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## Are Alien Sinners Amenable to the Law of Christ?

During the late 1950's, while living in Chicago, Ill, we had a Gospel Meeting with a brother from California. Early in the meeting he announced that later in the meeting he would preach a sermon on "Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage." Initially, I was glad to hear that, because this is a very important topic, for if one violates the Lord's teaching on this subject, he could well be living in adultery! Matt. 19:9; Matt. 5:32, etc. However, when he began the sermon I became greatly distressed.

"Why," you might ask, "did you become distressed by the sermon?" Mainly this: as he began his sermon he drew a line down the center of the blackboard. On one side of the line he wrote "**Satan's** Kingdom," and on the other side of the line He wrote in "**God's** Kingdom." Then he began to make application, declaring that God's teaching on marriage and divorce are applicable **only** to those who are in His Kingdom, or who are members of the church. Hence, prior to baptism (by which one enters the body or church of the Lord, I Cor. 12:13), he affirmed that (regardless of the circumstances) one could be married and divorced a hundred times and that it would make no difference whatever. In other words, Matthew 19:9 only applies to Christians, not to alien sinners! Needless to say, when he concluded his sermon, I began my rebuttal!

At the time I was unaware of the fact that this brother basically was affirming a doctrine proclaimed earlier by a bro. E. C. Fuqua. Bro. Fuqua, writing in **the Vindicator**, 1951, affirmed that "worldly people are judged solely by the law of the world," that "Baptism is the dividing line between the World and the Church" (I Cor. 12:13), "that up til then, Civil laws control," and that "after baptism Christ's law takes over."

Later, the highly esteemed Homer Hailey, in his booklet "**The Divorced and Remarried Who would Come to God**," affirmed that "the alien is not under the covenant law of Christ until he brings himself under it by obedience to its terms."

Because of the widespread implications and consequences of such teaching, it is evident that the subject must be examined in the light of the Bible.

First, we ask "what is a **sinner**?" Obviously, a "sinner" is one who has **sinned**! Hence, this brings up the to question "what is sin?" "*Sin*," the word, is translated from *harmatia* (Gk), which means "a missing of the mark" (Vine). God's word sets the "mark" or standard by which we must live; when we miss that mark we sin. Elsewhere "sin" is defined in the NKJV as "*lawlessness*," or as in the KJV it is defined as "*the transgression of the law*" (referring, of course, to the "*law*" of God). According to I John 5:17 "*all unrighteousness is sin.*" But **who** has "missed the mark;" **who** has "transgressed the Law" of God;" **who** is guilty of "*unrighteousness*?" The answer: every accountable person! Hence, we read in Rom. 3:23 *that "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."* Earlier, in Rom. 3:9, Paul declared that "*we have before proved both Jews **and** Gentiles, that they are **all** under sin.*"

We ask, **if** sin is the "*transgression of the law*" of God," and **if** "*all have sinned*," does that not necessarily infer that **all**, both Jews and Gentiles, are amenable to the law of God?" However, before answering that question, we ask "who is a **alien** sinner?" "Alien" is translated from *allotrios* (Greek), and is defined as "primarily, belonging to another (the opposite of *idios*, one's own), hence came to mean foreigner, stranger, not of one's own family, alien, an enemy"

(Vine). God's "family" is His "household," or His church (I Tim. 3:15). Hence, spiritually speaking, an alien is one who is not a member of God's family, or church. This reminds us of Eph. 2:12, wherein the apostle Paul referred to Gentiles before their obedience to the gospel, saying "*at that time you were without Christ, being **aliens** from the commonwealth of Israel and **strangers** from the covenants of promise having no hope and without God in the world.*" That verse, as clearly as any that I can think of, describes an "alien sinner."

But back to the question, "are alien sinners amenable to the law of Christ?" So what does "**amenable**" mean? "Amenable" is defined as "accountable to some authority, answerable" (**British Dict.**). But who now has "*all authority*?" The answer is Jesus Christ! In Matt. 28:19,20 Jesus said "*All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth, Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit?*" But why preach the word to aliens, or to people who are not amenable, or answerable to the law of God?

Think closely on this point! If sin is "*the transgression of the law*" of God (I John 3:4), and if aliens are not amenable to the law of God, then aliens are not sinners! Therefore, the worst thing we can do to an "alien sinner" is to preach the gospel to him! After all, if he doesn't become a sinner until he ceases to be an alien, and if he becomes a child of God upon obedience to the gospel, then what happens to a Christian once he falls away? Such a person would be better off to have never heard the word of God! However, Jesus commanded His apostles to "*Go into all the world and preach the gospel to **every creature**. He who believes and is baptized will be saved, but he who does not believe will be condemned*" (Mark 16:15-16). This necessarily infers that any person who is mentally capable of believing and being baptized is amenable (subject to, answerable to) the gospel message.

Now for the clincher! In Romans 4:15 the inspired apostle Paul stated that "*where there is no law there is no transgression.*" In other words, if there is no law from God directed to aliens, then aliens are not guilty of "*transgression*," meaning therefore that aliens are not sinners. I find it absolutely amazing that some who have spent their entire adult lives preaching the gospel to aliens, will take the position that aliens are not amenable to the law of God!

Getting more to the heart of the matter, we call your attention to I Cor. 6:9-10, wherein the apostle Paul, writing to the saints at Corinth had this to say: "*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.*" Clearly, those herein described were grievous sinners. But please note the next verse: "*And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*" Verses 9 and 10 describes what these people "*were*" before they heard and obeyed the gospel of Jesus Christ. Clearly, they were sinners; however, according to Rom. 4:15, "*where there is no law there is no transgression.*" To illustrate, I have never been to Russia; I am not a citizen of Russia. Living in America, and being an American citizen, I am not amenable to the laws of Russia, and therefore I have not transgressed Russian law. However, Jesus has "*all authority...in heaven and on earth*" (Matt 28:18), and His gospel is to be proclaimed "*to every creature*," Mark 16:15. Hence, as the song says, "the gospel is for all;" it is "for all" because "**all**" (both aliens and Christians) are amenable to the law of God.

Generally, when people deny that aliens are amenable to the law of God, they do so in a context which deals with marriage divorce, and remarriage, especially with regards to what Jesus said in Matthew 19:9. In this verse Jesus said "*I say unto you, **Whosoever** shal put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another committeth adultery, and whosoever*

*marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.*” Earlier, in verse six, Jesus alluding to the marriage union, said “*what therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.*” God intended for a lawful marriage to be “for keeps;” or until the death of one of the parties to the marriage (Rom. 7:2,3). To unlawfully sever such a union, and to marry another results in the parties to the second union living in adultery. But to this general rule, Jesus in Matt. 19:9 said “*except it be for fornication.*” To that general rule, there is one exception, and one only, it being “*for fornication.*” Hence, according to Matt. 19:9, when one’s mate is guilty of “*sexual immorality*” (NKJV), the “innocent” party is given the right to divorce the adulterous mate and marry another. Apart from fornication, being the reason for the divorce, any subsequent remarriage by either party constitutes an adulterous union. And, interesting enough, Jesus prefaced His statement by saying “*whosoever,*” a word which surely includes both saints and aliens!

The command to “*repent*” applies to all people everywhere, to both saints and aliens. Whatever is sinful **before** baptism is sinful **after** baptism. Repentance is the real answer to the sin problem in the lives of all, both saint and sinner. When it comes to the commands of God, instead of trying to figure out ways of getting around His command, let us do His will, regardless of the this-world consequences. No earthly sacrifice is too great for a person whose main goal is that of going to heaven, where he, along with the redeemed of all ages, can bask eternally in the wonderful sunlight of God’s abounding love. Consider ye well!  
—B. Witherington