

The Answering Service

FROM AMERICA'S PROMISE

Answers to questions from Radio and Tape Listeners

No. 6 - Sept 1, 1980

Question No. 1:

If God is a God of love, why did He allow so many wars in the Old Testament and all through history, up to the present time?

Answer:

The Bible tells us that "God is love" (**1 John 4:8**). The key to this question is in our understanding of the concept of love. Time and time again, we are commanded to love God and keep His commandments. Without obedience, love is not perfected, for love is perfected in obedience to law (**Rom. 13:9,10 and Gal. 5:14**).

If Mr. A kills Mr. B, would you, as a lawful judge, release Mr. A from any lawful penalty, under the pretext of love? After all, if you impose ANY penalty upon him, it wouldn't be showing him love, would it? Who will you love, the criminal or the victim?

God's judgments were given to deal with sin in a practical manner. It is not love to allow ungodly people to victimize others. War between nations must be carried out in the same spirit as we are to wage war against criminals in society; when there is international injustice committed.

The inhabitants of Canaan were a very perverse and ungodly people by God's standards. It was for this reason Israel was commanded to destroy them. Israel's calling is to teach and to enforce the

Divine Law in the earth. In the case of the Canaanites, the Law called for the death penalty. Yes, God could have destroyed them all Himself, if He so desired; but, He had delegated this responsibility to Israel as His representative government. Thus, God not only allowed this warfare, but He actually commanded it.

Question No. 2:

Is the Worldwide Church of God the one and only true church? And is Herbert W. Armstrong the one and only Apostle under Christ in this end of the age?

Answer:

No doubt there are a great number of Christians, who are members of the Worldwide Church of God, whose names are ALSO written in heaven (**Heb. 12:23**). However, we do not believe that God photocopies the names written on earthly church rolls and transcribes them onto the rolls of heaven.

Those who claim that people must go through their particular organization to approach God have made their organization (or their leader) into a mediator between God and man. 1 Timothy 2:5 says, "For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."

A mediator is a go-between, who functions as a point of contact, between God and men. A mediator may be a person or

an object of some kind (called an "idol"). A mediator says, "Come to me, and I will approach God for you; you cannot approach God by yourself; and thus you cannot become a true Christian without my help."

1 Peter 2:9, says of Israel that they are a royal priesthood (a kingdom of priests). We are all priests, and we must approach God through a single High Priest, Jesus, our Mediator. And keep in mind that the Scriptures speak of priests and high priests, but there is no office in between. Thus, if we are all priests, and Jesus is our High Priest, (**Heb. 8:1**) then anyone who insinuates himself between us and Jesus Christ is either usurping the office of Christ, or creating an entirely new office. In either, his professed position is false.

The Corinthian church faced this problem years ago, when men were saying, "I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos" (**1 Cor. 3:1-4**). In other words, they were saying, "I approached God (became a Christian) THROUGH Paul or Apollos." Paul refuses to compete with Apollos for the office of high priest, through which men were to approach God. In fact, he calls their preference for one man over another as causing envy, strife, and divisions. In **verse 22** he includes Cephas (Peter). Thus, Paul was teaching that none of the above men were God's special high priests, through whom we must approach God. The reason is given in **verse 23**: "Ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's."

Our conclusion is this: Our position in the "true Church" depends upon our position "in Christ," not upon our position in any person or organization on earth. And once "in Christ," we have free access to the throne of God (**Heb. 4:16**) purely on the

merits of Christ, whose righteousness has been imputed to us by faith (**Rom. 4:22-25**).

Herbert W. Armstrong is denying and blaspheming the finished work of Christ, when he preaches that he, Herbert Armstrong, is in any way responsible for your salvation.

Question No. 3:

What is the meaning of Romans 6:14?

The above verse says, "For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the law, but under grace."

Answer:

The key to understanding this passage is in understanding the phrase "under the law." In the Biblical system of justice, if I should be found guilty of stealing \$1,000, the law would sentence me to repay you as restitution either \$2,000 or \$4,000, depending upon the circumstances (see **Exodus 22:1-4**). But if I have no money or property with which to pay restitution, then I must be "sold for my theft" (**vs. 3**). In other words, I must work off my debt until it is paid.

Sin is reckoned as a debt to be paid to the victims of injustice. Thus, in legal terminology, one who is sold for his theft is "under the law" for as long as it takes him to pay his debt. Once that debt is paid, then the law releases him from the dominion of his sin (in this case, theft). He is, in effect, placed "under grace."

In Romans, Paul speaks of our justification before the Law by faith in the finished work of Christ. "All have sinned," Paul says in **Romans 3:23**, and, thus, the entire world stands convicted of sin by the Law. (**Rom. 3:19**) In ourselves we are all guilty and "under the law."

However, Christ paid the full penalty of sin (debt) for us. Those who place their faith in His free gift in payment of the restitution owed: are "under grace," "justified," pronounce NOT GUILTY in God's court of Law.

Now with that legal context in mind, let us again read **Romans 6:14 & 15**. To clarify the definition of sin, let us use the term "lawlessness" (**1 John 3:4**). "For lawlessness shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace." (In other words, because you are Christians, your past sins ("lawlessness") no longer have dominion over you, forcing you to work to payoff the debt for your sins; because you are not under the judgment of the law, but under the grace of the law.)

Verse 15: "What then? shall we sin (be lawless), because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid." Thus, Paul teaches us that just because Jesus has paid the full penalty for our lawbreaking, this does not mean that we now have a license to go out and break God's law, whenever we so desire. The whole force of **Romans 6** is to instruct the Christian to obey God and His law.

The point to remember is that people are "under the law" for as long as it takes to pay the debt incurred by sin. People are "under grace," as soon as "that debt has been paid. But in no case can we say that those who are under grace may now break the law with legal immunity.

Question No. 4:

I told a person that we are the children of Israel, and she said that Ruth in the Bible was a foreigner, so that blood line wasn't all white, and that is why the Jews are Israel. Please explain.

Answer:

Suppose Ruth was non-white, as your friend says. How would that make the Jews, Israelites? If Mr. Smith (an Anglo-Saxon) were to marry a black girl, would that make Sammie Davis Jr. an Israelite? There is no necessary connection between Ruth's racial background and the Jews being Israelites.

Secondly, the Bible does not say that Ruth was non-white. It simply says she was a Moabitess. That could mean that she was an Israelite resident of Moab who had lived there for some time, or it could mean that she was descended from the man named Moab.

Let us suppose she was descended from Moab. **Genesis 11** tells us that Abraham's brother, Haran, begat Lot; and **Genesis 19** tells us that Lot had two sons, Moab and Ammon. Thus, Moab and Ammon were of the same racial background as Abraham. Therefore, even if Ruth was descended from Moab, this would not automatically make her non-white.

In **Deut. 23:3** the Moabites and Ammonites were to be excluded from the congregation of Israel. To say that Ruth was a "racial Moabite" would raise serious questions regarding God's keeping His own law. It is much more probable that Ruth was an Israelite, whose street address was Moab. It was common to travel to another country, as is evidenced by **Ruth 1:1**.

If my ancestors came from England to America, and I were not to move to England, they would call me an American, not an Englishman. In like manner, if Ruth's grandparents moved to Moab, say, to escape famine, Ruth herself would be called a Moabitess.

But whether Ruth was an Israelite or a true Moabitess, there is no reason to accuse her of being non-white.
