

A NEW ORDER

By Pastor Paul Penno, Jr.
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Everything which God did with ancient Israel, after they made their old covenant at Mount Sinai, was an accommodation to them in order to lead them to the Christ of the new covenant. “The old covenant, the covenant from Sinai, is summed up in the word ‘SELF.’ The new covenant, the everlasting covenant is summed up in the word ‘CHRIST.’”¹

It was Christ who came to them at Sinai as the Revealer of divine *agape* (1 Corinthians 10:1-4). The message of the smitten Rock was the crucifixion of Jesus—the same message of which it is said that “Abraham rejoiced to see” (John 8:56). There is no “self” in being crucified with Christ.

God would use ancient Israel to proclaim His love to the nations. The dark, pagan world would be lightened with His glory. All this is what “might have been,” but for Israel’s trust in themselves—“all that the LORD hath spoken we will do” (Exodus 19:8). That was their old covenant. They had spurned and insulted their Divine Lover. Only a recognition of what they had done and an appropriate repentance on the part of the people could safely restore their alienated hearts to God.

So God would permit them to have as much of “self” as they wanted until they would get sick of it and awake to their need of Christ. He had told them He would use hornets to drive out the

¹ A. T. Jones, “Studies in Galatians. The Two Covenants. Gal. 4: 21-31; 5:1,” RH 77 (July 31, 1900), p. 489 (emphasis his).

Canaanites from their promised inheritance (Exodus 23:27-30). Would they believe God's promise or trust in their own strong arm? God must permit this test for love never forces His will upon His people.

The "New Order" was nothing more than the "old order" of trusting in "self" to gain the inheritance. Certain it is that the Lord commanded the census (Numbers 1:1, 2). How intrusive! 603,550 strong! (Numbers 1:46).

Levites now in charge of a "kindergarten object lesson" tabernacle with restricted access (Numbers 1:50, 53); whereas God's plan would have been for all the people motivated by His *agape* to come by faith to their Heavenly High Priest in His sanctuary—the true Tabernacle. They were to have been "a kingdom of priests" (Exodus 19:6).

Oh, yes, they were scrupulous in doing every just so as God instructed (Number 2:34), but a people are perfectly capable of performing ritualistically prescribed rules and regulations without their hearts being in it. When unconsciously "self" is the object of worship, lots of rules and rituals are important to validate religious experience.

Ancient Israel is a parable of modern Israel. "All these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Corinthians 10:11).

Our "Mount Sinai" was 1888. Jesus came to "us" as a Lover. The True Witness sent "messengers" with a message to the Laodicean church of "the matchless charms of Christ" (*The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, p. 348.). ("The message given us by A. T.

Jones, and E. J. Waggoner is the message of God to the Laodicean church” (*Ibid.*, p. 1052) The same reign of “self” in the hearts of the ancient Jews which rejected and crucified Christ reigns in our hearts and spurns and ridicules the “messengers” and the message of Jesus (“Those who might have been co-laborers with Christ, but who have spurned the messengers [ATJ and EJW] and their message, will lose their bearings” *Ibid.*, p. 1651; “We had to meet with prejudice and with ridicule and with sneers and with criticism of the very same character that we have had to meet here in this conference [1888]” (*Ibid.*, p. 830). We have been wandering in the wilderness every since. Jesus is still with modern Israel through the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

God has abundantly blessed the evangelistic proclamation of the third angel’s message by the Seventh-day Adventist denomination. The Holy Spirit is working marvelously for the expansion of the work. Back in 1948 it was declared:

“The financial success of this vast denominational undertaking cannot be stronger than the faith and zeal which animate God’s chosen people. These combined resources, under the generalship of the Captain of the Lord’s Hosts, will lead to the early triumph of the great Second Advent Movement in all the world” (Thirty-seventh Financial Report, General Conference, Year ending Dec. 31, 1948, p. 9).

And, yet, we are still here in this old world. Could it be that the Lord is testing our hearts with success? Is He permitting us to have as much of the religion of “self” as we desire in order that we might become sick of it and really want the true Christ and genuine righteousness by faith? Are we depending upon the strong arm of

“self” or is “the still small voice” being heard in our midst for the purpose that God’s plan has in store so much more in terms of the revelation of His *agape* as we see the message of the cross and the Holy Spirit is poured out in Latter Rain proportions.

On the day of Pentecost when Peter proclaimed “let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified” that the Jews “were pricked in their heart” and asked, “What shall we do?” And Peter said, “*Repent*” “and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:36-38). Peter brought in focus their history of rejecting Christ. When the Jews “saw” that, they repented.

Faith is an appreciation of what it cost Jesus to die for us (“You may say that you believe in Jesus when you have an appreciation of the cost of salvation” (Ellen G. White, RH, July 24 1888; DA, p. 753 conveniently summarizes the cost Christ paid). Self is crucified with Christ.

This will necessitate God bringing us back to where we failed the test in 1888. Then a spontaneous repentance will arise from the hearts of modern Israel. Alienated hearts will receive the atonement with God.—*Paul E. Penno*.