

Leviticus 18:5 And Paul:  
Do This And You Shall Live (Eternally?)  
Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., M.A.

Assoc. Professor of Old Testament, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Ill.

The classic theme of all truly evangelical theology is the problem of law and grace. Indeed the contrasts between the law which came by Moses and the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ seem to be legion. It would appear that the law is no longer obligatory<sup>1</sup> having served its usefulness now that the promise has come,<sup>2</sup> and therefore we are delivered from the law<sup>3</sup> and its dominion<sup>4</sup> in that Christ has fulfilled the righteousness of the law in us.<sup>5</sup> For many, these statements are so definitive that no further investigation need detain us.

Nevertheless, this presentation of the law's relationship to grace is too absolute, antithetical and incomplete for many other Pauline passages, let alone much of the Old Testament itself. Has grace "annulled" the law? Paul responds clearly: "never! On the contrary the law is established!"<sup>6</sup> "Annulled?"—that was the very word Paul had used in II Corinthians 3:11 to speak of the abolishing, or rendering the law as inoperative (*katargeo*). What is more, the law cannot be made the scapegoat for my problem with sin, for the law is holy, good, just, and spiritual.<sup>7</sup> It certainly had a distinctive purpose: to bring us to Christ.<sup>8</sup> Therein was its life-giving power revealed, for "if there had been a law which could have given life, verily righteousness would have been by the law."<sup>9</sup> Obviously then, there never was such a law which could give life and righteousness, nor was the law ever intended to be set in opposition to the promises of God.<sup>10</sup>

Had not the Psalmists argued in this same line of thought? The law of the Lord according to Psalm 19 was perfect, sure, right, pure, clear, true, righteous and able to revive the soul, make the simple, wise, rejoice the heart, enlighten the eyes, endure forever, being much more desirable than gold, fine gold, honey or the honeycomb.<sup>11</sup> Assuredly, all of Psalm 119 only enlarges on these themes.

Still the question remains: How shall we properly observe the continuity and discontinuity found in Scripture on this theme without violating either aspect of the truth? Is there, in fact, a meeting place for these two aspects found simultaneously in both Testaments?

The confusion on this one issue alone, in the judgment of many, deters more Christians from enthusiastically reading and receiving the revelation of God from the Old Testament than any other single problem in Old Testament studies. The value which a Christian assigns to the Old Testament will be directly dependent upon the answer he gives to the law-grace question.<sup>12</sup>

---

1 1. II Cor. 3:11; Eph. 2:15; Col. 2:14.

2 2. Gal. 3:19–25; 4:1–5.

3 3. Rom. 7:6.

4 4. Rom. 6:14; 7:4.

5 5. Rom. 8:3, 4; 10:4.

6 6. Rom. 3:31.

7 7. Rom. 7:7; 12–14.

8 8. Rom. 10:4; Gal. 3:24.

9 9. Gal. 3:21.

10 10. *Ibid.*

11 11. Psalm 19:8–11.

12 12. See Gerhard von Rad, *O. T. Theology*. II, Philadelphia: Westminster, p. 390.

Leviticus 18:5 And Paul:  
Do This And You Shall Live (Eternally?)  
Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., M.A

## A Hypothetical Offer Of Salvation

One of the most damaging positions on the law is to be found in the exegesis of Israel's response to the Lord's "Eagles' Wings Speech" of Exodus 19:3 ff and in the Sinaitic covenant which follows in Exodus 20. To these two declarations of God which concluded with the words, "If ye will obey my voice and keep my covenant" the people responded by saying, "All that the Lord hath spoken will we do and we will be obedient" ( Ex. 19:8; 24:3, 7). This, in the view of some, was spoken "rashly,"<sup>13</sup> for Israel thereby placed themselves under a conditional law. Rather than "believing," the emphasis would now fall, argue some, on "doing" as Leviticus 18:5, Ezekiel 20:11, 21 and Nehemiah 9:29 repeated: "Ye shall keep therefore my statutes and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the Lord."

It was just this development in the history of the religion of Israel, claim many, which "prepared the way for Paul's relating sin to the law and grace and faith to Abraham."<sup>14</sup> Even George E. Mendenhall has sought to harden this contrast by distinguishing the oath formula in the Abrahamic Covenant from that of the suzerainty treaty type found in Sinaitic Covenant of Moses.<sup>15</sup> In the former (Gen. 15 and 17) he finds no obligations imposed upon Abraham, for God swears by himself alone to maintain the covenant while in the case of the Sinaitic materials the people bind themselves by the above mentioned "rash" formula to obey the stipulations imposed by Yahweh himself.

Thus it happened that the people bargained for more than they were able to keep. The people, being weak, could never live up to their part of the bargain; in practice it became a hypothetical offer only.<sup>16</sup>

## Conditional Or Unconditional Covenants

In all the covenants of the Old Testament (including the promised "New Covenant") the establishment of the *relationship* precedes the outward conclusion of the covenant and is independent of its acknowledgement. After God has established a relationship by his grace and man has responded by accepting God's gift of love as it is visualized in the covenant form and specified by the promise content of the covenant, God rightfully expects a life which exhibits this believer's new life in the Man of Promise. Even in the so-called unconditional covenants made with Noah (Gen. 9:9) and Abraham (Gen. 12, 15), the covenant imposes upon those who receive it certain implicit and explicit obligations which are afterwards repeated and amplified. The covenant with its "given word" is a "declaration" of "good news." Thus the Old Testament is the story of God's single promise as amplified in a succession of covenants and Jewish men and women. This promise with its numerous expanding specifications throughout the course of Old Testament revelation was addressed first of all to the response of faith in the, Word and Will of

---

13 13. *Scofield Bible*, 1945, p. 20, n. 1.

14 14. Norbert Lohfink, *The Christian Meaning of the O. T.* (R. A. Wilson), London: Barnes and Oates, 1969, p.

105. See also G. Ernest Wright, *The O. T. and Theology*. N.Y.: Harper and Row Publishers, 1969, p. 138 and n. 26.

15 15. George E. Mendenhall, *Law and Covenant in Israel and the Ancient East*. Pittsburgh: The Biblical Colloquium, 1955, pp. 36-37.

16 16. Richard N. Longenecker, *Paul: Apostle of Liberty*. N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1964, pp. 121-22.

Leviticus 18:5 And Paul:  
Do This And You Shall Live (Eternally?)  
Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., M.A

God. But once received, such participation in the grace of God entailed the obvious demands that Lordship brings: Abraham's departure from Ur (Gen. 12:1), his call to a holy and blameless life (Gen. 17:1), his observance of the sign of circumcision (Gen. 17:9-14), and his willingness to obey in the sacrifice of his son Isaac (Gen. 22:1-19).

Some have argued that these things were only signs and not works of merit. We agree! That is just the point. There were things to be done, commands to be kept, but they were only signs of a grace which should have been already present. The sign was worthless if it had not been preceded by a circumcision of the heart (Deut. 10:16; 30:6, etc. ).

God's promise would stand regardless if Abraham received it by faith or not. The fact that Abraham did receive this unconditional covenant and demonstrate the reality of that commitment becomes the reason why Isaac should be offered participation in the same plan of God: Genesis 26:5 says, "because Abraham obeyed me, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws."

The Law of Moses will just extend these demands to the entire life of this people. They will become the rule of life for those *already* under the covenant and who have been justified like Abraham (Gen. 12:1 and Rom. 4:1-5).

Similarly, Martin Buber has argued that the Sinaitic Covenant is not a legal document containing the conditions of an agreement or a contract, but it is rather a "royal manifesto."<sup>17</sup> Jakob Jocz volunteers the comparison of the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7 where one finds a "Messianic Manifesto" also, rather than a collection of the conditions for discipleship.<sup>18</sup> In point of fact, the Sinaitic *relationship* antedated the transactions on Mt. Sinai, for the giving of the law only fixed and settled outwardly a relationship which had already been initiated in the plagues on Israel's behalf and their Exodus.<sup>19</sup> This fact may be established from opposite sides of the Sinai event: (1) the covenant was concluded with Israel in that whole complex of events "in the day that I (Yahweh) took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, which covenant they broke" (Jer. 31, 32). The promise of deliverance and the announcement that Yahweh is their Lord comes in Exodus 6:2-8; therefore a relationship already exists with the nation of Israel even apart from any agreement or conditions! (2) Just so, even after the Sinaitic Covenant had already been made, we find new covenants being made: in Exodus 34:10<sup>20</sup> and Joshua 24.<sup>21</sup> The former passage is specific: "Behold I make a covenant: before all thy people I will do marvels such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation; and all the people among whom thou art, shall see the work of the Lord, for it is a terrible thing that I will do with thee." New mercies are promised and these in turn automatically involve new obligations for the people.

---

17 17. Martin Buber, *Moses: The Revelation and the Covenant*. N.Y.: Harper Torchbooks, 1958, p. 103.

18 18. Jakob Jocz, *The Covenant: A Theology of Human Destiny*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1968, pp. 29-30. See also Joshua 24:25-27.

19 19. See Martin Buber, *Moses*, *op. cit.*, p. 104; E. W. Hengstenberg, *Christology of O. T.* II, pp. 429-32.

20 20. E. W. Hengstenberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 431-32.

21 21. M. Buber, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

Leviticus 18:5 And Paul:  
Do This And You Shall Live (Eternally?)  
Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., M.A

It is to be concluded then that it was Yahweh's love, mercy, and grace that initiated *even* the Sinaitic Covenant, and not the people's obedience (Deut. 4:37; 7:7–9; 10:15; etc.).<sup>22</sup> When Israel broke the law of God, they did not thereby forfeit their relationship to the Lord God, rather that very law made provision for the forgiveness and removal of all sins (Lev. 16). Even Israel's involvement in the, golden calf incident does not end God's faithfulness (Ex. 32). It only highlights the necessity of obedience for those who have already experienced the grace of God's deliverance and the fact that the Lord God is "merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness" (Ex. 34:6 and nine other Old Testament passages). Furthermore, the people did not speak "rashly" in saying "all that the Lord says, we will do." On the contrary, the Lord speaks in glowing terms of approval in Deuteronomy 5:28–29 and 18:17 saying, "Oh that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me and keep all my commandments always." The confession came from the consciousness of the unworthiness of any sinner to come into the presence of God as Keil has remarked on this passage.

Therefore the so-called legalistic "if" of Exodus 19:8; 24:3, 7 was the same found prior to Sinai in Exodus 15:26; Exodus 12:21–28; and in the commands given to Abraham: "Get out" ( Gen. 12:1 ), "walk before me and be perfect" (Gen. 17:1), "keep the way of the Lord and do righteousness and justice" (Gen. 18:19). Likewise, these same obligations expressing "the obedience of faith" (Rein. 1:5; 16:0,13) are still to be found today from Israel's example as the writer of Hebrews warns us in 3:7, 15; 4:7 by quoting the "if" of Psalm 95:7 f.<sup>23</sup> Even Jesus did not expect obedience to be an optional feature of the Christian life, but he repeated this same "if you love me, keep my commandments" in John 14:15; 15:10 and Matthew 19:17.

The covenant is everlasting and conditionless when viewed from the perspective of God's promise and election. It does not depend upon merit nor favoritism, but only God's grace and his election for *service*.<sup>24</sup> This same covenant, with the same promises, continues into the Mosaic revelation and is no more conditional or unconditional than was the Abrahamic Covenant. The problem is not to find the contrast between these two, but to identify the way in which both reflect elements of conditionality and unconditionality so as to avoid either one of the horns of this dilemma: God chooses the worthy and thus injures his grace or God chooses the unworthy and brings into disrepute his justice.<sup>25</sup>

The best place to illustrate this principle in the Old Testament is in the unconditioned, irrevocable covenant made to David.<sup>26</sup> Its contents are simply the amplification of that single promise already announced to the patriarchs. Here again the seed and the inheritance are to be solely God's gifts plus no works whatsoever. Nevertheless, even this covenant is presented as if it were conditioned by the obedience of David's descendants. God promised in I Chronicles

---

22 22. Paul and Elizabeth Achtemeier, *The O. T. Roots of Our Faith*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962, pp. 60-71, Chpt. IV "The Relation of the Law to the Promise."

23 23. O. T. Allis, "Modern Dispensationalism and the Law of God," *Evangelical Quarterly*, VIII (1936), pp. 272-89.

24 24. H. H. Rowley, *The Biblical Doctrine of Election*. 1950, p. 47, 49, 52, 59. He quotes Ex. 32:13; Lev. 26:42; Deut. 1:8; 4:31; 6:10; 9:27; 32:9; II Ki. 13:23; I Chron. 16:16–18; I Sam. 12:22; Psa. 33:12.

25 25. H. H. Rowley, *Ibid.*, p. 39.

26 26. II Sam. 7:13, 16, 24, 25, 26, 29 and its parallel in I Chron. 17: stresses the "forever" aspect of the promise. This word is supported with numerous other expressions.

Leviticus 18:5 And Paul:  
Do This And You Shall Live (Eternally?)  
Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., M.A

22:13 and 28:7 to establish Solomon's kingdom forever (a repetition of a feature already guaranteed in II Samuel 7) "if only he determines to keep my commandments and my ordinances as he is today." Also Psalm 132:12 contains the same "if": "If your sons keep my covenant and my testimonies which I shall teach them, then their sons shall sit upon your throne forever."

Are we faced with an error, a paradox, a different dispensation, or an Old Testament legalism? The thesis of this essay is that none of these explanations will fit. Rather the solution here again is as Willis J. Beecher remarked "...any member of the line of David may by sin forfeit his own share in the promise, but he may not forfeit that which belongs to his successors to eternity."<sup>27</sup>

### Paul's Contrast In Romans 10:4

Having established the fact that Scripture does not make a conditional or hypothetical offer of salvation under the law to Israel, nor has the way been opened for Paul's relating sin to the law, what shall we make of the passage in Romans 10:4 which obviously quoted Leviticus 18:5? Does Paul here announce that Christ has put an end to the law so that righteousness may now come by faith whereas Moses' description of the attainment of righteousness was: the man who does these things shall be righteous?

First, let us establish the fact that Leviticus 18:5 has as its background idolatry and not that of salvation, perfection or "doing" of the law in contrast to "believing." Andrew A. Bonar is wrong when he says: But if, as most think, we are to take in this place the words '*live in them*' as meaning 'eternal life to be got by them, the scope of the passage is that so excellent are God's laws, and every special minute detail of these laws, *that if a man were to keep these always and perfectly*, this keeping would be eternal life to him. And the quotations in Rom. x:5, and Gal. iii:12, would seem to determine this to be the true and only sense here. (Italics his).<sup>28</sup>

This view misses the following points:

1. "Those things" which Israel was to do were the statutes and judgment of the Lord, as *contrasted with* the customs and ordinances of the Egyptians and Canaanites.<sup>29</sup>
2. While the customs of these pagans lead to lust and abomination (vss. 3, 30) Israel's happy privilege of keeping God's laws only perpetuated a *life already begun* by faith.

---

27 27. Willis J. Beecher, *The Prophets and the Promise*, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1963, p. 232. See also pp. 219-220 where his wording could be improved. He makes it conditional on obedience insofar as the benefits accrue to any particular person or generation in Israel, but unconditional since it expresses God's purpose of blessing the human race and therefore without any dependence on the obedience or disobedience of men. The latter is true, but the former is stated in such a way as to play into the hands of a position of hypothetical merit salvation for O. T. men.

28 28. Andrew A. Bonar, *A Commentary on Leviticus*. London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1966 (r.p. of 1840), pp. 329-30. So agrees Charles L. Feinberg, *The Prophecy of Ezekiel*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1969, p. 110; "Obedience would have brought life physically and spiritually, temporally and eternally (see Deut. 4:40; 5:16)."

29 29. Patrick Fairbairn, *The Revelation of the Law*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1957 (r.p. of 1869), pp. 443-47.

Leviticus 18:5 And Paul:  
Do This And You Shall Live (Eternally?)  
Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., M.A

3. The passage begins and ends (vss. 1, 30) with the theological setting of “I am the Lord your God;” thus law-keeping here is Israel’s sanctification, the grand evidence that the Lord was indeed their God already.

4. This same point is made in Deuteronomy 30:16, Ezekiel 20:11 *et passim*.

Neither Moses nor Ezekiel, it is obvious, meant that the life spoken of, which comprehends whatever is really excellent and good, was to be *acquired* (italics his) by means of such conformity to the enactments of heaven; for life in that sense already was theirs ...Doing these things, they lived in them; because life thus had its due exercise and nourishment and was in a condition to enjoy the manifold privileges and blessings secured in the covenant. And the very same may be said of the precepts and ordinances of the gospel: a man lives after the higher life of faith only insofar as he walks in conformity with these; for though he gets life by a simple act of faith in Christ, he cannot exercise, maintain and enjoy it but in connection with the institutions and requirements of the gospel.<sup>30</sup>

5. The use of Ezekiel 20:25 where God speaks of giving “statutes that were not good and ordinances by which they could not (sic) have life” to relate any of the above views is incorrect since God is here identifying himself with the instruments of his wrath, *viz.* the polluted customs and observances of heathenism which he used permissively against Israel after they persisted in following them.<sup>31</sup>

6. One of the ways of “doing” the law was to recognize the imperfection of one’s life and thus to make a sacrifice for the atonement of one’s sins.<sup>32</sup> Leviticus 18:5, then, is not referring to any offer of eternal life as a reward for perfect law-keeping: it assumed and provided for law-breakers as part of that law which was to be kept!

There must now be a reexamination of the context of Romans 10:4 ff. The discussion of contrasts found here began in Romans 9:30ff. Why had Israel with searching failed to gain what the Gentiles had received without looking? Paul details the reasons:

1. Because (even Chrysostom, Calvin and Bengel missed this one) Israel sought “*the law of righteousness*” (Rom. 9:31). Many have tried to read “the righteousness of the law” for *nomon dikaiosunes*, but that will only be the beginning of troubles in this passage.<sup>33</sup> Paul’s point is explicit: the Jews had missed the righteousness of the law by making a law out of righteousness, i.e., by setting up external standards and observances: sabbaths, new moons, feasts, tithes, washings, foods and other minutiae. Paul deliberately chooses this phrase to remind his readers

---

30 30. Patrick Fairbairn, *An Exposition of Ezekiel*. Evansville: Sovereign Grace Publishers, 1960, pp. 215-16. As G. A. Cooke said it, “The ancient mind fastened on the outward acts revealing the inward state, while the modern mind goes directly to the internal condition.” *The Book of Ezekiel (I.C.C.)*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1967, p. 199.

31 31. Charles F. Feinberg, *op. cit.* p. 112 has one of the finest treatments of this problem. Also, Patrick Fairbairn, *Ezekiel*, p. 221.

32 32. George E. Howard, “Christ the End of the Law,” *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 88 (1969), p. 334. Even Tannaitic Judaism had not interpreted Lev. 18:5 in terms of perfectionism, so how could Paul have misunderstood it? *Ibid.*

33 33. See the B.S.V.’s “Righteousness which is based on the law”?

Leviticus 18:5 And Paul:  
Do This And You Shall Live (Eternally?)  
Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., M.A

that “the object of their labor was thus really *the law*, from which *righteousness* should have proceeded, and not *righteousness* itself, as the true contents of the law.”<sup>34</sup>

In a similar vein of thought, Jesus had condemned the Scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 23:23 for neglecting the “weightier matters of the law”: judgment, mercy and faith (which really is a quote from Micah 6:8). Sure, they should have tithed, but they had no right to forget the central issues of the law either. This should be an eternal answer to all who find it difficult to distinguish between the moral, civil and ceremonial elements in the law. Their Lord advises them to do just what they find it difficult to do. He advises them to “Go and learn what this means: I desire mercy and not sacrifice” (Matt. 9:12; 12:7 quoting Hosea 6:6) if they are to understand the Old Testament.

2. Moreover, Romans 9:32 supplies us with the reason why Israel did not find true righteousness: “on account of” *dia ti*; (not *eis ti*—“for what end”) the fact that (a) they sought it not by faith, but (b) “as it were by works.” Both ideas (a and b) depend on “they stumbled” and the participle “seeking” is understood on the analogy of verse 11.<sup>35</sup> Most Jews *missed God’s righteousness* because they did not come by God’s way of faith as revealed in the Old Testament (notice his quotation of Isaiah 28:16 and 8:14). The addition of *all’ hos ex* means “as if it were possible” or “as if it were based on works.”

3. A third term found in Romans 10:2, 3 gives us another reason for Israel’s failure: they had zeal but they lacked *discernment*. The term is *epignosis*, not *gnosis*. The Jews did not lack knowledge (*gnosis*), but an ability to go to “the true nature of a thing.”<sup>36</sup> Therefore, they were without the discernment of true righteousness since they did not have faith, having failed to attend to the weightier matters of the law. The “law of righteousness,” that external system which was anti-Old Testament, anti-faith, and anti-Christian, is now called “their own righteousness”—*ten idian* (vs. 3). Their views and God’s revelation in the Old Testament and now in the New Testament are in direct conflict.

Thus it was that they missed the central fact of the law: Christ. He was its teleological conclusion with respect to its destination and application of righteousness (*eis dikaiosunen*) to everyone that believeth [in either testament!]. Christ here is the “end (aim or goal) *telos* of the law just as in I Peter 1:9 he is the “*end*” of our faith and as love is the “*end*” of the commandment in I Timothy 1:5.<sup>37</sup>

In order to show to the Jew that this is so, Paul quotes extensively from the Old Testament from here on out starting first with two quotes from Moses in Leviticus 18:5 and Deuteronomy 30:11–

---

34 34. F. Godet, *Commentary on Epistle on Romans*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1956 (r.p. of 1883), p. 368.

35 35. *Ibid.*, p. 368-69.

36 36. *Ibid.*, p. 375.

37 37. Ernest F. Kevan, *The Grace of Law: A Study in Puritan Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1965, pp. 130ff. Christ as the termination, abolition and *extremitas* of the law is held to by: J. A. Beet, J. Denny, C. H. Dodd, A. E. Garvie, E. H. Gifford, C. Hodge, H. A. W. Meyer, A. Nygren, W. Sanday and Headlam. Christ as the aim or purpose of the law is affirmed by: H. Alford, C. K. Barrett, K. Barth, J. A. Bengel, W. Burkitt, J. Calvin, F. Godet, G. A. F. Knight, M. Stuart, J. Wesley, etc.

Leviticus 18:5 And Paul:  
Do This And You Shall Live (Eternally?)  
Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., M.A

14. These two quotes from Moses are not antithetical in the Pentateuch, much less here in Paul, for Paul uses the *gar...de* construction which means “for... and,” not “for...but” as most translate this set of particles. Notice this same set appears in verse 10 “for with the heart...and with the mouth,” and again in 7:8 and 11:15.<sup>38</sup>

Nor can it be said that Paul is just borrowing the language of the Old Testament to capture the principle of law-righteousness, as John Murray affirms,<sup>39</sup> because it is *Moses* who is describing this righteousness here, not the Jews. This is not the “law of righteousness” of 9:31 or “as if it were possible works” of 9:32 or even the “lack of discernment” and self-righteousness of “their own” in 10:2; no, this is Moses’ authoritative and revealed description of true righteousness, which is near to every one of them, i.e., it is the same thing as the word of faith which Paul preached! The doing and living of verse 4<sup>40</sup> was from a righteousness which was the true content of the law. The obedience of Christ (I command you this day to, love the Lord your God, Deut. 30:16) was prior to the obedience of faith (I command you this day to walk in his ways by keeping his commandments, his statutes and ordinances, Deut. 30:16). There are, therefore, two types of obedience in a set sequence.

The contrast is still between “their own righteousness” and the righteousness of God which Moses describes in Leviticus and Deuteronomy and which Paul here is describing and preaching.

### Conclusion: The Righteousness Of The Law And The Righteousness Of Faith

The Moses of Leviticus and the Moses of Deuteronomy are the same, yet Paul refers the righteousness of Leviticus to the law and that in Deuteronomy to faith. Do we then have two kinds of righteousness and two kinds of life after all the above work? Not if both verses 5 and 6–7 have their final aim in Christ. Christ witnesses to the fact that the inward principle was the focal point for both passages. The alleged antithesis then is only in the misconception of Paul’s generation of Jews.

Circumcision of the heart was required first (Deut. 30:6, *nota bene*) then a keeping of his commandments. True, the law could be made into “a ministration of death” (II Cor. 3:7ff) but so could the gospel also be made a “saviour of death unto death” (II Cor. 2:16) with respect to man’s abuse and corruption of it. Indeed the law is elsewhere anything but death: it is the living oracle and the living Word of God (Acts 7:38).

Had not Hebrews 4:9 proclaimed that the gospel<sup>41</sup> was preached to those carcasses that fell in the wilderness as well as unto us? The conclusion is most apparent by now. There was no alternative route to eternal life offered in the Old Testament. Not only was depravity a strike against that

---

38 38. George E. Howard, *op. cit.*, pp. 335-36.

39 39. John Murray, *The Epistle to Romans*. II, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968, p. 51, 249–51.

40 40. Notice F. Goder, *op. cit.*, pp. 376-77 and his convenient gathering of the three main textual variations on verse 4.

41 41. The “promise made to the fathers” (Acts 7:17; 13:32) is also called the “Gospel” according to Rom. 1:9. and Rom. 10:14, 15.

Leviticus 18:5 And Paul:  
Do This And You Shall Live (Eternally?)  
Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., M.A

man, but so was the consistent invitation to faith as a prerequisite for any sort of fruits of righteousness or obedience of faith.

May this investigation in one more area ease the way to full recognition of the Old Testament and its proper use in the Church today. Let us be among those who believe and who find the oft mentioned New Testament doctrine of promise as a summary of the Old Testament<sup>42</sup> and notice how the whole testament bent its total aim towards its realization in Christ and his righteousness.

---

42 42. See the writer's article, "The Eschatological Hermeneutics of Epangelicalism: Promise Theology" *JETS*, XIII (1970), 91-100.

This article first appeared in *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 14:1 (Winter 1971) pp. 20-28 and is used at [www.thepromise.typepad.com](http://www.thepromise.typepad.com) with permission.

No part of this article may be copied or transmitted in any form without the prior permission of *JETS*