

The Bloodless Altar Offerings

We live in an incredible point in the divine plan for restoring our Heavenly Father's glory on the creation stage. Our generation will witness our Creator's unveiling. The resurrection of the national first born son of God has identified the last generation of our appointed age. Creation's contractions for the birth of this new age are accelerating. Most of us enjoy some measure of the comforts from the advancements of travel and knowledge that Daniel prophesied for our generation (Dan 12:4). We have benefited from society's scientific advances that were finally freed from the shackles of religious distortions. Even Bible study has benefitted by this technology with computerized Bibles, concordances, and instant word search engines. A huge portable library can be held in one hand in a laptop computer, being referenced and cross-referenced instantly. It is a volatile global economy with entire industries being wiped out and replaced by new technology. Our anchor in this churning environment is our confidence in the scriptural truths we can confirm repeatedly in the Bible and the features of creation.

Hindsight Appreciation

One of the remarkable but possibly undervalued benefits of our final generation for this age would be hindsight. Hindsight is often dismissed in our obsessively forward-focused society where new technology may last as long as a year. Hindsight protects against faith erosion by remembering how so many prophecies have been fulfilled in such perfect detail. The Babylonian and Greek destructions of Tyre prophesied in Ezekiel 26 never fail to thrill me when compared to history and its current status. The resurrection of the nation of Israel in Ezekiel's two stage prophecy of a political and spiritual restoration is faith assuring. The list goes on and on. We are divinely encouraged to develop hindsight. Yahweh defined Himself repeatedly as the God that brought Israel up out of Egypt, directing His children to harness faith confirming history. Thankfulness, the greatest form of praise, is a recognition of the divine blessings we have already experienced. Hindsight offers great value to the children of God. We may think it should have been impossible for a rabbi to read Isaiah 53 and not realize the Jewish Messiah would have to die to save God's people. Nonetheless even the disciples who had been directly informed of that imminent death and resurrection were caught by total surprise and resisted accepting the validity of Christ's resurrection. Hindsight offers us a brighter and glorious understanding of Isaiah 53... and so many other chapters throughout our Creator's testimony.

Our continuing commentaries in this series may appear to be hindsight focused, but do offer a powerful application for our hopeful future. This hindsight should not be simply interesting. By looking back and seeing our Heavenly Father's progressive educational patterns from one age to the next we can appreciate both His comforting shepherding as well as His firm chastising. We stand with our faces to the veil that is about to be drawn back. Enlightenment will no longer be an option when that enlightenment veil is torn from heaven to earth. The default educational tool of the fear of God will create a global paradigm shift, far greater than anything in history. We have the opportunity to be among the immortal educators, the priest-kings of the Millennial Kingdom. We hope to serve the King of Kings, who is our High Priest, for 1,000 years. Many of the laws of the restored Kingdom are restored laws. A magnificent temple will be constructed. Animal sacrifices will again be burned. Sabbath law will be observed. No one uncircumcised in body as well as heart will be allowed entrance into the temple. Any region or nation refusing to respect the Feast of Tabernacles attendance will suffer with drought. Hindsight training can prepare us for this dream job of becoming immortal priests.

The Future Projected From the Past

From our Ecclesial Age 'hindsight' perspective we can see the seeds of the educational features of our age in the rituals, laws, miracles, prophecies and history of the previous two ages. The head-covering of the High Priest and the head uncovering of the suspected adulterous wife (Num 5) in the laws of the previous Kingdom Age project explanations for the sisters head-covering ritual of the Ecclesial Age. The man-then-woman order of creation and Eve's gender judgment of subjugation in the Patriarchal Age are offered by Paul as explanations for the sisters silence ritual in the Ecclesial Age (1 Tim 2:12-14). As we noted in our last commentary we can see projections of the same pattern and educational features of the memorial service in the covenant and miracles and historical events of the previous Kingdom Age. We have not plumbed this depth (nor can we with our severely limited minds and the crippling effect of our hearts that need repeated circumcising).

The Two Bread and the One Wine Feast Week Harvests

We have noted the obvious parallel between the grain/bread and wine altar offerings of the First Kingdom Age and the memorial service of the Ecclesial Age. Another subtle shadow of our memorial service would be the specific harvests associated with the three appointed feast weeks each year. The barley harvest offered the necessary firstfruits to be waved for the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The wheat harvest offered the necessary firstfruits that had to be **leavened** loaves, being waved to initiate the Feast of Weeks, also known as the Feast of Firstfruits and Pentacost. This two-fold leavened and unleavened grain/bread association with the first two feasts can be identified with the two broken pieces of bread in the memorial service. These two grain harvests with the first two feast weeks are offset by the grape harvest coinciding with the Feast of Tabernacles. As we have already noted these three feast weeks project the three great divine harvests in the divine plan, the three great immortalization events. It is interesting that the bread (barley and wheat) and the wine (grapes) are the primary harvests associated with each divinely appointed celebration. Hindsight offers us an inspiring shadow of the bread and the wine ritual in our subsequent educational stage in the divine plan.

The Bread and Wine Sin offerings

We have observed how the bread and wine altar offerings exclusively accompanied the positive burnt and peace offerings but never the sin or trespass offerings. However another subtle parallel does reflect the bread and wine in the context of the six sin offerings for repentance. The first five sin offerings demanded a blood offering on the Christ altar (High Priest, nation, ruler, common Israelite and poor Israelite; Lev. chapters 4-5). By the precedent of our Messiah we can associate our Ecclesial Age memorial wine with the blood in these altar offerings, as he identified the wine as representing his blood. The sixth sin offering category was for the poorest Israelite, who only had to offer a blood-free sin offering of finely crushed grain (the measurement of a one day ration of food). The blood of the first five sin offering categories afforded an atonement. The bloodless flour for the sixth sin offering also is expressed as achieving an atonement (Lev. 5:13). These are the two memorials we partake of for our own atonement: the blood of our Messiah projected in the wine and the body of our Messiah projected in the bread. Hindsight offers us a greater and more comprehensive view of how the previous age with its primary educational focus on sin condemnation would lead into our age with a primary educational focus of grace through imputed righteousness. Hindsight offers us a shield-like protection against the heart generated seduction of pompously disregarding the foundational lessons of sin condemnation so that we might presume that grace forever eliminates any severity to our sinfulness, that forgiveness is automatic with minimal (if any) regret or tears. The utter impossibility of diminishing the fear of God to the single application of respectful reverence is another dangerous symptom of ignoring the past and only looking at the present and the future... the same stumbling block tripping the sons of men.

Therefore, simply because the bread and wine altar offerings were not directly associated with the sin or trespass offerings is not an invitation to dismiss the sin condemnation feature of the memorial service. That would be an inappropriate over-simplification. The relationship between the sin offering and the bread and wine

is also confirmed in Hebrews 13:10-13: *For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. 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.* The Levitical Priests were forbidden to eat of the sin offering whose blood entered the Tabernacle (Lev. 6:30). However the Ecclesial Age priests are commanded to eat of the Christ altar sin offering of the bread and the wine, despite the blood (life) of the Christ sin offering being brought into the antitypical divine sanctuary of heaven. The bread and the wine encompass all of the altar offerings, including both the six guilt sin offerings from which repentance was necessary and the six guilt-free sin offerings which directed a physical cleansing, a purging.

Ritual Reversal Highlighting Christ Exclusivity

The altar drink offering, our current commentary focus, was not an independent offering category. The wine simply accompanied the burnt offering which served as the altar foundation for the peace offering. The wine enjoys a presence at the bronze altar but a reduced status of being an accompaniment. We see a complete reversal in the Ecclesial Age rituals. The wine takes center stage while the blood is physically eliminated and simply projected through the wine. The divine motivation for this inversion of significance can be understood by referencing the foundational focus for each of these progressive divine educational stages in the careful maturing of the bride of Christ. The educational focus of the First Kingdom Age laws and rituals was sin condemnation and judgment. The educational focus of the Ecclesial Age laws and rituals is grace and mercy. Despite the fact that the wine is featured in the altar rituals of each age, that wine see-saws in educational prominence from one age to the next. There is a very significant reason for this and that answer can be confirmed in several ways.

Jesus identifies the wine as representing his blood, therefore we are being directed to blend the progressive lesson of blood with the progressive lesson of wine. If you have followed these commentaries for some time you may recall the two great blood laws:

1. Blood must never be eaten (Gen. 9:4, Lev; 17:10-12)
2. Blood must either be poured out at the altar of burnt offering or into the dust, depending on whether a clean animal is domestic or wild (Deut. 12:21-28; Lev. 17:3-14)

We also have to remember that blood is the creational icon for mortal life, as noted in the validating verses offered above. This initial divine exhortation is rather obvious, that we must not 'eat' this life. We must not be a life consumer, living every moment to the fullest, grabbing all the gusto and smelling all the roses. This is the life philosophy of the flesh whose lives are bound to the curse of the dust. Our commitment is to live sacrificially, pouring our lives out at the Christ altar. A wild, undomesticated life, is a life bound to the curse of the dust and unacceptable at the Christ altar in its wild form. This is why the blood of a clean but wild animal was unacceptable at the altar and had to be buried in the dust of the earth. This is what repentance is all about, shifting from a self-centered, self-indulgent, self-worshipping (wild) lifestyle to a life dedicated to the understanding and appreciation of our Heavenly Father through His appointed avenue... His son.

Corresponding Blood and Wine Reversals

Just as the wine reversed its ritual significance from one divinely appointed educational age to the next, so did the blood. Although blood consumption was absolutely forbidden during the First Kingdom Age, blood consumption is demanded during the Ecclesial Age. However, that blood consumption is limited to the blood of our Messiah. *Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him* (Jn 6:53-56). Christ's followers were appalled. The enlightened following Jesus, but still focused on the jots and tittles of the law, were immediately repulsed by

this declaration. We have previously noted that fascinating feature in this narrative that Jesus actually allowed these disciples to walk away without offering any comforting clarification. The simple fishermen, the despised tax collector and the ordinary men who constituted the chosen twelve didn't understand either. However the evidence of Christ's power and the explanations he had offered in the past marshaled their confidence in this man from Nazareth, focused through Peter's response to Christ's inquiry as to whether they would abandon him also... *Lord, to whom shall we go? **thou** hast the words of eternal life.*

This parallel between drinking Christ's blood and eating his flesh offers the very simple answer to the oddly but frequently wrested reference in verse 62 where he says: *Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?* Jesus is simply stating that if it is difficult for them to understand the eating of his blood and body (indicating the ritual participation in his death and resurrection through the bread and wine of the memorial service) then how are they going to deal with it when it happens for real, when he actually ascends from the grave back to life again. We are not free to rip away the immediate context and jump way back in this discourse to where he began the rebuke of these pretend followers baiting him for free food, back to where he defined himself as the bread from heaven. We don't have to play along with the silly games of the apostate, being caught up in their scripture wrangling. All Jesus is asking is that if we have such a hard time understanding the eating of his blood and his flesh then how are we going to be able to deal with his rising from the grave back to where he was before... a living man. We make things too difficult when we accept the paradigms of the scripturally blind as somehow offering a legitimate premise for consideration.

Just as the blood consumption law was reversed (from never eating blood to a required eating of Christ's blood) from the First Kingdom Age to the Ecclesial Age, we also see a corresponding reversal of the wine in divine rituals from one age to the next (from the minimal status of being dependent on the burnt offering and not even qualifying as an independent altar offering to the prominence of the weekly memorial service). The educational value in both of these reversals can be drawn from this relationship between blood and wine in the context of the divinely intended educational theme for each maturing age. Prior to our Messiah's victory all the rituals and laws operated under the framework of the condemnation of sin and the inability of the enlightened to save themselves. This is how the law schoolmastered us to our Messiah, crushing us with the realization that our perfect righteousness is utterly hopeless. After the Messiah's victory the educational framework for the laws and rituals of the next age becomes merciful grace due to imputed righteousness. The righteousness we lack on a personal level is imputed to us, extended on the basis of our loving and obedient relationship with Yahweh's son. All the ritual blood of the age of sin condemnation is focused through the memorial wine representing the blood of Christ in the age promoting the great comfort of imputed righteousness. The animal blood the enlightened were forbidden is replaced by the Messiah's blood from which we absolutely must partake. These corresponding ritual reversals of blood and wine underline the significance of placing our examinations of these transitions within the limited educational theme for each progressive Age that is intended to mature the bride of the son of God.

Reversal Pattern

We also saw this ritual reversal from one age to the next in our examination of the law of the nazirite. During the First Kingdom Age a man or woman separating themselves **to** Yahweh had to emulate the High Priest by separating themselves **from** dead bodies, alcohol, grape products and haircuts, with a concluding procedure where the nazirite's head was completely uncovered with a shaving of that head of consecration. This was our consideration of the lesson of divine unity achieved through separation. However in the Ecclesial Age there are three rituals that reverse those issues. Just like the blood and the wine, that reversal is the result of a distillation from a general application to the specific application limited to of our Messiah. Currently we 'touch' the dead body of Christ when we are buried with him in baptism. We drink alcohol and partake of the grape by partaking of the

memorial wine and sisters must cover their heads when they pray (as opposed to the uncovering of the head at the conclusion of the nazarite vow ritual). The rituals are reversed from one Age to the next, when the educational theme of divine law changes and our Messiah's victory becomes central in the maturing educational plan of our Creator. The faithful in the Ecclesial Age are required to ritually perform what was forbidden in the previous Age, but now limited to a direct association exclusively with our savior. That highlighting of that which was lacking from the total divine equation in the previous age is supplied and highlighted in the subsequent age.

The wine was not an independent altar offering within the First Kingdom Age with its educational focus of sin condemnation but becomes highly prominent in the Ecclesial Age with its educational focus of salvation on the basis of grace, despite our incapacity to live without transgression. The memorial wine certainly represents the sacrificial poured out blood of our Messiah. However it also projects the second stage of our Messiah's life, the promise of immortalization. This is similar to how the second stage in the baptismal ritual (when the faithful one rises again out of their watery grave) demonstrates renewed life on the basis of recognizing the righteousness of our Creator in demanding death for sin. This association of the wine with immortalization is another reason the wine was not a prominent feature within Kingdom Law rituals. Eternal life was not the primary educational focus of Kingdom Law. That focus was the justified condemnation of sin through death. Since the wine, in its future projection of the Messiah's life, would project the promise of immortality; this would diminish the appropriateness of the wine's educational value in a context where immortalization is definitely not the dominant theme within the laws and rituals of that Age.

A further confirmation of this reversing perspective would be the actual wine consumer in each age. Yahweh was the wine consumer during the 1st Kingdom Age when the wine was offered at the altar, when the lesson was the divine condemnation of sin. In the Ecclesial Age it is the faithful that consume the wine, as the educational focus shifted to how righteousness is imputed to us on the basis of our Messiah's victory and our voluntary association with everything that victory encompasses. This is simply another consistent observation of the wine shadow with an application that expands from one Age to the next, suggesting a fellowship between God and believer in this age-bridging ritual wine progression.

Puddles or Oceans

Another application of this same law and ritual reversal in progressive ages would be the current temporary divine policies concerning the abstinence of military service, political participation and judging in a societal structure. In the previous age the faithful were commanded by God to serve militarily, judge in civil matters and participate in their national affairs, as this constituted the Kingdom of God. These responsibilities are complete reversals between one divinely appointed age and the next, and will reverse again in the Millennial Kingdom when the saints will serve militarily under Christ, be assigned political authority and must judge in civil matters. There is no inconsistency in our Creator. He is not undecided in His educational policies. He is simply educating the faithful in stages, just as we do with our own children. We don't teach our teenagers in the same way we teach our toddlers. That would be highly offensive and counterproductive. As the enlightened faithful serving in the third divinely appointed educational stage of the Creator's plan we cannot be seduced by the heart generated presumption that the laws and rituals of the Ecclesial Age are an end in themselves. Such an oversimplification would reduce the spiritual depth of these lessons to mere puddles instead of oceans of potential knowledge about our Creator and His eternal truths and principles. It is only our uncircumcised hearts that veil an ever increasing vision of our Creator's glory.

It would seem appropriate for our fiftieth commentary, the next in this series, to consider the law of the Jubilee, the fiftieth year. Following that examination we will address the more logical progression of a consideration of the dietary restrictions within Kingdom Law. As with so many other laws, these are also reversed in the Ecclesial Age.

Seven Sevens Plus One

Our choice for consideration in this fiftieth commentary in this series is Jubilee Law. While this fairly obvious connection between the number 50 and Jubilee Law falls far short of the subtle veiled connections found in every layer of divine communications, this decision is simply an attempt to follow the teaching pattern of our beloved heavenly Father and His son.

As with everything our Creator does and says there is far, far more below the surface of this law than there is readily apparent at our first consideration. The Titanic and the more than 1500 people who perished on that ship almost 100 years ago suffered because this creational principle of more being below the surface than above was underestimated. Our Creator veils Himself with shadows and layers of complexity that must be interpreted. This intentional complexity prevents the self-possessed and wise-in-their-own-eyes from approaching the divine presence veiled within these shadows. Only on the basis of a circumcised heart, only by refocusing our meditations away from the default personal focus will we be permitted to witness the glory of His light within the shadows of His expressions and activities. The law of the Jubilee is a perfect example of this foundational truth as this law demonstrates that our Creator's plan encompasses more than simply the salvation of men and women. While creation's appointed caretaker is certainly the primary component of the salvation plan, we are not exclusive. We are part of the entire creation project that will have to be brought into complete harmony with our Creator in every detail and feature and relationship. Jubilee Law demonstrates this understanding powerfully.

Egypt to the Mount of God in Fifty Days

Our commentary will have to assume the reader's familiarity with Leviticus 25, as space is limited with much to consider. It is recommended this chapter be reviewed in the context of these considerations. The timing of the Jubilee was defined as seven sets of seven years plus one. This is not an isolated pattern. We see this same timing expression in relation to the Feast of Weeks (Lev. 23:16). This 'seven Sabbaths plus a day' from the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread immediately following Passover matched the historical understanding of the fifty days from the first Passover to the giving of divine law to Moses on Sinai. That first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread was always a High Sabbath (just like the day immediately following Christ's death on Passover (John 19:31)). This fifty day understanding is drawn from Exodus 19 where we read Israel came to Sinai in the first day of third month. They had left Egypt on the 15th day of the first month. Therefore it had been 46 days to that point. The record goes on to tell us they had three days of preparation and then Moses ascends the mount. However he returns to warn the people and then returns to Mount Sinai, therefore apparently late on that 49th day. The terms for the Kingdom of God are given to Moses over forty days on Mount Sinai. The Jewish people associate this 50th day when Moses began to be instructed in the terms of the Kingdom of God with the Feast of Weeks because it too is defined by seven sevens plus a day, counting from that first High Sabbath of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Forty Sets of Fifty

There are interesting extensions from this relationship. As we have previously noted, the Feast of Weeks coincided with the wheat harvest, with two leavened loaves of wheat bread being waved to initiate this feast week. We have noted how this feast week projects the promise of the second of the three great immortalization events in the divine plan, as presented by Jesus in the parable of the wheat and the tares (Matt 13:24-43). The two numbers highlighted in 1) the journey to the mount of God and 2) the education of Moses in the terms of the Kingdom of God are the fifty days out of Egypt in order to receive these instructions and the forty days he spent on the mount receiving that education. Forty sets of fifty days is 2,000 days, projecting the two thousand

years that Christ will have spent with Yahweh after ascending the antitypical mount into heaven, being educated in the ways of his Father and the future terms of the creation plan. Unlike the return of Moses when the covenant stones were broken at the base of Sinai, Christ's return from heaven will parallel Moses' second return from the mount when the next set of covenant stones were placed in the ark of the covenant within the Most Holy, eventually resting in the temple at Jerusalem.

That 2,000 years projected by the 50 days from Passover to the Sinai ascent to receive divine Law being repeated 40 times (on the basis of the 40 days Moses was instructed on the Mount) can be seen within the shadows of other hidden prophecies identifying this time frame between the first great immortalization in the divine plan and the second, about 2,000 years later. We see this in the required distance between the ark of the covenant being carried into the Jordan River by the priests as they enter the promised land and the rest of the people waiting behind (Joshua 5). The feet of the priests carrying the ark stepped into the Jordan waters. These waters flowed from the living Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea just as we progress from life to death. The flow of these waters were reversed at the very mouth of that sea of death and miraculously returned all the way to the city of Adam (by Zarethan, meaning distress). This event served as a projection of the first great immortalization in the divine plan when our Messiah had the flow of life to death reversed, and the promise within that resurrection to immortality would be applicable to mankind all the way back chronologically to the distress by Adam. Just as the people were instructed to wait about 2,000 cubits back, so we have waited almost 2,000 years since that first immortalization. We are currently at the brink of the waters edge, awaiting the invitation to enter these waters of resurrection to immortality.

Revival After Two Divine Days

We also see the promise of 2,000 years subtly identified in Hosea 6:1-3 *Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.* The revival and binding will come after two days. It will be on the third day, meaning after two divine days of 1,000 years each (Ps. 90:4, 2 Pet 3:8) following the immortalization of our savior. The additional promise of the early and latter rains is yet another blending confirmation of exactly the same timing. The early and latter rains is a continuing theme in scripture that encompasses the two comings of Jesus Christ (James 5:7; Ps 72:6). Jesus came the first time as the early rain (planting rain) and comes again as the latter rain (harvest rain). Hosea explains there are two divine days between these early and latter rains. This observation matches perfectly with the prophecy in Amos 8:11-13 declaring the famine of the word of God, when Yahweh will be silent. That silence ends with the introduction of the Millennial Kingdom (Is 42:13-14). The drought of the word of God following the initial two generations of the Ecclesial Age (the promised timeframe for the Holy Spirit gifts that would be replaced by that which is perfect, indicating the finished written word of God) will continue until the latter rains when our Messiah comes again. Every expression blends perfectly all the way through scripture to confirm our understanding of the two divine days (2,000 years) separating the immortalization of Christ from the immortalization of his family. *Note: It should not be presumed this observation is somehow intended to identify any exact day and hour of our immortalization, but simply a faith confirming confirmation for the last generation of the Ecclesial Age.*

Divine communication reinforces truths endlessly in subtle ways available exclusively to the enlightened with circumcised hearts to see and hear. What 'Christian' would ever be able to witness the repeated shadows of the 2,000 year prophecies between the first two immortalizations... when they don't even believe in any necessary immortalization promise or procedure at all. Christianity embraces the serpent lie of not really dying and the eternal nature of sin. This glory in the shadows of divine communications cannot be seen by those with eyes

that cannot see or heard by ears that cannot hear. There are more shadow projections of this approximate 2,000 year timeframe between the first and second immortalization events for our discovery, but we have more to consider in other areas.

Jericho and Jubilee

We also see the pattern of seven sevens plus one played out in the victory over Jericho upon entering the promised land. On the seventh day of the Jericho siege, Israel is instructed to silently circle the pagan city seven times. Upon the completion of that seventh circling on that seventh day they shout in answer to the trumpet blast. That shout is defined as a jubilee ... *the people shall shout with a great shout* (Josh. 6:5) The highlighted word "shout" is from the same Hebrew word that is translated jubilee (*taruw*). That jubilee shout followed the seventh seven, which resulted in the miraculous removal of the supposedly safe walls of Jericho. Appropriately, every living thing in that city had to die and all the contents had to be burned, with the indestructible being completely dedicated to Yahweh after passing through the fire. The appropriateness of that annihilation requirement is a significant issue in the entire concept of Jubilee law.

The Plus One Pattern

The ultimate application of any divine pattern truly needs to be determined in order to see how the various separate beams of light radiating from that ultimate pattern application are divinely interconnected and interdependent. Our enlightened community frequently concentrates our considerations on the 'seventh' in these patterns but rarely on the 'plus one'. This focusing on the Millennial Kingdom as opposed to the time beyond the Millennial Kingdom is quite understandable. Not only is our particular reward identified with this seventh divine day of rest but we also have a vast range of details available for the consideration of this seventh day (Millennial Kingdom) but very little about the 'plus one' of the post Millennial Kingdom period when sin and death are completely eliminated. The reason that every living thing in the pagan city of Jericho had to perish and everything that could burn had to be burned and everything else belonged completely to Yahweh, is that the plus one after the seventh seven (that jubilee cry after the seventh circling on the seventh day) projects the end game of the divine plan when every form of life and every feature of creation that does not qualify to be freed from the law of sin and death will be annihilated completely. Everything belongs exclusively to Yahweh without a single contradictory molecule existing in that timeframe of the 'plus one'... beyond the Millennial Kingdom. Paul describes this time as when our Creator will *be all and in all* (1 Cor 15:28). There will be perfect harmony with our Creator. Literally everything in existence will manifest His eternal truths and principles without the presence of a single moral or physical contradiction.

This is what the concept of peace is all about. Peace should never be understood as mere unity. Unity is the pursuit of a fake peace, where the toleration of diversity is the engine of that false goal's pursuit. Our Creator will not suffer diversity in that 'plus one' finality. The final divine plan is not unity, based on a mistaken societal impression that peace is the absence of disturbance or the silent, unchallenged acceptance of disagreement. The divine understanding of peace is the presence of harmony. This is exactly the opposite definition of peace originating from the imaginations of our flesh based society. Peace (the presence of harmony) is based on the correction or elimination of errors, not the unchallenged embrace of real or potential error. This is why every living thing in Jericho had to die and everything that could not pass through the fire had to be consumed in flames and no one was allowed to take any spoil whatsoever. Everything in Jericho belonged to Yahweh following that jubilee shout immediately following the seventh seven. This is why the judgment against Achan and his entire family was so severe. Achan violated the principle and prophecy being projected in that unique victory at Jericho.

Circumcision Law Over Sabbath Law

This seven 'plus one' scriptural pattern always offers this foundational relationship to the finality of the divine plan that is beyond the full seven divine days of 1,000 years each. This seven 'plus one' pattern is demonstrated

in the challenge between observing Circumcision Law as opposed to Sabbath Law. The Lawgiver never offered any exception clause for when the eighth day of a boy's life fell on a Sabbath. The elders had to choose which divine law to elevate above the other. Should the law of the Sabbath (defined by its seventh day observation) be elevated above the law of circumcision (defined by its eighth day observation... seven 'plus one') with the child's circumcision being moved to the 7th or 9th day, or should circumcision law be elevated above Sabbath Law with the boy's flesh being cut away on the 8th day despite the Sabbath law to abstain from any work. Jesus points out that the Jewish authorities had correctly chosen to observe circumcision at the expense of the Sabbath (John 7:22-24). The reason why circumcision was more significant than Sabbath observance was the principles and truths being projected by the two rituals.

Sabbath observance was the signature ritual of the Mosaic Covenant of works (Ex 31:12-18; Deut 5:12-15). Circumcision was the signature ritual of the Abrahamic covenant of faith (Gen 17:10-14). Sabbath law projects the promise of rest on the seventh day in the divine plan (Millennial Kingdom). Circumcision law projects the cutting off of the flesh in the eighth day, the elimination of sin and death at the conclusion of the Millennial Kingdom. In every examination of the projections of the principles and promise within these two rituals we can see that circumcision is greater than Sabbath observance. Just as the number 8 is greater than the number 7, so the Abrahamic Covenant of faith is greater than the Mosaic Covenant of works. Just as 8 is greater than seven, a complete cutting away of the flesh is greater than a mere rest from the curse of sin, with its effects centered in our flesh. The post Millennial Kingdom period is greater than the Millennial Kingdom period. The 'plus one' pattern evident in Jubilee Law is also projected by the comparison between the Sabbath and circumcision laws.

Seven is the number that limits the reign of sin. Sin, death and the curse will end at seven. This is why eight is the number of immortality and the number of the door to immortality, Jesus. As we have repeatedly noted the six Greek letters of the name of Jesus add up to 888. The number of the savior's name also projects the three immortalization stages in the divine plan that are projected so frequently through the shadows of scripture and creation. This is why the blood of the sin offering had to be violently spattered seven times on the veil (Christ's flesh: Heb 10:19-20) at the first blood processing station in the sin offering ritual for the High Priest and also for the nation. These are the components of our memorial service. The blood spattered on the veil is seen in the memorial service wine. The veil upon which the blood is spattered seven times is defined as the flesh of Christ, just like our memorial bread. Another confirming parallel is that just as we break the bread of Christ's flesh in the memorial service to remember his death, so that same veil was torn in two from heaven to earth immediately upon the death of Christ. Our Ecclesial Age ritual projects the same concept of the ending of the power of sin as the first blood station in the sin offering for which the Mosaic priests were forbidden to eat. Seven is the number of the Mosaic covenant focused on the condemnation of sin. Eight is the number of immortalization, on the basis of grace through faith despite our sin status. An extension of this understanding is the Jubilee Law where we see the promise of freedom in the context of seven sevens **plus one**.

The Complete Purpose of the Eternal Spirit

We noted in the beginning of our commentary how Jubilee Law displays a promise of freedom and liberty and rest that extends beyond mankind. We need to remember a foundational statement of our enlightened community from our beloved Bro John Thomas: "Men were not ushered into being for the purpose of being saved or lost! God manifestation, not human salvation, was the great purpose of the Eternal Spirit." Problems accelerate when we accept the heart's relentless seductions of self importance. We are not the **exclusive** focus of the divine plan. All of creation must harmonize completely with the eternal truths and principles of the Creator. All that is physical (not simply mankind's contradictory, sin-producing, mortal nature) must harmonize into perfect peace with our Creator in that **plus one** stage after the conclusion of the Millennial Kingdom. This principle (God manifestation and not human salvation) is why the earth and plantlife rested each seventh year

and particularly in both the 49th year and the subsequent 50th Jubilee year (that 'plus one' year). This is why Sabbath Law required not simply the rest of the Israelites but their animals as well. The original curse of sin did not have any exclusive application to mankind. Animal life was cursed (as in the serpent). The ground was cursed. This is why the rest from sin in the 7th divine day of the Millennial Kingdom extends to the features of creation when the serpent, dragon, devil and satan are bound in the bottomless pit for 1,000 years. Just as sin is restrained, so are the effects of sin. We read of agricultural bounty dramatically increasing, barren wastes becoming luxurious gardens, carnivorous beasts becoming herbivorous, venom disappearing from reptiles and insects and mortal human life extending to such a degree that a person 100 years old is spoken of as being just a child in the frame of their life expectancy. When we try to limit divine principles to exclusively spiritual applications we start down a very dangerous road, such as suggesting atonement is only about the forgiveness of sins and does not extend to the physical application of immortalization.

Apparently we couldn't squeeze all of our Jubilee considerations into a single commentary. We will just have to apply a 'plus one' so that we can add a little more to this incredibly extensive scriptural theme of '**plus one**' as well as see how our Heavenly Father has subtly painted the promise and hope of Jubilee Law into the affairs of this world more than once over the last 115 years for the exclusive faith-inspiring confirmation of His children.

Bro Jim Dillingham

Jubilee Law No 2

Our initial examination of Jubilee Law noted the seven sevens plus one pattern that is evident in the Feast of Weeks, the time frame from Egyptian freedom to the instructions for the Kingdom of God at Sinai and the 'jubilee' shout after the seven circlings of Jericho on the seventh day. We also noted how the unique distinction of the 'plus one' scriptural pattern subtly promotes the truths and principles related to the final stage of the divine plan, following the conclusion of the Millennial Kingdom when everything in all of creation is brought into perfect harmony with the eternal truths and principles of our Creator.

Expanding That 'Plus One' Pattern

The double rest of the 'plus one' Jubilee year immediately following the seventh Sabbath year of seven sets of Sabbath years is another confirmation for ultimately identifying this Jubilee year with the post-Millennial Kingdom period. The Millennial Kingdom can certainly be identified by the 'seven' precedent of the creational projection of the divine plan in that 7th day of rest after six creation days. Hebrews chapter 4 identifies the Millennial Kingdom reward as a Sabbath rest greater than any previous rest. Therefore the plus one beyond that seventh suggests the time beyond that ultimate Sabbath rest of the Millennial Kingdom. However there is yet another interesting 'plus one' precedent that fits this same pattern with this same ultimate application, thereby confirming our understanding from another avenue. However, instead of initiating our count from creation, we begin counting our divine days of 1,000 years each from the first immortalization in the divine plan, from the precedent setting immortalization (atonement) of Jesus Christ.

We have noted in the past that the three days Christ spent in the grave under the power of death constituted a prophetic statement that all creation would continue to suffer under the power of sin and death for another three divine days of 1,000 years each. The only reason there would be two additional immortalizations in the divine plan would be on the basis of Jesus perfectly validating the right-ness of his Father from his birth right through to his sacrificial death. Jesus fulfilled the divine intent for creation, despite the severe handicap of being cursed with his sin producing flesh nature with its sin propensities inherited from his mother. The resurrection of Jesus to immortality constituted a new beginning and therefore an additional zero point for counting forward. The right to count from the resurrection of Christ to the fulfillment of the promise of reward was preceded in our last commentary in the consideration of Hosea 6:1-3 where we read of the promise of restoration, binding up, raising up and living in the sight of God occurring *after two days* as well as *on the third day*, indicating the two divine days from the resurrection of our messiah to the Millennial Kingdom when there will be two raising-ups (resurrections). One raising up will be right after the end of that 'second day' at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom and the other will be at the end... on that 'third' day. Therefore we are licensed to find more timing prophecies for our reward that can be initiated from our Messiah's resurrection. On that basis our seven 'plus one' pattern would now become a 'three plus one' pattern in order to identify the same end result for the finality of the divine plan for creation to be realized in the post-Millennial Kingdom period. Therefore we would have to ask if there might be a continuing pattern of 'three plus one' patterns in divine expressions to support this relationship. Interestingly, both the written and spoken word of God are absolutely saturated with this dominant pattern.

Patterns Within Patterns Exclusively for the Heart Circumcised

I remember when I first wondered about this 'pattern of three within a pattern of four' scriptural precedent. It was when our Ecclesial Adult Sunday School Class was considering Ezekiel's vision of the Millennial Kingdom Temple. There were four chambers where sacrificial components would be processed by boiling or baking (Ezek 46:19-24). The boiling and baking of sacrificial components suggests a projection of experiencing the

fiery and challenging trials in the life of every person choosing a life of sacrifice dedicated to the eternal divine truths and principles, a philosophy that is so despised by the sons of men whose lives are dedicated to self-indulgence and self-worship. These chambers had to be 30 cubits broad by 40 cubits long. In the context of a temple where foursquare was an extreme design emphasis it seemed odd to see these processing chambers to be distinctly separate from that foursquare pattern. Therefore our class started considering how this design pattern fit into other divine instructions, expressions, prophecies, historical records and creational features. We looked for patterns of three within a pattern for four in order to see that three plus one feature. Here are just a few examples.

- The contents of the golden Ark of the Covenant satisfy this pattern with four components but only three deposits into the ark, since the two stones of the covenant were deposited together. This is a pattern of three within a pattern of four.
- The last component placed into the ark projects this same pattern. The rod of resurrection identifying the High Priest displayed four levels of maturity, but two of them were the same physical construction of the bud. *Behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was (1) budded, and (2) brought forth buds, and (3) bloomed blossoms, and (4) yielded almonds* (Num 17:8). This is a subtle pattern of three within a pattern of four in the context of resurrection within the framework of a wooden rod. Remember that it was the tree of life in the Garden of Eden. Also trees are the earth's source of regenerated oxygen. Oxygen is numerically identified by the number of immortality (8) on the scientific Chart of the Elements. A tree component is a perfect foundation for the image of resurrection, just as the two arks of salvation were made of wood and either covered inside and outside with pitch (Noah's ark) or gold Moses' ark of the covenant).
- That gopher wood salvation ark from the Patriarchal Priesthood Age projects this same pattern, doubled four emphasis. There were two sets of four people saved on the ark, with four men and four women. However there was a father and 3 sons as well as a mother and 3 daughter-in-laws, therefore additionally projecting our pattern of three within a pattern of four.
- The heaven and earth covenant between Yahweh and Abram in Genesis 15 presents this same doubled pattern of three within a pattern of four. Abram was instructed to place three severed carcasses and one whole bird into two parallel rows. A further extension of this pattern of three within a pattern of four was the prophetic promise offered in this covenant that Abram's family would be in Egypt for four generations but it would be the fourth generation when they would actually escape Egypt.
- The inner (spiritual) community configuration in the wilderness was constructed with the three separate Levite divisions (Merarites, Kohathites and Gershonites) to the south, west and north. The fourth quadrant of the inner square (east) were also Levites but separate in that they were the priests and Moses. Therefore it is yet another pattern of three within a pattern of four. The outer (political) encampment configuration presented three tribes in each of four quadrants, hinting at this same pattern displayed in a clearer, more refined application in that next 'spiritual' stage of the community configuration.
- There will be four divinely designed temples (Tabernacle, Solomon's Temple, Post Captivity Temple, Millennial Kingdom Temple). However, three are permanent structures and one was a mobile tent.
- The Millennial Kingdom Temple will have four gates for entering. However the western gate will not be entered. The eastern gate is for the Prince and the north and south gates are for everyone else. One of the four gates will not be entered, constituting another pattern of three within a pattern of four for entrances into the divine sanctuary.
- The inner circle of Christ included Peter, James and John accompanying him at the transfiguration mount, the raising of Jairus' daughter and the interior watch in Gethsemane, satisfying this same pattern of three within a pattern of four.

- Similarly we see Daniel with his three friends and also those three friends along with one like the son of God in Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace. We also see the pattern of three within a pattern of four with Job and his three accusing 'friends.'
- There are four categories of life described in scripture. 1) The underived life of the Creator that never had a beginning and will never have an end; 2) the derived immortal life of the angels, Christ and the saints that each have a beginning but will never end; 3) the derived undying life of Adam and Eve prior to their sin which had a beginning but did not necessarily have to end; 4) the derived mortal life that was imposed after sin corrupted creation had a beginning and is assured an end. Three of these four separate categories of life were derived and had a beginning point.
- The development of a new human life is medically defined by three very defined tri-mesters while the developing child is within the mother and physically dependent. The fourth stage is the physical birth where the umbilical cord is severed and a new independent life has begun... clearly presenting another pattern of three within a pattern of four in the context of the promise of life.
- The cherubim faces depict three animals and one man; additionally as three land dwellers and one that soars the heavens; and also as three carnivores and one herbivore.
- The divine hierarchy stated in 1 Cor. 11 declares the four descending authority levels of God being the head of Christ being the head of man being the head of woman. Three of the four have been mortal. Also, three of the four have heads of authority above them.
- There were four frames for the door of an Israelite home (lintel, threshold, right and left posts). However only three of them had blood painted on them at the Egyptian Passover.
- God was not in the wind or the earthquake or the fire but He was in that 'fourth' manifestation, that still small voice, when Elijah came to Sinai.
- God defines Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. These are each single person generations inheriting the promises over three generations. It is the fourth generation when the pattern extends to the twelve men inheriting the promises.
- There are four progressive priesthood ages in the divine plan that are bordered by a change in the law, a change in the priesthood and a progressively greater outpouring of divine power to validate each transition: 1) Patriarchal; 2) 1st Kingdom Age (Mosaic); 3) Ecclesial and 4) Millennial Kingdom. However, the first three ages are dissimilar from the fourth in the context of that subtle divine education policy as well as the unrestrained operation of sin nature. That fourth priesthood age will introduce a dramatically greater pro-active divine education policy for both Jew and Gentile. Unlike the first three priesthood ages there will be both immortal and mortal priests during this fourth age when sin and its effects will be chained in the bottomless pit for 1,000 years.

If the repetition of this pattern of three within a pattern of four seems tedious, please understand we could continue for several more pages of examples. We needed to provide enough examples to avoid the charge of contriving a pattern but few enough to provide space for further considerations in this commentary. Just as there is a significant 'plus one' pattern in the context of the seven sevens plus one in Jubilee Law so there is a distinctive pattern of 'plus one' in other contexts as well. Just as the seven plus one pattern initiates at the beginning of the divine plan and concludes in the post-Millennial Kingdom period so does the three plus one pattern when we count the divine days from the new beginning of the resurrection of our savior, which is the very basis for the successful conclusion of Yahweh's creation project.

God Manifestation and not Human Salvation

These very subtle but undeniably extensive 'plus one' divine patterns are a confirmation of Dr. Thomas's quote offered in the previous commentary: "Men were not ushered into being for the purpose of being saved or lost! God manifestation, not human salvation, was the great purpose of the Eternal Spirit." Just as there is more to the

divine plan than simply the three immortalization events encompassing Christ and the saints, so we see this consistent pattern of three plus one. God manifestation is about more than simply mankind manifesting the eternal truths and principles of our Creator. While creation's caretaker is certainly the focus of the divine redemption plan, we are not the exclusive component of the principle of God manifestation. That 'plus one' added to the three immortalizations of mankind is when that peace, that perfect harmony to be enjoyed by the immortal saints, is extended to the entire creation project. All the earth will be in perfect harmony with the Creator. Every atom, every molecule, every feature of creation and every relationship between each feature of creation will all project the glory of our Creator, without a single contradiction on any level whatsoever. The earth will be filled with the Glory of Yahweh Elohim as completely as the waters cover the sea. The annihilation of sin and the grave in that typical lake of fire following the third immortalization event (Rev. 20) qualifies as the introduction of the 'plus one' final phase of the divine creation plan when the Creator will be all and in all. This understanding of requiring everything that exists to comply harmoniously with divine principles explains why the physical uncleanness laws in the 1st Kingdom Age had to be observed with extreme consequences for any disrespect. Although there was no guilt assigned for these unclean conditions, noncompliance with uncleanness laws meant either permanent ostracism or execution. There is a physical aspect to salvation that has to be understood along with the spiritual aspect. When teachers within our Brotherhood begin to disrespect this physical aspect of salvation without correction, we are licensing a progressive error that will eventually corrupt our community if left unchecked. The minimalization of our understanding of sin to strictly moral error and the minimalization of atonement to an exclusive application of the forgiveness of sins are both current examples of ignoring the 'plus one' scriptural pattern that demands the physical compliance of all creation into the framework of the complete divine plan... beyond the three immortalizations of mankind. We have to understand there are creationally 'right' divine standards and not simply morally 'right' divine standards. The difference is that neither we nor any part of creation bear any guilt for missing the mark of that physical category of divine right-ness. There is no need for repentance for the fact that both mankind and all of creation fall physically short of what our Creator considers to be 'right'. These physical effects generated from the corrupting influence of moral sin in the Garden of Eden will have to be corrected. Death, pain, tears, barren earth, poison, danger, violence, hunger, sorrow, and all the other physical effects of sin will have to be eliminated in everything... not just men and women.

This is the ultimate freedom, liberty and the reclaiming of the original family inheritance being projected in the 'plus one' year of the Jubilee. This represents the hope of our ultimate freedom from sin and all its horrible physical effects as well as the family of the meek inheriting an earth free from the physical effects of sin. It is so perfectly appropriate that the trumpet of the Jubilee year would sound on the Day of Atonement (Lev 25:9). Atonement is all about salvation. And there is more to salvation than simply forgiveness. Atonement includes a physical redemption for a divinely unclean condition, which is an understanding that is frequently repeated in the context of the laws of the Kingdom of God.

Faith Replenishment Through Hindsight

A completely separate consideration of Jubilee Law is how it has been divinely projected over the last 115 years onto the framework of global politics just for the exclusive appreciation and faith confirmation of the children of God. This will be another exercise in the power of hindsight for our constantly renewing confidence in the fulfillment of divine promises. It is the policy of our Heavenly Father to accommodate the need for reinforcement in our minds and hearts as we pursue His image and likeness, because we love Him. Weekly memorial service would be a feature of this accommodation to a necessary reinforcement. Faith can fade as the relentless and deceitful human heart wears us down, personally and corporately through the societies in which we live. Replenishment is a divine precedent. Just as we see the promise of three immortalization events in the divine plan, there are three necessary avenues of physical replenishment for continued life. We have to

constantly replenish our oxygen by breathing in good air and breathing out bad. We have to drink clean water and variations of that water in other beverages, as well as expelling the poison that our bodies process with that clean water. We have to eat solid food as well as expel the poison our body processes from that originally good food. We need replenishment. This is why the future kings of God's community were commanded to write their own copy of God's law and to keep it with them always and read from it every day (Deut. 17:18-20).

Replenishment is a necessary feature of our cursed nature.

However, our Heavenly Father's educational policy promotes the faith assurance of the circumcised in heart but simultaneously reinforces the delusions of the self-absorbed. This is achieved through the policy of intentional complexity in all divine communications. Therefore it is reasonable to understand there will be faith replenishing observations for the children of God that will be completely invisible to the children of men. Let's look at how our understanding of Jubilee Law has been very clearly projected onto the world politics screen over the last 115 years, for our exclusive benefit by our loving Heavenly Father.

Fifty Years From Promise to Fulfillment

In 1897 the first Zionist Convention convened in Basle Switzerland, intent on re-establishing the Jewish state in Palestine. Theodore Herzl issued his famous declaration that certainly within 50 years the world would see the reappearance of a Jewish nation. This was the promise of Jewish freedom, liberty and every Jew going back to their ancestral inheritance, exactly the terms of Jubilee Law. In 1947, 50 years later, that promise became reality when the United Nations voted to partition Palestine to create a new Jewish state. The world was stunned when Russia actually voted in favor of that resolution, a prospect that surely caught Great Britain quite by surprise. They apparently were hoping for a failure at the UN so that they would be free to deal with the Palestine issue in any way they chose, free of all that pesky international criticism they had faced for their policies. The very next day after the UN vote the Arabs began attacking Jewish settlements with the intention of annihilating every Jewish man, woman and child in Palestine. The Jewish war of independence had begun in November 1947. The realization of freedom, liberty and the children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob repossessing their ancestral land arrived 50 years from the original promise. This was a perfect projection of Jubilee Law.

A Second Fifty Years From Promise to Fulfillment

Similarly we saw the promise of Jewish liberty, freedom and the return of ancestral land in 1917 with the Balfour Declaration. Great Britain had taken Palestine from Turkish control during World War I under General Allenby's forces that had driven north from Egypt. One would presume there aren't too many Christadelphians that aren't familiar with this history and how England reversed their policy of open Jewish invitation for a Jewish homeland. Fifty years from this invitation to Jewish freedom, liberty and the repossession of ancestral lands brings us to 1967 when that invitation became a reality. The famous and miraculous Six Day War presented Israel defeating immense odds (all alone) in just a few days, repossessing geography lost many generations before. They defeated Egypt, Syria and Jordan in Biblical fashion in a scripturally appropriate six days and then rested from war on that seventh day. They took the Sinai Peninsula to the south away from Egypt. They took Jerusalem and the West Bank to the Jordan River away from Jordan. They took the Golan Heights to the north away from Syria. The realization of Jewish freedom, liberty and reclaiming the land of their divine inheritance became a Jubilee reality, fifty years from the 1917 promise.

The Blinding Capacity of An Uncircumcised Heart

These projections of Jubilee Law are flawless confirmations of our Heavenly Father's providential operation on the global political stage. While these observations and relationships are thrilling to the children of God, the children of men listen politely to our excited confidence with patronizing smirks and rolling eyes. They pity us for not joining their self-glorifying, lemming march to the sea cliffs of eternal destruction. This should really be no surprise. The day after Jesus fed 5,000 men (as well as women and children) from just 5 loaves and two fish they hunted him down the next day in distant Capernaum to bait him for more miraculous food (John 6). After

he declared they would have to eat his flesh and drink his blood, they left disgusted (including many of his disillusioned disciples). The ability of the human heart to darken the glorious light of miraculous divine activity is nothing new. It is utterly stunning to read how the Sanhedrin were willing to admit the legitimate raising of Lazarus from the dead but used that understanding as a motivation for conspiring to orchestrate the murder of Jesus (John 11:45-53). The power of the human heart to deceive and overwhelm ice-cold logic is simply amazing.

Our next commentary will begin to address the dietary laws of the Kingdom of God.

Bro Jim Dillingham

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Eating Laws

Everyone likes to eat. Personally, I like it a little too much. We like to talk about eating. We like to read new cooking books and watch cooking shows. Food is not simply a creation pattern for life continuance, it is an absolute mental and emotional obsession for most people. Most people consider food to be more than a physical necessity, serving also as an emotional fulfillment. We call it "comfort food" as we retreat from the stress of life under the curse. The first thing we should recognize about the creational feature of 'eating' is that it projects divine principles. Our Creator **chose** to create the natural order to be dependent on ingesting nutrition and processing it into body mass and energy in order to continue living. This is not a feature of the divine immortal nature. Eating was also a key feature in the original failure in Eden as well as freedom from Eypgtian slavery (Passover), Kingdom laws, miracles, rituals (memorial service) and divine conditioning. The ritual of fasting was not a divinely imposed requirement, however Christ's defense against the temptation to make bread from stones was to quote the presumed inspiration for the ritual, which was the wilderness manna. This lesson from our Master is a perfect example of how the creational feature of eating serves as a platform for understanding a greater measure of divine wisdom. *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* (Deut. 8:3). The provision of manna was intended as a teaching experience to emphasize the foundational source of life continuance... our Creator's word and not just the practice of eating.

Eating Laws and Miracles

There are quite a number of divine eating laws offering insight into the eternal truths and principles of our Heavenly Father.

- The mandate against eating blood during the Patriarchal and First Kingdom Ages, compared to the demand for eating the blood of Christ during the Ecclesial Age.
- The only flesh Israel could eat during the wilderness wanderings was the two heavenly outpourings of quail, participation in a peace offering or to hunt a wild but clean animal. Yet in the promised land the previously forbidden flesh of clean animals from the flock or herd that qualified for altar sacrifice were divinely considered as wild, despite being technically domestic and therefore acceptable to be eaten.
- Eating leavened bread was forbidden during Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread and always forbidden at the altar of burnt offering. However, leaven was demanded for the Peace Offering and for the initiation of the Feast of Firstfruits.
- The Nazarite was forbidden from eating any grape product and from drinking any wine or alcohol
- While the flesh from a young goat could be cooked in milk for eating, it was forbidden to do that with the milk from the kid's own mother.
- An animal dying on its own (naturally or accidentally) without being slaughtered could not be eaten. However, that meat or carcass could be sold to the stranger or alien, thereby emphasizing this limitation as having divinely educational significance only to the enlightened.
- Divine permission was granted to eat meat and not just fruits and vegetables after Noah and his family of eight people exited the ark: *Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things* (Gen 9:3).
- There were four categories of 'flesh' under Kingdom Law that could be eaten, each with further restrictions: 1) domestic and wild animals, 2) specific fowl, 3) Fish with fins and scales and 4) specific insects (Lev. 11). Three conditions had to be satisfied for an animal to qualify for eating. The animal had to have a split hoof as well as a cloven hoof and also chew the cud. If any one of those conditions were

not met the animal would be considered unclean and not part of the permitted diet of the children of God.

- A significant distinction in divine eating laws is that they changed as the divine plan transitioned from one Priesthood Age to the next. In the Patriarchal priesthood Age there were no dietary restrictions recorded or observed. In the First Kingdom Age there were powerful restrictions as to what the children of God could and could not eat. Jesus cleansed all foods as the First Kingdom Priesthood Age was surrendering to the Ecclesial Priesthood Age (Mk 7:18-23).

Mystified by the Great Things of the Law

The key question in all these laws, rituals and creational features is "Why". The 'what, how, when and where' issues are simply operational considerations. We need to plumb the divine motivations for these judicial and creational laws to determine the underlying purpose in their requirements and modifications throughout the progression of the divine plan in order to witness a greater measure of the intentionally veiled glory of our Creator. We must respect the wisdom of our Creator in hiding great truths and principles in layer upon layer of divine communications and activities. Yahweh complained through Hosea of the enlightened community's inability to understand the 'whys' of divine law. *I have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing* (Hos 8:12). Is it the same with the enlightened community today? Do we fathom the great things in our Creator's laws, or are they a *strange thing* to us as well? Won't we be tasked with educating and policing Kingdom Laws if we are granted the great privilege of being clothed with the divine nature, that white wedding garment that will finally and forever eliminate the shame of our nakedness before our Creator? The *great things of the law* should not be counted as a strange thing to those who seek the wonderful intimacy of witnessing an ever increasing measure of our Creator's glory.

There were also miracles involving food and eating such as the manna and quail in the wilderness, the unfailing oil and meal that sustained the three in Zeraphath (Elijah, the widow and her son) and Christ's feeding of both the 4,000 and the 5,000. Every one of these records have to be understood in the context of their creational features to begin to understand the truths and principles being projected in the issue of the judicial and creational eating laws. These recorded miracles were not simply matters of convenience. They offer divine education in veiled truths and principles, as Jesus noted in relation to the miraculous manna provision.

Quoting Creation to Change Divine Law

Therefore we will start looking for answers from the greatest human teacher that every existed: our King and Savior. Jesus reversed the eating laws imposed by his Father through Moses. He was responding to the Pharisees insistence to maintain the gnat-straining elder tradition of never eating with unwashed hands. Christ's closest disciples didn't even understand his comments. *And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him; because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, **purging all meats**? And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man* (Mk 7:18-23). Jesus "purged" all meats, declaring them to be clean. Once again our Lord quotes creation to enlighten us concerning a divine principle. Therefore we are licensed to examine how the creational features of 'eating' shadow divine truths.

In and Out... or Die

Our bodies need replenishment and nutrition to continue living. Life itself is a projection of our Creator, who is the source of all life. A feature of the curse of sin and death is the constant need for renewal to sustain temporary (mortal) life. The curse of mortal life is punctuated by the principle of fading and decay. We arrest that fading feature of energy loss and mental fatigue by ingesting the three categories of matter creation offers

to us: gas, liquids and solids. However, not only do we need fresh air, clean water and solid food, we also have to eliminate the waste generated by these mortally cursed bodies. This is a highly significant observation that contradicts one feature of the current leavening of our global ecclesial community. I nearly died years ago as I experienced an intestinal blockage, eliminating the capacity to expel bodily waste generated from eating. If the body does not expel the unclean waste it has generated, our life will end. We breathe in good air and breathe out poison. We drink clean water and expel unclean, useless liquid. We eat good food and expel unclean waste. Just as we renew our lives with the three categories of clean matter (air, liquid and solids) our lives are also dependent on the capacity of removing the three unclean waste categories generated by our cursed natural bodies. Our Creator could easily have designed flesh so that what we ingest is entirely converted into either energy or mass. Our Creator chose to design us so that our flesh would take what is clean and convert some of that into unclean waste. Creational features (the spoken word of our Creator) always demonstrate the eternal truths and principles of our Creator (found in the written word of our Creator). Paralleling these three categories of unclean waste naturally exiting our cursed flesh are the three laws of physical uncleanness that had to be addressed with guilt-free sin offerings (touching the dead, leprosy, bodily issues). Just as the mortal body must eliminate the three categories of waste it generates to continue living, so the children of God had to reconcile themselves from the three categories of physical uncleanness or suffer permanent ostracism or execution (Num 19:13; Deut 17:12).

Creation Itself Confirms the Illegitimacy of Equality

Additionally we have no options in relation to these three categories of necessary replenishment. We do not have the freedom to choose only one or two of these nutrition categories and expect to continue living much longer. We won't live more than a few minutes without clean air. We will not live two weeks without water, choosing only to breathe. We will not live two months by only breathing and drinking water, without any solid food. In the same sense a clean animal qualifying for dinner under Kingdom Law had to satisfy all three conditions simultaneously: the parted hoof as well as the cloven hoof as well as chewing the cud. This creational observation mirrors the divine judicial requirement. We will have more to say about this observation in another commentary but we should respect that there is an obvious hierarchy of significance in these three life sustaining categories. Oxygen is greater than water which is greater than solid food. There is no equality. Equality is a God-despising, but highly treasured delusion of the uncircumcised heart. The signature doctrine of the apostasy is scripturally defined as the denial of the flesh (humanity) of Christ. This is the 'equality' doctrine promoted by the man of sin hissing that there are three gods that are co-equal and co-eternal. The three basic creational features of continuing life contradict the vile delusion of equality on the basis of their significance to life continuance. This relationship observation is merely a meditational seed at this point.

Pursue Righteousness and Eliminate Wickedness

Why did our creator design our flesh nature so that we have to **both** ingest good, clean nutrition as well as expel bad, unclean waste so that we might continue living? Additionally we should ask why there are specifically three clean categories that have to go in and three unclean categories that have to go out to continue living? There are two primary issues we have to address in the context of an 'eternal' life continuance. These are righteousness and sin. We have to pursue righteousness and we have to deny sin. Apostate Christianity exclusively promotes the forgiveness of sin as the assurance of salvation. Sadly the foundations of this false doctrine are being promoted in our brotherhood today. The principle of atonement (salvation) is being dramatically reduced to nothing more than the forgiveness of sins. Christadelphian writers and speakers are even promoting the exclusivity of imputed righteousness at the expense of the significance of pursuing personal righteousness... which is the qualification for the very consideration for being awarded the always undeserved gift of imputed righteousness. We are repeatedly warned throughout scripture that we will be judged according to our deeds. We are never told that we will be judged according to whether or not we have been forgiven for all our failings or just some of them. Our salvation is not exclusively about forgiveness or the reconciliation of sin.

These are absolutely essential issues but they are not exclusive. Divine acceptance is also about how we have personally validated our Creator's righteousness by our deeds, words and thoughts. Similarly, if we do not voluntarily drink clean liquids and voluntarily eat clean foods then we will die. Just as we also have to voluntarily participate in the reconciliation of sin we also have to expel the unclean wastes generated by our cursed flesh. If we only eat but don't expel the waste... we die. We need both in order to live. In order to live forever we also need to both voluntarily pursue righteousness as well as eliminate sin from our lives. If we listen to those among us suggesting that atonement is only about forgiveness then we are contradicting the very laws of creation. As we have always affirmed, when something is divinely true then that truth can be demonstrated and confirmed in countless avenues. This is the principle of God manifestation, where everything is interconnected to everything else and nothing stands alone or isolated... except for a lie.

Three and Three

This natural observation of the three good categories being ingested into the body and the three negative categories being expelled to continue life offers multi-layered parallels with divine truths (as it must, or it would be wrong). We have noted previously and frequently how this extreme pattern of threes saturates scripture and creation. We have noted how there are both positive and negative patterns of three. The significance of this dual pattern is underlined by the three hours of light and three hours of miraculous darkness that defined the six hours Christ spent dying horribly by crucifixion (Mk 15:25,33), thereby reconciling the world (Rom 5:10). We will simply reference a few examples from each side of this pattern, rather than restating the extensive range of evidence for this powerful pattern. The negative pattern of threes is defined by the three categories of sin (lust of the eye, lust of the flesh and the pride of life; 1 Jn 2:16) and the three stages of sin (lust, sin, death; Js 1:14-15). The three positive patterns of three can be initially seen in the expressions of Christ being the truth, the life and the way (Jn 14:16); as well as the path to enlightenment being the three stages of asking, seeking and knocking (Matt 7:7) and the three positive behavior patterns of faith, hope and love (1 Cor 13:13). Confirming this pattern, we can also see the triple sixes numerically identifying the man of sin while the triple eights in the name of Jesus identify the man of righteousness. Similarly we see three distinct stages in both the approach to the divine presence in the Most Holy within the Tabernacle as well as the retreat away from the divine presence. The three portals serving as both entrances as well as exits are the door to the Tabernacle courtyard (with the three curtains to the left and three curtains to the right) and the doorway into the Holy Place (with the lampstand with the three lamps to the left of the center shaft and the three to the right) and the third entrance/exit to and from the Most Holy Place. Just as continued human life is dependent on pursuing three categories of nutrition and removing three categories of waste, we see the path to and the path away from our Creator defined by three stages.

Three Immortalizations and Three Perishings

We originally considered these positive and negative three patterns about four years ago in our fourth commentary in this series, entitled Blood Times Three. This is a very powerful dual pattern that surfaces constantly in laws, miracles, visions, and the features of creation. The ultimate application would be the three immortalizations and the three perishings. The three immortalizations would be 1) Christ, 2) his family at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom and 3) the rest of the world at the end of the Millennial kingdom. The three perishings would be 1) when any of the unenlightened mortally die, as they will never be resurrected for judgment (Ps 49); 2) the "*many*" who will be called to judgment but not "*chosen*" at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom (Matt 20:16; 22:14); and 3) those called to judgment but rejected at the end of the Millennial Kingdom (Rev. 20:11-15).

As our consideration of divine eating laws progress we will have to compare all future determinations in the context of these foundational observations. Everything has to fit together perfectly to offer any glimpse of the veiled glory of our Heavenly Father that we pursue out of love and wonder.

Brother Jim Dillingham

Eating is a creational feature projecting spiritual truths exclusively for the educational benefit of the enlightened with circumcised hearts. Creational laws and features qualify as the same category of carefully veiled divine expressions as Kingdom rituals and Christ's parables. Jesus explained to his curious disciples that the intentional complexity of his allegorical teaching pattern was intended to reveal answers to a few within the enlightened community while simultaneously hiding those answers from others within the enlightened community. *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* (Matt. 13:12). Christ's ministry was directed almost exclusively to the body of believers as opposed to the Gentile pagans. Jesus preached to the Christadelphian community equivalency of his generation. Just like the Christadelphians today, those three million or so Jews in Israel, almost 2,000 years ago, qualified as the enlightened in covenant relationship with Yahweh. Just as we have differing fellowships today, so there were the Pharisees and Sadducees and other divisions of the enlightened during that generation. Sadly, very few of the enlightened in covenant relationship that lived during Christ's ministry responded to his gospel of the Kingdom, serving as the constantly repeated focus of his ministry. One would presume that should be a rather bracing observation. The laws and features of creation offer an entirely additional range of veiled absolute truths and eternal principles that are exclusively available to those among us with seeing eyes and hearing ears. The wonderful scientific education available to us in this final generation of 'voluntarily' participating in a divine education presents the opportunity to view a far greater measure of divine glory than previous generations, due the extent of the scientific documentation of the features of creation.

Only We know Why

Of all people on this planet only we can see **why** human beings are the only animal species to clothe their shamefully naked created form. We alone can see **why** we have to experience a death-like sleep every day and experience a resurrection-like awakening at the dawning of each new day. We are the only people who know **why** the earth revolves around the sun and **why** there are 6 protons in the carbon atom while there are a perfectly appropriate 8 protons in the oxygen atom. Unlike everyone else on the earth, we know **why** the features and laws of creation are the way they are. This precedent is also true of the creational as well as the judicial laws concerning eating. The unenlightened can certainly explain in detailed fashion the 'hows' and then inappropriately refer to their explanations as addressing the why questions, but only we actually know the Creator's motivation for these creational laws... that they perfectly shadow eternal truths.

We have referenced creational laws many times in our considerations of Kingdom laws. We have noted how Jesus and Paul particularly quote creation to prove divine truths such as the necessity to return good for evil (Matt. 5:45) and to defend the doctrine of the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:35-37). We noted in our previous commentary how the three matter categories that support temporary life (gas, liquid, solids... air, water, bread) ultimately reflect the three immortalization stages in the divine plan when life is extended eternally. These three immortalization stages would be 1. Christ; 2. The family of Christ at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom and 3. The rest of the world at the end of the Millennial Kingdom. We also noted how the three categories of waste that our cursed bodies expel (carbon dioxide, liquid and solid waste) ultimately reflect the three consignment categories of eternal death (1. The first death of anyone that will be unaccountable to divine judgement; 2. The second death of those rejected at Christ's judgment following the resurrection to mortality and 3. the second death of those rejected at the final judgment at the conclusion of the Millennial Kingdom). However, besides the prophetic and principle projections of these creational observations there are also spiritual exhortations being divinely offered in these creational observations.

Eating the Broken Bread and the Wine

It is quite simple to validate how eating is divinely intended to project divine truths and exhortations. We eat the bread and wine of the memorial service. These memorials are repeatedly expressed as shadowing the broken body of Jesus as well as his blood. The fact that not a single bone of our Messiah's body was allowed to be broken absolutely screams for examination in the context of Christ's identifying that bread by saying: *Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me* (1 Cor 11:24). Since Christ's Father would not accommodate a single bone of His son's body to be broken (Ps. 34:20; John 19:36) then the identifying of the broken bread representing the breaking of the Messiah's unbroken body should encourage a powerful curiosity as to what it was that was broken in the body of the Messiah that we must eat if we want eternal life. This issue is further emphasized by the ripping of the temple veil immediately upon the death of our Messiah. This veil is identified as the flesh of Christ (Heb. 10:19-20). The denial of the flesh of Christ (the torn veil) was prophesied to be the signature doctrine of the antichrist system (1 John 4:2; 2 Jn 7). Therefore the proper identification of what was broken in the flesh of our Savior upon his death has to be foundationally significant, as we are required to consider this issue as we eat the broken bread every week.

The Breaking, Cleaving and Severing Salvation Pattern

Further emphasizing the significance of this consideration is the definite pattern of dual Messiah projections where the first of the two components is broken, cleaved or severed.

- Paul identifies the rock Israel drank from in the wilderness as representing Christ (1 Cor 10:4). There were two fountain stones Israel drank from in the wilderness. The first one was broken in two by the serpent rod of Aaron, wielded by Moses (Ps. 78:15; Is. 48:21). The second was approached by Moses, having been explicitly commanded not to strike the rock, and carrying the same rod that was now identified as the rod of resurrection, having miraculously identified the High Priest.
- There were two categories of animals in the heaven and earth covenant between Abram and Yahweh. The three earth animals, each three years old, were severed in two. The two fowl of heaven were left whole (Gen. 15).
- There were two sets of covenant stones upon which the finger of God wrote the divine testimony. The first set of covenant stones was broken at the base of Sinai while the second set was preserved in the ark of the covenant and eventually sat in the temple at Jerusalem (Ex. 32:15-19; Deut. 10:1-3; 1 Kings 8:9). Just like the bread and wine, each first component of these dual Messiah memorials is broken or severed.

Our heavenly Father and His son are highly emphasizing this issue of something being broken in the body of Jesus upon his death, while eliminating any possible misconception that this breaking could somehow apply to just his physical body (due to the divine refusal to allow any bone to be broken). The command to eat this broken bread and the warning that whoever does not eat Christ's flesh will not inherit eternal life (Jn 6:53) makes this issue highly personal.

The Cloven Hoof and the Cleaved Water

Before we address this issue of what specifically was broken in the body of our Messiah at his death, we will identify a further emphasis that will lead us into our next eating law consideration. This is the divine limitation of eating animals with not simply a split hoof, but specifically a cloven hoof. Just like the broken bread, in memorializing the death of our Savior, only animals with a 'cloven' hoof had any capacity to be identified as clean and edible under the laws of the Kingdom of God (Lev 11:3). The cleaving component in the principle of salvation is also validated by how Israel was saved from their murderous Egyptian pursuers when the Red Sea clave in two. We also see the entering of the promised land under Joshua on the basis of the cleaving of the Jordan River just before Passover, thereby reversing its natural flow from a sea of life into a sea of death. We see this 'being saved by cleaving' issue emphasized at both the leaving of Egypt as well as entering into the land of promise. The divine repetition of this very common cleaving pattern should be amplifying our Master's voice in our mind, asking if we will have ears to hear.

So what is the point? What was broken in the flesh of Christ at his death that our Creator doesn't want us to miss? Although this is not a difficult issue, it has oddly been a point of contention within our brotherhood in recent years. The death of our Savior has been repeatedly diminished at the expense of the magnification of his resurrection, as if his sacrificial death was a mere technicality of law. This issue was also the core of Bro Roberts defense against the renunciationist challenge within our brotherhood in the late 19th century, led by Brother Edward Turney. History always repeats itself. As Brother Solomon wrote: *There is nothing new under the sun.*

We are repeatedly told what was broken in the flesh of our Messiah upon his death. The power of sin was broken in the sacrificial death of Jesus, qualifying our reconciliation (but not insuring our salvation).

- *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; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage* (Heb. 2:14-15).
- *And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he **reconciled** In the body of his flesh **through death**, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his sight* (Col 1:20-22).
- *For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having **abolished in his flesh** the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body **by the cross**, having slain the enmity thereby* (Eph 2:14-16).
- We have been reconciled by the death of Jesus but we shall be saved by his resurrection. *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).

Reconciliation Without Salvation?

The power of sin was broken in the transgression-free and completely guilt-free body of Jesus upon his **death**. That is what the testimony says. That cleaving, breaking and severing of the power of sin in the body of Jesus upon his mortal death is what has reconciled the faithful. Just as the cleaved Jordan River travelled all the way back to the city of Adam by Zaretan (meaning distress) to invite the faithful to cross into the promised land from their 2,000 cubit distance so the divine reconciliation afforded by the death of Jesus is effective all the way back to our distress by Adam (meaning the curse of sin and death) to which we look back almost 2,000 years (Joshua 3) . However, reconciliation is not the same as salvation. It is the resurrection of the Messiah whereby we may have the complete escape from the curse of sin and death and not simply enjoy a reconciliation. We don't simply eat the memorial broken bread and refuse the memorial wine. What good is reconciliation without salvation? However, we have to understand that without reconciliation there could be no salvation. Without the sacrificial death of Jesus there would have been no resurrection of Christ. The reconciliation achieved through Jesus was accomplished by the declaration in his voluntary, innocent, violent death that our Creator's judgement of death for sin was absolutely right. The death of Jesus emphatically declared the right-ness, the righteousness, of his Father in His Edenic judgment that contradictions to His right-ness must end. That sin producing nature Jesus inherited from his mother, for which he bore no guilt whatsoever, was isolated and exposed at that crucifixion due to his transgression-free life, and condemned to die horribly because that is what is right... sin must die. Eternal sin, the default reasoning of apostate mankind, is a Creator despising delusion launched from the serpent lie.

This is why we break the bread before we eat that bread, ingesting the eternal truths and principles in that broken bread. We make those truths a part of our flesh and our mind by eating that broken bread and meditating on the divinely shadowed issues.

A more comprehensive examination of this lesson concerning how death was defeated, how the power of sin was broken and why we eat ‘broken’ bread to memorialize the death of Christ can be considered in the 14th through 16th commentaries in this series entitled Defeating Death. Our primary lesson at this time has been the context of eternal principles and truth being demonstrated in what we eat, as well as specifically considering why our Messiah demands we eat broken or cleaved bread to remember what he accomplished by his death.

The Parted As Well As Cloven Hoof of the Clean Beast

Within the context of the frequent scriptural theme of cleaving we noted the distinction our Creator demanded for eating ritually clean animal flesh including a cloven hoof. There were three distinctions for this category of beasts the enlightened were permitted to eat under Kingdom Law. *Whatsoever parteth the hoof, and is clovenfooted, and cheweth the cud, among the beasts, that shall ye eat* (Lev 11:3). Let’s make some initial observations but we will have to leave the consideration of the spiritual considerations for these eating laws to our next commentary.

There were three cleanliness distinctions that could not be considered separately. The divine communication addresses the default human thought process of oversimplification by stressing the fact that all three conditions had to exist in the same beast in order to be slaughtered and eaten. There was no either-or choice. Swine were disqualified despite satisfying two of the three qualifications. Swine don’t chew the cud, by divine design. Similarly the enlightened have minimum qualifications to be acceptable to the divine Lawgiver. If we have truth but do not have love we are nothing (1 Cor 13:2). If we have truth and faith but have no works we are unfruitful and doomed to fiery judgment (James 2). As our King advises us, we have to count the cost of a complete, hold-nothing-back commitment (Luke 14:26-35).

All or Nothing

In this context we should consider the challenge being presented in our brotherhood that constantly resurfaces no matter how many times it is defeated. There are two primary considerations our judge will address concerning our service before consigning us to the right or to the left, to join the sheep or the goats. These are **both** sin and righteousness. How have we dealt with sin? Have we recognized our sins and sought repentance with shameful tears... over and over again? Or have we trusted in a blanket forgiveness while unconsciously satisfied with the silly excuse that “everyone else is doing it,” which was always so popular an excuse during our maturing years? Do we **also** pursue righteousness, anxiously searching for opportunities to demonstrate our Father’s right-ness in the things we do and say? Or do we lazily relax, trusting in the foolish misconception that imputed righteousness is the exclusive category of righteousness and all we have to do is be forgiven on the basis of grace and our divine acceptance is a foregone conclusion? There will always be rainless clouds, waterless wells and fruitless trees among us that our community elevates in order to scratch our itching ears with personally glorifying half truths so that we may feel wonderful about ourselves. It is the circumcised heart that will reject the half measures, like the cud chewing beast that doesn’t have a cloven hoof, as with the unclean camel. The clean beast that could become one with the faithful under divine eating laws demanded all three categories be met simultaneously. The men and women that our divine Lawgiver will make one with Himself must understand that we are not free to disrespect the minimum requirements for fruitfulness. We have to love truth and hate lies. We have to have a living faith, thereby producing works that validate our Creator’s right-ness. We have to exhibit sacrificial love and be willing to accept being despised by the world and possibly even by those we love most. These minimum requirements are not a menu but cumulative... just like the eating laws for clean beasts.

In our next commentary we will consider the interesting highlight of the cloven hoof, as this is a feature in the divine projection of the gift of immortalization in the context of the cherubim. This was also the prayer of Habakuk: *The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet (Hab. 3:19).*

Brother Jim Dillingham

Eating Laws 3

Jesus purged all meats. *And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him; Because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, **purging all meats**? And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man.* ²¹ *For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man* (Matt. 7:18-23). Jesus reversed his Father's laws requiring the restricted meat diet of the children of God. It took Peter's vision on Simon's rooftop, appropriately repeated three times, to emphasize the fact that we are not free to consider unclean that which God has cleansed (Acts 10:9-16).

A couple basic questions should be bubbling up to the surface in our minds. Why would God impose these eating restrictions? Why would they be changed once He declared they were necessary?

Educational Context

The primary answer to both questions is that these are educational issues. The second stage to the answers is that these opposite rulings were applied in two different divinely appointed ages within the three stage maturing plan for the bride of the Creator's son. Please note, that although there are certainly four maturing stages in the divine plan for creation, it is the first three stages that apply to the maturing process for the Ecclesial bride of Christ, as the fourth would be the Millennial Kingdom. As we have noted before, these divinely appointed educational stages are clearly bordered by a change in the priesthood, a change in divine law and an escalating outpouring of divine power to validate and legitimize those transitions. These three separate and progressive educational stages are the Patriarchal Age, the First Kingdom Age (or Mosaic Age) and the Ecclesial Age. There was a separate priesthood and separate laws and rituals for each of these stages in the maturing development of the Messiah's bride. Each maturing stage offers a very clear primary educational focus. Each law and ritual within an Age must be examined for its divinely intended educational value in the constraining context of that primary (but certainly not exclusive) educational focus. Each age offers a partial but progressive educational value concerning the eternal divine truths and principles. Unlike divine laws and rituals, these truths and principles never change. The flesh eating restrictions of Leviticus 11 were imposed in the context of the educational focus of the First Kingdom Age. As Paul repeatedly emphasizes to the Romans, the educational focus of the Law was the understanding of sin. We have considered this precedent thoroughly in past commentaries (Rom. 3:19-20; 5:20; 7:13). The Law was supposed to schoolmaster us to Christ by crushing our spirit (circumcising our hearts). The Law was intended to make it perfectly clear we could not justify ourselves. Its purpose was to stop every mouth and declare the world guilty before the Creator (Rom 3:19). The Law emphasized that we needed a savior. Therefore, it is the educational focus of sin that must border our consideration as to why the divine diet restricting laws were imposed during that First Kingdom Age. It is the progressive educational focus of the Ecclesial Age that will offer the answer as to why those dietary laws were reversed.

Kill It or Don't Eat It

First we should understand why a clean animal, qualifying for dinner, had to be slaughtered. An animal that died on its own could be sold to the stranger but was unacceptable by divine standards to God's children (Deut 14:21-22). Even if an animal chewed the cud, had a split hoof and a cloven hoof, it could not be eaten without being slaughtered. Just as our Messiah's sacrificial death (which we participate in through eating the memorial bread and wine) could not be accidental or a 'natural' death, so these clean animals also had to be slaughtered before they could qualify for the diet of those under divine Law. Jesus had to be sacrificially executed in order

to offer the pattern of the memorial service where we eat the broken bread of his body to demonstrate the righteousness of God that was validated in our Messiah's violent death. Our Messiah could not have saved us through a natural or accidental death. Just like the clean animals that accommodated the holiness of the Creator, our Messiah had to be violently and intentionally executed in order to be effective. Just as an Israelite had to butcher a clean animal for their diet, so an Israelite had to lay their hand on the head of a sacrificial animal and then personally execute that animal before the officiating priest prepared the animal for whatever sacrifice category was determined. These issues all lead us to our Messiah and the principle of salvation.

This lesson is repeated endlessly through every educational stage in the divine plan. It is the acceptance of the right-ness of our Creator in demanding death for sin. Sin must die. It is an understanding that is fought by the considerable deceitful and adversarial power of the human heart (diabolos and satan). Our individual and societal instincts fight this understanding passionately. The serpent lie reigns supreme in the hearts of mankind, no matter what name they give their personal god (Allah, Zeus, Buddha, Rah, Baal, Jehovah, etc). Outside the small community of true believers in this world the common understanding is that death is not related to sin. This is the foundational lie from Eden that not only permeates the hearts of the sons of men but constantly resurfaces among the children of God with creatively presented challenges. The same validation of the righteousness of our Creator for His judgment of death for sin is demonstrated in the personal execution of all flesh altar offerings, the demanded execution of dietary flesh, the first of the two stages of the baptism ritual, more subtly in the circumcision ritual and ultimately and completely in the crucifixion. The divine demand that dietary flesh had to be executed in order to pursue holiness is simply another complimentary law, emphasizing this most basic understanding of the right-ness of that first divine judgment of death for sin.

The Physical Nature of Holiness

There were two 'sin' issues that had to be addressed under Kingdom Law. One was the reconciliation of guilty sin, requiring repentance. The other had nothing to do with repentance but everything to do with cleansing from a physical defilement. There was no guilt associated with this sin category, unless one refused to participate in a cleansing ritual... refusing the legitimacy of this divine requirement. The divine judgment for refusing to recognize this required physical cleansing category of sin was either an irrevocable banishment or execution. A number of sin offerings were required to ritually cleanse, without any necessity for forgiveness whatsoever (i.e. giving birth, touching the dead, leprosy recovery, bodily issue recovery). This ritually clean or unclean status is repeated frequently in Leviticus 11 in the context of the eating laws, with the final over-ruling declaration that *Ye shall be holy; for I am holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth* (Lev 11:44). What we eat becomes part of us in a very real physical sense. Under the sin focused dietary laws of the First Kingdom Age these dietary restrictions were highly significant. However under the grace focused laws and rituals of the Ecclesial Age the physical defilement issue within the concept of sin is temporarily eliminated, on the basis of Jesus purging all meats. This absence under the laws and rituals of the Ecclesial Age does not somehow eliminate the eternal nature of this principle of a divinely required physical cleansing.

Unmistakably, there is a physical aspect to holiness. However this is not highly stressed within the laws and rituals of the Ecclesial Age, as it was in the previous divinely appointed educational Age. This physical aspect of sin will become the primary educational focus of the laws and rituals of the Restored Kingdom Age (Millennial Kingdom) when the enlightenment blinding veil is ripped away from the minds of Gentiles and Jews (Is. 25:7; 2 Cor 3:14-16). That "veil" blindfold to be torn away is the instinctive misunderstandings concerning the flesh of Christ (the "veil" in the Tabernacle...Heb. 10:19-20). That veil was the only possible entrance into the Most Holy Chamber of the divine sanctuary. Yahweh ripped that veil of his son's flesh within the temple from heaven to earth at the exact point of His son's death, **not** at his resurrection. We tear that same

‘veil’ when we partake of the torn memorial bread, with the exact same representation of the flesh of our savior. It is the death of our Messiah that has reconciled us from guilty sin. It is the resurrection of Jesus that will save us by cleansing us from the physical defilement of sin cursed flesh (mortality/human nature). *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).

We are certainly called to a status of holiness. According to the dietary laws of Leviticus 11 holiness is the intended goal for these eating laws. Therefore we are being invited to see with seeing eyes and hear with hearing ears the hidden divine lessons that are blackened and deafened by an uncircumcised heart. As we have noted before, the intentional complexity of all divine communication serves as a filter that enables only the crushed heart, refusing to continue the standard pattern of self-worship, to witness a greater measure of the divine glory veiled within the parables, visions, dreams, rituals and dark sayings of our Creator.

Cloven... Not just Split

In our previous commentary we noted the ‘cumulative’ requirement of the three ritually clean flesh eating demands. Hungry people were not free to pick and choose, but had to satisfy all three requirements to slaughter and eat a clean, holiness-engendering animal. A divinely approved animal had to have a split hoof **as well as** a cloven hoof **as well as** chew the cud. It was an all-or-nothing demand. Now let’s concentrate on the redundancy of the hoof requirement. Divine repetition is a communication tool for both emphasis and interpretation. The question of the distinction for not simply a ‘split’ hoof but specifically a ‘cloven’ hoof should draw our attention. A cloven hoof would certainly qualify as a split hoof, yet the Lawgiver specifically demands both. This suggests that the cloven aspect of the hoof should particularly draw our attention as there is no other parted hoof distinction that would qualify as acceptable. We examined the initial doctrinal and exhortational features of cleaving in our previous consideration, centering on the cleaving of the memorial bread. The very consistent pattern of salvation by cleaving was demonstrated. Before we consider the aspect of divine promise associated with not simply the principle of cleaving but particularly the cloven hoof, let’s make another doctrinal observation concerning these clean animals.

The Eight Component Foundation of a Clean Animal

A clean animal taken from the herd or flock (or hunted) for the dietary needs of the enlightened faithful would have four legs and therefore four cloven hoofs. This indicates an earthly foundation of eight components, on the basis of eight halves (four sets of cloven hoofs) upon which the animal stood and moved about the dust of the earth. As we have noted many times, eight is the number of immortality and therefore also the number of our savior. The six letters of the Greek name of Jesus add up to 888, projecting the three great immortalization events in the divine plan. It is perfectly appropriate that a clean animal, qualifying to maintain the holiness of a child of Abraham, would have an eight component foundation for its created construction. This was equally true of the construction of the children of Abraham in the wilderness encampment. There were four outer quadrants for the political construction of the twelve tribes. There were also four inner quadrants to this divinely designed encampment to satisfy the spiritual construction of the three Levite divisions and the priests. This is equally true of the eight people on the ark of salvation with four men and four women. It is equally true of the four divinely inscribed surfaces of the covenant stones smashed at the base of Sinai by Moses while the second set of four divinely inscribed covenant stone surfaces were preserved within the golden ark of the covenant in the Most Holy. It is equally true of the two incense handfuls (with four equal spice components in each hand) that the High Priest tossed into the flames in the Most Holy on the Day of Atonement, creating the cloud that would save his own life (projecting the immortalization/atonement of the ultimate High Priest in his transition from dust nature to cloud nature).

Let's place this observation of these four cloven hoofs in the context of the additional equally demanded feature of a cud chewing animal. An acceptable animal did not simply chew, swallow and digest in order to make their food a part of their mass and energy reserves. An acceptable animal had to have the capacity to recall that partially (and inadequately) digested sustenance, re-chew it again and send it back down the body for a full digestion in order to sustain their life. Chewing the cud has long served as a colloquial term for our meditation and reconsideration of difficult to understand issues. That mental relationship is the easy part. The real question is what are we supposed to be reconsidering? Is the required meditation intended to center on the four split and specifically 'cloven' hoofs? That is an interesting possibility.

Four Cloven Truths

There are particularly four divine truths that are balanced by a dual application. These four issues are commonly and inappropriately minimalized by an instinctive heart generated thought process into a single issue. These four foundational issues each have a distinct dual application, somewhat like the four cloven hoofs of a cud chewing animal, divinely approved for the diet of the sons of God. These four divine principles with dual aspects are sin, righteousness, death and resurrection. There are two distinct and balancing aspects to each of these four issues. There are two acceptations of sin (1. transgressional sin and 2. sin producing human nature). There are two categories of righteousness that are equally necessary for salvation (1. imputed righteousness and 2. the personal righteousness that God and Christ assign to us individually depending on how our personal words, thoughts and actions validate the Creator's right-ness). There are two categories of death (1. the temporary death of those accountable to the judgment and 2. the permanent death of the forever divinely rejected). There are two categories of resurrection (1. the resurrection of the just and unjust for the purpose of judgment and 2. the resurrection to immortality following judgment which is exclusively limited to the participation of the just). When a Bible student refuses to "chew the cud" but simply accepts the instinctive, heart generated and commonly treasured first impressions of these four issues we find a very common historical pattern.

The sons of men (as opposed to the sons of God) refuse to accept the understanding of an eternal **death**, clinging to the serpent lie that we don't really die. They reject the second aspect of death. The understanding that human nature is the source of **sin**, being scripturally identified simply as "sin", is absolutely denied by the sons of men. They presume human nature to be inherently holy and that temptation always originates from an exterior influence. They reject the second aspect of sin and therefore cannot truly understand why our Messiah died. The understanding that there is any category of **righteousness** besides the gift of imputed righteousness is desperately opposed by the sons of men, presuming that divine acceptance is exclusively about forgiveness and that it doesn't really matter what we do as long as we are forgiven. They reject the second aspect of righteousness. The basic concept of the **resurrection** is begrudgingly accepted by apostate Christianity, due to its undeniable scriptural validity, however it is presumed to refer to the eventual recombination of an immortal consciousness and the physical body that the consciousness had inhabited before shedding that body at death. They completely reject the concept of a resurrection from mortality to immortality, limiting the understanding of atonement to nothing more than forgiveness. Each rejection of the 'cloven', twofold aspect of these divine truths reverses the glory from our Creator to oneself. This is why a circumcised heart is the only possible avenue for a 'true' believer to pursue the glory of Yahweh our Elohim, a glory that will eventually fill the earth as the waters cover the sea. We are made of earth. Our initial enlightenment has invited the same global end-game in the context of our own earth-bodies... to fill ourselves with the glory of our Creator as completely as the waters cover the sea. Our goal should be the same as our Creator, now and forever.

I apologize for not saving room to address the issue of how the cloven hoof of a 'clean' animal is a necessary component of the immortalization shadows of scripture, as I had suggested at the conclusion of the previous commentary. I believe we will be able to address that fascinating pattern in our next commentary.

Brother Jim Dillingham

Eating Laws 4

There are a number of veiled portraits of the promise and nature of immortalization presented to the heart circumscribed throughout scripture. These portraits are highly veiled to shield their glory from the self-possessed. However, that detailed and very consistent veiling pattern of these immortalization images offer highly valuable insight into the conditions for our participation and the features of our hope of sharing the eternal nature of our Creator, both His image and His likeness. These veiled images include the vision of the composite man in Daniel 10 and Revelation 1, the cherubim of Ezekiel 1, 10 and 11, the living creatures of Revelation 4-5, the seraphim of Isaiah 6, the rainbow angel of Revelation 10, the three records of the miraculous transfiguration of our Messiah on the mount and the golden cherubim whose faces were directed to the Mercy Seat on the Ark of the Covenant. There is no suggestion here that these particular images are exclusive or comprehensive, simply serving as ‘some’ of the divinely provided examples for the consideration of the enlightened concerning our hope of immortalization.

Like all of the components of the intentionally complex divine education pattern, these images need interpretation. There are only two primary ways to interpret these intentionally veiled images... either right or wrong. Certainly there are layered truths in these images. We will never have the capacity to plumb the divine mind completely, whether mortal or immortal. However, any observations or conclusions concerning all of the educational layers to these images must be completely complimentary to all other divine truths and principles to satisfy the over-ruling principle of God manifestation, where everything is connected and interdependent with everything else. We do not have any divine invitation to postulate or presume in our examinations of these images. We need to proceed with caution, as incorrect interpretations of divine expressions are not inconsequential. After all, it was the original denial of our Creator’s testimony in Eden that resulted in the curse of sin and death infecting creation.

The Cloven Hoof and Immortality

There is a direct connection between the eating law of the cloven hoof (that was so significant in the context of pursuing holiness) and the pattern of the immortalization images. As we have previously noted, there is an interesting emphasis in the three cumulative conditions for identifying a clean beast that can serve as part of the believer’s diet without contradicting their required holiness status. In addition to requiring a separated hoof, Yahweh also demands specifically a cloven hoof (Lev. 11:3). Presumably, a cloven hoof would require a separated hoof (although a separated hoof would not demand the particularly cloven status). Redundancy is a feature of divine expressions often used for emphasis and as a highlighted key for greater understanding. We noted the flowing scriptural pattern of salvation-by-cleaving in the context of the Red Sea, the Jordan River, the Christ fountain-rock at Rephidim and the memorial bread representing the “broken” body of our Messiah.

Righteous Feet

That same cloven hoof that is significant in the divine dietary laws is also present in a domesticated beast’s sacrificially acceptable status as well serving as a component of immortalization images. The heaven and earth covenant between Yahweh and Abram required 3 beasts that were each 3 years old, as well as 2 birds (Gen 15). Only the 3 beasts were to be cleaved (like their hoofs), making 6 of the 8 sacrificial components. The 12 foundational legs and cloven hoofs of these 3 beasts serve to project both the foundational 12 tribes within the Patriarchal Age as well as the First Kingdom Age and also the 12 Apostle foundation of the Ecclesial Age. The red heifer, whose ashes cleansed from the defilement of death, also clearly projected the significance of the cloven hoof as this sacrifice projected how our Messiah (the antitypical red heifer) would cleanse the faithful from the

defilement of death. Additionally the only sin offerings whose blood was ever acceptable within either the Holy Place or the Most Holy Place always had cloven hoofs, without exception. Therefore it should not be surprising when we see cloven hoofs in the image of the immortalized in Ezekiel 1:7. *And their feet were straight feet; and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot: and they sparkled like the color of burnished brass.* It should be noted that the Hebrew word translated “straight” (yashar) is predominantly translated as right and righteous. The feet of the cherubim were defined as ‘righteous’ feet. Therefore we are being invited to understand that the burnished brass, cloven hoofs of a calf is a divine image of feet that walk righteously. This is a principle, an exhortation and a condition of participation for the blessing of immortalization.

The cherubim are certainly a divine projection of the immortalized saints. The parallel four living creatures witnessed by John define themselves as those redeemed by the blood of the lamb who will reign as kings and priests on earth (Rev 5:9-10). The activity and detailed description of the cherubim confirm this identification with the immortalized saints. The cherubim appear in Ezekiel 10 immediately after the slaughter of the Jews at Jerusalem presented in chapter 9. When the vision is complete, the cherubim settle on the Mount of Olives on the east, just as the Christ and the immortalized saints will be seen on the Mount of Olives after two thirds of the Jews at Jerusalem have been slaughtered by the Gogian host (Zech. 13:8 - 14:4). Just as the golden cherubim wings overshadowed the mercy seat on the Ark of the Covenant and their faces gazed exclusively at that mercy seat, so the immortalized saints will surround and look to Christ, our mercy seat and redeemer. These and additional complimentary confirmations cement our understanding that the cherubim represent a carefully veiled divine image of the features, truths, and qualifications for the immortalization of the saints, when the faithful will be transformed into both the image and likeness of our Creator.

While other immortalization projections do not necessarily share the definition of specifically a “cloven hoof,” there are certainly parallel descriptions of these feet among the various scriptural immortalization projections that bind them all together. The burnished brass aspect of the cherubim calf’s foot is repeated in both Daniel’s and John’s description of the composite man (the multitudinous Christ; Dan. 10:6; Rev. 1:15). Yahweh promises that He will give brassen hoofs to the daughter of Zion to beat in pieces many people (Micah 4:13). Malachi also reports that salvation offers the promise that those who fear God’s name will grow up as calves in the stall and tread down the wicked who will be as ashes under the soles of their feet (Mal. 4:2-3). David testifies that God gives him hinds feet (cloven hoofs) and sets him in high places (2 Sam. 22:33-34; Ps. 18:32-33). Similarly Habakkuk testifies that the God of his salvation would make his feet like hinds feet (cloven hoofs; Hab. 3:18-19). This cloven hoof component of salvation is an extension of the cloven hoof dietary restriction that accommodated the requirement for pursuing and maintaining holiness. It is also an extension of the consistent projection of the principle of salvation by cleaving we have considered. This consistency satisfies the principle of God manifestation where everything blends together perfectly and we can validate truths through many different complimentary avenues.

Dual Foundation Projections of the Cloven Foot

We suggested at the conclusion of the previous commentary that the four cloven hoofs of a clean beast projected the foundational **dual**, balanced understandings of each of four principles that are crucial to recognizing and appreciating the right-ness of our Creator in His truths concerning: sin, righteousness, death and resurrection. Continuing this obvious dual application projected by the foundational cloven hoof of a divinely approved beast, we will expand our focus to the **qualification** consideration for immortalization.

In order for an enlightened believer to eventually experience the resurrection from mortal to immortal, we must be approved by our judge. In order to participate in this cherubic image of the immortalized saints (with the gleaming bronze, cloven calf’s foot) we have to be judged acceptable by Jesus Christ. Since the feet are the foundational

structure from the earth to heaven physical structure of the Cherubim it is very reasonable to understand we will have to find a dual theme for the immortalization qualification considerations of our judge (two separate feet) with a dual aspect to each individual consideration (the 'cloven' aspect of each of the two feet).

Salvation Demands More Than Just Forgiveness

Jesus has made it abundantly clear his judgment approval will not be automatic. An understanding of the true gospel is certainly not enough for his approval. Additionally, baptism alone offers no assurance of an invitation to inherit the Kingdom following our judgment. Despite the confidence of some within our community that the forgiveness of sins should be our complete focus we see no judgment warnings about the dangerous absence of some blanket or individual forgiveness status. However we certainly do see an abundance of judgment warnings from Christ concerning an insufficient personal pursuit of righteousness in our individual behavior patterns. There is more to salvation (atonement) than simply the forgiveness of sins.

The Sin and Righteousness Judgment Categories

The two categories of consideration our judge will address when we stand before him to determine if we will live forever or die forever will be sin and righteousness. Of the two aspects of sin, we only personally control one of those aspects: personal transgression for which we bear individually assigned guilt. Within that specific aspect of sin (guilty transgressional sin) there will be two primary questions to be considered: 1) How we avoided transgressional sin and 2) How we recognized and addressed our actual failures (repentance).

Of the two aspects of righteousness our judge will address we can only personally control one of these aspects: our individual pursuit of righteous behavior. We cannot earn the status of imputed righteousness, which is the second righteousness aspect. Imputed righteousness is not awarded on the basis of enlightenment or baptism. Besides the fairly ambiguous qualification of a proven faith we have no defining path for qualifying for the graceful gift of an undeserved righteousness status. Otherwise this category of righteousness could be earned. If imputed righteousness could be earned then the God-despising Christian doctrine of an instant, guaranteed salvation status would actually be true. Contradicting that presumption is that our personal acceptance by Christ is always in doubt. Even the Apostle Paul feared the possibility of a judgment rejection (2 Cor. 5:10-11; Phil. 3:11-14; 1 Cor. 9:27).

Forgiveness Alone is Not Enough

Interestingly there is never any disagreement on the necessity for forgiveness in order to be awarded the covering of salvation when mortal will **put on** immortality. It appears guilt is a universal instinctive understanding. The enlightened and unenlightened agree on the necessity for forgiveness, although certainly disagreeing on the terms of that forgiveness. It is the second judgment category of the pursuit of righteousness where the differences surface. We certainly have to avoid sin and seek forgiveness. However, that solitary sin focus is scripturally expressed as being insufficient for acceptance at our judgment. Christ's three judgment parables in Matthew 25 exclusively address this second judgment category of pursuing righteousness. Christ's rejection of the unwise wedding attendants, the lazy servant and the ambivalent goats had nothing to do with transgressing any divine laws. Their rejections were based on the righteous deeds they had left undone. They had not pursued righteousness. Not only should we be avoiding sinful behavior and properly practicing repentance we should also be pursuing divine righteousness in our thoughts, words and deeds. Coasting through a life in the truth, confident in the safety of our assured forgiveness, places us in very dangerous company in the context of the three judgment parables Jesus shared with those two sets of two brothers on the Mount of Olives (Peter, Andrew, James and John; Mk 13:3).

Those who insist that atonement (salvation) is exclusively about forgiveness introduce a leavening effect into the body of believers, accommodating the instinctive thought pattern of our naturally and incredibly deceitful hearts. Validating this sin and righteousness salvation qualification we have previously examined the repeated divine requirement for both the sin offering as well as the burnt offering to establish the projection of an

atonement under the laws of the Kingdom of God. The burnt offering had no relationship with sin forgiveness whatsoever, but was demanded for an atonement (i.e. Lev. 1:4; 12:8; 14:19-20; 15:15,30). In consistent fashion, demonstrating divinely right behavior is necessary for our ultimate atonement when our heavenly tabernacle made without hands covers our mortal tabernacle, swallowing up death and we are no longer naked before our Creator (2 Cor. 5:1-4).

‘Personal’ Righteousness

There is an odd objection to the principle of a personally assigned degree of righteousness that re-surfaces in the body of believers fairly consistently (including this current generation). It is unscripturally suggested that any perception of righteousness has to be exclusively understood as imputed. It seems to be implied that any sense of ‘personal’ righteousness would somehow demand an entirely different basis for what is right than our Creator’s standards, that ‘personal’ righteousness could only refer to ‘self’ righteousness (as in the Pharisaic pattern). It seems to be presumed that it would have to be the standards that would be ‘personal’ as opposed to the divine recognition of our individual demonstration of the Creator’s right-ness. This presumption is invalidated in a number of ways, but quite effectively by the divine use of personal possessive pronouns concerning individual righteousness (i.e. **his** righteousness, **your** righteousness, **our** righteousness, **their** righteousness, etc).

What is Righteousness?

Righteousness is not holiness. Righteousness is not some mystical, indefinable condition of exaltation. Righteousness is simply the practice of being right. There is only one true plumb-line for right-ness. That is the absolute and exclusive right-ness of our Creator. We are called to emulate that right-ness by recognizing, appreciating and embracing the right status of His truths, principles and judgments in both spiritual and physical applications. The original intention for creation included creation’s caretaker (mankind) to be in both the image and likeness of Elohim. Our Creator has been searching ever since mankind’s rejection of His right-ness for those who will understand and highly value His vision for what is truly right both spiritually and physically. We are no longer in either the image or the likeness of Elohim. Only sin-cursed mortals suffer with tears, pain, blindness, deafness, crippled conditions, disease, energy loss and decay. The original intention of a ‘right’ image for creation’s caretaker would not have included these conditions as they are not ‘right’ by divine creation standards. The image of our Creator is our hope. The likeness of our Creator is the path to our hope.

The cloven hoof is a common theme included in the context of expressions for divine acceptance throughout scripture. Divine repetition is a tool for emphasis and interpretation. There has to be a foundational dual application in the context of the terms for divine acceptance for seeing eyes to witness and hearing ears to understand. Just as the gleaming brass man measures the temple of Ezekiel’s vision with two measuring tools (Ezek. 40:3-5), so Christ will measure us to determine if we may be acceptable structural components for the antitypical sanctuary of the Eternal Spirit who defines Himself as Yahweh. The brass man used a six cubit reed, indicating the sin category of his measurement considerations. He also used a flax line that had no specific length. This measurement tool indicates how Christ will measure our individual pursuit of his Father’s right-ness as demonstrated in our thoughts, words and deeds.

Our primary consideration has been to understand the significance of the features of the dietary laws of the Kingdom of God. The principle of personal righteousness is one component of that consideration. However that issue is sometimes a point of contention within our brotherhood. Due to space limitations we were not free to confirm the absolute legitimacy of the principle of personal righteousness and how it should be understood. If anyone would like a more comprehensive explanation of this feature of divine truths, then a specific examination of this subject can be requested through the editor.

Bro Jim Dillingham

Eating Laws 5

The Law-less Ritual of Not Eating

Over the last several months these continuing commentaries have noted a number of eating regulations that have been divinely required at various stages throughout the three progressive priesthood ages of the divine plan to this point. This particular examination will consider the practice of fasting, the practice of ‘not eating’ as opposed to eating. Initially it should be understood that fasting was never a divinely imposed ritual. There was no fasting law. Therefore, our commentary title is representative of our content, as it was a ritual that was not generated by divine law. However, the practice of fasting is not without divine precedent.

Eating Laws Are Reversed But Not-Eating Ritual Is Maintained

The ritual of fasting has been oddly ignored in the Christadelphian community since our community’s inception in the mid-1800’s. The presumption that fasting is somehow a Mosaic limited ritual seems to dominate the absence of consideration for this subject. However, we find no divine command to abstain from eating for any particular days of the week or holy days, as opposed to the necessary abstaining from any ‘work’ on the seventh day as well as holy days. We certainly do see laws limiting what could be eaten as well as not eaten. As we have noted before, these eating laws were reversed as the Kingdom Priesthood Age transitioned into the Ecclesial Priesthood Age and as the divine educational focus shifted from the divine justification for sin condemnation to the legitimacy of grace on the basis of imputed righteousness. The command to abstain from eating blood (Lev. 17:10-11) reversed into an absolute necessity to eat the blood and body of our Messiah in order to qualify for the potential gift of eternal life (John 6:53-55). Additionally Jesus purged all meats during his ministry, reversing the divinely imposed dietary restrictions for the children of God (Mk. 7:19).

That He Might Make Thee to Know

Despite the absence of a fasting law we do have justification for this voluntary, God-directed behavior. Jesus entered the wilderness following his baptism and receiving that gift of limitless power. He fasted for those 40 days in the wilderness, defending the legitimacy of that fast against his temptation by quoting from Deut. 8:3 *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.*** Just as Israel was made to involuntarily hunger for 40 years in the wilderness (fed sparingly by manna) after their baptism in the cloud and in the sea (1 Cor. 10:1-2), so Jesus hungered (although voluntarily) for 40 days in the wilderness following his baptism in the Jordan River. Jesus defines the theme for fasting and the desired subsequent enlightenment to be drawn from this sacrificial behavior. Our life continuance is primarily based on the words that issue from our Creator, with bread (as well as oxygen and water) being simply symptoms of our life continuation. We have the freedom to abstain from solid food and liquids for days at a time, however we cannot ‘fast’ from oxygen replenishment, as that would mean death within minutes. Respiration is divinely structured to be involuntary, even when our bodies are asleep (which our Creator’s ‘words’ declare to be simulating death). Just as a side note, this unconscious respiration while asleep is a creational validation of the unique death state of the enlightened. The deaths of the enlightened and the unenlightened are different, reflecting the two death categories of permanent and temporary, the opposite mirror image of the two categories of resurrection (1. temporary resurrection to mortality for judgment and 2. the permanent resurrection to immortality following judgment). Unlike the unenlightened who utterly perish upon death (permanent death) the enlightened, into whom the true word of God has been breathed, do not die forever. Their death is a temporary death. The enlightened will live again, awakening to the call of Christ to rise from our death-sleep. Our involuntary respiration during sleep is a

creational confirmation of the promise that the enlightened do not die (or ‘sleep’) forever. Unlike respiration, the other two categories of bodily replenishment are voluntary exercises in life continuation: eating and drinking. They cannot be done while asleep. The faithful can ‘fast’ from eating and drinking, which is done as an exercise to physically project the divine truth that man does not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of Yahweh.

According to Jesus the inspiration for fasting is a lesson of perspective. Our confidence in the continuation of our lives should not be based on the availability of food, but the words of our Creator. The difference is a short term perspective as opposed to a long term perspective, which is also the difference between focusing on the continuation and enjoyment of our mortal lives as opposed to energetically focusing on our hopeful immortal lives... often at the expense of the indulgences and enjoyment of our mortal life. It seems the first man to realize this relationship between fasting and reliance on the Creator’s words was Moses, the meekest but most powerful man of his generation in the entire world.

Eighty Days with No Food or Drink

Moses miraculously had nothing to eat or drink for eighty days. We read this in Deut. 9:9,18. He neither ate bread nor drank water for the 40 days he spent on the mount receiving the words of Yahweh concerning the Tabernacle construction, various laws, rituals and of course the awarding of the first set of covenant stones. When Moses came down from the mount he broke the covenant stones at the base of Sinai, just as Israel had broken the covenant they had made less than six weeks previously. God instructed Moses to *Let me alone, that I may destroy them, and blot out their name from under heaven: and I will make of thee a nation mightier and greater than they* (Deut. 9:14). Moses responded to the divine death mandate with the first example of fasting combined with prayer that Jesus later declared to have great value in faith development (Matt. 17:21). *And I fell down before the LORD, as at the first, forty days and forty nights: I did neither eat bread, nor drink water, because of all your sins which ye sinned, in doing wickedly in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.¹⁹ For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure, wherewith the LORD was wroth against you to destroy you. But the LORD hearkened unto me at that time also* (Deut. 9:18-19). Following the divine death sentence Moses fell down “as at the first” for another 40 days of not eating bread or drinking water. Therefore, he fasted for a total of 80 days, perfectly portraying the scriptural and creational representation of the number 8 being identified with immortality, eternity and endlessness. The name of Jesus projects this understanding as the six Greek letters of his name add up to 888, projecting the three immortalization events in the divine plan. Without a miraculous preservation Moses could never have lived 80 days without food and water. This is a dramatic confirmation of the intended lesson of fasting: that life preservation is based on the **words** of the Creator and not bread. Moses was successful with this approach in soliciting God’s forgiveness and thereby saving at least two million people from a justified wilderness execution. *Therefore he said that he would destroy them, had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach, To turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them* (Ps. 106:23). Moses combined fasting with prayer to turn away the wrath of God, perfectly understanding the principles being projected by the behavior.

Inspired by Moses success in this new religious behavior combining prayer and fasting we see Israel adopting this pattern on many occasions. David prayed and fasted for seven days to try to save the life of his first son by Bathsheba, but was unsuccessful. His advisors were shocked by his behavior when they hesitatingly confirmed that the child was dead. He removed the rags and ashes with which he had covered himself, rose from the earth and washed, put on clean clothes and ate. Unlike his advisors, David understood the purpose of fasting. Sadly but predictably, fasting eventually became a mindless ritual for the enlightened community, presuming that the mere performance of the ritual was sufficient for achieving value with the God they believed they were

supposedly honoring. This is a mental trap we too can easily suffer in our generation with a weekly memorial service participation.

The Misapplication of Fasting

It was the unpleasant recognition that the fasting of the enlightened had no influence with Yahweh that prompted their questions. *Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? Wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge* (Is. 58:3)? The answer presented by Yahweh highlighted the disconnection between mere performance and understanding the required implications of their performance. *Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, And exact all your labours. Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, And to smite with the fist of wickedness: Ye shall not fast as ye do this day, To make your voice to be heard on high.... Is not this the fast that I have chosen? To loose the bands of wickedness, To undo the heavy burdens, And to let the oppressed go free, And that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, And that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; And that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh* (vs 3-4, 6-7)? Jesus offered similar advice concerning how to fast effectively (Matt. 6:16-18).

Daniel understood the value in the partnership between fasting and prayer, just like Moses and David. Daniel, an elderly but highly significant political authority in Babylon and then Persia, fasted and prayed and would not anoint himself (Dan. 10:2-3). He prayed, simply for understanding. Like Moses, but unlike David, Yahweh responded positively to Daniel's prayer and fasting. Daniel was given a vision of the immortalized state of Christ and the saints in a composite man (10:5-7). He was shown the future in detail right through the introduction of the -Millennial Kingdom, including the return of the Messiah and the inheritance of the divine nature. Daniel's application of prayer and fasting yielded significant benefit.

The brief Absence of the Absence of Eating

However, despite the fact that Jesus also practiced the voluntary ritual of fasting he did not require it of his disciples during his ministry. This absence of this community respected ritual drew out confused inquiries from the Brotherhood. *Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not* (Matt. 9:14)? This is an excellent question as the answer highlights the issue of layered significance in divine laws and rituals. Despite the legitimacy for fasting (as seen with Jesus, Moses, David, Daniel) there is a greater principle that over-rides the lessons displayed in simply fasting. It is the presence of the Messiah, who is the Bridegroom of the faithful. *And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast* (vs. 15). This is a statement that fasting indicates mourning. This understanding blends perfectly with the successful applications of Moses and Daniel and even the unsuccessful but appropriate application of David. Since our Messiah declares perfectly clearly that the children of the bridechamber would certainly mourn and fast when the bridegroom was to be taken from them, as they certainly did in the first century ecclesia, we wonder why the Christadelphian community today does not choose to mourn the extended absence of the bridegroom in the manner that was recommended by our bridegroom.

It is the word of God that sustains us, not our bread. That is what the lesson of fasting is all about. Jesus defines the practice of combining prayer and fasting as offering significant value in faith development. The disciples were confused as to why they could not heal the epileptic boy that had been brought to them while Jesus, Peter, James and John had been on the mount of transfiguration. They had certainly healed before this time, but were incapable of helping this boy or his anxious father. *Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out* (Matt. 17:19). Christ's answer was that they lacked sufficient faith. He then defines that sufficient faith as being like a mustard seed. Jesus had already described the features of the mustard seed in relation to the Kingdom of Heaven (Matt. 13:31-32). He says it is the tiniest of all seeds but when sown

becomes the greatest of all herbs, as a tree in which the fowl of heaven may take refuge. Therefore a powerful and effective faith simply has to continue growing, though starting from the tiniest condition. Jesus continues by adding: *Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting* (Matt. 17:31). The combination of prayer and fasting is recommended by the son of God, our judge who will determine whether we live forever or die forever, as a valuable procedure for nurturing a growing faith.

Fasting before Apostasy But Not After?

Predictably but only temporarily, our Messiah was right about how the ecclesial body would mourn his absence through fasting. The children of the bridegroom most certainly fasted after he departed for an extended stay at his Father's right hand in heaven (Acts 13:2; 14:23; 1 Cor 7:5; 2 Cor. 6:5; 2 Cor. 11:27). It is doubtful that fasting will be appropriate during the Millennial Kingdom. After all, the bridegroom will be present just as he was during his ministry when fasting was not expected from the children of the bridegroom. Additionally, there will be a rest from sin during the Millennial Kingdom that will facilitate a plant of renown that will eliminate involuntary hunger in the borders of Israel (Ezek. 34:29). The mourning associated with fasting would seem to be inappropriate in the context of the establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth. However, we are currently still operating within the same divine dispensation and priesthood and rituals as the first century ecclesia. Therefore we might want to respect the recommendation of our Messiah about fasting in partnership with prayer, as well as the examples of such divinely approved men as Moses, David and Daniel.

Our next consideration will leave the eating laws of Kingdom Law behind us. We will examine the shadow of fasting's partner (prayer) within the holy chamber of the Tabernacle. We will address the golden incense altar projecting the necessarily shadowed pattern for successful prayer.

Brother Jim Dillingham

The Divine Prayer Template

Every evening and every morning of every day the priest would burn incense on the golden altar in the Holy Chamber, but only after replenishing the oil in each of the seven lamps of the lamp stand (Ex. 30:7-8). The incense burning ritual was performed **twice** per 'day' on that **two** cubit tall golden altar carried about by **two** golden staves, but resting within that **second** holiness stage of the Tabernacle (beyond the courtyard, which is the first of the three progressive holiness stages of the Tabernacle pattern). No detail in the design and operation of this incense altar is without significance, which is why Yahweh warned Moses to be sure to make everything according to the pattern supplied and displayed to him in the holy mount (Ex. 25:9; 40). David was also given a specific divine pattern for the second temple that his son would build, but the Babylonians would destroy (1 Chron 28:12,19). Since we have noted on many occasions in our commentaries that the Tabernacle (the first of the eventual four temples) is a projection of the ultimate divine sanctuary of the immortalized Christ and his saints, then we are invited to understand the hidden truths and principles within this pattern and witness its divine glory. The light of these truths, principles and glory can be seen in the shadows of the intentional complexities of that pattern that is veiled for the exclusive benefit of the circumcised in heart, empowering their **two** eyes to see and their **two** ears to hear.

Prayers As Incense

Our first concern has to be the behavioral theme that is divinely expected from the pattern and operation of the incense altar. Naturally, scripture offers the conclusive answer. David expresses his inspired understanding of incense offering as paralleling the offering of his prayers. *LORD, I cry unto thee: make haste unto me; give ear unto my voice, when I cry unto thee. Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice* (Ps. 141:1-2). John was instructed in this same pattern in his apocalypse visions. *And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.*⁴ *And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand* (Rev. 8:3-4). The entire Jewish nation understood this relationship between the offering of the incense and the expected behavioral service of prayer as can be demonstrated in the account of the angelic visitation to Zacharias. *And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense* (Luke 1:10). The community of the enlightened (therefore the Christadelphians of that age) understood that the timing of the incense was a pattern for the timing of prayer. Therefore we are invited to learn more about successful prayer by considering the carefully veiled divine truths and principles of the incense and its altar and their interactive relationship with all the other divine patterns.

The Fear of Potential Offense

Let's digest the gravity of what we are considering. Nadab and Abihu were instantly and divinely incinerated by fire from heaven for mishandling the incense and its fire (Lev. 10:1-2), representing the privilege and responsibilities of prayer. It is an extremely sad observation of this last enlightened generation, before the transition into the next divinely appointed age, that as a community we have almost entirely lost the necessary

service component of the ‘fear’ of God. As a community, we Christadelphians are not working out our salvation with fear and trembling, as Paul recommended to the Philippians. Predominantly the concept of the fear of our Creator has been minimized into an understanding of nothing more than reverence, dramatically imbalancing our relationship with our heavenly Father. Just as there are two acceptations of sin and two acceptations of righteousness, as well as two categories of death and two categories of resurrection and two categories of life there are also two ‘acceptations’ of the fear of God. It is self-righteous overconfidence that serves as the platform for the elimination of the heart circumcising capacity of the fear of God. It is the fear of God that will be the great educational tool for the miraculous global paradigm shift in the first generation of the Millennial Kingdom. Mankind will not politely surrender their egos reverentially simply because they immediately see the error of their self-worshipping ways. Additionally the Jewish people do not accept Jesus as their Messiah simply because he arrives, but because he saves them from a presumed certain annihilation by the Gogian invaders. Being afraid of our Creator’s justified judgments against all the contradictions to His righteousness has a powerful humbling effect. This is why we are told the fear of God is the very ‘beginning’ of knowledge as well as the ‘beginning’ of wisdom, which is properly executed knowledge (Prov. 1:7; Ps. 111:10). The fear of God is also the path to perfecting the principle of holiness in our lives (2 Cor. 7:1). Eliminating this second acceptation of the fear of God (actually being afraid) requires the usual lexicon word juggling, oversimplifications and completely ignoring the divine lessons of the first Kingdom Age that will again serve as the standard of operations for the restored Kingdom that we all yearn to inherit. A proper consideration of the two acceptations of the fear of God would require several commentaries and that is not our primary subject. However if we do not recognize the dangerous possibility of offending Yahweh with an inappropriate prayer pattern we may encourage not only His disappointment but His offense. Therefore we will offer a single paragraph that will at least crumble the common balsa wood foundation for this highly disrespectful understanding that the fear of God exclusively applies to nothing more than reverential respect during the Ecclesial Age.

The Casting Out of ‘All’ Fear

It is odd to see how 1 John 4:18 is endlessly misapplied to dismiss the historic need to be afraid of offending our Creator. *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.* If we presume that there is no fear whatsoever in love (in order to supposedly eliminate the uncomfortable humbling requirement of actually being afraid of God’s potential displeasure) then we also have to eliminate the reverential category of the fear of God. We can’t have it both ways. If “no fear” cannot be limited to specific fears then we have to accept the necessary elimination of all fears, even the universally accepted reverential fear of God. That is an impossible presumption. The other inappropriate presumption is that when it says there is “no” fear in love that this does not have to be placed in the context of all the other balancing instructions concerning Godly fear offered throughout scripture. Our Messiah makes it perfectly clear what fear is eliminated and what fear is not eliminated in a mature (perfect) relationship with his Father. *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 hell* (Matt. 10:28). We should have no fear of what men can do to us. The worst they can do is kill us, but they cannot keep us dead (kill the body but not the soul/*psuche*/life). However, Jesus advises us strongly to definitely be afraid of the One who can not only kill us ... but keep us dead (which is what is represented by hell/Gehanna/the Valley of Hinnon/Tophet/the second death). If we want to suggest that we

should never be afraid of our heavenly Father for any reason then we are insulting Jesus Christ, which is very unwise since all our prayers must be respectfully submitted through him.

This is only the barest surface scratching of the subject of the two acceptations of the fear of God. However, if we are going to examine the divinely appointed prayer template of the golden incense altar we first have to understand that there are serious standards to comply with in our approach or we risk offending our Creator. We may not understand that offense of disrespect until Christ's judgment, which would leave no room for repentance. It is always wise to *serve God acceptably with reverence **and** godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire* (Heb. 12:28-29). While it is easily understood that grace and imputed righteousness serve as the focus of our current divinely appointed educational stage, this cannot eclipse the previous divine educational focus on the judgments of sin condemnation and the required performance of God's righteousness from the previous age. Our God does not change, but His educational procedures and lessons do change as the bride of His son matures over 6,000 years.

That They Die Not

There were serious consequences if one approached the presence of Yahweh in a disrespectful manner, as is obvious with the incineration of Nadab and Abihu with their highly inappropriate incense and fire modification. It isn't wise to get creative and presumptive when we seek the audience of the Creator of the universe, prompted by our lack of fear. Before a priest could even enter the Holy Chamber of the Tabernacle in order to replenish the lamp oil and then burn the incense, they had to wash their feet and hands at the laver. It is highly doubtful the priests would forget this required step, as the consequence would be their death. *When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, **that they die not**; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the LORD: So they shall wash their hands and their feet, **that they die not**: and it shall be a statute for ever to them, even to him and to his seed throughout their generations* (Ex. 30:20-21). It was equally dangerous for the High Priest to enter the Holy Chamber without wearing the golden bells to signal his entrance (Ex 28:34-35). Under the laws of the Kingdom of God it was a serious matter to approach the divine presence in a less than respectful (as prescribed) manner.

The Seamless Priest Pattern

The Christadelphians are the priests of the Ecclesial Age (1 Pet. 2:5,9; Heb. 13:10-16; 1 Cor 10:16-18). Just as the sons of the High Priest in the First Kingdom served as the priests of that age, so we (the children of the current and permanent High Priest) serve as the priests of this age. Christ is most certainly the father of the faithful (Is. 9:6; Is. 53:10; 1 Cor 15:22-23). In the same pattern the children of the patriarchs assumed the priestly duties from their fathers for building altars, offering sacrifices and spiritually leading their families during the initial Patriarchal Priesthood Age. Therefore there is a direct parallel between the Aaronic priesthood of the First Kingdom Age and the Christ priesthood of the Ecclesial Age, as we have maintained repeatedly throughout these commentaries. This direct parallel is justification for serious caution concerning the manner in which we approach our Creator, which can currently only be done through prayer.

Our first observation of the incense altar prayer template is to respect the privilege of prayer, understanding how serious it is to intimately approach the Creator of the Universe. We certainly can offend our heavenly Father,

who is a consuming fire. Prayer should never be a casual effort, as that would be ominously disrespectful. Examples of this would include anytime we are engaged in some other distracting activity (driving, housecleaning, yard work, etc) or anytime we run the risk of interruption while we pray. However, the expected formality of prayer should not discourage prayers inspired by emergency or desperation, as those would not qualify as casual or disrespectful prayers. Prayers should be well thought out in advance and not disjointed or confused, as that would be disrespectful and potentially offensive.

The Priest Undergarment Death Threat

Another death threat for the priests to understand in their approach to the divine presence within the Tabernacle was the requirement for undergarments. *And thou shalt make them linen breeches to cover their nakedness; from the loins even unto the thighs they shall reach: And they shall be upon Aaron, and upon his sons, when they come in unto the tabernacle of the congregation, or when they come near unto the altar to minister in the holy place; that they bear not iniquity, and die: it shall be a statute for ever unto him and his seed after him.* (Ex 28:42-43). If a priest dared to enter the Tabernacle to burn the incense without their respectful undergarments, they risked death. Since incense burning is scripturally offered as the success model for effective prayer, on what basis could we expect divine access if we are not very, very careful to avoid offending our God in prayer?

The Personal Hygiene Law and the Absence of God

We can also consider the preparations divinely required for Israel's participation when Yahweh would draw close to them and speak from the burning mountain (Ex. 19:10-15). They had to wash their clothes. They had to temporarily forego marital relations and there was the ominous death threat of actually touching the mountain which would host the divine presence. That is reminiscent of the introduction of death into a previously very good creation due to the command to not even touch the tree of knowledge (Gen. 3:3). The proximity of the divine presence always had conditions. While it is true that our Creator is omnipresent, He makes demands for His providential presence and access to His providential attention. An example of this would be a particular personal hygiene requirement in order to avoid a very dangerous absence of divine protection. Deut 23:12-14 *Thou shalt have a place also without the camp, whither thou shalt go forth abroad: And thou shalt have a paddle upon thy weapon; and it shall be, when thou wilt ease thyself abroad, thou shalt dig therewith, and shalt turn back and cover that which cometh from thee: For the LORD thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp, to deliver thee, and to give up thine enemies before thee; therefore shall thy camp be holy: that he see no unclean thing in thee, and turn away from thee.*

Our goal is to serve as the immortal priests of the restored Kingdom of God. We currently serve as the priests of the Ecclesial Age. Since the priests of the first Kingdom of God Age were required to wear breeches in order to survive entering the Tabernacle in order to burn the incense... and the divine presence would be withdrawn due to the presence of unclean personal hygiene practices... then why would any one of us presume it would not be disrespectful to pray to our Heavenly Father while showering or barely clothed? There are respectful standards to be observed, by divine precedent for those with seeing eyes and hearing ears.

A Burden of the Age of Divine Silence

Societal formality standards and expectations have dramatically descended over the last half century. Deferential respect is not simply uncommon, it has become rare. Attire has become dramatically more casual

and genderless. As the enlightened in this final generation before the pending divine judgment our standards should not be descending in relation to society, but constant in relation to our Creator and Messiah. Formality, decency and order were divinely respectful patterns that should not be abandoned for the self-promoting societal motivation of equality based on the lowest common denominator. The rebellious challenging of respectful social standards is actually presented as heroic by the media saturating our lives. This default behavior pattern of the sons of men, coupled with the sad absence of the very necessary fear of offending our Creator has the capacity to erode our respectful and ordered approach to our God in prayer. It is highly unfortunate we are still living in the prophesied age of divine silence. We cannot recalibrate our community understandings by witnessing the instant divine incineration of those among us who offend our Creator, as Nadab and Abihu.

Respecting the privilege of approaching the Creator of the universe through prayer is only the beginning of our consideration of the divinely provided prayer template of the golden altar of incense. We will be considering such issues as timing details, the incense composition, comparing the required turban head-covering of the Aaronic High Priest when offering incense to the required head-covering of sisters offering prayers, the design and two stage composition of the altar, the application of that altar in relation to the sin offerings for the High Priest and nation, the application of the incense on the Day of Atonement, as well as other issues.

Bro Jim Dillingham

The Divine Prayer Template 2

Incense offering was a very significant ritual mandated during the First Kingdom Age. Only the priests, qualified by being the sons of the High Priest, were allowed to burn incense. King Uzziah suffered an immediate and enduring affliction of leprosy for presuming his qualification for burning incense (2 Chron. 26). The 250 Levites supporting Korah's equality rebellion were divinely incinerated, with their incense censors being hammered into plates for the bronze altar of burnt offering. As noted in our previous commentary, scripture interprets the incense burning ritual as being a parable for divinely acceptable prayer. During our current Ecclesial Age the priesthood construction is still constituted by being the mature sons of the High Priest. However instead of lineage, the children of the High Priest are those who have faithfully believed with full understanding and been obediently baptized into the true gospel. Our prayers parallel the incense burning of the last and future Kingdom Ages. Just as the construction of the incense, the incense altar and their detailed applications were highly significant and divinely policed then so should our prayers be similarly structured in order to be fruitful. The presumption of Nadab and Abihu for the certain divine acceptance of their own creative manipulations of the incense procedure prompted an instant fiery death. It is only the foolish absence of the fear of offending our Creator that would blind us to the caution encouraged by heaven's historical response to the mishandling and misapplication of the incense offering ritual, in the context of its projection of the acceptable prayer pattern.

The Bronze to Gold Altar Progression

The design and placement of the incense altar, the platform upon which that unique incense composition would be regularly burned, blends with the many two stage pattern projections of our Savior. Just as the incense was to be offered on the golden incense altar, we understand that our prayers must be submitted through our Messiah in order to avoid a dangerous offense against both Christ and his Father. The two divinely designed altars within the Tabernacle construction and the foundational divine truths they project blend perfectly with the repeated two stage procedure in our path for pursuing both a currently available reconciliation and a future salvation. We have previously noted the many dual acceptations of divine principles and the instinctive challenges from our deceitful hearts to minimize them into a single focus, thereby imbalancing our understandings of righteousness, sin, life, death and the fear of God. The two altars of bronze and gold present this same dual understanding and two stage progression within the framework of the two holiness stages within which these altars were employed. We need to consider both the similarities and the differences of these two altars to 'see' the light of the truths, principles, exhortations and warnings being radiated from the parable darkness of their shadows.

Repetition of the Doubled Four Pattern

Each altar was foursquare. Each altar had to have four horns on the four corners. This doubled four pattern is a common scriptural component, always highlighting a veiled significance for the exclusive witnessing of the heart circumcised. Just a few obvious examples would include:

- The four men and four women saved on the flood's ark of salvation.

- The four surfaces on each of the two tables of the Testimony upon which the finger of God wrote the ten commandments.
- The four carcass components laid out in two parallel rows for the heaven and earth covenant between Yahweh and Abram.
- The two handfuls of incense (with four equal spices in each hand) that are transfigured from dust nature to cloud nature on the Day of Atonement in the Most Holy Chamber to save the life of the High Priest.
- The four sacrificial altars assigned to each of the subsequent temples each had four blood & flesh offerings assigned to them (burnt, peace, sin & trespass)... similar to how the incense altar burned the four equal spice ingredients.
- The four cherubim with their four faces that all have four wheels within four wheels beneath them.
- The fourth deposit into the golden ark of the covenant was the High priest's resurrection rod with its four maturity stages: *behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was (1) budded, and (2) brought forth buds, and (3) bloomed blossoms, and (4) yielded almonds* (Num 17:8).
- The outer foursquare political configuration of the twelve tribes in the wilderness encampment and the inner foursquare spiritual encampment of Levites and Priests.

The common component in this brief list of eight examples is the fact that they all project features of our Messiah. The doubled four Christ pattern is confirmed in how the number eight (doubled four) is so powerfully identified with our Messiah, as the six letters of his Greek name (Iesous) add up to the numerical value of 888. We have repeatedly noted how these three eights project the three salvation/immortalization/atonement events in the divine plan. We have noted the consistent association between the number eight and various features of our Messiah, our template for divine approval. We examined the construction, features and applications of the bronze Christ altar in the 17th and 18th commentaries in this series. Now let's consider the progression and combined use of these two altars together.

The bronze altar of burnt offering is where the flesh and blood of the animal offerings were consumed in flames. These sacrificial animals represented the offering party, who had to place one hand on the head of the animal they offered while they personally executed that animal. We know this altar represents our Messiah as Paul directly tells us this more than once, in addition to other unique relationships between this altar and our Messiah. The bronze Christ altar in the Tabernacle courtyard (1st of three holiness stages) represents the necessary sacrificial death of our savior, which is a declaration of the Creator's right-ness for His condemnation of death due to the corruption of sin into His previously very good creation order. Sin (contradictions to our Creator's right-ness 1 Jn 5:17) must die. Only our Creator's right-ness is eternal. It was the sacrificial death of a completely righteous man, with no contradictions to the Creator's righteousness during his entire life, that broke the power of sin in Christ's unbroken body. The bronze altar is the first stage. The enlightened come to that Christ altar with their own sacrificial life offerings. The golden altar within the 2nd holiness stage of the Tabernacle represents the second stage, where our immortalized (gold) Messiah can be accessed through prayer (incense) to his Father. This two-stage progression of mortality and immortality in addition to Christ's sacrificial benefit followed by his benefit to us in accessing his Father through prayer is additionally and

perfectly paralleled by the two miraculous fountain stones in the wilderness. Paul declares the rock Israel drank from in the wilderness (comparing it to the wine of the memorial service) was Christ (1 Cor. 10:4).

The Fountain Stones and the Altars

The first Christ stone from which Israel drank was at Rephidim, very early in their journey after being saved from slavery. The second Christ stone from which Israel drank was at Kadesh, near the end of their journey to the promised land. The first Christ fountain-rock incident is a prophecy of the sacrificial death of our Messiah. Moses is to be accompanied by only a few of the elders of Israel, who will witness him strike the rock once with the serpent rod of Aaron. That rock of flint cleaves in two upon being struck and the lifesaving water pours from the rock, sufficient to provide for over two million people and countless animals (Ex. 17; Ex. 7:10; Ps. 78:15; Is. 48:21; Deut. 8:15; Ps. 114:8). This first rock is the crucifixion rock, comparable to the bronze altar of burnt offering. The crucifixion of Jesus was orchestrated by a few of the elders of Israel, under the Mosaic appointed authority of the High Priest. The serpent power was broken in our Messiah's body on the basis of the death of a perfectly righteous man. We of the Ecclesial Age memorialize that death with the similarly broken bread. We are divinely reconciled through the death of our savior (Rom 5:10). Confirming this understanding is how this first fountain stone is defined as flint. The knives used for circumcising all of Israel in the promised land at their 2nd Passover had to be made of flint-stone (Josh. 5:3 see all other translations except KJV). Flint was the crucifixion rock Moses struck with the serpent rod to save Israel. Flint was the circumcision stone Joshua was commanded to use in cutting off the flesh to confirm the covenant in the promised land in order to participate in the Passover.

There are two separate Hebrew words for these two Christ rocks (at Rephidim and Kadesh). The Hebrew word defining the crucifixion rock at Rephidim is *tsur*, indicating a rock embedded in the earth to which one would look down to view. The Hebrew word defining the resurrection rock at Kadesh is *selah*, indicating a high, overhanging rock to which one would have to look up to view. The second fountain rock incident required Moses to take the entire congregation with him and simply speak to the rock, requesting its water of life to save the children of God from a thirsty death. Sadly we know that Moses inappropriately struck the rock and was banned from entering the land of promise. This resurrection rock, with its elevated state, represents the second stage of Christ's Messiahship. We all have the opportunity to ask him for his life waters, through prayer to him in heaven, due to his immortalized nature and his High Priest status. This second fountain stone is a direct and perfect parallel to the application of the 2nd altar within the 2nd holiness stage in the Holy Chamber of the Tabernacle, the golden altar of incense that serves as the divine educational template for acceptable prayer.

It Takes Two

The perfect symmetrical beauty of the endless shadowed repetition of the two stages necessary for our salvation can only be seen and its testimony exclusively heard by those who have eyes to see and ears to hear. Salvation does not come by the Abrahamic covenant of faith alone, but also by the Mosaic covenant of works. We are not saved by the reconciliation of our sins alone but also by our personal pursuit of divine righteousness in our thoughts, words and deeds. We are not saved simply by eating the memorial bread alone but also drinking the memorial wine. We are not saved by simply being buried with Christ in baptism but by also rising again from the baptismal waters to project our hopeful participation in his resurrection. The danger is in letting our hearts

focus on just a single ‘acceptation’ of the endless two acceptance patterns in divine communication. Our Creator wants an eternal family, but we cannot create a family from a single man or a single woman. As the common saying goes, it takes two. We need both works and grace. We need both acceptations of righteousness (personal and imputed). We need to resolve both acceptations of sin (guilty transgressions and guiltless cursed nature). We need to demonstrate both acceptations of the fear of God (reverential fear and being afraid of offending our Creator). The enlightened faithful need to participate in two resurrections to be saved (the resurrection from the grave to mortality for judgment and the resurrection from mortality to immortality following judgment). We balance all of these dual acceptations in order to avoid participating in **both** categories of death (the temporary death of those whose presence will be demanded at the judgment and the permanent death of the forever rejected).

Under the laws of the Kingdom of God there were three initial and final rituals to be performed by the priests every evening and morning. These three rituals started and ended with the two altars: bronze and gold. The three alpha and omega rituals of each day were:

1. The daily burnt offering on the bronze altar in the courtyard
2. The replenishment of the seven lamps inside the holy chamber
3. The burning of the incense on the golden altar

In the same ‘two acceptance pattern’ we briefly noted above we see yet again this same dual repetition emphasis in this divinely mandated procedure. The progression from the flesh and blood burning bronze courtyard altar to the aromatic dust burning golden holy chamber altar offers the same progression as the two fountain stones at the beginning and end of the wilderness journey from slavery to the promised land.

In our next commentary we will consider this doubled three stage progression that had to be repeated every evening and morning. We will consider the divine truths, principles and exhortations being radiated from this pattern, noting some of the scriptural parallels that serve to validate these understandings and emphasize the significance of the veiled exhortations.

Brother Jim Dillingham

The Divine Prayer Template 3

Our third commentary in our continuing consideration of the incense altar will address the observation noted at the conclusion of our previous notes. There were three rituals performed at the beginning and the end of every day during the First Kingdom Age. These alpha and omega rituals were: 1) the daily burnt offering in the Tabernacle courtyard; 2) the replenishing of the golden lamps within the Holy Chamber and 3) the burning of the incense on the golden altar within the Holy Chamber. This doubled three stage ritual pattern integrates beautifully with a number of significant scripture and creation patterns, offering an increasing capacity to witness a greater and greater measure of our Creator's glory that is still being veiled within His written (Bible) and spoken (creation) communications.

Three Nights and Three Days

These three evening and morning rituals parallel the divine processing of our Messiah's transition from mortality to immortality through death. Jesus notified the blind Pharisees and scribes that the only sign that would be offered that evil generation would be the son of man's three days and three nights in the heart of the earth (Matt 12:38-40). This was the sign of the prophet Jonah. Jesus particularly highlighted the necessity for his death to endure for specifically three days and three nights. Those three evenings and three mornings of our Messiah's death, whose significance is emphasized by the corresponding three hours of daylight and three hours of darkness during our High Priest's crucifixion (Mk 15:25-37), offer a parallel pattern to the divinely required performance of the three evening rituals and the three morning rituals performed by the priests. The divine demand for three full days of the Messiah's death is one of the endless beams of light emanating from the dark shadows of the intentional complexity of all divine communication, visible exclusively to "seeing" eyes. Those three days in the tomb that the savior suffered under the power of death serve as a prophecy of the specifically three divine days that creation would continue to suffer under the power of death. It will be at the conclusion of the subsequent three thousand years when death will be completely eliminated from creation, following the pattern of creation's savior (but from a divine perspective; Ps 90:4). The common Christian presumption of a Friday evening death of Jesus is a contradiction of divine testimony as well as a wall of darkness shielding the illumination of the extending principles and prophecies. Contradicting our Creator and His son is never a wise course.

In the course of these continuing considerations we have noted a number of divinely appointed patterns of three. There are negative and positive patterns of three, paralleling the evening and morning frame of our current doubled three ritual pattern. Our 52nd commentary concerning Eating Laws noted some of these doubled three divine patterns in scripture and creation, within that particular context of our creationally appointed 3 nutrition categories (gas/air, liquid/water, solid food/bread) that we have to ingest to live and the 3 corresponding categories of bodily waste we must expel to live. This legitimate inclusion of the 3 evening and 3 morning rituals into this scriptural theme is validated by the recognition that this would constitute a total of the 14 individual sets of these 3 ritual categories within the foundational seven day framework of the divine plan, with

7 evening progressions of these 3 rituals and 7 morning progressions of these same 3 alpha and omega rituals. This interestingly parallels the 3 distinctive sets of fourteen generations noted in Matthew's lineage of our Messiah (Matt. 1:17). Those 42 generations from Abraham to Christ parallel the presumed 42 months of the ministry of Jesus and the 42 recorded encampments of the wilderness Ecclesia from Egypt to the promised land. These three applications of the extended pattern of the alpha and omega daily priesthood rituals of burnt offering, oil lamp refueling and incense burning each project a complete progression from a beginning to an end. These progressions project Christ's pioneering pattern that we are invited and exhorted to follow.

A Secret Map to an Eternal Treasure

The 3 alpha and omega rituals repeated every evening and morning serve as a secret map concerning this progression pattern from our Creator that can only be understood by those with seeing eyes and hearing ears. The Jews were blinded by their overwhelming concentration on simple ritualistic performance, presuming that divine acceptance (righteousness) was centered in the mechanics of divine commands. The Christians are blinded by their overwhelming concentration on grace and forgiveness, discounting the mechanics of divine rituals as meaningless. The imbalancing nature of each extreme but opposing focus blinds each party to the veiled path of divine acceptance that can be seen in the progressive performance of this three evening and morning ritual pattern. We need to look beyond that veil of divinely constructed complexity to see this progressive map in order to follow our Messiah to the destination of divine acceptance, which is the key to unimaginable value.

The motivation for this current examination sub-series is the application of the incense offering. The placement of the incense offering in any progressive series of rituals is always significant to understanding the theme and application for that particular progression. Incense burning is the **first** of the three Atonement Day rituals performed inside the most holy chamber (Lev. 16:12-15). The incense altar is the **second** stage in the three blood application stations for the sin offering for the High Priest or nation (Lev. 5:4-7). As we have already noted, the incense is the **third** and last of the three daily evening and morning rituals. Therefore, since this evening and morning ritual progression presents such an extremely repeated pattern for every day of every week of every year during the First Kingdom Age; and then extends out in parallel fashion with other related patterns... then clearly the hidden principles and exhortations within this ritual progression must offer extreme value in our determined pursuit of the image and likeness of our beloved Creator.

The First of the Three Alpha and Omega Rituals

The first of these three alpha and omega rituals was the daily burnt offering. As we have noted repeatedly, the divine behavioral expectation of the burnt offering is the pursuit of the knowledge of God. *For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God (Elohim) more than burnt offerings* (Hosea 6:6). The accurate knowledge of our Creator is the foundational platform for any effective pursuit of His image and likeness. The reasoning mind has to take the lead and definitely not the deceitful heart. The heart must be repeatedly circumcised with the sharp two edged sword of divine truth. Without that very rare recognition and appreciation for the exclusive right-ness of divine truths and principles, there is no relationship upon which to build any confidence for an eternal relationship. Our Creator is always right. Contradicting that right-ness (righteousness) is what introduced death and suffering into a previously very good creative order. John tells us specifically that

all unrighteousness is sin (1 Jn 5:17). Sin is not merely a transgressional performance, but also qualifies as the mere absence of righteousness. Christ's death would have been as ineffectual as the death of a newborn child if all he had done was to never transgress his Father's "thou shalt not" commandments. He also had to demonstrate his Father's righteousness perfectly, which is above and beyond simply not transgressing the law. Christ's three judgment parables of Matthew 25 each highlight the basis for an eternal rejection being prefaced by an absence of righteousness and not the presence of a sinful transgression. The inattentive wedding attendants simply had no oil. The servant had not stolen his master's investment. He simply did nothing with it. The goats had not stolen the clothes or food from Christ's poor brethren. They had simply not shared their own with the naked, hungry, destitute, lonely, imprisoned and sick among the brothers of the Messiah. It is the dual responsibility of pursuing righteousness as well as denying sin that is projected in the constant positive and negative patterns of three coursing through divine communication like the Jordan River transporting the waters of life from the living Sea of Galilee to the Sea of Death.

The Invisible Sabbath Miracles Principle

This issue of concentrating exclusively on the behavioral absence of sin is at the core of the Jewish authorities persecution of Jesus for his regular Sabbath healing miracles. They insisted on the absence of inappropriate activity and not the presence of the right activity. Their blind oversimplification of the lesson of the Sabbath incapacitated their recognition of the perfect application of Christ's healing powers being exercised on the seventh day to offer the enlightened a rest from the effects of sin under which they suffered. This same imbalancing oversimplification exists in the enlightened community today when Brethren insist that salvation (atonement) is exclusively about forgiveness, that all we have to worry about is being forgiven.

The first of the three stages in the evening and morning ritual pattern demonstrates the necessity to regularly sacrifice the instinctive flesh-based right-ness generated by our hearts in the fires of the bronze altar. We have to recognize that we only deserve death, recognizing the legitimacy of our death judgment to uphold the original testimony of our Creator that contradictions to His righteousness (sin) must be eliminated (die).

Unity With Men Should Never Oppose Harmony with Yahweh

The accelerating philosophy within our brotherhood for respecting the toleration of diversity in order to pursue a brotherhood unity is another denial of this first morning and evening ritual. Unity with men that is dependent on disrespecting the absolute and exclusive rightness of our Creator's truths contradicts the divine definition of peace. Scriptural peace is dependent on the presence of harmony and not the absence of discord. Divine peace has always historically been maintained through correction and not the toleration of diversity.

The Second of the Three Alpha and Omega Rituals

However, the mere academic understanding of divine truths and principles are completely ineffective if never engaged. The personal activation of these divine truths and principles is demonstrated in the second evening and morning ritual in this pattern. The seven golden lamps are refueled to comply with the command that this light in the Holy Chamber must always be burning (Ex. 27:20). Jesus identifies both himself and his disciples as the "light of the world". Jesus associates his status as the light of the world on the basis of his activities. *I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world* (John 9:4-5). The knowledge of divine truths, that are not instinctive to the

natural serpent mind we all inherit at birth, serves as the fuel for the generation of the light we are commanded to radiate in our lives to the glory of our Creator's right-ness. We keep our promises **because** Yahweh always keeps His promises. We love mankind as we love ourselves **because** God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son. We return good for evil **because** the Creator sends his rain on the just and the unjust. It is the truths, principles and patterns of our heavenly Father's behavior that serve as the fuel and it is our passionate dedication that ignites that flame of our life's service.

The dual three pattern of these evening and morning ritual progression is shadowed in the design of that golden lamp stand. There were not simply seven lamps. By divine design there had to be three lamps to the left of the center shaft and three lamps to the right of the center shaft, mimicking the same dual three pattern we can see so frequently. The initial eastern entrance into the Tabernacle courtyard was through the four curtain doorway but with three pillars/curtains to the left of the entrance and three pillars/curtains in mirror fashion to the right of that entrance (Ex. 27:13-16). Just as this is the design of the alpha temple it is also the design of the omega temple in the Millennial Kingdom where we see the requirement for three chambers to the left of that same eastern gate as well as three chambers to the right in mirror fashion (Ezek 40:10). The dual three pattern absolutely saturates divine communication in both the written word (Bible) and the spoken word (creation), offering an extreme emphasis for the attention of those who have taken the divine name (at circumcision or baptism).

Personal Light

The fuel restoration for the light generation of the 2nd ritual demonstrates the requirement to produce divine light in our lives, to generate divinely right behavior that confirms eternal truths and principles. This behavior requirement is expressed in scripture as righteous works and righteous deeds. This is the personal righteousness for which we will be judged. We must personally radiate divine right-ness by our individual words and personal activities. This is why righteousness is constantly attributed to individuals with personal possessive pronouns throughout the Bible (my, his our, your, their... righteousness) . That personal righteousness is not a denial of Yahweh's righteousness. It is a confirmation of His righteousness, but assigned on a personal and individual basis, differentiated from each other. However it would be impossible to differentiate from our Creator, who is the exclusively legitimate standard of righteousness. The sad attempt of some to eliminate the principle of personal righteousness constitutes the beginning nudges of the default serpent thought process, offered to the eager itching ears yearning to hear that our failure to demonstrate divine righteousness in our lives is just inconsequential and that salvation/atonement is really just all about forgiveness.

The Intimacy Opportunity of the Third Alpha & Omega Ritual

The third evening/morning ritual in the pattern is the incense offering, indicating the behavior of prayer, as previously validated. Once we have offered our lives in the sacrificial flames of complete dedication and love on the Christ altar (burnt offering), and having replenished the fuel of our faith with that dedication to the knowledge of Yahweh Elohim so that we might personally and corporately radiate those eternal truths in our thoughts, words and deeds (burning lamps)... then we are invited to intimately approach our Creator in prayer. In this last generation of the Ecclesial Age this is the greatest intimacy opportunity available to us with our heavenly Father. Until He ends His prophesied silence we cannot witness His unveiled power, but are limited to

the subtlety of providence. Unlike the first two generations of our Ecclesial Age we cannot taste the powers of the Age to come. We do not hear the voice of God booming out from the burning mountain. We cannot touch the blue hem of the son of God to be healed. Our special blessing of the perfect (mature) written word of God is afforded us because we have believed without having seen (Jn 20:29). Prayer to our Heavenly Father through His son is the greatest intimacy afforded our generation, prior to our call to judgment. That intimacy understanding is validated by the application of the incense burning as the first of the three Most Holy Chamber rituals during each Day of Atonement. That conversion of aromatic dust into the cloud that embraced the divine glory on the mercy seat is a projection of the immortalization/atonement of our Messiah, demonstrating a nature change that affords an eternal, unbreakable intimacy. The privilege of prayer should be cherished with all the courage and appreciation of a Daniel who would willingly face a pride of intentionally starved lions rather than even temporarily forfeit the divine intimacy permitted through prayer. Our current aching and yearning for that greater intimacy afforded through immortality, that one-ness with our beloved Creator and His son, can be expressed to them through the wonderful blessing of prayer.

We will continue inventorying the hidden treasures within the design and rituals of the incense offering and golden altar in our next commentary.

Brother Jim Dillingham

The Divine Prayer Template 4

The greatest obstacle to reading the Bible effectively is exactly the same for every level of Bible student. It makes no difference if one has opened it for the first time or spent thousands of hours studying and meditating on this book. That obstacle is always the same. That greatest of all tripping points is underestimating the Bible, presuming that we can easily take the full measure of the words. The corresponding tripwire of overconfidence naturally generated from a far too powerful human heart serves to clear and pave that broad and popular path Christ cautioned the children of God to avoid. The first and last step in divine education is that there is always far more to be found in divine expressions than we will ever see in this life and we are not nearly as smart as we presume. This is why Peter commands us to be ready always to give an answer to anyone who asks a reason for the hope that is in us, with meekness and fear. This willingness to prove all things sanctifies our heavenly Father in our hearts (1 Pet 3:15, 1 Thess 5:21). Therefore, beware the conclusions of any professed Bible teacher in our community who pre-warns us that they are not willing to suffer any objections or corrections from their presentations or expositions... which appears to be a growing trend.

The Living Gospel

Divine communications (whether written or spoken) are like single cells within a complete living entity. Despite a single detail's independence there is also an interdependence and partnership that affords a comprehensive synergistic cooperation, achieving a perfect balance and greater combined purpose. There is no superfluous or unnecessary component within any form of divine communication. Every law, every ritual, every miracle and every creational feature offers a variety of inter-related applications. There is an individual as well as a shared and layered purpose to each detail. Each component of our living body has an individual purpose but that purpose is magnified on the basis of its cooperation with and dependence upon all the other parts of our body. The functioning of our lungs is incredible, yet meaningless without partnering with the heart and the digestive system, and the brain, etc. Paul notes this synergistic design when he parallels the human body with the intended operational structure of the ecclesia (Rom. 12; 1 Cor. 12). However this understanding framework also extends to the structure of the Bible (the written word of our Creator) and the features of creation (the spoken word of our Creator). On the basis of this understanding we should have the opportunity to witness the continuous flow of related divine thoughts throughout all divine communication, like blood feeding oxygen and nutrients to every cell of the body. The witnessing of the same divine perspective through many different written and spoken expressions being pumped through different priesthood ages with different laws and rituals as well as the confirming features of creation offers a measured vision of our Creator's incredible glory that will eventually cover the earth as the water covers the sea.

Extreme Warnings Invite Extreme Attention

Our consideration of the design and operation of the incense and the golden altar certainly offers this measured glory opportunity. The significance of these observations is underlined by the extreme warnings associated with the incense and golden altar rituals. The High Priest had to burn the incense within the Most Holy chamber on the Day of Atonement to prevent his own death (Lev 16:13). Anyone presuming to plagiarize the composition of

the incense formula for personal use was to be permanently ostracized from the community of God (Ex. 30:38). The incineration of Nadab and Abihu as well as King Uzziah's imposed leprosy for disrespecting the incense are also invitations to witness this significant hidden value. Let's continue to pursue this veiled beauty and hidden glory within the construction and operation details of the incense and the golden altar.

Our previous commentary examined the pattern of the three evening and morning rituals of the burnt offering, the lamp refueling and the incense burning. We noted that the daily doubling of these three stage alpha and omega rituals is a common scriptural and creational pattern. As we also noted, there are three successive divine ritual patterns, each requiring three stages in which one of those stages employs the subject of our consideration.

A. The pattern of the three morning and evening rituals employs both the incense and the golden altar in the third stage of the progressive rituals.

B. The incense alone constitutes the first of the three rituals within the Most Holy Chamber of the Tabernacle on the Day of Atonement (1. incense burning; 2. bullock blood spattered eastward and westward over the Mercy Seat; 3. goat blood spattered eastward and westward over the mercy seat Lev. 16).

C. The third of these three stage ritual progressions was for the two categories of the sin offering when the sacrificial bullock blood was taken within the Tabernacle. The ritual instructions for the sin offering for both the High Priest as well as the nation required twelve blood deposits at three progressive stations (Lev. 4:1-21).

The golden altar alone (no incense) was employed as the second stage in this third three-fold progressive ritual (Lev. 4:1-26). Therefore in these three 3-stage ritual patterns we see the incense and altar serving first (Day of Atonement) in the progression, second (sin offering) and also third (evening and morning rituals). We also see the incense serving separately (Day of Atonement), the golden incense altar serving separately (High Priest sin offering) and both of them serving together (evening and morning rituals). This is not a haphazard pattern within a pattern within a pattern. It is perfectly ordered, just like the intelligent design of creation where the natural order is sustained by a perfect blending of very complex and layered interdependence of each individual feature of the whole, like the cumulative cells of a living body.

We originally considered this three stage sin offering ritual progression 45 months ago in our fourth commentary entitled Blood Times Three when our primary focus was the dual acceptance lesson of the blood (1. forgiveness and 2. cleansing/purging). Now that our focus is the incense and the incense altar, let's reconsider these two sin offering rituals within our current context.

The Fire of Rejection

The sin offering procedures for the High Priest and the nation were parallel yet expressed independently, unlike the other four of the six sin offerings for transgressional sin, for which guilt was assigned (Lev. 4-5). The fact that the blood of the bullock sin offering entered the divine sanctuary was the qualification for the elimination of the priests of the Kingdom of God from personal benefit (Lev. 4:10-12,21; Lev. 6:30; Heb. 13:11). Each of the six bullock waste components divinely identified had to be transported out of the camp and burned completely to ashes in the same exact location where the ashes from the altar of burnt offering were deposited

(Lev. 4:11). These appropriately six rejected bullock components are defined as the skin, all the flesh, the head, the legs, the inwards and the dung. The incineration from flesh to ashes/dust outside the camp for these six rejected components confirms the Edenic condemnation of the flesh returning to the dust from which it was generated on the basis of sin. Death was not part of the original creation order when everything was declared to be very good. The dying nature was introduced only after sin corrupted that formerly very good creational order. That observation defines a very significant feature of our Creator's righteousness. This fiery consumption of the six rejected sacrificial components also highlights the consuming fiery nature of our Creator (Heb. 12:29). It also fits perfectly within the creational features of fire that project divine principles. Sin, with its numeric identification with the number six, is frequently presented in scripture as an incendiary and fire as a demonstration of divine judgment (Matt 25:41; 2 Thess. 1:8-9). This is why igniting a fire on the Sabbath (the assigned rest from the effects of sin) was forbidden (Ex. 35:2-3). The fact that water is a flame retardant demonstrates how filling ourselves with the water of the word of God protects us from our Creator's justified fiery judgments, in the same sense that well watered plants and trees are more resistant to flames than dried out plant life.

The Fire of Acceptance

The second category of fire for this sin offering was within the camp, consuming the bullock's divinely acceptable components on the bronze altar. This fire of acceptance (as opposed to the fire of rejection outside the camp) highlights how fire is presented as both the avenue of rejection as well as the avenue of divine acceptance. Just as eternal death is presented in the context of never ending smoke as well as ashes, so the only path to eternal life is through death, through the painful flames of a complete self-sacrifice. It was the death and ashes of the red heifer that cleansed the children of God from the divine unacceptability of touching the dead. It was the death of our Messiah that was the required path for his resurrection to immortality. It is our associative death in the waters of baptism that precedes our rising again from those baptismal waters to project our hope of salvation from the condemnation of death originally imposed in Eden. The sin offering for the High Priest and also for the nation included two separate fire categories in two of the three geographic theatres for this ritual: the rejection fires outside the camp and the acceptance fires within the Tabernacle courtyard. The third ritual theatre was within the Tabernacle's Holy Chamber, but there was no fire applied.

The Golden Altar Participation

The employment of the golden incense altar in these two sin offering rituals (High Priest and nation) involves the very appropriate three stage progression of the sacrificial blood. The sin offering bullock blood had twelve applications at three progressive stations. Just as the fire was employed in two separate environments (Tabernacle courtyard for acceptance and outside the camp for rejection), so the blood is applied in two separate environments (the Holy Chamber and the Courtyard) projecting both a mental and behavioral partnership, therefore comprising three separate theatres for the complete execution of these two sin offering rituals. Now, let's follow the blood trail.

Scripture repeatedly identifies blood with mortal life (Gen. 9:4; Lev. 17:11; 1 Cor. 15:50). Sacrificial blood has two applications, forgiveness and cleansing (Heb. 9:22). Both of these applications are components of atonement (salvation), for which the blood is an icon (Lev 17:11). Therefore as we follow the sin offering blood trail we need to place all of our understandings within the framework of blood representing sin cursed mortal life.

The first blood station was the veil upon which the blood was violently spattered exactly seven times. This veil projects the flesh of our Messiah (Heb. 10:19-20). The denial of our Messiah's flesh nature was prophesied to become the signature doctrine of the Christian apostasy (1 Jn 4:3; 2 Jn 7). The doctrine of an immortal god disguising himself in a cloak of flesh and lying about being mortal, lying about a capacity to sin, lying about dying and lying about returning from the dead is the ultimate blasphemy. The removal of the 'veil' over the face of all nations (Is 25:7) at Jerusalem upon the return of Christ prophesies of the global enlightening concerning this basic feature of apostate presumptions. Interestingly, the separate enlightenment of the Jewish people is expressed in very similar terms of that 'veil' being taken away from their heart (2 Cor 3:16). The absolute first step in an effective sin offering would be understanding the nature of our Messiah's life sacrifice, which was all about his Father's righteousness. That death was not primarily focused on the forgiveness of our sins, as is sometimes suggested. Enlightenment is always the first stage in any acceptable relationship with the Creator. This is the exact same beginning point of the doubled three stage evening and morning rituals that we considered in our last commentary, where the knowledge of God was the divinely mandated expectation of the daily burnt offering (Hos. 6:6).

Spattered Blood and Not Sprinkled Blood

It should be noted that there is a unique Hebrew verb for the handling of the blood of the sin offering, separate from the other blood offerings. The Hebrew verb '*nazah*' indicates a violent spattering and not a gentle sprinkling, as indicated by the verb (*zaraq*) used to define the blood handling for the other blood-based altar offerings. This unique verb application confirms the understanding that the defeat of sin (the extent and limit of exactly seven splatterings) could not be accomplished without violence. Sin never surrenders politely. Sin is a devouring lion, a poisonous serpent and a fearsome dragon.

This three stage blood trail projects the complete defeat of sin and sin's power that will be divinely processed at three stages over seven millenniums, projected through the six Greek letters of the name of our savior (Jesus/Iesous) that numerically add up to three eights (888 = three immortalizations). The six letters that produce the three eights depict this progression from mortal to immortal in three stages for the complete maturing of the divine plan. These three battles that sin loses are demonstrated in the immortalization of our savior, the immortalization of his family at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom and the third immortalization for the rest of the world at the end of the Millennial Kingdom, after a full seven 'times'. The sevenfold blood splattering of the sin offering on the veil prophesies the same final defeat of sin after seven millenniums that is also projected in the seven splatterings of the blood of the red heifer toward the Tabernacle from outside the camp (Num. 19:4). Just as the violent splattering of the blood of the sin offering prophesies of the complete and final elimination of the guilt of transgressional sin after seven 'times', so the violent splattering of the red heifer blood prophesies of the elimination of the guilt-free sin application of the cleansing from the physical effects of sin (the defiling touch of death) after seven 'times'. Both sin acceptations are eliminated in these three progressive victories of Spirit over flesh, projected through the two blood acceptations (forgiveness and cleansing). However, if we limit our understanding of sin to just a single acceptance, or inappropriately understand that

second sin acceptance to also assign guilt, then the consistency and bright, glorious beauty of these symmetrical patterns dissolve into the darkness of our oversimplification presumptions.

Smearing the Blood on the Golden Horns

The second blood application of this sin offering required smearing the sacrificial blood on the four horns of the golden altar. Once we have been exposed to the light of divine truths we need to make a choice for either acceptance or rejection of those truths, selflessness or selfishness. We have to choose our master: Yahweh or sin. The smearing application of the sacrificial blood on the four golden horns indicates that we have chosen to worship Yahweh instead of the mirror. We have previously noted the scriptural interpretation of the incense altar and incense burning to indicate the application of prayer, the intimate personal mental and heart circumcising submission to the ultimate authority. Once we recognize our sin (the blood spattering on the veil), we need to repent (the blood on the four incense altar horns). However this is not enough. The forgiveness of sins due to our prayerful repentance is not the only component of our salvation. Forgiveness alone is never enough. There is a third stage with the twelfth blood application.

The third and final blood application station involved the remainder of the blood. This remaining blood had to be poured out at the bottom of the altar of burnt offering in the Tabernacle Courtyard. That altar is scripturally interpreted as defining our Savior (Heb. 13:10; 1 Cor 10:15-18). After we have experienced enlightenment (our sacrificial life blood on the veil) and we have prayerfully repented (our sacrificial lifeblood on the golden altar horns) we still have to pour out our lives at the feet of Jesus Christ, demonstrating the proof of our repentance which was enabled by our enlightenment. This third application of the blood confirms the understanding that there is more to salvation (atonement) than simply forgiveness. This third blood stage also projects that second acceptance of 'personal' righteousness, as opposed to oversimplifying this righteousness principle exclusively to the universally accepted understanding of imputed righteousness. Personally demonstrating Yahweh's righteousness in our lives is absolutely necessary for salvation. This is why we are repeatedly warned we will be judged according to our deeds. As noted previously, the three judgment parables of Matthew 25 all highlight the impending rejection of our judge for the absence of personally projecting divine righteousness in our lives. The second and third blood application stations for the sin offering project the two categories of consideration for our final judgment: sin reconciliation on the basis of repentance (incense altar) and righteousness demonstration (burnt offering altar). The appropriately 12th application of the blood at the third station involves the huge majority of the blood, indicating the intensity of the required commitment to be visibly demonstrated in our lives. The first blood stage involved finger spattering. The second blood stage required smearing. The third blood stage required pouring out the rest of that blood at the base of the altar, just as we must pour out our whole life at the feet of Jesus Christ.

Our considerations concerning the incense and its altar and the glory of how their details and applications compliment all other divine communications will continue with our next commentary.

Brother Jim Dillingham

The Divine Prayer Template 5

Our foundational understanding concerning the incense ritual has been its intended projection of the privilege of prayer (Ps. 141:1-2; Rev. 8:3-4; Luke 1:10). Therefore we should be able to examine the required details concerning the incense components, their processing and the execution of the ritual in order to better understand divinely acceptable prayer patterns.

Four Incense Components

Four specific ingredients were required, in equal weights, to produce the Tabernacle incense. That composition was forbidden for any personal use, upon a threat of permanent expulsion (Ex. 30:38). We have noted on several occasions how the very common 'four' pattern highlights the theme of God manifestation. A pattern of four serves as a frame for some lesson concerning how our Father has, does or will manifest Himself. We have also noted the 'doubled' four pattern and how that consistently identifies our Messiah and his role in the ultimate plan of God manifestation. That ultimate state of perfection in the eighth millennium, when our Creator and His truths and principles are manifested through every single component of creation without a single contradiction will be a state of peace, which is a complete harmony between the Creator and everything that exists beyond the elimination of sin and death. The cursed flesh and everything associated with it will be cut away in circumcision-like fashion beyond the end of that seventh divine day, eliminating all physical and spiritual contradictions to our Creator's righteousness. The progressive plan resulting in this conclusion moves through four specific divinely appointed educational stages. The transition between one divinely appointed educational stage into the next is clearly identified by three markers: 1) a change in divine law, 2) a change in the priesthood and 3) an incredible outpouring of divine power that validates these changes. That validating and very public divine power escalates with each transition. This was the subject of our very first commentary beginning this series five years ago. Our generation will soon experience the divinely appointed third transition into the fourth assigned educational stage. These educational stages can be identified as the Patriarchal Priesthood Age, the First Kingdom Priesthood Age, the Ecclesial Priesthood Age and the Millennial Kingdom Priesthood Age. Each Age had its own laws and priesthoods. An interesting note is that each transition period from one Age to the next is associated with a two generation introductory period.

Each stage has its particular focus for educating the enlightened concerning the instinctively challenging eternal truths and principles of our Creator. It is the inappropriate presumption that each stage is completely comprehensive that serves as a common tripping point that the hearts of the enlightened sometimes exploit to convert humbling divine truths into self-glorifying understandings. The Jewish community incorrectly presumed that their mechanical ritual performance completely satisfied divine approval. The Christian community (and increasingly Christadelphians) incorrectly presume that faith alone completely satisfies divine approval. Both perspectives are incomplete.

Four Equal components

It should be understood that many of these four component allegorical frames for the principle of God manifestation present a distinct equality balance in their divine design. The configuration of the community of the enlightened had to be foursquare with three tribes at each quadrant. The inner spiritual foursquare encampment was for the Levites and Priests. The four horns on the four corners of the two foursquare altars of bronze and gold were separately stationed at the junction of each of the four altar quadrants but offered the same construction and appearance. The four Cherubim of Ezekiel's vision are each the same, with their four faces looking to those same four quadrants and connected in a foursquare fashion, never needing to turn in order to move in any direction. They were accompanied by four wheels within four wheels. Additionally the four incense components were required to be of equal weight. The equality of each of these groups of four (and

many, many others) exhort us in parable fashion to balance the educational focus of each divinely appointed Age. It is the deceitful heart within every one of us that relentlessly hisses its seduction for imbalancing divine principles into a self-centered focus. It is the circumcising and re-circumcising of that heart that empowers our divine vision to see the light veiled within the darkness of our Creator's intentionally complex communications.

Divine principles have to be balanced. Judgment and mercy are both divine principles. Neither is exclusive. Condemnation and forgiveness are both divine principles. Spiritual and physical... perishing forever and everlasting life... works and grace ... imputed righteousness and personal righteousness... transgressional sin and sin producing human nature ... light and darkness ... good and evil... love and hatred... and blessing and cursing have to all be balanced if we are going to manifest our heavenly Father in our thoughts, words and deeds. Therefore, the four incense ingredients had to be of equal weight.

The Blending of the Four Separate but Equal Incense Ingredients

Those four ingredients (stacte, galbanum, onycha and frankincense) were blended together by the apothecary before being employed in the ritual. The lessons of the four divinely appointed educational phases of the Creator's plan have to be blended together in our lives in order for our prayers (burning incense) to be effective. The primary, but certainly not exclusive, educational focus of those four progressive stages are: 1) The value and necessity for personal righteousness in the Patriarchal Priesthood Age; 2) The condemnation of sin in the First Kingdom Age; 3) the necessity and value of grace and imputed righteousness in the Ecclesial Priesthood Age; and 4) The necessity for a physical application extending from spiritual truths and principles in the Millennial Kingdom Priesthood Age. Just like the foursquare and four equal weight distinctions, each educational focus should not be elevated above another or in opposition to another. They have to be blended, just like the apothecary did with the four incense ingredients. Dangerously imbalancing divine principles results from a preferred singular focus generated from our hearts and accommodated by a divine communication pattern that gives to those who have and takes away from those who have not (Matt. 13:12).

Harvesting Tears to Burn on the Incense Altar

It is an interesting note to understand how these incense ingredients were harvested from creation for this divine purpose. Frankincense is drawn from particular trees by creating slits in the bark, bleeding the resin from within into tears that harden into the necessary incense component. Since the Tabernacle incense presents an image of prayerful repentance on the basis of a circumcised heart, this harvesting operation for its frankincense component serves to confirm a seamless theme in relation to repentance following enlightenment.

Beaten Into Dust

The apothecary's processing of the incense would involve crushing the incense chunks into a dust-like consistency (*thou shalt beat it very small* Ex. 30:36). This projects the processing of the saints into the appropriate vessels for the eternal Spirit to dwell (John 14:23). *For thus saith the high and lofty One That inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, With him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, To revive the spirit of the humble, And to revive the heart of the contrite ones* (Is. 57:15). The two related Hebrew words translated "contrite" here in Isaiah are also translated dust, broken, crushed and bruised. The crushing of the incense into a dust consistency is a confirmation of the righteousness of the divine judgment of death for sin in Eden when the declaration was made: *Dust thou art and to dust thou shalt return*. This dust consistency is a necessary component for the incense application in the first of the three rituals performed in the Most Holy Chamber on the Day of Atonement. Two handfuls of that incense dust (creating yet another doubled four Christ pattern) was burned in the fire from the bronze altar to create a cloud to embrace the divine glory between the cherubim inside the Most Holy Chamber (Lev. 16:12-13). That dust to cloud transfiguration on the Day of Atonement that saved the life of the High Priest is a projection of the immortalization of our Messiah, being the first of the three immortalization events prophesied in the divine plan that were all so flawlessly portrayed on the annual Day of Atonement.

The Flames of Divine Acceptance

The burning of that incense is a demonstration of the necessity for a burning passion, an energy that needs to be heard in our prayers and witnessed in our lives. A casual shuffling through of enlightened service and particularly the appropriately four rituals of the Ecclesial Age (baptism, memorial service, the required presence or absence of a head covering during prayer on the basis of gender and Sisters silence) offers our deceitful hearts a distinct advantage in its relentless pursuit to subjugate our minds to its instinctive self-worshipping philosophy. The unacceptability of an unprepared prayer full of often repeated expressions that are spilled out with a hypnotic cadence is like unprocessed incense on the golden altar that just won't burn.

The Divine Spotlight of Broken Patterns

One particular inconsistency between the Ecclesial Age ritual of prayer and the Kingdom Age ritual of incense burning stands out like white on black. We have noted many times that these pattern departures and surface inconsistencies should serve as divine beacons to the seeing eyes of the heart circumcised who are eager to see a greater measure of our Creator's glory. The necessary choice of whether to break Sabbath Law or Circumcision Law when a boy turned eight days old on the Sabbath was one of these issues (John 7:22-23). Another was the unique bloodless 'flour' sin offering of the impoverished Israelite (Lev. 5:11). Another was the reversal of the Nazarite 'separating from' restrictions being reversed into the Ecclesial Age 'separating to' ritual requirements. These surface contradictions are keys to understanding how to assign the layers of significance to interdependent divine truths in the correct order. Our current question would be why the High Priest was required to wear his standard head covering (turban/mitre) when he performed the incense ritual, portraying the pattern of acceptable prayer? This required head covering is in direct contradiction to the Ecclesial Age instructions that a Brother must never cover his head during prayer, as opposed to a sister who is required to cover her head whenever she prays (1 Cor 11:4-5). This ritual explanation is concluded with Paul's gavel pounding statement that there are absolutely no exceptions to this ritual requirement for both men and women (vs. 16 in any translation except the KJV). What are we supposed to understand by the High Priest performing the prayer template ritual of incense burning with a 'covered' head? This answer will also address the reason why the golden crown of the High Priest could not be placed directly on his head but had to rest on that same turban head covering.

The Required and Forbidden Head Covering

In order to answer that question, we need to define the lesson of the head covering. Paul explains this for us when he defines and interprets one of the two gender specific Ecclesial Age rituals. Let's also remember that every single divinely imposed ritual in any age shares the foundational understanding that the correct application will always demonstrate some feature of our Creator's righteousness. This is true in all applications without exception. Sister's are commanded to cover their heads during any prayer in order to demonstrate the right-ness of the divine order: that God is the head of Christ who is the head of man who is the head of woman. A sister praying with an uncovered head is contradicting the divine righteousness of that assigned order. Just as a sister must always project the Creator's righteousness by covering her head during any prayer, so a brother must never cover his head in prayer... to demonstrate the exact same feature of our Creator's righteousness. When a sister prays to Yahweh through Jesus, she is bypassing her divinely appointed head (man). She covers her head, declaring she accepts her appointment under the power of man by divine command, so that she might directly access Yahweh through our appointed mediator. An uncovered sister's head in prayer rebelliously contradicts the Creator's rightness in His four-stage descending hierarchy. The Brother has no 'power' on his head between himself and our Mediator and therefore must never cover his head in prayer. To do so would be a rejection of Christ as the man's immediate authority. Also, since the woman is the glory of the man, an uncovered sister's head disrespectfully projects the unveiled glory of the man in the face of God when she seeks to approach Him directly in prayer. Therefore one aspect of the head covering is a recognition of being under the power of another. Another divine righteousness feature of this Ecclesial Age ritual was confirming that the

woman was made for the man and not that the man being made for the woman. Now, let's apply these observations to the head-covered High Priest burning the incense.

In exactly the same fashion, the Mosaic High Priest was under the authority of another. The Mosaic High Priest would surrender to the greater authority of the ultimate High Priest, our Messiah. Paul highlights this power level assignment when he observes how Levi (while still in the loins of Abraham) respectfully paid tithes to Melchizedek (Heb. 7:4-11). The Mosaic High Priest was under the authority of a greater High Priest, despite the fact that the Messiah was not yet born. This is true in the same sense that Jesus was the lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8) and that Yahweh had already made Abraham the father of many nations when he didn't even have a son at the time (Rom. 4:17). Our omnipotent Creator has the exclusive right to refer to future events in the past tense because if He says it will happen, it is as good as done. Therefore the Mosaic High Priest had to cover his head in the Tabernacle when he burned the incense, projecting the prayer pattern. He was under the power and authority of another. Similarly to sisters, Aaron and the continuing line of temporary High Priests were assigned as helpers that were fit (Gen. 2:18) for the bridegroom, the ultimate High Priest.

Repeated Ritual Reversals Are Christ Focused

We have seen a number of Kingdom laws and rituals reversed in the Ecclesial Age. The four restrictions of the Nazarite were converted into absolute requirements in the Ecclesial Age but focused on a singular association. We touch the dead body of Jesus in both baptism and eating the broken bread. We eat the grape and drink the alcohol in the wine of the memorial service. Sisters cover their heads in prayer as opposed to the Nazarites that uncovered their head at the conclusion of their vow by shaving their head and placing that previously unshorn hair into the fire of the peace offering. The two great blood laws of the Patriarchal and First Kingdom Ages were reversed in the Ecclesial Age. Instead of being forbidden from blood consumption we are commanded to consume the blood of Christ in the memorial wine, or die forever (John 6:53). The temple altar where the sacrificial blood was to be poured out was eliminated and replaced by the mental image of our Messiah before whom we pour out our lives at his feet. Now we also see the reversal of the head covering requirement. Since we are told definitively that our Creator never changes we need to ask why these dramatic reversals in laws and rituals were implemented.

The progressive nature of our Creator's education process is for our benefit, and not a result of His enlightenment or some degree of wrath satisfaction, as is often suggested from apostate Christianity. Just as a parent teaches their maturing child with different methods at different stages in their child's progression, so does our Creator. As we have noted before, there is not a single animal species in creation that remains under the care and direction of their parents for anywhere near as long as is necessary for creation's appointed caretaker (mankind). We are the only species invited to share the image and likeness of our Creator. There are divinely appointed educational themes for each new priesthood age with its new laws and rituals. In order to truly understand and properly balance the eternal divine truths we are invited to understand and appreciate then we have to consider these changing laws and rituals. We must do this first in the context of their immediate and constricted educational framework and secondly in the greater frame of spanning the full range of divine education available to us, including both the written word of God (Bible) and the spoken word of God (creation). Not only will everything fit together perfectly when examined in this manner, but that understanding structure will be incredibly beautiful. It will be like viewing the earth from space, seeing the entire interdependent structure of creation at once.

Don't Be Satisfied With 'Either-Or' Answers

The primary educational theme of the First Kingdom Age laws and rituals is the condemnation of sin, compared against the necessity for personally demonstrating divinely right behavior. This educational theme emphasizes

our inadequacy and the need for a savior. After the transition into the Ecclesial Age the new laws and rituals primarily highlight the availability of grace and imputed righteousness despite the Creator's being right for condemning sin and requiring an impossible level of personal righteousness. However, if we view this educational transition as a replacement instead of a progression, then a veil of darkness prevents further enlightenment and the resulting glory from that growing enlightenment. The key to understanding our heavenly Father is the blending of all the stages of His progressive education. Comprehensive answers that are eternally true are not supposed to be simple or easy.

We have it all before us, like no generation ever before us. We have the entire (perfect, mature) word of God. We have a familiarity with the features of creation like no generation ever before us. We have amazing research tools to examine both of these forms of divine expression and how they compliment each other flawlessly at every level. The exponential value that is intentionally veiled in divine expressions can be realized individually if we will deny the heart generated, oversimplified distortions that saturate apostate philosophy and are endlessly re-introduced into the community of the enlightened. Everything has to blend perfectly. If something looks like it doesn't fit, then that is exactly what we need to address because the problem is not with Yahweh. The problem is always with us in our endless battle against the natural serpent thought process emanating unbidden from within.

Brother Jim Dillingham