



# Delivered from law to life

by Victor Hall

**W**hen I was a little boy, my mother would come and ask me to do some small job for her. She would tell me what she wanted and how to do it. I was then left alone to do the chore she had given me. When she came back to see how I was going she would find me doing things my way. Of course, the result was not very good. When she pointed out my failure to me, I would get angry and upset. She would say to me, 'Victor, don't be contrary!' I didn't like to be told how to do things because it went against my own desire to express myself as I pleased. I didn't understand that I could have a bad outcome from doing things my way.

I thought that doing things my way was good for me, and I felt right about my own expression. The Bible says, 'There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.' Pro 16:25. I didn't think that my mother's way of doing things was wrong and

that my way was better. Rather, I was contrary because I wanted my own way, and it was just part of me to do so.

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When we are born, contrariness is part of who we are. Contrariness is what the Bible calls 'another law' in the members of my body. Rom 7:23. This law makes me angry and rebellious toward my parents, teachers, and even God. This contrariness makes me a prisoner to the law of sin that is in my members. Sin produces a bad result from what I do. Actually, I can't do what is right unless I do it the right way. My way is not the right way when what I do is contrary to the instructions I have been given.

Contrariness can be quite clever. I often tried to convince my mother that my law was better than hers by saying, 'Mother, I have a better idea!' Or, even further, I told my mother how other people, including my friends, did things. I thought about how I could improve what I was doing by studying their law, which means how they did things. They had some good ideas, so I stole their ideas from them and made them my own. The main point is that I was refusing to be obedient, and the outcome was sinful.

At a personal level, when we talk about sin, we are mostly talking about what it means to 'go wrong'. To 'sin' can also mean to 'miss the mark' or 'fail the exam' and therefore not share in the prize. At a relational level, to sin against someone means to 'hurt and offend them in some way'. The Bible firstly talks about sin as a 'destructive principle' that came into the world as a result of Adam and Eve disobeying God. This principle of sin is part of us now and it is actively trying to kill us.

Sin is different from our own wilful contrariness that comes from our desire to do things our own way. If I talk personally now, 'Sin within me is actually sinning against me. Sin works by deceiving me. It tricks me into believing that I can be who I want to be and do the things that I can't or shouldn't do, and it gets me into trouble when I try.'

Another thing sin does is to make us want things that don't belong to us. If we accept this sinful attitude, we become wicked and evil people who make trouble and cause distress in the world. Sin does this to bring us under

the judgement of God's law so that God's law kills us. This is very cunning, isn't it?

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From the time that Adam and Eve disobeyed God, until the days of Noah, mankind developed as two separate groups. One group was called the sons of God and the other group was called the sons and daughters of men. The sons and daughters of men were the children of Cain, and the sons of God were those who descended from Seth.

Seth was appointed by God to take the place of Abel, seven generations from Adam. Once Seth had grown up and established his culture and family, his descendants began to worship God and call themselves by the name of the Lord. Seth's descendants were the sons of God. The descendants of Cain followed the culture of sin that had come from his contrariness and disobedience. Each descendant of Cain felt that their own way was the right way. They found ways of becoming a civilisation and they built cities. However, they filled the earth with violence and war. God put up with this while ever the descendants of Seth continued to worship God and were obedient to the culture of godly sonship.

Finally, in the days of Noah, the contrariness that was in man led to the mixing of the cultures of the sons of God with the daughters



of men, through intermarriage. Great things were achieved as the peoples of the earth came together and did things their own way. The culture of obedience to God that belongs to godly sonship was rejected and lost. The wickedness of man became great upon the earth. Everything they wanted, and everything they thought about, came from their selfish contrariness. This resulted in them being continually evil.

The Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth and said, 'I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky, for I am sorry that I have made them'. Gen 6:7. God then set about preparing to pour out His judgement upon the earth for the destruction of all living creatures. However, Noah was a godly man and found favour, or grace, in the eyes of the Lord. Noah was not a contrary person. He was full of faith and obedient to God. This enabled him to be a righteous man and blameless in his time. It is said of Noah that he walked with God. Gen 6:9.

Because of the faith-obedience of Noah and the grace that was given to him, the earth was saved, even though God judged the world. Noah believed and obeyed the word that was given to him. He built an ark according to the dimensions that God gave him. He obeyed God in every detail. He took no shortcuts, and he did not try to improve on God's plan and do it another way. He was not contrary or disobedient. By building the ark according to God's plan, it was strong enough and big enough to survive the coming flood. By obeying God's word, he and his family were saved, and all the animals and birds that God

sent to him were easily housed in the ark and came safely through the flood.

Jesus said that in the time preceding His second coming the nations would come together as they did in the time of Noah. They would achieve great things through science. They would reject God's way and be disobedient to His word. They would steal the principles of nature, claiming them as their own inventions. They would set about creating what they now call 'a brave new world'. This new world is a culture that does not acknowledge God. In fact, it is opposed to our becoming the sons and daughters of God whom He planned we should be.

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We are not a part of this 'brave new world', because we acknowledge God and His leading in our lives as His sons and daughters. Jesus has come and died for us. As a result of His death we can be born again, receive a new heart and live obediently, doing God's will. We don't have to be contrary anymore. Moreover, when we are baptised, we join Christ's death and die to sin. Sin no longer has power over our lives. We are able to hear and receive God's preached word as it comes to us from week to week at church. The Holy Spirit is our Helper, leading us from day to day to do God's will and live as His sons and daughters. ■