10); and neither can one be baptized until after he has heard, believed, repented, and confessed his faith in Christ (Acts 2:38, etc.). One is *amenable* to the instructions of Christ to be baptized even when he is an unbeliever, but he is not *qualified* to be baptized as yet! After baptism, of course, he is qualified to partake of the Lord's supper" (Thomas Warren, **The Spiritual Sword**, VI [Jan., 1975] p. 6).

#### **IV. NECESSARY CONCLUSIONS IF ALIEN SINNERS ARE NOT AMENABLE TO THE LAW OF CHRIST.**

- A. Men out of the church cannot sin in violation of the law of Christ. The only sins aliens would commit would be violations of *civil* law. Yet, 1 Cor. 6:9-11 and Romans 1:24-32 name sins (like "covetousness") which are not forbidden by civil law, and these Christians, both in Corinth and Rome, were guilty of them while aliens.
- B. Men out of the church could practice polygamy, group marriage, and concubinage while aliens and not be wrong in doing so, unless the civil law forbids it. Such a person could even continue in these relationships since repentance (according to this view) does not demand that all relationships which violate the law of Christ be severed in order to be pleasing to God after baptism. Yet aliens are called upon to turn from (through repentance) specific sins such as idolatry (Acts 17:21-31) and murder (Acts 2:23, 38).
- C. Men out of the church would be sinners and therefore damned, not because they had violated divine law, but because they had violated *civil* law. This raises the very important question as to how men get into the world in the first place---by breaking divine law or civil law? The Bible teaches that it is by breaking divine law, Rom. 3:23; 4:15; 3:19.
- D. Men out of the church will not be judged by the gospel of Christ, but by civil law, since civil law is the only law to which aliens are amenable.
- E. Men out of Christ do not have to be baptized to be saved, or else to be saved they have to obey a law that is no part of the gospel, in which case it is not the gospel that is God's power to save the alien, but another law altogether. Yet the scriptures affirm that the

gospel is God's power to save (Rom. 1:16).

—Walton Weaver