

Are All Men Amenable to the Law of Christ?

by J. T. Smith

This is a question that has been discussed by brethren for many years. It is also a question that is being given the wrong answer (in my understanding of the Scriptures) by a number of brethren today. Many say “No, one is not amenable to the law of The King until he becomes a part of the kingdom.” Or, “How can you be subject to the law of The King until you are a citizen in that kingdom?” Surely brethren have not thought this through



First let consider the word “amenable.” “Responsive to advice, authority, or suggestion; tractable. See Synonyms at **obedient**. **2**. Responsible to higher authority; accountable. See Synonyms at **responsible**”(American Heritage Dictionary) As you will observe, synonyms for the word “amenable” are “obedient” and “responsible.” Now since Christ is The King, let us consider the question: Is the alien sinner *responsible* for *obeying* the laws of The King?

We know that the New Testament teaches, “. . . for where there is no law there is no transgression” (Romans 4:15). So the question could well be raised – If “all men” are not amenable to the law of Christ, how is it possible for “all men” to sin?

We know that John said, “Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness” (I John 3:4). Those who take the position that “alien sinners are not amenable to the Law of Christ” tell us that civil authority is ordained of God, and that is true. Paul said, “Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God” (Romans 13:1). We are also told that when men violate the laws of the land that is when they become sinners, *and that is the only law to which they are amenable!* (I always thought that the fact that our violating the laws of the land makes us sinners was because of a Law of The King – cf. Romans 13:1; I Peter 2:13). However, that position raises a number of questions and produces a number of ungodly consequences. Also, if no one is amenable to the laws of The King until he becomes a part of the kingdom, how can he obey John 3:3-5, which puts one into the kingdom? Is that not a part of the King’s Law?

First of all, let’s read some Scriptures

I Corinthians 6:9-11 “Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. . . .”

Now, let’s examine these actions that would cause them “not to inherit the kingdom of God” one at a time by civil law. Let’s examine them, not just according to the laws by which the Corinthians lived, but in the here and now by our laws.

Fornicators - Fornication was not a violation of the Corinthians’ law. In fact historians tell us that fornication was a religious act performed to their gods. Sex between consenting adults is not a violation of our civil law in most states today. Since it is not, then consenting adults are not sinning when they engage in sex. And, in actuality, according to the “amenability theory,” there could not in Corinth, nor is there in this country today, such a thing as fornication

(Remember, where there is no law, there is no transgression). But Paul said of the Corinthians, “and such were some of you.” Why would Paul say of them *before* they were a part of the kingdom (washed, sanctified and justified, verse 11) that they were fornicators when they were not violating civil law? I maintain that they were (and aliens are today) amenable to and violating God’s law. That’s what made them guilty of the sin of fornication.

Idolaters – Neither in Corinth nor in the good old U.S.A. is idolatry a violation of civil law. How then could there possibly be idolaters? No law – no transgression.

Adulterers – The word “adultery” generally refers to sexual immorality between married persons – that is where at least one of the persons is married. This was not against the law at Corinth, and neither is it against our law if it involves consenting adults. Surely Paul was mistaken in his charge against these people. If there was no violation of either civil law or God’s Law they could not have been guilty of adultery. The same would be true of our civil law as well.

Homosexuals – Is homosexuality a sin? What law at Corinth was violated by homosexuality – what law is violated in most states in America today when consenting adults engage in homosexuality? Thus Paul must have been mistaken, when he said they could not inherit the kingdom of God. If they were not amenable to God’s law and were not violating civil law, how could they be sinning?

I am sure that you, our readers, are intelligent enough to view the rest of the list given here by Paul (sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners) and apply the law at Corinth and our civil laws (remembering “where there is no law, there is no transgression) to them just I have above. If the Corinthians (and people today) were not violating civil law and are not amenable to God’s law on the majority of the things mentioned, why were they condemned and told they could not enter the kingdom of heaven? Obviously if they were not violating civil law they were violating the only other law available – God’s law.

Now, let’s turn to Ephesians 4:17-22 and read what Paul said. “This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their heart; who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts”(NKJV).

Notice that Paul said Christians are to “no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk having their understanding darkened.” What would happen if they did? They would be “alienated from the life of God.” Why was this? “Because of the ignorance that is in them.” Was ignorance a violation of the civil law in Ephesus? They had “their understanding darkened,” Paul said. Was that a violation of civil law?

Paul said they had “given themselves over to lewdness.” What does that mean? The word translated “lewdness” in the New King James Version is from the Greek word *aselgeia* and means, “unbridled lust, excess, licentiousness, lasciviousness, wantonness, outrageousness, shamelessness, insolence” (Thayer). Was that a violation of the civil law that applied to unconverted Gentiles?

Paul said the unconverted Gentiles were working “all uncleanness with greediness.” Is *greed* a violation of civil law? He continues by saying that they were to “put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.” When did *lust* become a violation of civil law? And observe Paul’s conclusion and admonition to the brethren at Ephesus in verse 25. “Therefore, putting away lying, ‘Let each one of you speak

truth with his neighbor,' for we are members of one another" (Ephesians 4:25, NKJV). Thus they were to "put off the old man." What had the "old man" done? Lied! Now surely as many lies as have come out of Washington, DC in the past months, no one will say that lying is a violation of civil law or the majority of people, including our president, would be in jail or at least be fined. Yet in this context Paul said those who were liars, would be "alienated from the life of God."

Now, one more Scripture reference and then some of the ungodly consequences of the position.

Colossians 3:5-9 "Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds." (NKJV).

We have already discussed the word fornication in the things mentioned in I Corinthians 6. But notice the other things mentioned in Colossians 3:5. "Uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry." Are any of these things violation of our civil law? If so, what law do they violate? Yet Paul said, "Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience." Friends, that's alien sinners.

In verses 8 and 9 he said, "But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds." Who was the old man? Why the alien sinner. Are these violations of our civil law? Absolutely not! What was Paul's condemnation of those who practice the above mentioned things? "Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience." So they were violations of law – God's Law.

Now let's look at some of the consequences of this doctrine, "the alien sinner is only amenable to civil law."

If you hold to the position that the "alien is not amenable to the Law of Christ" and your daughter who is old enough to be a consenting adult but is not a Christian (and is dating a young man who is a consenting adult but not a Christian), comes in and tells you that they have decided to do what many other young couples are doing (sleep together), you cannot tell her she should not do that because it is a sin. According to your position it is not. Now if she jay-walks at a traffic light, she IS sinning (violating the laws of the land), but if she has sex with her boy friend, she is NOT sinning. Now you talk about ungodliness gone to seed . . .

Suppose you are talking to Liz Taylor about the fact that she has been married 7 or 8 time (I've lost count) and is now living with someone. If you believe the "not amenable to God's Law" position, you could not say to her, "you are sinning." However, if she is driving an automobile and runs a red light, she IS sinning.

And, what about practicing homosexuals? If they are consenting adults they are not violating the civil laws and thus not sinning. But if they kill a spotted owl they are violating civil law and thus sinners, and on and on we could go with such consequences of the position.

Brethren this is too silly to make good foolishness

OBJECTION: "If the alien sinner is amenable to the Law of Christ, then he is responsible for partaking of the Lord's Supper and giving as he has prospered on the first day of the week, etc."

ANSWER: No that does not follow. No one is responsible for any part of the Law of Christ, which *is not applicable to him*. Let me explain.

The Law of Christ says, "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her" (Ephesians 5:25). Would this passage apply to a woman; an unmar-

ried man; a child? Of course not. *That part* of Christ's Law would only apply to a man who had a wife.

The same is true with the question of the Lord's Supper, giving, etc. Only the person who is in fellowship with God is amenable to or responsible for carrying out *that part* of The Law of Christ.

What About Christ's Law On Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage

Many times the above mentioned position (aliens are not amenable to the Law of Christ) is used to try to prove that regardless of how many times a person has been married before he becomes a Christian, that that doesn't count with God. For after all, since that person is not in the kingdom he is not amenable to Christ's Law on marriage, divorce and remarriage since that is a part of the King's Law. But the position assumes the point to be proven. If this were true, then that would mean that God's marriage laws only apply to those who are in the kingdom. That would make marriage a "kingdom ordinance." And if that is true, then no persons outside of Christ's Kingdom are actually bound together by God.

This overlooks the fact that God's marriage law has existed since the beginning of time thus before The Kingdom came into existence. In fact Jesus cited that very fact when being tested by the Jews in Matthew 19. "And He answered and said to them, 'Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female, and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate'" (Matthew 19:4-6). He also, in this same context, said regarding divorce, "They said to Him, 'Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?' He said to them, 'Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so'" (Matthew 19:7-8). Thus God's marriage laws *from the beginning* permitted *no divorce*. Now unless the alien sinner is under the Law of Moses (and he's not) and if he is not under Christ's Law on divorce and remarriage, then what law is he under? He is under God's original marriage law which has been so from (not just *at*, but *from*) the beginning. But again, if he is under God's original law on marriage, then before he becomes a Christian he has *no scriptural right* to divorce and remarry.

I am both amazed and appalled as to what length brethren will go to try to circumvent God's Law on this and other subjects. Let's not pervert the word of God. Instead let's teach and practice what God has said on this and all subjects.

Newspaper article for April 20th

"What About Repentance and Confession?"

The above question was posed by one of our readers. His point was, why talk so much about baptism? Why not spend more time talking about repentance and confession? That deserves an explanation.

1. Romans 10:17 "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."
2. John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever **believeth** in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."
3. Acts 17:30 "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to **repent**."
4. Romans 10:10 "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth **confession** is made unto salvation."

5. Acts 22:16 “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and **be baptized**, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”

The facts of the matter are: Every single one of the above things is ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY to one’s salvation. You can’t **leave out** or **change** any one of these five things and be saved - become a child of God.

In these articles, why do we place more emphasis on baptism and not more on hearing, believing, repenting and confessing? Because, **we all agree on the first four**.

The fact still remains that the majority of people insist that God requires the first four. They then **change** # 5 from **baptism** to **prayer**. Are we not concerned that men have **changed** God’s plan of salvation? How can one be saved without doing what the Lord said? He said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:16). There are two people under consideration in this passage - the HE that shall be saved and the HE that shall be damned. The HE that shall be (not already is) saved is the HE that **believes** and is **baptized**. That’s what the Bible says.