

## *All Elaborated: Liberty*

God, in the exodus, in delivering the children of Israel from Egypt, released them from abject slavery in order to form them into a nation, separated from all others to him alone. It might well be said that liberty – and, associated with it, separation – was fundamental to the Jews as the people of God.<sup>1</sup> The same applies in the new covenant. In this chapter I want to set out this liberty.

The release of the Jews from Egyptian slavery: that was what God accomplished in the exodus. No wonder, then, in the years that followed, he had strong words for Jews who tried to impose slavery on fellow-Jews, as to how the business should be strictly restrained and regulated (Ex. 21:1-11; Deut. 15:12-18; Jer. 34:8-22).

Moreover, in light of what happened and what was said in the upper room, ‘liberty’ (or redemption)<sup>2</sup> is a key principle to hold onto in the change of covenants, for, if the old covenant majored on liberty or redemption – and it did – the new covenant, no less.

John the Baptist’s father, Zechariah, was inspired by the Spirit (Luke 1:67) to set the keynote, even while Christ was as yet still in his mother’s womb:

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people and has raised up a horn [that is, a symbol of power] of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us; to show the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to

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<sup>1</sup> Freedom not only from Egyptian slavery, but to maintain constant freedom from pagans, their ways and gods. This was an insistent call by the prophets – alas constantly ignored by the Jews.

<sup>2</sup> Release from bondage by payment of a ransom.

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grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days (Luke 1:68-75).

John, his father prophesied (Luke 1:67), would prepare the ground for the work of this coming Redeemer, the liberator of his people (Luke 1:76-79).

Christ, in the upper room, making it clear that he was fulfilling the exodus picture of redemption and bringing in its reality, was drawing on the concept of liberty, deliverance, redemption which was already rooted deep within the minds of the disciples.

This was not the first time. Right at the start of his ministry, Christ, in the synagogue, had read from Isaiah, asserting that he was the fulfilment of the prophet's words, and, as such, the freeing of slaves from their bondage would be fundamental to his ministry:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour (Luke 4:18-19).

What is more, in his upper-room discourse, in opening that auspicious occasion, putting it as it were at the very top of the agenda, Christ explicitly spoke of slavery to his disciples, after having demonstrated it before their very eyes:

Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him: 'Lord, do you

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wash my feet?’ Jesus answered him: ‘What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand’. Peter said to him: ‘You shall never wash my feet’. Jesus answered him: ‘If I do not wash you, you have no share with me’. Simon Peter said to him: ‘Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!’ Jesus said to him: ‘The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you’. For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said: ‘Not all of you are clean’.

When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them: ‘Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you

Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant [that is, a slave] is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him (John 13:1-16).

Yes, slavery – of a unique kind – was playing a vital role in the upper room. As Christ would go on to say:

No longer do I call you slaves for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you (John 15:15).

But there was a problem. Christ was talking about slavery; the disciples were thinking about slavery. But they were at cross purposes as to what that slavery was.

The disciples, in common with their fellow-Jews, were expecting the Messiah to deliver or redeem Israel from slavery (Luke 2:38), but, alas, they thought in terms of national slavery under Roman occupation, release from that, and the restoration of something like David’s kingdom. Christ, however, had in mind a far more important slavery from which he would deliver his people, paying a far greater and far more precious ransom than the blood of a lamb in order to secure the eternal redemption of the elect.

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That, as I have noted, was hidden from the disciples at the time, but, as Christ promised, in the days following Pentecost, the Spirit would bring all this back to them and others, instructing them as to its full meaning.

Let me trace it out.

Stephen, when delivering his final address to his enemies, recounted Israel's history, majoring on Israel's deliverance from slavery, declaring:

The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, and said to him... And God spoke to this effect – that his offspring would be sojourners in a land belonging to others, who would enslave them and afflict them four hundred years. 'But I will judge the nation that they serve', said God, 'and after that they shall come out and worship me in this place'.

Stephen continued: many years passed, and the children of Israel, having gone down into Egypt, living happily under Joseph in order to escape famine, sadly, with their brother's death and the change of Pharaoh, in the passing of the years they were forced into slavery in the land and among a people which had, until then, given them a place of respite. In order to set his people free from this bitter bondage, God called Moses and appointed him as Israel's deliverer, God's agent of redemption for Israel:

I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and have heard their groaning, and I have come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send you to Egypt.

And so, declared Stephen:

This Moses, whom they rejected, saying: 'Who made you a ruler and a judge?' – this man God sent as both ruler and redeemer by the hand of the angel who appeared to him in the bush. This man led them out, performing wonders and

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signs in Egypt and at the Red Sea and in the wilderness for forty years (Acts 7:1-36).<sup>3</sup>

Yes, redemption from slavery – liberty with a capital ‘L’ – was a major old-covenant theme.<sup>4</sup> But, as the following extracts show, liberty is also an essential aspect of the new covenant. Indeed, the slavery in question being all the greater in the new covenant, the same has to be said for the deliverance:

...justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith (Rom. 3:24).

You are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption (1 Cor. 1:30).

In [Christ] we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace...

Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption (Eph. 1:7; 4:30).

[God] has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins (Col. 1:13-14).

The same can be said of ‘ransom’ (Matt. 20:28; 1 Tim. 2:6).

Let’s page back a little. The disciples should have known what kind of slavery from which Christ would deliver them. Long before the upper room, he had made it as plain as noonday. John, when, by the Spirit, he came to see the importance of the matter of spiritual slavery, and redemption from it, made sure that he placed on record a definitive exchange – one of many clashes – between Christ and the Jews (John 8:31-59). This is the highly-significant altercation on question. This extract – and what it teaches – is of such

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<sup>3</sup> Acts 7:1-36 applies to the sum of the extracts from Stephen’s discourse.

<sup>4</sup> See my *Christ; Liberty*.

importance, it must play a dominant role in our understanding of the liberty Christ has wrought for his people in the new covenant:

Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him: ‘If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free’. They answered him: ‘We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say: “You will become free”?’

Jesus answered them: ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. I know that you are offspring of Abraham; yet you seek to kill me because my word finds no place in you. I speak of what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have heard from your father’.

The Jews, becoming incandescent by Christ’s words, retorted:

Abraham is our father.

Christ dismissed their protest:

If you [really, truly] were Abraham’s children, you would be doing the works Abraham did, but now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. You are doing the works your father did .

The Jews, becoming ballistic, raised their claim, and snapped:

We were not born of sexual immorality. We have one Father – even God .

Christ pronounced the verdict:

If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me. Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies,

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he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. Which one of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God .

The Jews then resorted to vitriolic attack and name-calling, but Christ had the last word, claiming he existed before Abraham. Whereupon, the Jews, losing all self-control, attempted – but failed – out of hand to stone him to death (John 8:48-59).

This exchange, I say, is absolutely fundamental to new-covenant redemption from slavery.

As so often, it was Paul who set out the logic behind it all. As he explained, when writing to the Galatians, false teachers were trying to take the *ekklēsia* into slavery by getting believers to go under the law of Moses,<sup>5</sup> but he stood up to them and their teaching, and fought back – hard:

Because of false brothers secretly brought in – who slipped in [had infiltrated our ranks, had sneaked in among us] to spy out our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might bring us into slavery – to them we did not yield in submission even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you (Gal. 2:4-5).<sup>6</sup>

And he set out the definitive argument once and for all:

Before [the] faith came [that is, before Christ came with the gospel, bringing in the new covenant], we were held captive under the [Mosaic] law, imprisoned until the coming faith [that is, Christ's coming with the gospel, the new covenant] would be revealed. So then, the [Mosaic] law was our pedagogue until Christ came, in order that we might be

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<sup>5</sup> For Jewish believers, this meant them going back under the Mosaic law; for Gentiles – since they never were under the law (Deut. 4:6-45; 5:26; 7:6-11; Ps. 147:19-20; Acts 2:23; Rom. 3:2; 9:4; 1 Cor. 9:20-21) – to go under it and/or pagan law (Gal 4:8-11).

<sup>6</sup> See my *False*.

justified by faith. But now that [the] faith [that is, the gospel, the new covenant] has come, we are no longer under a pedagogue, for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were [spiritually] baptised into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.<sup>7</sup>

I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no different from a slave, though he is the owner of everything, but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father. In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world. But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the [Mosaic] law, to redeem those who were under the [Mosaic] law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying: 'Abba! Father!' So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods. But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more? You observe days and months and seasons and years! I am afraid I may have laboured over you in vain (Gal. 3:23 – 4:11).<sup>8</sup>

And, as he continued confronting his readers, Paul issued this challenge:

Tell me, you who desire to be under the [Mosaic] law, do you not listen to the [Mosaic] law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman and one by a free woman... Brothers, we are not children of the slave but of the free woman... For freedom Christ has set us free;

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<sup>7</sup> For the explanation of my additions, see my *Three*.

<sup>8</sup> For more, see my 'Know & Being Known' and my 'Free Grace. Liberty & Duty' on my [sermonaudio.com](http://sermonaudio.com) page and my YouTube page.



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stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery (Gal. 4:21 – 5:1).

Again:

Walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if [since] you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the [Mosaic] law. Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

If [since] we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another... Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ (Gal. 5:16 – 6:2).

Writing to the Corinthians, Paul emphasised the glorious change for the believer; delivered from slavery to sin, law and death – slavery to Satan, indeed – he is now freed to be a slave to Christ and righteousness:

He who was called in the Lord as a slave is a freedman of the Lord. Likewise he who was free when called is a slave of Christ (1 Cor. 7:22).

Though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the [Mosaic] law I became as one under the [Mosaic] law (though not being myself under the [Mosaic] law) that I might win those under the [Mosaic] law. To those outside the [Mosaic] law I became as one outside the [Mosaic] law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the [Mosaic] law. To the weak I became weak,

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that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings (1 Cor. 9:19-23).

Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ... [Christ] must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death... The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:20-26,56-57).

And, when writing to the Romans:

Just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned – for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.

But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.

Therefore, as one trespass [or, the trespass of one – that is, Adam] led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness [or, the act of righteousness of one – that is, Christ] leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but

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where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. 5:12-21).

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, if [since] you are not under law but under grace.

What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to [progressive] sanctification.

For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to [progressive] sanctification and its end, eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Or do you not know, brothers – for I am speaking to those who know the law – that the law is binding on a person only as long as he lives? For a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies she is released from the law of marriage. Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man she is not an adulteress.

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Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the [Mosaic] law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God. For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the [Mosaic] law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. But now we are released from the [Mosaic] law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code...

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God...

So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry: 'Abba! Father!'...

...the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God (Rom. 6:12 – 8:21).

As the apostle made clear, Christ has redeemed his people from sin, law and death.

The writer to the Hebrews drew the comparison – and (more importantly) he drew the *contrast* – between the old and new

covenants in this matter of redemption, deliverance from slavery:

Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, [Christ] himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery (Heb. 2:14-15).

When Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant (Heb. 9:11-15).

Liberty indeed – but liberty is most decidedly not licence!<sup>9</sup>

Take Peter urging his readers to holiness:

If [since] you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot (1 Pet. 1:17-19).

Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God (1 Pet. 2:16).

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<sup>9</sup> See my *Liberty*.

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Look how the apostle argued with the Corinthians when he was trying to get them to repent and reform themselves over their appalling, bragging tolerance of incest within the *ekklēsia*:

Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth (1 Cor. 5:6-8).

You will recall how Paul explained that the false teachers by their teaching insisting on the law were destroying the liberty believers enjoyed under Christ in the new covenant, taking them back into slavery:

Because of false brothers secretly brought in – who slipped in [had infiltrated our ranks, had sneaked in among us] to spy out our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might bring us into slavery – to them we did not yield in submission even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you (Gal. 2:4-5).

And this is how Peter hammered the false teachers who were molesting his readers:

They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption. For whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved (2 Pet. 2:19).

As the book of Proverbs, long before, had stated concerning wisdom (in the new covenant, Christ):

Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the LORD, would have none of my counsel and despised all my reproof, therefore they shall eat the fruit of their way, and have their fill of their own devices. For the simple are killed by their turning away, and the complacency of fools destroys them (Prov. 1:29-32).

And:

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The iniquities of the wicked ensnare him, and he is held fast in the cords of his sin. He dies for lack of discipline, and because of his great folly he is led astray (Prov. 5:22-23).

It is, of course, as Paul told us:

Whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life (Gal. 6:7-8).<sup>10</sup>

As Paul told the Romans:

Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the

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<sup>10</sup> Unless a sinner is converted, sin will always have the last word, and that word is 'death': 'Behold, the wicked man conceives evil and is pregnant with mischief and gives birth to lies. He makes a pit, digging it out, and falls into the hole that he has made. His mischief returns upon his own head, and on his own skull his violence descends' (Ps. 7:14-16). 'The nations have sunk in the pit that they made; in the net that they hid, their own foot has been caught. The LORD has made himself known; he has executed judgment; the wicked are snared in the work of their own hands' (Ps. 9:15-16). 'Evils have encompassed me beyond number; my iniquities have overtaken me, and I cannot see; they are more than the hairs of my head; my heart fails me' (Ps. 40:12). In short: 'There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death' (Prov. 14:12; 16:25), and 'The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord' (Rom. 6:23). Sinners are hardened: 'Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them' (Rom. 1:32). The standing alternative: 'Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?' (Rom. 6:16).

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Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you (Rom. 8:5-11).

I can bring this chapter to a conclusion in no better way than turning to Paul again, who, when he was applying his exposition of the new covenant showing how that the old covenant and its law led to bondage, and that the new covenant – the covenant of the Spirit – is, in contrast, a covenant of liberty (2 Cor. 2:14 – 3:16), came to this:

The Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom (2 Cor. 3:17).

The law of Christ is the law of liberty (Gal. 5:1; 6:2) (Jas. 1:25; 2:12) as opposed to the Mosaic law (let alone, pagan law), a law of bondage and death (Rom. 8:1-4; 2 Cor. 3:4-11,17).