

WHEN WE AWAKE

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FOREWORD

So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Romans 10:17

I do not write these things to argue with your reasoning or to persuade you to do something with which you do not agree. My goal is to teach by the anointing of the Holy Spirit. My prayer is that He will bear witness to your spirit when you read whatever truth is here. Thus you will be hearing the Word of God Himself and my words will be but a double witness to the Truth.

"By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established."

2 Corinthians 13:1

PART I

FOOD SACRIFICED TO GOD

{1} I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. {2} And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. {3} For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. (Romans 12:1-3)

{8} I will not rebuke you for your sacrifices Or your burnt offerings, Which are continually before Me. {9} I will not take a bull from your house, Nor goats out of your folds. {10} For every beast of the forest is Mine, And the cattle on a thousand hills. {11} I know all the birds of the mountains, And the wild beasts of the field are Mine. {12} "If I were hungry, I would not tell you; For the world is Mine, and all its fullness. {13} Will I eat the flesh of bulls, Or drink the blood of goats? {14} Offer to God thanksgiving, And pay your vows to the Most High. (Psalm 50:8-14)

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE DOCTRINE OF FOOD

*{10} For the LORD has poured out on you **The spirit of deep sleep**, And has closed your eyes, namely, the prophets; And He has covered your heads, namely, the seers. {11} The whole vision has become to you like the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one who is literate, saying, "Read this, please." And he says, "I cannot, for it is sealed." {12} Then the book is delivered to one who is illiterate, saying, "Read this, please." And he says, "I am not literate." {13} Therefore the LORD said: "Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths And honor Me with their lips, But have removed their hearts far from Me, And their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men, {14} Therefore, behold, I will again do a marvelous work Among this people, A marvelous work and a wonder; For the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, And the understanding of their prudent men shall be hidden." (Isaiah 29:10-14)*

*As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied **when I awake** in Your likeness. (Psalm 17:15)*

*I saw well why the gods do not speak to us openly, nor let us answer: Till that word¹ can be dug out of us, why should they hear the babble that we think we mean? How can they meet us face to face **till we have faces**? C. S. Lewis, *Till We Have Faces* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, [1956], 1980), 294*

In Matthew 15 Jesus quoted from Isaiah 29 when he condemned the Pharisees as hypocrites. The Pharisees were the main political and religious leaders of Israel during Jesus' days on earth. They believed in God, the resurrection from the dead, and that the Scriptures contained the words of life. But, they had one huge problem. They contrived and taught so many man-made doctrines that they rendered those Scriptures void of Life. Jesus declared that they worshiped God in vain because they taught the commandments of men as the doctrines of God. Today we find exactly the same problem within God's Church, the religious institution that has, amazingly, become one of the greatest mysteries of all time. The Church, like the Pharisee, sleeps a deep sleep. From its pulpits come the commandments of men taught as the commandments of God. But, just as God moved in the time of Jesus, He is about to move again. He now stands ready to perform the marvelous work and wonder that Isaiah prophesied.

¹"That word" here refers to all of the carnal, or impure, thoughts we cherish and hold within our hearts, which keep us from knowing and communing with God.

C. S. Lewis exposed much of this mystery long ago, but still in a figure of speech.² His great book *Till We Have Faces* allegorically answers many questions concerning a person's relationship with God. For example, why did God so adamantly refuse to allow Israel to make any type of representation, or likeness, of Him? Why did He not simply show them His face so that they could then draw, paint, or mold His image and worship that instead of a stupid, golden calf? And, what is the real goal of our faith in Jesus Christ? What is the actual reward for the Christian faithful? Most of us simplistically answer, "heaven!" or "eternal life," but by this we show that we remain in our slumber and have not yet understood. Lewis eloquently unveils part of the divine mystery in his classic work *Till We Have Faces*. *When We Awake* reveals this and other hidden truths through the words of the Bible.

Throughout this book I will draw upon scenes from Lewis' work in order to illustrate spiritual concepts. A synopsis of Lewis' book is, therefore, necessary. *Till We Have Faces* tells the story of the ancient kingdom of Glome whose people worship the god Ungit, the same god known to the Greeks as Aphrodite. Ungit requires her patrons to make regular, blood sacrifices to her, which sometimes includes human sacrifice. The Bible calls these sacrifices "food sacrificed to idols" when it contemplates the natural meaning of this phrase. The queen of Glome, Orual, hated these ritualistic sacrifices and ended up hating the gods as well for many other reasons. Lewis' book describes the melancholy life of this ancient queen, who finally gets to complain to the gods face to face.

Lewis, however, did not write *Till We Have Faces* to explain the culture of natural idol worship. He wrote concerning the goal of worshiping the one true God. His work reveals real-life and spiritual applications of this strange doctrine called "food sacrificed to idols." In so doing, he partly answers the greatest of life's questions, i.e., how do we really awaken to God, and what can we expect when we do awake? Will God then meet us face to face, or not? What will the rapture really be like?

When We Awake answers these and more questions in the Bible's own words. This book concerns doctrine, God's doctrine, not man's. It is imperative, therefore, when one comes to quoted Scripture herein that he or she reads it. We all have a tendency to skip the reading of Scripture, especially if we have read the passage numerous times before. We think that we already know what it says and that we do not need to read it again. We err when we do this, little realizing the depths of wisdom and knowledge that God can hide in a seemingly simple verse. Always keep the following verses in mind, therefore, as you read this book:

{1b} We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies. {2} And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know. (1 Cor. 8:1b-2)

The truth is that we all know *some* of God's truth, or else we would not be pursuing more. The problem with us vain creatures is that once we apprehend *some* truth we think we know it all. Thus we become puffed up in pride, a deadly sin. This is one of the major problems in so many churches today, whether they are independent or part of a denomination. Many groups believe they have already settled and understood all important truth so they refuse to move into deeper revelations of God when the Holy Spirit moves on.

²His self-confessed "mentor," George MacDonald, dug out many of the gems concerning this mystery a century before even C. S. Lewis did. MacDonald's many adult and children's novels are well worth reading and highly recommended.

Yet, knowledge alone does not commend one to God. Paul reminds us to prefer love and edification to knowledge. In 1 Corinthians 13:2 Paul goes so far as to say that one could understand all of God's prophecies, mysteries, and knowledge and yet be "nothing" in God's eyes because he "has not love." *When We Awake* explains some of God's many mysteries that have not heretofore been widely known, but if we have not love, we will take these truths and beat others with them, rather than edify our brethren in love. As George MacDonald so beautifully wrote,

Our Lord had no design of constructing a system of truth in intellectual forms. The truth of the moment in its relation to him, The Truth, was what he spoke. He spoke out of a region of realities which he knew could only be suggested— not represented — in the forms of intellect and speech. With vivid flashes of life and truth his words invade our darkness, rousing us with sharp stings of light **to will our awaking**, to arise from the dead and cry for the light which he can give, not in the lightning of words only, but in indwelling presence and power.³

The Goals of This Book

This book reveals how we Christians take the food of God and sacrifice it to our own idols. Herein we will discover that God's food to us is His Word and that heretofore we have adulterated ("idolatorated") His food. We have sacrificed His food to our idols. Our idols then turned this food (true doctrine) into the traditions of man. Herein we will find that our personal and church doctrines often differ from the Truth. We selfishly take His food and sacrifice it to our own idols of mammon, i.e., the worldly icons of beauty, money, power, sex, and so on. One goal of this book is to awaken us to this truth so that we will cease sacrificing God's food (truth) to our idols and begin sacrificing food to God alone.

One must understand the doctrine of food to understand this book, so I will briefly describe the doctrine here. The doctrine will be elaborated upon throughout this book. Consider how Scripture uses this word in the following verse:

*Do not be carried about with **various and strange doctrines**. For it is good that the heart be **established by grace, not with foods** which have not profited those who have been occupied with them.*
(Hebrews 13:9)

Notice how the writer of Hebrews equates "various and strange doctrines" with "foods." Similarly, the phrase "various and strange doctrines" correlates to the Paul's concept of "food sacrificed to idols" in 1 Corinthians 8-11 and to my use of it throughout this book. Consider also how Jesus speaks of food through His prophet Isaiah:

{1} *"Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who*

³George MacDonald, *Unspoken Sermons Series One* (An exact textual copy of the First Edition, published by Alexander Strahan., London, 1867. Converted to e-text by Johannesen Printing & Publishing), emphasis added.

*have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk
Without money and without price. {2} Why do you spend money
for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy?
Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And let your soul
delight itself in abundance. {3} Incline your ear, and come to Me.
Hear, and your soul shall live; And I will make an everlasting
covenant with you; The sure mercies of David. (Isa 55:1-3)*

Jesus is the Water and Bread of Life. He speaks the Word of Life. Biblical “food,” therefore, is the true doctrine of Jesus Christ. “Food sacrificed to idols” is Biblical doctrine sacrificed to man’s idols. It is food offered to mammon instead of to God. This means that “food sacrificed to idols” equates to “doctrines promulgated by the idols of our heart.” These became the traditions of men that Jesus condemned in the Pharisees and which He now condemns in His Church.

My second major goal for writing this book is to prepare us to see God face to face, i.e., to awaken us the spiritual reality of someday coming into His presence. So many of us long for “the rapture,” or the “coming of Christ,” but we do not yet know that the brightness of His fiery presence would reduce us to mere ashes. To prevent this catastrophe He would first have to send us for a season into the “outer darkness.” The second coming of Christ will not look the way that most of us have been taught. It will not look like, for example, *Left Behind*. We will finally see God’s face only when we ourselves awaken from our darkness. Herein we discover that our theologies of the last things (eschatologies) merely reflect our idols. These theologies have become food sacrificed to idols.

Now I pray that God will open the eyes and ears of His guileless saints who seek to know Him better as they search for His hidden treasures. And I pray that God will continue to close the eyes and ears of those who would use His revelation to feed their own idols. Amen.

Chapter 2

FIRST THE NATURAL, THEN THE SPIRITUAL (FOR HE WHO HAS EARS TO HEAR)

“Oh cruel, cruel!” I wailed. “Is it nothing to you that you leave me here alone? Psyche; did you ever love me at all?”

“Love you? Why, Maia, what have I ever had to love save you and our grandfather the Fox? (But I did not want her to bring even the Fox in now.) “But, Sister, you will follow me soon. You don’t think any mortal life seems a long thing to me tonight? And how would it be better if I had lived? I suppose I should have been given to some king in the end--perhaps such another as our father. And there you see again how little difference there is between dying and being married. To leave your home--to lose you, Maia, and the Fox--to lose one’s maidenhead--to bear a child--they are all deaths. Indeed, indeed, Orual I am not sure that this which I go to is not the best.”

“This!”

“Yes....”

“Orual,” she said, her eyes shining, “I am going, you see, to the Mountain. You remember how we used to look and long? And all the stories of my gold and amber house, up there against the sky, where we thought we should never really go? The greatest King of all was going to build it for me. If only you could believe it, Sister! No, listen. Do not let grief shut up your ears and harden your heart--”

*“Is it **my** heart that is hardened?”*

Faces, 73-75

In this passage from *Till We Have Faces* Orual has gone to visit her beautiful sister, Psyche, the night before she will be sacrificed to Ungit, the god of Glome. She hates all of the gods because they remain so secretive and mysterious, but she hates Ungit in particular because she is now stealing away her beloved sister. Psyche, however, does not fear her fate. She has always longed to go to the Mountain of the gods. Orual went to Psyche to try to comfort her and it turns out that Psyche has to comfort Orual. Psyche even calls Orual “Maia,” the Greek name for “baby.” Orual becomes bitter toward Psyche, although she honestly loves her. Why? Because Psyche sees in the spiritual and Orual, a type of carnal Christian, sees only in the

natural.⁴

God is a Mysterious Spirit

This demonstrates a very common trait in God's people. Many believers become satisfied in their spiritual walk with God and remain spiritual babies all or most of their lives. When confronted with other believers who live more consistently by the precepts of God's Word, they become bitter and accusative. Often, they make accusations that the more spiritual believer is "legalistic" or "unloving." Sometimes they attempt to make the spiritual one feel or believe that he has arrogantly condemned them when, in reality, his righteous way of life smites their conscience. This happens to Orual here and we see this central idea repeat itself several times in *Till We Have Faces*. Lewis here draws upon the theme of the carnal versus the spiritual Christian.

The major part of Lewis' book contains Orual's complaint against the gods. She accuses the gods of remaining hidden from human view. She believes that they do not fully reveal themselves or their purposes to us so that they can just use and abuse us mortals. "How can we ever please them, or know what they want us to do?" comprise two questions she pits against them. And we, too, must confess that we sometimes become exasperated or angry because we do not see God clearly and do not understand events in our lives. I know that I, like Orual, have railed against God at times because I did not see Him nor perceive His ways with me.

I remember one night that I learned that a client would not pay the \$23,500 he owed me. I stormed out into my back yard, railing at God. I challenged God and I challenged Satan. I told Satan I would destroy him right then and there if I had the power. I screamed at God to meet me face to face and deal with me like a man. My family needed money to pay the mortgage and buy food. I had worked hard. I deserved the money. This was not fair and I intended to tell Him so face to face. Like Orual, I complained against God. But, I complained as a fool without knowledge, without faith in the love that our dear Father cares for our every need, and without faith in His utter sovereignty over our affairs. I wanted to meet God face to face so that I could yell in His face. I thought I was a mature Christian, but I was far from ready to see Him as He is.

Maturing Christians Can Begin to Understand God's Mysteries

Paul's dissertation on communion in 1 Corinthians 11 represents the culmination and summary of his teaching on "things offered to idols" which begins in verse one of chapter eight. Those four chapters deal extensively with this one issue, which begins, "*Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies. And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know. But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him*" (1 Cor. 8:1-3) Paul begins this teaching with a notice and a warning. First he warns that knowledge leads to pride, even knowledge of this doctrine that he now wants to teach. Right after introducing this brand new topic, he quickly says, "*if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know.*"

I believe Paul spoke this way because he now introduces Christians to a profound mystery and he wants them to hear with spiritual ears. Jesus often set off His mysteries with

4A Biblical "type" is an historical thing or event that prophetically pictures a future spiritual thing or reality. The prophetic event is called the "antitype." The concepts of "type" and "antitype" will be used throughout this book.

similar words like, “*He who has ears to hear, let him hear.*” Isaiah means the same thing when he says, “*Give ear and hear my voice, listen and hear my speech.*” (Is. 28:23) When we see these and similar cues we need to understand that we have just entered into the world of God’s concealed, mysterious Word. This means it is time to pray for God’s revelation because we will not be able to understand it in the futility of our own thinking. Our fleshly, carnal minds simply cannot perceive God’s truths. Yet, Paul says, once you do understand, do not become “puffed up” about it.

For twenty three years of almost daily Bible study I saw “food sacrificed to idols” as a Corinthian and “non-Christian” problem. After all, who among us has ever seen, much less eaten, literal food sacrificed to a literal idol? I have not and do not know anyone who has. I basically relegated Paul’s teaching to the Corinthians and other pagan, idol-worshipping cultures. I thought I understood “food sacrificed to idols,” and I believed it had no relevance to me or anyone in my culture. I thought *I knew*. But, I was wrong; I did not know anything yet as I ought to know.

Paul prepares us, though, to begin apprehending God’s mysteries early in his book. He says,

{7} But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, {8} which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. {9} But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him." {10} But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. {11} For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. {12} Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. {13} These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. {14} But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. {15} But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one. {16} For "who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ. (1 Cor 2:7-16)

The natural man does not receive, or understand, the things of God. Brethren, this describes both the non-Christian and the natural *Christian* who does not comprehend the things of the Spirit of God. This characterizes the person who does not walk according to the Spirit and hence does not walk in obedience to Christ’s commands. Paul depicts the carnal-minded Christian in Romans:

{5} For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the

things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. {6} For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. {7} Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. (Rom 8:5-7)

Before Paul gets to the spiritual meat of his Corinthian epistle, he tells his readers that he could not previously speak to them *“as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?”* (1 Cor. 3:1-3) We see, then, that the “natural man” of 1 Corinthians 2 is the “carnally minded” or “carnal” Christian of Romans 8 and 1 Corinthians 3. The Book of Hebrews says that *“solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.”* (Heb 5:14 NIV) The doctrine of food sacrificed to idols is solid food for the maturing or mature Christian, not the one satisfied with his own perceptions of his spirituality or his carnal thoughts and actions. In Lewis’ passage quoted above Orual represents a carnal Christian who cannot hear spiritual things. Rather than seeking the will of God, she pursues the matter by natural means and begins a course of disaster.

The Spiritual Man Approaches God in Humility

So, how do we begin to comprehend God and the hidden mysteries of Christ? We approach our Lord and His Word in humility. We admit that we do not really know God, nor His ways. We confess that we do not know the deep things of God. We realize that we cannot understand His Word in the futility of our own thinking. In fact, we must confess and acknowledge that even we Christians are yet sinners who live in a body of flesh prone to sin. We willingly confide to Him that **we ourselves do not have ears to hear, nor eyes to see his spiritual truths.** Therefore, each of us must cry out to Him, “Father open my ears that I might hear. Open my eyes that I might see. I long to understand your ways and pray for more of Your Holy Spirit that I might walk in those ways. I long to know You and have fellowship with You.” This is the cry of the heart upon which God has begun to write His law according to Hebrews:

{10} "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. {11} "None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them. {12} "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more." (Heb 8:10-12)

Again, in order to begin to comprehend the hidden mysteries of Christ we must approach God and His Word in humility. We need to understand and confess that we do not yet really know God, nor His deep mysteries. This brings us to the difference between the old and the new covenants. Under the old covenant, we and all those under Judaism or any other false religion

believe that our good works will bring us into fellowship with God. Under the new covenant, however, we learn that fellowship with God by faith in Jesus Christ will bring us into good works and obedience to His Word.

As long as we approach God and His Word in our natural minds and attempt to understand it by only logical reasoning, we will never apprehend its truth. We must take hold of Paul's words, "*These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*" (1 Cor. 2:13) He said this before he attempted to teach the Corinthians anything about God! Jesus says, "*It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.*" (John 6:63) Only our relationship with Jesus and our dependence upon the Holy Spirit will enable us to walk in His truth.

Chapter 3

WITHDRAWN FROM THE BREASTS

{9} Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. (Isa 28:9 KJV)

*“Need you ask?” said the King with one of his great laughs, jerking his thumb in my direction. “Do you think I want my queen frightened out of her senses? Veils of course. And good thick veils too.” One of the other girls tittered, and I think that was the first time I clearly understood that I am ugly. **Faces**, 11*

*Then there was a time (for in this book I must hide none of my shames or follies) when I believed, as girls do ... that I could make it more tolerable by this or that done to my clothes or my hair. Now, I chose to be veiled. **Faces**, 181*

Orual, the main character of *Till We Have Faces*, was extremely ugly. Everyone thought so. Even her own father called her such wicked names as “goblin” and made her veil her face when she sang at his and his new Queen’s wedding. When Orual became an adult she kept her face forever hidden behind a shroud. In time she became known as a mysterious queen and, later, even as a *beautiful*, mysterious queen. She found a strange power over others by keeping herself masked from their view. Handsome princes finally begged to see her face, but she never let them.

Similarly do men mask their true identity from others, from God, and even from themselves. We pretend to be someone we are not. And why? So people will “beg,” or want, to be with us, or lavishly praise us in the presence of others, or for some other vain reason. To achieve this glory we might want others to think that we are rich, popular, or well versed in the world’s latest fashions, styles, music, or movies. We want other Christians to believe that we live perfect lives, never sinning. Thus, we “veil” our true selves with “fig” leaves, just as Adam did when he disobeyed God. But, unless we take care to remove our own mask of fig leaves, we will forget what we look like inside. Thus we may not even know or recognize our own true faces. We can’t see them because we so successfully hide ourselves behind so many facades. We will never be prepared to meet God so long as these shrouds cover us.

The truth is that a shroud, or mask, prevents true communion with man and God. The veil over our soul precludes fellowship with one another, with a husband and his wife, and with a believer and his God. This is the truth that Paul sets out to explain in 1 Corinthians 8, but couches in the mystery called “food sacrificed to idols.” Paul sets forth several doctrinal examples of food sacrificed to idols in chapters 8 through 11 here. We will not examine each one in detail in this book. Instead, we will spend most of our time dealing with the mystery of communion.

Have you ever thought of the doctrine of communion as a mystery? True communion, or fellowship with man and God, prepares us to see God’s face, that is, it prepares us for what we

call “the rapture.” We clearly see that food sacrificed to idols directly relates to communion in 1 Corinthians 10:21, “*You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord’s table and of the table of demons.*” Previous verses in chapters 8 through 10 show the relationship between food sacrificed to idols and the table of demons.

Now it certainly is true and a matter of history that particular cultures did offer natural food to idols on pagan altars. It is also true that Israel itself at one time offered “food” to God in the form of its sacrifices at the Tabernacle and the Temple. Of course, God mandated these animal sacrifices, but these offerings were not meant for God’s literal consumption as in some pagan worship. They symbolized religious and prophetic truth. Today it may be that some cultures still do offer actual meat to their god (idol) because they remain ignorant of the one true God and His ways. In Biblical times food sacrificed to God (or a “god”) was eaten by both Israelite and heathen priests. Sometimes it was sold in the market. Paul’s teaching, on the natural level, clearly deals with the obvious, literal aspect of such offerings. He was following God’s established order with mankind of presenting things first in the natural, and then in the spiritual. It is very fitting, then, that C. S. Lewis in *Till We Have Faces* chose to illustrate the doctrine of food sacrificed to idols by telling the story of a primitive, idol-worshiping culture that offered literal animal and human sacrifices to their gods. He used the natural to portray a spiritual truth.

Let’s Wean Ourselves From the Milk

{7} But they also have erred through wine, And through intoxicating drink are out of the way; The priest and the prophet have erred through intoxicating drink, They are swallowed up by wine, They are out of the way through intoxicating drink; They err in vision, they stumble in judgment. {8} For all tables are full of vomit and filth; No place is clean. {9} "Whom will he teach knowledge? And whom will he make to understand the message? Those just weaned from milk? Those just drawn from the breasts? (Isa 28:7-9 NKJV)

The things of God are understood by “*first the natural, then the spiritual.*” (1 Cor. 15:46) This means that God first teaches us by natural means in order to prepare us for spiritual realities. We must build upon the foundation of Jesus Christ and His apostles and prophets a little at a time, as God gives growth. Like the drunken prophets and priests of Isaiah’s day, we ourselves are stubborn and rebellious children who like to hide behind our masks. We Christians often respond to God’s Word the very same way that these drunkards did in Isaiah 28:9 when they mocked the prophet. The question we now face is this, will we “*go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken,*” as Isaiah warned the Israelite leaders of his day? (Is. 28:13b)

So, who may receive the spiritual and secret knowledge of God’s Word? To whom will He teach knowledge? To whom will He make to understand His message? It is strange and serious how God may speak through those who mock and disbelieve him. Sometimes he even uses a donkey to get His word across as he did with Balaam’s ass. But, God will teach and make to understand only those weaned from the milk (of the simple things of God’s Word) and drawn from the breasts (of ministers of Christ who only teach the milk of the Word).

The Bread of Faces

It turns out that all of Isaiah 28 reveals much concerning food sacrificed to idols and communion, but we must begin our study well before this. We must go all the way back to the Bible's first mention of the word "table." We first find the word in Exodus 25:23 where the Hebrew word "shulchan" is translated "table." Here we see the description of the "table of showbread" that Moses placed in the holy place of the tabernacle. The word "showbread" literally means "bread of faces." We see the first use of the table in Exodus 25:30, which may be literally translated, "*And you are to put on the table the Bread of Faces, before My face, continually.*" The spiritual significance of this first table is profound. To attempt to understand it, we will explore the symbolism of the Tabernacle, including its furnishings and its sacrifices.

The Tabernacle of the Congregation

The last sixteen chapters of the Book of Exodus detail God's instructions for building the Tabernacle. This comprises about forty percent of that entire book, showing the Divine importance of this structure and its furnishings. Practically the entire Book of Leviticus centers around the sacrifices offered there. The tabernacle itself consisted of three parts: an Outer Court, a sanctuary or Holy Place, and an inner sanctuary or Most Holy Place. In type, these three components depict the three aspects of man: body (the Outer Court), soul (the Holy Place), and spirit (the Most Holy Place). They also correspond to the three major feasts of God, Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles in the same order.

The study of the Tabernacle shows that God begins His salvation work with us in the Most Holy Place. Salvation begins in our spirits when we receive the earnest of the Holy Spirit by faith in Jesus Christ. This is our spiritual salvation and corresponds to our Passover experience. By God's design, this salvation progresses out to the Holy Place (our soul) with the sanctification of our mind, will, and emotions. This corresponds to our Pentecost experience when we allow God to write His Law on our hearts, just as He wrote the Law on tablets of stone at the first Pentecost. Salvation ends in the Outer Court (body), with the glorification or resurrection of our bodies. This corresponds to the fulfillment of the Feast of Tabernacles.

Man experiences God, however, in the opposite direction. After we believe in Jesus Christ and are begotten of God, we first relate to God in spiritual experiences prophesied by the Outer Court sacrifices. As we are enabled by the Holy Spirit within to obey in the Outer Court, in the realm of the flesh, we begin to see our souls conform to the image of Christ. Each of the Outer Court sacrifices reveals specific aspects of walking in faith with God. Our obedience proceeds from our relationship to Christ; it does not create or establish our relationship.

The second part of the Tabernacle, the Holy Place, speaks of our sanctification or "salvation of our souls." The Holy Spirit effects this sanctification. We find that for this sanctification to take place, we must come into agreement with Jesus and willingly obey Him in our outer court experiences of life. A wise teacher often says, "We must become an amen people."⁵ He means that we must learn to say "yes" instead of "no" to God. We must come into agreement with Him. Finally, we will find that God writes His laws on our hearts as we come more and more into accord with His ways. Our Holy Place, our heart, will one day come into

⁵ Stephen Jones, the author of many excellent books, available on the web at <http://www.godskingdomministries.org/> Please see Stephen's writings for in depth coverage of many subjects briefly mentioned herein.

perfect unity in sweet communion and union with Him. This will occur at the resurrection, or glorification, of our bodies at Christ's second coming. The glorification rends the veil between our soul and our spirit. Then the Holy Place becomes one with the Most Holy Place. Thus, concerning God, His work in us is from the inside out, from our spirit to our soul to our body. Concerning our work for Him, it is from the outside in. This will become very clear as we study the prophetic meaning of the Tabernacle sacrifices and furnishings.

God's Sovereign Approach to Man

God deals with us according to His will for us, i.e., by His sovereign design. Ephesians 2:8-9 says, "*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.*" (KJV) This reveals that a man has utterly nothing to do with his own spiritual salvation. The presence and rule of God fills the Most Holy Place, just as it does saved man's spirit. This is why Jesus said, "*The kingdom of God is within you.*" (Luke 17:21) It is to this place that one's salvation first comes. God's Kingdom truly dwells there, but it will not stay there. In the Scripture, whenever we see salvation in the past tense, the context deals with one's spiritual salvation. This is a salvation that can never be lost or forfeit. It is totally by grace and has nothing to do with ourselves, nothing to do with that concept we call "free will." Even though our salvation is by faith in the Son of God, that faith itself is the gift of God and is not produced by our own wisdom or decision. This means that man does not enjoy a free will with respect to his salvation. God sovereignly saves him from his sins. God Himself moves a man to choose His salvation. The grace and the faith that bring one into spiritual life come utterly and only from God. We see these truths clearly in the Biblical portrayal of the first Passover in Exodus 12.

No one had a real choice to participate in the first Passover. If a father did not want the first born in his house to die that night, then he would indeed sacrifice a lamb and place its blood on his doorposts. He had already seen nine profound miracles of God. He did not need to see his son die in order to believe that God would kill the firstborn of his home unless he obeyed. God moved in such a way as to bring the grace and faith necessary for the Israelites to believe upon Him for their salvation from the death angel. We could say they exercised "free will," but did they really have a choice?

God required all of Israel, His chosen people at that time, to make the Passover sacrifice before they could leave Egypt, a type of world here. Thus we find that the Passover sacrifice brings us into a living relationship with God. Any man who refused to keep Passover would bear his own sin and be cut off from his people. (Numbers 9:13) To refuse to partake of Passover meant that one could not be part of God's Kingdom on earth. If he would not offer the Passover sacrifice, then he did not stand in a "saved" relationship to God. In fact, during the first Passover, if he happened to be a firstborn, he would die.

In the same way each one of us must believe that Jesus shed his blood for our sins in order for the death angel to "pass over" us and allow us to begin a relationship with God. If we do not believe in Jesus we will bear our own sins and will likewise be "cut off." This Passover typology demonstrates that all of Israel that participated in Passover stood on the same ground of salvation as a believing Christian. In this sense, an Israelite who offered the Passover sacrifice "by faith" can be considered a Christian, or believer. The salvation that comes through Passover, though, concerns our spirits, not our souls. We will see this more clearly later when we examine chapter 10 of 1 Corinthians which shows that Israel, although believers in God, did not work out

their soul's salvation in fear and trembling.

Man can only begin to relate to God after he partakes of the ultimate sacrifice, that of God's Son on the cross for his sins. Jesus' death and resurrection first bring us life in the spirit. The Hebrew Passover as originally ordained by God painted a picture of Jesus' impending crucifixion. A perfect, unblemished male lamb was slaughtered for each firstborn in the nation. The lamb's blood was spread upon each house's doorpost and lintel, thus making the sign of the cross, or the eighth Hebrew letter, the ך, pronounced "chet." This Hebrew letter means "life." Thus began and begins each man's walk with God in spiritual life. This Passover sacrifice is mandatory. Without it we cannot even "*see the Kingdom of God.*" (John 3:3) Unless and until we each personally make the Passover sacrifice, we will be cut off from God's people and God's life.

The Passover sacrifice, then, represents the beginning of spiritual life. We make that sacrifice externally, or in the flesh, by confessing Jesus Christ as our Savior. With our confession we apply Jesus' blood to the doorposts of our hearts. Yet, we can only confess Jesus as Lord by grace and faith and these are gifts of God. We know that we have begun to walk with God when we make this external profession of faith, but God begins his sovereign work internally, in our Most Holy Place, in our very spirits.

What About After Salvation? - The Holy Place

Although man may not choose his spiritual condition, he does have a choice, or free will, when it comes to obeying laws or doing right and wrong. This free will continues and becomes even more important after one's spiritual salvation. This is when we can either obey or reject the Gospel. Sadly, many Christians do reject the goodness of God to their own hurt. Most of Scripture deals with what one does after he believes in Jesus for the forgiveness of sin. Very little actually concerns getting someone to "make a profession of faith." Paul declares that the choices we make after knowing God have profound consequences. He says,

*{12} Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.** {13} For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. {14} Do all things without murmurings and disputings: {15} That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; {16} Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain. (Phil 2:12-16 KJV)*

Likewise, the writer of Hebrews extends five severe warnings to those Christians who would reject the upward call of Christ. One such grave warning ends thus:

{36} For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. {37} For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. {38} Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall

have no pleasure in him. {39} But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul. (Heb 10:36-39 KJV)

Here we clearly see a salvation different from the one of which we have known and been taught in the past. We see that a Christian may “*believe to the saving of the soul.*” On the other hand we also learn that a Christian may not so believe and that one could actually “*draw back unto perdition* (destruction)” and, hence, lose his (soul) salvation. This explains why this salvation has to be worked out “*in fear and trembling.*” We must not presume upon God and take our salvation lightly. This salvation corresponds to the sanctuary of the Tabernacle, the Holy Place. The articles within that room correspond to the salvation of the soul.

Finally, we come forth into the Outer Court. Here we deal with the third aspect of God’s salvation of men. The outer court represents the outer man, or the body. It corresponds typologically to the resurrection, or glorification, of our bodies of flesh. As Paul says,

{51} Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, {52} In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. {53} For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. {54} So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. {55} O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? (1 Cor 15:51-55 KJV)

This passage speaks of the day when the veil between our flesh and spirit will be utterly torn asunder. Then we will receive our new, spiritual bodies from God. At that time we will awaken with faces that allow us to behold the fulness of God in all His glory. But, do not mistakenly assume that this glorified body will come to everyone who calls himself a Christian or has made a confession of faith in Jesus. We cannot expect the glory of perfect communion with God when we continue in a mad pursuit of lust and sin. We must first purposefully begin to realize the salvation of our souls and learn to dwell in the holy place of God’s presence and communion. May God give us grace to learn how to approach Him.

Man’s Approach to God

We know that we can only come to God if we are cleansed of our sins by the blood of Jesus. As Hebrews teaches, “*For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*” (Heb 9:13-14) The basic typology of Scripture shows that the shedding of blood in all of the animal sacrifices points to Jesus’ shed blood on the cross for our sins.

Interestingly, however, man’s dealings with God are exactly the reverse of His dealings with us. We “work out” our soul salvation in “bodies of sin,” the flesh. We do this by learning

God's ways and by walking in obedience to those ways. We become able to walk in His ways by the power of the Holy Spirit who lives in us. Paul calls this "living according to the Spirit." This corresponds to the prophetic application of the food sacrifices that Israel made at the first Tabernacle furnishing, the brazen altar. The Book of Leviticus details the many explicit sacrifices required by God. Each of these bronze altar sacrifices contained prophetic truth meant for us. Remember though, before the Israelites could sacrifice on the bronze altar, they had to partake of the Passover lamb. Likewise, we must partake of the blood of Jesus Christ to cover our sins before we do any works for God. Good works always come after salvation; they never bring us salvation.

God ordained five main sacrifices for the bronze altar in the courtyard of the Tabernacle: 1) the whole burnt offering, 2) the meal, or grain, offering, 3) the peace offering, 4) the sin offering, and 5) the trespass offering. These prophetically represent the believer's approach to God after his initial faith in Christ. Remember that an Israelite was spiritually saved by his Passover sacrifice. He did not come into initial fellowship with God by his sacrifices at the bronze altar. Similarly, according to Ephesians 2:8-9, Christians are saved by faith in the atoning blood of Jesus, not by their works. The Bible also clearly shows that Jesus was the Passover lamb slain for the sins of the world. Paul, for example, specifically states this in 1 Cor. 5:7. Rather than representing spiritual salvation, these five Tabernacle sacrifices represent the good works that come after we receive the earnest of the Holy Spirit. They, therefore, prophesy concerning the believer's spiritual walk. This the Bible calls the process of "sanctification," or the "salvation of the soul."

The altar sacrifices and the laver of water as a whole represent the good works required by God. They also correspond to the elementary truths of God's Word revealed in Hebrews 6:1-2. These elementary truths comprise the milk of God's Word, but as we will see, the truths revealed there are not so basic as we might think. Once we understand them we can begin to wean ourselves from always focusing on the few issues of "getting saved." Then we can press on into maturity and communion with God and one another. Indeed, we will find that it is by doing the good works required by the Outer Court sacrifices that we effect the salvation of which Paul speaks in Philippians 2:12: "***work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.***" Paul *cannot* be talking here about the spiritual salvation of which Ephesians 2:8-9 speaks because that salvation is by God's grace and faith and is not by our works at all.

The various sacrifices presented at the bronze laver and altar deal with that aspect of our flesh that still tends to reject God and His Word. All five of these sacrifices were made in order to remain in fellowship with God. Each of the five major Levitical sacrifices typifies a particular aspect of our walk with God **after** spiritual salvation. Thus we see that the Tabernacle sacrifices prophesy the sanctified, Spirit-led life and that none of the outer court sacrifices deals exclusively with the one-time sacrifice for sin that Jesus accomplished on the cross. The blood of each, however, was effective only because of the blood He shed on that cross. Only the Passover lamb itself typifies the sacrifice of God's one and only Son. It is important to understand this fact before we go on to study each of the individual sacrifices. If we fail to apprehend this, we will constantly attempt to apply the sacrifices to spiritual salvation and will, therefore, miss their entire prophetic meaning. We will now begin with the fifth sacrifice, the trespass offering, and work backwards to the first, the burnt offering.

Chapter 4

OFFERINGS IN THE OUTER COURT (Repentance)

{1} 'If a person sins in hearing the utterance of an oath, and is a witness, whether he has seen or known of the matter; if he does not tell it, he bears guilt. {2} 'Or if a person touches any unclean thing, whether it is the carcass of an unclean beast, or the carcass of unclean livestock, or the carcass of unclean creeping things, and he is unaware of it, he also shall be unclean and guilty. {3} 'Or if he touches human uncleanness; whatever uncleanness with which a man may be defiled, and he is unaware of it; when he realizes it, then he shall be guilty. {4} 'Or if a person swears, speaking thoughtlessly with his lips to do evil or to do good, whatever it is that a man may pronounce by an oath, and he is unaware of it; when he realizes it, then he shall be guilty in any of these matters. {5} 'And it shall be, when he is guilty in any of these matters, that he shall confess that he has sinned in that thing; {6} 'and he shall bring his trespass offering to the LORD for his sin which he has committed, a female from the flock, a lamb or a kid of the goats as a sin offering. So the priest shall make atonement for him concerning his sin.'

Leviticus 5:1-6

“When I saw West-wind I was neither glad nor afraid (at first). I felt ashamed.”

“But what of? Psyche, they hadn’t stripped you naked or anything?”

“No, no, Maia. Ashamed of looking like a mortal--ashamed of being a mortal.”

“But how could you help that?”

“Don’t you think the thing people are most ashamed of are the things they can’t help?”

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Psyche felt ashamed in the presence of her god. She understood that she was a mere mortal, made of flesh. This speaks of understanding one’s own sinful nature and of needing to

depend upon God to someday change that nature. Leviticus chapter 5 deals with the trespass offering and it is interesting that the Hebrew word for the trespass offering is the “*āshām*” offering. The trespass offering literally turns out to be the offering one made because he was ashamed of his sins. According to Leviticus 5:5 the offeror had to confess explicit sins before the offering was presented to God. The *āshām* offering corresponds to our need for the daily repentance that God requires.

The Bronze Metal

The bronze altar of the Tabernacle, upon which all of the sacrifices were offered, speaks of sanctification, the “salvation of the soul.” It also reveals God’s judgment upon the flesh, or sinful nature, of man, a sinful nature that lasts even after one comes to faith in Christ and remains until glorification. The bronze metal of the altar symbolizes God’s judgment on sin. This is perhaps most clearly seen in the passage from Numbers 16 where “*fire came out from the LORD and consumed the two hundred and fifty men who were offering incense*” on bronze censers. (Number 16:35) These men were leaders of Israel and co-conspired with Korah, Dathan, and Abiram against the authority of Moses and Aaron. Their rebellion against God’s delegated authority meant that they had, in fact, “*rejected the Lord.*” (vs. 30) Thus they were consumed by His fire for this “*sin against their own souls.*” (vs. 38) Afterwards, Aaron took the two hundred and fifty bronze censers, hammered them out, and made them into a “covering” for the bronze altar. (vs. 39)

Remember that Korah and his followers all partook of the Passover lamb when they came out of Egypt with all Israel. They, therefore, were “saved” individuals regarding their spirits. They prefigure Christians who believe in the efficacy of Jesus’ blood for forgiveness of sins. Yet, they still “rejected the Lord,” and were judged severely for this rejection. We understand from this that Christians, too, may reject the Lord in a similar fashion. This rejection often takes the form of disobedience to His explicit commands so clearly given us in His Word.

Consider also the snake that Moses lifted in the desert:

{5} And the people spoke against God and against Moses: "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread." {6} So the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died. {7} Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD that He take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. {8} Then the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live." {9} So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived. (Num 21:5-9)

All of Israel stood in the position of spiritual salvation at this point. They had believed in God. They had offered the Passover lamb and the angel of death had passed over them. Their

spirits were “saved,” but their soul loathed “this worthless bread.” What was this “worthless bread?” It was the manna that fell from heaven, or food from heaven. The manna itself was natural food, but it typified spiritual food. It represented the Lord Jesus Himself, the Bread of Life. By speaking against the manna, Israel showed that they rejected the very God that led them. In consequence, God judged some of them with immediate death.

Moses interceded for the rest and God commanded him to fashion a bronze “fiery serpent” and raise it up on a pole. God did not remove the serpents immediately, but provided a remedy for their poison. Israel had to look upon the bronze serpent so that judgment would be abated. Again we see bronze standing in the place of judgment and thus we conclude that this metal symbolizes God’s judgment upon sin and, in particular, of sin within the believer. Similarly, God has not yet removed the serpent from our flesh. He has covered our sin, yes, but he has not yet removed our sin nature. Until then we must confess and repent of our sins, looking to Jesus on “the pole” for the forgiveness of our sins. Jesus took the sting of the serpent for us. This is the prophetic significance of the bronze metal.

The Trespass (*āshām*) Offering

The trespass offering, the fifth of the offerings introduced in Leviticus, demonstrates typologically⁶ the very first works of a newborn Christian, repentance of known sin. Detailed instructions for the trespass offering are found in Leviticus 5 through 7. The primary aspect of trespass offerings deals with atonement for intentional sins committed after salvation. According to Leviticus 5:5, the offeror must confess that he has sinned in a particular thing. This typifies or symbolizes the place where every Christian should begin his pilgrim walk in this world, repentance from sin. This corresponds to the first elementary teaching of Christ found in Hebrews 6:1.

Before one begins such a walk, though, he first believes upon the Lord Jesus for salvation from the effects of his sins. Christ’s blood establishes the expiation (atonement) or propitiation (conciliation with God) for our sins. His blood provides our justification before God and results in new spiritual life. The angel of spiritual death thus passes over us. The Passover sacrifice typifies all of this. (Remember, a Biblical type is an historical thing or event that prophetically pictures a future spiritual thing or reality)

After initial faith in Jesus one begins (or should begin) to learn the ways of the Lord. He should learn God’s law so that he will know what God considers to be sin for, as John tells us, “Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.” (1 John 3:4) When one commits a sin after coming to faith he is convicted by the law as a lawbreaker and must make atonement for that sin. Many Christians believe that their initial belief in Jesus already atones for these intentional and unintentional sins that they commit after salvation, but the Bible does not teach this. The trespass offering shows the continuing necessity to come to God for forgiveness of sins, even after salvation. Many writings from the New Testament reveal this same truth.

The Purpose of Jesus Christ’s Sacrifice

⁶A Biblical “type” is an historical thing or event that prophetically pictures a future spiritual thing or reality. The prophetic event is called the “antitype.” The concepts of “type” and “antitype” will be used throughout this book.

The initial purpose of Jesus' sacrifice is to establish peace with God through Him. (Romans 5:1) Jesus' death reconciles alienated mankind to his Creator. (Romans 5:10; 2 Cor. 5:18) Hebrews also tells us that this great offering cleanses our conscience from dead works (sins) in order to enable us to serve the living God. (Hebrews 9:14) Paul teaches that once we have faith in Christ's work of reconciliation with God we shall be (future tense) saved by His life. (Romans 5:10) God purposed that our reconciliation with Him would provide the basis by which we might "*reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.*" (Romans 5:17) But, this speaks of *potential* positions of rule available to Christians in the coming Kingdom of God; He does not guarantee a position of rulership with Christ. It is available to all who believe, but it will only be achieved by those who receive (actively take hold of) Christ's abundance of grace and gift of righteousness. (Romans 5:17) Paul thus instructs us to work out our own salvation in fear and trembling. (Phil. 2:12) If we desire to see God's face, then we must also desire the character that goes with it.

Repentance from Sin, the First Christian Work

The Book of Hebrews places repentance first in its list of elementary doctrines in the following passage:

{1} Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, {2} of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. {3} And this we will do if God permits. (Heb 6:1-3)

Unless we learn this primary lesson well, the writer says, we can never "*go on unto perfection.*" (Hebrews 6:1) The normal Christian life, according to John, is life without sin, but "*if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.*" (1 John 2:1) From the very beginning, God provided a means by which the one who does sin may once again become clean before Him. That way is the trespass offering, and its theological equivalent, repentance. Now that the one offering of Jesus Christ has been made we no longer have to sacrifice animals to God, but we do need to pray to our Advocate for continuing forgiveness.

Failure to repent of sin is one of the most telling signs that we stand at the very end of the age. Lawlessness and unrepentance mark today's Laodicean Christians and their institutionalized "form of godliness." The Book of Revelation tells us about the Laodiceans:

{14} "And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: {15} "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. {16} "So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. {17} "Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'; and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked; {18} "I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that

you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. {19} "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. {20} "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. {21} "To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. {22} "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." " (Rev 3:14-22)

The Laodicean and Revelation's other six churches actually existed at the time John wrote his prophecy. It is also true that the seven churches prophetically correspond to different time periods in Church history. Thus they serve as prophetic types in God's Word. The Laodicean Church is last in John's list and it characterizes the end-of-the-age church which includes the multitude of today's denominations and independent churches. Our churches possess huge buildings and vast worldly estates, but in terms of obedience and spiritual revelation they are "*wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.*" Indeed, lawlessness represents the most telling earmark in many of Christ's churches at the dawn of the third day (millennium) since His birth. Rarely will you hear a pastor or teacher exalt God's standards in ways specific enough to convince his people that the lives they live are full of sin and debauchery. Today's church and world events fulfill Paul's prophecy to Timothy:

*{1} But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come:
{2} For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, {3} unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, {4} traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, {5} having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!
{6} For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, {7} always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. {8} Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith; {9} but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was.
(2 Tim 3:1-9)*

If Christians cannot even repent, and thus offer the most basic of the five sacrifices, how will we ever enter into the sanctuary, much less the Most Holy Place of God's actual presence? John says, "*And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.*" (1 John 2:28) Yes, even a Christian may "be ashamed" of himself when He comes again! The purpose, then, of the *āshām*, or trespass, offering was not to bring initial salvation or one's first forgiveness of sins. It provided a means by which a believer could maintain forgiveness and purity before God for his intentional

and unintentional sins and thus remain unashamed before him.

The trespass offering did not represent an Israelite's initial forgiveness from sin or establish his relationship with God. The Passover sacrifice accomplished that. *"Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt."* (Ex. 12:13) The Passover sacrifice and its blood on a Hebrew door was "a sign," that is, it was an historic event with specific prophetic implications.

Laodicean Christians, you see, were (and are) rich, at least in a worldly way. Jesus said, *"It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."* (Mark 10:25) Surely, most Christians stare in astonishment when they become confronted with Scriptures that warn them that they may well miss participation in the Kingdom of God. So did Jesus' very own disciples, for the Scripture says, *"And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved?"* (Mark 10:26) Here, once again, we see Scriptures dealing with the salvation of the soul, not one's initial spiritual salvation. In answer to this question Jesus says, *"With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible."* (Mark 10:27) So, there is hope for us!

The Prophetic Goal of the Trespass Offerings

The trespass offering of Leviticus 5:1-6:7 dealt with God's boundaries upon man's activities. To trespass means to go beyond a point where you have the legal right to go. Webster's dictionary defines trespass as "an actionable wrong against another's person, property, or rights." The word "actionable" means that one can be brought into a court of law for conviction and determination of the proper punishment. Another of Webster's definitions for trespass is "a sin." To trespass the boundaries of God's Law is to sin. As Paul says, *"by the law is the knowledge of sin."* (Romans 3:20) Whenever someone mistakenly or knowingly violated God's Law, he was to bring a trespass offering to the bronze altar that stood in the court of the Tabernacle. Judgment would there be made upon the offering on behalf of the offeror. The offering would atone for the sin of the offeror.

The trespass offering pictures the first steps in our walk with God. It pictures the very first works of a newborn Christian, repentance of both intentional and unintentional sins. God's first requirement after faith comes is to obey Him with the help of the Holy Spirit. The trespass offering showed God's provision of forgiveness by repentance from the very beginning. Today we offer prayers of forgiveness to our Advocate, Jesus Christ. This is the "antitype," or prophetic goal, of the trespass offering.

The ultimate goal of all Christians should be to dwell in the presence of God. David cries, *"How lovely is Your tabernacle, O LORD of hosts! My soul longs, yes, even faints For the courts of the LORD; My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. ... For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God Than dwell in the tents of wickedness."* (Psalm 84:1-2,10) Hebrews declares *"without holiness no one will see the Lord."* (Heb. 12:14 NIV) The trespass offering and its prophetic application, prayers of repentance to Jesus Christ, help us to achieve this goal.

Trespass Types of Sin

I. The first sin of the trespass group deals with *"hearing the utterance of an [false]"*

oath” and refusing to tell the truth to the civil authorities about the matter even though one is an eyewitness to the truth of the issues involved. (Lev. 5:1) Such refusal to uphold the law in society breaks down the social order, especially in a nation like Israel which was supposed to be based upon God’s perfect law. We have witnessed many examples of this type of sin in recent well-publicized trials of important political and entertainment figures. The refusal to tell the truth in a court of law destroys the entire legal system. It is impossible to reach a just result when witnesses lie under oath. All of society ultimately suffers from this breach. The specific intentional sins mentioned in Leviticus 6 regarding the *āshām* offering also relate to sins of lying. Lies and deception characterize the lawless time in which we live, and, unfortunately, even many Christians who live in these times.

To lie and to deceive exhibit characteristics totally contrary to God’s will for our lives. Deceptive Christians may claim God as their father, but Jesus’ words will condemn them just as they did the Pharisees: *“You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”* (John 8:44, NIV) John proclaims that “all liars,” including Christians, will have their place in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. (Rev. 21:8) He also declares that liars, including Christians, will have their place outside the Kingdom and City of God. (Rev. 22:15) This is the place of “weeping and gnashing of teeth” and “outer darkness” that Jesus repeatedly warns His people about.

II. The second type of sins in the *āshām* (trespass) group relates to mistakenly or unintentionally becoming unclean. (Lev. 5:2-3) The Hebrews were required not to touch certain things, like dead animals. These requirements mainly concerned ritualistic or ceremonial laws that do not usually specifically apply to Christians. Nevertheless, they carry prophetic import and application. God commands Christians to maintain a life of separation from the ways of the world, but sometimes we become unclean unintentionally simply by living in the world. We may see a highway billboard, for example, that provokes lustful or covetous thoughts. We need to learn to take every thought captive to Christ immediately and repent of any uncleanness we allow to enter our souls. Thus we may still apply this aspect of the *asham* offering to our walk with God.

III. The third type of trespass relates to vows of the mouth *“to do evil or to do good.”* (Lev. 5:4) Jesus teaches us to answer “Yes,” or “No,” and not to take oaths at all. He says,

{33} "Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.' {34} "But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; {35} "nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. {36} "Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. {37} "But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one. (Mat 5:33-37)

We must learn to control our tongues as James so forcefully warns us. He likens our tongue to a spring that pours forth both fresh and bitter water since we both bless and curse with

our mouth. He asks, “Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening?” (James 3:11,) Clearly, the answer is, “No!” Then he asks, “Who is wise and understanding among you?” (vs. 3:13)

And, we have come to a mystery again! James also teaches, “If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a mature man, able also to bridle the whole body.” (vs. 3:2) The trespass offering presents us with an additional step toward maturity in that it brings us into an awareness of the importance of our words. Jesus warns us, “I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.” (Mat. 12:36-37) We need but remember one command for our speech: “Speak the truth in love.” (Eph. 4:15) Or, as David put it, “I do not hide your righteousness in my heart; I speak of your faithfulness and salvation. I do not conceal your love and your truth from the great assembly.” (Psalm 40:10) When we end this life, let us answer “I am wise and understanding,” to James’ last question and before then let us repent of “every careless word.” Thus we make our *āshām* offering.

IV. The fourth type of sin here involves unintentional sins “regarding the holy things of the LORD.” (Lev. 5:15) After all, what is God’s real desire for us? “And you shall be holy men to Me...” (Ex. 22:31) The word translated “holy” above is the Hebrew word “qodesh.” It first occurs in the passage where God calls to Moses from the burning bush, saying, “Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground.” (Ex. 3:5) To be in the presence of God means to stand on holy ground. Even though unintentional, this was a very serious sin because in addition to the *āshām* offering the priest imposed a twenty percent fine upon the offender. (Lev. 5:15-16)

The penalty seems severe until we realize the goal of our existence, i.e., to dwell in the presence of God continually, beholding His face always. This goal looks forward to the Table of Showbread,, i.e., the “Table of the Bread of Faces that sits before the face of God continually.” John puts it this way:

{28} And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. {29} If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him. Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. {2} Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. {3} And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. (1 John 2:28-3:3)

Our goal, says John, is to “see Him as He is.” However, there is only one way to really see Him. We must purify ourselves, i.e., become holy. We translate the Old Testament Hebrew word “qodesh” as the word “holy.” A key verse using the word *qodesh* is Exodus 26:33, “And you shall hang the veil from the clasps. Then you shall bring the ark of the Testimony in there, behind the veil. The veil shall be a divider for you between the holy place and the Most Holy.” The words translated “the Most Holy” are, in Hebrew, “qodesh qodesh.” So, we see that the

interior of the Tabernacle is a most holy place indeed! And this is our goal, to come into the Most Holy Place, into the *qodesh qodesh*.

The fourth aspect of the *āshām*, then, deals with unintentional mistakes regarding a sacred relationship with a holy God. This speaks of growing in the grace and knowledge of God. Clearly, when the person first committed his error he did not know it. At some point, perhaps through the instruction of the priests or clan elders, he did become aware of his sin. At that time he confessed his sin and brought his trespass offering “to the Lord” as “a sin offering.” Then the priest made “*atonement for him concerning his sin.*” (Lev. 5:5-6)

To repent of and to confess one’s sins means the same thing. Often we learn that we should only confess positive statement about ourselves, but this would often mean that we deny truth and reality. Biblically, “to confess” means “to speak the same thing as.” Thus when a sinner confesses his sin it means that he speaks the same thing as God. This, too, defines the meaning of “to confess Christ.” Those who truly confess Christ speak the same word that Jesus speaks. Their words, doctrines, and actions agree with His commands.

The opposite of confess, however, is to deny. Jude, in verse four of his book, tells us that “*certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.*” The Greek word translated “deny” here is the word *arneomai* and means “to contradict.” (Strong’s) Thus the mark of a false prophet or false teacher of the last days is that his teaching contradicts, or denies, the very words of Christ. To be a false teacher or prophet does not mean that one does not believe in Christ. In fact, most false prophets certainly do believe that Jesus died for their sins. Why do you think it is so hard to find good, true Biblical teaching these days? It is because false teachers and prophets who believe in Christ, yet deny Him, fill our churches. Unfortunately, we do not know how to recognize these false teachers. This is a sign of the times.

We see, then, that the goal of the trespass offering, like repentance for us, was to prepare one to stand unashamed in the holiness, or presence, of God. His thoughts regarding certain matters had come into agreement with God’s and he repented of his old ways.

V. The fifth *āshām* offering involves any unintentional violation of any of God’s laws. The Scripture says, “*If a person sins, and commits any of these things which are forbidden to be done by the commandments of the Lord, though he does not know it, yet he is guilty and shall bear his iniquity.*” (Lev. 5:17) This is where the common law precept “ignorance of the law is no excuse” comes from. Mankind is presumed to know the law, even God’s Law. When an Israelite discovered he had violated God’s Law, he had to make amends for “*he is guilty and shall bear his iniquity.*”

The same is true of us. Rather than denying the Royal Law and declaring it to be worthless, void, and mere legalism, we need to esteem and live according to its precepts. Jesus declared,

{20} "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. {18} "For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. {19} "Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but

whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. {20} "For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven."
(Mat 5:17-20)

The *āshām* offering teaches us to honor God's law in all its fulness. Thus we will fulfill the law of Christ and speak the same Word that He speaks even today.

VI. Intentional sins comprise the sixth, and final, group within the *āshām* category. (Lev. 6:1-7) The specific acts mentioned here relate to lying, robbery, extortion, and coveting (keeping what another has lost or given to him for safekeeping). Paul declares that "*neither thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.*" (1 Cor. 6:10) Clearly, the sins mentioned here are very serious sins. They are so serious, in fact, that in addition to the *āshām* offering the offender must return the stolen property to the victim and pay him an additional twenty percent of the stolen item's value. Further, he must pay the treasury of Lord the "valuation" that the priest determines as punishment for his deceit. (Lev. 6:5-6), which was probably an additional twenty percent of the stolen item's value. See Leviticus 5:16.

The Trespass Offering's Relationship to Truth

The list of sins requiring the *āshām* offering begins and ends with sins of deception. Prophetically, this means that repentant doers of Christ's Word will dwell with Him, but unrepentant liars will be cut off from His people. John blesses and warns,

{14} Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. {15} But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie. (Rev 22:14-15)

The New Testament clearly shows a continuing accountability to God for our sins. The trespass offering teaches the necessity of staying clean before God. The bronze altar speaks of judgment. When the offeror brought his trespass offering to the tabernacle, the priest would "*make atonement for him concerning his sin.*" (Lev. 5:6) Because of this atonement the offeror himself was not judged. His offering took his place. Several types of offerings could be made by the Israelite sinner depending upon his wealth, but the result was always the same, "The priest shall make atonement for him, for his sin that he has committed in any of these matters; and it shall be forgiven him." (Lev. 5:13) The offering itself, of course, looked to the sacrifice of Jesus in order to effect forgiveness. The result was the same then as it is today, however. When the sinner confessed and repented of his sins, he was forgiven. His sins were covered (though the law of sin was not removed from his flesh), and judgment for sin was averted.

Participation in the trespass offering by true repentance therefore begins the Christian journey to holiness. This journey eventually leads into the Tabernacle's sanctuary and finally ends in the presence of God in the Most Holy Place. Our review of the specific sins mentioned in Leviticus showed that the purpose of the trespass offering was not to bring initial salvation or

our first forgiveness of sins. Instead, the *āshām* offering provided a means by which a believer could maintain forgiveness and purity before God, even if he sinned. Thus he could continue standing unashamed before Him although he was still not perfect. The offering theologically applies to us through the doctrine of repentance from dead works (sins).

But What Should We Christians Repent Of?

The critical question for us at the end of the age is this: Of what do we repent? Few people, including Christians, even possess a knowledge of sin because they have cast God's Law out of both their church and their Bible studies. Christians indulge in the most blasphemous of activities and do not even feel a need to repent. They have been trained by their leaders that they have been saved by grace (true) and that their sins will never be counted against them (false). Such teaching is heresy. The immediate result of such doctrinal error is a seared conscience and a mind that does not love the truth. Because they do not love the truth, they become deluded by deceiving spirits. Paul speaks concerning this in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 with respect to the coming of Christ that so many Christians say they wait for. Yes, even Christians can be deluded if they do not love the truth.

The final judgment on one who does not love God's truth is the perdition, or destruction, of his soul, and this is true even for the Christian. "*For,*" according to Hebrews, "*if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.*" (Hebrews 10:26-27) The writer ends his dire warning as follows:

{36} For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: {37} "For yet a little while, And He who is coming will come and will not tarry. {38} Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him." {39} But we are not of those who draw back to perdition [destruction], but of those who believe to the saving of the soul. (Heb 10:36-39)

We believe that this critical need to love the truth reveals why most of the specific, intentional sins mentioned with respect to the trespass offering concern acts of lying and deception. Those with a habit of lying clearly do not love the truth.

The Trespass Offering's Relationship to the Armor of God

The trespass offering also directly parallels the Christian warrior's first piece of armor, the girdle of truth about his loins. (Ephesians 6:14) The loins represent man's procreative power and the most vulnerable place on his body. Attack his loins and a man lies helpless. We also note that the other pieces of a knight's armor were always attached to the girdle. Without the girdle about his loins, the knight stood naked. Similarly, without the knowledge of truth, the believer stands naked before God and will be ashamed before Him at His coming.

Just as the first piece of a knight's armor protects his loins, truth abides as our first defense to the enemy of our souls. Thus, the Christian's first responsibility lies in learning and obeying God's truth. For, if we violate the truth, we sin against God and fall prey to the devil's

wiles. Repentance, of course, answers our sin, but we cannot repent until we know our trespass. This is the first lesson of the Old Testament sacrifices. Many of us never get beyond even this first sacrifice because preachers teach us to despise God's Law as "legalistic" and never tell us that God's Law defines sin. We ourselves fail to study His Word to discern this error and, hence, we never learn those things of which we ought to repent. If we do not know the truth, then we cannot progress with God. We cannot advance to the second offering, which, in our approach to God, is the fourth offering mentioned in Leviticus.

Woe, woe, woe unto us who fail to repent of our known sins and who fail to find out what God requires of us. He who has an ear to hear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Chapter 5

THE SIN OFFERING (Faith)

If the anointed priest sins, bringing guilt on the people, then let him offer to the LORD for his sin which he has sinned a young bull without blemish as a sin offering. (Lev 4:3)

Now if the whole congregation of Israel sins unintentionally, and the thing is hidden from the eyes of the assembly, and they have done something against any of the commandments of the LORD in anything which should not be done, and are guilty; (Lev 4:13)

When a ruler has sinned, and done something unintentionally against any of the commandments of the LORD his God in anything which should not be done, and is guilty, (Lev 4:22)

If anyone of the common people sins unintentionally by doing something against any of the commandments of the LORD in anything which ought not to be done, and is guilty, (Lev 4:27)

“I have always---at least, ever since I can remember---had a kind of longing for death.”

“Ah, Psyche,” I said, “have I made you so little happy as that?”

“No, no, no,” she said. “You don’t understand. Not that kind of longing. It was when I was happiest that I longed most. It was on happy days when we were up there on the hills, the three of us, with the wind and the sunshine ... where you couldn’t see Glome or the palace. Do you remember? The colour and the smell, and looking across at the Grey Mountain in the distance? And because it was so beautiful, it set me longing, always longing. Somewhere else there must be more of it. Everything seemed to be saying, Psyche come! But I couldn’t (not yet) come and I didn’t know where I was to come to. It almost hurt me. I felt like a bird in a cage when the other birds of its kind are flying home.”

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At this time Glome dwelt in the midst of drought and plague. Her people were dying and rising in revolt and surrounding kingdoms made threats of war. So, it had been determined by the priest of Ungit and the elders of the people that Psyche, the beautiful princess, must be offered to the god of the Mountain for the good of all. The king gladly consented when he

realized that it was not him they wanted to sacrifice. Orual wept and pled for her sister's life, but nothing could sway the king from offering Psyche to Ungit or Ungit's son, or whoever the god of the Mountain was. Psyche would be the sin offering the god required.

Orual visited Psyche once between the moment the king determined she should be sacrificed and the time of the offering itself. She secretly hoped that Psyche would mourn as she did for her stolen life, and it grieved her that she did not. Little did Orual realize that Psyche had already given herself to the god of the Mountain. Her life belonged to him already. She was at peace with her god. She had chosen to die before she died, and thus she was the one chosen to be the bride of the god. Psyche, as a pattern of the overcoming saint, teaches us the same lesson as the five Levitical sacrifices as a whole.

In this scene Lewis uses the relationship between Orual and Psyche to again portray the struggle between the carnal and the spiritual Christian. Orual focuses on this world and her relationships in this world. She becomes angry and cries when she finds that Psyche's face is turned toward her god rather than herself. Psyche still affirms her love for Orual, but she makes clear her longing for her god. In the relationship between Orual and Psyche, Lewis describes the meaning of Jesus' instructions to us, *"If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple."* (Luke 14:26) Orual perceives that Psyche "hates" her in comparison with her longing for God, and she accuses her sister as "cruel" for it. The second type of offering we will study, the sin offering, provides a remedy for poor Orual's lack of understanding.

The Serious Nature of Unintentional Sins

Leviticus 4 comprises the main passage about the sin offering. In this chapter God provides rules for four separate types of sin offering, 1) for the sinning priest, 2) for the whole congregation, 3) for the ruler of the people, and 4) for the common citizen. According to verses 2, 13, 22, 27, a sin offering was made for an "unintentional sin," that is, a sin committed because of an error in understanding the commandments of God. The fact that a sin offering was made, however, implies that the offeror had recently come into a knowledge of his sin. This speaks of the ongoing nature of our relationship with God. *"To whom much is given much is required."* (Luke 12:48) As a believer continues his journey with God he will come to understand more of God's truth. With truth comes accountability. Mature believers are responsible for greater holiness before God than the babe in Christ. As we mature we become cognizant that things we used to do and teach without defiling our conscience now render us unclean and thus soil the white garments of our salvation. We must, therefore, repent of such actions and doctrine.

The Sin Offering

God divides the sin offering into four separate groups because of each group's specific role in society. In this study, we will look mainly at the first group, that of the "anointed priest." First, we see that if the anointed priest sins, he will bring guilt upon all the people of Israel. This truth brings a serious and sober warning to us. It speaks of the accountability of religious leadership, whether as a father, mother, elder, pastor, teacher, evangelist, prophet, or apostle. Those under our authority, and especially our children, will bear the guilt of even our unintentional sins. All of our sins will eventually lead others into the same or similar trespasses.

Consider, for example, the great sin of Aaron who fashioned the golden calf idol and

presided over Israel's worship of it. (Exodus 32) Aaron himself made the molded calf. He even built an altar to it and proclaimed "a feast to the LORD." Then *"they rose early on the next day, offered burnt offering, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play."* (Ex. 32:4-6) Paul quotes this key passage when he teaches about food sacrificed to idols. He intends that we learn from Israel's example. Paul says, *"Do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, 'The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.'"* (1 Cor. 10:7)

When Moses came down from the mountain of God to see this abomination he *"saw that the people were unrestrained (for Aaron had not restrained them, to their shame among their enemies)."* (Ex. 32:25) Then Moses pronounced judgment upon the people, saying, *"Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'Let every man put his sword on his side, and go in and out from entrance to entrance throughout the camp, and let every man kill his brother, every man his companion, and every man his neighbor.'"* (Ex. 32:27)

The sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses and killed three thousand of their brethren that day. Yet Moses, a Levite, did not kill Aaron, his brother who actually allowed, participated in, and led the people to commit this sin. We see here that the anointed priest, Aaron, brought guilt upon the people and that the people, not the priest, were judged accordingly. The LORD proclaimed this principle to Moses when He revealed Himself to him. *"And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, 'The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, **visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation.**'"* (Ex. 34:6-7) Children often pay the price for their parents mistakes.

Likewise do church members bear the iniquity of the sins of their leaders. We know that some Christian leaders sin deliberately and the members who tolerate such sins surely suffer for it. But, this sin offering covered unintentional sins against the Lord's commandments. (Lev. 4:2) This prophetically speaks of the sin of teaching false doctrine, even when the leader does not know that his teaching is false. James warns, *"My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment."* (James 3:1) Paul teaches, *"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, **rightly dividing the word of truth.** But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness."* (2 Tim. 2:15-16) Here we find a major clue concerning the mystery of food sacrificed to idols. God required that food be sacrificed to Him by the anointed priest even though he might have sinned in some aspect of his ministry of the things of God. But, why is a doctrinal error or a sin of ministry, even if unintentional, so important?

Doctrinal Errors Misrepresent Jesus Himself

We know that *"man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD."* (Deut. 8:3; Mat. 4:4; Luke 4:4) We also know that the ministry of the anointed priest concerned this Word of God as presented in His books and commandments. Jesus said,

{48} "I am the bread of life. {49} "Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. {50} "This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. {51} "I am

the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world." ... {53} Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. {54} "Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. {55} "For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. {56} "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. {57} "As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. {58} "This is the bread which came down from heaven; not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever." (John 6:48-58)

Jesus says His flesh is “food indeed,” and that His blood is “drink indeed” in verse 55. What is He saying? Is He really saying that we should eat his literal flesh and drink his literal blood. Of course not. His disciples were offended by this teaching (vs. 61), so Jesus had to explain what he meant. He said, “*The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.*” (John 6:63) Remember that before Paul introduces the doctrine of food sacrificed to idols he first says, “*These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*” (1 Cor 2:13-14) He says this to prepare us for the spiritual content that follows.

At one point Jesus says that “*man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.*” Then we hear Him say, “*He who eats this bread will live forever.*” Which is right? Both. The first instruction relates to natural bread, the kind we must eat to sustain our physical bodies of flesh. The second concerns spiritual bread, or spiritual food. Spiritual bread is the Word of God, the words of Christ. Spiritual bread is true doctrine. The sin offering required the anointed priest to offer sacrifices when he erred in teaching or performing true doctrine.

These Scriptures reveal the critical importance of serving the Truth to God’s people. Teachers who bring old, moldy bread (corrupt doctrine) to their hearers “*bring guilt upon the people.*” (Lev. 4:3) This warning applies to parents as well as pastors. The Bible teaches us to train our children in the fear and admonition of the Lord. (Eph. 6:4; Deut. 6:6-7) Christians suffer untold consequences from unsupervised fraternization of their children with unbelievers. How many Christian parents have grieved over the drug abuse and sexual activity of their children? How many have attempted to de-program their children from false evolutionary teaching? How many have counseled their daughters to have abortions when they became pregnant out of wedlock? How many Christian parents have given their sons money to pay for their girlfriend’s abortion? How many have seen their children turn away from their faith? Our spiritual leaders err regarding education, abortion, and sexual activity and they bring guilt upon us. Parents, in turn, bring guilt upon their children, who will also bring guilt upon their children. We all pay a heavy price because we do not recognize and repent of this sin.

Before the Face of God

The anointed priest who sinned was to bring a *“bull to the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the LORD, lay his hand on the bull’s head, and kill the bull before the LORD.”* (Lev. 4:4) The Hebrew word *paniyim* is translated “before” both times in this verse. The word *paniyim* actually means “face,” however, so God instructs us here to bring the sacrificial bull before His very face. This speaks of coming into God’s literal presence. The priests were to understand that their sacrifice actually occurred in front of the very face of God. They were to know that they stood in His presence although they were still not allowed to see Him face to face. To make this even more clear God required that they *“take some of the bull’s blood and bring it to the tabernacle of meeting.”* (Lev. 4:5) They had to actually go into the Holy Place of God’s presence inside the tent of God’s dwelling. How fearful this must have been! Then he was to *“dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle some of the blood seven times before (paniyim) the LORD in front of (before - paniyim) the veil of the sanctuary.”* (Lev. 4:6) This sprinkling occurred before the face of God before the face of the *separatrix* (veil) of qodesh (holiness).

The *separatrix* itself speaks of the separation that still exists between God and man so long as man remains but flesh. It also relates to the separation from the world that God requires of His people. Beyond the *separatrix* lay the ark containing the testimony of God and within that Most Holy Place dwelt the very presence of God. Now we have come to that holy doctrine of separation from the things of the world.

A Holy Nation

Standing before God, the anointed priest was directly confronted with his awesome task of correctly teaching his people to be a holy nation, separated from worldly mammon and separated unto the things of God. He should, therefore, have remembered the words of God to Moses:

{5} “Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. {6} And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel.” (Ex.. 19:5-6,)

God’s present calling to Christians exactly parallels this ancient call, says Peter.

{9} But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; {10} who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy. {11} Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul.... (1 Peter 2:9-11,)

Thus we understand that the sin offering concerns the issues of separation (sanctification) from the things of the world and of holiness before God. Another word for sanctification and holiness is “righteousness.” God’s plan from the very beginning, therefore, has been to prepare a

“royal priesthood,” or “kingdom of priests” who will walk in His righteous ways. Only then will He have established a “holy nation” upon the earth. We do not yet see this holy nation, but we must understand that this is God’s plan concerning mankind, and it will come to pass! Now we only see this coming nation by faith. God commends the heroes of the faith in Hebrews 11 for patiently waiting for this celestial city, this New Jerusalem. This city will soon be revealed and it will not stand upon or in a new temple in the old Jerusalem.

Faith, Righteousness and Justice in the Plan of God

God requires the Christian to live “by faith.” The prophet Habakkuk simply said, “*The Just shall live by faith.*” (Hab. 2:4) Hebrews quotes this phrase in verse 10:38, and goes on to say, “*without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*” (Hebrews 11:6) As a Christian grows in his faith he learns the ways of God and comes to understand that even the way he has lived his “Christian” life is sinful before God. He begins to understand Paul’s admonition, “*If anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know.*” (1 Cor. 8:2) As one grows in faith and knowledge, therefore, he repents of his earlier unintentional violations of God’s Word.

Thus we see that the sin offering relates to the second elementary doctrine of the gospel which is “*faith toward God.*” (Hebrews 6:1) God does not expect us to know it all when we begin our Christian life, but he does expect us to begin walking by faith. God will reveal His ways as we do this and will allow us to turn from our unknowing mistakes.

The sin offering’s proximity to the presence, holiness, and righteousness of God also shows us that this sacrifice corresponds typologically to the second article of clothing donned by the warrior of God, the breastplate of righteousness. (Eph. 6:14) Paul also calls this piece of armor “*the breastplate of faith and love*” in 1 Thessalonians 5:8. This helps us understand and define the word “righteousness” for we see here that to walk in righteousness means to walk in faith and love. Notice the tie-in to faith again and consider the Christian soldier’s “shield of faith.” (Eph. 6:16) So, we see that the sin offering relates to faith and righteousness.

Now we come to a very interesting truth. Remember, we found that the trespass offering corresponds to truth. Consider the following verse where Ethan the Ezrahite writes,

*Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne;
Mercy and truth go before Your face. (Ps. 89:14)*

Further study of God’s Word clearly reveals that the word “truth” corresponds to God’s justice and that “mercy” describes “righteousness.” The verse above represents just one instance where God explicitly makes this comparison. There exist many, many more.⁷ By substituting these words, therefore, we come to know that righteousness and truth form the foundation of God’s throne. These two words thus define God’s ways and show us the basis of His authority to rule all of creation. This also reveals that the first two articles of Christian armor, truth and righteousness, should also establish the foundation of a Christian’s life. These concepts, in turn, correspond to the Hebrews’ foundational doctrines of repentance and faith toward God. We repent as we come to know the truth. We walk in righteousness as we walk by faith. Thus we

⁷See *The Separation*, 1999, an unpublished manuscript by this author in order to study these two concepts in detail.

come to understand the ways of God!

Summary of the Sin Offering

We can now see that the first two Levitical sacrifices correspond to God's authority to rule the universe and to the Christian's potential authority to rule and reign under King Jesus. These two ideas are intertwined in the mind of God. Just as Moses discovered, God uses His laws to teach His ways. (Psalm 103:7) Do not let this truth escape you. God's judgment only comes upon His people because they fail to try to apprehend and live according to God's truth and righteousness. God only exalts into rulership those saints that mourn over their current carnal lives and long to live more fully according to God's ways of truth and righteousness.

Now we understand that the truths embodied by the trespass and sin offerings form the foundation of our walk with God. First, we learn to repent of intentional and certain unintentional sins. Then we learn to pursue the holiness of God and come to repent of unintentional sins regarding our religious duties to God and man. Understanding the sin offering should cause living preachers and teachers to repent of their false teachings and seek God for His truth. Likewise, this understanding should cause "laymen" to repent for continually sitting under false doctrine and stir them to seek the truth for themselves. It should also motivate us to walk by faith according to what is true. It prophetically pictures atonement for feeding food sacrificed to idols to God's people and, conversely, for eating defiled food (doctrine) without discernment. Now that we know, though, will we repent and walk by faith in God's truth? Jesus warned, *"When the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"* (Luke 18:8)

Chapter 6

THE BRONZE LAVER (Baptisms)

{18} "You shall also make a laver of bronze, with its base also of bronze, for washing. You shall put it between the tabernacle of meeting and the altar. And you shall put water in it, {19} "for Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet in water from it. {20} "When they go into the tabernacle of meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister, to burn an offering made by fire to the LORD, they shall wash with water, lest they die. {21} "So they shall wash their hands and their feet, lest they die. And it shall be a statute forever to them; to him and his descendants throughout their generations." (Exodus 30:18-21)

"And, Orual" (her voice grew very low). "when I took the cup, I--- I---**felt** the other hands, touching my own. Again, that burning, though without pain. That was terrible." She blushed suddenly and (I wondered why) laughed. "It wouldn't be terrible now," she said. "Then they had me to the bath. You shall see it. It is in the most delicate pillared court open to the sky, and the water is like crystal and smells sweet as ... as sweet as this whole valley. I was terribly shy when it came to taking off my clothes, but----"

"You said they were all she-spirits."

"Oh, Maia, you still don't understand. This shame has nothing to do with He or She. It's the being mortal---being, how shall I say it? ... insufficient. Don't you think a dream would feel shy if it were seen walking about in the waking world? And then" (she was speaking more and more quickly now) "they dressed me again—in the most beautiful things---and then came the banquet---and the music---and then they had me to bed---and the night came---and then---he."

"He?"

"The Bridegroom ... the god himself." **Faces**, 114-115

Psyche must be bathed in water, or baptized, before she can meet her Bridegroom, her God. She must also partake of the cup of wine, symbolizing communion. These events all

concern Psyche's continuing willingness to die to self. To take off her clothes speaks of putting off the sinful flesh nature. Psyche still felt ashamed because that nature had not been, even by this time, totally consumed. The burning caused by the spiritual hands touching hers relates to the baptism of fire that purges the dross from us. Yes, we may have been baptized in water once upon a time, but like Psyche, we must "take off our clothes" and die to our flesh daily. Someday we will all "take off" our mortal clothes forever.

Similarly, Exodus 30 shows that every anointed priest who appeared inside the Tabernacle or who offered a sacrifice first had to wash his hands and his feet in the bronze laver according to the explicit instructions of Moses. God said, "*They shall wash with water lest they die.*" (Ex. 30:20) God's chosen priests today (Christians) must also wash in water lest they die. Most Christians do not understand this. The washing required of the Levitical priests pointed ahead to the truth contained in Ephesians 5:26, "*the washing of water by the word.*" This is how Christ sanctifies, or sets apart, His Bride, his overcomers, unto perfection. This "*washing of water by the word*" is the "one baptism" of which Paul speaks in Ephesians 4:5. Notice, however, that the elementary Christian doctrines in Hebrews 6:1-2 refers to baptisms in the plural. In this chapter we will consider the entire "doctrine of baptisms," not just the "one baptism" of Ephesians 4:5.

The Mystery of the Waters

Baptizo is the Greek word used to translate the Hebrew word for "washing" found in the Old Testament. *Baptizo* is translated baptism or baptize in the New Testament. In order to understand baptism, therefore, we have to examine the Old Covenant ceremonial washings. Strong says that *baptizo* means "to make fully wet in a ceremonial ablution." An ablution is "a cleansing, or purification by water." (Webster's 1828 Dictionary) Scriptural washings or baptisms, then, concern the whole concept of cleansing by water.

"Water" itself is a mystery, even in the natural. For example, it is the only compound known to man that becomes lighter, instead of heavier, when it freezes. This is why ice floats and does not sink to the bottom of a lake, killing everything between it and the sandy bottom. The word "water" first appears in Genesis 1:2 where we read, "*The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.*" A few verses later we read,

{6} Then God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters." {7} Thus God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament; and it was so. {8} And God called the firmament Heaven. So the evening and the morning were the second day. (Gen 1:6-8)

Notice that "heaven" divides or separates the waters below it from the waters above it. Somehow the waters below relate to man and the waters above to Jesus Christ. On one hand, a man's body is said to consist of 70 percent water which is about the same ratio of water to dry land on the surface of the earth. Also, Scripture calls the masses of mankind "the Sea." See Jude 1:13 and many other verses. On the other hand, Christ is the Word (John 1) which is also the Water that cleanses man (Eph. 5:26). Genesis says there exists a division, or separation, between

the waters above heaven and the waters below. The waters above the firmament are spiritual, but the waters below are natural and concern the flesh.

The bronze laver sat between the altar and the tabernacle of meeting. In Solomon's temple, this laver was replaced by one much larger called "the bronze Sea." (1 Chronicles 18:8) The bronze metal used in the laver and Sea speaks of God's judgment upon sin and man's sinful nature, the flesh. Water filled the bronze laver in the Tabernacle courtyard according to Exodus 30:18, 40:7, and 40:30. The washings by the water within the laver correspond to the various baptisms comprehended by Hebrews 6:2.

The Four Baptisms

I. The first, and oftentimes only, baptism that a Christian ever understands is that ceremonial act we call "**Christian baptism.**" This is the baptism of which all believers should partake. It corresponds to the washing required by all priests under the Old Covenant. All priests had to wash before they could minister to God at the altar or in the Tabernacle of Meeting.

{18} "You shall also make a laver of bronze, with its base also of bronze, for washing. You shall put it between the tabernacle of meeting and the altar. And you shall put water in it, {19} "for Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet in water from it. {20} "When they go into the tabernacle of meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister, to burn an offering made by fire to the LORD, they shall wash with water, lest they die. {21} "So they shall wash their hands and their feet, lest they die. And it shall be a statute forever to them; to him and his descendants throughout their generations." (Exo 30:18-21)

We saw above how the trespass and sin offerings relate to repentance of sin and of faith toward God, the first two elementary teachings of Christ. All priests had to wash in the bronze laver before they could offer these sacrifices. This washing in the bronze laver prefigured the baptism of John and what we currently know as Christian baptism. John's baptism was a baptism of repentance from sin. The people responded to John's message because of their fear of God and His coming judgment. After Jesus this baptism also included the aspect of faith toward God because people were baptized in obedience to their new faith in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of their sins.

Many of us are baptized in a small sea or laver of water after we first believe in Jesus' atoning sacrifice. Others are sprinkled with water by a minister of the congregation either after conversion or as a child. This sprinkling is actually more akin to Old Testament washings than is baptism by immersion. Both methods effectuate God's purposes, however, because Christian baptism merely *represents* spiritual realities. "Christian" baptism is something that believers do in the natural in order to reveal spiritual truths. The truths signified by such baptism are at least three-fold.

Christian baptism denotes: **1) Repentance from sin**, which is similar to John's baptism. This is the initial baptism of which a believer spiritually partakes and corresponds to the most basic Christian doctrine, repentance from dead works. This is the baptism of Acts 2:38, "*Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and*

you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

2) Spiritual death is also signified. Baptism by immersion strongly portrays this spiritual reality. Here baptism symbolizes that truth taught in Galatians 2:20, *“I am crucified with Christ.”*

3) Life with Christ in heavenly places. Baptism also represents our resurrection with Christ. Paul says, *“{4} But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, {5} even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), {6} and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus....”* (Eph 2:4-6)

II. The baptism of the Holy Spirit

John the Baptist said concerning Jesus, *“I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.”* (Mat 3:11)

When a believer is baptized in the name of Jesus Christ he receives the “earnest” of the Holy Spirit according to Acts 2:38 and 2 Corinthians 1:22. This means that the Holy Spirit now dwells within the spirit of the believer. It is by the witness of this Spirit in our spirits that we know we belong to Christ. There also exists another “baptism of the Holy Spirit” that “charismatic” and “pentecostal” believers often talk about that relates to God’s further working and gifting in an individual. Strictly speaking, though, charismatics and pentecostals do not necessarily enjoy any more of the Holy Spirit than other believers. Often, however, they do believe in a more active role and presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives than do other believers. Thus, they sometimes walk in spiritual gifts that others do not. See I Corinthians 12-14. Unfortunately, many charismatics fake spiritual gifting and/or do not discern the spirit that brings the “gift.” This has led to incredible deception in some of their churches.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is also symbolized by the sprinkling of oil in the Old Testament. This occurs, for example, in the anointing ceremony of Aaron and his sons in Exodus 29.

III. The Baptism of Fire

The baptism of fire of which Scripture speaks is also called “the washing of water by the Word.” It portrays sanctification and the salvation of the soul. Much of this book concerns this aspect of baptism and is covered more fully in this chapter below. The water of separation found in the chapter on the law of the red heifer also concerns this baptism. About this baptism, John the Baptist said, *“I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.”* (Luke 3:16)

IV. The Baptism of Suffering

Christian baptism, especially by immersion, pictures the Christian dying to self and rising to live in the newness of Christ’s life, but this does not portray the baptism of suffering. The baptism of suffering is most clearly seen in the many baptisms by the sprinkling of blood in the Old Covenant ceremonies. We see this also in the consecration of Aaron and his sons in Exodus

29.

The baptism of suffering speaks of death to self, the willingness to give up those things that our flesh desires. In a very real sense the baptism of suffering and the baptism of fire speak of the same thing, for the washing by the water of the Word leads to the death of self, of the flesh. Recall that both water and blood came from Jesus' side when He was pierced. (John 19:34; 1 John 5:6)

The Method of "Christian Baptism"

Thus we see that our obedience in getting "baptized" by immersion or sprinkling is not the spiritual reality itself. Men's methods of baptism are effective for obeying the Scriptures and count as an initial, elementary act of faith. If an infant is baptized by the command of his parents it fulfills the requirement of Acts 16:33, for example. If an older child or adult comes to saving faith in Jesus and gets baptized in obedience to the Word, this fulfills the Scriptures according to Acts 2:38 and 8:12. Simply being immersed in or sprinkled with water, however, is just the beginning of the teaching about baptism. The ceremonial act itself is only a picture and does not effect the actual reality that God requires. It certainly does not bring anyone spiritual salvation as some believe. A person could easily be led into baptism by immersion or sprinkling and yet still not believe in Jesus Christ. Others misinterpret every Scripture concerning baptism as only dealing with one's initial salvation experience.

Baptism and the Salvation of the Soul (The Baptism of Fire)

We see a basic teaching concerning baptism in the following verses from Hebrews and Peter:

For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. (Heb 4:12)

{18} For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, {19} by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, {20} who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. {21} There is also an antitype which now saves us; baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, {22} who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him. (1 Pet 3:18-22)

These two passages concern the Gospel of the salvation of the soul versus the salvation of the spirit. Our soul consists of our mind, will, and emotions. Paul mentions the tripartite nature

of man, his body, soul, and spirit, in 1 Thessalonians 5:23. He teaches us in the Book of Romans to put our abstract soulical organs under the rule of the spirit.⁸ Only then, says he, can we please God. (Romans 8:6-10) Salvation of the spirit comes by faith alone in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ for our sins. It is a one time, once for all, event that cannot be lost or given away and comes as a gift from God. Salvation of our soul, however, concerns a process in which a believer may or may not choose to participate. This is why Paul said, “*Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling*” and then ties this salvation specifically to works of obedience. (Phil. 2:12)

Hebrews 4:12 informs us that the two-edged sword of the Spirit actively divides man’s soul and spirit. Ephesians 6:17 tells us that the sword of the Spirit is the Word of God, so Hebrews teaches that the division of soul and spirit comes by the working of the Word. Hebrews thus confirms Ephesians 5:26 and directly relates the salvation of the soul (not the spirit) with sanctification and spiritual cleansing which comes “*by the washing of water by the word.*”

Next, Peter tells us that Noah and the flood prophetically point to baptism “*which now saves us.*” This deals specifically with soul salvation and it comes “through water,” i.e. the washing of water by the Word. By comparing Hebrews 4:12 with 1 Peter 3:18-22 and Ephesians 5:26 and 6:17, we can see the relationship between the doctrine of baptisms and the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. This completes the Christian warrior’s armor.

Some people erroneously teach that Peter 3:18-22 teaches that a person cannot be spiritually saved until he is baptized. This adds a work to one’s initial faith in order to be saved. Paul says, however, “*{8} For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, {9} not of works, lest anyone should boast. {10} For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*” (Eph 2:8-10 NKJV) Good works come after salvation, not before it.

It is clear that Peter does not describe initial salvation by baptism. Instead, he says that this baptism is **not for** “the removal of the filth of the flesh.” This means that this is not the baptism relating to putting away our sins. Instead, says Peter, this baptism is the “*answer of a good conscience toward God.*” (vs. 23) Since it is the “answer” of a good conscience, the Christian’s conscience must have been cleansed before he gave the answer. This person has already believed in Jesus and begun to walk with Him, just as Noah had done. Remember, this baptism happened to Noah many years after he pleased and found favor with God. Hebrews 9:13-14 makes it clear that it is the blood of Christ that cleanses the believer’s “*conscience from dead works to serve the living God.*” It is only after one’s conscience has been cleansed by faith in the Blood of Jesus that he goes on to immerse or wash himself in Christ’s Word. This is how we renew our minds and conform our beings to the ways of God.

Peter’s teaching concerning baptism does not bear primarily on repentance, which is the act by which we clean ourselves spiritually. In other words when Peter says that this baptism is not for the removal of the filth of the flesh, he is saying that this baptism does not relate specifically to repentance for sins of the flesh. He is not, therefore, talking about John’s baptism. Remember, first the natural, then the spiritual. Peter here speaks of “*the washing of water by the word,*” which is the baptism of fire that will save our souls if we voluntarily submit to it. He thus addresses the soul salvation of the believer, not one’s initial spiritual salvation. The Book of Hebrews, as we will see, deals at length with issues concerning the salvation of the soul.

This teaching manifests why it is so extremely difficult for believers to move on to

⁸For an excellent treatment of the theology of the tripartite nature of man, please see *The Spiritual Man* by Watchman Nee.

spiritual maturity. Most of us do not even understand this third elementary teaching of Christ listed in Hebrews 6:1-2. We mistakenly believe that the doctrine of baptisms relates only to John's baptism, which is a baptism of repentance. Others do realize that the doctrine also includes the "baptism of the Holy Spirit" in Acts 1:5 and 1:8. This baptism, however, only consists of the earnest of the Holy Spirit that Jesus gives when we believe. (2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5) It does not betoken the fullness of his Spirit for which we all yearn. This baptism sometimes comes with evidence of speaking in tongues or other miraculous signs. Often it does not. Regardless of the way that the Holy Spirit comes to us, if we believe in Jesus, we will be aware that He lives within us. *"Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you-- unless indeed you fail the test?"* (2 Cor. 13:5, NASB) When we pass this test we may proceed to understand the ways of God.

Why is the Washing of Water by the Word called a Baptism of Fire?

We have now seen that the doctrine of baptisms includes 1) Christian baptism, which includes i) John's baptism of repentance and ii) the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory, and 2) the baptism represented by Noah which is the washing of water by the Word.

John said, *"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."* (Mat. 3:11) The baptism with fire is the baptism of Christ's Word. Now let us recognize that the washing of water by the word and the baptism of fire attest to one reality. Consider the teachings of God's prophets. First, Moses proclaimed, *"The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: **from his right hand went a fiery law** for them. Yea, he loved the people; all his saints are in thy hand: and they sat down at thy feet; every one shall receive of thy words."* (Deu 33:2-3 KJV) Notice here the relationship of God's "fiery law" to receiving His "words."

Years later Jeremiah prophesied, *"The prophet who has a dream, let him tell a dream; And he who has My word, let him speak My word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat?' says the LORD. **'Is not My word like a fire?'** says the LORD, **'And like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?'**"* (Jer. 23:28-29) These verses show a direct correlation between God's Word and fire. Here God reveals that the washing of water by the Word works like fire in our lives. It purges the dross from our carnal soul, renews our mind, and conforms us into the image of the Holy One of Israel. Thus we know that the washing of water by the Word and the baptism of fire attest to the same spiritual reality.

The Baptism of Suffering

Fourth, and finally, we see in Scripture the baptism of suffering.

But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" {39} They said to Him, "We are able." So Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink the cup that I drink, and with the baptism I am baptized with you will be baptized; {40} "but

to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared." {41} And when the ten heard it, they began to be greatly displeased with James and John. {42} But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. {43} "Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. {44} "And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. {45} "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." (Mark 10:38-45)

Mark tells us that the final baptism is the baptism of death to self. Paul tells us that suffering with Christ is required in order to share in His glory. Concerning himself he writes, *"that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead."* (Phil. 3:10-11). In the very next verse Paul admits that he had not yet attained this resurrection of which he hoped. But, didn't Paul believe in Jesus? Hadn't he been baptized? Hadn't Paul been begotten of God (spiritually saved)? Yes. Yes. Yes. But, he was not yet sure if he had reached the goal of his salvation, the saving of his soul. It was only late in his life, just before his death, that he could say,

{6} For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. {7} I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. {8} Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing. (2 Tim 4:6-8)

Here dwell two keys for attaining the salvation of our souls, 1) dying to self as a poured out drink offering and 2) loving His appearing. Paul teaches us to willingly deny self and steadfastly look for the return of Jesus Christ. We do not want to emulate the Jews who missed His first coming by missing His second coming. For, according to Hebrews 6:6 and 10:26, if we crucify him a second time, there remains no sacrifice for sin. The baptism of suffering and the baptism of fire both speak of the same thing. These are portrayed by the sprinkling of blood in the Old Testament.

These, then, are the four lessons which the Brazen Laver teaches us. All four combine together to comprise the third elementary teaching of Christianity called "baptisms."

Chapter 7

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

vs.

THE FREEWILL OF MAN

(The Peace and Grain Offerings)

{1} And if his oblation be a sacrifice of peace offering, if he offer it of the herd; whether it be a male or female, he shall offer it without blemish before the LORD. {2} And he shall lay his hand upon the head of his offering, and kill it at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and Aaron's sons the priests shall sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about. {3} And he shall offer of the sacrifice of the peace offering an offering made by fire unto the LORD.... Leviticus 3:1-3 KJV

*“Is it **my** heart that is hardened?” asked Orual.*

“Never to me; nor mine to you at all. But listen. Are these things so evil as they seemed? The gods will have mortal blood. But they say whose. If they had chosen any other in the land, that would have been only terror and cruel misery. But they chose me. And I am the one who has been made ready for it ever since I was a little child in your arms, Maia. The sweetest thing in all my life has been the longing--to reach the Mountain to find the place where all the beauty came from--”

“And that was the sweetest? Oh, cruel, cruel. Your heart is not of iron--stone, rather,” I sobbed. Faces, 75

Orual simply cannot understand how Psyche can remain fearless and joyful the night before her literal sacrifice to the god of the Mountain. She, in fact, sees Psyche's willingness to be offered as a betrayal of her sister's love for her. When Psyche actually calls her longing for God sweeter than her relationship to her sister, Orual becomes jealous. Thus she uses words that attempt to pry Psyche away from her love for her God. In the end she accuses the most tender Psyche of having a heart of stone.

The Sovereignty of God

The peace, the grain, and the burnt offerings all teach about God's sovereignty. God requires us to obey Him, yet He wants us to do so willingly and not under compulsion. The idea of willing obedience presents us with another one of the great tensions or mysteries of Scripture, man's free will versus God's sovereignty. This also brings us to the distinction between the Old and New Covenants. Under Moses' law, or the Old Covenant, strict obedience to God's Law

established fellowship with God. This covenant failed and history proves that man cannot obey God from his own strength. On the other hand, the New Covenant teaches that fellowship with God, by faith in Jesus Christ, brings us into obedience to Him. God Himself, sovereignly by His Spirit, moves us to believe in and obey Him. At this time, however, even under the New Covenant we cannot perfectly obey God. We still live in carnal bodies of flesh.

Our problem, like believers in virtually all of the world's religions, continues to be that we attempt to please God through the power of our own flesh. Even Paul proclaimed that he could not do that. He said,

*{14} For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. {15} For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. {16} If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. {17} But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. {18} For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. {19} For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. {20} Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. {21} I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. {22} For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. {23} But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to **the law of sin** which is in my members. {24} O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? (Rom 7:14-24)*

In 1 John 3:4, John defines sin as “lawlessness.” Thus this “law of sin” here is the law of lawlessness, the law of disobeying God’s Law. Paul declares in Romans 7 that his carnal flesh cannot perfectly obey God’s Law, but instead sometimes obeys the law of sin. None of us who still live in the flesh can perfectly obey God. What is the answer to our problem then? How can we ever please God? God sovereignly prepared the answer in the person of Jesus. When we learn to fellowship with Him by faith, we will find that we will live by the Spirit. When we live by the Spirit, His desires become our desires. When we desire what God desires we will voluntarily fulfill God’s Law. Thus God sovereignly moves in us until our “freewill” merges with His will.

The next three offerings describe this prophetically.

The Peace Offering

The third altar sacrifice is the “peace offering” and was offered as “*food, an offering made by fire for a sweet aroma*” to God. (Lev. 3:16) This offering corresponds to a believer’s trusting walk with God in the assurance of faith that he stands clean before God. Having repented of all known intentional and unintentional sins, as represented by the trespass and sin offerings, he now walks in peace with God. Leviticus 7:11-21 reveals that the peace offering was offered for “*thanksgiving,*” (vs. 12), or as a “*vow or voluntary offering.*” (vs. 16). David

writes, *"I will freely sacrifice to You; I will praise Your Name, O Lord, for it is good."* (Psalm 54:6) Hebrews proclaims, *"Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name."* (Heb 13:15) The peace offering foretells true praise and worship of God, offered thankfully and voluntarily by His own people. The peace offering also speaks of the purpose, or goal, of true worship, which is to convey our love to our Beloved. Jeremiah prophesies,

The voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voice of those who will say: "Praise the LORD of hosts, For the LORD is good, For His mercy endures forever"; and of those who will bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the LORD. For I will cause the captives of the land to return as at the first,' says the LORD. (Jer 33:11)

Leviticus 3 tells us that the peace offering was a freewill offering. It was not offered in response to sin, nor was it mandatory on some particular occasion. The peace offering also was the only offering that the people, as opposed to the priests, were allowed to eat. The offering, therefore, speaks of voluntarily choosing the ways of Christ and consenting to walk the narrow road He sets before us. This describes choices that the Bride of Christ alone will make.

In John 6 Jesus tells us that He is the *"living bread which came down from heaven,"* and that we must eat this bread if we desire eternal life. He says, *"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you."* (John 6:53) These words confused and appalled the Jews and some of Jesus' own disciples. He seemed to be condoning cannibalism. In fact, *"from that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more."* (John 6:66)⁹ Jesus Himself thus became the stumbling stone and rock of offense prophesied by Isaiah. As Peter writes,

{6} Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame." {7} Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, "The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone," {8} and "A stone of stumbling And a rock of offense." They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed. {9} But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. (1 Pet 2:6-9)

This verse ties the *"stone of stumbling"* to the praises of the chosen and, hence, to the voluntary thanksgiving (peace) offering. Peter also relates this stone to the Law. The Jews stumbled over the Law and, hence, also missed and stumbled over Jesus. Christians do the very

⁹Notice that this verse is numbered 666. Surely this one verse succinctly describes the difference between those who take the mark of the beast and those who refuse it. See Revelation 13:18. How many of us refuse to walk on with Jesus when the going gets rough or when the application of His doctrines becomes painfully real? How many of us already have "the mark" and do not even know it?

same thing, often in an opposite way. Jews created such strict laws of their own that they missed the heart of the Law, mercy. Christians, on the other hand, often throw away the Law and, thus, miss the other side of the heart of the Law, justice. Those who are “*disobedient to the word*” include many Christians as well as non-Christians. No disobedient person has the right to partake of the peace offering. Only those who obey the Word can proceed to the peace offering. Only these have determined that they will eat His flesh, i.e., that they will assimilate (eat and digest) the Word of God (heavenly manna) directly into their lives (souls). Only the people who voluntarily choose the ways of God can eat the peace offering.

The Christian Vow of Faithfulness to Christ

It is interesting that one of the reasons for making a peace offering was because of “*a vow*.” What greater vow can be made than that between a man and his wife? The peace offering, therefore, applies to the Bride of Christ’s inner vow to remain faithful to her Beloved. The offering thus prophesies the betrothal of the Bride of Christ to the Son of God. This means that all who aspire to become overcomers in God promise to remain chaste and virtuous before Him, free from idols.

The Scriptures clearly correlate idolatry and adultery. God forbade these sins in the second and seventh commandments of Moses. To commit idolatry means to commit spiritual adultery. So here we come to another profound lesson of our themes of understanding food sacrificed to idols and of awakening to God.

So long as the Old Covenant offeror did not prostitute himself by making offerings to other gods (idolatry), and he offered his sacrifices in accordance with Levitical law, God accepted his offerings. On the other hand, if he worshiped idols or other gods, or disobeyed the ceremonial commandments, God would not accept his offering. Today we Christians commit idolatry and spiritual adultery when we walk according to the precepts of the world rather than the commands of Christ. Paul teaches that we are “*not without law to God, but under the law to Christ*.” (1 Cor. 9:21) When we live without regard to the law of Christ, we commit idolatry and spiritual adultery. We thus become disqualified from participation in the prophetic significance of the offerings and forfeit our role as a potential overcomer.

The Peace Offering’s Relationship to the Armor of God

We shod our feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace as the third act of donning the armor of God. (Eph. 6:15) The term “gospel” or “gospel of peace” means far more than telling people that Jesus died for their sins. It includes the full counsel of God, all of the great commission: “*{19} 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, {20} teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.*” (Mat 28:19-20) This is what the New Testament calls “*the faith*” and “*the gospel*.” Paul says, “*Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel...*” (Phil. 1:27)

We become prepared to share the gospel of peace with others when we learn the precepts of God and walk in their counsel. Otherwise, we do no more than the Pharisees, of whom Jesus warned, “*Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one*

proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.” (Mat. 23:15) Christians create “sons of hell” by teaching their converts to live a lawless life. Thus we see that one only attains peace with God by walking according to His ways. *“There is no peace,” says the LORD, “for the wicked.”* (Isaiah 48:22)

The Peace Offering and the Elementary Doctrine of Laying on of Hands

The “laying on of hands” ranks fourth among Hebrew’s primary doctrines in Hebrews 6:2. The sin offering and the peace offering both involve the laying on of hands and teach us a basic lesson concerning this doctrine. The sin offering divides itself into four separate groups, depending upon who actually sinned, the anointed priest, the whole congregation, a ruler or leader, or any of the common people. The following verses mandate that either a specific person of that group who sinned or a representative for that group lay their hands on the head of the animal to be sacrificed for a sin offering: Lev. 4:4, 15, 24, 29, 33. The offeror himself lays his hand on the peace offering sacrifice according to Lev. 3:8 and 3:13. The laying on of hands demonstrates a personal identification with the sacrificial animal. The practice appears designed to bring an inner awareness of one’s personal sin, one’s need for forgiveness, and of one’s knowledge of actual forgiveness and peace with God. We see this theme developed even further in the later writings of Moses.

*{5} Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: {6} “Take the Levites from among the children of Israel and cleanse them ceremonially. {7} “Thus you shall do to them to cleanse them: Sprinkle water of purification on them, and let them shave all their body, and let them wash their clothes, and so make themselves clean. {8} “Then let them take a young bull with its grain offering of fine flour mixed with oil, and you shall take another young bull as a sin offering. {9} “And you shall bring the Levites before the tabernacle of meeting, and you shall gather together the whole congregation of the children of Israel. {10} “So you shall bring the Levites before the LORD, and **the children of Israel shall lay their hands on the Levites;** {11} “and Aaron shall offer the Levites before the LORD, like a wave offering from the children of Israel, that they may perform the work of the LORD. {12} **“Then the Levites shall lay their hands on the heads of the young bulls,** and you shall offer one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering to the LORD, to make atonement for the Levites. {13} “And you shall stand the Levites before Aaron and his sons, and then offer them like a wave offering to the LORD. {14} “Thus you shall separate the Levites from among the children of Israel, and the Levites shall be Mine. (Num 8:5-14)*

Here we see that the laying on of hands signifies representation and authority. All of the children of Israel, according to verse 10 above, were to lay their hands on the Levites. This act signified a passing of authority to stand before God for oneself to the Levites. Henceforth the Levites possessed authority to act on behalf of all of the Israelites in a spiritual function. Israel

gave the Levites authority to represent them before God. This laying on of hands effected a legal transaction. God's law books literally made note of the fact that authority to make atonement for Israel now rested with the Levites. It did not remain with the assembly of the people. This explains why God honored Aaron when he ran into the midst of the people with his censer of incense to stop a great plague.

{46} So Moses said to Aaron, "Take a censer and put fire in it from the altar; put incense on it, and take it quickly to the congregation and make atonement for them; for wrath has gone out from the LORD. The plague has begun." {47} Then Aaron took it as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the assembly; and already the plague had begun among the people. So he put in the incense and made atonement for the people. {48} And he stood between the dead and the living; so the plague was stopped. (Num 16:46-48)

Aaron possessed authority from the laying of hands by which he could stand between God and man in order to intercede and make atonement on Israel's behalf. The incense here represents intercession. Notice that this atonement did not involve blood. Intercession alone made atonement for the people. We witness the final result of this transfer of authority in Numbers 18:22, *"Hereafter the children of Israel shall not come near the tabernacle of meeting, lest they bear sin and die."* From that time until today there has existed a priestly caste in Israel. This ultimately led to the clergy/laity distinction, or Nicolaitan doctrine, in most of the Christian churches.

God specifically brings attention to this transfer of authority in the following passage:

{18} And the LORD said to Moses: "Take Joshua the son of Nun with you, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him; {19} "set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation, and inaugurate him in their sight. {20} "And you shall give some of your authority to him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient. (Num 27:18-20)

This idea of authority carries over into the New Testament doctrine of the laying on of hands. When a New Testament elder lays his hands upon another believer he conveys authority to that believer. Paul thus warned Timothy, *"Lay hands suddenly on no man."* (1 Tim. 5:22) Christians need to learn to discern the spirits of those in their midst. We ought not lay hands upon the unworthy, nor give spiritual authority to the undeserving. The initial Tabernacle sacrifices portray God's plan for making us worthy before Him by repentance, forgiveness, faith, and the washing of the Word (baptism). When our brother has submitted to these basic doctrines, then we may freely lay hands upon him, and anoint him for the work of the ministry. But, if he refuses to do so, then we must refuse to lay hands upon him in obedience to that very Word which he himself disobeys.

The Grain (Firstfruits) Offering

Moses announced the grain offering second in Leviticus, but this is now the fourth

offering we will study. The grain offering represented both a voluntary and a mandatory offering. The firstfruits aspect of the offering, Lev. 2:12-16, had to be offered by each Israelite according to Exodus 23:19 and 34:26. Other grain offerings could be made as freewill offerings. These were made by free choice, not compulsion. The grain offering, therefore, speaks of voluntary obedience to God. It means that we desire the ways of God from our heart!

When the grain offering was offered voluntarily, not like a tithe or a tax, it became a "*sweet aroma to the Lord.*" (Lev. 2:2). This conveys the preciousness in God's sight of the one who willingly lays down his life for his God in a life of joyful obedience. However, the mandatory firstfruits offering "*shall not be burned on the altar for a sweet aroma.*" (Lev. 2:12) Mandatory obedience does not bring the same reward or render the same "flavor" as willing obedience. This is one lesson of law versus grace, the Old Covenant versus the New Covenant. "*And the law is not of faith, but the man who does them shall live by them.*" (Gal. 3:4) Does the life of grace, then, nullify the law? Paul asked this same question and answered emphatically, "*Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law.*" (Romans 3:31) The law is holy and good, says Paul. It is an instructor that teaches us the ways of God and leads us to Christ. (Gal. 3:24)

When we must obey a strict set of rules to please God, we find ourselves under law, but this is not bad or evil. It simply is not the best way. One of the purposes of the law is to train us to *want* to live God's way. It is when we voluntarily obey God because we love Him and His ways that we fully live by grace and faith. This was as true in Old Testament days as it is in New Testament times. This ability to voluntarily obey, however, comes from the Holy Spirit. Grace describes life by the Spirit of God and comprises a major theme of Paul's books.

Before we believed in Jesus as our Savior, we possessed no power to serve God. We owned no independent desire to obey Him. After we believed in Him and received the "earnest" of the Holy Spirit, however, we held within us the seed of the power to obey Him. The problem then became one of exercising our own will to obey Him by and through His power in us. God desires that which indwells our spirit, the Holy Spirit, to affect our souls (mind, will, and emotions). The voluntary nature of the grain offering represents a transition in the Christian life from mandatory obedience to God's Law to voluntary obedience. Here we learn that we obey Him because we desire to obey Him. Ultimately this desire even comes from God and evidences His sovereignty over us because it originates from the Spirit within us. Now we find that we want to obey Him because our will aligns with His. We come to know His ways as right, full of peace, and the best way to live.

This also illustrates the difference between the Old and New Covenants. Under the Old Covenant we approach God and can only fellowship with Him by obeying His commands. In the New Covenant we obtain fellowship with God by faith in Jesus Christ. Then He gives us His gift of the Holy Spirit which enables us to begin to obey His commands. In other words, obedience does not bring fellowship, but fellowship brings obedience. Even so, God still requires our wills to become molded to His. In essence our "free will" becomes His will and ultimately we will only do what we see our Father doing. This is the mystery of sanctification and growing in Godliness.

The Grain, Bread, Oil, Frankincense, and Salt

Grain itself is the basic element of which bread is made and an essential foodstuff of domestic animals given to us for meat. Grain, therefore, is the basic building block of much of

our food. Leviticus tells us that only the priests could eat part of the grain offering. The general public could not even eat of their own grain offering. This shows that the grain offering relates in a special way to priests. Sometimes the grain was offered as fine flour and sometimes as baked bread. It was always offered without leaven, except at Pentecost, and with oil, frankincense, and salt.

The bread here speaks of Christ and His Word, the oil represents the Holy Spirit, the frankincense indicates the prayers of the saints, and salt shows the preserving, purifying, and seasoning effect of God's truth in action through His people. Leaven represents sin and false doctrine in Scripture, so unleavened bread speaks of pure doctrine. The grain offering thus paints a picture of the believer (priest) who has consumed the flesh of Christ (unleavened bread, the pure Word of God, true doctrine) and has assimilated that Word into his being by prayerfully (frankincense) looking to the Holy Spirit (oil) to open his spiritual eye and ear. He approaches God and His Word without preconceived notions of traditional or denominational doctrinal correctness (unleavened). Then, he does what he has heard by faith. (James 1:22-27) The Word of God and the Holy Spirit act as a double witness so that a man may learn to do only what he "sees" his Father doing.

The effect of a faithful man's life upon the world is shown by the salt of the grain offering. This is the "savor" of God's people in the earth. Jesus said, "*Salt is good: but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.*" (Luke 14:34-35, KJV) Ah, here we have another mystery. The reason that only the priest could eat the sacrifice is because the offering prophetically applies only to Christians (believers of any age, including all of the Old Testament) who learn to eat Christ's bread with salt. They alone can "season" God's world with His truth. Only they become the holy nation of priests who rule before Him. Not every Christian currently walks in such a role, but each of us is called to do so. "*Many are called, but few are chosen.*" (Mat. 20:16, 22:14) This is the priesthood in the order of Melchizedek.

We know that in the Israelite society the priest stood between God and man. Only a priest could enter into the Tabernacle wherein dwelt the presence of God. Only the priest could offer the blood on the mercy seat on the Day of Atonement once a year. The High Priest who offered the blood of atonement clearly typified Jesus who once for all offered His blood in the true tabernacle that is in heaven. Hebrews declares,

{6} Now when these things had been thus prepared, the priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing the services. {7} But into the second part the high priest went alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people's sins committed in ignorance; {8} the Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing. {9} It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience; {10} concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation. {11} But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more

perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. {12} Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. {13} For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, {14} how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (Heb 9:6-14)

A Christian priest, therefore, is one who serves God as an intercessor. Priests cry out to the Lord day and night for his justice and his mercy, for them, their families, their neighbors, their nation, and their world. Remember, justice and mercy describe the foundation of God's throne and the foundation of the Christian life. Justice and mercy is the heart of God's Law. The trespass and sin offerings speak of these concepts. The grain offering represents the offering of the priesthood. But, since most of us are not yet priests, what, then, do we do?

{1} Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, {2} as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, {3} if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious. {4} Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, {5} you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (1 Pet 2:1-5)

If coming to understand the application of the Old Testament sacrifices stirs your heart to desire to become a priest, then ask God for grace and strength to obey His Word. Start with Peter's exhortations. Feed upon Jesus, the manna of life, and replace your selfish and impure thinking. Desire the pure milk of His Word first. When you learn to apply the milk of the Word, you will soon be weaned, ready for the grain and the meat! The grain offering points to the priesthood of believers. The fact is, however, that not all "believers" believe the truths of God's Word and all do not go on with God to function in their calling. Those who do not continue with God end up sacrificing food to idols, rather than to God.

Chapter 8

DIE BEFORE YOU DIE (The Burnt Offering)

{25} "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. {26} "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? {27} "For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works. {28} "Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom."

(Matthew 16:25-28)

I had to go a little way along the river to a place where I knew that bank was high, so that I could fling myself down.... I hopped ... hopped with my strapped feet a little nearer the edge.

A voice came from beyond the river: "Do not do it."

Instantly--I had been freezing cold till now--a wave of fire passed over me, even down to numb feet. It was the voice of a god. Who should know better than I? A god's voice had once shattered my whole life. They are not to be mistaken. It may well be that by trickery of priests men have sometimes taken a mortal's voice for a god's. But it will not work the other way. No one who hears a god's voice takes it for a mortal's.

"Lord, who are you?" said I.

"Do not do it," said the god. "You cannot escape Ungit by going to the deadlands, for she is there also. Die before you die. There is no chance after."

"Lord, I am Ungit."

But, there was no answer....

Faces, p. 279

This part of Lewis' book reveals the true nature of man in the character of Queen Orual. Though queen of Glome, she does not possess god's blood as some of the common folk and vain kings of Glome have sometimes imagined. Orual is just a woman of flesh and blood, but now she truly believes herself to be Ungit. In fact, a terrible and powerful spiritual vision given her just before this event actually reveals that she *is* Ungit. In that fearful vision she sees her face in a mirror and that face is the very face of Ungit that she had recently seen in a ritual at Ungit's

temple.

But, Orual hates the god of Glome. She hates all that Ungit represents. Now that she realizes that she *is* Ungit, she hates herself as well. Consequently, death becomes her only escape. She must kill herself and so, in this passage, we find Orual about to throw herself into the deeps of the river Shennit. A god, however, speaks to her just as she prepares to jump. Interestingly, when this unknown god spoke to Orual, she *knew* that she *was* Ungit. But, she did not yet know who Ungit really is. The question is, do we?

The Burnt Offering

The burnt offering was the only offering wherein fire consumed the entire body of the sacrificial beast. Nothing remained to be eaten. The burnt offering represents an offering for God's consumption alone, but Psalm 50 makes it clear that God is not really concerned about eating cattle and sheep. The Law is prophetic and so is every single offering God required.

{3} "If the offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he is to offer a male without defect. He must present it at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting so that it will be acceptable to the LORD. {4} He is to lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him. {5} He is to slaughter the young bull before the LORD, and then Aaron's sons the priests shall bring the blood and sprinkle it against the altar on all sides at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. {6} He is to skin the burnt offering and cut it into pieces. {7} The sons of Aaron the priest are to put fire on the altar and arrange wood on the fire. {8} Then Aaron's sons the priests shall arrange the pieces, including the head and the fat, on the burning wood that is on the altar. {9} He is to wash the inner parts and the legs with water, and the priest is to burn all of it on the altar. It is a burnt offering, an offering made by fire, an aroma pleasing to the LORD."
(Lev 1:3-9 NIV)

Believers presented this offering "at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting" because it specifically represented Jesus Christ. Jesus is, was, and always will be our only way into the tabernacle of God. The fact that the offeror "lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering" symbolized the transfer of the offeror's sin to Christ and Christ's atonement to the sinner. This offering also made a "sweet aroma" to God because of the voluntary nature of Christ's sacrifice that it represented. This offering does not represent our initial salvation, but instead denotes the goal of our faith which is conformity to the image of Christ. We reach this goal only through faith in Christ's atonement and the gift of the Holy Spirit working out His salvation through us. We must never lose sight of this truth. Thus the burnt offering was a mandatory offering, not a "free will" offering as some versions of the Bible indicate.¹⁰

It is important to observe that the entrails and legs were washed with water. This symbolizes the washing of water by the Word that cleanses our insides (soul) and makes our

¹⁰See *The Companion Bible*, E. W. Bullinger, notes on Leviticus 1:4 (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1999), p. 133

earthly walk (legs) acceptable to God. The burnt offering wholly and totally consumed the sacrificial beast. It, therefore, represents the total giving over of oneself unto the Lord. This is God's goal for each of us and explains why the burnt offering comes first in the Book of Leviticus. It also represents death to self, so it is the last offering we come to understand. Very few people, even Christians, ever really want to die.¹¹ The burnt offering represents a believer's willingness to become a "living sacrifice" unto his God.

Thus Jesus Christ, God of both the Old and New Testaments, calls each of us to willingly lay down his own life. This represents the "second" death, a death that may come either before or after our physical death. It speaks of the death of the soul, of the end to selfish ambition. The sacrifice denotes dying to the life principle of this world and living by the life principle of God, the Holy Spirit..

Here is a New Testament picture of the burnt offering:

{23} Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. {24} "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. {25} "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost? {26} "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels. (Luke 9:23-26)

In this passage the word "life" that occurs twice in verse 24 is the word *psuche*, the Greek word for "soul." When Biblical writers wanted to designate man's spirit they always used the Greek word *pneuma*. Jesus declares that only those who willingly lose their souls will actually save their souls. A "saved soul" thus represents a life given over completely to God, one that has forsaken the principles of this world. This verse speaks, then, of "the salvation of the soul," not the "salvation of the spirit."

The burnt offering prophesies the voluntary sacrifice of the Bride of Christ who willingly offers herself a "living sacrifice." It also represents the sacrificial life of the Royal Priesthood that gives itself to intercession for the sins of the world. This offering speaks directly to separation from the things of the world. Romans 12:1-2 confirms these things,

{1} I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. {2} And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (Rom 12:1-2)

The Symbolism of the Washing of Entrails and Feet

The law of the burnt offering required that the Levitical priest "wash the entrails and the legs [of the burnt offering] in water." (Lev. 1:13) The water for this washing probably came

¹¹See also the profound book *Lilith* by George MacDonald regarding this truth.

from the bronze laver that stood before the Tabernacle's entrance close to the bronze altar. We do know that every priest had to wash his hands and feet with water from the laver before he offered a sacrifice. (Ex. 30:18-21) The metal itself, we have seen, symbolizes judgment, so this washing of water speaks of judging ourselves according to God's Word. (1 Cor. 11:31) The washing of the burnt offering, therefore, prophesied the washing by living water that comes only from Jesus Christ. We clean our insides, our "soul," by the "washing of the water by the word." This is why it is so important to continually read, meditate upon, and live according to God's Word.

Jesus Himself acted out this sacrifice when he washed the disciples' feet in John 13. He thereby showed the prophetic truth contained in the Leviticus 1 commands. He washed the disciples' feet just as the Levite priests washed the feet (legs) of the burnt offerings. Jesus was illustrating that he intended His disciples to become burnt offerings (living sacrifices) for the Kingdom of God. This could only be accomplished in them by the washing of water by the Word. Here the Word literally washed the disciples' feet!

These historical events from both the Old and New Testaments prophesy future spiritual realities that God wants every believer to experience. Jesus surely never intended that His people literally wash one another's feet in some religious ritual unless, of course, they were attempting to portray the Biblical truth of the washing of the water of the word. What does that tradition mean in a culture that wears socks and shoes? The message He gave from washing His disciples feet, however, applies to every culture throughout all time. The act was natural in that culture. The message is spiritual and timeless to every culture.

Born of Water

During Jesus' earthly ministry one of the leading Jews came privately to Jesus in order to discuss His teaching. Here is the story.

{1} There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. {2} This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him." {3} Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." {4} Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" {5} Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. {6} "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. {7} "Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' {8} "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit." {9} Nicodemus answered and said to Him, "How can these things be?" {10} Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things? (John 3:1-10)

Even now, two thousand years after Jesus spoke to Nicodemus, the teachers of Israel, now God's Church, still do not know these things. Jesus said two different things to Nicodemus in verses three and five. First, He tells him that a man cannot see, nor take notice of, the kingdom of God unless he is "begotten of God." We often call it being "born again," although we are not truly "born again" until we receive our glorified bodies. Jesus teaches here that a man cannot even see the kingdom of God unless he is first begotten of the Spirit. This means that he must first believe in the life and work of the Son of God and, therefore, receive the earnest of the Spirit and become begotten of God. First Jesus teaches the necessity of spiritual regeneration by faith in Him. Until we receive the earnest of the Holy Spirit by faith in Christ we cannot even see that there exists this thing called the kingdom of God.

Nicodemus, though, could not understand His terminology. He thought in the natural instead of the spiritual and asked natural questions. Jesus' answer, as usual, did not answer the natural question that the person asked. Instead, He moved beyond His original statement. Next He declared that a person cannot enter into this kingdom unless he is born of water and the spirit. He means that once a man is begotten of God and can discern the reality of the kingdom of God, he cannot enter into that kingdom unless he is also born of water. This birthing by water speaks of the washing of water by the Word. It is the baptism that Peter speaks about in 1 Peter 3:21 and concerns ruling and reigning with Christ in His Kingdom.

The burnt offering itself relates to giving all to Christ, to willingly become a "living sacrifice." Only these Christians will enter into the kingdom, or rule, of God. The others will be thrown for a time into "outer darkness" where there is "weeping and gnashing of teeth." See Matthew 8:12; 22:13; 25:30. The outer darkness describes a place outside of the circle of ruling with Jesus. It is also the place where Christians who lived "according to the flesh" will have their "part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." (Rev. 21:8)

The Renewal of the Mind

*{17} This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, {18} having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; {19} who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. {20} But you have not so learned Christ, {21} if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: {22} that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, {23} and **be renewed in the spirit of your mind**, {24} and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness. {25} Therefore, putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another. {26} "Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath, {27} nor give place to the devil. {28} Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is*

*good, that he may have something to give him who has need. {29} Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. {30} And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. {31} Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. {32} And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you. {1} Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. {2} And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, **an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.** (Eph 4:17-5:2)*

Notice that this passage ends with an allusion to the burnt offering. Jesus gave His whole body to be sacrificed. Although His body was not burned, God still calls His sacrifice a “sweet-smelling aroma.” This shows that the “aroma” had nothing to do with the “smell” of the animals cooking on the altar, but everything to do with the willingness of the offeror to make the sacrifice.

Further, we discover that the burnt offering represents a “love” offering according to verse 5:2. But, we must see that this love is not undefined. Paul lists at least twenty attributes of the spiritually healthy Christian who walks in love in this Ephesian passage. We need to recognize that “love” in the Scriptures never goes undefined. Specific, positive attributes always describe the meaning of “love your neighbor as yourself,” or “love your God with all of your heart, soul, and mind.” If we will meditate on these twenty or so fruits of spiritual life, then we will begin to understand Christ’s greatest commands. Let’s consider one example from Paul’s list here.

{29} Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.

Before we can practice this command (Yes, it is one of God’s commands, one of Christ’s many laws contained in the “Royal Law”), we must first consider the following words of Jesus:

{33} "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit. {34} "Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. {35} "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. {36} "But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. {37} "For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned." (Mat 12:33-37)

Did you know that you speak the very things that you feed your soul? With what do you feed your mind and emotions? Do you watch carnal television programs and commercials? Do

you still feel offended when you hear actors use God's Name in vain? How about when they act out sexually suggestive or pornographic scenes? Have you become so used to seeing such things that you no longer even feel offended? Or, do you enjoy the lust the scenes bring you? Again, what kinds of things do you listen to? What are the words to the music you or your children listen to? Is the music sexually suggestive or demonically motivated? Do you even discern these things in those noises you allow into your and your children's eyes and ears?

Jesus proclaims here in Matthew that a person filled with evil things cannot even speak good things. Good men bring "good treasure" out of their hearts, out of their minds, wills, and emotions, He says. If one has no good treasure there in his heart, he cannot bring it out can he? We find that Paul says the same thing in Ephesians 4:29 when we meditate on his words. He says, "*Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.*" Turn the verse around and apply it to yourself: "Let no corrupt word proceed into your ears, but only what is good and necessary edification, that it may impart grace to you who listen." Now judge what you watch and listen to according to Christ's law as it applies to you. Do you pass Christ's and Paul's test? If not, then seek grace to repent, and begin to do so! Fill yourself with good things that will then allow you to speak forth God's grace and life to others!

Scripture teaches that only the Bride of Christ renews her mind by the washing of her Husband's Word, not the whole church and not every person who has confessed Christ as his Savior. In obedience to Christ's Word, the Bride separates herself from worldly ways and practically demonstrates her nonconformance to its principles. She walks as a pilgrim and sojourner in this world. The world, nay, even most of her own brethren, cannot understand her. The masses have refused to love God's truth and apprehend the reality of God's Word. Most of us have taken God far too lightly. We have become much to "chummy" with Him, even believing that He approves of our wayward, sinful lives. Jeremiah prophesied of today's church long ago, saying,

{9} "Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, burn incense to Baal, and walk after other gods whom you do not know, {10} "and then come and stand before Me in this house which is called by My name, and say, 'We are delivered to do all these abominations'? {11} "Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of thieves in your eyes? Behold, I, even I, have seen it," says the LORD. (Jer 7:9-11)

Many Christians today believe they "have grace" to sin. They have learned and believed that God has "put away" His Law and they do not have to live up to any standards. But when the Bride's Beloved comes to take her, then those who refused to watch and prepare for Him will wonder why they, too, were not chosen. Then they will cry out, "*Return, return, O Shulamite; Return, return that we may look upon you!*" (Song of Solomon 6:13) The Bride of Christ consists of the Royal Priesthood, the Priesthood of the Order of Melchizedek. The Bible also give the Bride other names, like overcomers, Sons of God, and the firstfruits of God. This group consists only of Christians who willingly obey the fiery law of their Lord and live a life of holy repentance before Him. Thus we understand the prophetic significance of the burnt offering as contemplated in the Book of Hebrews:

*{28} Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. {29} For our God is **a consuming fire.** (Heb 12:28-29)*

God's Fiery Law

The burnt offering demonstrates our willingness to submit to God's "fiery law" that first appears in the book of Deuteronomy as follows:

*{1} And this is the blessing, wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death. {2} And he said, The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went **a fiery law** for them. {3} Yea, he loved the people; all his saints are in thy hand: and they sat down at thy feet; every one shall receive of thy words. (Deuteronomy 33:1-3 KJV)*

God told us in His Law the blessings for obedience and the curses for disobedience to His commands. God applies the law of blessings and curses to everyone's life, believer or unbeliever. We say, for example, that one of the principles found in the Bible is "You will reap what you sow," while followers of certain Eastern religions call this the "Yin/Yang" principle. People of science might call it "cause and effect." Whatever we call it, though, God's law of blessings and curses follows our actions. This is but one example of God's "fiery law" that He uses to purge our uncleanness, our "dross."

*{21} How the faithful city has become a harlot! It was full of justice; Righteousness lodged in it, But now murderers. {22} Your silver has become dross, Your wine mixed with water. {23} Your princes are rebellious, And companions of thieves; Everyone loves bribes, And follows after rewards. They do not defend the fatherless, Nor does the cause of the widow come before them. {24} Therefore the Lord says, The LORD of hosts, the Mighty One of Israel, "Ah, I will rid Myself of My adversaries, And take vengeance on My enemies. {25} **I will turn My hand against you, And thoroughly purge away your dross, And take away all your alloy.** {26} I will restore your judges as at the first, And your counselors as at the beginning. Afterward you shall be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city." {27} Zion shall be redeemed with justice, And her penitents with righteousness. (Isa 1:21-27)*

From this and similar verses we learn that if we choose to allow the fiery Law of Christ to purge the dross from our souls, then we will be refined like unto pure silver or gold. Those represented by the terms "Bride of Christ," "Royal Priesthood," "the remnant," etc. represent

only those Christians who have “made themselves ready” for their Lord by living according to His Word, i.e. righteously, in a sinful world. Unlike the five foolish virgins of Matthew 25, they have properly prepared themselves and have voluntarily submitted to their beloved’s sanctifying and cleansing “washing of water by the word,” (Eph. 5:26). They willingly submit to God’s fiery law now.

The prophet Jeremiah describes the purging and flesh destroying nature of God’s law like this:

{28} "The prophet who has a dream, let him tell a dream; And he who has My word, let him speak My word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat?" says the LORD. {29} "Is not My word like a fire?" says the LORD, "And like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces? (Jer 23:28-29)

Still, we often refuse to see God and His Word in this light. Seldom do God’s people contemplate the vision of Daniel:

{9} "I watched till thrones were put in place, And the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, And the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, Its wheels a burning fire; {10} A fiery stream issued And came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, And the books were opened." (Dan 7:9-10)

The fiery stream that issues forth from God is that fiery law we see going forth from God’s hand in Deuteronomy 33:2. We believe this also represents the “lake of fire” found in Revelation 19 and 20. We know that someday everyone will be judged by God, “*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.*” (2 Cor. 5:10) Do you think that Jesus will judge according to what He has made known to us, or do you think that He will pull out a new set of books (laws) by which to judge us at that time?

God has revealed His ways in His laws. Therefore, one day everyone will be judged in the fire of God’s Law. The question we now face is this: Will we willingly choose to become a burnt offering and allow our flesh (sinful nature) to die in the fire of God’s Law now, or will we persist in our sins and be made to partake of the second death later? Remember, it is only “*he who overcomes [who] shall not be hurt by the second death.*” (Rev. 2:11) “Die before you die,” the god warned Orual. But, will we heed God’s warning?

Chapter 9

THE LAW OF THE RED HEIFER (The Burnt Offering - cont.)

The law of the red heifer in Numbers chapter 19 gives us a specific example of the whole burnt sacrifice. It presents the prophetic significance of the burnt offering in startling detail.

{1} Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, {2} "This is the ordinance of the law which the LORD has commanded, saying: 'Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring you a red heifer without blemish, in which there is no defect and on which a yoke has never come. {3} 'You shall give it to Eleazar the priest, that he may take it outside the camp, and it shall be slaughtered before him;

The sacrifice of the red heifer was another type of burnt offering that God required Israel to make. The Levite priest could only sacrifice a heifer without blemish, without defect, and upon which the yoke had never come. Each of these attributes describes spiritual aspects of Jesus. Jesus possessed no moral or spiritual blemishes or defects. He was perfect. The “yoke” of sin never came upon Him and He was, therefore, never subject to its will.

Eleazar the priest sacrificed this heifer “outside the camp.” This typified several historical and spiritual realities. First, Jesus Himself was crucified outside the camp. John tells us that Jesus was crucified “near the city,” at the place called Golgotha, the place of the skull. (John 19:17, 20) The Jews, therefore, crucified Jesus outside the city, outside the camp.

Spiritually, Jesus did not identify with “the camp,” the established religious orders of His day consisting mainly of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Similarly, Hebrews teaches us that we must worship Christ and go forth to Him “outside the camp.” (Heb. 13:13) Practically, this means that those who want to obey Christ and worship Him in spirit and truth must do so apart from the established religious orders, or denominations, of the day. This has always been the case for, from the very beginning, God has called His people out of the established order. His people have always had to bear the reproach that such a separation brings.

For example, Noah had to separate from and prepare to leave all the rest of the world. God required him to build a boat in order to escape a flood. The flood itself would come from rain that no one had ever seen. Surely he was ridiculed. Abram had to leave his family, friends, and culture and go to the place God would **later** show him, certainly a rather silly idea in the minds of his friends. Moses had to lead his people out of Egypt and were chased by the Egyptian army into a wilderness. Likewise, the first Christians met in groups away from the Jewish synagogues and were chastised and stoned by the Jews. These and the following generations of Christians refused to worship the world’s idols and were persecuted and tortured for their faith. Later Christians suffered the same fate by the world’s predominant religion. They would not bow to Roman Catholicism’s heresies. “The Church” then killed the “heretics” who wanted to leave their camp. Later, Puritans and Pilgrims came to the New World to escape the camp. Of course, these groups also eventually became the established religions and those who desired to serve God had to go forth from them. All of these obeyed God and went forth to Him outside the

camp, bearing His reproach. The red heifer looks forward to all of this. This heifer thus symbolizes both Jesus who offered Himself as a living sacrifice outside of the camp of Jerusalem and believers of all ages who obey the call of God to come out of Mystery Babylon, i.e., out of the worldly system of mammon, all the world's religions, politics, and economics.

{4} and Eleazar the priest shall take some of its blood with his finger, and sprinkle some of its blood seven times directly in front of the tabernacle of meeting.

The sprinkling of the blood of the heifer, of course, speaks of the shed blood of Jesus. The "seven" sprinkles in front of the tabernacle door show that our entrance into the presence of God is secured by the shed blood of Jesus. Seven is generally considered the number of spiritual perfection. The "seven" sprinkles here foretell the seven places from which Jesus bled, His head, hands, feet, back, and side and also speak of the perfect work of reconciliation with God that Christ's blood accomplished.

{5} Then the heifer shall be burned in his sight: its hide, its flesh, its blood, and its offal shall be burned.

Next, fire consumed the entire beast. Every natural part of this animal had to be consumed. This presents us with another revelatory picture, for here we see a female animal which depicts the Bride of Christ. This Bride willingly allows herself to be consumed in the fire of God and thus dies to self. She judges herself by God's fiery law (Deut. 33:2) so that she will not be judged by God (1 Cor. 11:31). She offers herself a living sacrifice which she knows is her reasonable service. (Rom 12:1). She refuses to conform to the principles and patterns of this world. (Heb. 13:13) She renews her mind and learns to prove and do the good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (Rom 12:2). This speaks of the destruction of "the flesh," the sinful nature in us. The Bride willingly loses her life (soul), so that she may gain her life (soul).

{6} And the priest shall take cedar wood and hyssop and scarlet, and cast them into the midst of the fire burning the heifer.

Cedar wood and hyssop point to the cross. The cedar wood, of course, comes from the cedar tree and the law declares, "he who is hanged [on a tree] is accursed of God." (Deut. 21:23). Paul writes, "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree')..." (Gal 3:13) The hyssop speaks of Christ's shed blood since God commanded all Israel at Passover to take hyssop, dip it in lamb's blood, and strike the lintel and two doorposts with it. The wood and the hyssop, therefore, depict the future crucifixion of Jesus "outside the camp" in yet another way. But, what does the "scarlet" represent?

The Schocken Bible translates Numbers 19:6 as follows: "The priest is to take wood of cedar, and hyssop, and scarlet of worm, and is to cast (them) into the midst of the cow burning." Two Hebrew words make up the phrase "scarlet of worm." We could translate this as the "scarlet maggot" or the "crimson grub." Very interestingly, the very same word for worm, *towla*, is used in the very last verse of Isaiah, which says,

*"And they shall go forth and look Upon the corpses of the men
Who have transgressed against Me. For their worm (towla') does
not die, And their fire is not quenched. They shall be an
abhorrence to all flesh." (Is. 66:24,)*

Further, the word translated "midst" in Number 19:6 is the Hebrew word *tavek*. The word *tavek* first occurs in Genesis 1:6 where God places the firmament in the *tavek* of the waters in order to divide, or separate, the waters. The casting of the *towla'* into the *tavek* of the fire prophesies a separation or division that can only occur by fire. It, therefore, speaks of the voluntary casting of our own *towla'*, our carnal, or maggot-eaten, flesh, into the fire of God. It further contemplates the separation of our spirits and souls by the Word of God. By this fiery Word, we learn to discern the thoughts and intents of our own hearts. (Heb. 4:12) This brings about the salvation of our souls (not our spirits!).

But, notice that Jesus dwells in the fire with us because he is represented here by the wood and the hyssop. We see the very same picture when King Nebuchadnezzar cast Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego into the fiery furnace. (Daniel 3:19-30) These three obeyed God unto the death of their flesh. They lost, however, only their bonds (representing the carnal flesh, or bondage to sin) in the fire. The Son of God, of course, walked with them "*in the midst of the fire.*" (Dan. 3:25) Because they walked in purity before God, neither their bodies nor their garments (spiritual works, wedding garments) were singed, burned, or in any way affected by the fire.

Numbers 19:6 prophetically teaches that if we willingly cast ourselves into the fire of God, then Jesus Himself will sustain us in that fire and destroy our flesh (bonds, scarlet worm, sinful nature). Yes, our flesh will be dissolved into ashes, but our souls will be clothed with the garments that God requires for the consummation of the wedding of the Lamb. (Matthew 22:1-14)

Resurrection from the Dead

Immediately after the Passover of the death angel, the Israelites knew why they had offered the first Passover sacrifice. They knew that if they had disobeyed, they would have been killed like the Egyptians. But, why was it important for the Hebrews to offer the Passover sacrifice thereafter? And, why did the priest later have to cast cedar wood, hyssop and a scarlet worm into the midst of the fire burning the red heifer?

We believe that the reason these religious duties were important is because they impacted far more than a man's seventy or eighty years of natural life on earth. Since the people of other nations lived abundantly for the same seventy or so years of an Israelite's life, the implication is that these religious works held forth hope of a life after one's natural death. After all, what meaning would these sacrifices really have if the Israelites did not someday actually stand before the face of God? What if their lives (spiritual and soulical) ended after seventy years, just like the unbelievers thought? Why then did they have to live under such strict laws and provisions? Although some religious groups, like the Sadducees, would disagree, the Passover and other sacrifices possessed significance *only if* they concerned life after death with its consequent appearance before God Almighty. These offerings, therefore, prophesied the truth of the resurrection from the dead, which is the fifth of the six elementary Christian doctrines found in Hebrews 6:1-2.

Age-Lasting Judgment (Commonly called “Eternal Judgment”)

It may seem that the fifth doctrine of resurrection from the dead appears out of place in the Hebrews’ list. Most of us consider our Christian walk to begin with our faith in the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. We might, therefore, think that resurrection from the dead should be the first of the elementary doctrines listed. The teaching appears fifth, however, because such placement enables us to see the sixth reality in its proper context. This placement helps us to understand that eternal judgment, the sixth doctrine, really relates to Christians, not non-Christians as most people believe.

First we need to understand that the phrase “eternal judgment” consists of the Greek words *aionios krima*, which literally mean “age-lasting judgment.” Thus what we have come to know as eternal judgment is really judgment that lasts for a particular, defined period of time called an “age.” This makes sense because each punishment within God’s Law specifically applies to a particular sin (crime). God does not, for example, require the death penalty or mutilation for stealing someone’s apples. He only requires the death penalty for crimes that bring death to another or, eventually, to all of society. It would be unjust of God to demand death for stealing, or even cutting off ones hands for stealing. Our God defines Himself by justice and mercy, not vindictiveness.

“Eternal judgment,” therefore, refers to God’s corrective judgments and disciplines that last for a specifically determined length of time. The name for this finite period of time is “eon” or “age.” Each non-repentant sinner receives his exact and perfect share of judgment after he is resurrected from the dead. The doctrine of the resurrection of the dead occurs just before the doctrine of age-lasting judgment because all non-repentant and improperly clothed people, including Christians, will be judged by God for an “eon,” a God-determined length of time. This judgment will be accomplished by “the rod of iron,” the spiritual application of God’s Law. We do not presently understand how God will actually use the rod of iron.

The scarlet maggot of Isaiah 66:24 speaks of this age-lasting judgment. The scarlet, fleshly worm of unbelievers and sinning Christians will be burned in the lake of fire at the end of the millennial age, but this will not be a literal throwing of the bodies of men into burning lava. Instead, it will consist of the application of God’s fiery law in some spiritual way to the souls of men that will cause their carnal soul to die and that will eventually cause all men to bow in willing, not forced, obedience to King Jesus. This is the second death. The laws of the burnt offering, and especially of the red heifer sacrifice, when combined with the other prophetic literature, express God’s truth very clearly concerning this age-lasting, not “eternal,” judgment. As Stephen Jones so eloquently states, “If God’s punishment for sin was eternal torment in a literal lake of fire, then Jesus would have had to suffer eternally to pay the penalty for our sins. But, He didn’t.”

The closest Biblical reference we can find to “eternal” punishment is that mandated for the devil, the beast, and the false prophet in Revelation 20:10. This verse says that they are tormented “age upon age.” Then in Revelation 20:15 we find that those who are not found in the Book of Life are “cast into the lake of fire.” We do not know the duration of their punishment, but we do know that with God “*mercy triumphs over judgment.*” (James 2:13)¹² Yes, it is true

¹²We do see that the smoke of their torment ascends “age upon age” in Rev. 14:11. Could this not, however, refer to the long lasting remembrance of their purging from sin or the fact that God’s fiery Law endures forever? Whatever the duration and type of punishment these

that James also says in this verse, “*Judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy,*” but remember, this judgment is in the context of God’s Law. God bases His Law itself upon the foundation of justice and mercy. This is why, for example, men in ancient Israel who had squandered their inheritance and become bond servants to others could still go free in the seventh and fiftieth years with even their lost lands restored in the fiftieth year. This prophesies the principle that there is, even for the sinner, a jubilee at some point in time.

Also, the term “brimstone” from the phrase “the lake of fire and brimstone” implies a divine purification of the sinner. Brimstone comes from the Greek word *theion* and can be translated “sulfur.” The word *theion* is based upon the word *theios* which means “godlike” according to Strong’s dictionary. Pagan priests used *theion* to purify their temples. The lake of fire and brimstone, therefore, speaks of a place of divine purification. We believe that God perfectly works His will upon all so that eventually “*at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*” (Phil. 2:10-11) Then shall be fulfilled the “*restoration of all things,*” according to Acts 3:21.

Thus we see elementary Hebrews’ doctrines five and six in the Tabernacle offerings and discover that these doctrines are not quite so simplistic as we once believed.

Wash Your Clothes Outside the Camp

Then the priest shall wash his clothes, he shall bathe in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp; the priest shall be unclean until evening. (Num. 19:7)

Everything the priest did with the red heifer he did outside the camp. Israel committed the sin of idolatry with its golden calf and then Moses moved the Tabernacle, the presence of God, outside the camp. Jesus Himself was crucified outside of the city of Jerusalem, outside the camp. The golden calf represents mammon and foretells the awful truth that God’s people often love the world more than they love God. God’s requirement that sacrifices be performed outside the camp conveys the truth that the overcoming saints will always be found outside the camp of this world’s accepted and established religious institutions. They may be found in the institution, but will not be part of it.

The priest who offers the sacrifice of the red heifer must also stay outside the camp for the full day, until evening. In addition, he must wash his clothes and bathe himself in water. To wash oneself in water means to wash oneself with the water of Christ’s Word by learning and obeying it. This means that God’s priest works the righteous works given him to do as long as it is called “Today.” This is how he washes his clothes and how he clothes himself. Here are some New Testament verses related to washing our clothes and preparing our own garments:

{4} Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. {5} He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white

people endure we know that it will entail no less than “weeping and gnashing of teeth” in an “outer darkness” for a period of time. The punishment is grave indeed, but we do not believe that the punishment entails eternal torment by literal fire. God is not sadistic. His judgments are always corrective and done in love.

raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. (Rev 3:4-5 KJV)

And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. (Rev 7:14 KJV)

Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. (Rev 16:15 KJV)

{7} Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. {8} And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. (Rev 19:7-8 KJV)

And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. (Rev 21:2 KJV)

Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. (Rev 22:14 NIV)

Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. (Rev 22:14 KJV)

“The priest” in Leviticus 19, therefore, looks apocalyptically to the priesthood of the order of Melchizedek. In the millennial Day this order of priests will stand in either the presence of God or in the presence of men according to the prophecy of Ezekiel 44.5-19.¹³ Ezekiel 44 also prophesies of another order of priests that refused to voluntarily enter into the fire of God before evening. These other priests, the Levites, who represent much of the Old Testament and New Testament clergy failed to wash their clothes and themselves with the water of God’s Word. They did not maintain their holy garments.

{8} And the one who burns it shall wash his clothes in water, bathe in water, and shall be unclean until evening.

“The one who burns it” is the Israelite who brings the sacrificial red heifer to the priest. This verse breaks down the clergy/laity distinction that keeps most of the people in their “proper place,” sitting in the pew. Jesus calls the practice of setting apart clergy and laity the “doctrine of

¹³See the Chapter entitled “Our God is a Consuming Fire,” infra.

the Nicolaitans” in Revelation 2:15. This one doctrine has probably harmed more of God’s people than any other in church history, except the doctrine of lawlessness that now pervades virtually all church teaching. For centuries the doctrine of the Nicolaitans has acted as an opiate to convince God’s people that their religious leaders are really the spiritual ones that need to concern themselves with all of God’s holy things. Therefore they have believed that all is right with their own souls when, in reality, their lives are abominations before Him. Verse 8 thus reveals that any of God’s people can come into His presence and attend His wedding feast. We need but learn how to wash our clothes and bathe in water.

Beauty for Ashes

{9} *And a man that is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and lay them up without the camp in a clean place, and it shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for a water of separation: it is a purification for sin. {10} And he that gathereth the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even: and it shall be unto the children of Israel, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among them, for a statute for ever.* (Num 19:9-10 KJV)

Ashes alone remain of an animal’s flesh when consumed by the sacrificial fires of God. Fire destroys every single aspect of the flesh, leaving only the fine dust of ash. We often see the words “dust and ashes” together in Scripture. Job, for example, cried out, *“I am become like dust and ashes.”* (Job 30:19) When the word “ashes” was first used in Scripture, Abraham told God, *“I ... am but dust and ashes.”* (Gen. 18:27) Also, the two words are very, very similar in the Hebrew language. The word for dust is ‘*aphar* and the word for ashes is ‘*epher*. The word ‘*aphar* first occurs in Genesis 2:7, which says, *“And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.”* Then, the very first mention of the word ‘*epher* occurs in Abraham’s quote from Genesis 18:27, where he directly links ‘*epher* with ‘*aphar*, that is, ashes with dust.

From the sacrifice of the red heifer, therefore, we also learn that the fire of God reduces man to ashes, or dust, to the basic building block from which God first created him. This speaks of re-creation, or the restoration of man. Isaiah says that the Spirit of God comes *“to console those who mourn in Zion, To give them **beauty for ashes**, The oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; That they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.”* (Isaiah 61:3) God intends to turn each one of us back to dust, i.e., to ashes. Then He will restore us by giving us His “beauty” for our ashes.

Only a “clean” man can gather the ashes, or dust, of the sacrifice. To be “clean” denotes walking in obedience to God, to being led of His Spirit so that one does not go his own way. (Ultimately this speaks of Jesus Christ who first gathers and then beautifies our ashes) God tells the clean man to store the ashes of the burnt offering in a clean place for the congregation of the children of Israel for a “water of separation.” The clean man puts the ashes into some water which then becomes this special water. Merely touching these ashes, however, makes this man unclean and he must again wash his clothes and remain unclean until evening. To touch the ashes meant to touch a dead animal and made one unclean according to the Law. This denotes the truth that we all constantly touch death (our carnal nature) which renders us unclean.

The Waters of Separation

The Hebrew word “*niddah*” is translated “separation” in the King James Version and “purification” in the New King James Version in Numbers 19:9. In other verses *niddah* is translated “impurity.” The word is often used in relationship to the time of a woman’s menstrual period, a time when she was considered ceremonially unclean. This gave rise, I believe, to the use of the word “impurity.” The word *niddah*, however, is derived from the word *nadad* which means “to rove, flee, or drive away” (Strong’s). *Niddah*, therefore, speaks more of separation than of impurity or uncleanness. If a woman was ceremonially unclean, for example, she was *niddah*, separated from the clean. The term “waters of separation,” as in the King James Version, thus seems preferable to “waters of purification” or “waters of impurity” that we find in other translations.

The word congregation means “an assembly,” and in Acts 7:38 we learn that this congregation was the “church in the wilderness.” Prophetically, then, verses nine and ten picture a clean man (one who walks without known sin and disobedience to God’s Word) whose flesh has been reduced to ashes by his voluntary submission to the judgment of the fire of God’s Word. His ashes are placed “outside of the camp” in a clean place. There his ashes are “kept,” or “preserved” for the church, until the time the ashes are placed into the water (the water of the word). Then the water shall be sprinkled upon the church to purify it from sin.

But, there is a problem. Even the one who consents to his own burning and cleansing at the hands of God’s fiery Law is yet “unclean until evening,” i.e. until the beginning of Christ’s millennial Day. There is simply no way around this. So long as we tabernacle in the flesh we remain unclean. Further, we will be in this flesh, and, therefore, remain unclean, until “evening,” the dawning of the seventh Day of creation.

This “clean” man who becomes “unclean” until evening while doing his duty must also remember to “wash his clothes.” Again, this speaks of maintaining a life of purity and good works before God while we wait for “evening.” Remember, we must “die daily,” as Paul said, and continue to work out our salvation so long as it is called “Today.” (Heb. 3:12-15) It will no longer be called “today” tomorrow, i.e., at the beginning of God’s next prophetic day which begins at “evening.” (According to Genesis chapter 1, God begins each new day at evening.) The next two verses add light to this.

{11} He who touches the dead body of anyone shall be unclean seven days. {12} He shall purify himself with the water on the third day and on the seventh day; then he will be clean. But if he does not purify himself on the third day and on the seventh day, he will not be clean.

Why must a man purify himself with water on both the third and seventh days? Because this law foretells prophetic truth. In God’s plan the third and seventh days are the very same day. We are now entering into the third thousand-year day since Jesus was born. Likewise, we are entering the seventh thousand-year day since the creation of Adam. The third and seventh days under this law, therefore, prophesy the same day, the Millennial Day. This law also announces the truth that only those who become purified by the washing of the water of the Word can enter into the rule and reign of Christ on the third, i.e., the seventh, Day.

There is also another prophetic truth revealed here. The third day represents the salvation of our spirits and the seventh day represents the day upon which we realize the salvation of our souls. Jesus Himself was raised from the dead on the third day and by faith in Him we become begotten of God and receive the salvation of our spirits. This corresponds to the third day washing. But, we do not yet experience the salvation of our souls. Yes, we are currently working out our salvation, but we will not fully experience it until *that* Day, the seventh day of creation. The ceremonial washings on the third and seventh days, therefore, picture the first washing that comes with spiritual salvation, and the washing by the Word that must continue until the seventh day. Only those who partake of both washings will be declared “clean” on *that* day.

In verse 11 the phrase “dead body” literally means “dead soul of man.” So, the verse really says, “*He who touches the dead soul of man shall be unclean seven days.*” This, of course, includes everyone in the world, for since “*in Adam all die,*” (1 Cor. 15:22) we all touch Adam’s dead soul and each of us dies in Adam. We also each touch our own dead souls. Numbers 19:11 thus tells us that all mankind remains unclean for, or until, the seventh day.

These two verses also teach us that all of mankind will not necessarily be clean even on the seventh day. Two conditions must be met before one is declared “clean.” Each man must “purify himself with the water on the third day and the seventh day.” “The water” here is the “water of separation” seen in Numbers 19:9. The Israelites, in order to become clean after touching a dead body, had to be sprinkled with this water on the third and seventh days. This heralds the “washing of the water by the Word,” the means by which Christ sanctifies and cleanses His church. (Eph. 5:26)

The cleansing by the water of separation on the third day denotes our partaking of the cross of Christ, who rose on the third day and who will begin to reign on the third millennial day after His natural birth on earth. It also speaks of our voluntary submission to Christ’s holy Word, allowing it to have its way in us. Jesus Himself portrayed this when he washed His disciples’ feet. This represents an ongoing, daily washing of ourselves by Christ’s Word of Truth.

Unfortunately, many Christians do not submit to this washing, thinking that it is too “legalistic.” These “will not be clean” on the seventh day, the Millennial Day. Their garments will be found defiled on that Day. They must wait until the second, general resurrection found in Revelation 20, verses 5 and 11-15, before they can be cleansed in God’s lake of fire. This is when God forces them to partake of the prophetic picture presented in Numbers 19. Those of the first resurrection voluntarily enter into the Numbers 19 sacrifice and allow their scarlet worm, their fleshly nature, to be burned in God’s fiery Law. This is the mystery of the scarlet worm.

The cleansing by the water of separation on the seventh day announces the glorification of these earthly bodies at the time of the first resurrection, something we see more clearly in the next verses.

{13} Whoever touches the body of anyone who has died, and does not purify himself, defiles the tabernacle of the LORD. That person shall be cut off from Israel. He shall be unclean, because the water of purification was not sprinkled on him; his uncleanness is still on him.

The person who does not purify himself with God’s water of separation, the truth of His Word, defiles the Tabernacle of the Lord. This means that he defiles the House of God and

disqualifies himself from becoming a living stone in that house. The New Testament identifies this tabernacle as the New Jerusalem. Refusing to purify oneself speaks of disobedience to God's Word. In our time this disobedience is characterized by the heresy of lawlessness. This has resulted in the utter and complete defilement, i.e., the "leavening," of all aspects of society, including the institutional church.

The Hebrew word for Israel, *yisra'el*, literally means "he will rule as God." (Strong's) Genesis 32:28 contains the very first mention of *yisra'el* where God renames Jacob for this reason: "*as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.*" Jacob did something this night that caused God to take notice of him. He wrestled with God "until the breaking of day," and then asked for God's blessing. This, too, is prophetic, and foreshadows the overcoming saints of God who wrestle with God day and night, striving with Him so that they become all that He wants them to be. These saints "violently" pursue God's Kingdom until they die or are transfigured in life. These remnant saints partake of the first resurrection when God changes them into immortal princes who will rule with Him. (Rev. 20:6) Thus to be "cut off from Israel," as verse 13 states above, prophetically means to be excluded from the rule and reign of Christ in the Kingdom of God.

This understanding illuminates Matthew 11:12 which says, "*And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.*" This taking the Kingdom by force corresponds to Jacob having power with God and men and thus prevailing in life. Jesus promises that His overcoming saints will co-rule with Him in His Kingdom in the following verses:

{26} And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: {27} And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. (Rev 2:26-27 KJV)

To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. (Rev 3:21 KJV)

It is very interesting to see that both the words "take" and "force" in Matthew 11:12, quoted above, are translations of the Greek word *harpazo*. *Harpazo* means "to seize" or "to snatch or catch away." (Vine's) This is the same word used in 1 Thessalonians 4:17, the most common verse concerning that which is popularly called "the rapture." That verse says, "*Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up (harpazo) together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*" *Harpazo* is translated "caught up" in this verse and many, many Christians consider this catching up to be "the rapture." The interesting point is that the use of this verb in both Matthew 11:12 and 1 Thessalonians 4:17 ties together the concept of the rapture with that of taking the Kingdom of Heaven by force. This links the prevailing overcomers to "the rapture" in this particular way.

Also, the word "clouds" here in 1 Thessalonians refers to that "great cloud of witnesses" we find in Hebrews 12:1. This implies something far greater than just a cloudy sky. Notice also that Hebrews 12:1 concerns running "with patience the race that is set before us." This is what Jacob did and this is why he prevailed with God and is counted as an overcomer. He ran the race

God gave him until he took (*harpazo*) the Kingdom by force, i.e. until God blessed him. This event describes the time when God changed his name to Israel and made him a prince to rule in God's Kingdom on earth.

Number 19:13 describes the person who fails to cleanse himself on the third and seventh days. He is "cut off" from Israel. This verse announces disqualification from *Yisra'el*, and it foretells the person unfit for ruling and reigning in the Kingdom of God with Jesus. Anyone deemed unworthy to rule will one day be found in the place of weeping and gnashing of teeth that Jesus announced as follows:

{24} "Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. {25} "When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open for us,' and He will answer and say to you, 'I do not know you, where you are from,' {26} "then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets.' {27} "But He will say, 'I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.' {28} "There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out. {29} "They will come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and sit down in the kingdom of God. {30} "And indeed there are last who will be first, and there are first who will be last." (Luke 13:24-30)

Jesus also uses the term "the outer darkness" to designate this place of weeping and gnashing of teeth. Only then will many souls realize they squandered their life on vain and worthless pursuits in a life given to disobeying God's commands. People of all times past and present who refuse to wash their garments and bathe in the water of God's Word will one day find themselves cast into this very place. This certainly includes Christians who should have known better. All of these will have failed to purify themselves with the water of separation.

Psyche, unlike Orual at first, was willing to give up the worm of her flesh. Despite the difficulty she resolved to serve her God.

*"I see," said Psyche in a low voice. "You think it devours the offering. I mostly think so myself. Anyway, it means death. Orual, you didn't think I was such a child as not to know that? How can I be the ransom for all Glome unless I die. And if I am to go to the god, of course it must be through death. That way, even what is strangest in the holy sayings might be true. To be eaten and to be married to the god might not be so different." **Faces**, p. 72.*

For two thousand years, most Christians have failed to wash themselves in the water of God's Word. Most have not offered themselves as living sacrifices to God. Most have given themselves to mammon, the things of this world, and have willingly taken the mark of the beast on their hands and head. Rather than sacrificing food to God, they learned to sacrifice to idols

instead.

Part II

FOOD SACRIFICED TO IDOLS

*{1} Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies. {2} And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know. {3} But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him. {4} Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but one. {5} For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords), {6} yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live. {7} However, there is not in everyone that knowledge; for some, with consciousness of the idol, until now eat it as a thing offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. **1 Corinthians 8:1-7***

Then I looked at Ungit herself. She had not, like most sacred stones, fallen from the sky. The story was that at the very beginning she had pushed her way up out of the earth--a foretaste of, or an ambassador from, whatever things may live and work down there one below the other all the way down under the dark weight and heat. I have said she had no face; but that meant she had a thousand faces. For she was very uneven, lumpy and furrowed, so that, as when we gaze into a fire, you could always see some face or other. She was now more rugged than ever because of all the blood they had poured over her in the night. In the little clots and chains of it I made out a face; a fancy one moment, but then, once you had seen it, not to be evaded.

Faces, 270

Chapter 10

THE LAW

(The Premier Example of Food Sacrificed to Idols)

{1} *Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? {2} If I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you. For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord. {3} My defense to those who examine me is this: {4} Do we have no right to eat and drink? {5} Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as do also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas? {6} Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working? {7} Who ever goes to war at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock? {8} Do I say these things as a mere man? Or does not the law say the same also? {9} For it is written in the law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain." Is it oxen God is concerned about? {10} Or does He say it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written, that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope. {11} If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things? {12} If others are partakers of this right over you, are we not even more? Nevertheless we have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ. {13} Do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat of the things of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of the offerings of the altar? {14} Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel. {15} But I have used none of these things, nor have I written these things that it should be done so to me; for it would be better for me to die than that anyone should make my boasting void. {16} For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel! {17} For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship. {18} What is my reward then? That when I preach the gospel, I may present the gospel of Christ without charge, that I may not abuse my authority in the gospel. {19} For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; {20} and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law; {21} to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law; {22} to the weak I became*

as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. {23} Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with you.

1 Corinthians 9:1-23

"I lapped up all you gave me like a thirsty animal. Oh, Grandfather, Ansit's right. I've batted on the lives of men. It's true. Isn't it true?"

"Why, child, it is. I could almost be glad; it gives me something to forgive. But I'm not your judge. We must go to your true judges now. I am to bring you there."

"My judges?"

"Why, yes, child. The gods have been accused by you. Now's their turn."

"I cannot hope for mercy."

"Infinite hopes--and fears--may both be yours. Be sure that, whatever else you get, you will not get justice."

"Are the gods not just?"

"Oh no, child. What would become of us if they were? But come and see."

Faces, pp. 296-297

C. S. Lewis clearly understood the mercy of God. Yet, he also understood the severity of God. No one who reads his book can doubt that. When Lewis uses the word "justice" here, he does so in terms of the *lex talionis*, the civil law of retaliation and the Biblical doctrine of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." This also is the way that most Christians view God's Law and God's justice. Lewis understood, however, that the real heart of God's Law is justice and mercy. He knew that God's justice never comes to people without being mixed with His mercy, according to the Scriptures, "*Mercy and truth have met together; Righteousness and peace have kissed,*" (Psalm 85:10) and "*Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.*" (Mat. 23:23) Here Jesus calls "mercy" one of the "weightier" matters of the Law. In other words, mercy represents one key aspect of God's Law.

Thus, the Fox, Orual's Greek tutor and confidant, tells her during one of her many visions that the gods will not mete justice to her. No, they will not deal with her as she has dealt with them and with others. They will not apply "justice" by the principle of *lex talionis* for if they did,

“what would become” of her? Obviously, she would be condemned, just as she condemned them. Instead, he implies that they will meet her with mercy! This little section of *Till We Have Faces* thus introduces us to the Law of God and leads us to consider that Law within the mystery of food sacrificed to idols. We will see that the church’s doctrine of the Law is perhaps the most significant “food” sacrificed to idols that exists. Paul himself turned to the Law immediately after he introduced this strange doctrine in the eighth chapter of I Corinthians.

The Origin of the Law

God Himself declared the Law directly to Moses. The story of God’s declaration of the Law to man begins in Exodus 19 and continues throughout that book and the books of Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. He declares the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20. Recent years have witnessed increasing attacks upon God’s Law. Some say that Satan actually declared the Law. Others say that the Law equates to the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Still others say that the God of the Old Testament is the Father, who is harsh and unloving, and that the God of the New Testament is Jesus Christ, who is merciful and loving. These teach that Jesus “put away” the Law. All of these assertions are blasphemous heresies.

Jesus Christ Himself is the One who appeared to and gave Moses the Law on the mountain in Exodus 19. We know this from several Scriptures. First, God revealed Himself to Moses as “Yahweh” in Exodus 6:2-3. This was a new revelation of God to man for He had revealed Himself before only as “El Shaddai” to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob according to Exodus 6:3. Later, God revealed to Moses His future name, Yashua, in Exodus 15:2 which literally reads, *Yahweh is my strength and my song, and He has become my Yashua; This is my God; and I will praise Him; My father’s God, and I will extol Him.* This verse prophesies God’s incarnate name, Yashua, which is typically translated “salvation” in this verse. The name Yashua, however, is usually translated Joshua in the Old Testament and Jesus in the New Testament.

The prophet Isaiah also prophetically proclaims the incarnation of God in Isaiah 12:2-3, which literally reads, *Behold God is my Yashua, I will trust and not be afraid. For Yah Yahweh is my strength and song, and He has become my Yashua. Therefore you will joyously draw water from the springs of Yashua.* Jesus alluded to this verse in John 7:37-38 which says, *“On the last day, that great day of the feast [of Tabernacles], Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. {38} “He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.”*

Jesus says that if any man thirsts for spiritual truth he should “draw water from the springs of Yashua.” The “Me” in John 7:37-38 is “Yashua” of Isaiah 12:3. Jesus thus reveals Himself here as the “salvation” prophesied in the Old Testament. He is God (Yahweh) who became Yashua. He is Immanuel, God with us, God in the flesh. He is the One, therefore, who gave the Law to Moses. John speaks very clearly about this at the beginning of his gospel:

{1} In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. {2} He was with God in the beginning. {3} Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. {4} In him was life, and that life was the light of men. ... {14} The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. ... {17} For the

law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. (John 1:1-4, 14, 17 NIV)

Concerning His relationship to the Law, Jesus proclaimed,

{17} "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. {18} I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. {19} Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (Mat 5:17-19 NIV)

Has “everything” been “accomplished” yet? Jesus has not put all His enemies under His feet yet; nor has He given the Kingdom back to His Father according to 1 Corinthians 15:24-27. No, everything has not been accomplished. Not “the least stroke of a pen,” therefore, has disappeared from the Law. It remains relevant. This is exactly what Paul teaches his churches.

Paul’s Use of the Law in 1 Corinthians 9

Many of us view God’s Law in the same way as Orual, as something harsh and terrible. Our minds have become blinded to the truth because we have listened to teachers who have not understood God’s Law. We ourselves have failed to correctly apprehend this doctrine from our own faithful study of God’s Word. Thus we became convinced that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ meant an end to all application of God’s Law. We, like so many others, have believed a lie. Thus Paul, speaking by the Holy Spirit’s knowledge of this future heresy, presents us with doctrinal truth concerning God’s Law as a premier example of “food sacrificed to idols.”

In 1 Corinthians 9 Paul applies specific Old Testament laws to particular New Testament circumstances. Be sure to review the Scripture quoted above to see this. He applies the Law to New Testament doctrine. The Law clearly, then, does not end in Jesus. Rather, it reaches its goal, or fulfillment, in Jesus. Most of us have, for some reason, never realized nor understood this. Our minds have been blinded to the truth of what Paul does in this chapter because we have eaten food sacrificed to idols all of our lives. We have believed the doctrine of demons that says, “adherence to and/or application of God’s Law is legalism and to be avoided by the devout Christian,” or “the Law is symbolized by the Genesis Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil and is, therefore, an evil thing that Christians should avoid at all costs.” Paul’s many writings, including his application of the Law here, conclusively prove the grievous error of such common views.

Here Paul takes two specific Old Testament laws and applies the principle of each to a New Testament matter. First he uses the law of Moses, “*You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain,*” to teach that ministers of the gospel should be paid in the natural for their spiritual work. (vss. 7-11) Second he shows that the law which provided food from sacrifices to the Levite priests establishes the principle that “*those who preach the gospel should live from the*

gospel.” (vs. 13-14) These two examples alone conclusively prove that Old Testament laws still apply during New Testament times. We do, however, need to seek God’s wisdom concerning their applications.

In verses 19 to 22 Paul declares that he is even willing to live under Old Covenant ceremonial practices if it will help to win Jews to Christ. He also says that he is willing to live without any of these if it will help win the Gentile. He makes it clear, however, that although he may live as a Gentile “*without the law,*” he never lives as one “*without law toward God,*” but always lives “*under law toward Christ.*” (vs. 21) The meaning of this phrase has become another one of God’s many mysteries in these latter days. The rest of this chapter explains what Paul means and will help us to live under law toward Christ as well.

Paul’s Advice to Timothy Concerning the Law

{1} Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Savior and the Lord Jesus Christ, our hope, {2} To Timothy, a true son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord. {3} As I urged you when I went into Macedonia; remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine, {4} nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith. {5} Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith, {6} from which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk, {7} desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm. {8} But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully, {9} knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, {10} for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, {11} according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust. (1 Tim 1:1-11)

Paul begins his first letter to this *true* son, Timothy, with a command to teach “*no other doctrine*” than that explained to him by Paul himself. He begins his explanation of this doctrine with the purpose or goal of the gospel and the Law. The goal of the “*commandment*” or gospel is love. This Godly love proceeds from “*a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith.*” This corresponds to what we know to be the greatest commands given by Christ, (1) to love God and (2) to love men. Jesus tells us that all of the Law and the prophets are summed up in these two commands. (Mat. 22:37-40) Since these two commands “sum up” the Law, this means that the two commands are defined by the Law and the prophets. Otherwise the phrases “love God” and “love men” have no meaning. We simply could not know what “love” means without the instructions of the rest of the Bible.

In this passage Paul tells Timothy exactly who is under the Law. He lists fourteen specific sins and then adds the sin of “*any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine.*” First, see that each of these listed sins constitutes what Paul calls “sound doctrine.” Thus he is defining sound doctrine as **teaching that corresponds to the truth found in God’s Law.** Paul tells Timothy that the Law is for every single person who commits any of the fourteen specific acts he mentions *and* for anything else a person does that is contrary to sound doctrine. Paul, therefore, teaches that if any Christian commits any of these fourteen acts or any other sin that is

contrary to sound doctrine, then the Law is for that Christian. According to Galatians, the Law will then act as a tutor to lead one back to Christ and a Spirit-led life.

Understanding the Book of Galatians

But, how can the Law still be relevant? Is it not true that Galatians says, “*This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?*” (Gal. 3:2-3)

Thus we see that the Law never does make us perfect. Why, then, is it still important? Galatians answers all these questions. First, we see that the Law “*was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.*” (Gal. 3:24) Proper teaching of God’s Law brings an unbeliever (including unbelieving Christians) into the knowledge that he has sinned by breaking God’s Law. This leads him to seek forgiveness by believing in the work of Christ which brings him justification by faith. This is the way that anyone becomes a Christian. The Holy Spirit in His grace convicts a man of sin and then gives him the faith to believe that Jesus atoned for that sin. See Ephesians 2:8.

The problem with most Christians, however, is that they do not perfectly hear the Holy Spirit after they first believe and, therefore, are not led by the Spirit. Paul tells us a little later in Galatians that “*if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.*” (Gal. 5:18) This directly implies that if one is *not* led by the Spirit, then he comes back under the Law. We need simply look to our own lives and the sins that we have committed and then been convicted of by the Holy Spirit and we will see this is true. The working of the Law and the conviction of the Holy Spirit in the life of a sinning Christian brings personal conviction of sin. The Law itself defines sin according to Romans 7:7. No one could even identify particular sins if not for God’s Law. The Holy Spirit brings conviction of law-breaking according to John 16:8. The Holy Spirit’s Law-based conviction leads a Christian back to a healthy relationship with Christ through repentance and forgiveness. This is true so long as he does not harden his heart toward God. If a sinning Christian will at least read or hear some of God’s Word, then the written word, the Law, can still stir his heart and cause repentance and faith to spring up once again. Remember how the Levitical sacrifices prophesy this truth.

Every Christian needs to come to an understanding that it is Christ in him, i.e. the Holy Spirit in him, that will first convict him of sin and then empower and enable him to keep God’s commandments. Yet, this occurs only if we develop a desire to keep Christ’s commands. God’s Word, so long as we attempt to hear it, continues to convict us of certain areas in our lives that do not line up with Christ’s life. This is the “fiery law” of Deuteronomy 33:2 that burns our flesh, our sinful nature. The Law through the convicting and changing power of God’s Spirit purges our dross, and conforms us to Christ’s image. For our part, we must never make the mistake that we, in our own power, conform ourselves into the image of God. God works through His Law and Holy Spirit to convict us of sin and lead us to Christ. With broken, mournful hearts we fall before God and beseech Him to change our hearts, to write His laws on them, so that we may do His will from our hearts and not our heads. Our hearts (souls) must change. The Law helps us to understand that and the Holy Spirit prosecutes and persecutes us until we either do change by God’s power, or utterly rebel against God.

Thus, when Paul asks, “*Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?*” we answer, “No. We will not become circumcised in our flesh in order to be justified

before God to have fellowship with Him. Neither will we, by the power of our flesh, perfectly obey God's commands so that we become sanctified, holy and have fellowship with Him. Rather, we will believe Jesus and enjoy fellowship with Him. We will then learn to honor and love God's Law. We will allow Him to write that Law on our hearts so that we can obey Him by the power of the Holy Spirit who lives within us."

Understanding the Book of Romans

In the Book of Romans Paul says, "*Now we know that whatever the Law says, it says to those who are under the Law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.*" (Rom. 3:19) This succinctly describes the purpose of the Law and really conveys the same meaning as Paul's teaching in 1 Timothy 1:8-10 where he tells Timothy that the law is good if one uses it lawfully and that the law is for those who disobey sound doctrine. To argue in this way appears to place sinning Christians back under the Law, and yet Paul argues later in Romans that Christians are not "under Law."

To begin to understand this first note that Paul only mentions "moral" laws in the section from Timothy. He does not say that the Law is made for anyone who fails to get circumcised or who does not offer sacrifices at the temple in Jerusalem. In fact, he mentions no "ceremonial" laws at all. The reason for this is that Christ's death, burial and resurrection is the antitype, the prophetic fulfillment, of all the Old Covenant ceremonial laws. Men have no duty today, therefore, to participate in or obey any of the Old Testament laws dealing with ceremony or sacrifices. Our faith in Jesus Christ accomplishes these laws in us. Neither do we need to seek out the Jewish temple to come into the presence of God. Now we, individually and corporately, comprise the temple of God, and the presence of God dwells within us. (1 Cor. 3:16-17; Eph. 2:21)

It is true that the ceremonial laws still prophesy many truths to us, but the New Testament makes it clear that we must not continue any of those sacrificial or ceremonial law practices in a literal sense, except the prohibition of eating blood. (Acts 15:29) Paul's book to the Galatians speaks largely to these issues. It is clear that Paul does not put moral law in the same category as the ceremonial because when he finishes his instruction about circumcision he reminds them to be careful to walk according to the moral law.¹⁴ (Gal. 5:13ff)

We must understand, however, that the attempt to strictly obey God's moral law in the power of our flesh will lead to a dead legalism and certain failure. Paul makes it very clear in the first few chapters of Romans that no one can perfectly obey God's moral law. First he teaches us the purpose for the Law saying, "*whatever the Law says, it says to those who are under the Law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.*" (Romans 3:19) But, then he states, "*Therefore by the deeds of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the Law is the knowledge of sin.*" (Romans 3:20) Then he shows us why the sacrifice of Jesus is so important.

¹⁴I have just used a principle of Biblical interpretation that is very helpful and easy to remember as follows: "The Old Testament laws are maintained in the New Testament era unless they are modified or eliminated by explicit New Testament doctrine." The New Testament clearly eliminates the Old Testament ceremonial law. It just as clearly continues our obligation to the moral law. There is a contrary hermeneutic (principle of Biblical interpretation) that goes like this: "The Old Testament is repealed unless it is repeated." This doctrine cuts off almost all relevance of the Old Testament and has given us bizarre doctrines like forbidding the use of musical instruments in church worship. The preceding principle is easily remembered by the phrase, "*the Old Testament is maintained unless modified, not repealed unless repeated.*"

{21} But now the righteousness of God apart from the Law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, {22} even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; {23} for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, {24} being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, {25} whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, {26} to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. {27} Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the Law of faith. {28} Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the Law. (Rom 3:21-28)

We learn two major principles from Paul's teaching so far in Romans. First, a knowledge of the Law brings with it a knowledge of sin. The Law declares the entire world guilty before God. Second, since we stand guilty, we therefore need a Savior to save us from the wrath of God. That Savior is found in the face of the man Jesus Christ. When God gives us grace and faith to believe in His Son, then we become justified before God. To be justified means to be declared just, or righteous. This comes to us by faith in Christ alone. But, having said this, does he then go on to teach that the law is now null and void, having been "put away" by God?

Was the Law "Put Away?"

If the Law were put away, how then can God still judge sin? If Christ ended, abolished, or fulfilled to the extinction of the Law, then it makes no difference how you or I live. No law would exist to condemn us. Oh yes, we might break one of the State's laws and be sent to prison, but if God put away His own Law, then He could never hold you or me accountable to it.

But Jesus upheld the Law; He did not put it away. Jesus, as Author of the Law and Creator of the world, could have set us free from the Law's penalty of death by putting away His Law. This would have legalized sin, but He did not choose this plan. He upheld the Law and paid its price. He died for us. The Law, therefore, remains in effect.

According to the following verses, Paul calls any theory or theology that puts away the Law preposterous:

"Do we then make void the Law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the Law." (Romans 3:31)

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?" (Rom. 6:1-2)

"What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!" (Romans 6:15)

“What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the Law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the Law had said, ‘You shall not covet.’” (Romans 7:7)

“Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful.” (Romans 7:13)

Now let’s look at Paul’s views regarding the positive aspects of the Law that leads him to his conclusions.

“because you have in the Law the embodiment of knowledge and truth--” (Romans 2:20, NIV)

“Therefore the Law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.” (Romans 7:12)

“For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin.” (Romans 7:14)

“For I delight in the Law of God according to the inward man.” (Romans 7:22)

“I thank God; through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the Law of God, but with the flesh the Law of sin.” (Romans 7:25)

“For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the Law of God, nor indeed can be.” (Romans 8:5-7)

Immediately after stating that justification comes by faith alone, apart from the Law, Paul asks, *“Do we then make void the Law through faith?”* He quickly answers, *“Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the Law.”* (Romans 3:31) “Now wait a minute,” some say. “I thought that ‘to establish the Law’ meant I was getting into legalism. After all, didn’t Paul say, *‘You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by the Law; you have fallen from grace?’*” (Gal. 5:4) Yes, Paul did say that. How, then, can both be true? Let’s continue reading Romans to find out.

After declaring that Christians must “establish the Law,” Paul uses the examples of Abraham and David to show that God has always declared His people righteous based upon their

faith in Him. The purpose of justification by faith is to bring “*peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*” (Romans 5:1) Justification by faith, therefore, establishes our relationship and potential for fellowship with God. Justification does not and cannot come by the Law. Paul then uses the rest of chapter 5 to declare that “*through one Man’s righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.*” (vs. 18) We “establish the Law” after we come to faith in Christ, not before. Christians today, for the most part, fail to establish God’s Law and instead partake of the world’s sins. They have become lawless, *anomia*, and fight against God’s Law. Hence we see pastors who lead flagrantly sinful lives leading God’s people into more and more sin.. These will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

Finally, at the beginning of Chapter 6 Paul starts to explain the comment he made all the way back in Romans 3:31. Chapters 6 through 8 clearly show that he does not consider the Law of God to be something that we cast underfoot to the realm of “mere legalism” simply because we believe in Jesus Christ. On the contrary, Paul asserts in Romans 8:5-7 that the spiritual mind, i.e. the mind given to the things of the Spirit, can be and is subject to God’s Law. Paul teaches us that, having come to faith in Jesus, we now have a choice. We either choose to serve God by obeying His laws or we choose to serve sin and the devil by disobeying them. Now let’s consider these difficult Roman chapters more thoroughly.

Chapter 11

THE OLD MAN

(Living According to the Spirit)

The Crucifixion of the Old Man

Paul begins Romans chapter six by explaining that by faith in Jesus we were baptized into Him and His death. He says, “*Our old man has been crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.*” (Romans 6:6) It is very interesting to note that the word “man” in this verse comes from the Greek translation of the word *anthropos*. The literal definition of *anthropos*, according to *Strong’s*, is “man-faced, i.e. a human being.” Thus our old spiritual “face,” the old representation of our existence, dies when we believe upon Jesus Christ. Notice that the old man “has been crucified.” The verb is past tense. This is a once-for-all past event that occurs the moment an individual believes upon the Lord Jesus Christ. This act cannot be undone. One cannot later become “uncrucified.” Hence, one cannot “lose” his spiritual salvation. Yes, one may “fall from grace,” but this describes a different matter altogether, and has nothing to do with our spiritual salvation. (Gal. 5:4) At this point of faith, we spiritually become men without faces, and remain so until we learn to “put on” Christ.

Notice that God establishes two purposes for our crucifixion: 1) that our body of sin might be done away with, and 2) that we should no longer be slaves to sin. Neither becomes experientially true the moment we believe, as each one of us can testify. Each of us still lives in a body of sin. It is also true that we sometimes do sin. Nevertheless, we should no longer be slaves to sin. Thus sin should become a rarer and rarer event in our lives. John even goes so far as to say, “*Whoever abides in Him does not sin.*” (1 John 3:6)

Paul then states that one who has died has been freed from sin. (Rom. 6:7) He makes the obvious point that a dead man is not subject to sin because he literally *cannot* sin. This directs us to the spiritual truth that our spiritual old man cannot now sin either. He lies dead, crucified with Christ, no longer subject to sin. John says concerning this, “*Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.*” (1 John 3:9) The next three verses in Romans promise us that since we died with Christ, we will also live with Christ. This deals with the promise of immortal spiritual life. So far Paul speaks only to spiritual realities. He does not apply these truths to our earthly lives until verse eleven.

Apprehending Spiritual Truth by Faith

In Romans 6:11 Paul teaches us that we have to do something in the here and now, something beyond believing that Jesus Christ died for our sins and rose again the third day. Now we have to “*reckon*” ourselves “*dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*” (Rom. 6:11) This word “reckon” means “to take inventory.” (Strong’s) Paul uses the term to mean “count” on your old man’s crucifixion as a true fact of life. This reckoning may be the most difficult thing a Christian can do. It is a total act of faith to believe that something happens in the spiritual realm because we cannot physically see it.

Paul further explains the spiritual reality of our standing in Christ in the book of Colossians:

{9} For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; {10} and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power. {11} In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, {12} buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. {13} And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, {14} having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. {15} Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. (Col 2:9-15)

This passage deals entirely with spiritual realities, things that we can only accept and believe by faith. We do not now physically see any of it and most of us experience very little of it as well. Verse 10 says we are “complete” in Him. My body is getting old and I have allergies to grasses and trees. I don’t feel like I am a “complete” anything, yet Paul says that I am. Verse 11 says that my body of the sins of the flesh has been cut off, circumcised by Christ’s circumcision (sacrifice). I know that sin still dwells in these members of mine and I do not feel like my body of the sins of the flesh has been cut off. Physically, this simply has not yet happened. Spiritually, it has. Verse 12 says that I have been buried with Him in baptism and raised with Him, yet I am still here on the ground, never having physically died. Verses 13 and 14 declare that I have died, have been made alive in Him, and have been forgiven of all my sins and debts to God. How? Because Christ took the “*handwriting of requirements that was against us*” and “*nailed it to the cross.*” (vs. 14) I have never physically died and cannot verify that I was “*made alive in Him.*” I certainly cannot see any cross with handwritten “requirements” nailed upon it. I can only accept these assertions by faith. I cannot experience them in any way whatsoever, other than through the personal peace of God that passes all understanding. Nevertheless, I know that these words are true. How? By faith.

Now when we go back to Romans 6:11 we can understand that to “reckon” means to count upon the spiritual facts that Paul proclaims by faith. “Reckoning,” then, is a faith term. By faith I consent to baptism and believe that I am baptized into Christ’s death. My going down in the waters of baptism symbolizes my death with Christ. My coming up out of the waters symbolizes my resurrection with Christ. I accept the spiritual realities symbolized in my baptism by faith. By faith I reckon that I have died with Christ and that I am raised up with Him. By faith I count on the fact that Jesus nailed the handwriting that was against me to the cross, forgave me of all my sins, and made me alive with Him. I do not now see any of this. I cannot see that my sins are forgiven, nor anything else about the reality of my position in Christ. I have the witness of the Holy Spirit in my heart, but all of these truths I only apprehend by faith.

The Rubber (Faith) Meets the Road

Then, in Romans 6:12, Paul tells us “*do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you*

should obey its lusts.” Now Paul presents us with a tangible, difficult command. I can lie to myself and others and say that I “reckon” myself dead to sin and alive to God in Jesus Christ. I might even be able to fool my fellow church members about whether or not I let sin reign in my mortal body. They don’t know what I do when I am not around them, do they? But, I cannot fool myself, my wife, or my children about the condition of my life. Neither can I fool God.

“Do not let sin reign in my mortal body?” This sounds like works to me, Paul. I thought your grace doctrine meant everything was free! What do you mean, “Do not let?”

“I mean,” says Paul, “Do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.” (Rom. 6:13) Paul follows his first command with a second. He shows us that we can refuse to let sin reign in us by ceasing to present our bodies to sin. Now we need to know what sin is. This is where the Law comes back into view. According to Romans 7:7, the Law defines sin. The only way that I can attempt to keep sin from reigning over my body is to know exactly what constitutes a sin. Paul’s command, therefore, appears to put us back under law, does it not?

Under Law, Or Under Grace?

Paul anticipates the dilemma that his command will cause. Immediately he answers the last question, saying, “*For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.*” (Rom. 6:14) Even though it is true that the law defines sin and Paul commands us not to sin, nevertheless, we “*are not under law.*” Instead, we are “*under grace.*” Paul wants it to be perfectly clear, however, that this profound doctrine does not teach lawlessness. He immediately asks and answers this crucial question. “*What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!*” (Rom 6:15)

Many Christians err regarding their walk of faith because they misunderstand the phrase “*you are not under law but under grace.*” These believe that God has “put away” the Law and that it has no relevance to Christians. But, is this true? Don’t Paul and all other New Testament writers exhort us in virtually every book to live in moral purity, without sin? Doesn’t John specifically say, “*Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.*” (1 John 3:4)? We see, then, that God clearly wants His saints to obey His laws. The fact that we do not live “under law,” clearly cannot mean that we are free to ignore and break the Law. Thus we understand that the phrase “under law” speaks of the Law’s relationship to us, not ours to it.

Christians are not “under the law” in the sense that the Law’s penalties will not be invoked against us so long as we continue living by the Spirit and under grace. This does not mean that we have to live in sinless perfection. We know that presently we cannot. If we do happen to sin, we also know that we can repent, ask for forgiveness, and be forgiven because of Jesus’ sacrifice. The fact that we do not live “under law” means that we should never come under the Law’s curse of death. Next Paul explains why we should cease presenting our bodies to sin.

The Law of Redemption

{16} Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? {17}

But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. {18} And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. {19} I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness. {20} For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. {21} What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. {22} But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. (Rom 6:16-22)

This passage from Romans 6 applies the Biblical law of redemption that we find in Leviticus 25:47-53.

*{47} 'Now if a sojourner or stranger close to you becomes rich, and one of your brethren who dwells by him becomes poor, and sells himself to the stranger or sojourner close to you, or to a member of the stranger's family, {48} 'after he is sold he may be redeemed again. One of his brothers may redeem him; {49} 'or his uncle or his uncle's son may redeem him; or anyone who is near of kin to him in his family may redeem him; or if he is able he may redeem himself. {50} '**Thus he shall reckon with him who bought him:** [i.e. the redeemed shall reckon with the redeemer] *The price of his release shall be according to the number of years, from the year that he was sold to him until the Year of Jubilee; it shall be according to the time of a hired servant for him. {51} 'If there are still many years remaining, according to them he shall repay the price of his redemption from the money with which he was bought. {52} 'And if there remain but a few years until the Year of Jubilee, then he shall reckon with him, and according to his years he shall repay him the price of his redemption. {53} 'He shall be with him as a yearly hired servant, and he shall not rule with rigor over him in your sight. (Lev 25:47-53)**

The Biblical principle of *lex talionis*, or an “eye for an eye,” teaches us that sin creates a specific debt that the sinner owes. If one stole property from another, for example, he had to restore the property plus pay some additional amount that depended on the circumstances. This is called the principle of restitution. If one broke certain other laws, then he could be publicly whipped with up to forty lashes. The principle of *lex talionis* demands that the specific punishment meted out by God’s authorities proportionally matches the particular sin. If one plans and murders another, then the murderer’s life should be taken by capital punishment. Paul reminds us by using the phrase “*the wages of sin is death*” that God’s ultimate penalty for sin is death. (Romans 6:23, Genesis 2:17) Man’s sin, therefore, creates a debt impossible for him to

pay. He cannot escape the penalty of death without God's help. As Scripture says, "*For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*" (1 Cor 15:22 KJV)

Now consider Romans 6:16-22 in the light of Leviticus 25:47-53. By analogy, a stranger named "sin" has become our rich taskmaster. Sin, by the power of the Law, brought each one of us into its dominion and took all that we own. It made us its slave and it pays us nothing but death. Each of us now find himself powerless to effect his own release from this power of death. But, praise be to God, our kinsman redeemer, Jesus Christ, is not powerless! This is why Jesus presented Himself to die on the cross. He appeared once in the fullness of time to defeat him who had the power of death, Satan himself. He freed mankind from the power of death by this act of grace. Death could not hold him, nor exercise any power over Him, because He had no sin. Jesus owed no debt to sin or Satan.

Jesus, therefore, rose from the dead and "led captivity (death) captive." (Eph. 4:8) Then, as our kinsman redeemer, He released us, His brothers in the flesh, from their bondage to death. But, there is catch. If we accept His redemption, then each one of us becomes His bondservant according to Leviticus 25:50-53. Those verses say that the redeemed must serve their redeemer until the Year of Jubilee. This Year of Jubilee occurred, for Israel, on each fiftieth year. For us, the Year of Jubilee is a particular prophetic year that has not yet come to pass. Thus, according to God's Law, our kinsman redeemer, Jesus Christ, currently wields authority over each individual He has redeemed. This is why Paul, Peter, James, and Jude all referred to themselves as bondservants of Jesus Christ. See Romans 1:1, 2 Peter 1:1, James 1:1, and Jude 1:1.

Jesus exercises this authority by calling us to holiness and purity, but He does so in a fashion that places us under the jurisdiction of His grace instead of that of His Law. Jesus, of course, perfectly obeyed and obeys all of His own Law, part of which says, "*he shall not rule with vigor over*" us. (Lev. 25:53) He rules us gently by enabling us to pursue holiness without coming *under* the condemnation of the Law. Paul tells us that our rescue from sin and death causes us to become slaves to God and to His Law of righteousness. (Rom. 6:18, 22) Verse 22 tells us that "*having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness.*" The Greek word translated "holiness" here means "purity," or "sanctification." (Strong's) This describes the process that many Christians know as sanctification and that we call the "salvation of the soul."

But, and this a critical but, *we cannot become slaves to righteousness unless we know what righteousness is!* The Psalmist proclaims, "*Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, And Your law is truth.*" (Psalm 119:142) Isaiah declares, "*The LORD is well pleased for His righteousness' sake; He will exalt the law and make it honorable,*" and "*Listen to Me, you who know righteousness, You people in whose heart is My law: Do not fear the reproach of men, Nor be afraid of their insults.*" (Is. 42:21; 51:7) In Romans, Paul describes the precepts of the Law as "*righteous requirements.*" (Rom. 2:26)

The Law today, therefore, serves several functions. First, the Law convicts both wayward believers and total unbelievers as being sinners who need to repent and seek Christ's forgiveness. (Gal. 3:24) Second, it teaches believers the meaning of righteousness and gives them a standard by which to live. Third, it prophesies spiritual realities concerning God's work in and with mankind.

More Mysteries of the Law

{1} Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he

lives? {2} For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband. {3} So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man. {4} Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another; to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God. {5} For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death. {6} But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter. (Rom 7:1-6)

Here Paul gives us a lesson concerning the jurisdiction of the Law. He reminds us that the Law has no authority to speak or act if one is dead. He tells us in verse four that, spiritually, we have *“become dead to the law through the body of Christ.”* This speaks of the crucifixion of our spiritual “old man” on the cross with Christ. We can apprehend this fact by faith alone. None of us can physically see its truth today. Then he informs us that before this spiritual event we *“were in the flesh.”* This term “in the flesh” demands our attention. Romans 8:9 testifies that Christians *“are not in the flesh.”* Instead, it confirms that we are *“in the Spirit.”*

This tells us that our “old man” was a man of flesh. So long as our old man lived we lived “in the flesh.” When he died on the cross we ceased living “in the flesh.” At that point in time we were also delivered from the jurisdiction of the Law. This means that God must only give the Law jurisdiction over “the flesh.” This deliverance from the penalty of the Law works to enable us to *“serve in the newness of the Spirit.”* (Rom. 7:6) This means that we no longer approach God on the basis of adherence to the “oldness of the letter.” We now live and serve God by a new principle, that of life in the Spirit.

Next, from Romans 7:7 to 7:14, Paul reveals the purpose of the Law in God’s plan. In verse 7 we learn that the Law defines sin and that one cannot even identify a sin unless the Law teaches him. The following verses then describe how the Law produced the opportunity for sin to make itself known, that “it might appear sin.” Paul says, *“Has then what is good [the Law] become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful.”* (Rom. 7:13) Throughout this passage Paul carefully makes sure that no one receives a wrong or distorted view of the Law. He calls the Law *“holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.”* (Rom 7:12) He further declares that *“the Law is spiritual.”* (Rom 7:14)

The Bible teaches us that our spirit is begotten of God upon faith in Jesus Christ, but neither our soul nor our flesh changes immediately upon coming to faith. Paul says, *“It is the Spirit Himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God.”* (Romans 8:16) I first knew that I was a Christian by the witness of God in my spirit, not by my thinking, will, or emotions. A great Christian teacher once said, “It is imperative that a believer know he has a spirit, since ... every communication of God with man occurs there. If a believer does not discern his own spirit he invariably is ignorant of how to commune with God in the spirit. He

easily substitutes the thoughts or emotions of the soul for the works of the spirit.”¹⁵

Following this section, Paul proclaims himself still subject to sin. “*I am carnal,*” he says, “*sold under sin. For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do.*” (Rom 7:14-15) How many of us have uttered the very same words? Then he tells us why he still sins, “*But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find.*” (Rom. 7:17-18) Sin, says Paul, dwells in our flesh because we are still carnal. We yet exist inside mortal bodies of flesh and blood. The very principle of our earthly life causes us to sin. We cannot escape this body of flesh until our resurrection and/or glorification as the sons of God.

Even though “*evil is present with me,*” he goes on, nevertheless “*I delight in the law of God according to the inward man.*” (Rom. 7:21-22) Sometimes Paul finds this evil law within his body warring against the law of his mind. This can even bring him into captivity to the law of sin that still dwells in him. (Rom. 7:23) In Romans 7:25 he says that his “mind” really represents or lines its thinking up with himself, that is, with his inner man or spirit, not his flesh.

Vine’s says that this word “mind” denotes “the seat of reflective consciousness, comprising the faculties of perception and understanding, and those of feeling, judging and determining.” One of Vine’s definitions for the word “soul” is “the seat of the sentient element in man, that by which he perceives, reflects, feels, desires....” We understand, then, that the word “mind,” is another word for “soul.” Thus, Paul speaks here of our soul. He is saying that his mind, or soul, conforms itself to his inner man (born again spirit) versus his flesh. The deposit of the Holy Spirit we Christians possess exists in our spirits, not in our souls. Our minds (souls) can choose to either agree or disagree with the spirit.

Some teach that the word “mind” here in Romans 7 speaks of man’s spirit, but this is clearly not the case. Paul uses the word “pneuma,” translated “spirit,” with regard to himself in Romans 1:9. In Romans 2:29 Paul makes it clear that his “spirit” has been circumcised by faith in Christ. This means that that which was flesh within his earthly spirit has been “cut off” by faith in Christ. Hence his own spirit is now pure. After salvation, or spiritual circumcision, God intends for us to bring our soulful mind under the rule of our spirit. Consider again Hebrews 4:12:

For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Here we see the contradistinction of our soul and spirit and learn that only God’s Word can work to divide these two organs in our experience of God. Romans 12:2 teaches us to be “*transformed by the renewing of our mind.*” We do this by ceasing to conform to the ways of the world and by allowing the water of God’s Word to wash our minds. The mind, therefore, relates to our souls, not our spirits. Paul teaches that Christians can renew their minds, which speaks of “soul salvation.”

Constantly renewing his mind, Paul attempts to live according to God’s law. He finds, however, that the law of his body of death still frustrates him from fully obeying God. (Rom.

¹⁵Watchman Nee, *The Spiritual Man* (New York: Christian Fellowship Publishers, Inc. 1968), Vol. I, p. 31.

7:23-24) Finally, he bewails the condition of his unredeemed flesh and cries out, “*O wretched man that I am. Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God — through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.*” (Rom. 7:24-25)

The Mystery of “In the Flesh” vs. “According to the Flesh”

Even though Paul is not “*under the law,*” he yet claims that he will “*serve the law of God.*” This seems contradictory until we come to fully understand the role of the law in the life of the believer. He goes on to explain it more fully in chapter eight. First, he restates that there is “*no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.*” But, he says, this is true only for those “*who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.*” (Rom. 8:1) Now we need to notice the distinctive phrases “*in the flesh*” and “*according to the flesh*” that Paul uses and try to understand what he means by them.

The term “*in the flesh*” occurs five times in the book of Romans, in verses 2:28, 7:5, 8:3, 8:8, and 8:9. Paul distinguishes outward circumcision “*in the flesh*” from inward circumcision “*in the Spirit*” in Romans 2:28-29. In verses five and six of chapter seven he contrasts the bearing of “*fruit to death*” while we lived “*in the flesh*” to serving “*in the newness of the Spirit.*” Finally, he declares, “*But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.*” (Rom 8:9) We see, then, that the terms “*in the flesh*” and “*in the Spirit*” describe two distinct, totally contrary, states of existence. The terms do not deal at all with the particular way that a believer lives his life. They relate only to the particular status of our spiritual existence. Each of us lives in one, and one only, of these conditions. Either we live “*in the flesh*” because we do not believe in Jesus, or we live “*in the Spirit*” because we do believe in Him.

Paul uses the different terms “*according to the flesh*” and “*according to the Spirit,*” or “*by the Spirit,*” however, to describe the type of life we lead. Paul teaches several important truths in chapter eight of Romans that we cannot clearly discern until we understand the distinction of the terms “*in the flesh*” versus “*according to the flesh*” and “*in the Spirit*” versus “*by, or according to, the Spirit.*”

1) First, he declares that the promise of “*no condemnation*” comes only to those who walk “*according to the Spirit,*” not to those who walk “*according to the flesh.*” (Rom. 8:1) When we finish discussing chapter eight we will fully understand that a Christian, a person who now lives “*in the Spirit,*” can walk either “*according to the Spirit*” or “*according to the flesh.*” Once we see this reality, then we come to know that “*condemnation*” can indeed come to a Christian.

2) Next, he states, “*The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.*” (Rom. 8:2) This is a statement of spiritual fact. We apprehend this by faith. The Spirit that we receive upon faith in Jesus does in fact make us free from the law of sin and death. Note that this is a law, just as there are certain laws of physics. So, let’s consider some basic laws of nature to understand this. One basic law is that if an object is put into motion by some force, it will continue its motion in a constant direction and at a certain speed unless another force, like friction, acts upon it to slow and, finally, to stop it. Another law holds true, for example, if a person jumps up into the air. He will continue going up unless some force, or law, acts upon him to bring him down. We know that such a force exists and we call it the law of gravity. The law of gravity will prevail so long as the force is not great enough to overcome it.

Similarly, Paul tells us that the law of *“the Spirit of life”* prevails over the law of *“sin and death.”* This is a fact. I cannot see it. The laws of gravity and friction are facts also, but I cannot see them. I believe in all of these laws by faith. I can prove the existence of one, namely gravity, immediately by simple tests. The law of the Spirit of life, however, can only be proven over time as we walk in obedience to God’s commands. We must believe by faith, therefore, that *“the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.”*

3) The law of the Spirit of life makes it possible for the righteous requirements of God’s Law to be fulfilled (not perfectly, but to some extent) in us Christians. But, this is true only for those who walk *“according to the Spirit,”* and not *“according to the flesh.”* (Rom. 8:1, 4) Later, in verses seven and eight, Paul reveals that the one *“in the flesh”* cannot even hope to meet the righteous requirements of God’s Law. Paul demands, therefore, that believers make a choice. They must choose to walk either according to the Spirit or according to the flesh. Only the one who walks according to the Spirit will ever fulfill the righteous requirements of the Law and so please God.

4) After this Paul explains that living according to the flesh means that one sets his mind on the things of the flesh instead of things of the Spirit. Contrarily, living according to the Spirit means to set one’s mind on the things of the Spirit. (Rom. 8:5) This gives us instruction concerning that which we should choose to do. Are we going to set our minds upon money, fleshly gratification, and more earthly things. Or, shall we set our minds upon the things of the Spirit, i.e. upon knowing God and understanding His ways? Jesus told us long ago, *“You will either serve God or you will serve mammon.”* (Mat. 6:24; Lk. 16:13)

5) Next Paul warns us that *“to be fleshly minded is death.”* On the other hand, he says, *“to be spiritually minded is life and peace.”* (Rom. 8:6) He elaborates upon carnal mindedness in verse seven by stating that the fleshly, or carnal, mind sets itself at enmity against God. Paul says that such a mind is not and literally cannot be subject to the Law of God. But, many people miss the converse of this statement. The logic of Paul’s argument clearly implies that the spiritually minded person lives at peace with God and that he can be and is subject to God’s Law. What, then, shall be the end of all Christians who despise God’s Law in this present age?

6) In Romans 8:7 Paul makes the emphatic declaration that *“those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”* It is obvious that everyone who is *“in the flesh”* possesses a fleshly mind. The preceding verses explain the actual condition of a fleshly mind. Here, in verse seven, Paul simply summarizes his teaching and succinctly states the spiritual law that no human being who is still *“in the flesh”* can please God. He must, therefore, effect some change in his spiritual make up. He must be converted from a being who is *“in the flesh”* to one who is *“in the Spirit.”* This describes exactly what takes place upon one’s “conversion,” when he becomes “born of the Spirit,” or “born again.”

7) Paul clarifies these thoughts when he next says, *“But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.”* (Rom. 8:9) If one believes in Jesus, then he has the Spirit of Christ dwelling within him. In that case, promises Paul, *“you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit.”* This, of perhaps all verses, most clearly defines the difference between one whose exists *“in the flesh”* versus one who lives *“in the Spirit.”* Paul goes to the very core of our spiritual existence here. He does not speak of the way we live, or of one’s lifestyle. He is talking about the actual state of ones’ spiritual existence.

Every man’s existence, teaches Paul, must be defined in one of only two ways. Either he lives in the flesh, or he lives in the spirit. We only know to which existence we belong by one

test: does the Spirit of God dwell within us, or not. Paul states a critically important doctrinal issue here. He said the same thing to the Corinthians, *“Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?; unless indeed you are disqualified.”* (2 Cor. 13:5) If we do not know that Jesus Christ dwells within us, then we do not pass the test. We cannot please God in this case.¹⁶

8) Paul finally gets around to resolving the dilemma he writes about at the end of chapter seven. He says, *“And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.”* (Rom. 8:10-11) Yes, even though we have been born again, our *“body is dead because of sin.”* The Greek word “pneuma” is translated “Spirit” each time above. The writers of the Bible use the same Greek word whenever they discuss man’s spirit as well. The context alone determines whether the author intended man’s spirit or God’s Spirit. I believe that the word *pneuma* in verse ten speaks of man’s spirit, not God’s. Christ’s righteous act of love brought life to our spirits. Therefore, if Christ is in you, your spirit is life because of His righteousness. Nevertheless, even then our bodies remain *“dead because of sin.”* Verse eleven then promises that God’s Spirit within us will eventually bring life also to our mortal bodies.

9) Paul then returns to the redemption theme that he first stated in chapter six. He reminds us of our debt to Christ. This time he says, *“Therefore, brethren, we are debtors — not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.”* Here is that term *“according to the flesh”* again. As *“brethren”* we surely exist *“in the spirit”* and not *“in the flesh.”* But, we brethren, Paul makes clear, can live *“according to the flesh”* if we choose to do so. We are not, however, *“debtors”* to the flesh. We know from his previous words that we are debtors to our kinsman-redeemer, Jesus Christ Himself. So, what is Paul’s point?

10) *“For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.”* (Rom. 8:13) This, brethren, speaks of the second death, and it speaks to Christians. We believers already partook of the first death when we believed in Christ and died on the cross with Him. But, now we have a new choice and this choice deals with our souls. This is the choice Jesus gives us, *“For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel’s, the same shall save it.”* (Mark 8:35)

The word for “life” in Mark’s verse comes from the Greek word “psuche” which means “soul.” Jesus tells us that His people can “save,” or live for their soul’s pleasure now, or they can give up their lives (souls) now for God’s purposes. Christians may partake of the second death during their earthly lives by willingly giving their souls for the works of God. The Bible teaches that we will either choose to partake of the second death now or be forced by God into it later. See Revelation 20:11-15. If we choose to enter into Christ’s death now, we will ultimately “save” our lives (souls) and qualify to reign with Jesus in the Millennial Kingdom.

11) *“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.”* (Rom. 8:14) Here is the definition of the Overcomers of God. God’s remnant consists only of those believers who are led by the Spirit of God. Only they live at peace with God because they voluntarily

16I encourage everyone to test himself or herself at this point. Really, do not read any further unless you know for certain that God dwells within you. Spend time on your knees asking for a confirmation of His Spirit in you until you proceed from here. Tell Jesus you believe in Him and what He did for you and that you want Him to dwell inside you so that you can please Him.

choose to become subject to God's ways, His laws. Read Romans 8:7 again and you will now see that this is exactly what it means, "[b]ecause the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." All unbelievers are still "in the flesh" and are, by definition, at enmity against God. Believers who set their minds on the things of the flesh, however, also retain carnal minds because they refuse to renew them. They, too, find themselves at enmity against God. Brethren, since our old man, our existence "*in the flesh*" was crucified with Christ and since we are now "*in the Spirit*," we owe a debt to Jesus. Let us, then, live according to the Spirit, not according to the flesh.

CONFORMED TO CHRIST'S IMAGE (WRITING GOD'S LAW ON OUR HEARTS)

After our crucifixion with Christ our goal should be to “put on” the face of Christ. Paul calls this the “forming,” or shaping, of Christ in us. (Gal. 4:19) We also see this idea going back to the very beginning of creation according to these words from Paul: “*For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*” (2 Cor 4:6) Peter also elaborates on this theme, saying, “*proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.*” (1 Peter 2:9)

We begin our journey in God as did the present creation itself, in darkness. Before our salvation comes to us, darkness covers the face (*paniyim*) of the deep. (Gen. 1:2). But, the Holy Spirit hovers over us as He did that first darkness. Then He convicts us of sin, and righteousness, and judgment for, at some point in each of us, He declares, “Let there be light,” and there is light. (John 16:8; Gen. 1:3) Thus we become “born again.” (John 3:3) Once we come into the light we can see the Kingdom of Heaven. (John 3:3) God divides the light from the darkness when the face of our darkness, our spiritual old man, is nailed to the cross. (Gal. 2:20) Now, though, having seen the Kingdom, we must strive to enter into it through its narrow gate. (John 3:5; Mat. 7:13-14; Luke 13:24)

Putting Off The Old Man

“Our old man has been crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should not longer be slaves of sin.” (Romans 6:6)

Many of us believe that Paul only preaches that the “old man” has been, once for all, “put off” onto the cross of Christ when we first believe in Him. He does teach a one time event both here in Romans and in his book to the Colossians, saying, “*you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him.*” (Col. 3:9-10) Here, we see the putting off as a past, once for all, event. This coincides with Paul’s declaration to the Romans above and to the Galatians, “*I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me....*” (Gal. 2:20). We do see, then, that the putting off of the old man, on the one hand, is a once for all event. This is the first death, and it is spiritual.

All of the Scriptures, however, go beyond this one truth. In Ephesians, for example, Paul says the following:

*{20} But you have not so learned Christ, {21} if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: {22} that you **put off**, concerning your former conduct, **the old man** which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, {23} and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, {24} and that you put on*

the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness. (Eph 4:20-24)

Are the Scriptures contradictory, then, or do these verses express different truths? Clearly, they express different truths for the New Testament is filled with exhortations to “put off,” “cast off,” and “lay aside” the old man with its corresponding weight of sin. For example, Hebrews 12:1 says, “*let us **lay aside** every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.*” Peter also exhorts us, “*Therefore, **laying aside** all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, {2} as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby,....*” (1 Pet 2:1-2) Paul teaches the same thing in his letter to the Colossians, saying,

*{8} But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. {9} Do not lie to one another, since you have **put off the old man** with his deeds, {10} and have **put on the new man** who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,.... (Col 3:8-10)*

In these verses Paul actually mixes the two concepts. In verse 8 we see the present need to “put off” sinful, fleshly behavior. In verses 9 and 10 we notice the past, once for all, events that describe our present spiritual existence. Verse 8 deals with our need to presently work for the salvation of our souls while verses 9 and 10 relate to the past salvation of our spirits.

James teaches the same doctrines in his book. There he provides a critical clue for understanding how, on the one hand, putting off the old man is a one time event and how, on the other, we must put off the old man daily. He says, “*Therefore **lay aside** all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.*” (James 1:21) First, he assures us that the “word,” the Spirit of God, already dwells within us. He was “*implanted*” in us when we first believed upon Jesus. Since this is true, he exhorts us to receive that Word and “*lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness.*” In other words, be renewed in the spirit of your mind by the washing of the water of the Word.

Paul said, “*I die daily.*” (1 Cor. 15:31) This succinct phrase implies that Paul had to daily “lay aside,” or “take off” his “*old man.*” Yes, he taught that the “*old man*” was already crucified with Christ. He also taught that he still lived in a “*body of sin*” and that he had to willfully choose to refuse its sinful demands.

The truth is that the one time putting off of the old man deals with the putting off of our spiritual old man. This occurs and can occur only one time. We typically call this event “salvation” or being “born again.” Coming to faith in Jesus Christ thus effects our spiritual salvation. This is also when we receive the earnest of the Holy Spirit. It is when the Word is implanted in us. At this time He comes to dwell in us. Paul informs us that we are “*in the Spirit*” if the Spirit of God dwells in us. (Rom. 8:9) He tells us we are “*in the flesh*” if the Spirit of God does not dwell in us. (Id.)

A believer, however, continues to live in his fleshly body either until he physically dies or receives his immortal body. Right now we all live on this earth in bodies of flesh. This means we have a choice. Now we choose to either live according to the flesh (in which we still exist) or according to the Spirit (Who now dwells within us). Paul puts it like this, “*If you live according*

to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.” (Rom. 8:13) Paul clearly talks to believers here. Unbelievers do not possess the Spirit by which they can put to death the sins of their bodies.

It is by choosing to put on Christ’s righteous attributes that we make a decision to put on the new man. Conversely, we put off the old man by choosing to not participate in all of the things condemned by Scripture. Paul tells us that we do this *“by the Spirit.”* We cannot accomplish this in our flesh. This is a faith work. We put off the sins of the flesh by faith and we put on the righteous acts of the Spirit by faith. But, what if we Christians fail to put on righteousness and begin to put back on those deeds of darkness for which we have been cleansed and forgiven? In other words, what if we refuse to walk by faith?

The Old Man and the Law

The apostle James speaks specifically to these last questions. He says,

*{21} Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the **implanted word**, which is able to **save your souls**. {22} But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. {23} For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; {24} for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. {25} But he who looks into **the perfect law of liberty** and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but **a doer of the work**, this one will be blessed in what he does. (James 1:21-25)*

James tells us here that the Word of God within us is *able* to save our souls. His entire argument shows that Christians, i.e. the ones who *have the word implanted* within them, **do not necessarily save their souls**. In this passage James emphasizes the need for *doing* the Word and for *looking into and continuing in the perfect law of liberty*. James further defines this perfect law as *“the royal law,”* namely that *“you shall love your neighbor as yourself.”* (James 2:8)

Paul uses the Old Testament to tell us how to obey this royal law. He says, *“For the commandments, ‘You shall not commit adultery,’ ‘You shall not murder,’ ‘You shall not steal,’ ‘You shall not bear false witness,’ ‘You shall not covet,’ and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”* (Rom. 13:9) Paul, by using specific Old Testament law, thus defines for us what it means to love your neighbor as yourself. He says that if you truly love your wife, then you will not commit adultery. If you truly love your friend, then you will not commit adultery with his wife, nor kill him, nor steal from him, nor lie about him, nor covet his possessions. We need to understand that we simply cannot love another truly unless we have some idea of what love means. **The Law, therefore, not only defines sin. It also defines love.**

When he tells us to *“receive with meekness the implanted word”* he speaks of the infilling of the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the Word, by the Holy Spirit. We know that the Old Testament Word of God contains the Law of God. In James’ day there existed no New Testament. His use of the phrase *“implanted word”* thus affirmed the Old Testament Scriptural Word and the need to receive God’s Law. He further teaches us that only by receiving and doing this Word, this Law,

can we save our souls. Brethren, this speaks of the “salvation of the soul,” not the “salvation of the spirit.” The Law instructs us in the ways of God. It informs us how to love God and love men. Obedience to it, by the power and leading of the Holy Spirit within us, effects the salvation of our souls. Hence, the Law informs us concerning what it means to put off the old man and to put on the new man. This explains why the Law continues to be so relevant. It has nothing to do with our spiritual salvation, but it has everything, prophetically and practically, to do with the salvation of our souls.

Condemnation According to the Law

History and experience prove that many people, after coming to faith in Jesus Christ, live in service to Satan rather than to God. These Christians walk according to the flesh instead of according to the Spirit. Paul says, “*There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.*” (Rom 8:1) This verse clearly implies that there *is condemnation* for those who do not walk according to the Spirit, but according to the flesh. We need to ask, then, upon what basis does this condemnation come?

Every writer of the New Testament clearly says that the willfully sinful believer shall be judged according to God’s Law. Even John, the “disciple of love,” says,

{7} "He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. {8} "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." (Rev 21:7-8)

The condemnation spoken in verse eight above must relate to believers for the following reasons: 1) This passage compares and contrasts the overcomers in verse seven with the sinners of verse eight. The seven letters to the seven churches in Revelation chapters two and three very clearly describe “he who overcomes” as a member of a distinct class of Christians that prevails with God. The overcomer is the Christian who chooses to and thus succeeds in putting off the deeds of the flesh and putting on the deeds of the Spirit. 2) The time frame in view in this passage is the time of “*a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away.*” (Rev. 21:1a) This time period is during the millennial reign of Christ. As punishment for living according to the flesh, Christ condemns them to “*their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.*”

Christian sinners who refuse to repent and live according to the Spirit deliberately choose to “save their souls,” i.e. their natural, worldly lives, during their bodily existence on earth. Accordingly, says Jesus, they will lose their souls. (Luke 9:24) The place where Christians, and all other unbelievers, lose their souls is in the lake of fire. This is the place of “*weeping and gnashing of teeth*” in the “*outer darkness*” where God purges all willful sinners of their sins by His fiery law. These people refused to come into agreement with God concerning His ways. They refused to allow Him to write his laws upon their hearts. Thus, they do not “*inherit all things.*” (Rev. 21:7)

The Holy Spirit Works out God’s Law in the Believer

Most of Romans 7 deals with the dilemma in which all of us find ourselves from time to time, that is, that we continue to do sinful things even though we do not want to do so. Paul assures us here that this is the result of sin still dwelling in our flesh. He finally makes a distinction between himself and his flesh.

Paul teaches the key to the victorious Christian life in verse 7:6, *“But now we have been delivered from the Law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.”* (Note: this speaks of the first death) The very reason why we have been delivered from the Law, says Paul, is that we “should” serve God in the newness of the Spirit. This is why God gives us the earnest of the Spirit when we believe. This is also how we know that we belong to Christ. *“Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?; unless indeed you are disqualified.”* (2 Cor. 13:5)

But, we do not have to serve God after we believe in Jesus. In fact, many Christians do not. Paul says we “should” serve him. He does not say we will or that we will be forced to do so. In fact, in Romans 8 he says just the opposite.

{2} For the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the Law of sin and death. {3} For what the Law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, {4} that the righteous requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. {5} For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. {6} For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. {7} Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the Law of God, nor indeed can be. {8} So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. {9} But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. {10} And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. {11} But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. {12} Therefore, brethren, we are debtors; not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. {13} For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. {14} For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. (Rom 8:2-14)

The “Christian” Doctrine of Law is Food Sacrificed to Idols

Romans chapter 8 teaches that Christians may live either according to the principles of

the flesh or the principles of the Spirit. We will subject our souls either to the rule of the flesh or to the rule of the Spirit that lives in our spirit. So long as I keep in step with the Spirit's leading, the judgments of the Law cannot touch me, even if I make mistakes along the way. If, however, I sin willfully after I have received this knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for my sins. All that awaits me then is the fearful expectation of God's judgment and fiery indignation. (Hebrews 10:26-27) Again, "*For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.*" (Romans 8:13) This is the second death, the death of the soul, that occurs in the lake of fire.

The Law defines those deeds of the body that need to be put to death. Consequently, if we do not learn to love God's Law, we will never learn to hate our own sinful deeds. Remember, "*the Law is spiritual*" and this law is the "*embodiment of knowledge and truth.*" (Romans 7:14; 2:20) This, my brethren, is why the Law continues to be so very, very, important in the life of the believer. We do not perfectly hear our spirits within us. We do not, therefore, perfectly hear the Holy Spirit's instructions to our spirits. Thus none of us walk perfectly according to the Spirit. The Word of God, the Law, thus acts as a second witness with the Holy Spirit to communicate the truth of God to us. By the Spirit we establish God's Law, which, in turn, establishes God's ways in the world. (Deut. 19:15; 2 Cor. 13:1; Romans 3:31) The Law demanded blood and Jesus gave us His. The Spirit washes us with the water of the Word. John says,

This is He who came by water and blood; Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth. {7} For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. {8} And there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one. (1 John 5:6-8 NKJV)

Many, many Christians claim to be led of the Spirit and yet disregard the Bible's clear instructions by participating in habitual sinful behavior. They are not led of their spirit; they are led by their minds that have not been renewed by the washing of water by the Word and by their bodies of sin. Paul can say that his body does what he does not want to do because he can also say that he "*delights in the law of God according to the inward man.*" (Romans 7:22) Otherwise, would he not be doing the things that he really wanted to do? The point is that many sinful Christians actually do the sinful things that they want to do. For this they will be judged by God.

The "inner man" is the spirit of man that has been quickened by the Holy Spirit through faith in Christ. Paul "delights" within his own soul, or mind, according to the delight of his inner man, or spirit. His spirit, of course, delights in God's Law and thus Paul, since he washes his mind in the water of the Word, also delights in that Law within his own mind. How can we call a thing evil when the Holy Spirit delights in it? Yet, there are many Christians who do not fear to call God's Law "evil," "harsh," or "legalistic." Brethren, it is man's laws and traditions that are legalistic, not God's Law. Because we loved wickedness, we justified our actions. We invented the "Christian" doctrine that proclaims God "put away" His Law. This doctrine is a food sacrificed to idols.

Writing God's Law on Our Hearts

Now let's consider that great prophecy concerning the Law contained in the Book of Hebrews:

{8} Because finding fault with them, He says: "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; {9} "not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the LORD. {10} "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. {11} "None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them. {12} "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more." (Heb 8:8-12)

We Christians have assumed that the fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy found here, that God would put His laws in our minds and write them on our hearts, would be like going to a fast-food restaurant. We have believed that we would suddenly just have all of God's laws and ways written on our heart in one quick instant. No, a thousand times no! God does not work that way with us.

Is it not self-evident that we who have rejected God's Law as mere legalism do not now have God's Law written on our hearts? This false teaching that claims that God will automatically write his laws upon the hearts of the very people who hate His Law represents one of the gravest errors held by God's teachers in the last days. It is so prevalent that one can hardly find a book written within the last century that does not derogate the Law. We believe it is so popular because it removes accountability from God's people and allows them to indulge in the sins of their fancy.

I am not saying that a Christian writes God's Law upon his own heart. Neither am I saying that a Christian must perfectly obey God before God will write His Law on his heart. Nor am I saying that there is some magical number of good works that a Christian must do before he qualifies for God to write His Law on his heart. I AM SAYING that a Christian's mind must begin to come into conformity with God's Truth and that he must begin to love God's ways and laws before God will begin this spiritual process. He will not force us to take something we do not want. His goal is to bring us to the place where we willingly say with the psalmist, "*Oh how I love Your Law. It is my meditation all the day.*" (Psalm 119:97)

Paul applied Old Testament Law to New Testament situations in I Corinthians 9 because the Holy Spirit knew that the future church's doctrine concerning God's Law would become a "food" sacrificed to idols. Clearly, the church's false handling of God's Law has been one of, if not the, most devastating trends in the history of both the church and the world.

Conformed Into His Image

God puts His laws into our minds and writes them on our hearts only after we yield ourselves to Him in obedience to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, after we study, learn, listen, and begin to do the work of the Gospel. This type of obedience comes **after** we have believed in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of our sins. Persevering in the faith, in fact, represents a major purpose of our trials and tribulations. We will only be conformed into God's image **according to our own free will** as we **allow** Him to write his laws on our hearts. This represents true communion, or common union, between the believer and the Holy Spirit. This is the mystery of which John speaks when he says,

*{28} And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming. {29} If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of him. How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. {2} Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. **But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. {3} Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.** (1 John 2:28-3:3 NIV)*

We often misread this passage from John in that we think it says, "Whenever God appears, no matter what condition I am in as a Christian, I will immediately become like Him and, therefore, be able to see Him as He is." But, John does not say this. Rather, he says, "If we hope to see Him as He is (as pure and righteous and holy), then we will (honestly attempt to) live pure and righteous and holy lives here on earth." This speaks the same truth as Paul's doctrine, for when Paul ends his teaching on food sacrificed to idols, he says, "*If we [Christians] judged ourselves, we would not be judged.*" (I Cor. 11:31) It is this self judgment and this purification of ourselves by the power of the Holy Spirit that finally qualifies us to "*see him as He is.*" No, we will not do it perfectly or believe perfectly before He comes, but *we must want to!* We should be mourning over the sinful condition of our flesh.

Yet, Christian opinions that say both "adherence to God's Law is legalism" and "the day is soon coming when God will just rapture us and immediately conform us into His image" permeate the Church at the dawn of the seventh millennium. These false doctrines produced and still create the general lawlessness seen in most churches. The lawlessness among God's people, in turn, gives rise to the pervasive lawlessness throughout the world. In 2002 we witnessed rampant homosexual and sexual child abuse in the Catholic Church itself. Little did we realize it happened there long before it came "out of the closet" in the world. God always gives His people what their hearts truly crave, even lawlessness which eventually leads to bondage, fear and death. God's ultimate plan is that even such bondage will eventually lead to repentance and seeking God's face.

Thus we must not be so self-assured that we will automatically see God face to face simply because we now believe in His Son. Neither should we become complacent because we happen to know (or think we know) the truth concerning certain hidden doctrines. There exist

many Scriptural warnings that prove that this is not the case, especially in the Book of Hebrews.

Chapter 13

MYSTERIES OF HEBREWS and REVELATION (Salvation of the Soul)

You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons.

1 Corinthians 10:21

“Get up, girl,” said a voice. I opened my eyes. My father stood beside me. And instantly all the long years of my queenship shrank up small like a dream. How could I have believed in them? How could I ever have thought I should escape from the King? ... “Come with me to the Pillar Room,” he said.

I followed him down the stair (the whole palace was empty) and we went into the Pillar Room. He looked all round him, and I became very afraid because I felt sure he was looking for that mirror of his. ... But he went to one corner of the room and found there (which were strange things to find in such a place) two pickaxes and a crowbar. “To your work, goblin,” he said, and made me take one of the picks. ... When we had lifted four or five of the big stone flags we found a dark hole, like a wide well, beneath them.

“Throw yourself down,” said the King, seizing me by the hand. ... It was warmer down here and the air was hard to breathe It was another Pillar Room, exactly like the one we had left, except that it was smaller and all made (floor, walls, and pillars) of raw earth. And here also my father looked about him, and once again I was afraid he would ask what I had done with his mirror. But instead, he went into a corner of the earthen room and there found two spades and put one into my hand and said, “Now work. Do you mean to slug abed all your life?” So then we had to dig a hole in the center of the room. And this time the labour was worse than before... But at last we had done so much that another black hole opened beneath us. This time I knew what he meant to do to me, so I tried to keep my hand from his. But he caught it and said, “Do you begin to set your wits against mine? Throw yourself down.”

“Oh no, no, no; no further down; mercy!” said I. ...

Then we leaped down into the hole, and fell further than before,

but again alighted unhurt. It was far darker here, yet I could see that we were in yet another Pillar Room; but this was of living rock, and water trickled down the walls of it. ... As I looked I could see that it was getting smaller still. The roof was closing in on us. ...

“Who is Ungit?” said he, still holding my hand.

Then he led me across the floor; and, a long way off before we came to it, I saw that mirror on the wall, just where it always had been. At the sight of it my terror increased, and I fought with all my strength not to go on. But his hand had grown very big now... I was ... sucked along till we stood right in front of the mirror. And in it I saw him, looking as he had looked that other day when he led me to the mirror long ago.

But my face was the face of Ungit as I had seen it that day in her house. “Who is Ungit?” asked the King.

“I am Ungit.” My voice came wailing out of me....

Faces, pp. 274-276

In this vision Orual's dead father typifies God the Father and he forces her to see who she really is. Yes, she is ugly, pitifully ugly. But she is worse than that; she is Ungit, the very goddess she hates. This short passage brings us face to face with the reality of ourselves. Ungit is the flesh and we, like Orual, hate to confront our own “Pillar Room,” our own idols. Even so, the King will still come to us and then lead us to ever decreasing boundaries of our existence. Finally, He will force us to stand before the living Rock Who feeds us with His living water. But even there we will see the boundaries of our world growing smaller still. And why smaller? Because there, in His presence, He strips our idols away one by one until all that stands before Him is Ungit, the scarlet worm of sinful flesh.

Only then, only when the King forces us to stand before His mirror and to look deeply therein do we see who we really are. Only there, in the mirror of God's Word, do we perceive that we, like Orual, consist only of ugly, sinful flesh, a pitiful worm that must die. Sooner or later God brings each of us to the place where we will look deeply into this glass of revelation. There He forces us to view our entire life in the context of His mirror. Thus He causes us to understand ourselves and to truly cry out to Him for deliverance. In us, in our flesh, dwells no good thing.

The Books of Hebrews and Revelation: Food Sacrificed to Idols

Men continually misinterpret the books of Hebrews and Revelation. They usually say that all of the warnings in both books apply to non-Christians. They interpret these books

according to a preconceived idol that says, "No Christian will ever be judged by God. He is saved by the blood of the Lamb and that takes care of all potential judgment by God." But, this is only true if we do not trample this blood under our feet. The books of Hebrews and Revelation make it very clear that believers will be judged by God and that many believers can and will suffer loss because of disobedience. No, they do not lose their spiritual salvation, as some argue. They lose their souls. Thus the books of Hebrews and Revelation contain many doctrines that have become food sacrificed to idols.

Revelation: The Book of the Overcomers

Jesus Himself makes eight specific promises to "he who overcomes" in the Book of Revelation. Here are the eight promises:

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." (Rev 2:7)

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death." (Rev 2:11)

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it." (Rev 2:17)

{26} "And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations; {27} 'He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels'; as I also have received from My Father; {28} "and I will give him the morning star. {29} "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." (Rev 2:26-29)

"He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels." (Rev 3:5)

"He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. And I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name." (Rev 3:12)

"To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne."

(Rev 3:21)

{7} "He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. {8} "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." (Rev 21:7-8)

The first seven promises occur, respectively, within each of the seven letters to the churches that we find in the second and third chapters of Revelation. Jesus, therefore, promises a potential to “overcome” to members of all of His churches during all times (dispensations) of history. But, to overcome is only a possibility; it is not the sure thing that many of us have assumed. To see this we must understand that these letters are written to churches. Churches are groups of Christians, not non-Christians. A group of non-Christians, by definition, is not a church. These seven letters, therefore, are written to believers in Christ, not unbelievers. Christ’s words thus show that there exist different classes or ranks of believers within the churches. Notice how each promise to the overcomers relates to participating in and becoming an integral part of the New Jerusalem. Old Jerusalem is passing away and may have ceased to exist by the time you read this.

The letter to the Laodiceans makes this class distinction especially clear since Christ rebukes the entire church for being “wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.” (Rev. 3:17) Yet, even to these “wretched” believers, He offers the overcomer’s promise. He says, however, that they will receive this promise only *if* they buy from Him “gold refined in the fire” so that they may become rich and “white garments” so that they may be clothed. He also requires them to anoint their eyes with eye salve so that they may see and to open their spiritual ears and hearts to His Word. Hence, the term “overcomer” signifies a particular status among Christians; it is not a designation generally applicable to every believer in Christ. One of God’s great mysteries, however, is that we ourselves do not know if we qualify for this group until close to the time of our death. I cannot know, for example, that I at this point in time am an overcomer. I hope and work to be, but that is all.

When we study the passages in Revelation concerning the overcomers we see their many characteristics and the many promises they will receive for their perseverance in the faith. We also come to understand the traits of those who fail to meet the high mark of their calling along with the consequences of such failure. Have you ever considered, for example, that Revelation 2:11 implies, and therefore teaches, that a non-overcoming Christian *will* “be hurt” by “the second death?”

Revelation 21:7-8, the passage in which the eighth phrase “he who overcomes” occurs, identifies this “second death.” It is nothing less than that place we commonly call “Hell,” although Hell, i.e. Hades, is itself thrown into it in Revelation 20:14. Yes, it is the Lake of Fire. The Bible teaches that Christians who do not overcome will have their part in the Lake of Fire. They will “be hurt” by the fire of this second death, but this fire is not the boiling mass of lava we have thought. Somehow, in God’s perfect wisdom, the Lake of Fire represents God’s holy application of His fiery law to all of creation that stands in need of it. The overcomer’s task, then, is to apply this fiery law to our lives now by coming to know our blessed Lord and Savior in the way He prescribes. We will find that the Book of Hebrews, in its own special and mysterious way, exhorts us to do exactly this.

Typology: The Prophetic Application of Scripture

The ninth and tenth chapters of 1 Corinthians and the Book of Hebrews apply Old Testament history and law to New Testament Christians. This is the prophetic, or “type-antitype,” application of Scripture. For example, Isaac’s life prophesies of the life of Jesus in many ways and especially with respect to Abraham’s willingness to offer him as a sacrifice to God. Isaac is said to be the “type” and Jesus the “antitype” in this prophetic picture. In the same way, 1 Corinthians 9-10 and the Book of Hebrews prophetically apply Old Testament laws and history.

For some reason, however, many Christians do not take the warnings of 1 Corinthians 10 or of the entire book of Hebrews very seriously. We have been taught for so long by so many that our salvation by grace precludes any serious judgment by God, both in this life and in the one to come, that we now believe that every warning of the Bible concerns non-Christians. Such an understanding directly contradicts the clear teaching of virtually every book of the Bible. The Book of Hebrews, probably more than any other New Testament book, sets forth a series of serious warnings to Christians, but most commentators relegate the judgments to non-Christians. This teaching that God does not seriously judge Christians constitutes another example of how we sacrifice God’s food to idols in our day.

Many of us wonder how Israel could ever have sinned in the ways described in the Bible. We foolishly believe that we are somehow better than they. “We would never do what they did!” we say or think. But, who among us could take his entire family into the desert without food and water and trust God, even when everyone is thirsty and the water they do find after three full days is bitter and undrinkable? Who among us can even trust God to provide for our needs outside of employment in a big corporation or the government?

{22} So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea; then they went out into the Wilderness of Shur. And they went three days in the wilderness and found no water. {23} Now when they came to Marah, they could not drink the waters of Marah, for they were bitter. Therefore the name of it was called Marah. {24} And the people complained against Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?" Ex. 15:22-24)

I thank God that I have never had to find out what I would do in a situation like this one encountered by Israel. Therefore, I take the warnings of 1 Corinthians 10:1-14 very seriously. I want to take Paul’s admonition to heart and find out what idolatry really is. I do not want to be unaware of what befell Israel.

The Book of Hebrews helps us understand this idolatry and gives us a better understanding of the Old Testament types, including the Tabernacle and its sacrifices. We know that the only person allowed by God to enter the Tabernacle was the Levite priest. Everyone else had to remain in the outer court, coming no closer to God than to the altar of sacrifice. From Hebrews we learn that the natural Levitical priesthood looked forward to the spiritual priesthood of the order of Melchizedek. Only the Book of Hebrews talks in detail about the Melchizedekian priesthood. Remember, with God it is first the natural, then the spiritual. One must pray for and receive spiritual eyes and ears to understand the Book of Hebrews.

The Melchizedek priesthood represents a spiritual priesthood, one that we do not even now yet recognize. Because Hebrews deals almost exclusively with this topic it is one of the most obscure books of the New Testament. Most believers mistakenly apply the many warnings of destruction in this book to unbelievers, but beware. The warnings speak to Christians. I see Hebrews as a companion to the Book of Revelation concerning the Bride of Christ and her inheritance. (Remember, the end of the book even solves the mystery of food sacrificed to idols!) So, let's begin to take hold of this book's profound doctrine.

Hebrews: The Book of the Order of Melchizedek (the Overcomers)

{8} *But to the Son He says: "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; **A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your Kingdom.***
{9} *You have **loved righteousness and hated lawlessness;** Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions." (Heb 1:8-9)*

{6} *As He also says in another place: "**You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek**";* {7} *who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, {8} though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. (Heb 5:6-8)*

Here God the Father speaks to God the Son and tells Him that His throne shall last forever. Moreover, the scepter of His Kingdom shall be a scepter of righteousness. And why? Because Jesus, God the Son, loves righteousness and hates lawlessness. Note again this relationship between righteousness and lawfulness. To be unrighteous is to be lawless. To be righteous is to be perfect, lawful in all one's ways. And it is exactly because Jesus loves righteousness and hates lawlessness that His Father anoints Him as King and Priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

This introductory verse from Hebrews quotes Psalm 45, verses 6 and 7. This psalm begins in tribute to the great King and uses words reminiscent of the Song of Songs to describe Him. Song of Songs describes the relationship between Jesus Christ, the Bridegroom, and she who, in a figure, would be His Bride. Psalm 45 describes this Bridegroom who is also a great King:

{2} *You are fairer than the sons of men; Grace is poured upon Your lips; Therefore God has blessed You forever.* {3} *Gird Your sword upon Your thigh, O Mighty One, With Your glory and Your majesty.* {4} *And in Your majesty ride prosperously because of truth, humility, and righteousness; And Your right hand shall teach You awesome things. (Ps. 45:2-4)*

Here God the Son is gracious, blessed forever by the Father. But, He is also mighty, glorious, and majestic. Truth, humility, and righteousness describe His prosperous rule, for the

law was given through Moses and Jesus fulfilled the spirit of the law in both grace and truth according to John 1:17.

Then, verse 9 of the Psalm introduces us to the King's Bride, the Bride of Christ. She has been purged of all dross, all sin, and "stands" in the presence of the King in "gold from Ophir." Her gold clothing represents her personal purity and righteous works. She stands fully refined in the very presence of God and, therefore, speaks to and of all who aspire to this most exalted position:

{9} Kings' daughters are among Your honorable women; At Your right hand stands the queen in gold from Ophir. {10} Listen, O daughter, Consider and incline your ear; Forget your own people also, and your father's house; {11} So the King will greatly desire your beauty; Because He is your Lord, worship Him. (Ps. 45:10-11)

In these verses the Bride announces her innermost thoughts and says, "Come!" as in Revelation 22:17. She instructs would-be overcomers, saying, "Listen, my daughter, my fellow believer. Open your spiritual ear. Pray for God to give you understanding and believe that He will. Now, consider and do not forget what I am telling you. Make choices that demonstrate that you have truly heard my words. I speak to you that very word that God spoke to Abram so long ago, 'Get out of your country, from your family, and from your father's house, to a land that God Himself will show you!' Then, and only then, after you have separated yourself from the idolatry of the world, will the King, my Husband, greatly desire your beauty. For only after you decide to come into agreement with Him, to obey Him and to free yourself from the sins that bind you will my King purge your dross, write His laws on your heart, and dress you with gold as I now am. Come now! Worship the King because He is majestic and rides forth in truth, humility, and righteousness! Offer yourselves a living sacrifice and He will raise you up to show you what you must do." The Queen calls for the ultimate sacrifice of separation from the idols of this world. Can you hear her?

Now the King's Father announces the prize awaiting all who will hear her and obey His Word:

{16} Instead of Your fathers shall be Your sons, Whom You shall make princes in all the earth. {17} I will make Your name to be remembered in all generations; Therefore the people shall praise You forever and ever. (Ps. 45:16-17)

Here is the promise of ruling and reigning with Christ in His great Kingdom to come. God will make those who overcome this world "princes in all the earth." This is the great prize that awaits the glorified sons of God, the ones who willingly allow God to write His Law on their hearts and submit to His rule over their lives. Thus the Order of Melchizedek is an order, or class, of righteous world rulers. They are kings and princes who rule with a rod of iron according to the ways of God because His ways have been fully written on their hearts.

A second aspect of this royal priesthood is that they intercede for the people of God. Like Christ, their example, they pray for the people God has given into their care. This corresponds to the prophetic example of the altar of incense within the Tabernacle's Holy Place. Even now God

is preparing and using these future priests. They recognize the utter failure and sinfulness of MYSTERY BABYLON which includes most of the Church. They grieve over their own still sinful flesh. They have literally come out of this BABYLON THE GREAT. Only after they were sufficiently taught directly by the Holy Spirit could they return and begin to function as priests according to the Order of Melchizedek, and not according to the order of man. Now they intercede on behalf of those who honestly want to obey and please God. They do not reject them as some are wont to do. In fact, they learn to withhold from eating (communicating) God's meat (mature doctrine) when to do so will harm a weak believer. They always keep watch for the questing sheep who longs to drink of Christ's holy and pure water. But, when the time is right, they speak the whole counsel of God and do not hide the following realities found in the book of Hebrews.

Chapter 14

THE HEBREWS' WARNINGS

The Book of Hebrews announces the coming of the great King who will be remembered and praised forever. It takes us at once to many places in the Old Testament that prophesy concerning Him. It reminds us of our destiny to become His chosen Bride, His chosen princes who will rule the earth with Him. This is the **great salvation** which is the awesome theme of the Book of Hebrews. But, then, almost immediately, the book strikes us with its first warning.

Hebrews' First Warning

{1} Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. {2} For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, {3} how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, {4} God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will? (Heb 2:1-4)

“Therefore we must?” Saying “must” to a Christian is pretty risky business these days. The very word smacks of “legalism” and doesn’t sound like “grace” at all. Who is the “we” in this passage anyway? It is we to whom God has “spoken” in these last days “by His Son,” according to Hebrews 1:2. It is we who have “heard” the Word of God according to verse 2:1. It is we who might “neglect so great a salvation” as that described in Psalm 45 and warned of in verse Hebrews 2:3. Yes, “we” are “us.” Christians, therefore, must not be deceived into believing that this and the four following warnings of Hebrews deal with the unsaved. Each warning contains admonitions for the “begotten of God” believer, not the unregenerate man who could never understand these admonitions to begin with.

And what is this “so great” salvation of which he boasts? Hebrews 2:5 tells us that this salvation concerns “the world to come.” Hebrews chapter 3 explains that this salvation deals with the very dwelling (house, or tabernacle) of God. In chapter 4 we learn that this salvation has to do with the Sabbath “rest” of God, which is the thousand year reign of Christ in the Kingdom of God that all of Scripture points to. Chapter 5 teaches that this “great” salvation relates to the reign of Christ “according to the order of Melchizedek,” to Christian maturity and to the discernment of good and evil.

Clearly, Hebrews does not refer to the salvation known as being “begotten of God (born again)” or spiritual “regeneration.” Once that supernatural birth occurs, it’s done. We can’t get un-begotten and we can’t get spiritually unsaved, not even if we want to. This great salvation speaks of that salvation which deals with the soul of man, that is, with his mind, will and emotions. It is salvation that can be lost or won depending upon our freedom of choice according to Matthew 16:24-26. Ephesians 2:8 and Romans 9 makes it clear that man has no freedom of choice regarding his spiritual salvation. Hebrews speaks of the salvation that

promises rule and reign with the Mighty One for all those who overcome. See Revelation 3:21. On the other hand, it is a salvation that we can neglect to the gnashing of our teeth or the actual perishing of our souls. See Hebrews 2:1-3; 3:7-4:13; 6:4-8; 10:26-31; 12:25-29; 2 Thes. 2:10; 2 Peter 2:12; Rev. 3:5; Mat. 24:51; 25:30; Luke 12:46.

The Second Warning

{7} Today, if you will hear His voice, {8} Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, In the day of trial in the wilderness, {9} Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, And saw My works forty years. {10} Therefore I was angry with that generation, And said, 'They always go astray in their heart, And they have not known My ways.' {11} So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.'" {12} Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; {13} but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. {14} For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end. (Heb 3:7-14)

Hebrews now takes us to the wandering Israelites after they refused to believe God and conquer the land of Canaan. We must comprehend that all Israel was saved at this time. *"For indeed the gospel was preached ... to them."* (Hebrews 4:2) They had sacrificed the lamb and placed its blood over their doors at that first Passover. Their sins were covered (atoned) and the death angel passed over them. An Israelite here is a type of a saved person, then, although a disobedient and unbelieving one. They represent Christians who will not be allowed to enter into the rule of the Kingdom of God. Hebrews 3:19 says, *"we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief."* Just as Israel, except for Caleb and Joshua, did not enter into Canaan because of unbelief, so will Christians be kept out of the Kingdom of God because of unbelief.

The final verse of this passage speaks of those who have become "partakers of Christ." The word translated "partaker" is from the Greek word "metecho" which, according to Strong's, means "to share or participate" and by implication means to "belong to, eat (or drink)." Notice the analogy to food here once again. The same Greek word is used in Hebrews 5:13 which says, *"For everyone who partakes [eats] only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe."* Paul goes on, *"But solid food belongs to those who are of full age [mature], that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."* (Heb. 5:14)

Hebrews chapter four teaches us to "be diligent to enter that rest" of God. Through the Scriptures, both Old and New, we understand that the rest of God is the Sabbath day rest. Further, we understand that the Sabbath given to Israel was a "sign" that pointed to the millennial day of rest, that thousand years when Jesus will reign as King over the earth. The Sabbath given to Israel was a type of the millennial day. See Genesis 2:1-3; Exodus 31:13-17; 2 Peter 3:8; Rev. 20:6. This explains why the penalty for disobeying the laws of the Sabbath were so great, i.e. death. This physical death pointed to the potential perishing of one's soul. All of these things demonstrate in type the significance of striving to enter through the narrow door, thus qualifying to rule and reign with the King of Kings. This is no small honor and nothing to take lightly. This

is that “so great salvation!”

Separation of the Soul and the Spirit

And now the Lord tells us how we may win our souls and how we may escape the error of Israel: *“The Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”* (Heb. 4:12) Here we notice a key element of what I call the Doctrine of the Separation. The Word of God, we learn, is able to separate the soul from the spirit. The question for us is this: when will that separation occur? Now, when we voluntarily let the Word separate us? Or, at the judgment seat of Christ when we have no choice? See 2 Cor. 5:10.

But, we do not dismay if we find that we are not yet living in the perfection that Jesus requires. We simply will never become perfect, regardless of how hard we try, so long as we dwell in these bodies of flesh and blood. But, we must come to “mourn” over our human frailty and sin and truly desire God’s holiness. Hebrews next comforts us with the reality that Jesus now serves as our High Priest in the order of Melchizedek. See Hebrews 4:14-5:6; 7:1-28. His is a throne of grace as well as of righteousness and justice. Through Him we “obtain mercy and find grace to help in our time of need,” those times when we fail. Because Jesus lived and died as a man of flesh and blood He sympathizes with our weaknesses and makes intercession for us when we confess our sins to Him. This is true grace and each of us has access to all of the grace we require, so long as we do not use this grace as a license to sin like that condemned in Jude 4. This is the *“grace of God that brings salvation ... to all men. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope--the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ....”* (Titus 2:11-13 NIV)

Now, though, Jesus has become *“the author of eternal salvation to all **who obey Him.**”* (Hebrews 5:9) Brethren, this obedience is not grace, but it is accomplished by God’s grace. But, if we have to obey Christ to obtain this “eternal salvation,” then it has something to do with our works and is not simply a gift of grace. This salvation in Hebrews 5:9, then, speaks of a salvation other than that which most of us have known. It speaks of the salvation of the soul, not the spirit, and now we have also come again to that mysterious Melchizedek.

The Meaning of Melchizedek

The Book of Hebrews teaches us doctrine concerning Jesus as the King who shall rule after the order of Melchizedek. According to Strong’s Concordance, the word “Melchizedek” comes from two Hebrew words, “malkiy” and “tsedeq.” *Malkiy* is from the word “melek,” which means “a king.” *Tsedeq* means “the right,” or “equity” and is usually translated by the words “justice” or “righteousness.” Hence, Melchizedek means “King of Justice,” “King of Righteousness,” or “King of Justice and Righteousness.” I prefer the latter since we know that the foundation of Christ’s throne is justice and righteousness according to Psalm 89:14 and Psalm 97:2.

The name Melchizedek, therefore, speaks prophetically of God’s plan for earth. It tells of Jesus who shall rule the world as the King of Righteousness and Justice. Yet, before the author can explain these things he must first introduce us to the “teaching about righteousness.” He

must warn us to be weaned from the milk and to grow into maturity and so, He says,

{9} [O]nce made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him {10} and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek. {11} We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. {12} In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! {13} Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. {14} But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. (HEBREWS 5:11-14 NIV)

We will not focus on the milk of God's Word here, although bits of it are interspersed throughout this book and especially in Part One during the discussion of the Levitical sacrifices. We must be able to digest the milk before we can eat the meat. First, therefore, we must understand that if we have not been "constantly using" God's Word in our lives, i.e. reading and meditating on it daily, then we may find ourselves utterly unable to distinguish good from evil and, hence, to understand this vital doctrine. We will also find ourselves unwilling to "go on to perfection" as Hebrews 6:1 exhorts and thus find that God Himself will not even permit us to understand this important doctrine. See Hebrews 6:3. We do find, therefore, that few people understand the meaning and ramifications of righteousness and justice these days. To do so requires one to understand God's Word and in particular, God's fiery law.

Now we come to the solid food of Hebrews. The writer first admonishes his readers for their inability to understand his teaching. He rebukes them for having become "slow to learn," or "dull of hearing" as the King James Version says. He does not say that they have become deaf in that they cannot hear external sounds. He speaks of spiritual hearing and his words mean the same as those of Jesus when He says, "*He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*" See Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22. This is also that of which Jesus speaks when He says,

*{17} "For nothing is secret that will not be revealed, nor anything hidden that will not be known and come to light. {18} **Therefore take heed how you hear.** For whoever has, to him more will be given; and whoever does not have, even what he seems to have will be taken from him." (Luke 8:17-18)*

But we have not taken heed of how we hear and we have not taken seriously our responsibility to wash ourselves with the Word of God. Yet, by this we become sanctified, set apart, separated unto His good use according to Ephesians 5:26. We have refused to "*receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save our souls.*" (James 1:21) We have not seriously asked Jesus to open our spiritual ear so that we can hear spiritual truth. We have not asked God to open our spiritual eyes and to apply eye salve so that we can see spiritual reality as Jesus commands the churches in Revelation 3:18. Therefore, we have become "dull of hearing." Many who read these words have been saved ten, twenty, forty years, yet who among us is

skilled in the “teaching about righteousness” of which Hebrews speaks? Yes, we are those that “seem” to have something, but even what we think we have will be taken away.

{14} "And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: {15} "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. {16} "So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. {17} "Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'; and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked; {18} "I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. {19} "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent." (Rev 3:14-19)

Most Christians dwell in the end-of-the-age Laodicean Church, the church that all of Scripture prophesied would be devoid of “the faith” when Jesus returns. See Luke 18:8; 2 Peter 2:1-22; Jude; 1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Tim. 3:1-9; Rev. 2:20-23; 3:2-5; 3:14-19. But, individuals dwelling in that church who yet partake of its many, many sins still have a little, a very little, time to repent, to come out of their apostate churches, and to become overcomers who will inherit the promises of God.

{20} "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. {21} "To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. {22} "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." (Rev 3:20-22)

The “teaching about righteousness” of Hebrews 5:13 speaks of TRUTH, the real doctrine of Melchizedek, the King of Justice and Righteousness.

Hebrews' Third Warning

{4} For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, {5} and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, {6} if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame. {7} For the earth which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, and bears herbs useful for those by whom it is cultivated, receives blessing from God; {8} but if it bears thorns and briars, it is rejected and near to

being cursed, whose end is to be burned. (Heb 6:4-8)

Brethren, we must understand that his warning applies to believers, not to the unregenerate. The unsaved do not “become partakers of the Holy Spirit.” The non-Christian does not “taste the good word of God and the powers of the age to come.” These words apply specifically and only to the Christian believer who has been begotten of God and has tasted the goodness of God. This passage warns us that the disobedient Christian to whom much was given “*is rejected and near to being cursed, whose end is to be burned.*” This sinning Christian, though, is not cursed. He does not suffer everlasting torment, but he only escapes through the fire. He is, therefore, punished. His spirit will live, but his soul will perish. See 1 Cor. 3:11-15; Rev. 21:8; Hebrews 10:39; James 5:20; 2 Thes. 2:10; 2 Peter 2:12; 3:9; Jude 11; Matthew 16:24-26. Hebrew’s third admonition addresses those who have progressed spiritually beyond a simple “confession of faith.” The warning is severe. Are we really sure we want to proceed on into mature knowledge of the Holy One?

The Ministry of Melchizedek

(Heb 7:1-4) For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, {2} to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated "king of righteousness," and then also king of Salem, meaning "king of peace," {3} without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually. {4} Now consider how great this man was, to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils.

Melchizedek has no father and no mother. He has “*neither beginning of days nor end of life.*” He is “*like the Son of God.*” Who could he be? Since he is obviously eternal in nature and is like the Son, we have three options: He is either the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit. Since no one has ever seen the Father, then He is either the Son or the Holy Spirit. Since the Son is God in the flesh, I believe that Melchizedek literally is God the Son, Jesus Christ. The idea of being “according to the order of Melchizedek” does not mean that Jesus Christ is a priest “according to the order of Jesus Christ,” but that Jesus Christ is a priest according to the order of what Melchizedek represents. That is, Jesus serves as a Priest-King who rules in the ways of God. Melchizedek is the King of Justice and Righteousness.

The terms justice and righteousness describe the New Covenant over which Jesus mediates. Hebrews 8:6 says, “*But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.*” Hebrews then quotes Jeremiah regarding this better, or new, covenant:

{8b} "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; {9} "not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant,

and I disregarded them, says the LORD. {10} "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. {11} "None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them. {12} "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more." (Heb 8:8b-12)

The Melchizedek priesthood, therefore, is the Royal Priesthood of believers who allow God to write His law upon their hearts. These are the overcomers of God that Christ exhorts in His seven letters at the beginning of Revelation. We have a choice brethren, and that choice is either to walk in God's ways according to Christ's law, or not. We choose now to come into agreement with God concerning His ways, or not. We choose to allow God to write His ways, His laws, on our hearts now, or we do not. That Law was not written upon our hearts when we first believed, and we know it because we have not loved His Law and we have not walked in His ways. (Forgive us, LORD!)

The Melchizedek priesthood thus relates to the "salvation of the soul," not the salvation of the spirit. This explains why so few people understand the Book of Hebrews. They continually want to apply the book to spiritual salvation that comes solely by faith in Jesus. Hebrews 9 explains in detail the necessity of Christ's sacrifice and the work that His blood accomplished by that one sacrifice. It describes how the tabernacle, its furnishings, and the animal blood sacrifices were types of the heavenly things and of Jesus' own sacrifice. The chapter ends, though, with this statement: "*To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.*" Hebrews 9:28b. Notice that the salvation alluded to here is "apart from sin." It deals not with our initial atonement, our initial Passover that concerned the death penalty for sin by nailing it to the cross. Also, we know that not all Christians "wait for" Jesus to return. We know, too, that many Christians do not see their salvation as something future, something beyond their initial forgiveness of sins. The salvation here in Hebrews 9:28, therefore, refers once again to "soul salvation."

Hebrews' Fourth Warning

*The Lord is exalted, for He dwells on high; He will fill Zion with **justice and righteousness**. He will be the sure foundation for your times, a rich store of salvation and wisdom and knowledge; the fear of the LORD is the key to this treasure (Isaiah 33:5-6).*

Isaiah here reiterates the essential teaching of the Proverbs: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Isaiah expands upon Proverbs to reveal that the fear of the Lord is the "key" to the "rich store of salvation and wisdom and knowledge" found only in the Lord who dwells on high. In addition the Lord will "fill Zion with justice and righteousness." Most Christians, however, do not fear God. Therefore they are not wise and they do not have knowledge of soul salvation, justice, or righteousness. They seem to only know that God is their Daddy, their Abba, and they have been told that their Daddy, because of His grace, will never

spank them. They have believed a lie and they have willingly believed it because they have not loved the truth. Let us now go on to this knowledge of the truth, but beware of Hebrews' fourth warning (the first three are found in Hebrews 2:1-3; 3:7-4:13; 6:4-8):

{26} For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, {27} but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. {28} Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. {29} Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? {30} For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The LORD will judge His people." {31} It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. (Heb 10:26-31)

To understand Hebrews' fourth warning we must remember its third warning that says, "if they [Christians] fall away ... they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame" (Heb. 6:6) Here is the secret. If we crucify Jesus once again then "there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins." (Heb. 10:26) Why not? Because as far as we are concerned He is dead, crucified by us, and unable to rise again and bring us life. In other words, we Christians put Him in exactly the same place that the Jews put Him 2000 years ago, on the cross. And this, to our shame, is where many of us do place Him. The fourth warning ends with a promise and a dire premonition.

{35} Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. {36} For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: {37} "For yet a little while, And He who is coming will come and will not tarry. {38} Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him." {39} But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul. (Heb 10:35-39)

Notice how this blessing is tied to the Lord's second coming. Notice also that those who draw back from following Him do so to their own destruction (perdition). This represents the destruction of the soul (*psuche*), not the spirit (*pneuma*). Brethren, we have a choice to make.

The Fifth and Final Warning

All of chapter 12 of Hebrews comprises its fifth and final warning. Here we learn that the Christian walk must include the painful chastening of God. If we do not experience God's hand of correction, then we are not true sons of God. (vs. 4) Only those who endure it may partake (eat) of His holiness. (vs. 10) We also learn that without this holiness "no one will see

the Lord.” (vs. 14) This aspect of our relationship with God is absolutely critical insofar as our inheritance is concerned. John teaches, you will remember, that everyone who hopes to see Him as He is purifies himself just as He is pure. (1 John 3:2-3) Do you hope that you will someday see your King? Are you working to purify yourself? Paul ends his serious warning as follows:

{25} See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven, {26} whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven." {27} Now this, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. {28} Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. {29} For our God is a consuming fire.
(Heb 12:25-29)

Many may believe that the God of the New Covenant differs from the God of the Old, or that His methods of dealing with His people have changed. Not so, say the Scriptures. For just as God gave Moses His fiery law (Deut. 33:2), so even now He comes as a consuming fire Who will purge the sin from these bodies of flesh.

Food Sacrificed to Idols

And what do all these warnings have to do with food sacrificed to idols? What you have just learned is true doctrine. It is the true teaching of the Word of God.¹⁷ I have not relied upon commentaries or the traditional teachings of men in order to reach my conclusions. I prayed for many days and I wrote for many days. I stopped writing for days when I did not understand something. I waited upon God to reveal His truth so that I could understand it and convey it to others. I did not write under contract, for money, or for any particular audience. I wrote because God led me to write.

I knew by the Spirit that the Book of Hebrews provided essential understanding to the doctrine of food sacrificed to idols and as I recently finished reading the book yet again, I saw this:

{9} Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines. For it is good that the heart be established by grace, not with foods which have not profited those who have been occupied with them. {10} We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat. (Heb 13:9-10)

¹⁷I believe these things to be true today. My opinions on many aspects of Scripture have changed over the past quarter century and I remain willing to change my opinion when the Holy Spirit reveals my error. Then I repent and go on as the sin offering teaches us. Only God knows all truth, but as Paul teaches, knowing all things alone does not really cut it. Only faith, hope and love count in the end, and the greatest of these is love.

Here is the interpretation of these two verses in the light of what we now know. “Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines. (That is, do not live your life based upon the vain traditions of men that you have received from your fathers that do not accord with *the faith* as revealed in the Holy Scriptures.) For it is good that the heart be established by grace, not with foods which have not profited those who have been occupied with them. (That is, it is good that your heart [thoughts, feelings, mind, will, soul] be established by God’s goodness to you, not with **religious doctrines** that never did profit those who spent their lives in submission to them.)

Hebrews thus provides us here with the definition of food sacrificed to idols: “religious doctrines, supposedly taken right out of the Bible, which bolster and proliferate man’s worship of mammon.” Jesus tells us that man cannot serve both God and mammon. “*No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*” (Mat. 6:24, KJV) Yet, for two millennia the church’s ministers have taught as truth many doctrines that have held people captive to sin and which have lined their own pockets with silver and their own carnal lives with prestige. These doctrines were usually based partly or entirely upon God’s Word. The problem was and is that teachers interpreted His Word according to the idols of their hearts. These doctrines thus became the food sacrificed to idols of which Paul mysteriously speaks in 1 Corinthians 8-11.

Part III

THE TABLE OF COMMUNION

ENTERING THE TABERNACLE

{7} So Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, bowed down, and kissed him. And they asked each other about their well-being, and they went into the tent. {8} And Moses told his father-in-law all that the LORD had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, all the hardship that had come upon them on the way, and how the LORD had delivered them. {9} Then Jethro rejoiced for all the good which the LORD had done for Israel, whom He had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians. {10} And Jethro said, "Blessed be the LORD, who has delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of Pharaoh, and who has delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. {11} "Now I know that the LORD is greater than all the gods; for in the very thing in which they behaved proudly, He was above them." {12} Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took a burnt offering and other sacrifices to offer to God. And Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God.

Exodus 18:7-12

"You shall set the bread of faces on the table before My face always."

Exodus 25:30

THE BREAD OF FACES (Into the Tabernacle)

Inside the Tabernacle

Inside the Holy Place of the Tabernacle sat three articles of furniture. The Table of Showbread was placed on the north side. The Golden Candlestick stood on the south side, and to the west, just before the separatrix dividing the Holy from the Most Holy Place, loomed the Altar of Incense. The Table was built of acacia (shittim) wood. It was covered with pure gold. The acacia wood shows that the table represents man, who is made of earth, like the wood. The overlay of pure gold portrays man as fully refined. His dross has been purged by fire and he now sits in the presence of God continually.

The pure gold “Candlestick” was really an oil lamp that the priests regularly filled with olive oil. According to the command of God, the lampstand was to burn before the Lord continually. (Lev. 24:2) The burning here once again speaks of God’s fiery law. The fact that the Candlestick was made wholly of pure gold speaks of the purity of God and therefore shows that the oil lamp represented the Holy Spirit. Oil often represents the anointing of the Holy Spirit. The lampstand itself was comprised of seven lamps. This speaks of the seven-fold spirit of God revealed in Revelation 3:1 and Isaiah 11:2.

And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD (Isa 11:2 KJV)

And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. (Rev 3:1 KJV)

Here Jesus tells the Church of Sardis that we are nothing but dead men without the work of the seven Spirits of God in us, the Spirit of the Lord, the Spirit of Wisdom, the Spirit of Understanding, the Spirit of Counsel, the Spirit of Might, the Spirit of Knowledge, and the Spirit of the Fear of the Lord. The symbol of the seven-fold Spirit burned continually before the Table of Showbread. It revealed the way to purity. Purity comes only by the grace and power of the Holy Spirit working with our consent in our lives.

But this is not the only symbolism. According to Exodus 25:32, the seven-bowled lampstand consisted of six branches, each with a lamp, and the central lampstand with its lamp. Six is the number of man and one is the number of God. Worked into each of the six branches were three almond blossoms. The central stand itself contained four almond blossoms for a total of twenty-two. (Ex. 25:33-34) The almond tree, it turns out, was the first tree that blossomed in Canaan. It was the first tree that awoke from its winter slumber and its name spoke of this fact. The word almond in Hebrew is *shaqad* which means “sleepless” or awake. Strong’s 8246 and 8245. The almond blossom prophetically speaks of *being awake* to God.

The Secret of the Table and the Showbread

We have seen that the first mention of the word “table” in Scripture occurs in Exodus 25:23 when the Table of Showbread is introduced. The Bible’s first mention of a word is often very important, and this is certainly the case with the word *shulchan*, or table. A literal translation of Exodus 25:30, the verse that describes the purpose of this first table, is, “*You shall set the bread of faces on the table before My face always.*” The Hebrew word *paniym* (face) occurs twice in this verse. When one begins to watch for the word *paniym* in the Old Testament he will begin to see some very interesting things! But, why is it important to think about the *paniym* of God at all?

The Table of the Bread of Faces is a prophetic picture showing overcoming, awakened saints before the face of God. According to Psalm 41:12 God desires that His people become living beings that He sets before His face continually. David wrote, “*As for me, You uphold me in my integrity, And set me before Your face forever.*” David declares three truths here. 1) God Himself upholds us so that we may maintain our integrity before Him. 2) God is the One who *sets us* before Him. This terminology draws our attention back to the Table of the Bread of Faces where the bread was *set* continually (daily and forever) before the presence (face) of God by His sanctified priests. 3) Just as the bread of faces was *set before God’s face, so does God set His overcomers before His face.* Psalm 41:12, therefore, reveals the secret of the Table of Showbread. This psalm shows that **the bread of faces (showbread) itself symbolizes the saints who will dwell in the actual presence of God forever.**

The Goal of Our Faith

We know that no man of flesh can see the face of the living God and live, not even Moses. (Ex. 33:20) The face of God is the glory of God. (Ex. 33:18) A man will not see the glory of the face of God until he himself is glorified, and, according to John, we do not now understand the nature of our future change into immortality. (1 John 3:2) But we do know this: “*Everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.*” (1 John 3:3) Jesus also declares, “*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*” (Mat. 5:8). A primary objective of every Christian, therefore, should be to purify himself so that he may reach this ultimate goal of beholding the face of God and dwelling in His presence forever. Since every Christian does not purify himself, however, then either Christians do not really care to behold God’s face or they do not believe that to do so will require their personal holiness. Could it be that Christians simply do not know the real goal of their faith?

To behold the face of God should be life’s ultimate goal for every believer. David declares, “*As for me, I will see Your face (paniym) in righteousness (tsedeq, or zedek¹⁸); I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness (temuwnah).*” (Psalm 17:15) This word *temuwnah*, or likeness, first occurs in Exodus 20:4, in the text of the second commandment. *Temuwnah*, like *paniym*, is a very important word, for it describes the essence of this second of God’s ten great Commandments.

There God commands us to make no idol, likeness, or image to represent Him in our worship of Him. This command instructs us to maintain the proper doctrine of God in our minds. By obeying it we refuse to confuse Him with any image of any created thing. To do

¹⁸Here is another tie in to Melchizedek and the Melchizedekian priesthood.

otherwise would be to worship mere idols, “likenesses” of God that reflect only our own fallen nature. When we behold the face of God, then we will see Him as He IS. Only then will we be truly satisfied!

Communion and the Table of the Bread of Faces

This first table foreshadowed the communion table of the New Covenant. Notice that the Tabernacle’s table was illuminated by the Candlestick. This represents the New Testament table of communion that is illuminated by the Holy Spirit. Commonly, a table is a place where families and Christians gather together in fellowship and in communion of the good things of God. At the table we share the bread God gives us. The bread may be natural food as when we sit to dinner with our families, friends, and guests. Or, the bread may be the spiritual food of communion when we share the life and words of Christ with others, at church, at work, at play, and at dinner time.

This spiritual bread is Christ’s flesh in the sense that it is His Word. The bread is to be unleavened, which is to say that it should be the bread of true doctrine, undefiled by sin and false traditions of men. It is God’s Word, unpolluted by the carnal opinions of men. This Word should be shared with the wine, the blood of Jesus. This means that the sharing of God’s truth must be done in the power and the love of the Holy Spirit. This is the meaning of the bread and the wine of communion. Communion is something far bigger than we typically realize. When we understand its real meaning we see that participating in the ritualistic sharing of a piece of bread and a cup of grape juice may be totally irrelevant, devoid of any spiritual meaning whatsoever.

Communion shared as true spiritual bread and wine transforms our lives so that we, in turn, ultimately become the bread of God. Thus communion with men in the presence of God becomes the prophetic fulfillment of the bread of the Table of the Bread of Faces. This means, in essence, that a Godly man or woman *actually becomes* spiritual communion bread that God can serve to others. This new unleavened bread is that which God will break and use to feed five thousand others so that they, too, may learn to walk in obedience to Him. Once these learn obedience, then God will use them to feed still others. This new bread will ultimately become the bread that He will set before His face continually. This occurs at the time of the first resurrection and glorification of the overcoming saints described by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:51-52: *“Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed; in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”*

Attaining the Resurrection from the Dead

The entire New Testament very clearly sets forth the important and difficult journey God sets before us. We have seen that the Book of Hebrews contains no less than five stern warnings regarding our potential to fail in reaching our goal. Paul, at one point in his ministry, very clearly told his disciples that even he had not yet attained the goal of being set before the face of God continually. He said,

{8} Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain

*Christ {9} and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; {10} that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, {11} if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. {12} **Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected;** but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. {13} Brethren, **I do not count myself to have apprehended;** but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, {14} I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. {15} Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you. (Phil 3:8-15)*

Paul used the Greek word *anastasis* to describe “resurrection” in verse 10, but he used the word *exanastasis* for resurrection in verse 11. In fact, the word *anastasis* occurs exactly forty four times in the New Testament, the number for resurrection. *Exanastasis*, however, occurs but once, here in Philippians 3:11. The context here clearly shows that overcomers alone arrive at this particular resurrection. This is clear because we know that Paul was a believing Christian at this time. The only question remaining was whether or not he would complete the work that God gave him to accomplish, or fall short of it through disobedience and sin.

There did come a time, though, late in his life, when Paul could say that he had attained his goal. Writing to Timothy at that time he proclaimed,

{6} For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. {7} I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: {8} Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. (2 Tim 4:6-8 KJV)

We observe several important things in this short passage. 1) First, Paul compares himself to an offering. Like a whole burnt sacrifice, Paul has reached the point of his “departure.” He knows he has kept the faith to the end of his appointed work. For many years he had given everything to God, and now, he is willing to give his very life. 2) He knows, therefore, that he will “at that day,” i.e. on the day of the last trumpet, receive the “crown of righteousness.” 3) This crown will not be given to all believers, but only to those who “love his appearing.” This is another important verse for understanding how important it is to always be watching for the second coming of Christ. The Greek word for “appearing” is *epiphaneia*. That word occurs only six times in Scripture and once in conjunction with the word *parousia*, which we commonly refer to as “the rapture.” By the time of writing this letter to Timothy, Paul knows he will “at that day” enter the heavenly Tabernacle to be placed, in a figure of speech, as bread upon the Table of Showbread. He will then live continually in the presence of God, beholding the very face of God always.

Many of us wrongly assume that all Christians will automatically behold the face of God and forever dwell in His presence either when we die or when Jesus returns. This assumption is not founded upon Scripture. Hebrews specifically teaches, for example, "*Pursue ... holiness, without which no one will see the Lord.*" (Heb. 12:14,) Pursuit of holiness is not an option for anyone who wants to see God.

The Significance of Barley Bread

We know that Passover is the time of the barley harvest from Exodus 9:21-32. Just before the first Passover the plague of hail destroyed the barley that was "in the head." The wheat, however, was not damaged, for wheat ripens about seven weeks later, at the time of Pentecost. Also notice that the wheat loaves of Pentecost were made with leaven, whereas the barley loaves of Passover were unleavened. (Lev. 23:6, 17)

John 6:4-9 also shows us that barley ripens at the time of Passover. According to Leviticus 23:5-14 the firstfruits of grain, barley grain, was offered as a "wave-sheaf" offering on the day after the Sabbath after Passover. Here we notice that Passover was also called "the Feast of Unleavened Bread." The day of the wave offering is also called "the Feast of Firstfruits." Prophetically, Jesus is the unleavened bread that was offered for our sins at the time of Passover and which was waved before God Himself in the tabernacle in heaven on the day after the Passover Sabbath. Jesus was crucified on Abib 14, Passover preparation day. He resurrected from the dead early on the morning of Abib 16. He presented Himself a *living* sacrifice later that day before the throne of God at the very time that the Hebrew priest would have presented the wave-sheaf offering of barley to God. This occurred on the day after the Sabbath after Passover, on the Feast of Firstfruits, or, as we say, on Resurrection Day.

Jesus explains the prophetic signification of the barley bread in John 6. Here Jesus feeds five thousand men with five barley loaves and two small fish. Later in the chapter He mysteriously speaks about "the Bread of God" proclaiming that He Himself is the "Bread of Life." (John 6:26-66) This chapter contains many enigmatic quotations. For example, what does Jesus mean when He says, "*Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life?*" (John 6:27) Could He really mean what He says? Won't we and our families die of starvation if we refuse to labor for "food which perishes?" Yes, we might. Jesus requires that we be willing to die before He will feed us with real food. It is only when we willingly forsake the food of this world that we become qualified to partake of the food of heaven.

As you read the Scriptures, begin to note how God associates barley with people who walked in faith by the power of the Holy Spirit. Also see how wheat correlates to the time of Pentecost and the church from Pentecost to present. This shows that the entire church age, the last two thousand years, has been characterized by leavened wheat bread. Now the leaven has worked through all the dough. False doctrine and sin, characterized by leaven, permeate the entire institution we call the church. Jesus prophesied this concerning the message of the Kingdom of Heaven during the church age, saying, "*The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened.*" (Mat 13:33) We live at the end of the age, a time when the entire gospel has been perverted.

Thus we see that unleavened barley bread signifies God's food that endures to everlasting life. The Levites set this newly-baked bread daily on the Table of the Bread of Faces. Barley bread, therefore, also speaks of a life totally yielded to God. It speaks of a life spent in His

presence, before His face. It prophesies of a life willing to be broken, just as Jesus broke the bread in John 6. This reveals how Jesus distributes His life to others today.

Unleavened barley bread also serves as a Biblical type of God's overcomers, those who assimilate the bread of life. The barley bread overcomers are those in whom Jesus comes in the flesh. They have not yet been revealed, however, because they have not yet been glorified. This glorification is that which we call "the second coming of Christ." Presently we can only hope to be chosen. We do not know if we will be. Let us go to Jesus and buy gold (with repentance and humility) and white raiment to cover our nakedness. Perhaps He will have mercy upon us even now.

*{1} "Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk Without money and without price. {2} Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And let your soul delight itself in abundance. {3} **Incline your ear**, and come to Me. **Hear, and your soul shall live**; And I will make an everlasting covenant with you; The sure mercies of David. (Isa 55:1-3)*

Chapter 16

THE TABLE OF SHOWBREAD

(True Communion)

“Why, Sister,” she said merrily, “you have found my threshold cold and steep! You are breathless. But I’ll refresh you.”

She jumped up, went a little way off, and came back, carrying something; the little cool, dark berries of the Mountain, in a green leaf. “Eat,” she said. “Is it not food fit for the gods?”

“Nothing sweeter,” said I. And indeed I was both hungry and thirsty enough by now...”

“Wait!” said she. “After the banquet, the wine.” Close beside us a little silvery trickle came out from among stones mossed cushion-soft. She held her two hands under it till they were filled and raised them to my lips.”

“Have you ever tasted nobler wine?” she said. “Or in a fairer cup?”

“It is indeed a good drink,” said I. “But the cup is better. It is the cup I love best in the world.”

Faces, 104

Orual and Psyche: An Example of False Communion

Orual looks for and finds Psyche living on the Mountain of the gods several weeks after Psyche’s sacrifice. In this quoted passage she has just discovered Psyche in the wild of a beautiful valley in the midst of the Mountain. During the next few chapters Lewis presents a spiritual conflict between two young women, one who hates her god and the other who loves him. This part of the allegory explores the spiritual relationship between a sinning, carnal Christian and a temptable, but faithful, Overcomer.

In the midst of Orual’s search, Psyche suddenly appears, on the other side of a mountain stream, dressed, apparently, in rags. The Mountain represents Mount Zion, the Mountain of God’s actual presence. Psyche’s desire rests here, in her God’s presence. Psyche actually wears beautiful spiritual garments, but carnal Orual cannot see her true robes. Psyche quickly invites her sister over the stream and onto the very steps of her beloved’s palace, but Orual cannot see the grand estate of the God of the Mountain. Then Psyche, as mistress of her new home, offers Orual food and drink. Orual cannot perceive that Psyche hands her a marvelous cup, curiously wrought by the spirits themselves. Neither can she enjoy the delicious wine within that cup. Instead she tastes but water and sees only Psyche’s beautiful hands bringing that water to her thirsty lips.

Lewis presents us here with a veiled picture of a spiritual Christian attempting to engage in true communion with a carnal Christian. Psyche gives Orual food and drink, representing God's true doctrine (food) taught by the Holy Spirit (new wine). Fleshly Orual, however, sees no wine; she sees only water. Not only does she fail to see the spiritual realities unfolded by her sister, by the end of this scene, she also attempts to tear Psyche from her own spiritual destiny. Here Lewis also reveals a spiritual defect in Psyche. She allows her natural love for Orual to overcome her love for her husband. Thus, she does not properly or spiritually judge Orual's impertinent reviling of her God. Shortly thereafter Orual succeeds in beguiling Psyche. This leads to her disobedience of her husband's commands which causes instantaneous separation between Psyche and her beloved, thus bringing his judgment upon both her and Orual.

C. S. Lewis does not mean to show by these events that a spiritual Christian may not commune with a carnal Christian. For example, Paul "*could not speak unto [the Corinthians] as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ,*" but he could, after all, still speak to them. (1 Cor. 3:1) I believe that Lewis uses the relationship between Orual and Psyche to demonstrate the ruin that can occur by continuing in fellowship with a *deliberately sinning* Christian. The command by God to forsake fellowship with those who persist in their sins constitutes a hard teaching, especially when one must forsake an old friend or family member. This, however, denotes exactly what God requires in certain circumstances, according to His word through Paul in 1 Corinthians 5 and the following passage that came through Jesus' own lips:

{51} "Do you suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division. {52} "For from now on five in one house will be divided: three against two, and two against three. {53} "Father will be divided against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law." (Luke 12:51-53)

True Communion Today

{17} Now in giving these instructions I do not praise you, since you come together not for the better but for the worse. {18} For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it. {19} For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you. {20} Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper. {21} For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others; and one is hungry and another is drunk. {22} What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise you. {23} For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; {24} and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body

which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." {25} In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." {26} For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. {27} Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. {28} But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. {29} For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. {30} For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. {31} For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. {32} But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world. {33} Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. {34} But if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, lest you come together for judgment. And the rest I will set in order when I come. (1 Cor 11:17-34)

Paul's instructions on communion summarize his four-chapter teaching on food sacrificed to idols. Here he attempts to bring his hearers into a place of true worship and communion with God and into true communion with one another. Jesus tells us to love God and men. Worship of God and communion with men describe these twin goals.

Paul calls the communion table the "Lord's table" in 1 Corinthians 10:21. Traditionally, the natural elements of communion, the bread and the wine, sit upon this table.. Remember now that the first table of Scripture is the Table of the Bread of Faces. The Levite priests continually brought holy, unleavened bread before the face of God and set it upon the ancient golden table. Now we understand that this bread represents transformed men who take every thought captive to Christ, who constantly keep their faces turned toward Him. The true communion described by Paul here denotes the antitype of Scripture's first table. Communion with God and men thus becomes the prophetic fulfillment of the Tabernacle's Table of Showbread.

Church theology concerning communion usually interprets the bread as only symbolizing Jesus' body and the wine as portraying His blood. Thus we look to the verse, "*For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes,*" (1 Cor. 11:26) and interpret communion as "that Christian ordinance whereby we eat bread and drink wine in order to remember the death of Jesus' body and his blood shed for our sins." Such theology vastly oversimplifies and ignores the spiritual import of communion.

In the Book of Corinthians, Paul was not concerned about eating literal food any more than Jesus was concerned about earthly food when he answered his disciples, "*I have food to eat of which you do not know.*" (John 4:32) Most of us, however, still respond like those men who asked each other, "*Has anyone brought Him anything to eat?*" Jesus spoke the same truth to them when he said, "*Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.*" "Beware" of leaven? Why should one be afraid of leaven? "Because we have brought with us no bread?" they reasoned. (Mat. 16:6-7)

{8} But Jesus, being aware of it, said to them, "O you of little faith,

why do you reason among yourselves because you have brought no bread? {9} "Do you not yet understand, or remember the five loaves of the five thousand and how many baskets you took up? {10} "Nor the seven loaves of the four thousand and how many large baskets you took up? {11} "How is it you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread?; but to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." {12} Then they understood that He did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees. (Mat 16:8-12)

“Bread,” therefore, represents far more than Jesus’ physical body. Jesus told us that He is the “Bread of Life.” Thus the bread of communion *IS* Jesus. Communion shares *all truth, not just the truth of the fact that Jesus gave His flesh as a sacrifice for our sin*. For this reason only unleavened bread should ever be used in a church communion ceremony. Leaven itself speaks of false doctrine and sin. Unleavened bread, however, speaks of true doctrine and perfection, the very essence of Jesus’ earthly and spiritual life.

This explains why Paul’s directions for communion included discerning the body, i.e. other believers, and judging ourselves. Once we realize that the bread of communion relates so clearly to truth, we will begin to judge the false and the deceptive ones with whom we once communed. We do this first and especially within our own selves. We must deal with the plank in our own eye before we can see clearly enough to remove a speck from our brother’s eye. Communing this way leads to the sanctification and holiness of the entire body of Christ, something we should all long to see.

The wine of communion, too, represents even more than the shed blood of Jesus. We know that Jesus was born of the seed of the woman (His Mother, Mary) and the seed of the Holy Spirit. (His Father, God. Luke 1:30-35) The seed from the Holy Spirit literally contained the “blood” of God, just as the seed of any man carries his own blood. Thus Jesus bled the actual and literal blood of God when He was crucified. Remember now that *“the life is in the blood.”* (Gen. 9:4; Lev. 17:11; John 6:54) Also remember that it is the *“Spirit that gives life.”* (John 6:63; 2 Cor. 3:6) The wine of communion, therefore, actually represents the very Spirit and life of God, that which we know as the Holy Spirit. **Thus, Communion literally means to share God’s truth by God’s Spirit, or, as the New Testament says, “speak the truth in love.”**

In 1 Corinthians 11 Paul chastised the Corinthian believers for their false doctrine, pride, and arrogance. This clarifies why the topic of communion culminates his teaching on food sacrificed to idols. In essence he is saying that their gatherings amounted to little more than sharing food sacrificed to idols. Their meetings had little to do with God’s truth and love. Many of today’s churches themselves remain guilty of this same sin and most do not know it. Thus the doctrine of “food sacrificed to idols” remains a mystery even now.

Summary of the Meaning of Communion

Biblical communion, therefore, means: 1) To partake of the blood and body of Christ. These words are spiritual and they mean that we must partake and share of Word of God by the Spirit of God. 2) To live lives according to the pattern found in the Bible. 3) To take every thought captive to Christ so that we do not conform to the world’s idolatrous principles. Paul

taught the Corinthians not to eat with fellow believers who were idolaters. (1 Cor. 5:11) How many of us freely commune with idolaters, and even idols themselves? Remember, communion summarizes Paul's teaching on idolatry and food sacrificed to idols. The Bible defines idolatry as conforming to the ways of the world. Jesus said that man cannot serve both God and mammon. "Mammon" is the transliteration of the Greek term *mammonas* which means "worldly wealth personified" and "avarice deified" (Strong's). The primary aspect of communion, therefore, relates to heart idolatry. Paul uses the term "food sacrificed to idols" to describe it.

Since Scripture uses the word "food" as a codeword for Biblical doctrine, food sacrificed to idols means to sacrifice God's Word to the idols of one's heart in order to make that Word mean what we want it to say, and not what God intends it to say. True communion, therefore, means to share God's truth with one another by the anointing of the Holy Spirit. We should "speak the truth in love." God reveals His truth to us by the revelation of the Holy Spirit either directly or through the words of His Book and His servants. A servant's spiritual revelation never contradicts God's truth as revealed in the Bible. Then, He moves us to live, to do, and to share this living Word with one another in the power of that same Spirit.

The food of God in Scriptures is His Truth, His Word, His Son. Jesus proclaims that His flesh and blood are real food. The bread and wine of Christian communion symbolizes this reality. The bread represents all truth and the wine signifies the transforming life of the Holy Spirit, for the life is in the blood (wine=blood of Christ= impregnating seed of the Holy Spirit). Jesus' blood actually *was* the same blood as that of the Holy Spirit. It was indeed life! *To speak the truth in love, therefore, means to speak with the bread and wine of God, the truth and Spirit of Jesus. It is not, therefore, the literal taking of the communion elements that is so important; it is what those elements represent. Doctrinal truth, shared in the Spirit and love of God denotes the goal of true communion. It is expressed in obedience to that truth.*

An Old Testament Example of True Communion

{7} So Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, bowed down, and kissed him. And they asked each other about their well-being, and they went into the tent. {8} And Moses told his father-in-law all that the LORD had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, all the hardship that had come upon them on the way, and how the LORD had delivered them. {9} Then Jethro rejoiced for all the good which the LORD had done for Israel, whom He had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians. {10} And Jethro said, "Blessed be the LORD, who has delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of Pharaoh, and who has delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. {11} "Now I know that the LORD is greater than all the gods; for in the very thing in which they behaved proudly, He was above them." {12} Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took a burnt offering and other sacrifices to offer to God. And Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God. (Ex. 18:7-12)

This short passage from Exodus gives us a brief and poignant view of true communion.

In verse 7 we see Moses bestow true honor and love to his father-in-law. Jethro was not the anointed ruler of God's kingdom on earth; Moses was. Yet, Moses bows before him and kisses him in honor of his stature as a priest of God who ruled his house well and in honor of him who was father to his wife. Moses here obeyed the fifth commandment even before God gave it to man. Then Moses and Jethro asked each other about their well-being. Each desired to honestly know the other's welfare. Then Jethro entered Moses' home in continuation of their communion. This verse demonstrates their "love" for one another.

Next, God communicates the essence of true fellowship. Authentic communion shares with other believers how God has delivered one from the hand of God's enemies, how God has judged His enemies, and how God has delivered one from the depths of this world's hardships. True communion does not hide the truth and say, "Everything is fine" when it is not. Those idle words mark the "happy church," a church that does not face reality, but hides it behind false smiles and "howdy dos."

Verse 9 then demonstrates continuing communion by Jethro's response to Moses' words. He "rejoiced" at the goodness of God in delivering Israel from the hand of its enemies. Notice that Jethro did not attempt to turn Moses away from God's will for his life. He did not say, for example, "Moses, these things that your god makes you do are too hard. I will not allow you to take my daughter with you across a desert wasteland where she may have to go days at a time without food or water. You Israelites probably deserve this means of correction, though. Your god is only treating you as you surely deserve. No, Moses, when you reach this 'promised land' of yours, send me a message. My daughter and I will come back to you then!" Instead, Jethro rejoiced at God's goodness! He recognized that these trials were meant for Israel's good and not their harm.

This in turn led, I am sure, to Moses also rejoicing in God's wonderful and miraculous provisions over the past two months. The mutual rejoicing resulted in worship when Jethro "blessed" the Lord for his goodness to Israel and for his deliverance of Israel from the bondage of the world. This, in turn, produced greater faith in Jethro, for he then declared, *"Now I know that the LORD is greater than all the gods; for in the very thing in which they behaved proudly, He was above them."* (vs. 11)

Jethro's expression of faith proclaimed the preeminence of God. It is an example of Paul's communion command to *"proclaim the Lord's death until He comes."* (1 Cor. 11:26) Satan believed he had defeated Jesus when He willingly suffered death. But, the Scriptures clearly show that after He died, Jesus "disarmed" the spiritual powers of wickedness and made an open show of His victory." (Col. 2:15) Rather than being led captive into death, Jesus led death from its captivity to Satan. (Eph. 4:8; Heb. 2:14-15) Thus Jesus showed Himself *"greater than all the gods"* because *"in the very thing in which they [Satan and his demonic host] behaved proudly,"* Jesus showed that *"He was above them."* Similarly, Jethro's strong profession of faith and trust declared God's greatness to all the heavenly host.

Communion in Practice

Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ send greetings. (Rom 16:16 NIV)

All the brothers here send you greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss. (1 Cor 16:20 NIV)

Greet one another with a holy kiss. (2 Cor 13:12 NIV)

Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss. (1 Th 5:26 NIV)

For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. (1 Cor. 11:26)

The picture of true communion given by Moses and Jethro establishes true church order as well. The practice of greeting one another with a holy kiss conveys Godly affection for each other.¹⁹ It tangibly demonstrates that we care about one another's needs and welfare. We respect each other and we hope and want the best for each other. A holy kiss brings our focus off of ourselves and onto our brother's best interest. We visibly portray our true concern about our brother's well-being. We inquire about his circumstances. "How are you really doing," we ask. "Tell us about your trials and temptations and how God has delivered you out of them all! What is going on with you? I want to know how I can pray for you. I want to know how I can meet your physical, emotional, and spiritual needs now." These and similar questions are those we ask after we greet one another with a holy kiss.

We must understand that this is not just a "Quick, tell me your week's trials and tribulations so that we can get onto the worship and the sermon." Let's look at Paul's instructions again concerning communion.

*{17} Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse. {18} For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. {19} For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. {20} When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper.
(1 Cor 11:17-20 KJV)*

The problem with early church communion, just as today, began at the beginning. We come together with impure and wrong motives. Many of us come with set agendas as to what we want to see happen or what we want to say and we do so with a wrong motive. Our desire, often, is to get accepted or prove we already are accepted by the church's popular cliques or the pastor's inner circle. Sometimes the pastor wants to impress the congregation or guest with his "great" speech or sermon. We possess selfish ambitions concerning "our ministry." Oh, how we attempt to be "approved" by the spiritual leaders or the congregation!

{21} For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others; and one is hungry and another is drunk. {22} What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you?

¹⁹Note the wording of 1 Thessalonians 5:26. Only "the brethren" are mentioned. Paul does not instruct the men to kiss the sisters, nor the women to kiss the brothers. Such a practice would soon lead into fornication and we must understand this and avoid it.

Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise you. (1 Cor 11:21-22)

Leaders take the front rows of the church, always, of course, to filter out the “heretic” who “presumptuously” thinks the Holy Spirit has given him a word for the body, or to make sure our esteemed guest sees how well our church functions. There we sit in the first two rows, pastors, associate pastors, prophets, special guests, and those other known and unknown members of the inner circle. We relegate the poor and needy (spiritually and naturally) to the outer edge of the congregation. In doing this we “take our own supper ahead of others.” We are “filled with the Spirit” of sweet communion with our enlightened brethren aren’t we? Yes, even “drunk” in the Spirit, for haven’t so many of us proclaimed that this “high” is better than the one we got in the world before we were saved? Yet, the spiritually poor sit in the outer rows, hungry for communion and never receive it.

Paul tells us here that we should have partaken of communion already in our houses with those people that we exalt over the poor and needy among us. In fact, isn’t this often what we have done? Haven’t these visiting missionaries and prophets already stayed a day or two in our houses before we show them off to the church? Haven’t we already eaten and drunk of the good things God is doing in each of our lives? Why then do we exalt them and each other when we come together and so “despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing” spiritually or naturally that we deem important?

We leaders must exalt ourselves “first,” since, has God not appointed us the rulers of this expression of His body? Yes, and we who always consider ourselves first *shall* be last when the Lord who called and appointed us casts us into His “outer darkness.” See Matthew 8:12. We will find that just as we neither chose nor comforted the poor, neither did God choose us to co-rule with Him. Therefore, says Paul, when we do “come together into one place, this is not to eat the Lord’s supper.”

And yet, we really do believe that we “eat” the Lord’s supper in some regular fashion, don’t we? We take the bread, we pass the cup, we look and smile at each other as if to say, “Yes, I recognize you as fellow Christians, brother Joe and sister Sue.” Thus we believe we have discerned the Lord’s body and eaten righteously, according to Paul’s word, but we have not yet understood communion.

Communion begins the moment we meet each other. Immediately we convey the love of God to one another. Then we saints begin to share the Lord’s doings since we last communed with one other. The Holy Spirit will begin to move among all of His people. The men and women will sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs as He leads them. The saints will pray. The prophet and prophetess will prophesy. Then, the breaking of the bread will begin. Those whom God has anointed will break fresh manna and serve it to each of the saints who have come into the presence of God.

And, I am not talking about the “bread that perishes.” I speak now of fresh, unleavened bread that God gives directly from heaven. This is the bread of true doctrine, the real flesh of Jesus shared with the real blood of Jesus, the life of the Holy Spirit. This is real food and this is real communion. It is this that brings life to the saints and it is the absence of this that brings death, just as Paul warns.

{23} For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; {24} and when He had given thanks, He

broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." {25} In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." {26} For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. (1 Cor 11:23-26)

Jesus speaks spiritually here. We must understand this. Otherwise, all that John wrote concerning the miracles of turning the water into wine, of multiplying the bread, of Jesus being the "bread of life," and of Jesus body and blood being real food and real drink have no meaning at all. Jesus said, *"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life."* (John 6:63) Communion, therefore, expresses the spiritual reality of the living Christ, imparted in true doctrine (Jesus' flesh=water=bread=truth) by the power of the Holy Spirit (Jesus' blood=water turned into wine=the life of God). This explains why both water and blood poured from Jesus' side when stabbed by the spear.

Summary of Authentic Communion

Moses and Jethro exemplify the communion that Paul commands as follows: 1) Showing honor and love for one another, 2) Sharing real life experiences of God, 3) Rejoicing together in God's goodness to us in this earthly life, 4) Blessing, i.e. worshiping, God for His deliverance from the bondage and hardships of this world, 5) Resulting in a greater faith in God for deliverance and provision. This culminates in 6) A life lived as a sacrifice to God, which is shown in Exodus 18:12 as a burnt offering to God. The final result is 7) The communion meal, i.e. eating bread and drinking wine together, before the face (*paniym*) of God. Thus we see communion demonstrated in seven distinct aspects.

We must not revert again to carnal thinking concerning the seventh aspect of communion here. The sharing of bread before the face of God by the elders of Israel and their honored guest meant far more than enjoying mere natural food together. Yes, we believe they did eat of the goodness of that bread, and we believe that it was the manna from heaven. Further, we believe that they continued to share the goodness and revelation of God with one another, thus stirring themselves to greater faith. The unleavened manna represents the sharing of true doctrine in the fellowship of God. These doctrines lead to a life of righteousness and justice, mercy and truth, grace and law. This is true communion and we ourselves will only experience it when we go beyond the trivial and come to understand that our God really is a "consuming fire." (Hebrews 12:29)

Late in his life John reiterated the mystery of communion, saying,

{6} This is He who came by water and blood; Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth. {7} For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. {8} And there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one. (1 John 5:6-8)

Do you see it? The “three agree as one.” The “Spirit, the water, and the blood ... agree as one.” In the fellowship of real Christian communion, the Spirit changes the water of the Word (the bread of life) into the blood (new wine=living reality) of the covenant of God’s grace. *This* is true communion. Authentic fellowship and communion spiritually turns the water of God’s Word into new wine by the working of the Holy Spirit among us. This new wine contains God’s power to effect His purposes in the earth, to “execute His word.” (Joel 2:11) This new wine *IS* God’s life, the very opposite of death. Sharing God’s communion changes us “from glory to glory,” ultimately transfiguring us into that showbread that will sit before God’s face forever. (2 Cor. 3:18) This is the glorification of the sons of God. This is the meaning of the Table of Showbread in the Holy Place of the Tabernacle of Meeting. It is the place of communion between God and man and man with man. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

THE ARK OF THE TESTIMONY (Into the Holy of Holies)

The Altar of Incense was the final piece of furniture in the Holy Place. Like the table of showbread, Moses made it of acacia wood overlaid with pure gold. It too, therefore, painted a picture of the overcomer. The structure itself represented man, made of the earth. The fact that it showed forth as pure gold signified man's final state before God. This altar also depicted the life of sacrifice or dying to self. The burning of incense continually upon it conveyed the idea of a life given to prayer and intercession for others. When a man reaches this place before God he is ready to enter the very presence of God! Thus we become prepared to enter into the Holy of Holies, the place of union between God and man, the place of union between the Bridegroom and His Bride.

The Law Within Our Hearts: God's Ultimate Testimony

The separatrix, or veil, separated the Holy from the Most Holy Place inside the Tabernacle. This speaks of the profound separation that exists between God and man because of man's sinful nature. It also conveys the truth of man's need to separate from worldly idols (mammon) in order to come into the presence of God.²⁰ Inside the Most Holy Place we finally come to the goal of our faith.

Within the Most Holy Place dwelt the actual presence of God. Three prophetic pieces sat in this room. The first was the "ark of the covenant," which Moses described as follows:

{10} "And they shall make an ark of acacia wood; two and a half cubits shall be its length, a cubit and a half its width, and a cubit and a half its height. {11} "And you shall overlay it with pure gold, inside and out you shall overlay it, and shall make on it a molding of gold all around. {12} "You shall cast four rings of gold for it, and put them in its four corners; two rings shall be on one side, and two rings on the other side. {13} "And you shall make poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold. {14} "You shall put the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark, that the ark may be carried by them. {15} "The poles shall be in the rings of the ark; they shall not be taken from it. {16} "And you shall put into the ark the Testimony which I will give you." (Ex. 25:10-16)

Here we again see an item made of wood and overlaid with pure gold. This may shock us now that we have seen the symbolism of so many articles of Moses' tabernacle. How can something made of wood, something earthly that speaks of man, dwell in the midst and presence of a holy God? This represents another of God's mysteries. The Ark's outside and the inside are

²⁰See also the author's manuscript, *The Separation*, 1999

both overlaid with gold. This conveys the truth that man may one day be *completely purified, or glorified*.²¹ We also see that this representation of man contains “the Testimony” within him. This means that the law of God has now been perfectly written on his heart. This fulfills Jeremiah 31:32-34 and Ezekiel 11:18-20, of which Hebrews speaks thus:

{8} Because finding fault with them, He says: "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; {9} "not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the LORD. {10} "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. {11} "None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them. {12} "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more." (Heb 8:8-12)

Many Christians believe that this passage has already been fulfilled and that God finds fault only with Old Testament believers, not New Testament Christians. Many also think this passage teaches that God immediately writes his laws upon the minds and hearts of all believers in Christ. Yet, how could this possibly be true? Most believers do not care at all about God’s Law. When mentioned or taught they often scoff at the “mere legalism” of the “foolish” Bible teacher. One thing that is certain is this, if a Christian derogates God’s Law, then we know that His Law has not been written on his heart.

Modern day’s “fast food” mentality leads many people to believe that God writes His Law immediately upon a person’s heart at the time of his salvation. We have come to think that everything, including the promises of God, should and do come to us “right now.” But, this is not so. The writing of God’s laws upon our soul begins as a process; it is not an instantaneous event. There will come a time, the time of our resurrection or glorification, at which God will dramatically change these bodies of flesh into spiritual bodies that fully obey Him. See 1 Corinthians 15:33-58. But, as of this writing, the last trump has not sounded and the glorification of flesh has not occurred.

At the present time God requires that we come into agreement with Him regarding His laws and His ways. Twice in the Book of Hebrews the Holy Spirit says, *"Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, in the day of trial in the wilderness...."* (Heb. 3:7-8, 15) Brethren, God does not force us to hear Him. We choose to hear Him by praying for ears that hear and eyes that see. If we choose not to hear, then, by default, we choose

²¹It is a common mistake to think that only God can or will receive glory (and I say this with fear and trembling!). The glory that may come to men is another of the great mysteries Paul speaks about. 1 Corinthians 2:7 says, *"But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory."*

to harden our hearts to God. In that case we do not come into agreement with Him and we do not allow Him to write His Law on our hearts. *Today*, now, we choose to either allow Him to write His laws on our hearts or we choose to deny Him entry into our innermost being. Unfortunately, the many heresies of today's leavened Christian doctrine, food sacrificed to idols, often prevent Christians from reaching out to God for His perfect provision of Law.

This explains why five of the ten virgins in Matthew 25 cannot prepare themselves fast enough when they finally realize their betrothed is coming. When they discover that Christ is truly coming they no longer have the time required for God to write His laws on their hearts before He arrives. The five who are ready understand and already apply, at least in part, the teaching about righteousness. (Hebrews 5:14) These are those that "hear" the Spirit speaking Truth from whatever source and long to understand and walk in these truths. The five foolish virgins refuse to hear this teaching and they also refuse to ask God to give them ears by which they might hear and eyes by which they might see. Consequently, when they do become convinced that He is coming, and beloved, HE IS COMING SOON, they will not have time to prepare their hearts.

The Contents of the Ark of the Testimony

If the Ark represents glorified man, then the contents of that Ark should concern qualities of this immortal man. Let's see if they do. 1) First, Moses placed the jar of manna inside the Ark of the Testimony. (Ex. 16:33; Heb. 9:4) The manna was God's food from heaven. It prophesies of the true bread from heaven, Jesus Christ, as we see in John 6. The manna first speaks of God's Word. Second, since it literally was food that could be eaten, it symbolizes true communion, sharing and eating the truth (Word) of God with one another and with God. The glorified man will be full of Christ's food, His Word, and will share it with others.

2) Next, the Ark contained the "Testimony" that God gave directly to Moses. (Ex. 25:16) This Testimony, in fact, gave the Ark of the Testimony its specific name. (Ex. 25:22) In Exodus we learn that the Testimony consisted of the two tablets of stone upon which God wrote the Law (Ex. 31:18; 34:1) This Testimony is so important that the entire tabernacle became known as the Tabernacle of the Testimony. (Ex. 38:21) What, though, is a "testimony?"

"Testimony" is a legal term. According to Strong's, a "testimony" is a "witness." The American Heritage Dictionary defines testimony as "1. A declaration or affirmation made under oath, esp. in a court of law. ... 2. Evidence in support of a fact or assertion; proof. 3. A public declaration." All of these definitions describe God's Testimony.

These definitions show us the following: 1) God gave His Law as an affirmation of His truth. It is the standard of truth for men on earth and for His court of law. 2) God's Law will serve as the evidence in His court of law in order to determine that every person is a law breaker. The sacrifice of Jesus did not do away with God's Law. We need Jesus *because of* God's Law. Thus, in God's court, will Jesus say, "Yes, that man broke My Law many times, but he always repented and sought my help to do better. I already paid the penalty for his violations of the Law. He may go free."? Or, will He say, "Depart from Me, you who do lawlessness, for I never knew you."? 3) God's Law publicly declares His character, for the Law expresses His righteousness in deeds of mercy, justice, and truth. "*Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; Mercy and truth go before Your face.*" (Psalm 89:14) Glorified man will perfectly embody God's Law and will act as God's testimony in the earth.

3) The last item placed inside the Ark foretells the future of man. It is Aaron's rod that

budded that we find in the following passage:

{1} And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: {2} "Speak to the children of Israel, and get from them a rod from each father's house, all their leaders according to their fathers' houses; twelve rods. Write each man's name on his rod. {3} "And you shall write Aaron's name on the rod of Levi. For there shall be one rod for the head of each father's house. {4} "Then you shall place them in the tabernacle of meeting before the Testimony, where I meet with you. {5} "And it shall be that the rod of the man whom I choose will blossom; thus I will rid Myself of the complaints of the children of Israel, which they make against you." {6} So Moses spoke to the children of Israel, and each of their leaders gave him a rod apiece, for each leader according to their fathers' houses, twelve rods; and the rod of Aaron was among their rods. {7} And Moses placed the rods before the LORD in the tabernacle of witness. {8} Now it came to pass on the next day that Moses went into the tabernacle of witness, and behold, the rod of Aaron, of the house of Levi, had sprouted and put forth buds, had produced blossoms and yielded ripe almonds. {9} Then Moses brought out all the rods from before the LORD to all the children of Israel; and they looked, and each man took his rod. {10} And the LORD said to Moses, "Bring Aaron's rod back before the Testimony, to be kept as a sign against the rebels, that you may put their complaints away from Me, lest they die." {11} Thus did Moses; just as the LORD had commanded him, so he did. {12} So the children of Israel spoke to Moses, saying, "Surely we die, we perish, we all perish! {13} "Whoever even comes near the tabernacle of the LORD must die. Shall we all utterly die?" (Num 17)

These fearful, rebellious sons of Israel spoke the truth, did they not? Whoever even comes near the Tabernacle of the Lord *is doomed to die!* And this is as true today as it was then. But, the glorious truth here is that Aaron's rod, the rod that brought such a fearful proclamation, actually prophesies of resurrection and the presence of God. The wooden stick itself pictures the flesh, natural man dead in his trespasses and sins. The fact that Aaron's rod budded and produced flowers demonstrates God's ability to bring fruitful life from fleshly death. Even more than that, however, is prophesied by the fact that the rod brought forth almonds. The Hebrew word for almonds, *shaqed*, means "the almond (tree or nut; as being the earliest in bloom)." (Strong's) In this sense the word speaks of God's overcomers, His firstfruits. The word *shaqed* derives from the word *shaqad*, which means "to be sleepless," or "to be awake." Thus the almond itself portrays the firstfruits of God. An almond, so to speak, is one who remains awake to Him and prophesies of the overcomers. The rod that budded and bore fruit specifically foretells God's ability to make dead, carnal lives into glorious blessings to Him.

The Ark of the Covenant thus pictures the glorified, or manifested, Sons of God. These are God's overcomers, the Bride of Christ, the ones who today (or before they died) willingly allow their Beloved to write His Testimony upon their hearts. The Bride's soul has been purified

by God's holy Word, His Manna. The washing of the entrails and legs of the burnt offering by water from the Tabernacle's bronze laver represents this purification. That sacrifice foreshadows Jesus sanctifying us (setting us apart wholly unto Him) by the washing of water by the word. (Eph. 5:26) Finally, the Bride's life produces, now and in ages to come, fruit rendered to God.

Let us now re-read the following passage from Ephesians and consider how all of it relates to these things:

*{22} Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. {23} For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. {24} Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. {25} Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, {26} that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, {27} that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. {28} So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. {29} For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. {30} For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. {31} "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." {32} **This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.***
(Eph 5:22-32)

What is the mystery if every believer, i.e. all of the so-called "church," becomes the Bride? Haven't both believers and unbelievers been saying that the entire church is the Bride for two thousand years? *The mystery is that the Bride allows herself to be washed and sanctified by the Word of her Betrothed so that she may produce fruit for Him. She forsakes food sacrificed to idols and desires only the pure food her Beloved gives her each day.*

Do we believe, then, that we are already perfect or that we expect to be perfect before we will be chosen as Christ's Bride? No. We teach that we must *want* to become perfect. We must come to the place where we grieve with broken hearts because of our sinful nature. "*Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.*" (Mt. 5:4) We must desire the covering of our Beloved who ensures our safe conduct to that place of rest and anointing He has ordained for us at His "mercy seat."

The Mercy Seat

Jesus Christ loves each one of us with all of His heart. We all know John 3:16 and that one verse may describe this great love more succinctly than any other. "*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*" Our God is a God of mercy! Just listen to some of these Old Testament Scriptures:

"Therefore know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments"
(Deut. 7:9)

{8} The LORD is gracious and full of compassion, Slow to anger and great in mercy. {9} The LORD is good to all, And His tender mercies are over all His works. (Ps. 145:8-9)

{5} And I said: "I pray, LORD God of heaven, O great and awesome God, You who keep Your covenant and mercy with those who love You and observe Your commandments, {6} "please let Your ear be attentive and Your eyes open, that You may hear the prayer of Your servant which I pray before You now, day and night, for the children of Israel Your servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel which we have sinned against You. Both my father's house and I have sinned. {7} "We have acted very corruptly against You, and have not kept the commandments, the statutes, nor the ordinances which You commanded Your servant Moses. {8} "Remember, I pray, the word that You commanded Your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations; {9} 'but if you return to Me, and keep My commandments and do them, though some of you were cast out to the farthest part of the heavens, yet I will gather them from there, and bring them to the place which I have chosen as a dwelling for My name.' {10} "Now these are Your servants and Your people, whom You have redeemed by Your great power, and by Your strong hand. {11} "O Lord, I pray, please let Your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your servant, and to the prayer of Your servants who desire to fear Your name; and let Your servant prosper this day, I pray, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man." For I was the king's cupbearer. (Neh 1:5-11)

Many people cannot see how God's mercy relates to His justice. Justice, in their eyes, equates to heartless rules and laws that serve only to rob us of our pleasure. But, says Zechariah, *"Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Execute true justice, Show mercy and compassion Everyone to his brother. {10} Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, The alien or the poor: Let none of you plan evil in his heart Against his brother."* (Zec 7:9-10)

The people of Israel in Nehemiah's day were a typical bunch. They had not obeyed the commands of God. Nehemiah admitted this to God. How, then, could he still expect God to be merciful? Because he knew his Maker. He knew Israel's history, a history that included God's forgiveness and mercy toward the extremely wicked behavior of their own great king, David. He must have known Solomon's prayer to God: *"Thou hast showed great mercy unto David my father, and hast made me to reign in his stead."* (2 Chron. 1:8) How is it that God could have been so merciful to King David since David committed adultery with a friend's wife and then murdered that friend in an attempt to hide his sin? God knew his heart, as we see in the

following verse:

And Solomon said: "You have shown great mercy to Your servant David my father; because he walked before You in truth, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with You; You have continued this great kindness for him, and You have given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. (1 Kings 3:6)

David, like us, was a man of flesh. He committed grievous sins, but in his heart he walked before God in truth, righteousness, and uprightness. God's own testimony about David was, "I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will." (Acts 13:22) Notice that this testimony is in contrast to that of Saul, the first king of Israel, whom God "removed." (Acts 13:22) No, it is not sinless perfection in this flesh that God demands of us. He desires a heart that wants to please Him, a heart that beats for His holiness and purity, a heart that breaks over his own wickedness and fleshly sins, a heart that willingly seeks to be filled with God's Law and to do it. This is the man whom God covers with His mercy, and this is the meaning of the mercy seat.

{17} "You shall make a mercy seat of pure gold; two and a half cubits shall be its length and a cubit and a half its width. {18} "And you shall make two cherubim of gold; of hammered work you shall make them at the two ends of the mercy seat. {19} "Make one cherub at one end, and the other cherub at the other end; you shall make the cherubim at the two ends of it of one piece with the mercy seat. {20} "And the cherubim shall stretch out their wings above, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and they shall face one another; the faces of the cherubim shall be toward the mercy seat. {21} "You shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the Testimony that I will give you. {22} "And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are on the ark of the Testimony, about everything which I will give you in commandment to the children of Israel. (Ex. 25:17-22)

The Hebrew word used for the mercy seat is the word *kapporeth*, a word used only for this one thing. Strong's teaches that the word is derived from the word *kaphar* which is the Hebrew word for atonement. Thus the mercy seat also speaks of the covering blood atonement of Jesus Christ. Man can never enter into the presence of his Creator without that blood covering. Finally, God commanded that the mercy seat be made of pure gold because it represented Himself. It sat directly on top of the Ark of the Testimony, representing man in his glorified state. Here we see a perfect picture of the two becoming one, for the lid of a box is certainly part of the box.

Summary of the Ark

In summary, the Ark of the Testimony, which stood in the Most Holy Place of the

Tabernacle of the Testimony, pictures glorified man living within the atoning covering of His merciful God. The ark itself contained 1) the jar of manna, 2) the tablets of the Testimony, God's Law, and 3) Aaron's rod that bore fruit. These three items convey one prophetic message to us today: The man whom God created, now but a man of flesh, who fills himself with God's Word and who partakes of holy communion with God and his fellow men (the jar of manna), and who allows God to write His Law upon his heart, thus dying to self, (the tablets of the testimony), will one day live anew with God's life, glory, and fruit (the dead rod of wood that brought forth fruit). Such a one's final end shall be as a glorified saint, purged of all dross, living continually in the covering and presence of God. He, a man of mere flesh (wood), shall become a glorified being (gold).

PART IV

WHEN WE AWAKE THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness. Psalm 17:15

{7} My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast; I will sing and give praise. {8} Awake, my glory! Awake, lute and harp! I will awaken the dawn. {9} I will praise You, O Lord, among the peoples; I will sing to You among the nations. Psalm 57:7-9

I sleep, but my heart is awake; It is the voice of my beloved! He knocks, saying, "Open for me, my sister, my love, My dove, my perfect one; For my head is covered with dew, My locks with the drops of the night." Song of Solomon 5:2

*{33} Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits."
{34} **Awake to righteousness**, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame. 1 Corinthians 15:33-34*

*{17} As a woman with child Is in pain and cries out in her pangs, When she draws near the time of her delivery, So have we been in Your sight, O LORD. {18} We have been with child, we have been in pain; We have, as it were, brought forth wind; We have not accomplished any deliverance in the earth, Nor have the inhabitants of the world fallen. {19} Your dead shall live; Together with my dead body they shall arise. **Awake and sing**, you who dwell in dust; For your dew is like the dew of herbs, And the earth shall cast out the dead. {20} Come, my people, enter your chambers, And shut your doors behind you; Hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment, Until the indignation is past. {21} For behold, the LORD comes out of His place To punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; The earth will also disclose her blood, And will no more cover her slain. Isaiah 26:17-21*

*{44} "Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. {45} **"Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? {46} "Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. {47} "Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. {48} "But if***

*that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' {49} "and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, {50} "the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, {51} "and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. **Matthew 24:44-51***

*When they were fully awake, they saw His glory. **Luke 9:32***

"And then---at last---for a moment---I saw him."

"Saw whom?"

"The west-wind."

*"**Saw** it?"*

"Not it, him. The god of the wind; West-wind himself."

"Were you awake, Psyche?"

*"Oh, it was no dream. One can't dream things like that, because one's never seen things like that. He was in human shape. But you couldn't mistake him for a man. Oh, Sister, you'd understand if you'd seen. How can I make you understand? **Faces**, 110-111*

Chapter 18

OUR GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE (The Overcomers)

{25} See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven, {26} whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven." {27} Now this, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. {28} Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. {29} For our God is a consuming fire.

Hebrews 12:25-29 (New King James Version)

{12} And the fire on the altar is burning on it; it is not quenched, and the priest hath burned on it wood morning by morning, and hath arranged on it the burnt-offering, and hath made perfume on it with the fat of the peace-offerings; {13} fire is continually burning on the altar; it is not quenched.

Leviticus 6:12-13 (Young's Literal Translation)

"Psyche," said I, leaping up, "I can't bear this any longer. You have told me so many wonders. If this is all true, I've been wrong all my life. Everything has to be begun over again. Psyche, it is true? You're not playing a game with me? Show me. Show me your palace" Of course I will," she said, rising. "Let us go in. And don't be afraid whatever you see or hear."

"Is it far?" said I. She gave me a quick, astonished look. "Far to where?" she said. "To the palace, to this god's House." ...

"Orual," she said, beginning to tremble, "what do you mean?"

I too became frightened, though I had yet no notion of the truth. "Mean?" said I. "Where is the palace?" How far have we to go to reach it?"

She gave one loud cry. Then, with white face, staring hard into my eyes, she said, "But **this** is it, Orual! It is here! You are standing

on the stairs of the great gate.”

Faces, pp. 115-116

This passage from *Till We Have Faces* presents Orual on the footsteps of Psyche's home, the palace of the god that Psyche claims as her husband. Orual's problem is that, even though sitting on the very threshold of a god's home, she cannot discern it. Orual thus represents many of us. Right now we sit on the threshold of the Day of the Lord, but many of us do not see it. Indeed He is coming soon, but many do not see the manifold signs which accompany this. If we do see them, do we act like we believe the signs?

Psyche allegorically represents the Bride of Christ in Lewis' book and especially in the passage quoted above. By now we understand that "the Bride" is a Biblical "codeword" for a rank of believer in the Kingdom of God. The Bride represents the very highest position for any human in the Kingdom of God. Other Biblical words for the Bride are "overcomers," "sons of God," the "manchild" of Revelation 12:5, the "remnant," "Gideon's 300," etc. Psyche was specifically chosen by the god of Glome to become his wife. She represents the Bride of Christ.

Orual, at this time of her life, though, cannot see the god's magnificent palace, at least not very well. Also, she experiences either jealousy at Psyche's exalted position or simply does not understand it. Whatever her reason, Orual chooses not to believe Psyche's description of her husband's grand house. She even begins to plot against Psyche's happiness there. Similarly, many of us refuse to believe God's teachers who proclaim Christ's soon coming rule. Some become wickedly jealous of such "exalted" claims and even plot the "seer's" ruin.

Who May Ascend God's Holy Mountain?

God, however, has planned His "second" coming very carefully. Immediately after He gives us a picture of true communion in Exodus 18, for example, he presents us with a prophetic illustration of that time we live in now. Many of us just can't see it very well. We are a lot like Orual who thought she "might" have seen the great god's palace in the evening mists. Today, at the end of Satan's six thousand year reign of this earth, God has called certain people to the top of His holy mountain. They will fulfill the mandate that God gave Moses: "*And the LORD said to Moses, 'Go down and warn the people, lest they break through to gaze at the LORD, and many of them perish. Also let the priests who come near the LORD consecrate themselves, lest the LORD break out against them.'*" (Ex. 19:21-22)

Why would God want Moses to warn His people not to try to look at Him? Isn't this the whole goal of God's dealings with us, to behold His face? And, why would God want His prophets to warn people today about rushing onto His mountain and trying to break through to gaze upon Him? We will discover the answer, I think, when we understand just who may ascend God's mountain.

{3} Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who may stand in His holy place? {4} He who has clean hands and a pure heart, Who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, Nor sworn deceitfully. {5} He shall receive blessing from the LORD, And righteousness from the God of his salvation. (Ps. 24:3-5)

Now notice the context of those three verses above, *“This is Jacob (God’s chosen and anointed servant), the generation of those who seek Him, **Who seek Your face. Selah**”* (Ps. 24:6) You see, God raises up a specific generation which seeks His face. The verses preceding this one describe the character of this generation.

We live in a day when many of God’s people, prepared or unprepared, want Jesus to break through the heavenlies so that they can gaze upon Him. Many do not realize that to do so means that their souls will utterly perish in the consumption of His blazing glory. They do not yet understand that our God is a holy God and that only the holy ones may look into his holy eyes and gaze upon His holy face (*paniyim*). Christ’s end-of-the-age witnesses will teach and warn God’s people, preparing them for the Day of the Lord. This is the meaning of those last mysterious verses in the Old Testament:

{4} "Remember the Law of Moses, My servant, Which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel, With the statutes and judgments. {5} Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. {6} And he will turn The hearts of the fathers to the children, And the hearts of the children to their fathers, Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse." (Mal 4:4-6)

We must understand that it is not God’s desire, nor His will, to strike the earth with a curse. Jesus sacrificed Himself just so that He would not have to strike the earth. This passage describes what God intends to do in the days of the establishment of His Kingdom on earth. He will send forth anointed ministers in the spirit of Elijah and their ministry will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to their fathers. Through them the Spirit of God will work repentance and establish love on the earth.

To do this God must call His Law into remembrance, for the Church has long forgotten it. The reign of King Josiah of Judah prophesies this time. The Church, just like Israel and Judah, laid God’s Law aside and thought that they could go their own way, with their own laws, and still please God simply because they were His “chosen” people. Josiah rediscovered the Law of God and tore his robes for all of Judah’s sins and idolatry. Then he led his country into a time of repentance. As with Josiah God has been revealing His Law to His last day prophets. They will go forth in the spirit of Elijah just as Malachi prophesied and will remind and teach God’s people of His Laws. The revelation of God’s ways will restore the heart of love to God’s people, for if not, God will “come and strike the earth with a curse.”

The Prophetic Law - Details of Christ’s Second Coming

The historical account of God giving the Law to Moses in Exodus 19-31 reveals many details concerning the second coming of Christ. Several verses herein have always mystified me. For example, after Moses “went up to God” at the top of the mountain in the Wilderness of Sinai, why did God almost immediately warn him to *“Go down and warn the people, lest they break through to gaze at the Lord, and many of them perish?”* (Ex. 19:3, 21) Even Moses was confused by God’s command, for he answered, *“The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai; for You warned us, saying, ‘Set bounds around the mountain and consecrate it.’”* (Ex. 19:23) Then, God, almost angrily, replies, *“Away! Get down and then come up, you and Aaron with you. But*

do not let the priests and the people break through to come up to the LORD, lest He break out against them." (Ex. 19:24) What is going on here? These verses are prophetic, and they were written for us who live at the end of the age, just prior to the second coming of Christ. Let us consider this passage in detail.

God Revealed the Law at Israel's First Pentecost

{1} In the third month after the children of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on the same day, they came to the Wilderness of Sinai. {2} For they had departed from Rephidim, had come to the Wilderness of Sinai, and camped in the wilderness. So Israel camped there before the mountain. (Ex. 19:1-2)

The words "on the same day" show that God does things at appointed times and demonstrates His absolute sovereignty over creation. Exodus 19 occurs at the time of Pentecost on the Jewish calendar. Pentecost Scripturally occurs on or about the 6th of Sivan, the 6th day of the third Jewish month, as we see from the following passage:

{15} 'And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be completed. {16} 'Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the LORD. (Lev 23:15-16)

Here we see that the counting off to Pentecost begins on the day after the first Sabbath that occurs (on or) after Passover. The killing of the Passover lamb itself always takes place on "Preparation Day," Abib 14, the 14th day of the Hebrews' first month of the year. (Ex. 12:1-14; Lev. 23:5) The 14th day of the first month can, of course, fall on any day of the week, i.e., Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, etc. The first day in the countdown to Pentecost, however, begins on the day following the first Sabbath on or after Passover. This means that Pentecost always falls on a Sunday, the date of which is always from Sivan 5 to Sivan 12.

Exodus 19, therefore, takes place at the time of the first "Pentecost" after God delivered Israel from Egypt. Jewish tradition states that the actual date of the giving of the Law to Moses was Sivan 6 and this is the date upon which most modern Jews celebrate Pentecost. From Acts 2:1 we also know that the Christian church began upon this same Jewish festival. This first Pentecost of the Christian age was the day upon which God gave the earnest, or deposit, of the Holy Spirit, the evidence of the New Covenant by faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

God Declares Israel His "Special Treasure"

*{3} And Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: {4} 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. {5} 'Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a **special treasure** to Me*

above all people; for all the earth is Mine. {6} 'And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel." (Ex. 19:3-6)

These verses, and especially verses 5 and 6, bring to mind the peculiar calling of both Israel and the Church of the New Covenant. Peter writes,

*{4} Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, {5} you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. {6} Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame." {7} Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, "The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone," {8} and "A stone of stumbling And a rock of offense." They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed. {9} But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own **special people**, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; {10} who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy. (1 Pet 2:4-10)*

We know that Israel itself never fulfilled this mandate, so we see here that the prophetic fulfillment of Exodus 5-6 must occur in Christians. Even now, however, two thousand years after the first coming of Christ, we do not see these words fulfilled. No Christian group ever has become the "royal priesthood" or "holy nation" that God desires and plans for His *special* people. This word for God's special people, or special treasure, is the Hebrew word *cegullah*. The word occurs only eight times in the entire Old Testament. Eight is the number of Christ, the number of new beginnings. God's *cegullah* represent something new in the earth, something that shows forth the glory of Jesus Christ Himself. We believe that the *cegullah* begin to become manifest during the "gestational" period of the Second Coming, the time we now live in. This is the time before the birthing of the Sons of God. God's Sons will come into the fulness of their calling at the last trump, when Christ returns fully manifest in His *special* people to rule this world.

Malachi the prophet proclaims concerning this: "*They shall be Mine, 'says the LORD of hosts, 'On the day that I make them My jewels. And I will spare them As a man spares his own son who serves him.'"* (Mal. 3:17) "The day" here is that prophetic day we call the second coming of Christ. That day, however, has not yet come, for when it does come, "*Then you shall again discern Between the righteous and the wicked, Between one who serves God And one who does not serve Him.*" (Mal. 3:18) The ministry of God's potential overcomers now prepares the rest of God's people to discern between good and evil, to ready them for that day, so that they too may (or may not if they refuse to hear) become the *cegullah* of God. This is the ministry of the priests according to the order of Melchizedek. (Heb. 5:14) If His people fail to listen to this

word, then they must learn to repent in the outer darkness of the Kingdom where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. Yet, even these will one day be allowed to come within the City of God.

*{7} So Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before them all these words which the LORD commanded him.
{8} Then all the people answered together and said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do." So Moses brought back the words of the people to the LORD. (Ex. 19:7-8)*

One can see the words of the Lord's Great Commission in the preceding two verses. Jesus said, "*{18} All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. {19} 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, {20} teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen.*" (Mat 28:18-20) Moses "*laid before them all these words which the Lord commanded him,*" for example, corresponds to "*teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.*" And, "*All that the Lord has spoken we will do,*" relates to "*make disciples of all nations,*" for a "disciple," according to Vine's, is "one who follows another's teaching." A true disciple of Christ, therefore, says, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do," which is the very thing the Israelites told Moses.

The Prophecy of the Day of the Lord

{9} And the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I come to you in the thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and believe you forever." So Moses told the words of the people to the LORD. (Ex. 19:9)

Here in Exodus we face the "thick cloud," another of Scripture's mysterious sayings. This time of the "thick," or "dark" cloud actually describes the Second Coming of Christ. Notice that the Lord says here, "I come to you." This is what many of us now expect. We expect the Lord to come to us in "the rapture." Yet, this is a time of uncertainty, darkness, and a sure sense of foreboding. What better words could describe this time of saber rattling, terrorism, and threatened major wars that we live in? This is the prelude to the glory to be revealed. Remember the Book of Joel where the prophet says,

{1} Blow the trumpet in Zion, And sound an alarm in My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; For the day of the LORD is coming, For it is at hand: {2} A day of darkness and gloominess, A day of clouds and thick darkness, Like the morning clouds spread over the mountains. A people come, great and strong, The like of whom has never been; Nor will there ever be any such after them, Even for many successive generations. (Joel 2:1-2)

These verses mark the very beginning of that famous passage from Joel quoted by Peter

in Acts 2:17-21,

{17} 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams. {18} And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy. {19} I will show wonders in heaven above And signs in the earth beneath: Blood and fire and vapor of smoke. {20} The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD. {21} And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the LORD Shall be saved.' (Acts 2:17-21,, quoting Joel 2:28-32)

Today we know that Joel 2:28-32 has not fully come to pass. “The great and awesome day of the Lord” has not yet occurred, but it is coming, and it is coming soon. The Day of the Lord will indeed be great, awesome, dark, gloomy, cloudy, and terrible. The inhabitants of the earth will tremble as Jesus Christ descends the Mountain of God. But, this descent looks differently than any of us have imagined. The entire world will not see a massive, glorified Jesus all at the same time. Instead, the inhabitants of earth will witness the clouds of heaven. Joel describes these “clouds.” These are a people “*great and strong, the like of whom has never been; nor will there ever be any [like them] after them....*” (Joel 2:2) These people are those represented by such Biblical names as “the Sons of God,” “Gideon’s 300,” “the Overcomers,” and “the remnant,” those who come in the power and spirit of Moses and Elijah. They will fulfill the following mandate to Moses.

Preparation for the “Third Day,” the Day of the Lord

{10} Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes. {11} "And let them be ready for the third day. For on the third day the LORD will come down upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. (Ex. 19:10-11)

Verse ten foretells the “two day” or two thousand year Christian era that is now ending, i.e., “today and tomorrow.” The Word of God to Christians today, as it has been for two thousand years, is “consecrate yourselves and wash your clothes.” These instructions remind us of Moses’ commands regarding the red heifer that we considered in Part One above. The command to consecrate means “to sanctify,” to set oneself apart to God’s holy uses. Now consider 2 Cor. 6:17, which says, “*Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you.*” God’s command to wash their clothes meant that they were to repent of and, hence, take off all uncleanness (sin) that defiled them. They were to wash themselves with God’s Word of grace, mercy, and forgiveness.

Jesus explicitly warns His people concerning their corrupted clothing in Revelation 3:4, 3:17-18, and Matthew 22:11-12. The self-righteous, however, believe they have no sins to repent

of. But, John says, *“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”* (1 John 1:8-9) Also, we know that one of the factors of Godly communion is to judge ourselves by Christ’s standards before He comes to do so, for *“if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.”* (1 Cor. 11:31)

God’s grave command in Exodus 19:10 prepares us for the “third day,” for *“on the third day the Lord will come down upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people.”* The “third day” is prophetic language for the Day of the Lord, the at-hand thousand year rule of Jesus Christ, which is also the third day or third thousand-year period since His first coming. He will come down to earth on that Day and He will be seen by all people, at least in some form. But, people today, like people then, are not ready to see Him *as He is*. Now, as then, people want to “touch” their holy God and they believe, by virtue of their faith in Christ, that they are ready to do so. But, to touch God when one is not sanctified means certain death, just as He illustrated through the death of Uzzah when he touched the Ark. (2 Sam. 6:6-7) This truth applies to Christians as well as non-Christians. John makes this clear as follows: *“And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.”* (1 John 2:28) Notice the possibility that even Christians may be ashamed at His coming.

God commands Moses here to prepare His people so that they will not be ashamed at His coming. Similarly, God’s witnesses now go forth to teach His Law and His ways so that His people today will not be ashamed, nor have their souls destroyed, when He comes a second time. See Hebrews 10:37-39. John makes it clear that all who hope to see God must purify, or sanctify, themselves. Jesus says the same thing in Matthew 5:8, *“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”* Then God continues speaking with Moses.

{12} "You shall set bounds for the people all around, saying, 'Take heed to yourselves that you do not go up to the mountain or touch its base. Whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death. {13a} 'Not a hand shall touch him, but he shall surely be stoned or shot with an arrow; whether man or beast, he shall not live.' (Ex. 19:12-13a)

Just as God commands Moses to *“set bounds for the people all around,”* He gives the same command today. God’s “bounds” are His laws. God is now restoring His Law to His people. Verse 12, therefore, speaks of law, of the boundaries God places about His creation. We know that God Himself submits to His own laws, that Jesus came to fulfill all of the Law, and that not one jot or tittle of the Law shall fail to be established and come to pass. Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament laws of Passover and many others at the time of His first coming and resurrection from the dead. He fulfilled Pentecost in His new people shortly after His resurrection. He will fulfill the laws of the Feast of Tabernacles as well as many other mysterious laws when He comes again.²²

In the preceding passage from Exodus, God establishes the law that whoever touches the mountain of God *“shall surely be put to death.”* A mountain in Scripture represents a kingdom, and the mountain of God pictures the Kingdom of God. God allows no one to touch Him, His Kingdom, or that which represents Him, presumptuously. God’s end-of-time, anointed teachers carry this same word to God’s people today. Next the Lord provides another prophetic figure,

²²See Dr. Stephen E. Jones, M.A., Th.D, *The Laws of the Second Coming*, 2001

the trumpet blast.

Prophecy of the Last Trump

When the trumpet sounds long, they shall come near the mountain.
(Ex. 19:13b)

The following verses shed light on this trumpet blast as well as on the thick, dark cloud of God:

*{30} Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the **clouds of heaven** with power and great glory. {31} And He will send His angels with a great **sound of a trumpet**, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. (Mat. 24:30-31)*

*{51} Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed; {52} in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at **the last trumpet**. For the **trumpet will sound**, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. {53} For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. {54} So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." (1 Cor 15:51-54)*

The trumpet blast on the Day of the Lord fulfills the following Old Covenant law:

{1} And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: {2} "Make two silver trumpets for yourself; you shall make them of hammered work; you shall use them for calling the congregation and for directing the movement of the camps. {3} "When they blow both of them, all the congregation shall gather before you at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. {4} "But if they blow only one, then the leaders, the heads of the divisions of Israel, shall gather to you. (Num. 10:1-4)

When God's leader blew but one trumpet, only "the leaders" or "heads" of Israel were to gather together. Thus when the "last trumpet" (singular) is blown so shall the leaders or heads of God's Kingdom gather together before their head, the Lord Jesus Christ. The earthly nation of Israel blew its last lone trumpet blast years ago, but the time of the Lord's last singular trumpet blast still lies ahead of us. Now, however, is the time prophesied by the following passage.

True Sanctification: The Washing of Water by the Word

{14} So Moses went down from the mountain to the people and

sanctified the people, and they washed their clothes. {15} And he said to the people, "Be ready for the third day; do not come near your wives." (Ex. 19:14-15)

Moses, who here typifies the last day prophets of Malachi 4:4-6, has been on the Mountain of God and has communed with God. He has heard God's voice and he knows God's will concerning that which shortly comes to pass. Moses, therefore, warns Israel of God's appearance in just three days. God's prophets today also know that the "third day" looms immediately ahead. They cry out, "Be ready for the third day since Christ's first coming!" Hosea prophesies about this third day as follows: "*After two days He will revive us; On the third day He will raise us up, That we may live in His sight.*" (Hosea 6:2) And, as Peter taught, "*But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*" (2 Peter 3:8) Therefore God's prophets cry, "Get ready for the third day! Awaken from your sleep! Sanctify yourselves and wash your garments! Prepare for the coming of our Lord when He will establish His Kingdom on earth!"

Then, the rest of God's people, when they hear such a warning, should cry out, "Tell us how to get ready!" And we will give the same answer as Moses, "*Do not come near women.*" In other words, we proclaim "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. Do not defile yourselves with the sins of the flesh. Sanctify yourselves. Consecrate yourselves. Come out from among the ways of the world and be separate. Do not touch what is unclean. Judge yourselves of all of your unrighteous deeds and repent thereof. Live lives of holiness unto God!" It is the cry of John the Baptist, the type of the Spirit of Elijah who is now come.

The Book of Revelation tells us of the elect "firstfruits" who respond to this call:

*{1} Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads. {2} And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. {3} They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. {4} These are **the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins.** These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being **firstfruits** to God and to the Lamb. {5} And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God. (Rev 14:1-5)*

Verse 4 here might better be translated as, "These are the ones who were not defiled among women, for they are virgins" since virgins, or maidens, appear as the subject of this sentence. We also see by the use of the word "virgins" that this whole passage relates to God's people, or virgins, who were not defiled by the things of the world. Contrast these virgins with His virgin, Israel, who acts "horribly" according to Jeremiah:

{13} Therefore thus says the LORD: "Ask now among the Gentiles,

Who has heard such things? The virgin of Israel has done a very horrible thing. {14} Will a man leave the snow water of Lebanon, Which comes from the rock of the field? Will the cold flowing waters be forsaken for strange waters? {15} "Because My people have forgotten Me, They have burned incense to worthless idols. And they have caused themselves to stumble in their ways, From the ancient paths, To walk in pathways and not on a highway, {16} To make their land desolate and a perpetual hissing; Everyone who passes by it will be astonished And shake his head. (Jer 18:13-16)

We see by comparing these two passages that the word “virgin” does designate God’s people. A virgin, surely, believes in God. The word, however, does not necessarily imply a holy position before God. This helps us to better understand the parable of the ten virgins:

{1} "Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. {2} "Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. {3} "Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, {4} "but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. {5} "But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. {6} "And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!' {7} "Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. {8} "And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' {9} "But the wise answered, saying, 'No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.' {10} "And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. {11} "Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!' {12} "But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.' {13} "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming. (Mat 25:1-13)

Note that the “Kingdom of Heaven shall be likened to ten virgins.” All of the virgins believe in Christ and await their Bridegroom, but there exist two separate groups therein. We must not continue to believe the error that says that the five foolish virgins represent unbelievers. We err when we believe and teach this destructive heresy. Instead, we see that those who respond to the end time message of repentance and holiness before God, and who diligently watch for their Lord, make up the five wise virgins of Matthew 25. Only the properly prepared and attired go in with the Bridegroom “to the wedding.” The others, those who refuse to be sanctified by God’s Word, remain outside the glory and presence of God. They will dwell in the outer darkness of the Kingdom.

The Overcomers’ Call on The Day of the Lord

{16} Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled. {17} And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. (Ex. 19:16-17)

We now come to the prophesied third day, the actual beginning of Christ's physical rule among men. The day begins with thunder, lightning, a thick cloud, and a loud trumpet blast. This illustrates the aspect of Christ's second coming that is like His earthly departure after His resurrection, i.e. in the clouds. Since it will be "cloudy" on the day of His coming, His doings will not be apparent to everyone. Only those who know His ways and walk with Him will know what is going on. The fearfulness of this time will cause the unprepared of God's people "to tremble." Then the anointed of God will lead them to His mountain, just as Moses led Israel there.

{18} Now Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly. {19} And when the blast of the trumpet sounded long and became louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him by voice. {20} Then the LORD came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain. And the LORD called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up. (Ex. 19:18-20)

We believe that these verses depict that time shown in Joel 2:1-2:

{1} Blow the trumpet in Zion, And sound an alarm in My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; For the day of the LORD is coming, For it is at hand: {2} A day of darkness and gloominess, A day of clouds and thick darkness, Like the morning clouds spread over the mountains. A people come, great and strong, The like of whom has never been; Nor will there ever be any such after them, Even for many successive generations. (Joel 2:1-2)

The calling of Moses to the top of the mountain represents the anointing, or glorification, of the "great and strong" people of Joel 2:2, a people totally unlike any before or after in the history of mankind. This is that event that men commonly call "the rapture." Notice that it occurs when the trumpet sounded long and became louder and louder. This is the last trumpet of 1 Corinthians 15:52. This is the time when God's firstfruits, His overcomers, exchange their bodies of flesh for incorruptible bodies of immortality. Thus they shall bear the image of the heavenly Man. But, it is at the top of the mountain, in the presence of God, that they will receive a surprise, just as Moses did. They do not get to stay there in His presence. Instead, He gives them another work to do. They must go back "down and warn the people." They return as

“clouds.”

God's Overcomers Return to Warn the Rest of God's People

{21} And the LORD said to Moses, "Go down and warn the people, lest they break through to gaze at the LORD, and many of them perish. {22} "Also let the priests who come near the LORD consecrate themselves, lest the LORD break out against them."
(Ex. 19:21-22)

In other words, at the second coming of Christ, many of God's people will not be ready to come into the presence of God. Many who are not ready believe that they are. Many today want to “gaze at the Lord,” as He comes to “rapture” them from this earth. They do not yet realize that to gaze upon God means that they must “perish” because of their continuing rebellion and uncleanness before God. Again, this “perishing” speaks of the punishment required by God's fiery law that is never willingly dealt with by the believer. Christ sends forth His clouds so that most of the people will not be burned by the intense radiance of the Son. (God always uses natural pictures to explain spiritual realities) God's clouds will be sent to the entire earth and, since they are the glorified Sons of God, the fulness of Christ indwells them. Thus when the people of the earth see them, they see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven. But, this doesn't look like what we have always been taught, does it?

These anointed people, like Moses did, will bring God's Word especially for the “priests who come near the Lord.” These priests will heretofore have missed all of their opportunities for coming into the fullness of the presence of God. Now, however, God requires them to uphold His holiness in a strict and non-compromising way according to the following words of the prophet Ezekiel:

*{5} And the LORD said to me, "Son of man, mark well, see with your eyes and hear with your ears, all that I say to you concerning all the ordinances of the house of the LORD and all its laws. Mark well who may enter the house and all who go out from the sanctuary. {6} "Now say to the rebellious, to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "O house of Israel, let us have no more of all your abominations. {7} "When you brought in foreigners, uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in My sanctuary to defile it; My house; and when you offered My food, the fat and the blood, then they broke My covenant because of all your abominations. {8} "And you have not kept charge of My holy things, but you have set others to keep charge of My sanctuary for you." {9} 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "No foreigner, uncircumcised in heart or uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter My sanctuary, including any foreigner who is among the children of Israel. {10} "And **the Levites who went far from Me** (these are the priests of God's churches, mainly pastors, who refuse to obey Him), when Israel went astray, who strayed away from Me after their idols, they shall bear their iniquity. {11} "Yet they shall be ministers in*

*My sanctuary, as gatekeepers of the house and ministers of the house; they shall slay the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall stand before them to minister to them. {12} "Because they ministered to them before their idols and caused the house of Israel to fall into iniquity, therefore I have raised My hand in an oath against them," says the Lord GOD, "that they shall bear their iniquity. {13} "And **they shall not come near Me to minister to Me as priest** (the priests, or pastors, signified by the Levites will not get to come into the direct presence of God at this time), *nor come near any of My holy things, nor into the Most Holy Place; but they shall bear their shame and their abominations which they have committed. {14} "Nevertheless I will make them keep charge of the temple, for all its work, and for all that has to be done in it. {15} "But the priests, the Levites, **the sons of Zadok**, who kept charge of My sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from Me, **they shall come near Me to minister to Me** (the priests according to the order of Zadok, i.e. Melchizedek, shall come into the presence of God); *and they shall stand before Me to offer to Me the fat and the blood," says the Lord GOD. {16} "They shall enter My sanctuary, and **they shall come near My table to minister to Me** (the priests after the order of Melchizedek shall be as bread on the table of showbread; they shall be continually before the face of God and they shall be broken and dispersed to the people of earth as spiritual food), *and they shall keep My charge. {17} "And it shall be, whenever they enter the gates of the inner court, that they shall put on linen garments; no wool shall come upon them while they minister within the gates of the inner court or within the house. {18} "They shall have linen turbans on their heads and linen trousers on their bodies; they shall not clothe themselves with anything that causes sweat. {19} "When they go out to the outer court, to the outer court to the people, they shall take off their garments in which they have ministered, leave them in the holy chambers, and put on other garments; and in their holy garments they shall not sanctify the people. (Ezek 44:5-19)****

God's glorified Moses and Elijah people now must correct His other priests concerning their abominations, their food sacrificed to idols. The overcomers represented by Moses and Elijah will receive new, spiritual bodies before any others of God's people. They will have bodies like unto the body of Jesus after His resurrection from the dead. They will be able to manifest physical flesh and bone, as did Jesus, when they minister to inhabitants of the earth. Being dressed "in wool" represents this. They will be able to transfigure into spiritual bodies, their linens, at will and stand in the direct presence of God.

Their ministry will be to fill the earth with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, "for the earth will be filled With the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, As the waters cover the sea." (Hab. 2:14) If God's "Levite" ministers receive their corrective instructions, then they will

still be allowed to continue ministering for the Lord in the earth. They will not, however, have access into the very presence of God at this time as will the glorified saints of God, the sons of Zadok that we see above in Ezekiel 44. These glorified saints are the ministers according to the order of Melchizedek. They are the overcomers of God.

{23} But Moses said to the LORD, "The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai; for You warned us, saying, 'Set bounds around the mountain and consecrate it.'" {24} Then the LORD said to him, "Away! Get down and then come up, you and Aaron with you. But do not let the priests and the people break through to come up to the LORD, lest He break out against them." {25} So Moses went down to the people and spoke to them. (Ex. 19:23-25)

Moses obeyed God, of course, walked back down the mountain, and warned the people according to the words God had spoken. This was a second warning. It shows that man is hard to hear and harder still to obey. And we come to the Law once again....

Chapter 19

THE ROD OF IRON

{1} And God spoke all these words, saying: {2} "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. {3} "You shall have no other gods before Me. {4} "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; {5} you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, {6} but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments. {7} "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain. {8} "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. {9} Six days you shall labor and do all your work, {10} but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. {11} For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it. {12} "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you. {13} "You shall not murder. {14} "You shall not commit adultery. {15} "You shall not steal. {16} "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. {17} "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's." {18} Now all the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood afar off. {19} Then they said to Moses, "You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die." {20} And Moses said to the people, "Do not fear; for God has come to test you, and that His fear may be before you, so that you may not sin." {21} So the people stood afar off, but Moses drew near the thick darkness where God was. (Exodus 20:1-21)

The First Work in the Kingdom of God: Teach and Enforce God's Law

First we must understand that the glorified saints will bring the teaching about God's Law

from the well-spring of the New Covenant, not the deadness of the Old. The Old Covenant teaches, "You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them: I am the LORD." (Lev. 18:5). The Old Covenant teaches that strict obedience to God's commands brings life. The New Covenant teaches that Life through a relationship with Jesus Christ brings obedience to God's commands. John says, "*{3} This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, {4} for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. {5} Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.* (1 John 5:3-5 NIV) The Old Covenant teaches that obedience to God's commands brings fellowship with Him. The New Covenant teaches that fellowship with God by faith in Jesus Christ brings obedience to Him. There exists a world of difference in the two approaches to God.

In the verses above from Exodus 20 we find out what happened as soon as Moses went back down to the people. Exodus 20:1, says, "*God spoke all these words, saying....*" Then He proceeds to orate the Ten Commandments directly from the Mountain of God. This establishes a pattern, I believe, concerning what God will ask His glorified saints to do. I believe that the "God" who spoke from the midst of the dark cloud on Mount Sinai was Jesus Christ Himself. At the time of His second (or third) coming, however, He will not personally teach or declare that Law as He did here at His "first" coming. Instead, He will have a people ready and willing to teach and obey His Law, and they will possess the power by the fullness of the Spirit to do so perfectly. They will be the clouds from which God speaks His Word this time!

The voice of God must have been terrible, for after He spoke Moses wrote, "*{18} Now all the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood afar off. {19} Then they said to Moses, 'You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die.'*" (Ex. 20:18-19)

Here we see the nation of Israel as a whole unwilling to directly hear the voice of God. They refused to draw near unto God, for they feared death within His consuming fire. Moses, however, "*drew near the thick darkness where God was.*" (Ex. 20:21) Christians today face the very same dilemma. A willingness to hear God forces one to draw near to Him, and He shrouds Himself in thick and terrible darkness. The road of faith is a dark road, a veritable valley of the shadow of death. It is as if one walks a narrow trail shrouded in the misty blackness of the densest fog. But the faithful one, even on that road, will learn to fear no evil. They walk obediently into the thick darkness with God and learn not to fear God's Word. Yes, they know it will bring death to all of their ways, but they know that out of death comes life, for our God gives beauty for ashes. In this way God prepares them to take His Law back down to His people.

Few, because of this severe difficulty, willingly choose to take the narrow road. This is why God calls those who do "overcomers." Jesus said, "*Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. {14} Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.*" (Mat 7:13-14)

The vast majority of believers proclaim, as did Israel, "You, preacher, you speak with us and we will hear, but let not God speak with us, lest we die." They criticize the few who dare to walk in God's ways as proud and arrogant because they uphold "too high a standard." These revilers do not qualify for the first resurrection. Their sins and unbelief render them yet incapable of beholding the face of God. Yes, they cry out for "the rapture," but God spares them from the fulness of His fiery judgment. He sends His glorious ones, His mighty Joel army to

them in order to prepare them for His presence. They will teach God's people that they must learn His laws and come into agreement with them. Only then will God write His laws upon their hearts so that they may be fit to enter and dwell inside His Kingdom. Remember, the Old Covenant teaches that obedience to God's commands brings fellowship with Him while the New Covenant teaches that it is fellowship with God by faith in Jesus Christ that brings obedience to Him and His laws.

The prophetic lesson drawn from Exodus 19-20 is the same spiritual revelation taught by the writer of Hebrews in these verses:

{25} See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven, {26} whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven." {27} Now this, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. {28} Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. {29} For our God is a consuming fire. (Heb 12:25-29)

The New Testament Interpretation of the Law

{8} Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. {9} For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not bear false witness," "You shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." {10} Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. {11} And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. {12} The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. {13} Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. {14} But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts. (Romans 13:8-14)

Many Christians teach that Jesus Christ did away with God's Law and that today the only Biblical mandate is to "love one another" and to love God. We forget, however, that Paul defines love for one another by quoting God's Law. Yes, he says that all of God's commandments are "summed up" in the phrase "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." But, do we understand what a sum is? Here is a simple sum: $A + B + C = D$, or $1 + 2 + 3 = 6$. Notice that a sum is not a "sum" unless there exists both a right hand *and* a left hand part to the equation. We often say

that God's Law is "summed up" by the command "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," and then write the sum as "you shall love your neighbor as yourself." But, we do not really have a sum, do we? Paul's makes the point that the Law *defines* the meaning of the phrase "you shall love your neighbor as yourself." The Law, then, *is* the left hand side of the sum, i.e., "the Law" = "you shall love your neighbor as yourself."

The knowledge of God's Law provides us with tangible, concrete ways that we can demonstrate our love for others. Otherwise, our conception of "love" may become merely "emotional," and have more to do with good feelings than with God's commands. Paul teaches us here that the last five of the ten commandments, with all of their commensurate case laws found in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, define what it means for us to love our neighbor as ourselves. Similarly, we understand that the first five of the ten commandments, and their corresponding case laws, define the other great command of Christ, to love God with all of our heart, soul, and mind.²³

Notice in the passage quoted above that Paul does not say that all of the temple sacrifices were summed up in the command "you shall love your neighbor as yourself." This is because they were not. Rather, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, sums up all of these ceremonial laws according to the following verses:

{9} For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water, scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, {20} saying, "This is the blood of the covenant which God has commanded you." {21} Then likewise he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry. {22} And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission. {23} Therefore it was necessary that the copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. {24} For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; {25} not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another; {26} He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. {27} And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, {28} so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart

²³For an excellent treatment of these concepts see Rousas John Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law* (The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1973) I do not endorse the "Reconstructionist" or "Dominion" theology that either Mr. Rushdoony or others, like Gary North, teach, especially because they fail to account for the weakness of the flesh until the time of the fullness of the Spirit is given. Nevertheless, many of the Reconstructionist authors provide excellent insights into God's Law, and their works are well worth studying. I commend them for honoring God's Law.

from sin, for salvation. (Heb 9:19-28)

Virtually all of the Old Testament blood sacrifices relate in some way to Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. We have discussed many of these in detail in the first part of this book. The Law also includes many laws of separation from "unclean" things. Detailed exposition of these is beyond the scope of this book.

"The Salvation of the Soul"

Our willingness to listen to God's Law demonstrates our willingness to die to the sinful desires of our flesh. Further it shows our desire for God to write His Law on our hearts. We become conformed into Christ's image only as we come into agreement with God concerning His ways. As shown above, His laws define His ways.

{24} Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. {25} And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. {26} Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. {27} But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified. (1 Cor. 9:24-27)

The passage above briefly speaks of the doctrine of "the salvation of the soul," which is clearly another of God's mysteries. We know this because Paul says, "Run [the race of faith] in such a way that you may obtain [the prize]." Most of us have been taught that all Christians will obtain the "prize" of eternal life and will become co-rulers with Christ in the Kingdom of God. It is true that our spirits live forever, but some of us will taste the lake of fire before we learn to serve God in righteousness. It simply is not true that all Christians immediately become co-rulers with Christ in His Kingdom upon their death or at His second coming. This "prize" awaits only those who "run in such a way that [they] may obtain it."

"Soul Salvation" and the Work of the Holy Spirit

Now we know that the Bible teaches believers to live according to Spirit and not according to the flesh. The prophets exhort us to obey God by the power and working of the Holy Spirit, Who dwells within our spirits, and warn us that we cannot accomplish this by the power of our flesh. Romans teaches us that we simply cannot obey God's law through the efforts of our own sinful nature. Paul makes it abundantly clear, however, that we can obey the mandate of God by living according to the working of the Holy Spirit in us. The wording in Romans focuses our attention upon the mind of man and we have seen that this really speaks of man's soul. The battle ground of the spiritual man involves his own soul. Paul concisely states this issue to the Philippians as follows:

{12} Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in

my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; {13} for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure. (Phil 2:12-13)

Paul says that it is God (Holy Spirit) who works in us both to will and to do His own “good pleasure,” i.e. God’s will. The “*salvation*” here cannot be that same salvation that comes to us by faith alone, according to Ephesians 2:8. Works have nothing to do with that salvation according to Ephesians 2:9. The “work” of Philippians corresponds with the “good works” of Ephesians 2:10 and consists of those things we do by the Spirit after we come to faith in Christ. This exactly parallels Paul’s teaching in Romans. Thus we see that the Book of Romans speaks of our initial justification (spiritual salvation) by faith in Christ alone and then proceeds to discuss the salvation of the soul. The salvation of our soul is effected through the working of God’s Spirit in our spirit. This doctrine of soul salvation eludes the understanding of most Christians. The term “sanctification” actually applies to the salvation of our souls. The word means “to be set apart for God’s use.” When we lose our souls (lives) for God’s sake, we find that we have been set apart for His use. When we understand this idea of “the salvation of the soul,” we will realize why so many people consider the book of Romans so difficult to understand. The doctrine also opens our understanding to the role of the Law in the victorious Christian life.

Jesus Reveals the Law as Grace and Truth

We know that Jesus Christ is the One who gave the Law through Moses for we read, “*Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend.*” (Ex. 33:11) Yet, nine verses later, after Moses asks to see His glory, God declares, “You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!” (Ex. 33:20) Moses was not allowed to behold the glorified spiritual reality of God. When God appears to man in both the Old and New Testaments it is always Jesus in the robe of flesh. No living man has beheld the Face of the Father for, according to John, “*No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.*” (John 1:18)

The apostle also says, “*For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ.*” (John 1:17 NASB) The New American Standard Bible does not make the same error as do most translations. It does not add the word “but” after “Moses.” The word “but” is not in the original Greek and should not appear in this verse. The reason this word often appears is because men attempt to set the “grace and truth” revealed by Jesus against the Law that was given by Moses. What John really says is, “Jesus perfectly reveals the grace and truth contained in the Law that was delivered to Moses. “

Jurisdiction of the Law

Now, in order to understand the Biblical teaching about law we must understand the significance of the word “jurisdiction.” Jurisdiction means “the authority to interpret and apply the law.” (The American Heritage Dictionary) A definition that I like better, taken directly from the meaning of the components of the word itself, is “the authority to speak the law.” Jesus is the Word and He “speaks” the truth, the Law, into all areas of life because He possesses the

authority, or jurisdiction, to do so. Understanding the concept of jurisdiction enables us to comprehend Paul's teaching concerning the Law.

"To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the Law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. (1 Cor. 9:21)

How is it that Paul can say "we are not under the Law" in Romans 6:14 and "I am under the Law to Christ" in 1 Corinthians 9:21? Are these not two totally contradictory statements? The Bible never contradicts itself, but our understanding of it sometimes seems contradictory. When the Bible contradicts itself (to our understanding), we need to seek God's understanding. We learned in Colossians that Christ nailed the Law to the cross, thus wiping away the requirements of the Law that were against us. (Col. 2:14) Does Paul then turn around and apply these requirements to believers?

It is interesting that most translations of the Bible use the word "under" in both 1 Corinthians 9:21 and Romans 6:14, including the NIV, NAS, KJV, and, yet the original letters use two different Greek words. The word used in Romans 6:14 is the word "hupo" and refers to "an inferior position or condition," i.e., underneath something in terms of physical "position" or beneath someone or something in terms of a hierarchical or spiritual "condition." (Strong's) Paul says in Romans, then, that the Law no longer retains mastery over us. We Christians are not under the Law's judgmental dominion or jurisdiction.

On the other hand, the Greek word used in 1 Corinthians 9:21 is "ennomos," which means "subject to" in a legal sense. (Strong's) It also means "within law," or "in law." (Vine's) This word basically means exactly the opposite of the word "lawless" which is the translation of the Greek word "anomos." We find this word used by Paul in 1 Timothy 1:9-10 where he says, *"knowing this: that the Law is not made for a righteous person, but for the Lawless (anomos) and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine...."*

The conclusion of the matter, therefore, is this: Christians must realize that they are under law to Christ. They live subject to His legal authority over their lives. They must act, therefore, according to Christ's moral law which is revealed in both the Old and New Testaments. In Matthew 5-7, for example, we see that Christ's law is even stricter than that commonly understood by practitioners of the Old Covenant law. This is not to say that Christ's law differs from that revealed in the Old Testament, but only to say that He understood it better and could thus explain it with more precision than could the Pharisees. To reject the Law's precepts is to be *anomos*, lawless.

To be under Christ's Law does not mean, however, that we are "under the Law" in terms of jurisdiction. The Law possesses no jurisdiction over the believer who walks according to the Spirit. Christ, however, does possess jurisdiction over us. We must obey His Law because He tells us to. Our flagrant disobedience of Christ's Law demands His second crucifixion and subjects Him to open shame. (Heb. 6:6) Hebrews 9:28 declares that Christ can only be offered once for sin. Hebrews 10:26-27 makes it clear that our demand for a second sacrifice brings God's judgment and fiery indignation upon us. If Christians refuse to submit to Christ's Law they will be forced to submit to God's Law in the lake of fire.

The Rod of Iron

God Himself says to His Son, Jesus Christ, the High Priest of the Order of Melchizedek, *"Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your Kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions."* (Heb 1:8-9) This passage quotes Psalm 45:6-7, the Psalm of the King who rules in *"truth, humility, and righteousness."* (Psalm 45:4). The King's "scepter of righteousness" is none other than the "rod of iron" that we find in the following verses:

You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel. (Ps. 2:9)

'He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels'; as I also have received from My Father; (Rev 2:27)

She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne. (Rev 12:5)

Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. (Rev 19:15)

We know that the "rod of iron" is the "scepter of righteousness" because 1) the same Greek word is used for both terms in the New Testament and 2) the foundation of God's throne is righteousness and justice according to Psalms 89:14 and 97:2. We know that a king's throne symbolizes his legal authority to rule and to pronounce the law. A king rules his land from the decrees that issue from his throne, i.e., from the mouth of him who sits on the throne. A scepter is "a staff (or rod) carried by a sovereign as an emblem of authority." (American Heritage Dictionary) A scepter, therefore, is a sign of legal jurisdiction or law. The scepter of righteousness is thus a scepter of law but, as applied to those who refuse to willingly obey Christ, it is a rod of iron. This scepter, or rod, is also the Shepherd's staff of Micah 7:14.

But, why is this scepter a "rod of iron" and not a "rod of gold?" The nations over which these overcomers rule do not obey Christ when jurisdiction is given to them. The remnant Sons of God begin to rule at the beginning of Christ's millennial reign, a time when most people of the earth do not esteem the laws of God. God's law, therefore will be considered harsh at first by the world's inhabitants. The rule of law will be that described by Jeremiah:

"Is not My word like a fire?" says the LORD, "And like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?" (Jer. 23:39.)

The rod of iron is the iron hammer of God's Law that beats the hard hearts of earth's inhabitants into hearts of flesh. (Note: these are figures of speech!) The rod of iron represents

the fiery Law that burns the flesh of men into submission to God that we find described by Moses:

{1} Now this is the blessing with which Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death. {2} And he said: "The LORD came from Sinai, And dawned on them from Seir; He shone forth from Mount Paran, And He came with ten thousands of saints; From His right hand came a fiery law for them. {3} Yes, He loves the people; All His saints are in Your hand; They sit down at Your feet; Everyone receives Your words. (Deu. 33:1-3)

Moses here prophesies the coming of Christ to rule according to His Law. Notice that in His hand are both the “fiery law” and “His saints.” These saints represent those who will rule with a rod of iron, i.e. with His fiery law. The overcomers of Revelation 2:26-27 qualify to rule by God’s law because they willingly submitted to that law during their time of testing in this world. No, they did not obey in the power of their flesh. They obeyed by submitting their flesh to the will of the Holy Spirit who lives inside them. They learned to “die daily” and partook of the second death during their lives, just as Christ did on the cross. They know that the Kingdom of God is within them now, instructing them in all righteousness and writing His law on their hearts. Tomorrow, on that Day, the great Millennial Day of rest, the Law will have been written fully within them and they will be qualified to rule with their King! The great promise awaits all of those who learn to cry out with King David, “*How I love Your Law! It is my meditation all the day!*” (Psalm 119:97) Once we learn to esteem God’s Law, He will reveal wonderful mysteries through it, mysteries like those concealed for centuries in Exodus 19.

Look, though, why God gives his fiery law. “He loves the people.” When all is said and done, one word alone describes God’s Law and that word is “Love.” This is why Paul proclaimed,

*{9} For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not bear false witness," "You shall not covet," and **if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."** {10} Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. {11} And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to **awake out of sleep**; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. {12} The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. {13} Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. {14} But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts. (Romans 13:9-14, emphasis added)*

Remember who wields the rod iron, the glorified Sons of God. They possess the fulness of the Holy Spirit, and God is love. The application of God’s Law by His overcomers will not be characterized by harsh injustice. The Law will be wielded with and in love and its application,

even by the rod of iron, will be lovely! It will be based upon man's relationship with Immanuel Himself, God in men. Thus does Micah the prophet foretell this time:

{14} Shepherd Your people with Your staff, The flock of Your heritage, Who dwell solitarily in a woodland, In the midst of Carmel; Let them feed in Bashan and Gilead, As in days of old. {15} "As in the days when you came out of the land of Egypt, I will show them wonders." {16} The nations shall see and be ashamed of all their might; They shall put their hand over their mouth; Their ears shall be deaf. {17} They shall lick the dust like a serpent; They shall crawl from their holes like snakes of the earth. They shall be afraid of the LORD our God, And shall fear because of You. {18} Who is a God like You, Pardoning iniquity And passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, Because He delights in mercy. {19} He will again have compassion on us, And will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins Into the depths of the sea. {20} You will give truth to Jacob And mercy to Abraham, Which You have sworn to our fathers From days of old. (Micah 7:14-20)

CHAPTER 20

THE WEDDING GARMENT

Awake, awake! Put on your strength, O Zion; Put on your beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city! For the uncircumcised and the unclean Shall no longer come to you.

Isaiah 52:1

“The voices spoke again; but not loud this time. They were awed and trembled. ‘He is coming,’ they said. ‘The god is coming into his house. The god comes to judge Orual.’

“If Psyche had not held me by the hand I should have sunk down. She had brought me now to the very edge of the pool. The air was growing brighter and brighter about us; as if something had set it on fire. Each breath I drew let into me new terror; joy, overpowering sweetness. I was pierced through and through with the arrows of it. I was being unmade. I was no one. But that’s little to say; rather Psyche herself was, in a manner no one. ... The earth and stars and sun, all that was or will be, existed for his sake. And he was coming. The most dreadful, the most beautiful, the only dread and beauty there is, was coming. The pillars on the far side of the pool flushed with his approach. I cast down my eyes.

“Two figures, reflections, their feet to Psyche’s feet and mine, stood head downward in the water. But whose were they? Two Psyches, the one clothed, the other naked? Yes, both Psyches, both beautiful (if that mattered now) beyond all imagining, yet not exactly the same.

“‘You also are Psyche,’ came a great voice. I looked up then, and it’s strange that I dared. But I saw no god, no pillared court. I was in the palace gardens, my foolish book in my hand....”

Faces, 307-308

Shortly before this startling vision Orual went on pilgrimage and discovered a religious shrine erected to Psyche, her sister. The priest of the shrine told her the story of Psyche, with some alterations in the facts from what Orual remembered. The gravest concern to Orual was that the “myth” now said that it was Psyche’s sister’s jealousy that had spurred her to cause

Psyche to gaze upon her sleeping husband and incur his wrathful curse. After that meeting with the priest, “All day, and often all night too, I was recalling every passage of the true story, dragging up terrors, humiliations, struggles, and anguish that I had not thought of for years, letting Orual wake and speak, digging her almost out of a grave, out of the walled well. The more I remembered, the more still I could remember— often weeping beneath my veil as if I had never been Queen, yet never in so much sorrow that my burning indignation did not rise above it.” (**Faces**, 247)

Orual could not yet face her true self, the actual motivations of her life’s actions. Even now she justified her actions before her god. She determined after this fateful meeting to write her book, a book that would accuse the gods and tell the “true” story of Psyche, the story according to Orual. “I say, therefore, that there is no creature (toad, scorpion, or serpent) so noxious to man as the gods. Let them answer my charge if they can. It may well be that, instead of answering, they’ll strike me mad or leprous or turn me into beast, bird, or tree. But will not all the world then know (and the gods will know it knows) that this is because they have no answer?” (**Faces**, 249-250)

Through a series of events during and after the writing of her book, the God of Glome causes Orual to see and confront her true self. First, the very writing of her book causes her to face feelings and events she has always tried to hide. Then she meets a man she knew as a child who reminded her how she had ignored and even hated her sister, Redival, thus causing Redival to suffer severe loneliness. Orual realizes she had always justified her treatment of this younger sister because she was pretty and Orual herself was ugly. Thus she begins to sift and sort through her life’s experiences, trying to understand her motives.

Next Bardia, her best friend and beloved captain of the palace guard, dies. Orual goes to visit Bardia’s wife, Ansit, and there discovers a faithful woman who accuses her queen of working her husband to death. There Orual realizes she, like Ansit, had loved Bardia and had kept him in her presence as often as she could, thus depriving his wife of his husbandry. Bardia’s wife then accuses her queen, “I know that your queenship drank up his blood year by year and ate out his life.” (**Faces**, 264) Orual can hardly bear to hear Ansit’s true words and leaves in anger, even considering a slow, tortuous death for Ansit, but she is changing. Now she begins to see her true self, a self not nearly so noble as she imagined.

Thus the gods bring Orual to understand her selfish, cruel soul and, hence, to die to that self. But, now it is all but too late. Her life is almost over. She has no time left to do any good works for the gods. In her final vision, when she is fully purged of her dross and sin, Orual “becomes” Psyche, and no longer Ungit.. Now, finally, Orual becomes beautiful, but, she stands naked in the presence of God, and Psyche stands fully clothed. Why?

The Coming Wedding

What is the real difference between Orual and Psyche? Orual loved herself and Psyche loved her God. This one difference led to a life of manipulation for Orual versus one of fellowship and service to God for Psyche. Orual’s conspiracies even caused her to attempt to keep Psyche from serving her God. Finally, at the end of her life, Orual confronts her true self, but only with the necessary help of God. Forced to confront the awful fact that she herself *is* the grotesque god whom she hates, she understands who she really is. She is Ungit, mere flesh. Her worm must die. But, will it? Will she face the reality of her flesh, or will she refuse God’s fiery Law even now, like those in Isaiah 66:24,

*And they have gone forth,
And looked on the carcasses of the men
Who are transgressing against me,
For their worm dieth not,
And their fire is not quenched,
And they have been an abhorrence to all flesh!*

(Isaiah 66:24, Young's Literal Translation of the Holy Bible)

Now it is too late to join the wedding that Psyche shared with her so many years ago. She has no wedding garment. She stands before God, at last, but no time remains to buy "*white garments that she may be clothed, that the shame of her nakedness may not be revealed.*" (Rev. 3:18) She, therefore, stands naked before her God, while Psyche stands fully clothed in bright raiment.

But some, even some who will read this book, will not hear the truth about their carnal condition and they will arrogantly refuse to ask God to open their ears that they might hear. Some will even persist as did Orual and seek to hinder those saints who are escaping from the errors of this world's Babylonian system. Some will, like Orual, scoff at God's words and will not take those words to heart. They will think God's Word a mere story containing some good *suggestions*. Then, when Christ's wedding day does come, and it will come soon, they will find themselves as the poorly dressed man in the following parable:

*{1} And Jesus answered and spoke to them again by parables and said: {2} "The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, {3} "and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come. {4} "Again, he sent out other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, "See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the wedding.'" {5} "But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business. {6} "And the rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them. {7} "But when the king heard about it, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. {8} "Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. {9} 'Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.' {10} "So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding hall was filled with guests. {11} "But when the king came in to see the guests, **he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment.** {12} "So he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. {13} "Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be*

weeping and gnashing of teeth.' {14} "For many are called, but few are chosen." (Mat 22:1-14)

Some Christians hold to the silly opinion that the man without a wedding garment here is not a believer. The problem with this thought is that he is one of the guests that God's servants invited to the feast and he at least believes enough to come. Actually, he is one of the "bad" guests that refuses to read and comply with the wedding invitation. He believes (is a Christian) and wants to come to the wedding (be raptured), but he comes unprepared. He is like the man in James who once hears the Word, but never does it. Consequently, he forgets what kind of man he is and lives a life of deception. (James 1:22-25) This man in Matthew 22 is a Biblical "type." He represents the kind of person who will be cast into the "outer darkness" until he learns his lesson. It will be no excuse to say, "I did not know!" when that day comes. God gives his people every chance to know the truth now.

Many of us, though, have never learned to love the truth. We settle for and even crave *deception* because we *want* what the deceiver *promises*. This describes the time in which we live, the time of the revealing of the Lawless One according to the following passage:

{1} Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, {2} not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. {3} Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, {4} who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. {5} Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? {6} And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. {7} For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. {8} And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. {9} The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, {10} and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. {11} And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, {12} that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. (2 Th 2:1-12)

Several important facts can be seen in this passage. 1) First, it concerns the timing of both the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and the revealing of the Lawless One, antichrist; 2) Great Satanic signs and lying wonders will be common; 3) These signs and lying wonders will deceive all who do not "love the truth;" 4) God Himself sends "strong delusion" so that those who do not love the truth *will be* deceived by these lying signs and wonders with the

purpose that 5) *“all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”* Now we must ask ourselves these questions: 1) Have I received “the love of the truth” so that I “might be saved?” (note: this is “soul salvation” again) If one has not received this love from God, then pray mightily for it! 2) Have I believed the truth, i.e. have I acted upon and done the truth in my life? Once you receive the love of the truth, then *do it!* 3) Do I take pleasure in unrighteous acts and behaviors? If so, then repent now and ask God for strength to abstain! Otherwise be assured that you too will fall to the strong delusion that *God sends* even now as I write these words.

The Doctrine of Spiritual Garments

The stark reality that Christians can spoil their white spiritual garments becomes clear in Christ’s letter to the Church at Sardis. Jesus declares,

*{2} "Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God. {3} "Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you. {4} "You have a few names even in Sardis **who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. {5} "He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.”** (Rev 3:2-5)*

Jesus ends this letter like all his letters to the seven churches, *“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”* (Rev. 3:6) In other words, this letter contains a mystery. This is why so few people understand the Biblical doctrines centering around His coming again and actually becoming able to see Him face to face, doctrines like the salvation of the soul, ruling and reigning in the Kingdom of God, the choosing of the Bride of Christ, and food sacrificed to idols. We do not have an ear to hear what the Spirit says to the churches until we humble ourselves before Him and pray for such an ear. We have to realize that a hearing ear is the gift of God and not the product of our natural strength.

The Bride of Christ qualifies to be the Bride because she makes herself ready for that position. John prophesies,

*{5} Then a voice came from the throne, saying, "Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!" {6} And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! {7} "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and **His wife has made herself ready.**" {8} **And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the***

saints. (Rev 19:5-8)

We see here that God “grants” His Bride fine, bright linen garments for her righteous acts. (Remember the prophetic symbolism of the linen garments in Ezekiel 44) Verse 7 also says that she *made herself ready*. This means that she came into agreement with God concerning His ways. She allowed the Holy Spirit to write His laws on her heart and move her to do them. Remember, “*it is God who works in you* [who come into agreement with Him] *both to will and to do for His good pleasure.*” (Phil. 2:13) Those overcomers who comprise the Bride now call out to God’s other people to join her, saying, “Come. If you are thirsty for God, take of the water of life freely. Wash yourselves in the water of His Word. Wash the stains from your soiled spiritual garments. Get ready, for surely He comes soon!” See Revelation 22:17.

For example, I became a devoted, sincere Christian over 25 years ago. I made many radical decisions to serve and obey Christ throughout those years. I have even been called “legalistic” countless times for my devotion to God’s Word. But, it has only been since 1997 that I have truly prepared my heart for His coming. I had thought I was ready for His coming long, long ago. What follows is how I finally began to prepare myself.

Preparing for the Second Coming

In late 1996 and early 1997 I heard that the “Hale-Bopp” comet was coming close to the earth and that it was a harbinger, or sign, of Christ’s second coming. At that time I served as a State Legislator so my mind was focused on politics, the things of this world. Nevertheless, in the early spring of 1997 I went to a secluded area to view this “sign of the times.” I had heard that this particular date was the time of its closest point to the earth. When I got out of my car in the middle of the country I looked up to view this “sign.” I was amazed. The comet was awesome. It was huge, far bigger than any star or planet in the night sky that night or any other that I had seen. I could see its long tail with my naked eye. It also looked like it was leaving the vicinity of the earth, not coming toward it. I remembered then that this date was supposed to be its closest point to the earth, so it only made sense that it would now be leaving this cosmic location.

It was then that I heard the “still, small voice” that we learn to recognize as God speaking to us. He said, “If that had been Me, you would have missed My coming.” They were only eleven words, but they were life changing.

“Oh, no,” I thought. “I do not want to miss Your coming!”

I then began to seriously study the Scriptures concerning Christ’s second coming. The first profound and new doctrine He taught me was that of the salvation of the soul. At that time I did not distinguish between the soul and the spirit of man, although I vaguely knew the difference. I read the New International Version of the Bible exclusively and that version obscures the teaching of soul salvation considerably. Just compare Hebrews 10:39 from the NIV with the NAS, KJV, NKJV and you will clearly see this. Since 1997 I have endeavored to work out my soul salvation as Paul described. It was also that year that I determined not to run for a fourth term in office. I became convinced that our Lord’s coming is near, and that became far more important to me. God had also shown me by this time that the world’s entire political, economic, and religious system is corrupt. It will not be changed until “the glorious ones” come to change it.

Consider also the parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25. The problem with the five

foolish virgins is that they have not donned their wedding garments at the time Christ returns for them. These foolish virgins are also a Biblical “type.” They represent the same class of believers as the dumbfounded man in Matthew 22:12 who tries to attend the wedding without the proper apparel. Remember, concerning him the King (God) said to His servants, *“Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”* (Mat 22:13) When the virgins attempt to enter the door into the wedding crying, *“Lord, Lord, open to us!”* the Lord answers, *“Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.”* (Matthew 25:12)

This word “assuredly” here is the Greek word “amen.” This is the word with which we end our prayers to God. It literally means “let it be,” or “so be it.” It is a word of stark finality. It is also the word of coming into agreement with God. God seeks an “amen” people. Make no mistake then. The bound man, like the five foolish virgins, represent unprepared Christians who refuse to say “amen” to God. They never came into agreement with Him. They try to enter and stand in the midst of Christ’s wedding either naked or wearing defiled garments (Rev. 3:4), but Jesus warns them and all of those like them:

{15} "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. {16} "So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. {17} "Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'; and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked; {18} "I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. {19} "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.” (Rev 3:15-19)

Beloved, there is yet time as I write these things, but only a very little time. Even now Jesus reaches out to the pitiful wretches of Laodicea, adherents of organized religion at the end of the church age, saying, *“Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with me.”* Remember, we cannot hear His voice until we ask for spiritual ears to hear. Also notice the allusion to food again in this short letter. Jesus surely wants communion with us, but we must learn to eat only His food from His altar. And, we must stop eating food sacrificed to idols. (Heb. 13:9-10)

The Bride of Christ, represented by the five wise virgins in Matthew 25, makes herself ready for marriage by clothing herself in righteous works according to Revelation 19:7-8. She earnestly desires to behold her Husband face to face. She knows that in order to do so she must be like Him. (1 John 3:2) Because she holds this hope she purifies herself by forsaking the sins and conformity of the world. (1 John 3:3; Romans 12:1-2)

The Carnal Versus the Spiritual

Till We Have Faces forcefully illustrates Paul’s command to the immature Corinthians:

{9} I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually

immoral people. {10} Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. {11} But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; not even to eat with such a person. (1 Cor 5:9-11)

Psyche, while very young, willingly offered herself a living sacrifice to her god, just as many new Christians do when God first reveals Himself to them. She was therefore accepted as his bride, just as we hope to be. At that time Psyche began to taste the good things of her god. This tasting of the good spiritual things corresponds to Hebrews 6:3, *“those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit....”* Psyche, of course, does not ever fall away from actual faith in her husband and god, but she does disobey his commands to her when Orual beguiles her. All of us could retell times when we, too, have disobeyed God’s commandments.

The result of Psyche’s disobedience meant disaster to her, just as it does for so many of us who persist in a known sin. The question for us is this: will we respond to our sin like Psyche did, or like Orual? Psyche wept bitterly when she discovered her god’s great displeasure with her. Similarly, we who sin willfully after knowing God’s truth should weep for our sin, humbly repent, and go on to seek God’s face. Psyche does exactly this, henceforth roaming the earth and doing the works that her god assigns her by the power he provides her. Psyche thus exemplifies the proverb, *“a righteous man may fall seven times And rise again, But the wicked shall fall by calamity.”* (Prov 24:16) She never returned to Orual, although that was Orual’s goal in making Psyche sin. Instead, Psyche sought henceforth only to please her god. She came into agreement with God. At the end of the book, therefore, she stands fully clothed in God’s presence.

Orual, on the other hand, continues her life in the power of her flesh. Rather than repenting for her own lack of faith, for the harm she caused Psyche, for her scheme to make Psyche do her will, and for all of her many other sins, she blames the gods for deceiving her. After her grave deception she even becomes a worldly Queen with great power for change. She accomplishes great and mighty works as sovereign lord of her dominions, but she does all in her name, by her own power, and for her own glory.

Lewis’ story illustrates the grave warnings found in the Book of Hebrews. It also serves as an example of the words of the prophet Ezekiel: *“If I tell the righteous man that he will surely live, but then he trusts in his righteousness and does evil, none of the righteous things he has done will be remembered; he will die for the evil he has done.”* (Eze 33:13 NIV) This death here in Ezekiel speaks of the second death in the Lake of Fire, for all people, righteous and unrighteous, face mortal death. Only those who refuse to die (to the things of the world) before they die (physically, the third death) must face the second death in God’s Lake of Fire. (Remember, the first death is the death of our Old Man on the cross with Christ) The second death forces us to let go of those fleshly desires that still bind us when we physically die.

Orual just barely learns this lesson before she dies. Thus she ultimately serves Lewis as a type of Christian that Paul describes in his first letter to the Corinthians as follows:

{12} Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, {13} each one's work will

become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. {14} If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. {15} If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. (1 Cor 3:12-15)

This is why Orual appears “like” Psyche in the end. Orual, however, stands naked, while Psyche herself stands fully clothed in her wedding garments of righteousness.

Awake to Righteousness

Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame. (1 Cor 15:34)

God reveals throughout Scripture that His overcoming saints love righteousness and hate lawlessness. These saints conform their minds to the mind of Christ. They cease sacrificing food to idols according to the following Scripture:

{14} Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? {15} And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? {16} And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people." {17} Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you." {18} "I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty." {1} Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. (2 Cor 6:14-7:1)

This love of righteousness and hatred of lawlessness (and the wickedness it breeds) represents the purity that John speaks of in his first epistle. “*Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed. We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.*” (1 John 3:2-3)

My dear brothers and sisters, when you awake in God’s presence, do you hope to see Him as He is? Do you hope to see Jesus face to face? Then, do not assume that you and all other Christians will automatically see His face. Awaken to righteousness now. Purify yourself before you die or before He comes, whichever is first. For when we awake from this body of flesh, we will not see His face until we also have faces.

Until we become like Him, we will not be able to bear the brightness of His face. This is why He first places some in the outer darkness. There, we will weep and gnash our teeth. There

we will long to become as He is. At that time we will have our part in the Lake of Fire according to the following verse: *"But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."* (Rev 21:8) Be careful to understand that this punishment occurs at the time of the new heavens and the new earth described from the beginning of Chapter 21. Also, verse 8, quoted above, stands in contradistinction to the verse immediately preceding it, *"He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son."* (Rev 21:7)

If we do not voluntarily choose to obey God in this life, then God will rule us with a rod of iron in the next. His Word will burn our flesh like fire until all of our red, fleshly worm dissolves. This is the second death in the Lake of Fire. Then each of us will be prepared and ready to see His face. Then, the word "legalism" will no longer matter. We will finally have allowed Him to write His Law on our hearts. But, if we wait that long, we will have lost our souls and all chance of ruling and reigning with Him during the seventh day. In that outer darkness the soul we now know will be forever destroyed. There we will wait naked, weeping for our loss, until God purifies us in His fire. So, when we awake, will we stand clothed like Psyche, naked like Orual, or faceless like Ungit?

{1} And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. {2} In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. {3} And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. {4} They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. (Rev 22:1-4 NKJV)

{14} Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. {15} But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie. (Rev 22:14-15 NKJV)

As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness. (Ps. 17:15)

When we awake, will we have faces?

AFTERWORD

But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

1 Corinthians 9:27