

LIGHT BEARERS MINISTRY

MISSION

UPDATE

January 2003

— 2003 —
CONVOCAATION SCHEDULE

4th Annual
East Coast Convocation
at Fletcher Academy—
June 23-28, 2003

19th Annual Convocation at Malo—
July 1-5, 2003

...And Justice for All

Part 4

Science is just now realizing the intricate connection between guilt and behavior. It has long been understood that wrong behavior normally leads to feelings of guilt, but it is now being proven that those feelings of guilt can, in turn, perpetuate the very same type of behavior which originated the guilt.

To illustrate the point, consider the case of alcoholics who drink to escape their guilt. They will drink into oblivion tonight, but tomorrow they will awaken feeling *guiltier* than before, seeing themselves as nothing more than drunks. So, in an effort to drown out this new weight of added guilt, they drink again, only to waken to still greater guilt the next day. Behavior produces guilt that feeds behavior. So goes the vicious cycle. It looks something like this:



Some believe the only solution is to concentrate on changing the behavior. This solution, focusing mainly on the left side of our diagram, emphasizes overcoming, willpower, dependence on a higher power, etc.— if we can just master the cause of the condemnation, then the cycle will be broken and we will be free. Though this might sound like good advice on the surface, it begins with a *false assumption*. It assumes that our condemnation is always caused

by our wrong behavior when, in fact, it can be just the opposite. A deep, gnawing sense of condemnation, guilt and worthlessness *produces* self-destructive behavior. Too many times we minister to others by focusing on that person's behavior and underestimate the power of their sense of condemnation that dictates their behavior. For many of us, freedom will not come if our hope for change focuses us primarily on the left side of the diagram. We need a much different approach. We need a power outside of ourselves to free us first from our own sense of condemnation.¹ We need to experience a love that is non-condemning and unchanging. Then behavioral changes in us can blossom as the blessed fruit of believing in that love.

As we come to the end of our study on Romans 5:15-19, we will see that the gospel Paul sought to communicate follows this order perfectly. Our study has traversed verses 15-16 in Part 1, verse 17 in Part 2, and verse 18 in Part 3. In each of these articles we have seen how God seeks to deliver us from our soul-destroying sense of guilt. We will now begin to unravel verse 19, in which Paul discusses how freedom from condemnation “will” produce the fruit (behavioral change) of that freedom.

“For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners. . . .”

The Amplified Bible says we were “constituted” or made sinners by one man’s

by Herb Montgomery

This new identity, this position in the new human race that Christ purchased for us, is a gift. In order for it to free us from the guilt and behavior inherent in the human race patterned after Adam, our new identity must be accepted, received, taken in and allowed to become a part of us.

disobedience. It is not primarily the sins we commit that make us sinners. We are sinners because we naturally, inherently, belong to a race whose original forefather plunged our race into sin.² Thus, through Adam's disobedience, all who followed after him, if left to themselves, would also naturally disobey. Our status as "sinners," according to Scripture, finds its source in Adam—one who was out of harmony with God. As his descendents, we were also born out of harmony with God. We were conceived into sin³ and are by nature children of wrath.⁴ Our personal sins don't "constitute" us sinners; they simply prove the fact that we were born sinners. For example, an apple tree is not an apple tree because it produces apples. An apple tree produces apples because it is an apple tree. Thus, a man is not a sinner because he sins; man in his natural state, apart from Jesus, behaves sinfully because he is naturally out of harmony with God.

This disharmony, lived out in our lives, produces guilt and condemnation in us. And as the diagram illustrates, these feelings of apprehension only compound the problem. They double-latch the doors of any hope of change in our behavior. Apart from Jesus, man is destined to spiral deeper and deeper into the condemnation/sin cycle, with sin begetting condemnation, condemnation encouraging worse sin, greater sin fueling even greater condemnation and on and on. This cycle is the precise reason we cannot solve our dilemma by simply focusing on changing our behavior. Negative behavior is a symptom of troubles within. This type of behavior will not change without a preceding change in the feelings that spur it, without a preceding faith in the free gift of the righteousness of Christ. Behavioral

change always has been and always will be the fruit of God's solution for a much deeper problem.

“. . . by one Man's (Jesus Christ's) obedience, many will be made righteous.”

Notice this is future tense. You see, when Christ lived His life of perfect righteousness, He lived it as the last Adam,⁵ the head of a new human race. God in Christ, through the cross, recreated an entirely new human race—righteous, holy, and blameless. The glorious good news of the gospel is that this new human race was not separate or disconnected from the first human race. The gospel states that every person who belongs to the first race founded in Adam, also gratuitously belongs to the second human race founded in Christ. Let me repeat, as many as belong to the human race ruined by Adam, now also belong to the human race redeemed by Christ. Every human being simultaneously belongs to both human races whose ancestral heads are as different as day and night. God has thus successfully created a new identity for each human being.⁶ But remember verse 17 of Romans 5.

This new identity, this position in the new human race that Christ purchased for us, is a gift. In order for it to free us from the guilt and behavior inherent in the human race patterned after Adam, our new identity must be accepted, received, taken in and allowed to become a part of us. Yes, God made an entirely new race of humanity that is righteous through its representation in its ancestral head, Jesus Christ. And this new race includes all who are included in the race of Adam. But remember that in order for this new identity to affect a change in

any person, the old man, that member of the old Adamic human race with its sin and guilt, must be rejected and the new man, our new identity in Christ's lineage, must be "put on." All of heaven is working in men's and women's lives to impress upon their hearts to receive this holy heritage.

So then, for as many as will receive their new identity in Christ, they *will*, by the obedience of one Man, be freed from their own vicious cycle of guilt-sin-guilt, and thus experience the fruitfulness of their righteous new birthright. Notice what Paul wrote to the Corinthians, who were struggling in this same area of behavior. Paul's words to them were not a pep talk on how to try harder, but rather they were reminders of the vital truth of the Gospel:

And so it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven. As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.⁷

This text is by interpretation discussing the physical exchange of our old bodies for a new one at Jesus' return, but notice also that by application, the inspired principle in this text is true as well. "And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man." Just as each of us has resembled our sinful father (Adam) in character, we will also "bear the image" in our character of

the "last Adam" (Jesus Christ), the head of the new human race, if we accept this position through faith. This is glorious good news. God doesn't want to merely candy-coat our conscience to make us "feel" better about ourselves, leaving us deceitfully the same. He wants to go all the way, to change the very behaviors that bring on our feelings of condemnation in the first place.

You see, in Christ's redeemed human race, you are righteous. Through accepting your new birthright in Jesus, you then experience being made righteous on the level of your personal identity (verse 18). What is true of Christ *is* true of you, and when you believe that, you will notice a radical change in your life. First, guilt will give way to peace; as condemnation dissipates, you will have peace with God.⁸ Then, as a result of this newly found peace, you will start to experience righteousness in your behavior. Our original diagram can transform from illustrating self-destructive behavior on the left side and condemnation on the right, to justification on the right with the left side reflecting the righteous life Jesus purposed for us—one a vicious cycle, the other a victorious one.

Dear reader, would you like to experience this radical transformation brought about through God's grace? Take a moment to meditate on these truths: Yes, you do belong to a sinful race patterned after Adam. Your behaviors reflect your membership in that ancestry. You wrestle daily with feelings of worthlessness, disrespect for yourself, condemnation and guilt. But the truth does not end there. You also belong, by virtue of the grace of God, to a bloodline fashioned by Jesus Himself. In this humanity, you are righteous, holy, and blameless. This new identity is free from condemnation. Your membership in this

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race of heirs of Jesus Christ is a gift. Accept your new position, under your new parentage, and believe that what is true of Jesus is also true of you. Share with God your sorrow for your active participation in the first human race you were born into and then, as Paul wrote to the Romans, “For [as] the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”⁹ Whatever is true of Jesus, is true of you!¹⁰ Let the full weight of this truth liberate you from the guilt you have experienced and as the Apostle Paul also wrote, “by the obedience of one Man,” you “*will* be made righteous.” You are no longer bound by behaviors belonging to Adam’s race. You are now, and always have been, free to behave in a manner befitting a descendent of a race fashioned by Jesus Christ. I leave you with the words of the Apostle Paul, from the New American Standard Version:

“But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption” (1 Corinthians 1:30).

The gift of our freedom, purchased by Christ on the cross, is simply the manifestation and outflowing of our heavenly Father’s love for each of us. My prayer is that faith in this love will bring complete healing to your life—emotionally, psychologically, and even behaviorally. May God bless you on your journey.



¹ See also Christ’s parable about the leaven that works from the inside out (Matthew 13:33).

² Some object to this, thinking it would imply that Christ, stepping into our lineage, would then likewise be a sinner. But it must be remembered that “our” nature never “became” Christ’s naturally inherited nature. It always remained “our” nature. He simply “took” our sinful nature upon his own sinless one. He never allowed our nature, even by so much as a thought, to become His, but always resisted its pull for Him to make it His own.

³ Psalm 51:5.

⁴ Ephesians 2:3.

⁵ 1 Corinthians 15:45.

⁶ 2 Corinthians 5:14, 17. (See also *Review and Herald*, October 24, 1899, A. T. Jones on Galatians 2:20: “And when the last Adam died, we, being involved in Him, died with Him. And when the last Adam was crucified, He being ourselves and we being involved in Him, we were crucified with Him. As the first Adam was in himself the whole human race, so the last Adam was in Himself the whole human race, and so when the last Adam was crucified, the whole human race—the old, sinful human nature—was crucified with Him. And so it is written, “Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.”)

⁷ 1 Corinthians 15:45-49 (NKJV).

⁸ Romans 5:1.

⁹ Romans 6:10-11.

¹⁰ See Ephesians 1:18 through 2:7.

Events Schedule

- ◆ **January 3-4**
Myrtle Creek SDA Church, OR
Ty Gibson—☎(541)863-3815
- ◆ **January 10-11**
Diamond Lake/Newport SDA Church
Retreat at Camp Mivoden
James Rafferty—☎(208)437-4196
- ◆ **January 31–March 15**
Evangelistic Meetings, Lebanon, OR
James Rafferty—☎(541)258-7827
- ◆ **February 14-16**
Marriage Seminar, Marshall, MI
Ty Gibson—☎(616)781-4196
- ◆ **February 21-23**
Walla Walla, WA, Retreat
Herb Montgomery—☎(509)529-4337
- ◆ **February 27–March 2**
Southwestern Adventist University
Herb Montgomery—☎(817)645-3921, x439
- ◆ **March 7-8**
E. Wenatchee SDA Church, WA
Ty Gibson—☎(509)667-1177
- ◆ **March 21-22**
Sandpoint SDA Church, ID
Ty Gibson—☎(208)263-3240
- ◆ **March 28-29**
Porterville SDA Church, CA
James Rafferty—☎(559)791-0904
- ◆ **April 4-6**
Floral Crest SDA Church, FL, Men’s Retreat
Ty Gibson—☎(610)781-2495

Lift Him Up

3ABN Schedule

(GE- 4 Satellite;

Sky Angel Channel 9710)

Tuesday	4:30 p.m. (PST)
	10:30 p.m. (PST)
Thursday	11:00 a.m. (PST)
Saturday	10:30 a.m. (PST)

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Light Bearers is a non-profit ministry based in the beautiful northeastern mountains of Washington State. Our purpose is to help proclaim the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ through the spoken and published word.