

## Are Non-Christians amenable to the law of Christ?

by Hendrik Joubert

The question before us seems as one of those rhetorical ones the inspired writers ask. The gospel is designed to call non-Christians to repentance and obedience so they may be saved. *You do not understand what they mean when they say that non-Christians are not amenable to the law of Christ*, I hear someone say. You are right; I do not know how one could believe this statement to be true.

What does it mean to be *amenable*? I did a quick search in several versions of the New Testament on my computer and did not find the word *amenable* there. To make sure I had the right word I “googled” the whole phrase. I wanted to make sure the question is properly stated. I found a number of references containing, not only the word *amenable*, but the whole phrase. I knew I had the right word.

Because I could not find it in the Bible I decided to check some online dictionaries to make sure I understand the meaning conveyed by the word *amenable*. Merriam-Webster's online dictionary (March, 2007) says: *...liable to be brought to account* with the synonym *answerable*. So, are non-Christians not *liable to be brought to account* to the law of Christ? Are they not *answerable to the law of Christ*?

Surely they do not mean the whole thing; otherwise they would have stopped trying to convert non-Christians – they are not *liable to be brought to account*, or *answerable* to the law of Christ – they are not under Jesus' jurisdiction. So, they must have in mind only one section of *the law of Christ*.

Another definition of the word *amenable* reads *agreeable, open to, willing...* Now here we have a definition that would justify a *positive* answer. There are non-Christians who are not *agreeable, open to* or *willing to accept* the law of Christ. Some reject the whole thing, but others only those parts they are not *amenable* to.

It is the old problem of *repentance*. What does this word *repentance* mean? Back to the dictionary, and this time we find it in the Bible. Let's consider only one part of it: (NT:3341) (subjectively) compunction (for guilt, including reformation); by implication reversal (of [another's] decision). (Biblesoft's New Exhaustive Strong's Numbers and Concordance with Expanded Greek-Hebrew Dictionary. Copyright (c) 1994, Biblesoft and International Bible Translators, Inc.)

What does the word *compunction* mean? I had to go to Merriam-Webster's again. *Compunction: 1 a: anxiety arising from awareness of guilt <compunctions of conscience> b : distress of mind over an anticipated action or result.* One who experiences feelings such as conveyed by the concept *compunction* after hearing *the law of Christ* has three options. The first is to make the feeling go away by deciding Christianity is not for me. I counted the cost, and found I am not willing to pay the price. I will consider religion a big hoax, and accept an ape as my great-great-great... grandfather. I am encouraged to feel *scientific* and therefore *intellectually* superior because of it. I will not ponder **2 Thessalonians 2:8-10**.

Those who are not able to put the prize of immortality (with God) out of their minds, or those who are touched by the selfless sacrifice of Jesus Christ, advance to the next two options. Among these there are those who realize that this world (and all that is in it) will pass away. Not even the closest fleshly relationship in this life (marriage) will continue into the next. They are willing to repent of any sin, however difficult to **accept. (Matthew 19:11-12)**

Then there are those who find (some) the saying(s) too difficult. When some of the statements Jesus makes, and if changing your life is too difficult you simply change what the Bible says. You can do so by using catchy phrases and fancy words – that old concept *interpretation* comes in handy. Interpretation often becomes necessary when people find that their life is not in harmony with the Scriptures – instead of becoming amenable to the law of Christ, they *interpret* the Scriptures.

Jesus *personally* announced His law while on earth, we must be careful to accept it and not drift away from it. ***For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it. <sup>2</sup> For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty, <sup>3</sup> how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, <sup>4</sup> God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.*** Hebrews 2:1-4