

“As I Have”

After we learned that the commandment to love God with all ones heart, mind, and strength, (which originates in Deuteronomy Chapter 6: 4, 5 of the Old Testament) was inconclusive to be “God’s Ultimate Will”, we set our hearts on the second great commandment: “Love your neighbor as thyself”, found in Lev. 19: 18. It seemed to be more tangible, attainable, or shall we say, more “User-friendly”. However, it became another misunderstanding for us, just as it has been for many others, because after a time of contemplation, we realized that loving your neighbor as thyself is also too incomplete, and therefore, could not sum up “God’s Ultimate Will”. On the other hand, after further observation, we truly set our eyes on Jesus and concluded that his “New” command, exemplified by Jesus, modifies and completes: Lev. 19: 18 “loving your neighbor as thyself.” Therefore, Jesus’ command is more suited to be “God’s Ultimate Will”. And that new command is, as stated from the “New International Version” (St. John 13: 34): “A NEW command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. From the “The Living Bible” version, verse 34, it states, “And so I am giving a new commandment to you now – love each other just as much as I love you.” Verse 35 states, “Your strong love for each other will prove to the world that you are my disciples.” – The phrase “AS I Have” is the key phrase in Jesus’ command.

Specifically, what does the phrase, “As I Have” entail? It entails that we are to love people and our enemies so much that we would carry our cross (as Jesus did) to the death for those people. (St. John 15: 13 & Matt.16: 24, 25) Also, we are to deny ourselves, and he who loves mother, father, son or daughter more than Jesus is not worthy of him. (Matt. 10: 37- 39) Furthermore, we are to seek the well being of the community first and ourselves second, so in the end, together, we’ll achieve a healthy community and never die! (Matt. 6: 33& 19: 29/ Mark10: 29, 30/ Luke 18: 29, 30) In summary, “As I Have” means that we are to look towards Jesus’ historical life and imitate his example as Peter stated in 1st Peter 2: 21.

In addition, one must keep in mind that the Old Testament was turned into a book, and the New Testament is rightfully called letters. However, it has been wrongfully called a book just because it was combined with the Jewish Torah. Also, you can’t look in the Old Testament book to attain Jesus’ historical example; you must look in the New Testament letters only. So then, when we once stated “The weak need a book”, we were referring mainly to the Old Testament, just as St. Paul, in Romans chapters 14 & 15 referred to the weak that were adhering to the Old Testament. But “weak” can also be applied to any student of the New Testament or the Bible as a whole, if one has not graduated knowing “God’s Ultimate Will”. Here’s an illustration to help explain what we mean. ‘Suppose you went into a hospital for heart surgery. As you were waiting in the operating room, your surgeon walks in with a few books. In your curiosity, you ask him, “Why the books?” He turns and says to you that they are his manuals to help guide him through your surgery.’ Would you see him as a competent surgeon or an undergraduate? If he was well educated and mature, with all that a complete surgeon should know, he would be able to do surgery by faith, or shall we state, by spirit and not by the letter of the books. (Gal. 5: 18)

The illustration above is given to show that once an individual learns “God’s Ultimate Will” as stated by Jesus and emphasized in 1st John 3: 23, one graduates and knows all that he needs to know, for Love is the Greatest. (1st Cor. 13: 13) We must stop being undergraduates and put our beloved religious Bibles on the shelf of human development and on our personal home shelves, then go out into our communities and commit to its politics; feeding the homeless, visiting the sick, visiting the prisoners, and if we are merchants, lowering the cost of living. (Matt. 25: 31- 46) Yes, there is a temporary need for the book, specifically the New Testament “Letters”, so that the mature who think and act like Jesus can show to others, from within the book, that there is no need for the Book/Letters anymore. (Romans 15: 1– 7)

Last of all, the Old Testament Book led the Jews and their contemporaries to Jesus, and there should not have been a return back to the Old Testament as a guide for righteous living. However, due to ignorance, the murder of Jesus (which was upheld and decreed by the Old Testament –Deut. 13: 1- 5 & 18: 20; St. John 19: 7) the rejection of “Jesus’ Year of Jubilee –Luke: 4 and especially the misunderstanding of God’s “Incarnation” –Matt. 1: 23, the New Testament letters had to be written, for therein, is “God’s Ultimate Will” fulfilled by Jesus’ Bible closure and religion ending command: to love one another “As I Have” loved you. (Romans 10: 4) (Gal. 3: 23- 25 & 5: 18, 22)