

Circumcision of Heart and Flesh No. 5

Of all people in the world we should be the most sensitive to the principle of truth. This is our standard reference for defining our common understandings. We call it “**the**” truth. We reject society’s opposite suggestion that truth is a variable instead of a constant. Society would prefer to use the term truth with the indefinite article instead of our preference for the definite article (‘a’ truth as opposed to ‘the’ truth). This seemingly minor (but actually devastatingly significant) grammatical modification is prompted from global society’s philosophy of unity through toleration. Absolute truth (“the” truth) is presumed to be a pitied delusion as well as divisive and inflammatory. It is presumed that there are many equally legitimate truths, no matter how contradictory they may appear. The common phrase ‘perception is reality’ encapsulates this Creator-despising philosophy. The challenge we face in our dramatically different foundational understanding of the principle of truth is that our society is oddly convinced that they greatly respect the principle of truth despite their incredible distortions. A community-shared self-delusion is a very powerful defense mechanism for shameless hypocrisy. A black and white example of this, on a national scale, has been the basis for determining the truth of a matter in the American judicial system. Until recently it was the practice of the court to require one who would give truthful testimony to place their hand on a Bible and personally swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. The extreme hypocrisy so pompously ignored for two centuries by countless ‘intellectuals’ is the demand of the very book by which they swear that one never swears for any reason whatsoever (a fact well known by our community... Matt. 5:33-37; Js. 5:12). Additionally, the very structure of judicial law passionately despises the principle of truth. It matters not so much **what** the truth of a matter happens to be as **how** that truth was determined. Definitive evidence to the truth of a matter is routinely denied exposure on the basis of some improper manner in which that conclusive evidence was produced. America’s standard for truth, its judicial system, despises the principle of truth. The American Legislative government branch is no different. There is a century old architectural law in Washington DC that no private structure may be built higher (above sea level) than the freedom statue sitting atop the Capitol Building, since ‘nothing is greater than freedom’. The world presumes their freedom to pursue the individual delusions that they define as their ‘truth’ as being greater than absolute truth. I doubt America is unique in their national treatment of the principle of truth, but I am not so familiar with the laws relating to truth in other governments.

The Language of Absolute Truth

Our baptism committed us to the foundational understanding that absolute truth is the only correct platform from which to make conclusions. Our Creator exclusively determines what qualifies as truth and what is not truth. He demands that same foundational thought platform from any who pursue His favor. *But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth* (John 4:23-24). We cannot relax, allowing ourselves to be absorbed by the presumptions of the Creator despising societies around the globe. Our Heavenly Father defines words like truth, love and peace dramatically different from the governments, media, advertising and entertainment industries saturating our world. Truth is absolute and not adjustable according to convenience or expedience. Love is sacrificial and not indulgent or instantaneous. Peace is the presence of harmony and certainly not the absence of disturbance.

It can be challenging to live within society, communicating with our neighbors, suppliers, teachers, employers and government officials on a daily basis and then do our Bible readings or attend Bible class or Memorial Service where the same words have completely different implications. It is difficult to avoid slipping into the

same presumptions of our communities and then avoid transferring those thoughts and impressions to our supposedly separate community. This is especially true when others in our community are doing the same thing, creating a wider base for the mistakes of variable truths, shallow love and thinking that the absence of disturbance is all the peace for which we can hope. If our policy is to avoid controversial Bible topics during Christadelphian gatherings in order to pursue the absence of disturbance, then we have already adopted this philosophy of the flesh. The presumption is that avoiding disagreement (respecting diversity) is far more preferable than promoting or defending absolute truth. The flesh's path to 'unity' is the toleration of error, respecting everyone's cherished beliefs no matter how diverse. The divine path to peace is harmony (complete agreement) on the basis of absolute truth. The divine concept of peace is perfectly expressed in the principle of God manifestation, a multitudinous singularity where One reveals Himself through many who are all one in Him (Deut. 6:4).

We Don't Have the Freedom to Be Wrong

With this foundational understanding for the imperative of absolute truth we are free to ask the key question concerning circumcision. Why was this particular ritual, with its unique physical and gender specific procedure, the divinely appointed seal of a covenant relationship with the Creator of heaven and earth? Why was this specific procedure the qualification for participating in the passing over of death as the Hebrew slaves were freed, thereby projecting salvation through Christ? What salvation principle is our Heavenly Father veiling for the exclusive understanding of those with eyes to see and ears to hear? After all, we don't have the freedom to be wrong.

It is not difficult to see the scriptural value of circumcision. This was the seal of the Abrahamic covenant of faith and the official inclusion ritual into the family of Yahweh Elohim. The Hebrew slaves had ignored the circumcision practice of their ancestors when all the Hebrew men and boys were required to circumcise themselves before the 10th plague in order to enjoy the passing over of death. Only the circumcised could participate in Passover (Ex 12:48). When the Kingdom of Heaven is restored under Christ we see that no person that is not circumcised in both flesh as well as heart will ever be allowed in the Temple or even to enter Jerusalem (Ezek. 44:9; Is. 52:1). It isn't difficult to recognize the extreme significance of this particular physical ritual. Whatever principles this specific ritual shadows are directly related to qualifying as the immortalized children of the Creator who will escape slavery and death. The real question is why **this** particular physical procedure is so incredibly significant?

The Circumcision of the Messiah

In circumcision the crown of man's flesh is cut away with a sharp knife, predominantly on the eighth day of his life. We have already addressed the significance of the 8th day, identifying both our Savior (Jesus/Iesous/888) and the prophetic nature of the timeframe which identifies the period following the end of the Millennial Kingdom when all flesh will be cut off (the 'eighth' day). We have initially considered one of the major gender specific features of this ritual. Hebrew women and girls, despite the impossibility of their circumcision, qualified to participate in the Passover on the basis of their relationship to a circumcised father or husband. This observation shadows the fact that the only reason the faithful can participate in the final passing over of death (immortalization) is through their bride and child relationship to the Messiah, the only antitypically circumcised man. This is the issue we want to address. How and when was the real circumcision of our Messiah performed? When did he cut off the flesh? What was his circumcision, in fact, that qualifies our participation in the passing over of death? Was it somehow Christ's daily and repetitive rejection of sin that qualifies as his circumcision? Was it his death? Was it his resurrection? Is it nothing specific but everything in general?

The procedure for determining **absolute** truth in scripture is to extend what we understand as basic scriptural truth three dimensionally, identifying repeated and emphasized patterns that define the same issue and are

clearly bound together. This provides depth to our understandings, offering a three dimensional image for a specific principle. We also have the clear statements of scripture, however these are frequently twisted and bent and reversed by the creative lexicon and concordance gymnastics of people both inside and outside our brotherhood with an agenda that does not center on absolute truth. If our thoughts only go as far as our concordance and lexicon we are only consuming the milk of the word from a flat two dimensional view. The complex but perfectly symmetrical and interdependent patterns in the inspired text (projected from the shadows, visions, dreams, dark sayings, laws, rituals, prophecies, miracles, parables and features of creation) are what expands the simple song of scriptural truth into a rapturous symphony offering an intellectual and emotional experience unmatched in our world. Without the key of basic truth they just remain shadows and parables to be twisted into self worshipping delusions, losing all cohesiveness so that the rock of truth becomes the shifting sands of self accommodation.

The Uncircumcised Woman is the Source of the Messiah

Circumcision requires the removal of a crown of flesh. It requires the severing of flesh with a sharp instrument. The particular flesh to be removed is strictly a male component covering. This body component serves the body in eliminating poison that the body has generated as well as issuing the seed for the initiation of a similar, mortal (sin-cursed) life. A basic fact of creation is that nothing 'clean' can possibly issue from a man's body. Every form of gas, liquid or solid coming out of a male's body in any way always qualifies as unclean and contaminating. It is interesting to note that women, who cannot be circumcised, enjoy one exception to this rule. The one thing that can issue from a human body that divinely qualifies as 'clean', is a mother's milk that nourishes her new child. This is not an accident of creation or a feature of the fable of evolution. It is a detail of an intelligent design and offers great significance. It is a confirmation that redemption from the curse of sin and death would issue from the woman and not the man. It is the seed of the woman that would bruise the head of the serpent (Gen. 3:15). This is one of the features of Paul's final statement after explaining the reasons for the Ecclesial Age ritual of sisters' silence to Timothy. Paul states: *Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing* (1 Tim. 2:15). There is more to the childbearing benefits to the woman than simply this unique freedom for her to teach children and her greater authority than her children. A mother exhibits the principle of salvation and redemption when she develops the capacity to uniquely issue a divinely clean substance from her body due to childbearing. Her elevation, her divine honor despite her lowest headship (1 Cor. 11:3), is witnessed by those with seeing eyes and hearing ears when she sustains new life with a clean substance from her body, which is forbidden to man by the terms of the Creator. It is only the man, generating nothing but uncleanness, who can and must be circumcised.

It should also be noted that our Messiah is one of only two men (including Adam) who did not depend on the seed of man from this circumcised or uncircumcised male body part in order for his life to be conceived. He had no human father. Our Messiah did not issue from the shadow lesson of circumcision. He would experience true circumcision, not the parable. It was Adam that introduced the need for the shadow lesson of circumcision by believing the serpent, touching and eating the fruit that he believed would make him like God, thereby corrupting all of creation and introducing death and suffering. It was Christ that resolved that need for circumcision by experiencing true circumcision. It would be on the basis of our Lord's antitypical circumcision that his antitypical bride and his children (the saints) would qualify to participate in the antitypical Passover (being covered with immortality) as well as providing the avenue for perfect divine harmony with all of creation (1 Cor. 15:28). The question we are addressing is what was the actual point at or process by which our Messiah was antitypically circumcised. What was it in our Messiah's life that casts the circumcision shadow all through scripture? Let's look for the patterns.

Cutting the Flesh

Circumcision requires a severing of the flesh. We certainly do see patterns related to our Messiah projecting this unmistakable image of cutting, severing or breaking the Messiah's flesh. An obvious example would be the veil separating the Most Holy from the Holy in the temple. The letter to the Hebrews highlights this issue and leaves us without any doubt of this relationship. *Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh* (Heb. 10:19-20). The veil in the Tabernacle and the Temples all represent the flesh, the sin-cursed mortality of the Messiah inherited from his mother. Paul references our opportunity to enter the Holiest which was made possible (*dedicated*) by the flesh of the Messiah, being shadowed by the veil that was severed in two from heaven to earth simultaneous with our Lord's death (Matt. 27:50-51; Mark 15:37-38; Lk 23:45-46). Just as circumcision was the key to participating in Passover (shadowing immortalization) so entering the veil was the only path into the Most Holy (shadowing our hope of immortality: ... *the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that **within the veil**; Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus...* Heb. 6:18-20). It was the severing of the veil that dedicated our invitation to follow our Lord into the Most Holy. It was the severing of the flesh of man that dedicated the invitation to participate in the passing over of death during the 10th plague (Ex. 12:48). Our initial confirmation concerning when Christ was circumcised is the repeated scriptural emphasis that this veil (Christ's flesh) was torn in two in conjunction with his death. This is when the flesh of the Messiah was circumcised, at his death. This issue is extremely significant and repeatedly and dramatically emphasized throughout the patterns of scripture with absolute clarity.

Have Been Reconciled and Will be Saved

The reason the veil had to be torn from heaven to earth was to emphasize that the work of atonement is primarily the work of our Heavenly Father. *To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself* (2 Cor. 5:19). This Creator authorship of atonement is a subtle but repeatedly emphasized pattern throughout Kingdom Law. We should also remember that it is the death of Christ that was the divinely appointed avenue of reconciliation, while his resurrection is the avenue of our salvation. *For if, when we were enemies, we **were reconciled to God by the death** of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we **shall be saved by his life*** (Rom 5:10). As directed in previous commentaries, please note the past tense verb being used for our reconciliation as opposed to the future tense for our salvation. There are clearly two separate and necessary stages: a reconciliation that has already been achieved through the Messiah's death and a salvation that will be accommodated through his resurrection. Both of these stages will highlight separate features of our Creator's righteousness that must be recognized, understood and embraced. The manifestation of the Creator's righteousness is what creation is all about, not human salvation. We are not the focus. Our Heavenly Father is the focus.

This two stage process is reflected in a series of Messiah shadows where the first component is severed, broken in two or broken in general. This pattern is emphasized throughout scripture, thereby underlining its significance. It should be understood that circumcision addresses the issues concerning the first stage (reconciliation) while Passover **primarily** (but certainly not exclusively) addresses the second stage (salvation). It should also be understood that while the circumcision in Egypt that afforded participation in Passover was strictly physical, it is the circumcision of the heart that is emphasized in the Ecclesial Age that addresses the philosophy of circumcision that must also be adopted. It is the Millennial Kingdom Age where we see both the mental and the physical components of circumcision blending into a single law to authorize entrance into both Jerusalem as well as the divine sanctuary (Is. 52:1; Ezek. 44:9). Both physical and spiritual circumcision will **both** be necessary to approach the divine presence. Neither can be legitimately discounted for the exclusive application of either focus in our considerations of divine principles. The Jew is not free to focus only on the

physical and the 'Christian' is not free to focus exclusively on the spiritual application when pursuing absolute truth. We are not free to favor one focus over the other but need to balance both physical and spiritual in order to think like our Heavenly Father and reshape ourselves into His image and likeness.

Cleaving the Memorial Bread of Christ's Flesh

We are currently focusing our attention on the **physical** application of circumcision. The spiritual application is about adopting the divine philosophy and rejecting fleshly thoughts and ways (circumcision of the heart). The physical application concerns the death of our Messiah, through which the saints have already received a reconciliation (as already noted). We will continue our pattern study with the most obvious dual Messiah reflection where the first component is severed, which would be the memorial service. Jesus himself identifies the bread as his body (Matt. 26:26; Mk 14:22; Lk 22:19). In each case it is also emphasized that Christ broke the bread (his body) before inviting his disciples to participate. He certainly did not just pass the symbol of his body around without first cleaving that bread. Paul emphasizes this necessary bread-breaking as well (1 Cor 11:24). It is always noted that the broken memorial bread precedes the memorial wine, just as reconciliation through Christ's death precedes salvation through his resurrection... just as the severing of the flesh in circumcision had to precede Passover and the tearing of the veil of Christ's flesh at his death had to precede our invitation into the Most Holy... just as our baptismal burial into the death of Christ precedes our rising from that baptismal grave in hope of joining him in his resurrection to immortality. Death must precede life and natural must precede spiritual in the divine plan (1 Cor. 15:46). This is why the physical application of circumcision was the law of the Mosaic Kingdom Age and the spiritual application of circumcision (of the heart) is subsequently the law of the Ecclesial Age.

The Mirror Effect of Reversal

This natural to spiritual progression is invariably the pattern in all of the dual messiah memorials. This observation is highly significant when pursuing divine principles. This is the difference between truth and lie and between light and darkness. 'Christianity' proclaims exactly the opposite progression, claiming that the spiritual nature of the Creator actually transformed into the natural mortality of the Messiah (spiritual preceding natural). It is very appropriate that the mirror worshippers of the apostasy reverse this foundational progression, as the mirror reverses all images (by divine design). Every shadow of scripture repels this vile degrading and diminishing of the divine nature. This is why John prophesies of this reversal of the divine principle as being the signature doctrine of the apostasy. Whoever suggests that Christ did not come 'in the flesh' is a deceiver and an antichrist (1 Jn 4:3; 2 Jn vs 7). Christianity's insistence that Jesus came as a spirit being who merely disguised himself with a flesh costume fits this incredibly blasphemous profile like a glove. The absolutely necessary 'flesh' (human nature) of Christ is emphasized throughout scripture. The twelve applications of blood at the three stations during the sin offering procedure for both the High Priest and the nation began at the veil of Christ's flesh (Lev. 4 and our 4th commentary in this series). Seven blood spatterings on the veil led to the the four blood smearings on the horns of the incense altar which led to the 12th application of blood by pouring out the vast remainder of the blood of the bullock at the base of the altar of burnt offering. The repentance procedure for the sin offerings of the High Priest and the nation all began at the veil, signifying the flesh of Christ. If we don't understand that the Messiah had to possess the exact same nature that we do, mortal nature cursed by sin, then we haven't even reached the starting point in any pursuit of forgiveness with the Creator or His son. The ritual of circumcision declares that this flesh of the Messiah had to be circumcised, to be 'cut off'.

This subject of the circumcision of the flesh of the Messiah, consecrating our invitation to enter the Most Holy, is too sensitive and the patterned evidence too vast to accommodate any brief consideration. We have run out of space. Respecting the principle of absolute truth demands that we pursue these dual Messiah shadows where the first component is cleaved, severed or broken. The conclusion that the circumcision of the flesh of our Messiah

took place at his death has only begun. We will pursue the shadows cast throughout scripture by the light of this very significant divine principle in the next commentary.

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Circumcision of Heart and Flesh No. 6

Our individual and community's exclusive pursuit of absolute truth, a defining feature of our Heavenly Father, positions us defensively in a lonely, isolated struggle against the instinctive, self-worshipping, self-righteous presumptions of the rest of mankind. The philosophy of polite, respectful toleration for the many conflicting 'truths' in our societies is pridefully presented as a godlike behavior, no matter which 'god' one chooses or invents. This is the immensely popular philosophy of unity through the toleration of diversity. This thinking springs from the false presumption that the principle of peace is defined by the absence of disturbance (instead of the presence of harmony).

The Haves or the Have-Nots

It is the lonely, uncomfortable pursuit of absolute truth that initiates our personal membership into the community Christ defines as 'those who have' as opposed to those who 'have not'. *Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables* (Matt. 13:11-13). It is through the intentional complexity of divine communication (dreams, visions, parables, imagery, rituals, dark sayings, features of creation, divine laws) that the 'haves' will get more and the 'have nots' will lose what little they had to begin with. Emotional resistance stiffens as the nature of absolute truth strips away the natural self-worshipping focus of the human heart. It is the painful circumcision of our hearts by the two edged sword of absolute truth that focuses our spiritual eyes to the glorious recognition of the divine principles being projected through these parables, visions, rituals, etc. This is exactly the case with the divine principles being projected through the ritual of circumcision.

We began to examine the pattern of divinely appointed shadows that can define at what point our Messiah was truly circumcised, at what point his flesh was cut off that qualified him to participate in the true Passover (immortalization). In our last commentary we paralleled the cutting off of the flesh in circumcision to the tearing of the temple veil of Christ's flesh simultaneously with his death. We also noted the circumcision parallel to the breaking of the Messiah's flesh in the first stage of the memorial bread and wine. The bread, representing his body, is broken. We noted that just as the cutting of the flesh in circumcision qualified a man (& his bride and daughters who could not be circumcised) to participate in Passover (Ex. 12:48)... so the cleaving of the Temple veil at the death of Christ *consecrated the living way* for believers to enter the Most Holy (Heb. 10:19-20) ... so partaking of the broken bread of Christ's body qualifies us to then partake of the wine of his blood... so the reconciliation we have already achieved in the sacrificial death of Jesus qualifies us to participate in the salvation of Christ on the basis of his resurrection (Rom. 5:10).

Breaking the Symbol of An Unbroken Body

We need to pursue one divinely appointed spotlight before continuing this dual theme throughout scripture. Our Heavenly Father makes it very difficult for us to miss the highly significant issue of the **breaking** of the bread, representing the body of Christ. This bread cleaving is the parallel to circumcision where the flesh is cut away. The Father invalidates any possibility of dismissing the significance of the breaking of the bread as well as

mistaking it for some illegitimate or inconsequential lesson. He does this by demanding that His son's body cannot ever be physically broken (John 19:32-37; Ps. 22:16-17). The Father would not allow his son's body to be broken but also demands that we break the bread of his body. Yahweh is underlining and highlighting the fact that something in the flesh of His son was being broken, but the object lesson could not be minimalized into a trivial prophecy of a broken bone. Just as there is a great object lesson in cutting off the crown of flesh in the ritual of circumcision there is a great lesson in the cleaving of the bread of Christ's flesh and the tearing of the veil of Christ's flesh. This great object lesson centers on the death of the Messiah. The veil of Christ's flesh was torn from heaven to earth immediately upon the death of Jesus. The bread is also associated with the death of Jesus as evidenced by the layered historical parable of the dreams of the baker of bread and the presenter of wine (Gen 40). The baker of breads died after three days. The presenter of wine was exalted out of prison to the right hand of the most powerful ruler of his day to present the wine, reflecting the death and resurrection stages of our Messiah in the bread and wine. The pattern is certain. The antitypical circumcision of the Messiah was achieved through his death. This is an extremely significant as well as unmistakable conclusion. Let's pursue this same pattern further.

We are all well aware of the layered patterns that scripture's Author imbeds liberally throughout the Bible. It would be quite naïve to assume that there would be no shadow parallels to the memorial service ritual of the Ecclesial Age, depicting the death and resurrection of the Messiah. We can clearly see these dual Messiah memorials projecting exactly the same objects, procedure and principles. Paul interprets for us that the rock Israel drank from in the wilderness was Christ (1 Cor 10:4). In fact there were two rocks Israel miraculously drank from in the wilderness. The rock at Rephidim was at the very beginning of their journey (Ex 17). The rock at Kadesh was at the end of their journey (Num 20). It is not difficult to see how these dual Messiah memorials represent the same issues and progression as the broken bread and the wine. Yahweh commands Moses to take his brother's serpent rod that had turned the Nile to blood with him along with just 'some' of the elders of Israel to a specific rock. Moses is to strike the rock. Living waters will pour from the rock. Jesus was taken by 'some' of the elders of Israel, on the supposed basis of the authority of the law of Moses, burdened by the serpent curse of sin and death passed to him from his older brother (Adam) and crucified outside the 'camp' (Heb 13:12-13). The 2nd Christ rock, at Kadesh, should not have been struck. At this time the command was to take the serpent rod that now qualified as the rod of resurrection (issuing the four maturity stages of almonds as it lay before the Testimony one night so many years before ...Num. 17) along with the entire congregation and simply speak to the rock for its water.

The Crucifixion Rock and the Resurrection Rock

It is helpful to broaden our understanding of these accounts by considering other scriptural references to these same incidents. We should understand that two separate Hebrew words are being used for these fountain rocks. The crucifixion rock at Rephidim is *tsur*, indicating a boulder embedded in dust of the earth. The resurrection rock at Kadesh is *selah*, indicating an elevated, craggy cliff. This first rock matches perfectly with the spiritual images of the death of Jesus, a product of the dust of the earth struck by the serpent rod before some of the elders of Israel. We also see the resurrected Christ in the second '*selah*' rock of Kadesh where we must look heavenward following his crucifixion and ask him for that life represented in the waters pouring from that overhanging rock that Moses was commanded not to strike. We can identify which rock is being referenced throughout scripture by determining which Hebrew word for rock is being used. We learn that the crucifixion rock at Rephidim (*tsur*) was made of flint (Ps. 114:8; Deut. 8:15). We learn that this crucifixion rock did not crumble, or bounce aside upon being struck, allowing some capped water source to bubble up. That rock (*tsur*) clave in two (just like the temple veil and just like the memorial bread) and then water issued from the rock itself streaming heavenward like a fountain (Ps 114:8; Is. 48:21; Ps. 78:15-16). This dual Messiah memorial of the two stones from which Israel drank clearly portrays the same progression and lessons being projected by the

bread and wine. The first rock represents the death of Jesus and the second rock represents the resurrected Christ. The flint nature of the Rephidim crucifixion rock solidly binds this image of the sacrificial death of Christ to the ritual of circumcision.

When Israel enters the promised land they camp at Gilgal, so named because Yahweh rolled away the reproach of Egypt at Gilgal by their national circumcision just before Passover (Josh. 5:8-9). The feature of this national circumcision that connects it to the crucifixion rock at Rephidim is that the circumcising knives were made of sharpened flint stone, just like the crucifixion rock at Rephidim. *At that time the LORD said unto Joshua, Make thee sharp knives, and circumcise again the children of Israel the second time. And Joshua made him sharp knives, and circumcised the children of Israel at the hill of the foreskins (Josh. 5:2-3).* The Hebrew word that is translated “sharp” is actually *tsur*, meaning a stone. The huge majority of Bible translations actually identify this stone as “flint.” i.e. *So Joshua made flint knives, and circumcised the people of Israel (RSV).* The flint crucifixion rock at Rephidim specifically chosen by Yahweh to save Israel parallels the flint- rock knives specifically chosen by Yahweh to circumcise the entire nation of Israel before they could participate in their first Passover in the promised land. The parallel between the death of Jesus and the ritual of circumcision is a consistent and powerful theme throughout the divinely appointed shadows of scripture.

We always have far more evidence available to us for validating absolute truth than just the clear statements of scripture, that are sometimes manipulated by the distorters of truth employing confusing mental gymnastics based on concordance and lexicon juggling. Our Creator offers us three spatial dimensions within the terms of creation (width, breadth and height). In our pursuit of absolute truth we should never be satisfied with just a two dimensional examination of a divine principle, especially when the cost of error is distancing ourselves from our Heavenly Father.

The Earth and Heaven Covenant

Another dual Messiah memorial presenting an exclusive severing of the first of the two components would be the heaven and earth covenant in Genesis 15. Abram is instructed to take two sets of animals. The first set consists of three animals that are each three years old (heifer, she-goat and a ram). These animals are gravitationally limited to the dust of the earth upon their foundation of the total of twelve legs (similar to the 12 tribe foundation of Israel and the 12 apostle foundation for the Ecclesial Age). These earth-bound animals were required to be severed into six halves separated into two rows. The second category of animals were the fowl of heaven, not limited to the dust of the earth and not identified by age. Besides the earth/heaven separation in these two animal categories we also see these birds were not to be cleaved, but left whole. The total four leg foundation of the two birds can be paralleled to the repeatedly fourfold emphasis within the description of the heavenly cherubim (4 cherubim with 4 heads and 4 wheels within 4 wheels...Ezek 1, 10). There were clearly two categories of animals constituting this earth and heaven covenant validating ritual. One category was related to the earth with its six halves and 12 leg foundation and a specific age. The second category was related to the heavens with its two unbroken, unsevered bodies, its four leg foundation and their ageless status. As a whole, there were eight sacrificial components separated into two sets of four. This observation solidly binds this covenant, if not already clear, to the role of our Messiah as the binding agent between heaven and earth. We have commented repeatedly on how clearly the number eight identifies the Messiah and each aspect of his roles. We have also commented on the constant scriptural repetition of two sets of four in relation to salvation and God manifestation (inner and outer foursquare wilderness encampment, the men and women on the gopher wood ark, the cherubim and wheels, two sets of two covenant stones written by the finger of God on all four surfaces on both sets of stones, two handfuls of incense comprised of four equal components that convert into a single cloud on the Day of Atonement to save the life of the High Priest, etc). These scriptural patterns are frequent and perfectly symmetrical. The earth/heaven covenant between Abram and Yahweh maintains this

scriptural pattern of dual Messiah memorials where the first component is broken, severed or cleaved... just like memorial service where the bread is broken and eaten before the wine.

It is this first stage of each dual Messiah memorial that consistently parallels the ritual of circumcision, with the same language and image being presented. The Father is dramatically and undeniably emphasizing a powerful confirmation of His righteousness in the sacrificial death of His son. Admittedly, this righteousness has yet to be addressed in this commentary. This specific confirmation of the Creator's righteousness is the 'reconciling' feature of His plan. This reconciliation feature of the divine plan (cutting, severing, breaking something in the 'unbroken' body of the Messiah) is what qualifies us to participate in the salvation stage of the divine plan. The absolute truth of this conclusion is proven by the consistent chronology of this dual pattern. The cutting, severing, breaking is always the first of the two stages. Circumcision is what afforded participation in Passover. The severing of the veil at the death of Christ is what consecrated the new and living way into the Most Holy for the faithful. We partake of the broken bread before the wine. We descend into the watery grave of baptism joining our Messiah in his death so that we might rise out of that baptismal grave in the hope of joining him in his resurrection. We have already been reconciled by the death of Jesus. We now hope to be saved by his resurrection (Rom. 5:10).

The Two Sets of Testimony Stones

Another Christ shadow that fits this dual pattern is the two sets of covenant stones already mentioned. Moses prepared two sets of stone tablets on which the finger of God wrote the ten commandments. Each set of stones consisted of two stones divinely inscribed on both sides of each stone, making four written surfaces for each set. The first set of stones was broken at the base of Sinai by Moses upon his return from his forty days on the mount. The second set of stones was preserved in the ark of the covenant, identified by those very stones of the covenant. Those two stones, written on all four surfaces, became the point of reference for everything in the Tabernacle. These stones were called the tables of the testimony (Ex. 32:15). We read of *the ark of the testimony... the veil of the testimony... the omer of manna that was laid up before the testimony... Aaron's rod of resurrection that lay all night before the testimony*. It is significant that the resurrected rod identifying the High Priest is said to have laid all night before the 'testimony' (the second set of two stone tablets) as the first of all the dual Messiah memorials all refer to the principles surrounding his death while the second component of all these dual Messiah memorials all refer to the principles surrounding his resurrection. The first set of stones is appropriately broken by Moses at the base of Mount Sinai. The second set is preserved inside the golden ark along with the rod of resurrection and the incorruptible manna. Once again we see the number eight figuring prominently in a Christ shadow with the total of eight stone surfaces upon which the finger of God wrote the words of the covenant. Once again we see two sets of four (between the first and second set of covenant stones each with their four divinely inscribed surfaces). The powerful consistency of this dual Messiah pattern validates the Creator's righteousness in the sacrificial death as well as the resurrection of His son, our Messiah.

This is the same lesson projected by the unique baptism of Jesus at the beginning of his ministry at the very significant age of thirty. Jesus comforted John's objection of unworthiness by stating the purpose of his baptism: *Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness* (Matt. 3:15). The righteousness Jesus was fulfilling was not his own. It was his Father's. Baptism (like the bread and wine memorials, the heaven and earth covenant, the two wilderness fountain stones, the two sets of covenant stones, and circumcision and Passover) projects all the righteousness of our Heavenly Father. Voluntarily submitting to the burial in water as an expression of faith declares that the Creator was right in demanding death for sin. Death was the righteous answer for the corruption of a very good creation by sin. We oppose all mankind when we declare the righteousness of Yahweh in demanding death for sin. The religious inventions of the hearts of men all agree that sin should not have to die, that immortals can sin and that we don't really cease to exist after death. The non-

religious also refuse to understand that death is simply the result of the rejection of the Creator's righteousness. When Christ rose up out of the baptismal waters of Jordan he declared his Father's righteousness in His gracious promise of restored life, despite the fact that He was right in demanding death for sin. Baptism declares that Yahweh was right in demanding death for sin. Baptism also declares that Yahweh is right in offering renewed life, despite His righteousness in requiring that death. This is the theme of the scriptural path of dual Messiah memorials. We must recognize the righteousness of the Creator. He is always right, no matter how difficult that is to understand when considered against our instinctive, self-centered thought process. Our Heavenly Father is **never** unfair or inattentive or unjust.

Not Quite As Simple As Might Be Imagined

It may be presumed this conclusion is elemental. But if that were the case then why do we see the universal separation of sin and death in the minds and philosophies of mankind? Even the frequent fragmenting of the Christadelphian brotherhood over the last 150 years most often begins with the distancing of sin from its physical effects. Invariably there is a redefinition of the constitution of sin, most frequently (but not exclusively) diminishing sin to simply the guilty category of behavioral sin. The physical relation of death to sin is then brushed aside, along with the overwhelming significance scripture places on the victory achieved in the death of the Messiah. There is often a presumption that death existed before sin, which leads to the misconception that the death threat for partaking of the tree in the center of the Garden could only have been an immediate execution, narrowly escaped by the animal skin covering. That premise rejects the righteousness of the Creator in requiring death for sin, by presuming that death was simply a feature of creation and not a divine judgment. *As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men... by one man's offence death reigned by one...sin hath reigned unto death (Rom. 5:12,17,21). For the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23). Sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me (Rom. 7:13). The sting of death is sin (1 Cor. 15:56).* One of the standard mental stages presented as brethren gravitate away from the thin difficult path of absolute truth is this separation of sin from death. The historical pattern frequently includes the diminishing of the principle of sin to exclusively an understanding of behavioral sin (guilty sin). The death of our Messiah is also diminished as a mere formality, paling before the supposedly far greater key issue of Christ's resurrection. Circumcision of the flesh is minimalized to simply an exhortational shadow of the circumcision of the heart (meekness) with no attention paid to the Millennial Kingdom mandate barring any presence in the temple or Jerusalem unless one is circumcised **both** physically and mentally. These challenging issues are why the brethren who formulated our statement of faith expressed the divine absolute truths so powerfully.

In our seventh and final commentary on this ritual of circumcision we will address those powerful and clear expressions in our worldwide statement of faith that address the same lessons portrayed in the ritual of circumcision. Since blood is an unavoidable feature of circumcision we will address how the blood of Christ appropriately serves as a scriptural icon for the principles involved in the lesson of circumcision and what was achieved in the death of our savior, securing a divine reconciliation that qualified him for a resurrection to immortality. It is on the basis of the exclusive circumcision achieved in Christ that we (his impossible to circumcise bride) will be invited to participate in his Passover (resurrection to immortality).

Jim Dillingham

Circumcision of Heart and Flesh No.7

We have considered many issues intertwined with the covenant ritual of circumcision. There is only one gift we can possibly give our Creator that He cannot and will not take without our compliance. That is our heart. However an uncircumcised heart is completely unacceptable. Circumcision of the flesh became the basis for covenant relationship in the Patriarchal Age. At the transition into the Ecclesial Age circumcision of the heart became the exclusive emphasis. In the Millennial Kingdom Age we have noted that both flesh and heart circumcision will be required, barring anyone from Jerusalem and the Temple if either of those circumcision applications is not satisfied. The harmony of physical and spiritual is the 'peace' of the ultimate plan of the Creator when He will be all and in all. Rituals, like circumcision and memorial service, are physical expressions of divine principles, just like the features of creation. From the vastness of the universe right down to the molecular level, the terms of creation project divine truths. The intentional complexity of creation (the spoken word of the Creator) perfectly matches the intentional complexity of scripture (the written word of the Creator). Both the spoken and written words of Yahweh demonstrate a perfectly balanced singularity composed of many individual parts that are interdependent (highlighting the principle of God manifestation). It is this intentional complexity that serves as the divine knife for circumcising the naturally self-worshipping human heart in order to make it an acceptable sacrifice to our Heavenly Father. Therefore if we disrespect these rituals we are disrespecting the divine principles they project, evidenced by the incineration of Nadab and Abihu for their inappropriate creativity in the priestly ordination procedure. We have noted the interweaving of circumcision law with many other laws. Circumcision law was greater than Sabbath law, just as the complete cutting away of sinful flesh at the eighth millennial 'day' is greater than the rest from sin and all its horrible effects during the seventh millennial 'day.' We observed that the qualification for the first Passover in Egypt and the next Passover in the promised land was circumcision and how there were no circumcisions during the forty years in the wilderness, reflecting the uncircumcised hearts of the Israelites. Circumcision is a gender specific ritual where an impossible to circumcise wife or daughter could participate in Passover on the basis of their circumcised husband or father. This projects how the faithful, as the bride and children of the Messiah, can only qualify to participate in the ultimate passing over of death (immortalization) on the basis of the antitypical circumcision of Christ (our groom and our father). The question we began to address in our last commentary is the point at which our Messiah experienced his antitypical circumcision... so that he might participate in his antitypical Passover. We noted the two stages of reconciliation through the death of Jesus and salvation through the resurrection of Jesus being projected repeatedly through a series of dual Messiah memorials where the first component was severed or broken while the second component remained whole. These very consistent patterns powerfully validate the absolute truth that Christ's circumcision was accomplished through his death. That death of this mortal man cut away the power of sin producing flesh by its violent destruction, completely exposed by the isolation from any transgressional guilt. Christ's voluntary sacrificial death demonstrated the righteousness of his Father in requiring death for sin. The rightness, the moral correctness of the judgment of death because of sin is an understanding that is absolutely despised by religions and humanists spanning the globe. The serpent lie about not dying because of sin is a foundational frame of reference for mankind. Men have invented common Creator despising religious doctrines springing from this presumption that death for sin is unjustified.

Circumcision Principles Within the BASF

This is why our community's pioneers so powerfully expressed the absolute truths projected by the ritual of circumcision within our Statement of Faith. Adam's failure introduced death into a creation where death was not a feature of the originally created order. Due to this contradiction of the Creator's righteousness, this sin

produced a justified physical law in man... the law of sin and death. These two issues would be inseparable until a descendant of Adam, the seed of the woman, would cut away that law of sin and death by his own sacrificial death. On the basis of this circumcision of his flesh, the Messiah would establish a new opportunity for those who would faithfully follow him to escape that law of sin and death. On the basis of his sacrificial death, death could not hold Jesus Christ. That would have violated the righteousness of the Creator. This condemnation of sin in the flesh, through the death of Christ, is projected in the ritual of circumcision. It was through death that Jesus destroyed him who had the power of death, the diabolos (Heb. 2:14). This sacrificial death, this antitypical circumcision, achieved a divine reconciliation (Rom. 5:10). When Christ returns he will invite the saints to participate in his antitypical Passover, being saved by his resurrection (Rom. 5:10).

The 5th article in our Statement of Faith declares: **“That Adam broke this law, and was adjudged unworthy of immortality, and sentenced to return to the ground from whence he was taken-a sentence which defiled and became a physical law of his being, and was transmitted to all his posterity.”** Adam’s sin resulted in a physical law from which all Adam’s descendents would suffer. This physical law, due to sin, is further explained in the 10th article where we read that Christ suffered **“all the effects that came by Adam’s transgression including the death that passed upon all men, which he shared by partaking of their physical nature.”** Our statement of faith declares emphatically that death was a direct result of Adam’s transgression. Death was not part of the terms of the original creation. The BASF further declares that this physical defilement of death because of Adam’s sin was officially cancelled (abrogated) by the death of Jesus, not his resurrection. Article 8 declares that Jesus, **“though wearing their condemned nature, was to obtain a title to resurrection by perfect obedience, and, by dying, abrogate the law of condemnation for himself, and all who should believe and obey him.”** Our foundational statement of faith declares that it was through the death of Jesus that the condemnation (due to sin) was defeated. In the language of scripture’s shadows this is equivalent to severing, cutting, breaking (as in the memorial bread, the temple veil, the first fountain stone at Rephidim, the act of circumcision, the three halved land animals each three years old, etc). Paul expresses this defeat of mankind’s Edenic condemnation by the death of the Messiah to the Hebrews in this powerful statement: *Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil* (Heb. 2:14). It was through Christ’s death that the ‘devil’ (which has the power of death) was destroyed in Christ. It was not the resurrection of Christ that achieved this particular victory. It was his death. It was his circumcision of that physical result of sin from Eden. It was through the death of the antitypical red heifer that the defilement of death would be cleansed.

Article 12 further adds: **“That for delivering this message, he was put to death by the Jews and Romans who were, however, but instruments in the hands of God, for the doing of that which He had determined before to be done-namely, the condemnation of sin in the flesh, through the offering of the body of Jesus once for all, as a propitiation to declare the righteousness of God, as a basis for the remission of sins. All who approach God through this crucified, but risen, representative of Adam’s disobedient race, are forgiven. Therefore, by a figure, his blood cleanseth from sin.”** The condemnation of sin in the flesh through the death of the Messiah has been a foundational issue for our community from the beginning. The pioneer Brethren expected challenges to this understanding of sin in the flesh and therefore expressed in article 27 of the Doctrines to be Rejected: **“27.-There is no sin in the flesh.”** The fact that we recognize the blood of Christ as being a divine cleansing icon further confirms this great victory achieved in the death of Jesus Christ. The blood of Christ only serves as a symbol of what he achieved in his sacrificial death, certainly not his resurrection. After all, *flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God* (1 Cor. 15:50). Circumcision cannot be performed without blood being spilled. It is a feature of our current natural order, so perfectly crafted by our Heavenly

Father to project His absolute truths. So the blood of Christ became a “figure” for the cleansing of sin, by his sacrificial death... as it is clearly expressed in our common Statement of Faith.

Subtle Projections of the Victory in Christ’s Death

Just as circumcision served as the qualification for participating in Passover, so the victory achieved in the death of the Messiah qualified him for his resurrection. The incredible victory in the death of the Messiah is demonstrated in the breaking of the memorial bread of his flesh, the ripping of the temple veil of his flesh, the cutting off of the crown of man’s flesh in circumcision as well as the breaking of the first set of covenant stones, the severing of the first wilderness fountain stone of flint by the serpent rod wielded by Moses and the severing of the three year old animals in the confirmation of the Abrahamic covenant of earth and heaven. We need to understand how the death of our Messiah demonstrates the righteousness of his Father. It is not enough to simply agree that Christ’s death and the atonement is about the righteousness of Yahweh. We need to understand specifically what righteousness is being demonstrated.

When Adam failed, the principle of sin corrupted all of creation. Everything was no longer *very good*. Adam had chosen the serpent’s testimony over the Creator. Adam and Eve’s choice declared that Yahweh was not right. That necessarily exterior temptation source from the serpent was internalized into the corrupted nature of man. The serpent became a symbol of this sin-corrupted physical nature of mortal man from that moment. Our Messiah was born with that same condemned nature with that internalized temptation source that the Apostle Paul (Rom. 8:3) and our Christadelphian pioneers called *sin in the flesh*. That power of sin had to be broken. That corrupting feature of our nature had to be cut away without contradicting divine principles. This is what was achieved in the death of Jesus Christ. The power of sin was broken in his transgressionless body at his death... just as our worldwide statement of faith declares. This is exactly what has been and will be again demonstrated in the ritual of circumcision.... a physical projection of spiritual truth.

Circumcision Always Produces Blood

The act of circumcision produces blood. This is the way we were designed by our Creator. As we have repeatedly seen, the carefully crafted features of creation project an endless parade of spiritual truths. The perfect harmony of physical and spiritual is the ultimate plan of the creator. Simply because circumcision naturally spills blood serves as spiritual evidence for the significance of the blood of Christ in his ultimate circumcision of the flesh at Calvary. This blood of Christ is unique in all sacrificial applications of blood. It is a spiritual icon testifying of the principles by which forgiveness of sins is available. That blood projects what was achieved in the death of the Messiah, promising hope for participating in his resurrection. *And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins* (Matt. 26:27-28). *In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins* (Col. 1:14). *And the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin* (1 Jn 1:7). *Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father* (Rev. 1:5-6). The blood of Christ, a product of his sacrificial death and a natural product of all circumcisions, repeatedly emphasizes the great victory and extended advantage that was achieved in the death of the Messiah. This connection between the blood of the Messiah and what was achieved in his death is promoted in a phrase we have often referenced. *Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life* (Rom. 5:9-10). *Being justified by his blood* is paralleled to having being *reconciled to God by the death of His son*. *Saved from wrath* is paralleled to being eventually *saved by his life*. The sin cleansing blood of Christ should direct our minds to his death, not his resurrection. That conclusion would violate the laws of creation, the shadows of scripture, the direct statements of divine truth and our community’s Statement of Faith.

Blood is a divinely appointed symbol for life (Gen. 9:4; Lev 17:11,14), but only mortal life. There are four categories of life presented in scripture: 1) the life of our Creator which never had a beginning and will never end; 2) the immortal life of Christ, the angels and the hope of the saints where life had a beginning but will never end; 3) the undying life of Adam and Eve prior to sin which began but didn't necessarily have to end and 4) mortality, where death is assured. Blood only represents mortal life. We are told specifically that blood is not a part of the spirit life into which we hope to be reborn. *Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God* (1 Cor 15:50). This is why the two great laws concerning blood declared that blood must never be eaten but that it had to be poured out at the bronze altar (Deut. 12:23-27). The object lesson is that we must not consume life (eat blood). We must not live indulgently, savoring every moment and living life to the fullest. We must live sacrificially, forever pouring our lives out at the feet of our Messiah (pouring the blood out at the bronze altar). This is why blood is the divinely appointed symbol for life and for atonement. *For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul* (Lev. 17:11). It is blood, a product of the death of the Messiah which focuses our attention on what was achieved in his death, the blood that Yahweh declares to be the key to the atonement of our lives.

Balancing the Messiah's Death with His Resurrection

However, we must always fear the heart's instinctive and relentless seduction of oversimplification. The death of the Messiah is not the beginning as well as the end of the atonement process. Atonement means covering. It is more than just forgiveness. If forgiveness was the only part of atonement we would never be covered by the divine nature. The iconic Day of Atonement is all about salvation, where the three immortalization events in the divine plan are projected by the three entrances and activities in the Most Holy. The creation of the cloud of incense that saves the life of the High Priest projects the forever saving of the life of the ultimate High Priest almost 2,000 years ago. The spattering of the blood of the bullock for the High Priest and his family upon the second entrance projects the marriage of the Lamb at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom when Christ's bride and children join him through immortalization. The spattering of the goat's blood for the rest of the nation upon the third entrance projects the immortalization of the rest of the world at the end of the Millennial Kingdom. Atonement begins with forgiveness (reconciliation through the Messiah's death, as seen in the figure of his blood) and ends with the covering of mortality with immortality (we shall be saved by his life; Rom. 5:10). We have seen this dual atonement theme emphasized in our sixth commentary entitled The Day of Salvation. We noted that both the whole burnt offering and the sin offering were expressed as being necessary for atonement. The burnt offering has nothing to do with forgiveness of sins. It has everything to do with the dedication to the knowledge of God (Hosea 6:6). We have also noted the two categories of sin offerings. These are the six categories of guilty sin offerings (Lev. 4-5) and the six guiltless sin offerings (giving birth, touching the dead, leprosy recovery, bodily issue recovery, bronze altar sin offerings upon its initial dedication and the annual sin offering for the Tabernacle and all its contents). The golden covering of the six exterior and six interior surfaces of the ark of the covenant is an extended shadow of this same atonement/salvation pattern.

The ritual of circumcision is all about the first category of this continual dual pattern that saturates scripture. The spiritual principles projected by circumcision create a chain of evidence underlining the forgiveness that is afforded us on the basis of what was achieved in the death of the Messiah, his circumcision, the breaking (severing, cutting away) of the power of sin in his flesh. Due to Christ's death we enjoy a new testament. The letter to the Hebrews expresses this perfectly. *And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that **by means of death**, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth. Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood. For when Moses had*

spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, Saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. (Heb. 9:15-22). This new testament, affording us forgiveness as well as the promise of eternal inheritance, was processed by the death of Christ. This why it is called a “testament”, as there is *of necessity the death of the testator*. This is why Jesus calls the memorial wine the symbol of the new testament in his blood. What our Messiah achieved in his sacrificial death affords us forgiveness of sins. Understanding and confident faith in these issues is what gives us hope for the second atonement stage, the redemption of our bodies with the covering of immortality so that we might no longer be naked before our God (Rom 8:23; 1Cor 15:52-55; 2 Cor 5:3).

Vigilance Is A Product of Intense Love

If this somehow seems quite basic, I would stress that questioning the pronounced scriptural emphasis of this particular issue of the death of our Messiah is one of the subtle initial baby steps to dangerous apostasy. We may chronicle the loss of the truth at 325AD (Council of Nicea) as being the ultimate perversion of divine truth. However, those God despising doctrines did not overwhelm the brotherhood overnight. The mystery of iniquity was already slithering into the brotherhood after only a couple of decades following the ascension of our Lord (2 Thess. 2:7). The Apostle Paul, offering a wealth of recorded insight into these issues, was abandoned to his imprisonment by all but a very few in the brotherhood (2 Tim 1:15-16; 4:16). His detractors, no doubt, highlighted his imprisonment as some sort of evidence of divine displeasure, freeing them to question his conclusions to further their own self promotion. It is the initial, seemingly slight, oversimplifications of our doctrines that gain social momentum and substance if not acknowledged and arrested. The pattern of doctrinal distortions generated from within the brotherhood over the last 150 years always include an exaggerated emphasis on the resurrection of Christ in tandem with a diminishing of the significance of his death. This results from a shifting of the definition of sin, a distancing of sin from the physical nature of sin-cursed mortality. It comes with an insistence that atonement is exclusively about forgiveness. This is where it begins. Given time and the absence of resistance it leads to the denial of our Creator’s righteousness for demanding death for sin. It leads to doctrines like the trinity, the immortality of the soul and immortal angels that can still sin without dying. These perversions do not happen overnight. Fortunately we will not have 300 years to lose the truth. This generation will not pass until all things have been fulfilled (Matt 24:34). The set time to favor Zion has come, identifying the last generation (Ps 102:12-18). The issue being stressed here is not the loss of the truth from our community some time long in the future. It is our individual careful attention to the absolute truths of our Heavenly Father, who we love so completely with all of our heart, all of our might, all of our mind and all of our life. We are always vigilant for those we truly love.

It is appropriate we should cut off this consideration of circumcision after completing seven commentaries. We are using the excuse of maintaining the circumcision pattern of cutting it off at the eighth to avoid excess redundancy, thereby (hopefully) discouraging boredom. We will move on to another issue of Kingdom Law in our next commentary.

Jim Dillingham

Degrees of Holiness

Our continuing premise for more than two years now has been our intense desire to serve our King as his immortal priest/kings during the approaching Millennial Kingdom. The restoration of the Kingdom of God will require the restoration of Kingdom law. Just as King David demonstrated his devotion by preparing for the construction of a temple he could not personally build we too can demonstrate our devotion by preparing ourselves for a vocation that we cannot currently perform.

We have seen how Kingdom law presents the eternal true principles of the Creator, but with a filtered focus. The principles projected by the Law are not temporary. The law certainly school-mastered us to Christ, dramatically highlighting our utter incapacity for self-justification. We need a savior. We can't do it ourselves. However, once the law mentally and emotionally diminishes us in our own eyes, delivering us to the Messiah, its lessons and purpose are not somehow dissolved, as if its exclusive purpose has been satisfied. Christ is not the final step. He is the door to the final platform in our ascent. The Creator of heaven and earth is the final destination. Our Heavenly Father's Kingdom law projects His eternal principles. However, that law is filtered by a particular limiting focus, just like the Ecclesial Age laws and rituals project eternal divine principles but with a different divine focus, like a shadow that progressively changes throughout the day as the single light source frames that particular substance from different perspectives as the day progresses.

Properly Prioritizing

Another fascinating principle exhibited powerfully by Kingdom law (as well as the corresponding terms of creation) is the issue of the degrees of significance. We experience the challenge of juggling priorities every day of our lives, with frequent perplexity as to how we can determine the most important issues to address first. We can become so consumed by certain projects or focuses that more important issues are completely invisible to our attention. This is how marriages suffer and maturing children drift away from our community and jobs are lost. The wisdom challenge of prioritizing is an entire commercial industry with life coaches, one minute managers, focus groups, self-help books, consultants and instructional seminars. Our enlightenment in relation to divine principles increases the difficulties in prioritizing within societies that are rigorously opposed to the concept and subsequent responsibilities of absolute truth.

Our behavior illuminates our priorities. Our deeds spotlight our passions. Passion is the engine of focus. This is why those accountable to judgment will be judged by our deeds. *And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be* (Rev. 22:12)... *the righteous judgment of God; Who will render to every man according to his deeds* (Rom. 2:6)... *and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works* (Rev. 20:12). Christ's three judgment parables in Matthew 25 each highlight different categories of deeds by which we will be judged. Our deeds will always prove the ascending significance of what we truly love. The terms of our judgment will center on the prioritizing we have practiced in our lives. The laws, rituals and patterns within Kingdom law demonstrate varying levels of significance that should be understood, embraced and demonstrated in our lives in order to be remade into the image and likeness of our Creator.

The English language only offers one word for love, inviting confusion due to the many possible conflicting categories of love. There is a natural hierarchy for love in anyone's life that cannot be imbalanced without inviting conflict and disappointment. One must love their husband or wife more than their children... which they must love more than their parents... which they must love more than their friends... which are loved more

than strangers... which should also be loved. When these loves become imbalanced, demonstrated by our prioritizing, sorrow will always follow. The equality of love is a Godless delusion, contradicted by many scriptural laws and patterns. This consideration is just one example of the principle of the degrees of significance which will lead into our examination of the degrees of holiness.

Three Separate Love Commands

There are three great love laws in scripture. Each offers a defined level of significance so that we might correctly balance these loves and wisely prioritize our 'deeds' in a divinely approvable manner. These three love laws are also perfectly reflected in the three categories of peace offerings, displaying exactly that same layered significance. There are many patterns of these degrees of significance that are highlighted in Kingdom law, as well as weaving all through scripture. Sadly both society and now some within our brotherhood are promoting the equality of love categories, contradicting divine principles. This is our challenge.

We know the greatest of all commandments. *The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these* (Mk 12:29-31). Numbering itself often serves as a feature of significance, as opposed to simple chronology. The 'first' commandment is one of total love and the absolute first priority. That 'second' love commandment only required a level of love that was dramatically less than the required love of our Heavenly Father. That standard of love only had to be equal to the love of self, unlike the love of God that must be far greater. Later that same week, at the last supper, Jesus initiated a new love commandment, wedging it between those two love commandments on the scale of significance. Jesus defines this commandment to his disciples as both a new commandment and his own personal commandment.

After Christ demonstrated his lesson by washing his disciples' feet, like a slave, he announces his new commandment: *A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another* (John 13:34). It would be unwise to contradict our King and our judge as to the unprecedented nature of this commandment, simply because we may think this somehow fits within the framework of the second great commandment. The level of significance and the limited range of this command places it in an entirely new category, just like Christ explained. A short while later during the evening Jesus comments on this new commandment by claiming it for his own and clarifying the terms for performance: *This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you* (Jn 15:12-14). The **friends** of Jesus Christ are those who work his works, and do his deeds. We will be judged according to what we have done in our lives. Jesus laid down his life for those 'friends'. The Greek word for *laid down* does not indicate simply a single act, such as his death. It indicates a placing aside, out of the way. Jesus laid aside his separate ambitions and personal will every single day and every single moment, for his Father and his friends (the enlightened who perform his instructions). Jesus defines this level of love, directed to his friends, as his personal commandment. This new commandment about loving the friends of Jesus requires a greater level of love than is required for our neighbor. We are only asked to love our neighbor to the same degree we love ourselves. Jesus commands us to love our brothers and sisters in the truth more than we love ourselves, being willing to set aside our lives, our ambitions and our personal concerns for their benefit. Yet, we are not asked to do more for our neighbors than we are willing to do for ourselves.

Loving Christ's Friends Greater Than Ourselves

Previously that week Jesus had presented a parable to four of his disciples about the terms of his eventual judgment as they overlooked the temple mount from the Mount of Olives. This third parable demonstrated how

the enlightened will be judged specifically by the terms of Christ's new commandment. The sheep that inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world are approved for eternal life on the basis of how they sacrificed themselves and their assets for the benefit of the least of Christ's brethren (Matt. 25:31-46). This judgment parable has nothing to do with loving our 'neighbors' as ourselves. Our 'neighbors' are neither the least of Christ's brethren nor his 'friends'. We certainly have responsibilities to our neighbors. However, we have far greater responsibilities to our brethren and sisters in Christ. We are commanded to love Christ's friends more than we love ourselves, demonstrating a willingness to lay aside our lives for the benefit of our brothers and sisters. There are degrees of significance in divine commandments and principles that must be demonstrated in our daily behavior if we want to qualify as the "friends" of Jesus Christ.

The apostle Paul was certainly familiar with this distinctive love command of his Lord. He specifically references it to the Galatian brethren and sisters. *Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil **the law of Christ*** (Gal. 6:2). When Christ's brothers and sisters lay aside their own burdens to bear the burdens of other true believers then we are fulfilling the personal commandment of Christ... his law. Paul wants to make this issue perfectly clear to all. A few verses later he emphasizes the expected priority of our devotion in relation to our brethren as opposed to our neighbors. *As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith* (vs. 10). Our level of devotion to the household of faith must exceed our willingness to do good to all men in general. We are only asked to love our neighbor as much as we love ourselves. Jesus tells his friends that we must love each other greater than we love ourselves. If we imbalance these loves, if we treat our brethren no different than our neighbors, we are disappointing the son of God.

Passion is the Engine of Focus

Our current challenge is society's insistence of equality in all things. It is politically incorrect to think in terms of inequality or any form of layered significance. Despite the fact that this is a completely illogical presumption, this false impression increasingly slithers its way into many aspects of societal and personal policy... and quite sadly, the Christadelphian brotherhood. Over the last ten years I have heard (from Bible School platforms) and read (from Christadelphian periodicals and literature) several declarations that dramatically diminish our understanding of the love of Yahweh to nothing more than the love of self. It is always expressed in the same way. We are told that loving our neighbor is what actually fulfills the divine command to love the LORD our God with all our heart and strength and soul. That is far more than simply a preposterous proposition. That exhortation degrades the recommended intensity standard for the love of God to the love of self. The intensity standard for the love of our neighbor is only the love of self. *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself* (Lev. 19:18). It shouldn't be surprising that this understanding is presented within our community. What is surprising is the absence of any challenge from our brotherhood when this is expressed. The proposition that we reduce the intensity of our love for Yahweh to simply love-of-self perfectly fits the pattern and purpose of all false doctrine. The unwavering pattern of false doctrine is to elevate the flesh and degrade our Creator. The purpose of every form and category of false doctrine is self worship... mirror worship. When we embrace the concept that we can fulfill the love of God by just loving our neighbor, the level of our passion is dramatically lowered, subconsciously excusing a life that is not highly focused on spiritual principles. Passion is the engine of focus. When we accept the recommendation to diminish our passion, our focus will automatically follow.

The children of God, the friends of Jesus Christ, are supposed to assign **divine** values in our lives that perfectly align with our Heavenly Father. We are supposed to understand what issues must take precedence over other issues. Our deeds will always project our true values, no matter how our stated intentions or sputtered rationalizations may contradict our deeds. The most common defense against the conscience generated pain of hypocrisy is to redefine right and wrong. Adopting society's descending standards, as the love of many continually waxes colder, places us in the safe majority ... everywhere. The key to realigning ourselves is the

painful peeling away of a crusted over conscience with the flaming blade of absolute truth. We have to re-assign values in our lives paralleling the degrees of significance presented by our Heavenly Father and our King. Korah, Dathan and Abiram did not understand this principle concerning the degrees of holiness.

The Equality Subversion is Buried in the Desert

These ‘Christadelphians’ objected to the separate priesthood established through Moses. They actually had seemingly reasonable grounds for their objections. The terms of the initial divine covenant upon the family’s arrival at Sinai was that Yahweh would make them *a kingdom of priests and a holy nation* (Ex. 19:6). What Korah and his followers did not consider was the divine timing of that promise. Since they were being given a kingdom, with borders and laws and government structure then they expected that national priesthood status immediately and resented the suggestion they did not personally qualify for that status. Adding to the weight of their democratic objection to this inequality of a restricted priesthood was the appointment of a man as High Priest who had cast the golden idol just a few weeks after Moses had disappeared into the mountain to speak with God. It was presumed that Moses had personally, but inappropriately, appointed his idol smelting older brother to this exalted position of High Priest and his nephews as the exclusive priesthood and then awarded the entire tribe of Levi to be his relatives’ assistants. This was a very plausible story that Korah, Dathan and Abiram could use to encourage discontent among the body of believers, while their own authority grew in opposition to Moses and Aaron.

We all know what happened. These brethren in the truth, their wives and their little children (with the exception of Korah’s children – Num. 26:11) were all buried alive by the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. These brethren became icons of false teachers within the brotherhood. Peter calls them *angels that sinned* (2 Pet. 2:2) and Jude calls them the *angels which kept not their first estate* (Jude 6). The Greek word translated *angels* in each case is *aggelos*, indicating simply an appointed messenger, without any indication of their nature. The ‘angel’ indication is simply the translator’s whim. These brethren in the truth did not respect the principle of the degrees of holiness that our Creator requires us to understand and value. Korah, Dathan and Abiram opposed Moses and Aaron on the basis that the entire community was equally holy. *Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD?* (Num 16:3) Disrespecting the principle of the degrees of holiness led to their violent destruction and the death of their families and many that respected them. This same failing is possible today in our community through the seduction of society’s self-righteous philosophy of equality in all things. The current self-imposed silent restraint of our Heavenly Father prevents the immediate judgments of directional earthquakes among the community of believers. That absence doesn’t eliminate that avenue of failure, just its immediate judgment. Our Creator assigns degrees of holiness, degrees of significance in relation to Himself that must be respected if we ever hope to enjoy an eternal relationship with our Heavenly Father.

Respecting the divine policy of the degrees of holiness directly opposes global society’s treasured self-righteous presumption of complete equality in all things. These foundational philosophical foundations are completely opposed, just like flesh and spirit.

Equality Diminishes Holiness and Exalts What is Common and Unclean

The great problem with the fleshly concept of equality is the reducing of divine value assignments along with the elevation of fleshly value assignments. This is a consistent feature of all false doctrine. In every single distortion of divine truth there is a degrading of our Heavenly Father and an exaltation of the flesh, without exception. The forbidden idol worship that characterized paganism and its evolved state of Roman Catholicism diminishes the glory of the Creator into mere man made articles springing from the imagination of men’s hearts, trinkets, plaster and carvings. The defining doctrine of the apostasy, prophesied by John, would deny the flesh-nature of Christ (1 Jn 4:3; 2 Jn 7). The incredibly blasphemous doctrine of the trinity suggests that our Creator

reduced Himself to the standard of man, disguising himself as a mortal man, lying about having a capacity to sin, lying about dying, and lying about coming back from the dead. This doctrine reverses the clearly stated divine plan and makes man the standard to which the Creator must realign himself in order to save his wrecked creation. This diminishing of our Heavenly Father along with the elevation of men in their own eyes is the consistent pattern in every single distortion of divine truths. We need to value things in the same manner our Heavenly Father does. We need to understand the degrees of holiness He assigns. Anything else is just a lie. It makes no difference whether we agree or disagree among ourselves. The only issue that truly matters is whether we agree or disagree with our Heavenly Father.

The purpose in creation is to appreciate our Creator, being filled with awe for His greatness and power... loving Him for his mercy and patience and tender care... realizing all we really are is a pail of dirt that has been given the capacity to breathe and think with all of creation before us. We express this understanding with theme verses such as: *Truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of Yahweh.... For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.* Eventually, our Creator will be respected globally. Both of these quoted declarations were divine responses to the community of believers disrespecting Yahweh, and diminishing His glory in their attitudes, behavior and philosophies. This was Yahweh's objection through Malachi to the priesthood who disrespected Him but couldn't understand how that could possibly be true. The back and forth debate between Yahweh and the self-righteous but actually wicked priests was all about the disrespect they showed the God they claimed to worship by their willingness to offer the more convenient torn, lame and sick animals as altar offerings (Mal. 1). This policy labeled *the table of Yahweh* (bronze altar) as *polluted* and *contemptible* (Mal 1:7-8). Understanding the principle of the degrees of holiness is about respecting our Creator to be the standard judge of all valuations. He is the scale. He is the plumbline. Our 'opinions' are of no consequence whatsoever.

The Degrees of Holiness Is An Eternal Principle

The greatest of all Bible truths, the foundation of our community's faith, is the doctrine of God manifestation. Certainly the atonement would be next but the principle of the atonement is meaningless and truly impossible to grasp without first understanding the principle of God manifestation. Our Creator chooses to manifest and reveal Himself through many avenues. He projects Himself through the various veils of the features of creation, Jesus Christ, angels, prophets, kings, pagan military empires and faithful believers. Eventually everything that exists will be brought into a single harmonious unity with the Creator. However, that certainly doesn't require that everything will be equal. The ultimate plan is not an expression of equality, but of perfect agreement. One explanation of the conditions that will exist following the end of time, when death and the grave have been cast into the lake of fire is that Christ will be over all but still subject to his heavenly Father (1 Cor. 15:24-28). We are told our Creator will be all and in all... but there will be no equality. There is always a hierarchy of significance in the divine order. If we imbalance the order of significance, the degrees of holiness, then we encourage the displeasure of our Creator by disrespecting His ultimate authority. We question His 'right-ness' by juggling or inverting His values.

Therefore, in our next commentary we will begin to consider how the divine law of the Kingdom of Heaven, established at Sinai and soon to be restored at Jerusalem, projects the proper order of values for many issues in the lives of believers. The degrees of holiness is a theme that saturates divine law, highlighting what is more significant in what context and the conditions by which a lesser principle ascends to become a higher principle. The degrees of holiness displayed in divine law can serve as our balancing pole with which we can safely walk the tightrope of life above that lake of fire, *which is the second death.*

Jim Dillingham

Degrees of Holiness No. 2

Equality is a myth of fleshly philosophy that generates from our deceitful hearts. The political philosophies of democracy, communism and socialism each claim to be the ultimate framework for equality. Eternal divine policies do not accommodate the concept of equality. Our Heavenly Father has created layered structures of authority, responsibility, judgment, values and holiness. The descending headships of Yahweh being the head of Christ being the head of man being the head of woman (1 Cor 11:3) is an example of divinely appointed layered authority and the absence of equal authority. Teachers of divine principles are warned of a “greater” condemnation (Js 3:1) due to the greater responsibility they invite in accepting the role of a ‘master’. However, balancing that imposing warning would be the judgmental danger of burying one’s ‘talent’ in the dust wrapped in a napkin (Lk. 19:20). In the context of Christ’s explanation of his eventual judgment he declares: *unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required* (Lk 12:48). The faithful should not pursue the fleshly goal of equality. The development of meekness and humility dissolves the defensive, ego inflating ambition of equality. It is meekness that serves as the eye of the needle through which the faithful must pass to enter the city of divine understanding and favor.

The degrees of holiness emphasized under divine Kingdom laws offer invaluable insight for understanding the system of divine values. This is the great challenge of the enlightened faithful. Our hearts constantly pump flesh-based, instinctive presumptions into our value considerations. This is the unfathomable deceitfulness of the human heart. *The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked: Who can know it* (Jer. 17:9). Stressful situations create difficult choices where value decisions must be determined and maintained. What is more important at the moment, in the long term and in the eyes of our Heavenly Father? Frequently the most convenient and personally advantageous solution to a stressful situation is not the best answer for the long term. This is where the power of faith comes to bear in supporting the promotion of eternal divine values in a society that is entirely centered on immediate and short-term advantage. It is the contrast in value assignments among Brothers and Sisters that create tension and discord in relation to Ecclesial discipline and doctrinal issues.

The Three Stage Divine Approach

There are obvious examples of this principle of layered holiness to validate our examination. There were increasing restrictions in reference to different aspects of divine service and rituals. There were varying degrees of punishment for the violation of different divine laws. The very approach to our Heavenly Father when Kingdom Law was originally mandated confirms our examination of this theme. There were specific borders assigned to each layered degree of holiness in that approach. There were the exterior two layers of the foursquare tribal encampment, with the exterior foursquare political stage and the interior foursquare spiritual stage. Approaching the presence of our Heavenly Father required an invariably westward approach, out of the east. A westward approach was always the exclusive path to approach the divine presence, ever since Adam and Eve’s expulsion from the Garden eastward and Cain’s separation further eastward, Israel’s expulsion directly east to Babylon, etc. This geographical observation mandated the reverse westward approach back to the Garden and the Tree of Life. The exterior political perimeter required passing through Judah, serving as the lead tribe on the east. Next, one would pass through that second spiritual stage, the encampment of the priests divinely appointed to that eastern quarter. Beyond the encampment of the priests was the exclusive entrance into the Tabernacle courtyard, continuing the westward approach. Inside that courtyard offered a more significant layer of holiness in our approach to the divine presence. There were three holy components in the courtyard: the

bronze altar of burnt offering to the right (north); the bronze laver of water before the door of the Tabernacle; and the Tabernacle itself. The courtyard environment was accessible to Levites, priests and Israelites. There was only one door for entering the Tabernacle, naturally facing the east and therefore demanding that same westward approach. The very division of the Tabernacle presents a clear definition of this principle of the degrees of holiness. There was the initial Holy Place and beyond the border of the veil was the **Most Holy Place**. In the Holy Place there were another three holy components: the golden table of shewbread to the right (north); the golden lampstand to the left (south) and the golden altar of incense before the veil. Clearly this environment presented a significantly greater degree of holiness than simply the courtyard. The progression of metallic value is one validation of the different degree of holiness for each environment, from bronze to gold. The priests were allowed to enter the Holy Place. If they attempted to enter the Holy Place without first washing their hands and feet, then God would kill them (Ex. 30:19-21). There was no such restriction for entering the Tabernacle courtyard. This severe restriction is another validation of the accelerating degrees of holiness in our approach to the divine presence.

The last entrance, also requiring the consistent westward approach, was through the veil into the Most Holy. The glory of our Heavenly Father radiated from between the cherubim above the mercy seat of the golden Ark of the Covenant. This is the final stage, which is why it is defined as the holiest of all and had the greatest restrictions. Only the High Priest could enter this room. He could only enter three times on one day each year. If he entered at any other time Yahweh would kill him (Lev. 16:2). Upon entering that first time each year he had to immediately generate a cloud of incense to embrace the mercy seat... or Yahweh would kill him (Lev. 16:13). The intense restrictions and the severe warnings associated with the Most Holy serve to powerfully highlight the principle of the degrees of holiness. As we have noted before, these three High Priest entrances on the Day of Atonement each year project the three immortalization events in the divine plan. Aaron's conversion of two handfuls of 4 equal ingredients of incense (aromatic dust) from each hand into a cloud through the reaction to the flame from the altar of burnt offering saves the life of the High Priest (Lev. 16:13). This parallels the first immortalization event when Jesus Christ, our High Priest, was immortalized... converted from the dust-of-the-earth nature to the cloud of the divine presence, power and glory... from earthly nature to heavenly nature. The second entrance of the High Priest into the Most Holy was for spattering the blood of the bullock behind and before (east and west) the Mercy Seat for the benefit of the entire family of the High Priest. This ritual projects the second immortalization event in the divine plan when the family of Jesus Christ (his bride, his children) are joined with him, being covered (atoned) with the divine nature. The third entrance of the High Priest with the blood of the goat was for the atonement of the rest of the nation. The third and final immortalization event in the divine plan will be at the end of the Millennial Kingdom which is for the rest of the world. The ultimate approach into the divine nature was projected annually within the environment of this holiest of all places. Just as there will be three immortalization events in the divine plan and there were three entrances into that Most Holy place each year to project these events so there were three distinct entrance stages in this layered approach to the divine presence. The first entrance into the courtyard presented a greater level of holiness inside the courtyard as opposed to outside. The second entrance through the door of the Tabernacle presented a greater degree of holiness and greater restrictions. The third and final passage through the veil into the Most Holy presented the greatest degree of holiness with the most severe restrictions. These three entrances into progressively holier environments project the same three stage divine plan for the perfecting of all creation through the three immortalization events of (1) Jesus, (2) the faithful at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom and (3) the rest of the world at the conclusion of the Millennial Kingdom.

A further validation of the significance of this threefold progressive pattern for inheriting the divine nature would be the sign of its promise offered to the first century Ecclesia: the Holy Spirit outpourings (Eph 1:13-14;

2 Cor 5:5). The gift of Holy Power was offered as proof of our Creator's offer of immortality. Just as there will be three immortalization events in the divine plan so there were specifically three outpourings of the Holy Spirit, reflecting the exact same progressive pattern as the three entrances into the Most Holy chamber on the Day of Atonement. Although there will be another Holy Spirit outpouring at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom, that is outside the definition of qualifying as the proof of the promise of immortality offered to the early Ecclesia. The proof will no longer be necessary as the reality of the second immortalization event will already have been experienced. The first Holy Spirit outpouring was exclusively for Christ at his Jordan baptism, just as the first entrance on the Day of Atonement saved the life of the High Priest, reflecting the first immortalization stage of exclusively Jesus Christ. The second Holy Spirit outpouring was for the 120 Jewish brethren of Christ on the day of Pentecost, just as the second entrance on the Day of Atonement was for the whole family of the High Priest. This reflects the second immortalization of the family of Christ (his bride, brothers, sisters and children) at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom. The third outpouring was exclusively for the Gentiles at the home of Cornelius, paralleling the third entrance into the Most Holy for the atonement of the rest of the nation and the third immortalization of the rest of the world at the conclusion of the Millennial Kingdom. There were exactly three Holy Spirit outpourings just as there were exactly three entrances into the Most Holy on the Day of Atonement and just as there are exactly three immortalization events in the divine plan. All three of these threefold divinely appointed progressions portray the exact same progressive pattern. These patterns are further validated in the shadow of our Messiah's name. The number of the name of Jesus is 888. Eight is the number of immortality in scripture and a sideways 8 is the mathematical symbol for infinity. Therefore the number of the name of Jesus is a threefold repetition of the numerical identification of immortality, further confirming this three immortalization event progression in the shadows of scripture.

Air, Water and Food Life Extenders

One of the creation patterns confirming this three stage immortalization progression would be the three progressively significant components of life extension under the terms of the curse. Three categories of physical renewal are necessary for the continuation of life, under the curse. These three parallel the three progressive immortalization stages for the eternal continuation of life. They are oxygen, liquids and solids. Oxygen (spirit) would be the first and obviously most significant, since we would die within eight minutes without oxygen. Water would be the next most significant component as we would die in less than ten days without water. If we have water and oxygen we may be able to live for two months without bread or other solid nutrition, but we could not live much beyond that timeframe. These three progressively significant components extend cursed life. We were carefully crafted by an omniscient Creator who weaved his principles through all of the features of Creation for the exclusive witness of those with seeing eyes and hearing ears, the meek who passionately love truth in all forms. Further emphasizing this conclusion would be the observation we made in commentary 21 (Circumcision of Heart and Flesh No. 1) concerning the numerical atomic identification of the oxygen atom being eight (as seen on the Chart of the Elements). Just as eight is the number of Jesus (as the six letters of his Greek name add up to 888, along with the consistent number eight Messiah shadows dotting scripture), so it is also the number of oxygen (spirit). Just as Christ is the first and most significant of the three progressive immortalization stages in the divine plan, so oxygen is the first and most significant of the three components necessary for continuing life... both numerically bound by the number eight. The features of creation consistently validate divine principles. Entwined around both of these patterns of three is this issue of the degrees of significance.

Holiness demands a distinction, a separation and an elevated significance in relation to our Creator. However, equality eliminates all semblance of holiness as it maintains all things are equal, allowing no separation between holy and common. The social laws of democratic governments are increasingly stressing equality through anti-discrimination laws. The laws of the Kingdom of Heaven established at Sinai certainly discriminated on the

basis of age, gender, religion and physical handicaps. Consider how ludicrous it would be to realize the Creator of heaven and earth could be indicted on criminal charges for violating the constitutional rights of American citizens on the basis of discrimination. There were age limitations for the Levite service (Num. 4:3). There were certainly gender and handicap limitations for the revered priestly job classification, by divine mandate. Only the physically flawless, male descendants of Aaron qualified to serve as priests (Lev. 21:16-23). All others were excluded. Korah, Dathan and Abiram objected to this discrimination. They protested that *all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves* (Moses and Aaron) *above the congregation of the LORD*. Korah, Dathan, Abiram and their discrimination protesting supporters were buried alive by a divine earthquake or incinerated by fire from heaven. A similar judgment will address the nations around the globe exhibiting this disdain for the principle of holiness when Christ and the immortalized saints make known the name of Yahweh through earthquakes and whirlwinds and the volcanic and storm generated fires from heaven. The self-righteous social philosophy of equality is just another God degrading emotional platform for the egotistical promotion of the flesh, as is the case with all false doctrine.

Divine Death Threats Emphasize the Degrees of Holiness

Holiness is understood on the basis of discrimination. There were (and will be again) divinely appointed degrees of discrimination to separate increasing degrees of holiness under Kingdom Law. One of the Kingdom Law patterns available to pursue in relation to judging significance would be the seriousness of the divine responses to unacceptable behavior or conditions. The threats of death or permanent ostracism would certainly offer a divinely appointed spotlight of significance for encouraging deeper understanding. Interaction with the holy Ark of the Covenant was surrounded by death threats. The High Priest was warned only to enter the Most Holy chamber with the Ark at no time other than the Day of Atonement *that he die not* (Lev. 16:2). Upon entering the chamber of the golden Ark for the first time each year the High Priest had to immediately generate a cloud of incense to envelop the divine presence on the Mercy Seat, *that he die not* (Lev. 16:13). Anyone, other than the appointed Levites, attempting to approach the Ark of the Covenant during transport would invite a divinely mandated death sentence. *And when the tabernacle setteth forward, the Levites shall take it down: and when the tabernacle is to be pitched, the Levites shall set it up: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death* (Lev. 1:51). Thousands of curious Bethshemesh residents died when some looked into the Ark returned by the frightened Philistines (1 Sam. 6:19). A well intentioned Uzzah suffered an immediate execution as he reached out to steady the rocking ark when the cart's oxen stumbled. He died instantly (2 Sam. 6:6-7). David was appropriately frightened. His disrespect for the principle of the degrees of holiness had cost Uzzah his life and Uzzah's family terrible grief. Uzzah's well meaning intentions did not trump the dangers of disrespecting divinely assigned holiness. Several months later David wisely complied with the requirements for the exclusive Levite personal transportation command. After all, the fear (being afraid) of Yahweh is the very beginning of wisdom. Only those destitute of wisdom are unafraid of our Creator.

The Three Progressive Holy Ark Deposits

The repetitive death threats for inappropriate interaction with the Ark of the Covenant provided a fearful respect for this divinely designed article that was assigned a level of extreme holiness. However, it should be understood that the proper interaction with the Ark would therefore extend life (symbolizing the ultimate extension of life: immortality). The holiness of the Ark was punctuated by the three progressively holy deposits within that Ark. Just as there were exclusively three High Priest exposures to the Ark each year (reflecting the three immortalization events in the divine plan) so there were three progressive deposits beneath the Mercy Seat representing resurrection, incorruptibility and eternal life. Christ can be seen in each of these three progressive deposits, just as he is the common element in all three immortalization events. The omer of non-corrupting manna was the first deposit, reflecting Christ's role as the bread from heaven that would have to be broken and then eaten to qualify for eternal life. *I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the*

living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world (John 6:48-51).

The second deposit was the replaced covenant stones. The first set was broken at the base of Sinai, paralleling the death of Christ under Kingdom Law established at Sinai. The second set of stones, with the words of the Father impressed upon the four surfaces by His finger, was intended to be preserved forever within the Ark. These stones are also related to Christ, who is the stone which the builders rejected, the stone cut out of the mountain without hands that powders the towering political image in Daniel 2, the stone of stumbling and rock of offense, both the corner stone and the keystone of Zechariah's visions, etc. Just like the omer of manna, stones are incorruptible. They are not subject to disease, rusting, or rotting. Just like the word of our Creator impressed on these stones, so the stones also symbolize incorruptibility.

The third deposit was the rod of resurrection which identified the divinely appointed High Priest following the living burial of the believers who protested against the absence of equality in Yahweh's appointments (the rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram). Each of these three deposits directly relate to the holy reward of the saints inherited through Christ: resurrection, immortality and incorruptibility.

The Tripled Set of Three

Just as three holy deposits were made into the Ark of the Covenant, so we see three components placed in each of the three progressively holier stages in the wilderness approach to the divine presence. In the Tabernacle courtyard we see the bronze altar of burnt offering, the bronze laver and the Tabernacle itself. Within the Holy Place we see the golden shewbread table, the golden lampstand and the golden incense altar. Within the Most Holy chamber is the single Ark of the Covenant which had received the three progressive deposits just considered. This repetitive emphasis is hard to miss.

Balancing Principles: Holiness and Grace

Each of the three progressive stages in the approach to the divine presence (courtyard entrance, Holy Place entrance and Most Holy Place entrance) leveraged an increasing degree of holiness with increasingly more serious restrictions. As Christadelphians currently operating within the soon to be replaced Ecclesial Age we would be well advised to carefully consider our respect for the absolute requirement for this intensifying holiness in our pursuit of divine favor. If we presume that the current Age's divine emphasis for graceful forgiveness somehow eliminates the principles of holiness we invite the same ultimate divine response to disrespecting the principles of holiness experienced by the enlightened in the previous Age and promised in the subsequent Age. We are currently sandwiched between two divinely appointed educational stages (the initial Kingdom of Heaven and the restored Kingdom of Heaven) where respecting the degrees of holiness is stressed by very serious threats of permanent exclusion and even loss of life.

We must constantly assess values in our lives and decide which action or response or direction must take precedence. We do this every day. These decisions, transformed into deeds, project our personal balancing of values. Our hearts will instinctively elevate selfish concerns and then direct our minds to redefine them as God's will. This is called rationalization and self-justification. The necessary procedure is exactly the opposite. Our minds must consider the varying degrees of value assigned by our Heavenly Father throughout scriptural and creational patterns and then direct our circumcised hearts to comply accordingly, no matter the level of inconvenience, sacrifice or embarrassment. We will be continuing our consideration of the degrees of holiness in the subsequent commentary.

Jim Dillingham

The Guardian of Holiness

We have established that holiness can be a progressive condition, not exclusively an either-or status. These degrees of holiness present an escalating significance offering a precedent for understanding how to balance conflicting issues. One of the obvious divine patterns for highlighting the degree of significance for a specific principle would be the varying consequences for disrespecting a feature of that principle. These consequences may be as simple as washing ones clothes and being considered unclean until the beginning of a new day at sunset. The consequence may also have been a temporary seven day separation from one's family and community to participate in a cleansing process. The consequence could also be execution or permanent banishment. Underlining and emphasizing the degrees of holiness are the degrees of the fearful consequences for disrespecting holiness.

Moral and Physical Holiness Violations

One of the distinctive features of the condition and degrees of holiness was there were both moral and physical challenges for believers to maintain the holiness required by Yahweh. That holiness could be defiled by certain behavioral activities as well as physical conditions and practices. Idol worship and abhorrent sexual abominations both constituted a behavioral defilement, violating the demanded holiness distinction of the faithful in covenant relationship. However, there were also physical conditions that threatened defilement, having no relationship to moral behavior. Eating unclean foods mandated a condition scripturally defined as abominable, unclean, and defiled. The understanding of the significance of this 'physical' defilement status is emphasized by the final warning in this diet restriction chapter: *For I am the LORD your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. For I am the LORD that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy* (Lev. 11:44-45). There were other physical condition challenges that introduced defilement, a departure from the required holiness, such as eating blood, eating fat, suffering with a bodily issue, touching the dead, and a priest entering the Tabernacle or approaching the bronze altar with unwashed hands and feet. These had no direct relationship to moral or behavioral issues such as idol worship, sexual deviance, working on the Sabbath, etc. If one refused to respect the significance of these physically defiling conditions they would either be killed or banished forever (i.e. Lev. 7:25, 27; Num. 19:20).

These two primary categories of holiness defilement are (1. Moral and behavioral defilement; 2. Physical and bodily defilement) parallel the two categories of sin presented in scripture and our Statement of Faith. There is the behavioral sin of coming short of the righteousness of our Creator in the things that we do, say and think. There is also the sin producing flesh nature of man. Dr. Thomas expresses this non-behavioral category of sin in Elpis Israel by stating: "Sin, I say, is a synonym for human nature. Hence, the flesh is invariably regarded as *unclean*." The physically defiling "uncleanness" Kingdom laws highlight this category of sin, for which no guilt is assigned. However, guilt would be assigned if a believer disrespected those physical defilement laws by refusing to recognize and correct that condition of physical defilement. *He shall both wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even: then shall he be clean. But if he wash them not, nor bathe his flesh; then he shall bear his iniquity* (Lev. 17:15-16). Guilt was the result of refusing to recognize a physically unclean condition by addressing corrective measures.

The Physical Uncleanness of Sin Infected All of Creation

The introduction of sin into a very good creation by Adam and Eve was physically defiling throughout all of creation, not just the hearts and bodies of our original ancestors. Creation was no longer "very good." Just as the

mortal (sin-cursed) flesh of mankind is “inherently unclean” so all of creation suffers from a condition of physical uncleanness. This understanding is punctuated by the parallel effect during the Millennial Kingdom. The restraining of sin (satan, devil, dragon and serpent being chained in the bottomless pit for 1,000 years... Rev. 20:1-3) and that millennial Sabbath rest from sin (Heb. 4) are directly paralleled by a restraining of the **physical** effects of sin. There will be a rest from danger and corruption. Carnivorous predators will become herbivorous. Venomous reptiles and insects become harmless. Mortal life is extended so that a person 100 years old is considered a child. The curse on the ground is diminished to allow for dramatically greater harvests and productive new plant species (Is. 11:1-9; 35; 65:17-25; Ezek. 34:29). Recognizing the physical defilement of creation and the need for its correction should divorce us from the endless political debates over environmental integrity and species extinction. Our goals and dreams and wishes are to witness and experience the glory of the Creator covering the earth as the waters cover the sea. Our vision for this planet is our Creator’s vision... not the maintaining of the current physically unclean state of creation.

During the Ecclesial Age the enlightened faithful are directed to focus on behavioral uncleanness, not physical uncleanness. Christ declared all foods ‘clean (Mark 7:18-23). We are commanded to actually eat blood (the wine/blood of Christ). There are no required procedures for cleansing ourselves after touching the dead. The divine educational focus for the Ecclesial Age is not sin, but grace. However, that does not afford us the freedom to disrespect the divine principles of holiness, just as an older teenager should not forget the lessons of their younger years. Kingdom Law led us to the devastating conclusion that we were lost without a savior, that we are incapable of self-justification. The law schoolmaster delivered us to Christ, in desperate need of the imputed acceptability he has the freedom to share with those who truly love him and his Father. However, the lessons of Kingdom Law should not be forgotten, but built upon. The divine principles promoted by Kingdom Law are not eclipsed by any other principles being highlighted by the laws of the Ecclesial Age. The laws changed (as they will change again) but divine principles are eternal.

Fear: The Guardian of Holiness

The ‘Christadelphians’ of the Kingdom Age, from the Kingdom foundations at Sinai to the temple destruction at Zion by the Romans, were taught to fear the consequences for disrespecting the principle of divine holiness. The fear of Yahweh encouraged cautious (and sometimes trembling) respect among the enlightened in covenant relationship. The absence of this fearful encouragement is a tremendous disadvantage that the faithful in covenant relationship face today, during the prophesied time of divine silence. The sun went down on the prophets (Micah 3:6-7) and the drought of the word of God (Amos 8:11-12) began after the last divine revelation to John on Patmos and the Holy Spirit Gifts had faded away. Isaiah explains that this divine silence will end dramatically at the introduction of the Millennial Kingdom when Yahweh roars like a charging soldier and cries out like a birthing mother (Is. 42) after the Creator will have *long time holden His peace, been still and refrained Himself*. By then it will be too late for us. There will be no further opportunity to be educated by the fear of our Heavenly Father. Our judgment will have been completed. Perhaps due to this divine procedural change (the absence of direct fear inducing actions to encourage fearful respect for holiness) some suggest that we no longer have any reason to be afraid of disrespecting our Creator. Some suggest that the much-vaunted fear of God filling scripture is nothing but reverence and awe... exclusively. This is a dangerous misconception as it offers our ever deceitful hearts a great advantage in rationalizing our actions. This misconception about the fear of God being exclusively awe and reverence encourages an inflated image of ourselves and disengages a powerful tool for maintaining the meekness that is absolutely necessary for seeing eyes and hearing ears.

Just like fire, fear can both destroy and save. A controlled fire heats our homes, replaces darkness with light, tempers metal, purifies, cooks food, disinfects, converts matter to energy for travel and warms our planet to make it habitable. Uncontrolled fire destroys, consumes and kills, leaving ashes. This is why a mourning

Israelite would cover their head in ashes. The effects of the curse of sin and death had consumed their joy, portrayed by the ashes on the head. The head is the body's seat of authority and responsibility. Therefore the ashes were placed on the head, somewhat related to how a sister during the Ecclesial Age is required to cover her head whenever she prays. As with fire, fear can both destroy and save, Unrestrained fear is what we call panic. Panic was the primary weapon against the 135,000 Mideonite mercenaries faced by Gideon and his 300. Panic will be one of the weapons against the Gogian invaders faced by Christ and the saints (Ezek 38:21). When fear is controlled by courage and love then fear becomes a positive (but still unpleasant) instructor. Cautious respect is the result of controlled fear. Fear is a necessary educator. The fearless are always fools, without exception. Even the successful risk-takers in entertainment and commerce will tell us they are not unafraid, which is why they plan so meticulously. The absence of fear produces carelessness. The mild and pleasant 'fear' of reverence and awe does not possess the power to educate us in the same fashion as the highly uncomfortable fear or divine disfavor. No courage is demanded to balance any consuming danger from the reverence and awe category of the 'fear' of God.

The Rending Lion of the Tribe of Judah Converts the World

Fear drains away pompous, arrogant overconfidence, which is the natural product of the human heart, just as weeds grow unbidden from the dust of the earth (from which we are made). It is meekness that is the only path to true enlightenment. Scripture is written with an intentional complexity affording the self-possessed the exclusive vision of their own glorious reflection from the surface of the Bible. It is only the meek, the emptied heart, the circumcised heart that can see beyond the divinely imposed veil. We are supposed to see through a dark glass at this time (1 Cor 13:12) but not gaze into a mirror... which perfectly satisfies the rest of the world. Fear is a great educator. This is the educational path our Heavenly Father will use to create the incredible global paradigm shift when Christ returns. *In the day of affliction, the Gentiles shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit. Shall a man make gods unto himself, and they are no gods? Therefore, behold, I will this once cause them to know, I will cause them to know mine hand and my might; and they shall know that my name is Yahweh* (Jer 16:19-21). This divinely imposed enlightenment by fear is not reverence. It is terror, when earthquakes and storms and volcanoes and tsunamis create a global panic for which there has been no precedent. Israel expected a lion and rejected the lamb. Christianity expects a lamb but will face the roaring and rending lion of the tribe of Judah.

Balancing Testimony

Our Heavenly Father taught respect for holiness through encouraging fearful respect for His principles during the first Kingdom Age when sin was the dominant educational theme. Sadly, a reversal of this divine lesson is often promoted in our brotherhood today, suggesting we have absolutely no reason to be afraid of our Heavenly Father. The common tactics of misdirection and oversimplification are used to dispense with this divinely appointed educational tool for the development of the children of God. Since there are two primary categories for the fear of God (as is also the case with sin, righteousness, death and resurrection) then the pleasant category of the fear of God (awe and reverence) is promoted as the exclusive application for understanding the fear of God. The standard pattern is to let one or two references solidify the entire line of reasoning, trusting in shared presumptions. Usually 1 John 4:18 is offered, as if it says everything. *There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.* One of several ignored contradictions in the presumptions made concerning this verse is that the very definition for the fear of God that is trying to be eliminated is presumed to apply in this exclusive expression. On what logical basis can a Bible expositor apply the exclusive 'awe and reverence' application of the required fear of God in every other New Testament scriptural reference, but choose to apply the 'fearful' application in this one reference? The answer would be the natural deceitfulness of the human heart. If we want to determine what fear it is that is cast out by a mature love we can simply ask our judge. Jesus declares: *And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna* (Matt. 10:28).

We do not have to fear men, who can only kill us once, but cannot keep us dead. According to Jesus we should be afraid of the one who can not only kill us but keep us dead... his Father. We do not have to choose between Christ's testimony or John's. They complement each other flawlessly. It is our shared, heart generated presumptions that get in the way of understanding. A mature love is more powerful than fear, just as a loving mother will risk her life if the life of her child is in jeopardy. Love is a powerful catalyst for promoting courage above fear. If our fear is more powerful than our love then cowardice results followed by sorrow and disappointment. That is the consuming feature of unrestrained fear.

The fear of potential rejection at the judgment seat served as a powerful motivator for the Apostle Paul. *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the **terror of the Lord**, we persuade men* (1 Cor 5:10-11). Paul also advised us to work out our salvation with fear and trembling (Phil 2:12). Our fear of offending our Heavenly Father does not center on the directional earthquakes, fire from heaven, divinely invited marauding invaders or even the sword of the word of God wielded by Peter against Brother Ananias and Sister Sapphira. We only have two avenues for experiencing the effects of divine displeasure: the subtle outworking of divine providence and the finality of our ultimate judgment. We are quickly approaching the full maturity of the bride of Christ. Greater maturity is expected of us by the Father of the groom. Loving parents do not discipline their older teenage children with the same educational patterns they used when their children were much younger. While the divine wisdom of the rod taught our child the relationship between pain and unacceptable behavior, we do not use that form of discipline on far more mature sons and daughters. Prov 13:24 *He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes*. It is the education that comes from painful divine correction that offers the participation in divine holiness.

Divine Chastening to Partake of Holiness

*For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be **partakers of his holiness*** (Heb 12:6-10). The direct connection between the unpleasant educational feature of divine correction and divine holiness is certainly maintained into the Ecclesial Age. However the educational procedure for divine correction has changed in relation to the expected maturity of the bride of Christ. The lesson is the same, bridging the First Kingdom Age and the Ecclesial Age. There must be a fear for disrespecting the principle of divine holiness. If we accept the redefinition of the fear of God being exclusively awe and reverence then by the power of our deceitful hearts we will be able to maintain a personal image of confident self-righteousness despite an increasing casualness in our approach to our Heavenly Father and the things He maintains as elevated and holy. The memorial service may be disrespected with inappropriate attire, and necessary or unnecessary absences will not be shamefully regretted. Our speech and expressions will be increasingly indistinguishable from society, because after all: we supposedly have nothing to be afraid of from our Creator. This is the same Creator who defines Himself as a consuming fire (Heb. 12:29).

The fear of God has always been a correction measure against the deceitful human heart, relentlessly promoting self at the expense of our Creator, constantly seeking grounds for self accommodation through any shred of perceived justification. The heart's influence grows if we consciously remove the threat of its great enemy: the fear of God. The heart takes defensive comfort in the shared presumptions of the many. One of the significant lessons concerning holiness is the emphasis our Creator places on respecting what He defines as holy by

threatening severely unpleasant consequences. This current period of self-imposed divine silence and the absence of Yahweh's historical response to disrespecting holiness with fearful consequences should not encourage any overconfidence in our own glorious righteousness. His silence is not because we are so incredibly wonderful that there is just no need for our correction by fear. The bride of Christ is almost mature. We are expected to display a spiritual maturity that does not require teaching us like a toddler or pre-teen. The intended bride is supposed to remember the lessons of her youth. Do we remember?

In our next commentary we will look at specific consequences for specific violations of the principle of holiness. We will look at the degrees of these consequences so that we might understand the layers of significance our Heavenly Father assigns to different principles.

Jim Dillingham

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Degrees of Holiness No. 4

It's all about understanding, respecting and appreciating our Creator. Everything was perfect at the end of those first six days. There was no sin. There was no death or disease or hardship or danger or fear or depressing regret. There was only one restriction, one avenue for possibly disrespecting the Creator. Sadly, the contradictory testimony of the serpent was appreciated above the testimony of the Creator. Sin corrupted and infected everything, naturally towing along suffering, pain, sorrow, and death. Just like our original ancestors we still only have two choices. We can appreciate the rightness, the correctness, the validity of the Creator's principles or we can prefer the philosophy of the serpent. The serpent philosophy is invariably self-worship, focused in heart generated creations of gods and 'scientific' presumptions that are always Creator degrading and personally promoting.

The great challenge we face is that we need to think like our Creator. Every divine ritual declares the right-ness of the Creator, when performed as directed. It makes no difference whether the ritual was prescribed during the first Kingdom Age when sin was the dominant educational theme or the ritual is limited to the Ecclesial Age where imputed righteousness is the dominant educational theme. Every single ritual is intended to confirm that our Creator was, is and will always be **right**. This is how Paul explains the significance of the ritual of Sister's silence. *Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression* (1 Tim 2:11-14). Paul emphasizes two reasons why this ritual must be observed. The first was the order of creation. The second was Eve's responsibility in the initial failure. By disrespecting this ritual requirement a Sister and the unopposing Brethren are declaring that God was wrong in making Adam first and then Eve, instead of both simultaneously. Disrespecting this divine requirement also declares God was unrighteous in His assignment of Eve's guilt. Without exception, every divinely imposed ritual is a portrayal of the right-ness of our Heavenly Father.

Education by Ritual

The genealogical descendants of Abraham, Issac and Jacob presumed the significance was simply in the mechanical performance of a ritual. They were so consumed by mere performance they created layers upon layers of law modifications. Their heart generated modifications contradicted the very principles these rituals projected, blinding them to the vision of God's glory empowered by the enlightenment of eternal truths. The

spiritual descendants of Abraham, the Christadelphians, should not fall into the same mental pit. We should not presume that mere ritual performance somehow validates personal righteousness. Nor should we presume that the performance of divine rituals is ultimately inconsequential, reverse-reacting to the Jewish mistake of focusing on mere performance. The point is not what we are supposed to learn about ourselves. That is the heart's focus. The point is what are we supposed to learn about our Creator in the performance of these rituals. It is not about how these rituals make us **feel**. It is all about how these rituals lead us to **think**.

However, there are no mandated banishments or executions during the Ecclesial Age for disrespecting divinely imposed rituals and laws. The change in divine law and priesthood, marking the transition from the first Kingdom Age into the Ecclesial Age, temporarily eliminated the severe and permanent judgments for disrespecting the divine righteousness exhibited in our Creator's rituals and laws. We know that divine principles never change, unlike divinely appointed laws, rituals and forms of discipline. Therefore, examining the laws and rituals of the first Kingdom Age will demonstrate eternal truths about our Heavenly Father. In our quest to recreate ourselves into the image and likeness of our Heavenly Father we must appreciate whatever righteousness is being displayed in these rituals and laws, no matter how our hearts and instincts naturally oppose those understandings.

The Simplicity Mirage

One of the great truths that is uncomfortably hammered into our lives during this last generation of the Ecclesial Age is that nothing is ever truly simple. There are always unexpected consequences. Society's endless parade of charlatans and parasites will tempt us with emotional declarations of simplicity, but there is no pill that will make us thin and beautiful. There is no regimen or mantra or pharmaceutical cocktail that defeats the humbling of age. Life is never simple and divine principles are not simple. Maintaining a divinely approvable spiritual balance throughout our dodging, weaving, jumping, climbing, stumbling, striding and sprinting through this life can be quite challenging. We can be faced with multiple avenues and not have a clear understanding of what is the best route to reflect honor to our Heavenly Father and our King. Yet we hope to serve as the immortal king-priests of the next Kingdom Age. Of all the people on this earth we should be the ones with the answers about righteously navigating the right and wrong courses of this life, turning neither to the left nor the right. The degrees of holiness exhibited in divine laws and rituals offer patterns of layered significance in divine principles. Understanding these layers of significance can be like a beacon of light on a dark and vexing path.

The Abomination of Refusing to Discern

We may be tempted to presume that understanding the complexities of differentiating between what is divinely more acceptable and more unacceptable is not really relevant in this current age where graceful forgiveness is so powerfully emphasized. The danger of this inappropriate presumption would be underlined within Kingdom Law by the warning against not being willing to distinguish between what is divinely defined as clean and unclean. This unwillingness to address this avenue of the various degrees of holiness qualifies for an **abominable** status with the Creator. *Ye shall therefore put difference between clean beasts and unclean, and between unclean fowls and clean: and ye shall not make your souls **abominable** by beast, or by fowl, or by any manner of living thing that creepeth on the ground, which I have separated from you as unclean. And **ye shall be holy unto me**: for I the LORD am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine* (Lev 20:25-26). Yahweh never changes. His principles and His right-ness are eternal. These laws and declarations are not whims. They are not capricious experiments in search of a preferred response, rotating between stick and carrot teaching patterns, between strict discipline and positive reinforcement. In fact the specific laws for the mortal Jewish priests of the approaching Millennial Kingdom Age are all about distinguishing holiness. Ezekiel 44 defines ten conditions and responsibilities for the mortal priests of the future Kingdom Age whose foundations were in the priestly laws of the First Kingdom Age. Each law and condition is a lesson in maintaining a higher level of holiness for the blessings and privileges of the priestly status. Within this text is

the motivating force behind these requirements: *And they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean* (Ezek 44:23). Jews and Gentiles will have to be taught the difference between what is acceptable to the Creator and what is unacceptable, both physically and spiritually... both behaviorally and throughout the conditions of a still cursed creation.

There are specific scriptural highlights that serve to define these degrees of holiness. One obvious highlight would be the degree of danger or harmful response from our Creator for the potential or real disrespecting of a particular divine principle. An immediate death sentence would certainly offer a greater significance than a permanent banishing, which would in turn offer a greater significance than a limited absence from the community which would also offer a greater significance than a one day limiting status of uncleanness. Mankind creates laws of their own to reflect their perceived levels of significance. An increasing threat of punishment indicates an increasing perceived disrespect for the imagined standards of right-ness by those who make the laws. A traffic violation may incur a small fee but theft will bring temporary imprisonment and murder often results in either permanent imprisonment or execution. The degree of the threat for unacceptable behavior is directly related to the perceived degree of society's perception of right and wrong.

The attitude of those in covenant relationship to divine laws was an issue that dramatically escalated the severity of divine judgments. If one became physically unclean for one reason or another there was always a specific procedure to follow in order to become clean. That cleansing procedure may require simply waiting for nightfall and washing their clothes, as well as themselves at certain times. The cleansing procedure may require the healing of a physical condition (bodily issues or leprosy) as well as a seven to eight day procedure to progress from an unclean status to a clean status. However, if one refused to recognize and address that uncleanness status the divinely required response became far more serious. *But the man that shall be unclean, and shall not purify himself, that soul shall be cut off from among the congregation, because he hath defiled the sanctuary of the LORD: the water of separation hath not been sprinkled upon him; he is unclean* (Num 19:20).

Separate Holy from Unholy ... or Die

The dramatic difference between the severity of these two divine responses to an unclean condition is based on attitude. The pursuit of holiness under Kingdom law by enlightened believers required a great respect for that holiness status. If one disrespected that holiness status by refusing to address and correct an unclean condition they were to be banished forever or executed. The guilt assigned for defiling the sanctuary was prompted by an attitude of disrespect for what is holy along with an ambivalence for what is unclean. This pursuit of holiness and avoidance of uncleanness is the understanding that is destroyed by the heart generated philosophy of equality. Holiness is a principle dependent upon the application of separation based on divine value assignments. The failure to separate what is holy from what is unclean is a sin of presumption, void of any possibility of repentance. Under Kingdom Age law the sin of presumption meant banishment or execution. Under Ecclesial Age law the sin of presumption is judgmentally equivalent to blaspheming the Holy Spirit. It is unforgivable.

Presumptuous Sin

There were repentance procedures for sins of weakness and ignorance. However, any sin performed presumptuously, pompously and arrogantly defying the divine Lawgiver, offered no avenue for repentance. *But the soul that doeth ought presumptuously, whether he be born in the land, or a stranger, the same reproacheth the LORD; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Because he hath despised the word of the LORD, and hath broken his commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him* (Num. 15:30-31). Immediately after this judgment declaration we read of the man who was stoned to death by the entire congregation, by divine command, for gathering sticks on a Sabbath day.

The 'accidental' death of a person afforded the responsible person safe access to the six cities of refuge. However, the 'intentional' death of another demanded the execution of the presumptuous murderer. The difference between safety and death highlighted the issue of intent, presumptuously or accidentally being responsible for the loss of another's life.

Eliminating the Infectious Nature of Holiness Disrespect

The man who arrogantly refused to accept the judgment of the priest in a matter was to be executed. *And the man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the priest that standeth to minister there before the LORD thy God, or unto the judge, even that man shall die: and thou shalt put away the evil from Israel. And all the people shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously* (Deut 17:12-13). A significant issue in the purpose of this divine law was arresting the leavening of the community of believers in this contagious attitude of presumptuous defiance. This is similar to the warning of Paul in his advice to withdraw fellowship from the young brother defiling his father's bed. The Corinthian Ecclesia was instructed to purge out the old leaven that they might be a new unleavened lump (1 Cor. 5). The temporary fellowship withdrawal (2 Cor. 2:5-11) was intended to benefit both this young brother and the entire Ecclesia (1 Cor. 5:5-6). If a presumptive attitude is not arrested or cut away, it will contagiously infect an entire community. Interestingly, Paul defines the motivation for this ecclesial resistance in addressing this necessary discipline as being "puffed up." *And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you* (vs. 2). According to the divinely inspired Apostle Paul, those who consistently refuse to address any form of Ecclesial discipline are motivated by arrogance. They are *puffed up*. Peter confirms this understanding when he powerfully warns the brotherhood of the false teachers that are always among us. *But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities* (2 Pet. 2:10). Those among us who are unwilling to reverse the progression into the lust of uncleanness and despise any authority over them (like those refusing to abide by the priestly judgments under Kingdom Law) are presumptuous and selfwilled. Peter goes on to describe these Brothers and Sisters within the brotherhood as waterless wells, Baalam-like, servants of corruption, dogs eating their own vomit and cleansed sows returning to the mire. Presumptuousness is a very, very serious failure.

A 'willful' sin following enlightenment (as opposed to ignorance or weakness) displays an unmistakable presumption of automatic forgiveness... as if forgiveness is simply some kind of technicality. Paul employs the clear **language of Kingdom Law** in relation to pursuing holiness and cleansing procedures when he freezes us with the finality of the judgment policy for presumptuous sin. *Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our **hearts sprinkled** from an evil conscience, and our **bodies washed** with pure water.... For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.* (Heb. 10:19-22, 26-27). There is no forgiveness for a willful, presumptuous sin where the principle of holiness is despised and the conditional blessing of forgiveness is not cherished but taken for granted. Just as there was no sin offering under Kingdom Law for a presumptuous sin, so even the sin offering of Christ will not afford forgiveness for the severe holiness disrespect of presumptuous sin. The only other category of unforgivable sin is the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. Fortunately our generation is not exposed to this danger, as we are still under the prophesied time of divine silence when the Holy Spirit activity is limited to the subtleties of providential activity. However, presumptuous sin is a very real possibility.

All Flesh is Grass

The first issue to be highlighted by the degrees of holiness is the very foundational problem in pursuing the image and likeness of our Creator, which is our own egos. The uninvited lusting of flesh and eye and the

incessantly surfacing pride of life each bubble up from our hearts no matter how desperately we work to suppress them. It is arrogance that catapulted a simple uncleanness issue into an unforgivable sin for which no sacrifice could be effective, whether it was the first Kingdom Age or the current Ecclesial Age. Respecting the principle of holiness meant personal inconvenience, meekness and sometimes even humiliation. However, the arrogance fueling the disrespecting of the principle of holiness through inaction dramatically exaggerated the divine response to that original departure from a state of holiness into an issue of life and death. Perhaps this is why the appointed prophet (John the Baptist) to prepare the way of our ultimate sin sacrifice (our Messiah) was instructed to declare that *all flesh is grass* (Isaiah 40:8; Mk 1:1-4). Peter confirms the delivery of this foundational message as a significant part of the original gospel of Christ (1 Peter 1:24-25). Our basic problem is that we think too much of ourselves.

This natural heart generated self promotion completely blocks initial as well as continuing enlightenment. Meekness is the exclusive path to understanding. This is why Moses, the meekest man in the world, was the only man to whom God would speak with as a friend, without the visions, parables, metaphorical expressions and dark sayings that are so necessary to circumcise the hearts of the rest of us (Num. 12). This is why only those circumcised in flesh and heart will enter Jerusalem and the temple during the Millennial Kingdom (Ezek 44:9; Is. 52:1). Arrogance is a natural product of the human heart, just like weeds in a garden. A creational confirmation of this principle is the need to circumcise the dust of the earth every spring so that the seeds of life might be sown in that dust to bring forth glorious and bountiful fruit to the sower. Farmers call this circumcising of the dust of the earth... plowing. They cut open the earth to break up its hard packed resistance to allow any sowing or fruit development. This is the same process as the circumcising of the human heart, made from the dust of the earth. An uncircumcised heart is completely resistant to the seed of life and cannot offer any fruit bounty to the divine sower. This is why fruit bearing plantlife is a symbol for the enlightened all through scripture (olive trees, fig trees, wheat, barley, vineyards) but non-fruit bearing plantlife (briers, thorns, weeds) are consistent symbols of the unenlightened and the enemies of righteousness. The very lesson of the seed declares the principle of resurrection (1 Cor. 15:35-38). Humility is the first step, the last step, and every step in-between in the path to understanding divine principles.

Arrogance, the disrespecting of the principle of holiness, was the incendiary catalyst that accelerated the fearful judgments in any departure from holiness from a simple procedure to death or banishment. We do not currently serve under the burden of Kingdom Laws during the Ecclesial Age. There are no ecclesial stonings. The discipline tool of Fellowship withdrawal was not intended as a banishment, but a corrective measure. However, societies around the planet seduce us with the self-worshipping principles of freedom and equality and Godless human fraternity. Our generation constitutes the fully mature bride of Christ, waiting for our groom. We should no longer need the stern looks, the hand slapping, bottom paddling and time outs the younger intended bride had to endure from our Heavenly Father for their maturing education in divine principles. More is expected of our generation. If we despise the principle of divine holiness, punctuated by separation and varying degrees of significance, where will we stand in the last day... to the right or left of our judge?

Bro Jim Dillingham

Holiness Through Separation

The principle of holiness was a primary theme of Kingdom Law. Respecting both behavioral and physical holiness was punctuated by fearful warnings of banishment and execution within that law. Kingdom Law will be restored, within our generation, with a powerful renewed emphasis on physical as well as behavioral holiness. Our greatest goal is to be awarded the position of an immortal priest/king in this restored Kingdom. One fascinating feature in context of the progressive divine education procedure concerning the principle of holiness is that only behavioral holiness is **stressed** during the Ecclesial Age. The emphasis on physical holiness during the initial and restored Kingdom Ages that book-end our Ecclesial Age is bound to the rotating educational theme of the four divinely appointed educational ‘ages’ running from creation to complete universal perfection. As we have noted previously, a divine age is bordered by a change in divine law in addition to a change in the priesthood and is always accompanied by an ascending level of miraculous validations for these appointed transitions. The first priesthood age was the Patriarchal Age where personal righteousness was the foundational educational theme. The second priesthood age was the initial Kingdom Age where behavioral sin was the foundational (not exclusive) educational theme. The third priesthood age is the Ecclesial Age where imputed righteousness is the foundational (not exclusive) educational theme. The fourth priesthood age will be the restored Kingdom Age where the physical application of sin will be the foundational educational theme. This pattern was the theme for the very first article in this series and expanded upon in number 9: The Divine Prayer Pattern. We do not have the space to re-confirm these conclusions but this platform of understanding is significant in our ascent to greater enlightenment concerning our beloved heavenly Father in reference to His principle of holiness.

Shifting Educational Emphasis During the Maturing Process

Yahweh certainly stresses certain educational aspects during specific ages. This emphasis rotation does not eliminate the significance of de-emphasized principles. That conclusion would presume an understanding that our Creator changes, that He operates by whim. *For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed* (Mal. 3:6). As parents we also teach our children principles with a progressive teaching pattern. Like our Heavenly Father, we want our children to understand the value and depth and interdependence of our behavioral and philosophical principles. However, we will employ different teaching patterns throughout the maturing stages of our children. At a very young stage, out of love, we will work to instill an instinctive relationship between unacceptable behavior and physical pain, which is also a divine principle. *He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes* (Prov. 13:24). As our child matures we will introduce a greater measure of the philosophy of the principles we want them to understand and value. This requires different patterns of discipline and reward. Puberty is a perfect example of how our education patterns for our children are bound to the stages in their mental and physical maturity. Our Heavenly Father established this progressive teaching pattern with mankind. Despite the overwhelming evidence throughout the Old Testament for the necessary sacrificial death and the resurrection of the Messiah to defeat sin and validate the righteousness of the Creator this truth is repeatedly described as a revealed mystery by Paul (Rom 16:25-26; Eph 3:3,9-10; Col 1:26-27). The truth of the matter had been subtly presented, but its clear understanding was not demanded by the divine teacher. Hindsight enables the illumination of powerful and repeated validations of this revealed mystery. Yahweh accommodated the incapacity for most of His children to understand this foundational issue... until Christ rose. This truth was no longer a mystery. The understanding of its significance is required in this stage of mankind’s maturing development within the Heavenly Father’s plan. The necessity for the death and resurrection of the Messiah was no less true during the Patriarchal and First Kingdom Ages,

but its understanding was not demanded or forced on God's children. This lesson pattern similarly applies to the principle of holiness.

Unlike the previous and subsequent divinely appointed ages the lesson of **physical** holiness is not emphasized during the Ecclesial Age. We have no dietary laws to observe in maintaining physical holiness. There are no ritual cleanliness procedures to follow in pursuing holiness. We are free to touch our dead without leaving our family for a week. There are no leprosy or bodily issue separation requirements. Mothers no longer present sin offerings for the righteous behavior of giving birth. The holiness emphasis for the Ecclesial Age is behavioral. *As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation (behavior/deportment); Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy (1 Pet 1:14-16).* The principle of physical holiness is still referenced in the teachings of the Ecclesial Age. They are simply not emphasized. *Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the **flesh** and **spirit**, perfecting holiness in the fear of God (2 Cor. 7:1).*

Dangerous Rationalization Opportunities From an Educational Emphasis Shift

Sadly, the current divine, temporary de-emphasis of the principle of physical holiness encourages challenges among God's children to the understanding of the original and eventual divine principle of physical and spiritual harmony, suggesting there is no physical aspect to divine principles, such as sin and holiness. The amazing capacity for the consistent historic blindness to spiritual principles among the enlightened throughout the ages is a testament to the incredible deceptive power of the human heart. The divine thought pattern requires the mind to control the heart. The success of the fleshly thought pattern is dependent upon the standard societal pattern of the heart controlling the mind. We are bombarded with societal exhortations to "listen to our hearts, to let our heart guide our way, follow our hearts and go with our first instincts." This is the broad path to destruction. This is why a greater vision and comprehension of eternal principles is always dependent upon the initial circumcising of the human heart. Meekness, the suppression of the naturally self-glorifying human heart, is the exclusive avenue toward true enlightenment. The instinctive imaginations of the heart, when shared by a community, take on a societal power resulting in inappropriate presumptions and ungodly paradigms. One example of this pattern can be witnessed in certain areas of the global Christadelphian community in relation to instinctive presumptions concerning the concept of brotherhood unity. 'Unity' among brethren, for the simple sake of unity, is sometimes presumed to be an overwhelmingly righteous goal, even to the detriment of divine truths (doctrine).

A distinctive issue bordering the principle of holiness is the principle of separation. Without any relation to the principle of separation, divine holiness has no definition, no clarity. Holiness is not just some preference that our Creator would really like to witness in His children. Holiness is demanded. It is a prerequisite for divine acceptance. *Be ye holy, for I am holy* is a current, future and historical command. The term *common* in scripture is synonymous with *unclean*. All things being kept *common*, or equal, eliminates holiness and is equivalent to a divinely unclean condition. Holiness is not contagious like uncleanness. Under divine law the physical condition of uncleanness (divine unacceptability) was passed by the mere physical touch of anything that had directly or indirectly come in contact with an unclean person (Lev. 15:4-12). However, the condition of holiness by touch could only be achieved by **direct** contact with either the bronze altar or the flesh of the sin offering (Ex 29:37; Lev 6:27... refer to number 12 in this series: Holiness by Touch). The transition from clean to unclean and from holy to unholy was quick and very, very easy. The transition to holiness was very restrictive, limited and difficult. This glaring disparity emphasizes the severe danger of embracing the instinctive impression that unity at all costs is divinely acceptable.

Moving the Ancient Landmarks

This principle is currently being tested in North America. The goal of 'unity' is being promoted to the expense of doctrinal significance. Bridging documents are being generated to widen the borders of separation to accommodate an inappropriate concept of unity. Just like holiness, there are **degrees** of significance in reference to other divine principles. This is how merciful forgiveness has the capacity to over-rule judgment. The principle of the justification of the Creator before all mankind, achieved at both the beginning and the end of the Millennial Kingdom, is currently diminished while the principle of divine patience affords everyone the opportunity to repent. The principles of judgment and divine vindication are no less significant while divine grace is promoted. However, this encourages some to dramatically over-emphasize grace as completely eclipsing judgment and vindication in their presumptions of divine approval. There is an absence of fear in expanding the borders or moving the landmarks of our community that were so carefully set by our pioneers. *Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set* (Prov. 22:28). Expanding the borders of unity presumes the diminishing of the principle of separation.

The principles of separation and holiness are the contradictions of the flesh principles of equality and freedom. That heart generated and instinctively comfortable concept of equality promotes fraternal and gender unity without distinctions of significance or headships (layers of authority) or philosophical differences. Toleration of diversity is the presumed standard of righteousness in our global society. This is why mankind presumes the God-despising definition of peace as being the absence of disturbance, instead of the exact opposite divine definition of peace being the presence of harmony (Eph 2:14-15). One can never understand the lessons of the peace offering, the blessing of the peacemakers or the hope for peace on earth without this foundational definition, so dramatically opposed to the societal paradigm. The pursuit of any divinely approvable unity cannot be achieved on the basis of accommodating diversity. Unity must be pursued on the basis of promoting harmony, with clearly defined borders that are not blurred by bridging documents intended to accommodate greater diversity. The pursuit of unity based on respecting diversity is simply a 'social' unity, a dramatically diminished unity that is completely unacceptable to God but revered by mankind as the highest pursuit.

Calling Evil Good and Good Evil

Separation is considered by our global generation to be a socially immoral result of arrogance and detrimental to social unity and peace. Separation (sometimes appropriately) is presumed to be a degrading declaration concerning those from whom one separates himself. Separation is ego deflating and considered somewhat insulting to those from whom a community or one personally separates. Therefore the principle of separation is presumed to be un-loving. Our Heavenly Father's righteous principle of separation is considered to be unrighteous and ungodly by the societies of our world within which we live and operate. Separation is viewed negatively as judgmental criticism instead of positively as an exhortation to improvement. In fact, it is both.

Separation To and Separation From

The divine concept of separation is certainly presented powerfully within the laws and rituals of God's Kingdom. The clearest and most comprehensive application would be the law of the nazirite. This is where we see the dual application of separating 'from' and separating 'to' defined clearly. The subject of the nazirite was considered extensively in articles 10 and 11 entitled Unity through Separation. Our theme is now holiness and therefore we simply need to reference some observations from that examination. The motivating precedent for the nazirite law was a separation 'to' Yahweh. *When either man or woman shall separate themselves to vow a vow of a Nazirite, to separate themselves **unto** the LORD...* (Num. 6:2). However, in order to separate 'to' our Creator, He demanded that man or woman separate themselves '**from**' four categories. These four separation categories bound the nazirite to the restrictions and features of the Kingdom of God's High Priest, who also was forbidden strong drink, forbidden to ever touch any dead body whatsoever, was supposed to be a cultivator of God's vineyard (body of believers) and not a consumer (exploiter) of the vineyards bounty and had the

“consecration” (Hebrew is *nezer*, also translated crown) of God upon his head, which coincidentally displayed the inscription: *Holiness to Yahweh*. As pointed out in number 11 of this series we find that under the laws of the subsequent Ecclesial Priesthood Age that the faithful bind themselves to our High Priest in exactly the opposite fashion. We are commanded to ‘touch’ the dead body of our Messiah by being baptized into his death and by eating his flesh as seen in the broken bread. We drink the strong drink and partake of the grape by sipping from the memorial cup. Our Sisters cover their heads to avoid shaving their heads in order to pray through our High Priest to Yahweh. We are still separating ourselves to and from in our pursuit of Yahweh, but now we have a new High Priest focus that is eternal and not temporary. We don’t demonstrate our separation by emulating an office but a particular man, the ultimate High Priest.

The separation **emphasis** for the nazirites under Kingdom Law was a separation ‘from’. The separation **emphasis** for the nazirites of the spirit under Ecclesial Age law is a separation ‘to’. The danger we constantly face is the natural urge to oversimplify in order to accommodate heart generated instincts, the unrelenting influence of the sin propensity in our cursed flesh. An emphasis does not indicate exclusivity. We must separate ‘from’ as well as separate ‘to’, thereby igniting the disdain of the societies we live among and those among our community who embrace the wisdom of the flesh. The current wisdom of the flesh is strictly self-affirmation with a complete absence of criticism. This is the incomplete process of separating ‘to’ without separating ‘from’. It is incorrectly presumed that the absence of criticism will encourage a positive self-image and therefore generate more desirable behavior patterns. This philosophy presumes the absence of any pre-disposition to ungodly behavior. However, no one has to teach children to deceive or be violent or disrespectful. Human beings know these things instinctively, because we are all born with sin generating hearts that are not dependent on any priming. We have to teach our children **not** to act ungodly, because the curse of sin and death has made that the default behavior pattern for mankind. Criticism, and even quite harsh criticism, was certainly employed repeatedly by Christ and the apostles when necessary. Exclusive self-affirmation is not the pattern of true righteousness.

Holiness and Separation Are Inseparable

One of the consistent features of the laws of the Kingdom of God was (and will be again) how the application of separation was impossible to isolate from the goal of holiness. Departures from both physical or behavioral holiness demanded various degrees of separation. During the Ecclesial Age, when only behavioral holiness is emphasized, separation is still a necessary feature of that required holiness. Divine emphasis does change throughout our Creator’s educational process, however His principles **never** change! *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore **come out from among them, and be ye separate**, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you (1 Cor 6:14-17).* Note the Kingdom Law reference by Paul to the physical barrier from holiness: *touch not the unclean thing*. Yoking ourselves with unbelievers (marriage, business partnerships, etc.) is directly identified with the negative divine precedent of uncleanness by touch. Those who were ritually unclean under the laws of the Kingdom of God were separated from the community of believers in a number of ways. One very significant separation due to uncleanness would be that the unclean were absolutely forbidden from partaking of any peace offering while they were unclean. In fact, if an unclean person arrogantly ate from a peace offering they were to be banished forever, with no opportunity to return. There would be no seven day wait before rejoining their family and friends. There would be no simple clothes change or bathing at sunset. There was no procedure for reversing the expulsion. *But the soul that eateth of the flesh of the sacrifice of peace offerings, that pertain unto the LORD, having his uncleanness upon him, even that soul shall be cut off from his*

people. Moreover the soul that shall touch any unclean thing, as the uncleanness of man, or any unclean beast, or any abominable unclean thing, and eat of the flesh of the sacrifice of peace offerings, which pertain unto the LORD, even that soul shall be cut off from his people (Lev 7:20-21). It should be understood that the peace offering indicated fellowship with Yahweh. It was the only altar offering where the offerer themselves partook of the offering. Yahweh received His portion on the altar. The officiating priest received the shoulder. The offering individual also partook of this same fellowship meal... so making "peace." However, any ritually unclean person was absolutely forbidden to participate in this fellowship meal. What do you think that Kingdom of God precedent suggests about those who refuse to separate ourselves from the unbelievers surrounding us during the Ecclesial Age?

The Illegitimate Salvation Paradigm

The principle of separation, absolutely essential for enjoying any degree of divine holiness, is never easy to apply. It is considered impolite, contradictory to society's false policy of unity based on toleration and invites abuse. The divine policy of holiness by separation is always isolating (by its nature) and therefore can be sometimes quite lonely. However, separation can also generate inappropriate images of personal exaltation and arrogant personal significance. The Jews developed this personal self image or superiority and disdain for the unclean pagan Gentiles. There are countless scriptural examples of how these 'Christadelphians' of their age were blind to their own failures but sharply aware of the unclean condition of the Gentiles. Jeremiah speaks of these children of God as being incapable of blushing, having a harlot's forehead and being unashamed. Jeremiah is challenged by God to search through Jerusalem to find a single man among the self-proclaimed faithful that seeks truth and executes judgment in order to free Jerusalem from its impending destruction. Are we so arrogant a community to presume that we are nothing like every generation of believers that have preceded us? Are we unfamiliar with the implications of the Laodicean challenge in Revelation 3? How many of the believers were saved in the flood? How many of Lot's ecclesia, easily numbering in the hundreds, escaped Sodom's judgment? How many men of the more than 600,000 that left Egypt actually entered the promised land? Despite the thousands upon thousands witnessing the miracles of Jesus and eating his multiplied bread and fish, there was only 120 in that upper room to be baptized with the Holy Spirit. This was an image of the atonement of immortalization that will be realized by the truly faithful at the second immortalization event (of the three) in the divine plan at the beginning of the restored Kingdom of God. There were only 120 that were showered with that *earnest* of the promise of inheriting the divine nature among the millions of 'Christadelphians' in the land of Israel at that Feast of the Firstfruits (Pentecost). The entire nation was enlightened as well as in covenant relationship with Yahweh. There were millions of Christadelphians during Christ's ministry. But there were only 120 that were baptized with the Holy Spirit in that second of the three outpourings of the Holy Spirit (Christ, the 120 and the Gentiles at the home of Cornelius). Josephus estimates there were close to three million Jews trapped inside Jerusalem during the feast of Unleavened Bread in 70AD when the Roman army under General Titus laid siege. Josephus determined this best guess on the basis of the number of Passover lambs reported by the priests along with the average of 10-20 people per lamb. It was against Jewish traditional law for less than 10 people to partake of a single Passover lamb.

It appears to be a widely accepted yet very odd presumption in our community that a great majority of Christadelphians will be approved by Christ at the judgment and invited to inherit the Kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world. This presumption has absolutely no scriptural support. Every single judgment/salvation precedent in scripture indicates only a few among the enlightened and self-proclaimed believers will be acceptable. Jesus puts an exclamation point on this understanding at the conclusion of two separate judgment parables when he states, in relation to those called to the judgment, *many are called, but few are chosen.* (Matt 20:16; 22:14). The Christadelphian community defines itself with all scriptural accuracy as

The Called (Greek is *ekklesia*), but only a few of those “called” to judgment will be chosen, according to our assigned judge.

Holiness is a very difficult pursuit. It is not a saunter or an amble. It is a difficult, painful, lonely path while we are constantly being beckoned over to the nearby party along the broad path to destruction with the street signs painted over to read “Path of the Righteous” and “The Way for All the Truly Good People of the Earth.” The path to holiness takes us directly through the principle of separation. Without separation there can be no holiness, which is an absolute requirement for any level of divine acceptance. Is it really a wise course to be redefining the ancient borders, respecting diversity and redefining unity as being centered in each other as opposed to our Heavenly Father?

Jim Dillingham

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Secrets of the Altar Offerings

It is fascinating to see how far humanity has distanced itself from the divine understandings of righteousness and wickedness. With supreme self-righteous confidence our societies declare animal sacrifices and stoning executions and capital punishment to be barbaric, ignorant and evil. Any degree of mortal human life is presumed to be sacred and not divinely cursed. Righteousness has been redefined as wickedness and wickedness has been redefined as righteousness. Isaiah addresses this community based self delusion: *Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!* (Is. 5:20-21). However, it should be understood that our Brother Isaiah was directing these “woes” to the enlightened in covenant relationship of his generation... the Christadelphians of that age. The challenge in rejecting or respecting worldly philosophy should be even greater in our age where we do not enjoy the benefit of belonging to a separate Christadelphian nation, with our own laws, traditions and paradigms. We live and work and relax among the Godless and self-absorbed who manufacture gods in their own image and likeness. In order to communicate and conduct commerce and live by the laws of our nations and communities we have to be able to understand the presumptions of our Godless neighbors and supervisors and customers and teachers and even family. Their definitions of simple words like peace and love and truth are dramatically different from divine definitions. The God-degrading term ‘nature’ replaces the respectful term ‘creation’ in their vocabulary. Maintaining a spirit focus while still communicating and operating in a world of flesh takes extreme vigilance, with daily Bible readings, weekly Bible classes, relentless reading of Bible commentaries, memorial service revitalizations, strong social ties within the brotherhood for our whole family, frequent study-weekend attendance and an annual Bible School presence. However, most importantly it is the frequent meditations, the musing and wondering that is encouraged by the intentional complexity of the written word of God (Bible) and the spoken word of God (creation) that can re-plumb our minds and hearts. Avoiding having our minds and hearts digested by the societies we must live within is a very difficult endeavor. It is increasingly difficult to effectively preach and teach the truth and we are losing our children to the voracious appetites of the mirror worshipping societies engulfing us. Peter warns us: *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist steadfast in the faith* (1 Pet 5:8-9).

Animals' Rights

We approach the powerful but hidden lessons of the altar offerings, recognizing that the societies of the world are morally repulsed by the concept of butchering and burning live animals to worship a loving God. PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals), with its 2,000,000 members, contradict our Creator by claiming we have no moral right to eat animals (Gen. 9:3; Lev. 11; Mk 7:18-19). PETA self-righteously defies Yahweh by claiming we have no right to use animal hides for clothing or covering (Ex. 35:5-6; 36:19). PETA declares God to be immoral, maintaining that we have no right to impugn the independent rights of animals in any way whatsoever (Lev 17:11). The worship patterns of our current divinely appointed Ecclesial Age do not demand animal offerings on a flaming bronze altar. However, when the Kingdom of God is restored this practice will be resumed. We read of how the Prince himself will be offering animal sacrifices in the temple when the knowledge of the glory of Yahweh spreads across the globe like the waters covering the sea (Ezek 45:17, 22; 46:4). Truly understanding the secret lessons of the altar offerings demands a respect for their validity, directly opposing popular world opinion.

Everything Affects Everything Else

Each detail of the altar offerings is significant to the total understanding. This is a divine rule that is evident in all of our Creator's expressions and deeds. They are all inter-related and interdependent. The integrity of gospel truth as well as the features of creation (or 'nature' as the nations of the world would inappropriately refer to our sin-cursed environment) is entirely dependent on every other feature making up the whole. Nothing stands apart, isolated or untouched by any other expression, action or feature. Paul demonstrates this principle in reference to the Ecclesia being like a human body (1 Cor 12; Rom 12:4). Surely we have all observed that once one feature of the gospel is modified, every other doctrine is affected. This is why it is so difficult to deny a single Christian gospel distortion of divine truth, because one lie corrupts everything and not just a single feature. If we promote the hope of resurrection as the exclusive avenue of salvation then we challenge the self-worshipping delusions of the immortality of the soul, being immediately transported to a ghostly heavenly kingdom upon death, the existence of a subterranean eternal torture pit presided over by an evil immortal angel, etc. We get peppered with "what about" questions that can quickly degrade the conversation. Similarly, if we think we can eliminate wetlands for construction purposes without creating a mutating domino effect throughout a regional environment then we haven't learned anything from history. Everything our Heavenly Father says and does is bound to everything else He says and does. He is flawless. He is always right, no matter what. He was right to spare Aaron for casting the golden calf and He was right for instantly incinerating Aaron's (presumably) inebriated sons for introducing an unauthorized feature into the priestly ordination procedure. Yahweh was right for mandating the expulsion or annihilation of the Canaanites from the promised land. Our Heavenly Father is always right. That right-ness (righteousness) must be respected at all times if we ever wish to ascend the platforms of divine truth to the higher platforms of wisdom and glory. Every detail of the altar offerings is significant to the total understanding of divine principles and our Creator's ultimate will.

Five or Six?

An example of how this principle of flawless interconnected design operates would be to consider the simple question of determining the number of altar offerings. There appears to be a question as to whether there are five or six altar offerings. There were certainly five independent categories of altar offerings (burnt, peace, grain, sin and trespass). However, the drink offering only accompanied the burnt and peace offerings and was not offered independently. Therefore some wish to degrade this offering as unworthy to be included with the five. This is an inappropriate presumption on the basis of at least two significant issues. The first would be that Yahweh Himself refers to this as an "altar offering". He requires the drink "offering" to be included along with the meal offering. Oil is also a required component of certain offerings but unlike the wine, oil is not referred to as an "offering" by the divine Lawgiver. The first reason we should include the drink offering as being one of

the six altar offerings is because the divine Lawgiver refers to it as an offering, just like the other five categories, despite the absence of its independent status.

Sin's Textbook

The second reason is far deeper and more powerful, confirming our foundational premise for flawless interdependence for all divine expressions and actions. We have examined the rotating educational emphasis of the divinely appointed priestly ages that are defined by a change in the law, a change in the priesthood and validated by an increasing measure of miraculous power through each transition. We have examined the flow from the Patriarchal Age into the First Kingdom Age into the Ecclesial Age and we now wait for the transition into the Millennial Kingdom Age. The law, ritual and structure modifications mandated for each subsequent age portray a very definite educational emphasis for each phase. The very obvious theme for the Ecclesial Age is imputed righteousness as opposed to personal righteousness (Patriarchal Age). It should be understood that an emphasis does not suggest any shred of exclusivity. It is the dangerous presumption of exclusivity that is the evidence of the great oversimplification mental tripping point of the human heart. Imputed righteousness is certainly not the **exclusive** lesson of the Ecclesial Age, simply the very clear educational **emphasis**. The educational emphasis for the First Kingdom Age would be the lessons concerning transgressional sin. Let's prove that premise again before we build upon that foundational issue concerning the significant number of altar offerings.

Rom. 3:19-20 *Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.* The law established not just the guilt of the faithful but all the world (Gk: kosmos). The law suffered no sputtering objections of innocence. If one wants to know about the subject of sin, they must study the law for **by the law is the knowledge of sin**.

Rom 5: 19 *Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound.* The law was intended to magnify the offence, slicing open the crusted over conscience shielding the natural arrogance of the heart from the pain of shame.

Rom. 7:8,13 *Without the law sin was dead...But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.* The law empowers sin. The law was the spotlight, the magnifying glass of sin. The law forbade the diminishing of the horribleness and the crushing weight of sin.

Gal. 3:19 *Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made.* Transgressional sin was the determined educational emphasis of Kingdom Law.

Gal. 3:24-25 *Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.* Paul references the temporary educational aspect of the law serving the purpose of delivering us to our Messiah. The law was intended to crush us with the realization that we are pitifully incapable of self-justification. With silenced mouths and heads hanging in shame from the relentlessly smothering weight of the law, we recognize the need for a savior. We needed a hero to defeat our enemy, sin, whose great weapon was the law. That law will be employed again for the same purpose when the reluctantly enlightened of the world have to learn about sin during the Millennial Kingdom. Hopefully, it will be our privilege to teach them... exactly the issues we are currently considering.

Kingdom law was the divinely appointed educational classroom to understand the divine right of judgment for ungodly behavior. That certainly wasn't the only lesson within the law, simply the emphasis. If one presumes they can understand sin without studying its divinely appointed textbook (Kingdom Law) then they are suggesting they are smarter than their Creator.

Now that we have identified the Kingdom Law theme we now enjoy a solid platform from which to identify the appropriate number of altar offerings as being six and not five. Six is the number of the curse of sin and death, being identified with sin, death, hard labor, disease, subjugation and flesh. Since the educational emphasis of the law is the identification, magnification and spotlighting of sin then the fact that there are six altar offerings perfectly aligns within that educational emphasis, while five would be contradictory to that theme.

The Journey of the Drink Offering Through the Ages

The drink offering, although it was not an independent offering, is a very interesting progressive study throughout the four appointed educational ages. Jacob poured a drink offering onto a memorial rock at Bethel upon his return from Padanaram (Gen 35:14). The bread and the wine (grain and drink offerings) are the only two altar offerings to continue from the First Kingdom Age into the Ecclesial Age, being employed in the memorial of Christ's death and resurrection. Although the four blood offerings (burnt, peace, sin and trespass) are eliminated with the elimination of the altar, the drink offering becomes the single symbol comprising those four blood offerings, being identified with the blood of Christ. The cup was the new covenant in the blood of Christ and the communion with the blood of Christ. Disrespecting this cup burdens us with the guilt of the blood of the Lord. The blood abstinence law of both the Patriarchal and Kingdom Ages (Gen 9:4; Lev 17:10) is reversed in the drink offering of the Ecclesial Age as we are commanded to drink the 'blood' of Christ and that if we do not eat his flesh and drink his blood then we have no life in us (John 6:53-56).

Although the drink offering is mentioned as being offered during the Millennial Kingdom Age (Ezek 45:17) we note the absence of the drink offering from the burnt offerings of the Millennial Kingdom (Ezek 46:4-15), which was never the case when Kingdom Law issued from Sinai. The grain/unleavened bread and the wine offerings always accompanied the burnt and peace offerings under the laws of the First Kingdom Age. This change in Kingdom Law, along with others such as the absence of the Feast of the Firstfruits and the absence of the evening burnt offering are all features of the progressive educational posture of our Heavenly Father's teaching pattern. There are distinctive lessons hidden away only for those with eyes to see and ears to hear. We will be able to make conclusions concerning this progressive application of the drink offering throughout the ages, but first we need foundational observations.

The Christ Platform for All Life Offerings

The first issue is the identification of the bronze altar as representing our savior. We have presented this before, but since this understanding is extremely significant to our altar offering observations we will take a brief moment to re-solidify this issue. Heb 13:10 *We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.* The Kingdom laws generated from Sinai mandated the priests of that age to live from the bronze altar, sharing the benefits of the offerings. However they were forbidden to eat from the sin offering on the altar when its blood was brought into the Tabernacle (Heb. 13:11; Lev 6:30). We, the priesthood of the Ecclesial Age with our laws generated from Jerusalem, are actually required to eat this same sin offering category from our Christ altar. Christ's offering for sin brought his blood (life) into the antitypical Tabernacle of his Father's presence. Christ is the altar from which we eat the bread and wine, the symbols of the sin offering whose blood was brought into the true Holy Place. An additional confirmation of this understanding is a unique feature shared by that bronze altar and Jesus. Touching the altar meant instant holiness (Ex 30:28-29). Similarly, the touch of Jesus instantly reversed conditions of uncleanness to clean. Jesus touched the leper who immediately became ritually clean. The woman with a 12 year bodily issue touched Jesus and was instantly healed. Jesus touched the dead 12 year old daughter of Jairus. He was not made unclean by that touch, like all other Israelites would be. The girl came back to life. The bronze altar upon which the six altar offerings were presented to Yahweh represents the only platform for any acceptability to the ultimate Lawgiver. The altar of burnt offering projects our Messiah.

Basic Observations

There are several associations we can observe among these six altar offerings. The meal and drink offerings (bread and wine) were bloodless offerings. These two are the only altar offerings to continue into the Ecclesial Age, but are still bound to the altar (Jesus Christ). There are four blood offerings but two distinct categories in those four offerings. The burnt and peace offerings indicate positive behavioral issues while the sin and trespass offerings highlight negative behavioral issues. This separation between these two categories is divinely underlined by the fact that only the burnt and peace offerings were ever directly accepted by fire from heaven. There were, interestingly, four occasions when fire fell from heaven for burnt and peace offerings (Aaronic priestly ordination: Lev. 9:24; David's offering on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, marking the geographical location for the temple to be constructed by Solomon: 1 Chron 21:26; the dedication of that same Jerusalem temple 2 Chron 7:1; and Elijah's vindication on Mt Carmel: 1 Kings 18:38). While there were occasions when fire from heaven consumed 'sinners' there were no sin offerings or trespass offerings accepted in this manner. On the basis of this divine precedent we are free to separate these four blood offerings into two separate categories.

The Two Categories of Judgment

These two sub-categories of the four blood altar offerings project the two categories of behavior that our judge, that Messiah altar, will look for when he examines our lives with us. This is another one of the many tripping points whereby heart generated thinking will trick us into the false comfort of a fearless self-righteousness. The enlightened will be judged on the basis of how we have promoted righteousness in our lives as well as how we have denied wickedness. There is absolutely no avenue for any 'either-or' frame of reference on this issue. Many seem to presume that if they haven't done horrible things in their lives that they are assured of judgment success. The avoidance of evil is only half the battle. We also have to pursue righteousness. Others seem to think that all the good things they have done in their lives more than balances out significant indiscretions. This too is an inappropriate presumption. We do not have the freedom to concentrate on **either** promoting righteousness **or** avoiding wickedness.

The terms of judgment relentlessly repeated throughout scripture center on our deeds (Rev 22:12; Rom 2:6; 2 Cor 5:10; Rev 20:11-13; Matt 16:27). We will be judged according to what we have done and what we have said, but also what we have not done and have not said. The five unwise virgins in Matthew 25 are rejected for their inactivity. The lazy servant who hid his single talent in the dust of the earth was condemned for his inactivity. The goats placed to the left of the judge in that chapter's third judgment parable were rejected because they did nothing when they had opportunities to befriend their judge through his family. It is our deeds that truly prove our heart, as we can do absolutely nothing that we do not choose to do. The unrepentant frequently defend their inappropriate choices by sputtering something about "having" to follow that course... or being "forced" to pursue unwise directions in life or "never having the time" to read daily from the Bible with our family. These are false and pitiful excuses, but the easiest person for any one of us to lie to is the face in the mirror. The 'Chrstadelphians' at Jerusalem who persecuted Jeremiah for highlighting their divine unacceptability were described by our Heavenly Father as not having the capacity to blush (Jer 3:2-3; 5:3; 8:12). Just like the two blood categories of altar offerings we must actively pursue righteousness and actively avoid wickedness throughout our lives. We will be judged by what we have said and done as well as what we have not done.

One image of this is the brass man (like our Christ altar) that has two measuring devices with which to measure the temple of Ezekiel's vision. One is a measuring reed of six cubits and the other is an indeterminate length of flax line. The temple is a projection of Christ and the saints, within which our Creator will take residence (John 14:23). When the bronze judge (Jesus) comes to measure us as to whether or not we will be chosen to be part of

the temple of our Creator's residence, he will use two measuring tools: how we denied wickedness and how we promoted righteousness... just like the two categories of living offerings consumed on the bronze altar.

The altar offerings provide a rich tapestry of detail concerning the principles of our Heavenly Father and what he expects from those who wish to reshape themselves into His image and likeness. We will be identifying the clearly defined behavioral patterns sought from the burnt and peace offerings. We will examine how these themes blend with the various divinely appointed celebrations of both the First Kingdom Age and the Millennial Kingdom Age. There are differences that should be understood. Why is there only a morning daily burnt offering described in the restored Kingdom? Why are the quantity of burnt offerings for every Sabbath doubled from four to eight in the restored Kingdom? Why is there a bloodless sin offering for the very poor? Why are there sin offerings required for guiltless and even righteous behavior? Why are there three categories of the peace offering with their descending significance? What particular offering allowed a blemished animal and why? These are questions, I would imagine, that the immortal priests of the restored Kingdom will be asked by the newly curious when the glory of the knowledge of the Creator increasingly spreads across the globe like the waters cover the sea. Like David preparing for the temple he could not build himself, let us vigorously prepare for the most wonderful vocation for which we are not even equipped with the capacity to imagine how wonderful it will be (1 Cor 2:9; Is. 64:4).

Jim Dillingham

Vocational Training for an Immortal Priesthood No. 34 December 2010

Secrets of the Altar Offerings No 2

Ascending the platforms of understanding invited by the shadows of divine communication is always challenged by the overwhelming natural fleshly urge to oversimplify. We like our foundational understandings to be simple, basic and easily ordered. Unfortunately, very little about our Creator's communication procedures is simple. Therefore the common practice is to concentrate on certain issues and simply ignore or redefine any challenges to our preferred and comfortable interpretations concerning divine intent. Different patterns are employed for different environments. Outside the community of the enlightened it is the commonly accepted definitions of scriptural language that block understanding of the divine intent. It is expected to be understood that the word soul indicates an immortal ghost-like conscious personality. The many scriptural references to souls actually dying are completely ignored, even when read aloud. The paradigm is presumed without question, even by non-believers, thereby completely blocking any possibility of understanding eternal truths.

We Can't Climb A Broken Ladder

This mental obstacle of oversimplification enables a social group (unenlightened or enlightened) to confidently structure a framework of shared presumptions. These shared presumptions establish a level of comfortable confidence. However, when those presumptions are incorrect or just partially accurate then very little spiritual depth develops. Only truth can lead to greater truth. This is why only the enlightened have an opportunity to see the far greater glory within the shadows, dreams, visions, rituals, and intentional complexity of divine communication, whether written or spoken. The unenlightened cannot possibly witness the perfect symmetrical beauty connecting all divine communications, embracing both scripture and creation.

The Impervious Evidence of Flawless Symmetry

The apostle Paul repeatedly demonstrates this flawless symmetry by confirming the spiritual lessons of the Ecclesial Age for the first century believers by referencing laws and rituals of the previous Kingdom Age. As Paul writes in Greek he does not offer linguistic examinations from lexicons or Hebrew root word definitions and redefinitions. In confirming the newly appointed educational focus of the Ecclesial Age Paul references the Levitical Priesthood, the laws of sacrifice, and blood laws. These are the very rituals and laws being replaced that Paul references as the keys to understanding the new Ecclesial Age revelations. In emphasizing the significance and procedures of Ecclesial Age rituals he also offers the testimony of creation. *But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression* (1 Tim 2:12-14). Paul's proof for that divinely inspired Ecclesial Age command was the order of creation and the Edenic judgment for failure, not Hebrew word studies. We cannot object to the legitimacy of the silence ritual without questioning the legitimacy of the creative order or the Edenic judgment. Paul repeatedly demonstrates how everything is interconnected. This is the absolute key to witnessing a greater and greater measure of divine glory in this present age, during the time of the prophesied divine silence, the very famine of the word of God (Amos 8:11-12).

Therefore as we begin to plumb the lessons of the altar offerings we recognize the need to test our conclusions on the basis of how each determination blends perfectly with every other determination, every other law in every other age as well as the laws of creation. Nothing can stand alone or isolated. There must be a structure to our understandings where each determination both supports and is supported by every other altar offering determination. That structure must also fit perfectly into the larger structure of all divine principles that are veiled within the framework of the rotating educational emphasis in the divinely appointed ages of continuing revelations. It is our understanding of the basic divine truths that enables us to see into the shadows with our lamps of basic enlightenment. That sword of truth has circumcised the mirror worship issuing naturally from the human heart. Unlike the rest of humanity, we have eyes to see.

Rising From the Platforms of These Understandings

In our previous commentary we noted certain basic observations that will serve as the foundation for the structure of our altar offerings considerations. The bronze platform for the altar offerings is powerfully identified with our Messiah. There were six altar offerings but only five of them were independent offerings. There were three clear divisions within those six altar offerings.

1. The burnt and peace offerings both projected a positive behavioral emphasis.
2. The sin and trespass offerings projected the reality of negative human behavior and the need for reconciliation.
3. The two bloodless altar offerings (bread/grain and wine/drink) were the only two altar offerings to continue into the next Age with the drink offering representing all the discontinued blood offerings within the context of the memorial service.

There are five altar offerings imbedded in the shadows of the memorial service wine: 1. the bloodless Drink Offering; 2. Burnt; 3. Peace; 4. Sin and 5. Trespass. The always unleavened grain/flour/bread offering continues separately into the Ecclesial Age through the bread of the memorial service that absolutely must be broken before consumption... or it would be a denial of significant divine principles.

Three Days and Three Nights

The altar offerings are about the sacrificial death of the Messiah. Although the resurrection is implied in the memorial service, Jesus clearly emphasizes his death in the bread and wine memorials representing his body and his blood. The altar offerings are certainly related to the death of the Messiah. The three divisions of two

related offerings within the six have an application in his death in the context of how Christ specifically defines the term of his death as being 3 sets of days and nights. *For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth* (Matt 12:40). Our King could have described the period of his death in a wide range of timeframes, from simply three days to the number of watches to the number of hours, etc. The three days and three nights of Christ's death make an interesting parallel to the three hours of daylight followed by the three hours of darkness from the time of Christ's crucifixion to his death (Mark 15:25, 33-37). These observations, parallels and patterns are invisible to those who foolishly subscribe to the Christian misinformation of a Friday afternoon death and a Sunday morning resurrection. There is no depth to that two evening and one day contradiction of Christ's prophecy of being three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The common mistake is presuming the Sabbath preceding the Messiah's death was a seventh day Sabbath instead of the High Day Sabbath recorded by John (19:31) that served as the first day of the feast week (Lev. 23:7). There are always two Sabbaths during the eight days from Passover through the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Just as the miracle of the ripping of the temple veil from heaven to earth served as a highly significant miracle coincident with the death of Christ, so also the divinely imposed three hours of natural light followed by three hours of unnatural darkness during the crucifixion of Christ is highly significant. The six hours of his crucifixion presented in Mark's gospel fits within the consistent numerical pattern of the number six being identified with the curse of sin and death, along with all of the effects of that curse. The initial light followed by the darkness in the six hours of our Messiah's execution reverses the usual progression emphasized throughout scripture of darkness before light, as in the evening and morning of each creation day. That darkness before light progression is a dominant scriptural pattern we have considered previously. It is so fittingly perfect that our current world has mutated the creational pattern to begin and end their days in total darkness, instead of continuing the divine precedent of beginning in darkness but ending in light. This reverse progression of light before darkness (spiritual before natural) during the crucifixion is another veiled validation of the divine orchestration of the reconciliation process. *God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation* (2 Cor 5:19). It was through the death of our Messiah that we can enjoy reconciliation. It is on the basis of his immortality that we may enjoy life for an eternity. *For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life* (Rom. 5:10). This is the two stage process of death to the flesh and life to the spirit that is evident in so many of scripture's salvation shadows. The death of the Messiah is all about the declaration of the Creator's righteousness for His judgment that sin must die, that sin cannot continue endlessly like righteousness (as opposed to every form of apostate reversal for this divine truth). The lessons of the altar offerings can be harnessed to validate our understandings concerning eternal divine truths and to exhort us concerning divinely approved behavior patterns to pursue as well as avoid. However, these six offerings should always be considered within the constraining framework of the **death** of our Messiah in order to avoid heart generated embellishments of fleshly postulations.

The Blood Foundation

Another key foundational understanding for altar offering considerations would be the lesson of the blood. The lesson of the blood must be highly significant, as we are specifically told it is the icon of atonement. *For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul* (Lev. 17:11). Perhaps we remember from a far earlier commentary that there were two great divinely appointed blood laws imposed during the Patriarchal Priesthood Age and First Kingdom Priesthood Age. The first was that blood must never be eaten. When the Creator offered mankind permission to eat meat after the flood He forbid the ingestion of blood. *Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things. But flesh with the life thereof, which is*

the blood thereof, shall ye not eat (Gen. 9:3-4). The key to understanding why this law of blood abstinence is so significant is that the blood is the symbol of life. However, there are four separate categories of life presented in scripture. The blood only represents one of them.

The life of our Creator never had a beginning and will never end. His life is the source for all life. The angels, Christ and eventually the immortalized saints possess a derived immortality, but certainly share a beginning. Adam and Even were changed from an undying to dying life. They did not possess immortality, obviously, but initially had a nature that was not cursed mortality. The “very good” status of creation eliminates any possibility of the presence of death, which is the evidence of sin. The fourth life category is mortality where death is assured. Just as Adam possessed two of the life categories, so our Messiah possessed both mortality and currently a derived immortality. However, blood only represents the last of these four life categories: mortal life. One clear observation of this is Paul’s declaration: *Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption* (1 Cor. 15:50). Blood cannot be associated with immortal or undying life. The only life category that blood represents is cursed mortal life. This is why the faithful could not eat the blood. We are not supposed to eat life, or be a life consumer, or a living-large exploiter. We are supposed to live sacrificially, demonstrating the second great blood law. The blood was poured out at the altar. *Only be sure that thou eat not the blood: for the blood is the life; and thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh... the blood of thy sacrifices shall be poured out upon the altar of the LORD thy God, and thou shalt eat the flesh* (Deut. 12:23,27). Our lives must be poured out at our altar: Jesus Christ.

Any interpretation of divine shadows must be tested by its flawless application through every platform of scriptural application, through every dream, vision, parable, prophecy and scientific rule of creation. This is the only path for confidently ascending the heights of enlightenment in order to witness a greater vision of the divine glory veiled within the word and the confirming laws of creation for the exclusive witness of the meek with seeing eyes and hearing ears. The simple beginning point of concordance and lexicon studies do not always lead us to these greater heights. Word studies limited to concordance and lexicon examinations are sometimes manipulated by brethren with personal agendas. We should not be satisfied with just the milk of the word. The process of maturing is a distinct feature of creation. Paul advises us: *Strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil* (Heb 5:14). The strong meat that is necessary for the mature palate of a growing enlightenment requires more extensive research than simply word definitions and redefinitions. Let’s apply that test procedure to the issue of the blood so that we can confidently progress with our altar offering considerations.

The Destination of the Blood: Dust or Altar

Despite the fact that Israel possessed large flocks and herds during the wilderness wanderings they were not allowed to eat those animals. Their diet was limited to bread from heaven (manna) and flesh from the heavens (quail). Their flocks and herds were completely dedicated to the altar. *What man soever there be of the house of Israel, that killeth an ox, or lamb, or goat, in the camp, or that killeth it out of the camp, And bringeth it not unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, to offer an offering unto the LORD before the tabernacle of the LORD; blood shall be imputed unto that man; he hath shed blood; and that man shall be cut off from among his people: To the end that the children of Israel may bring their sacrifices, which they offer in the open field, even that they may bring them unto the LORD, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, unto the priest, and offer them for peace offerings unto the LORD* (Lev. 17:3-5). The only way an Israelite could partake of their flock or herd was to eat that flesh as part of a peace offering. This is the only offering inviting the offerer to fellowship with Yahweh and the priests in the offering. If an Israelite did not bring their domesticated sacrificial animal to the altar then they were to be permanently ostracized (*cut off from among his people*). Clearly, this was a very significant issue.

However, they were free to hunt wild game ('clean' animals) and then kill and eat those animals. They had to be careful to deal with the blood in a particular manner. While their domesticated herds and flocks had to be brought to the altar and have their lifeblood poured out, they were free to kill and eat 'clean' wild (undomesticated) animals as long as they poured the blood into the dust of the ground. *And whatsoever man there be of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, which hunteth and catcheth any beast or fowl that may be eaten; he shall even pour out the blood thereof, and cover it with dust* (Lev. 17:13). There were two significant differences between the clean animals the Israelites could not eat and the clean animals they were permitted to eat: 1) The wild vs. domesticated distinction and 2) what was done with the blood. The wild, undomesticated, rebellious life-blood is appropriately poured into the dust of the earth, signifying how the life that refuses to be restrained from its own individual course is bound to the curse of the dust (*dust thou art and to dust thou shalt return*). The life of the animals that willingly serve (the flocks and herds) are bound to the blessings of the altar.

The Blood and the Water

This relationship continues with an interesting accommodating exception after Israel inherits the promised land. Yahweh would choose a particular location to place His name. As the Israelites spread out to their tribal inheritances it would be very inconvenient to bring all of these animals to the single altar somewhere in the promised land. That journey would be reserved for special occasions, such as feast weeks. The law forbidding the eating of their flocks and herds changed when Israel left their wilderness transition. *But in the place which the LORD shall choose in one of thy tribes, there thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings, and there thou shalt do all that I command thee. Notwithstanding thou mayest kill and eat flesh in all thy gates, whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, according to the blessing of the LORD thy God which he hath given thee: the unclean and the clean may eat thereof, as of the roebuck, and as of the hart. Only ye shall not eat the blood; ye shall pour it upon the earth as water* (Deut. 12:14-16). Yahweh accommodates the meat lust of the Israelites by considering their herds and flocks as nothing but wild animals that can be killed and eaten... as long as the blood is poured into the dust of the earth (*as water*). These non-rebellious, domesticated, sacrificial animals are killed within the borders of the promised land, but away from the altar. Their blood is poured out upon the earth like water.

This is a flawless snapshot of the death of our Messiah. This ultimate sacrifice was killed outside the walls of Jerusalem. *Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach* (Heb. 13:12-13). Upon his death his side was pierced with blood and water pouring out onto the dust of the earth beneath him (John 19:34-35). The blood and the water issuing from his dead body testify of the two necessary components for our reconciliation through his death. The blood signifies his mortal life, cursed by sin and death inherited from his mother. The water represents the word of God, for which he served as the perfect living representative for his Father. He was still the pure water of the word upon his death .

The Age Reversals from Wide Abstinence to Singular Consumption

The blood abstinence law initiated after the flood and confirmed during the first Kingdom Age was reversed upon the divinely orchestrated transition into the Ecclesial Age. This was a very confusing issue for Christ's disciples. When he declared that eternal life was dependent on drinking his blood and eating his flesh he lost many disciples. It is a fascinating truth that Jesus allowed these disciples, these 'Christadelphians', to walk away disgusted without explaining to them what he meant by that expression (John 6:53-69). However, it is not just any blood we are required to consume. It is exclusively the blood of the Messiah we are commanded to consume. This is a parallel observation to the reversal of Nazarite law at the introduction of the Ecclesial Age that we covered in numbers 10 and 11 of this continuing commentary, entitled: Unity Through Separation. Each of the four separation commandments for Nazarite law from Sinai were reversed by the new laws issuing from

Jerusalem at the beginning of the Ecclesial Age. We are commanded to partake of strong drink and a grape product in our consumption of the memorial cup, representing the blood of the Messiah. We ‘touch’ our Messiah’s dead body by eating the bread and being baptized into his death. Our sisters cover their heads in prayer so that they don’t have to shave their heads (like the Nazarite at the end of his or her vow term). Kingdom Law from Sinai demanded an abstention from all blood. Its requirements for the Nazarites demanded a separation from all dead bodies, from all alcohol, from any grape products and from any haircuts. The Ecclesial Age law from Jerusalem frees us from the constraints of a separation ‘from’ in the pursuit of High Priest emulation and demands we separate ‘to’ in our emulation of our ultimate and eternal High Priest.

The lesson of the blood fits perfectly at every level of consideration. This mortal life relationship in the context of the two great laws of denying blood ingestion along with pouring out the blood at the altar all blend flawlessly within the shadow lessons of every historical event, every ritual, parable, vision, prophecy and principle. This is how we confirm our conclusions with granite confidence, by accepting or rejecting a premise on the basis of flawless interdependence with every divine expression: scriptural or creational.

Our next commentary will build upon these base understandings to offer a comprehensive understanding of how each altar offering (separately and cumulatively) offered definitions of eternal principles and declared behavioral standards for divine approval that apply in every age.

Jim Dillingham

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Secrets of the Altar Offerings No 3

Our foundational platform has been constructed for pursuing the substance creating the shadows of the six altar offerings. We know the bronze altar represents our Messiah. We know that blood, the icon of atonement, represents mortal life. We know there were five independent altar offerings with the sixth wine/drink offering accompanying the burnt and peace offerings but not offered independently. Yet in the Ecclesial Age the wine encompasses five of the altar offerings, blending all blood offerings into the memorial wine that must follow the broken bread which would be the remaining altar offering, a continuation of the always unleavened meal/grain offering. We know the life blood of the domesticated sacrificial animals had to be poured out at the Christ altar. However, the life blood of clean wild animals that were hunted for their meat had to be poured into the dust, like water. We understand the complete blood abstinence law of the previous two priesthood ages has been reversed during our dispensation, requiring us to consume blood. However the blood we are commanded to eat is strictly the blood of our Messiah, the only mortal life during which the sin emanating from the flesh was never exercised.

We Have This Treasure in Earthen Vessels

We also know that whatever conclusions we propose must be seamlessly projected throughout every dream, vision, historical event, parable, prophecy and feature of creation in order to confidently accept our conclusions. Our Creator’s expressions are always complexly interdependent, in both creation (the spoken word of God) and scripture (the written word of God). Witnessing that perfect symmetry displayed at every level of consideration of divine expressions is so amazing and powerful we are frequently crushed in spirit, humbled that such an

amazing and glorious being as Yahweh would even take notice of us in the vastness of His glorious creation, let alone love us. We are each just a pail full of dirt that has been given the ability to breathe and wonder. But we can see things that the powerful, wealthy and exalted of the earth are completely blinded from beholding. Just as our Creator took light out of darkness, we can pursue His image and likeness by searching for the light in the shadows of His expressions. *For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us* (2 Cor. 4:6-7).

The burnt offering clearly dominated the altar offerings. The very altar itself was divinely declared to be the “altar of burnt offering.” This was not a generic term referring to any category of offering burned upon the bronze altar. This title identifies the bronze altar specifically with this first of the six altar offerings. This is a highly significant understanding in the context of the divine principle and the behavioral intention being projected by this specific altar offering. Frequently we hear and read Brethren suggest this offering represents simply “dedication.” While this is true, it is an oversimplification and far too general an application. There is a specific feature of our dedication that was intended to be understood by our Heavenly Father. Yahweh makes this understanding perfectly clear through the prophet Hosea, while His son draws our attention to this understanding during his ministry.

The Knowledge of God More Than Burnt Offerings

When Pharisee followers condemned Christ’s favored disciples for harvesting handfuls of grain on a Sabbath morning Jesus defended them. His final warning to these Pharisees quotes his Father from Hosea: *But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless* (Matt 12:7). Jesus warns us that we must understand his Father’s declaration in Hosea or our judgments concerning our Brethren may be dangerously different from the judgments of our Messiah. *For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings* (Hos. 6:6). Yahweh defines the behavioral responses He expected from two very specific altar offerings. The Hebrew word translated *sacrifice* is *zebach*. This is the Hebrew word for the peace offering, not altar offerings in general or just any form of sacrifice. This is not difficult to determine. All we have to do is take the time to look up every one of the 166 places in scripture where the Hebrew word *zebach* is used. This conclusion that the Hebrew word *zebach* exclusively represents the peace offering becomes very clear and absolute. Additionally, there are different motivations for mercy. The Hebrew word used here by Yahweh and quoted by Jesus indicates one particular motivation for extending mercy: love. The desired merciful motivation to be learned from the peace offering was not to spring from simple pity or potential personal advantage. This mercy springs from love. This is indicated by the Hebrew *chesed* being translated as *mercy* (often translated as *lovingkindness*). Our heavenly Father expected us to learn the value and application of merciful love from the peace offering. He expected us to learn the lesson of dedicating ourselves to the knowledge of God from the requirements of the burnt offering. These divinely expressed motivational expectations do not eliminate any other more obvious relationships and lessons in these two offerings. However they do offer the divinely appointed primary theme through which the subsequent observations must conform.

The burnt offering foundational lesson should not be understood as some kind of general devotion to our Heavenly Father. It is the **specific** devotion of pursuing the knowledge of God. This perfectly aligns with the ultimate divine intent. *The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea* (Is. 11:9). *For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea* (Hab 2:14). We can dedicate ourselves to fulfilling the divine plan in that specific ‘pail of earth’ we are allowed to control... ourselves. We can saturate ourselves with the knowledge of Yahweh, as the waters cover the sea. We are not free to dilute the foundational lesson of the burnt offering into some wide ranging application of

‘general’ devotion, enabling our hearts to deceive us into thinking that ever greater knowledge of divine absolute truths is really not all that significant to our relationship with our Creator once we grasp the basic gospel. Our Heavenly Father has been quite specific in this verse that our Messiah tells us we had better understand if we want to make judgments according to divine standards.

With this understanding we must progress to the painstaking detail of considering this focused lesson in the context of every separate application. However, that extensive a search will have to be a personal responsibility. This commentary will consider several applications to demonstrate the perfect consistency of this understanding within the interdependent divine laws, rituals and principles.

The Messiah’s Altar Shadow

Every altar offering is obviously related to the bronze altar, projecting our Messiah’s role as our focused avenue for service and the path of our reconciliation. However that Christ altar is specifically identified as the altar of “burnt offering,” emphasizing its association with this foundational offering. This is not a generic offering identification simply because all offerings placed on the bronze grating are burned. That Christ altar is repeatedly identified by our Messiah’s Father as specifically the altar of **burnt offering**. As any marginally serious Bible student is aware, there are no meaningless expressions in scripture. It is not called the altar of peace offering or the altar of sin offering. This burnt offering identification of the Christ altar should be understood in the context of its core message of dedicating ourselves to the **knowledge** of Yahweh. Jesus is the introduction to great knowledge concerning his Father. He is the platform for our dedicated pursuit of the knowledge of the glory of Yahweh Elohim, just as the bronze Christ altar of burnt offering was the platform for all divinely acceptable offerings. Jesus is the bridge from mortal to immortal, from finite to infinite and from natural to spiritual. The divine light shining on the truths concerning our Messiah creates the shadow of the bronze altar to those with eyes to see.

Most of us are probably already aware that the burnt offering was the first as well as the last offering of every day under Kingdom Law. It was the foundational offering for all other offerings as well as the final one. It was the first lesson of the morning and the last lesson of the day. This aligns perfectly with the core message of dedicating ourselves to the knowledge of our Creator, to filling our bodily ‘earth’ with the knowledge of Yahweh as the waters cover the sea. Christadelphians, as the Israelites did before us, understand that there is no relationship with the Creator that does not begin and continue to the end without accepting the humbling truths of God. We are warned by Christ in the context of avoiding the seduction of deceitful false prophets that we must continue to the end if we wish to be saved (Matt 24:11-13). As is always the case with God’s word, there is more to the equation.

The One Day Food Ration Accompanying the Daily Burnt Offering

Each daily burnt offering was always accompanied by the grain offering, the wine offering and oil (Num 28:3-8). The flour (grain offering) was equivalent to a single day’s serving of manna for one person during the wilderness wanderings (Num. 28:5 and Ex 16:18,35). This omer (a tenth of an ephah) was also the exact quantity of flour that would serve as the bloodless sin offering of the poorest Israelite (Lev. 5:11-14). This was also the quantity for the priest’s grain offering (Lev. 6:20). This volume of grain constituted a one day food supply for one person, to sustain that mortal life. Each day is a frame for our whole life. Each day is a representative of that life, reinforcing the divine truths of resurrection and atonement and cursed mortality. Following our resurrection-like awakening to the dawning light we cover the shameful nakedness of our bodies (atonement). As we progress through the day our energies drain as we work hard according to the terms of the curse until we finally succumb to that death-like sleep once again, emphasizing our fragile mortality. The mortal life fuel for a single day, according to the wilderness pattern, was one tenth of an ephah of food, an omer. This is the quantity of flour that appropriately accompanied each whole burnt offering. Supporting the context of this

one day ration of 'bread' was the foundational understanding of pursuing the knowledge of our Creator. This was the great lesson of the forty year supply of manna, interpreted for us by Moses in Duet. 8:3 and quoted by Jesus during his own wilderness trial of 40 days. *And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.* The volume of the flour accompanying the burnt offering identified a daily ration of food. However that wilderness limitation was intended to teach one of the basic divine truths that the burnt offering exhorts us to pursue. We continue to exist day to day on the basis of the word of Yahweh, not just bread. Creation is the result of the spoken word of our Creator. The reason we have grain and fruit and water is because our Creator verbally commanded them into existence, with all the complexities of their substance and seed-to-harvest-to seed renewal and interdependence with all other features of creation perfectly designed and operational.

The male lamb of the daily burnt offering was accompanied by both bread and wine offerings, just as we remember the male lamb of God with bread and wine in our weekly memorial. The drink offering was a fourth part of a hin of wine, which could also serve as the matching liquid volume for sustaining life for a single day. The prophet Ezekiel was sustained by just one sixth of a hin of water, along with minimal measured grain, for well over a year to demonstrate the impending hunger and suffering of the Israelites (Ezek 4:11). This single day liquid sustenance serves to confirm our understanding concerning the significance of the volume of bread accompanying the continual burnt offering. The oil was the fourth component (along with the lamb, the flour and the wine). The oil was the same one third of an hin volume as the wine. This makes a total of four components for the continual burnt offering.

The Four Burnt Offering Components

As we have demonstrated in several previous commentaries (numbers 9, 17 and 26) the number four is the number of God manifestation. This direct relationship is powerfully and repeatedly expressed throughout scripture and creation. In commentary No. 21 (Circumcision of Heart and Flesh) we noted how the foursquare configuration of the Kingdom of God initiated at Sinai with its three tribal components on each side perfectly mirrors the foursquare construction of the universe with its three components within each category (**space**: height, width, depth; **time**: past, present, future; **matter**: gas, liquid, solid; **energy**: passive, active and Holy Spirit energy). We have also repeatedly noted the frequent doubled four scriptural pattern spotlighting our Messiah's role, whose Greek name is numerically equivalent to 888. He is the ultimate demonstration of our Creator manifested in the flesh and therefore is appropriately identified by a doubled four pattern. We have repeatedly and extensively reviewed these issues and now must build further upon their solid platform. There were appropriately four components to the continual burnt offering (lamb, flour, wine, oil). The behavioral response divinely expected from the burnt offering was a dedication to the knowledge of Yahweh (Hos. 6:6). The number four is relentlessly associated directly to the principle of God manifestation throughout scripture, which is the absolute greatest lesson the written and spoken word of our Creator offers. These facts, features and patterns all blend together flawlessly to offer interdependent confirmation concerning our divinely intended core lesson for the continual burnt offering: dedicating ourselves to the pursuit of the knowledge of the eternal principles of our Creator. He wants to be appreciated. He seeks His rightful glory coming from an understanding that continually expands. Just as our universe is always expanding, according to the scientists who observe the physical features of creation, so our spiritual understanding concerning the projection of divine principles should always be expanding. The more we learn about our Creator and His principles... the more we have an opportunity to learn ever more.

The continual burnt offering was repeated for six evenings and mornings for a total of 12 offerings and then doubled on the seventh day for a total of sixteen (four-fours) burnt offerings every week, further emphasizing

the significance of the four pattern. This projects the divine intention of dramatically emphasizing the knowledge of our Creator all over the earth in the seventh millennium.

Doubled and Doubled Again

The continual daily burnt offering was appropriately doubled on the day when work was forbidden, when a mental shift from flesh to spirit and from physical to spiritual was facilitated by Sabbath law. All work was stopped so that the mental focus could center on the knowledge of God on that one day when the daily burnt offering was doubled. The priests, those tasked with promoting the knowledge of Yahweh, still had to work on the Sabbath but were guiltless (Matt. 12:5). In order to emphasize and cement this understanding our Heavenly Father has recorded future burnt offering laws that will be observed during the restored Kingdom we anxiously await. In that Kingdom, when the knowledge of God will be dramatically and powerfully promoted we see the Sabbath burnt offering schedule doubled yet again for a total of eight offerings, as opposed to four during the original Kingdom initiated at Sinai. There will be seven special Sabbath burnt offerings (6 lambs and 1 ram) as well as the single daily continual burnt offering in the Kingdom. In the restored Kingdom the evening burnt offering is eliminated. The daily burnt offering in the restored Kingdom is exclusively offered in the morning (Ezek 46:13-15). Fitting this feature into our consistent pattern suggests this is due to the absence of the historic divine accommodation for the darkness of men's minds. Apostasy will not be tolerated when the knowledge of the glory of the Creator increasingly dawns over the entire planet. *The Gentiles shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit. Shall a man make gods unto himself, and they are no gods? Therefore, behold, I will this once cause them to know, I will cause them to know mine hand and my might; and they shall know that my name is The LORD (Jer. 16:19-20). **Then shall they know that I am the LORD their God, which caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen: but I have gathered them unto their own land, and have left none of them any more there. Neither will I hide my face any more from them** (Ezek 39:28-29). The very mother and father of a false teacher will have to personally execute their own son (Zech 13:3). There will only be a morning daily burnt offering in the restored Kingdom. However there will be a total of eight burnt offerings on every Sabbath, with the seven Sabbath-specific offerings plus the daily single burnt offering (Ezek 46:1-15). Just as the daily burnt offerings in the initial Kingdom of God were doubled on the Sabbath to promote divine knowledge, so they are doubled again (from a total of four to a total of eight) in the restored Kingdom of God when the knowledge of God will be dramatically promoted throughout creation. These facts all blend perfectly together with our core understanding that the foundational behavioral lesson to be drawn from the burnt offering is the dedication specifically to the knowledge of Yahweh Elohim.*

In our next commentary we will identify the repeated emphasis of the atonement feature of the burnt offering. We will also see the light in the shadows of combining the burnt offering with other altar offerings.

Jim Dillingham

The Burnt Offering and Atonement

Divine expressions are like a structure. Considered together, interconnected and interdependent, each component of truth fits together perfectly with every other truth to form a glorious architectural sanctuary protecting us from the fierce winds, conflagrations and marauders outside that structure of divine truth. However, when we try to consider these truths separately and independently, our oversimplifications begin to break apart that incredible bond between all divine expressions. Our safe structure can then be breached by those winds and flames along with foes laying siege against the principle of absolute truth (as opposed to the delusion of variable truth). It is when we attempt to isolate divine expressions from the balancing and bordering of other divine expressions, that we introduce the cracks in our structure. We do not have the freedom to consider the features of the restored Kingdom of God while ignoring the features of the previous Kingdom of God that was destroyed by the Romans. We are not free to consider Christ apart from the Christ altar projecting him throughout the first Kingdom age. We are foolish if we concentrate on our Creator's mercy at the expense of any balancing considerations of His judgments. Exclusively searching for validations of our heart treasured presumptions throughout divine expressions will unfortunately never disappoint. However, that is only the path of self-delusion. We also must search for exceptions to our presumptions and suggested conclusions. Absolute truth never corrodes, does not chip or fade and is impervious to assault. This is why the enemies of truth recalibrate their weapons away from the truth they cannot defeat toward the soft flesh of those who promote truth. Persecution is the great defensive weapon of mirror worshipping mankind. History's brutal inquisitions bear witness to the fruit of frustration resulting from absolute truth's impervious nature.

We must constantly test and re-test every foundational understanding if we ever want to ascend the heights of enlightenment to view the glory of our Creator, intentionally hidden from the masses. Those who love truth will not shrink from its defense for the mere excuse of social conformity. Peace is the presence of harmony and not the absence of conflict. Truth lovers will not shrink from the inquisitions from others, but will be ready always to give an answer to anyone asking a reason for the hope that is in us. Divine truths must be deep in our hearts as well as being ready on our lips. Let's apply this foundational framework to the lesson of the burnt offering, the first of the six altar offerings.

Assessing Our Platform of Understanding

We noted the intended behavioral lesson from the burnt offering as being the dedication to the knowledge of God (Hosea 6:6). We tested that foundational understanding in several applications, observing the flawless symmetry of the divine intent for this initial and concluding offering. We have not exhausted and certainly could not exhaust these confirmations but will confidently proceed on the basis of this substantial evidence already offered. The intended behavioral response for the burnt offering was a dedication to the knowledge of our Heavenly Father. This is the ultimate divine intent for all of creation, that the earth shall be filled with the glory of the knowledge of Yahweh Elohim as the waters cover the sea. We are free to build upon that understanding to see if the structure of our understandings offers stability.

Making an Atonement With the Burnt Offering

The burnt offering was necessary for atonement. That fact is indisputable, yet very rarely recognized. In some cases this would be because the concept of the atonement is dramatically minimalized as signifying nothing but forgiveness. However this suggestion is simply another domino that must fall when one first suggests that any reference to sin must indicate some level of guilt, as if there is no such thing as guiltless sin within divine law or

expressions. These are the progressive issues that must fall as one lie is generated to support the last lie in order to preserve heart treasured delusions of personal significance. The laws of the Kingdom of God repeatedly emphasized the relationship between the principle of atonement and the burnt offering.

Lev. 1:4 *And he shall put his hand upon the head of **the burnt offering**; and it shall be accepted for him **to make atonement** for him* (basic burnt offering instructions). Lev. 9:7 *And Moses said unto Aaron, Go unto the altar, and offer thy sin offering, **and thy burnt offering**, and **make an atonement** for thyself, and for the people* (priesthood ordination). Lev 12:8 *And if she be not able to bring a lamb, then she shall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons; **the one for the burnt offering**, and the other for a sin offering: and the priest shall **make an atonement** for her, and she shall be clean* (atonement for birthing a child). Lev. 14:31 *Even such as he is able to get, the one for a sin offering, and the other for a **burnt offering**, with the meat offering: and the priest shall **make an atonement** for him that is to be cleansed before the LORD* (healed leper). Lev. 15:15 *And the priest shall offer them, the one for a sin offering, and the other for a **burnt offering**; and the priest shall **make an atonement** for him before the LORD for his issue* (healed from a bodily issue). Num. 6:11 *And the priest shall offer the one for a sin offering, and the other for a **burnt offering**, and make an atonement for him* (Nazarite). Num. 8:12 *And the Levites shall lay their hands upon the heads of the bullocks: and thou shalt offer the one for a sin offering, and the other for a **burnt offering**, unto the LORD, to **make an atonement** for the Levites* (Levite tribe dedication). Lev. 16: 24 *And he shall wash his flesh with water in the holy place, and put on his garments, and come forth, and offer **his burnt offering**, and **the burnt offering of the people**, and **make an atonement** for himself, and for the people* (day of atonement).

The emphasizing repetition of the relationship between the burnt offering and making an atonement should be impossible to miss. Frequently it is the combination of the sin offering with the burnt offering that qualifies as making an atonement. The combination of these two offerings to accommodate the making of an atonement is quite defining, since the burnt offering is not directly associated with sin forgiveness. It is one of the two positive offerings, along with the peace offering. The sin and the trespass offerings are the negative offerings. The third dual category of offerings were the bloodless bread and wine offerings (meal and drink). As noted in past commentaries it was exclusively the positive burnt and peace offerings that were directly consumed by fire from heaven.

Dedication to the Knowledge of God Plus Guilty and Guiltless Sin Offerings

The behavioral focus for the burnt offering was our dedication to the knowledge of God. The behavioral focus for the sin offering was primarily forgiveness for transgressions as well as the necessary procedure for that forgiveness. However, it should be noted that several of these offered examples include the necessity for a sin offering where there had been no sinful transgression of any divine law. There was no law against contracting leprosy or suffering with the physical malady of a bodily issue. Yet a sin offering was demanded for the atonement process upon the healing of those maladies. A woman giving birth was righteously performing the divine commandment to fill the earth, but her necessary atonement for this righteous act demanded a sin offering. We see both the guilt bearing sin offering as well as the guiltless sin offering being included in the atonement making procedure, along with the burnt offering.

One of the first issues we can conclude from the divine precedent of requiring a burnt offering in order to make an atonement is that the common societal impression that atonement is strictly about forgiving the guilt of sin is a groundless presumption. The burnt offering is not associated with sin forgiveness. This offering promotes correct, God approved behavior. It doesn't deal with the procedure for recognizing and repenting from incorrect, ungodly behavior. This is one of several independently conclusive avenues of reasoning that completely

eliminate this minimalization that atonement is strictly about forgiveness for the guilt of transgressional sin. There is clearly more to atonement than simply the forgiveness of transgressional sins.

Is Salvation a Covering or an Uncovering

The ultimate application for the understanding of atonement is immortalization, the covering of flesh with spirit; the "putting on" of immortality over mortality; the "putting on" of incorruptibility over corruptibility so that we might no longer be naked before our Creator (1 Cor. 15:53-54; 2 Cor. 5:3). The term atonement simply means "to cover," as in the covering of the gopher wood ark of salvation with the pitch sealant applied to both the inside and the outside of the ark. *Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch* (Heb. kaphar; predominantly translated as atonement) *it within and without with pitch* (Gen. 6:14). The introduction of the concept of making an atonement is initially projected through the two coats made from a single animal skin to cover the naked shamefulness of Adam and Eve that was the direct result of their sin, their denial of the Creator's right-ness concerning the judgment of death for sin. As error continues to slither into the community of the sons of God, the minimalizing of the concept of atonement from immortalization to merely sin forgiveness would eventually result in the apostate reasoning that salvation should be understood as an uncovering instead of a covering, just as it did over the first 300 years of the Ecclesial Age. Christianity, Paganism and all the harlot daughters suggest the salvation procedure is the stripping away of the mortal body to reveal the immortal spirit nature previously covered. Scripture is clear that the salvation process is a covering and not an uncovering. When we distance the concept of atonement from immortalization we initiate a set of falling mental dominoes that eventually lead to this reverse reasoning of the salvation procedure being an uncovering.

Daily Testimony for the Eyes That See

The lesson of atonement is projected all over our planet on a daily basis, but the unenlightened are oblivious. Creation (the spoken word of God) declares the same truths and divine principles as the written word of God (Bible). Mankind, with its exclusive blessing of conscience and shame, covers the shame of our nakedness every morning. There are no animals, insects, birds or fish that seek to cover their nakedness. They feel no shame for their uncovered created form, as humans certainly do. Every single day of our lives the major lessons of divine truths are projected by the terms of our curse right in front of our eyes, but the sons of men (as opposed to the sons of God) are blind and deaf to divine communication on the basis of their uncircumcised hearts. We experience a resurrection every morning as we rise from our death-like sleep to the light of a new day. We simulate the making of an atonement by covering the shame of our nakedness. We suffer the frustrations and burdens of the day, having our energies slowly drained away so that we eventually surrender once again to that death-like sleep, anticipating the replaying of the very same divine lessons the next day and the day after that. Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.

Once we recognize that atonement is all about immortalization we are free to witness glorious atonement shadows in scripture and creation. The three entrances into the Most Holy every year on the Day of Atonement perfectly project the three immortalization events in the divine plan: 1) Christ; 2) the family of the High Priest at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom; and 3) the rest of the world at the end of the Millennial Kingdom. We are free to see those same three immortalization stages in the shadows of the three great feast weeks that are all related to three annual harvest stages. The harvests indicate judgment and the reaping of mature fruit. The feast weeks declare the great joy and celebration associated with those three great immortalization events. Barley was the primary harvest associated with the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Wheat was the harvest associated with the Feast of the Firstfruits (also known as the Feast of Weeks). The vineyard was the primary harvest associated with the Feast of Tabernacles. We will consider these feast weeks in more detail in future considerations. The glory of the light seen in these shadows is invisible when we shackle our understanding of atonement to the partial truth of exclusively forgiveness. The divine teaching pattern is to give more

knowledge to those with knowledge and wisdom to those who have wisdom (Dan. 2:21). Partial understandings will only compound misunderstandings. Jesus explained to his disciples that his unexplained parable teaching pattern was intended to give to those who had and take away from those who had not (Matt. 13:11-12). When we start with truthful understanding we are divinely empowered to learn more, to enjoy a greater clarity in the divine thought pattern and expressions. When we start with distortions and half-truths that will not be surrendered, we have only one direction our minds can travel without humbly recognizing error. It is the intentional and interdependent complexity of all divine communication that creates this dichotomy, reinforcing a preferred perspective.

Christ's Rejection for the Absence of Righteousness Pursuit

The burnt offering, with its behavioral exhortation of dedication to the knowledge of God was necessary to make an atonement. Atonement is about the covering salvation process of immortalization. Salvation is certainly dependent on pursuing the knowledge of our Creator. However, this is not exclusive. Once we begin to know our Heavenly Father we must act like Him, validating His righteousness by deed as well as thought. When we fail to act like Him, when our deeds contradict His righteousness (as Adam & Eve's contradiction of divine testimony) this absence of correct behavior or presence of incorrect behavior constitutes sin for which we bear guilt. Fortunately, there is an avenue of reconciliation available to us, encouraging us to recognize our failures, beg for forgiveness and repentantly reverse our behavior pattern. The making of our own atonement, in which we certainly participate, includes both active pursuit and active avoidance. We must pursue divine righteousness. We must avoid fleshly wickedness. Christ's judgmental approval, facilitating salvation, is not exclusively based on whether or not we still have any unforgiven sins at the point of judgment. The absence of the pursuit of righteousness also qualifies as divinely unacceptable to our judge, as well as overt sin. This is obvious from Christ's three judgment parables recorded in Matthew 25. The five rejected members of the wedding party had not prepared for the coming of the bridegroom. They had done nothing. There was an absence of effort. The rejected servant did nothing with the talent he was assigned. The rejected goats had simply not fed or clothed or visited the brethren of Christ in the moment of their need. All three salvation rejection patterns display this absence of the pursuit of righteousness. These rejection examples do not focus on repenting from pursuing wickedness. They focus on the absence of pursuing righteousness. We are not free to coast comfortably through our life once we have been properly baptized. Avoiding wickedness is only one part of the salvation consideration standards.

Christ's victory was not simply that he lived without disappointing his Father even once. A significant part of that victory was that Christ projected his Father flawlessly in everything, which is why he answered Philip's request to *show us the Father* with the statement: *He that hath seen me hath seen the Father*. The original intent for creation was that every feature of creation should harmoniously reflect the eternal divine principles of the Creator, not simply that nothing contradict His principles. When we stand before our judge there will be more to consider than our avoidance of wickedness or a technical satisfaction of performing a forgiveness procedure. Concentrating on not doing anything wrong is insufficient. We also have to concentrate on doing what is right. This is why the burnt offering was necessary to *make an atonement*, in addition to the sin offering.

Salvation is About More Than Just Sin Avoidance and Forgiveness

The instinctive thought process of the flesh concentrates on the elimination of sin, not the production of righteousness. This is why the harlot religious system baptizes babies, to perform the technicality of eliminating presumed guilt. If we consider baptism simply the elimination of sin we are only seeing part of the atonement picture. Christ's personal baptism had absolutely nothing to do with forgiveness. He had no guilt. His baptism was all about *fulfilling all righteousness* (Matt 3:15), not eliminating sin. This too is why the burnt offering was necessary under the laws of the Kingdom of God to *make an atonement*. We must actively pursue the knowledge of God so that we can exercise that knowledge into righteous behavior... if we want more than

anything to be part of the ultimate divine plan for creation. This is the oil that must fill our lamps so that we can burn brightly, prepared for the much anticipated return of our beloved bridegroom.

The fact that both the burnt offering and the sin offering are co-dependent for making an atonement is another of the numberless validations of the interdependence of all divine expressions. Isolation and oversimplification of divine expressions is the path to error. The intentional complexity and interdependence feature of creation and scripture offer an eternal growth opportunity for understanding and appreciating the divine mind (recognizing His glory). This is why each of the altar offerings are identified in ways that associate a particular offering with other specific offerings. All offerings are related to the burnt offering, since Yahweh named the bronze altar the Altar of Burnt Offering. The sin and trespass offerings were offered on the altar of burnt offering. The meal and drink offerings (bread and wine) were offered with the burnt offering. The peace offering was offered on top of the burnt offering. This is a further validation of the foundational understanding that the pursuit of the knowledge of Yahweh Elohim (burnt offering) is the only way to perceive the significance of every aspect of sacrificial service to our Christ altar. When we start to disrespect divine knowledge, presuming that the simple familiarity and acceptance of the BASF is the full extent of divine knowledge that will ever be necessary and that now we must concentrate on the principle of love we are inviting self worshipping error. If we do not constantly sharpen the sword of the word of God then our relentlessly self-justifying hearts will scar over, creating a thick crust. Circumcision of the heart is not a single stroke that facilitates a life time of righteous service. We are not free to re-name our Christ altar of service as the 'altar of peace offering', with the intended behavioral lesson of love. Just as the created universe is constantly expanding, so our understanding of the glory of our Creator should also expand in complimentary fashion. The patterns are there in creation and scripture for the exclusive appreciation of the enlightened. We can see the glory of divine light in the darkness of the metaphorical shadows of divine expressions. Emulating our Heavenly Father we should want to take light out of darkness (2 Cor. 4:6).

In our next commentary we will pursue the relationship between the laws of the burnt offering and the peace offering, between the principles of knowledge and love.

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