

John's visions of the Millennial Kingdom recorded in Revelation depict the immortalized saints in the role of priests with political authority. The four living creatures and the twenty four elders declaring the holiness and worthiness of our Lord make the declaration in chapter 5 that they had been redeemed from every kindred, tongue, people and nation and have been assigned to serve as reigning priests over the earth. After we read of the restraining of the four sin metaphors (dragon, serpent, devil and satan) in chapter 20, John prophesies that those blessed by their participation of the first resurrection will be priests and reign with Christ for 1,000 years. The job description of the immortalized saints in the Millennial Kingdom is that of priests with political authority, reigning priests.

The scriptural precedent for those covered with immortality being assigned to the priesthood is well founded in Kingdom Law. Under the original Kingdom of God on earth one qualified for priest status by being the physically flawless son of the divinely appointed High Priest after reaching maturity (30 years). Aaron's sons were the chosen by God to serve as priests of the Kingdom of Heaven. In the restored Kingdom it will be the physically flawless children of the divinely appointed High Priest, Jesus Christ, who will serve as priests of the same undying order as their King and High Priest. This fatherhood of the Messiah has been a consistent tripping point for those who are unfamiliar with the principle of God manifestation.

Christ as the Father of the Priests

Isaiah defines the promised Messiah as an everlasting father, a prince of peace, a mighty Elohim and a wonderful counselor (Is. 9:6-7). In chapter 53 Isaiah describes the process by which the Messiah would become a father. *Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand* (Is. 53:10). The Messiah would see his seed, his descendants, when he made his life an offering for sin. This father-ship by life sacrifice would be accompanied by a life extension. The Messiah's days would be prolonged. His priesthood would not end.

In accordance with restored Kingdom Law when Christ sits on David's throne, the mature, blemishless sons of the High Priest and King will be the appointed priests with political authority to teach divine laws and principles. Their political authority will include policing and judicially determining matters of divine law. Although the original Kingdom Law required the exclusive appointment of the **sons** of the High Priest it should be understand that we are genderless in Jesus Christ. *For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.* ²⁸ *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus* (Gal. 3:27-28). Therefore immortalized Christadelphian sisters will serve as priests along with brethren.

Sister Priests of the Ecclesial Age

This particular genderless feature of immortal priests is hinted at in the transition from the original kingdom priesthood under the order of Aaron into the Ecclesial Age priesthood where the priest's gender limitation was eliminated. Peter describes the universal Ecclesia as a royal priesthood and a holy priesthood offering spiritual sacrifices (1 Pet. 2:5,9).

Hebrews presents the Ecclesial Priesthood as enjoying benefits forbidden to the Aaronic priesthood. *We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp* (Heb. 13:10-11). Our current Ecclesial Age Priesthood is invited to eat of the sin offering for the High Priest and nation at Christ's altar every Sunday morning. This participation was expressly forbidden to the servants of the tabernacle (Aaronic priests) in the previous age. We partake of the memorial bread and wine representing the body and blood of Christ, our sin offering whose life (blood) was taken into the antitypical sanctuary of God (heaven). The priests of the previous priesthood age were forbidden this privilege. They were only allowed to eat the sin offering whose blood only went as far as the altar of burnt offering and never entered the sanctuary.

A Change in the Priesthood Requires a Change in the Law

Yahweh has always maintained some form of priesthood since the corruption of creation by sin. There have been varying priesthood roles and qualifications. The priesthood of the Millennial Kingdom will constitute the fourth priesthood age. In the first age the patriarchs performed the priestly duties. Faithful men such as Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Melchizedek built altars, offered sacrifices and directed their communities. They spiritually instructed and led their households in matters of divine principles and holiness. When Kingdom Law was established at Sinai the priesthood qualifications and duties changed dramatically. As Hebrews confirms, a change in the priesthood requires a change in the law (Heb. 7:12). These modifications necessitated miraculous divine validation. In fact, the transition period into any new priesthood age shares these three conditions without exception: 1) There is a change in the priesthood; 2) There is a change in divine law and 3) There is an incredible public outpouring of divine power to validate these changes. In fact, with the introduction of each new priesthood age the terms of that validating display of divine power escalates.

When God established the very limited priesthood at Sinai, the terms of Kingdom law accompanied that priesthood change. Incredible miracles validated the divine approval of these changes. The children of God had been more than skeptical. Some had rebelled at these priesthood qualification restrictions. The rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram was based on the contention that Moses and Aaron had overstepped their authority since all God's congregation was holy (Num. 16:3). They presumed that since God had promised that He would make them a nation of priests (Ex. 19:6) He would not have immediately established laws forbidding that immediate realization of a national priesthood. Fueling that doubt would be Moses appointment of the High Priest being his older brother, who had recently cast the idolatrous golden calf. It was announced that only the nephews of Moses would qualify as priests and that the entire tribe of Levi would serve Moses' priestly relatives. Significant ecclesial conflict has been based on far less during our generation.

Divine validation was needed. Moses used the two edged sword of the word of God that will also issue from the mouth of Christ when the fourth priesthood age will begin shortly (Num. 16:28-34). The earth opened up and then closed, swallowing some of the wilderness ecclesia alive. Fire rained down from heaven in a very selective fashion. The previously indignant and rather self-righteous rebels were eliminated.

Four Maturity Stages for the Bride Development

The subsequent miraculous validation of the priesthood is considerably more expressive than is immediately evident. The heads of the twelve tribes place their rods in the Tabernacle overnight. In the morning it is Aaron's rod that displays the miracle of resurrection throughout four stages of maturity. These four stages reflect the four stages of divinely appointed priesthoods in the maturing of the intended bride for the King's son (Jesus Christ) throughout the darkness of the reign of sin and death for 6,000 years. Those four stages of maturity in the resurrected rod are expressed as the rod (1) budding as well as (2) bringing forth buds as well as (3) blooming blossoms and finally (4) yielding almonds (Num. 17:8). These four maturity stages developing during the night in God's tabernacle became evident upon examination of the elders in the morning. The four

priesthood stages in the development of the bride of Christ will become evident with the age of global divine enlightenment in the fourth priesthood age of the Millennial Kingdom.

The beginning of the Ecclesial Priesthood Age is marked by the same three conditions. There is a change in the priesthood. There is a change in the law. Temple worship is eliminated. Altar offerings end. Ritual worship is reduced to just four applications: baptism, memorial service, sisters' head-coverings and sisters' silence. There is an escalation in the outpouring of divine power to validate these changes in the priesthood and law. The dead are raised. One man is immortalized. The new priestly order of brothers and sisters are given gifts of the Holy Spirit to perform certain categories of miracles at will (*the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets*). There is a clear escalation in the miraculous divine validations of this new priesthood age. These divine gifts of power to the newly appointed priests of the Ecclesial Age were time limited and served a specific purpose related to this transition stage.

Peter only offered the promise of the Holy Spirit to two generations of Jewish and Gentile believers at Pentecost in Jerusalem (Acts 2:39). Paul explained to the Corinthians the gifts of power would be replaced by that which was perfect (1 Cor.13:8-10) indicating the completed and fully mature word of God. Paul explained to the Ephesians that these gifts were intended to jumpstart the maturing process of the body of believers experiencing all these modifications in divine worship. Paul explains these gifts were awarded for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, to lead us into a greater unity to a mature man, to a 'measure' of the stature of the fullness of Christ. He exhorts them not to be children but to grow up into Christ. The Spirit gifts were a tool for promoting the maturity of the bride of Christ into the final stage before the marriage that would take place in the next priesthood age.

The fourth priesthood age is the Millennial Kingdom. There is another change in the priesthood. There is another change in divine law. The greatest of all miraculous validations of these changes are displayed before the entire world.

As Hebrews declares, *For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law*. We do not read of baptism and memorial service or sisters' headcoverings or sisters' silence in the millennial kingdom prophecies. We do read of a fourth temple being erected (as the tabernacle should be understood and is scripturally defined as a temple; 1 Sam. 1:9; 3:3). We do read of altar offerings. We read of how all the nations will be required to attend the feast of Tabernacles and how Kingdom Law will be restored and made honorable to display the righteousness of Yahweh. *The LORD is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law, and make it honourable* (Is. 42:21).

Kingdom Law

Kingdom Law was initially communicated through Moses at Sinai for the first heavenly Kingdom of God on earth. The restored heavenly Kingdom of God on Earth will be structured on that same restored Kingdom Law. It is misleading to refer to this as 'the Law of Moses.' This was the law of God's Kingdom. It will be the law of God's restored Kingdom. It is Kingdom Law. This mislabeling of the law was a mistake made by the Jewish teachers of the law. They never expected Solomon's temple to be destroyed by the Babylonians since it was God's home. They actually thought their proximity to God's temple somehow shielded their ungodly behavior, since God's home was presumed to be eternal. The Jews never expected a Messiah that would have to die. They never expected the Kingdom of God to be temporary and that the Romans could somehow eliminate God's Kingdom. They also thought that the law given to Moses was forever. They incorrectly presumed that if something replaced that law that somehow the original law would have had to have been wrong in the first place.

Paul addresses this issue with the Romans, with a crescendo of declarations following the patiently growing symphony of reasoning throughout the first six chapters. Paul declares that simply because the law highlights sin, we are not free to think of law as sin (Rom 7:7). The law should be understood as holy and just and good (Rom 7:12). Paul explains that the purpose of the law was to define, border, magnify and illuminate... sin. Kingdom Law displays the limitless gulf between the righteousness of Yahweh and the sin state and behavior of man. This is how the law has the capacity to shut every mouth. This is what Paul tells the Romans: *Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: **that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty** before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for **by the law is the knowledge of sin*** (Rom. 3:19-20).

By the law is the knowledge of sin. Paul admits he would not have known lust if the law had not commanded to abstain from coveting. Paul goes on to say how the sinful propensity within him, our human nature, was activated by this limitation and harassed him against his good intentions to fail in this manner. *I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence* (Rom. 7:7-8). Paul confirms this foundational purpose of Kingdom Law throughout his letter to the Romans. *Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound* (Rom. 5:20). The Law is the magnifying glass for sin. It is the spotlight that won't accommodate our hiding sin in the dark recesses of our minds by searing our consciences.

Sin Education

Since the law highlights our despicable lowness against God's glorious highness there is an instinctive tendency to associate the law with negative conclusions. After Paul tells us that sin, taking advantage of the law's limitations slew him he asks and answers this instinctively motivated question. *Was then that which is good made death unto me? By no means. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful* (Rom. 7:13). The law (that which is good) makes sin appear to be sin as that sin works death in us. The law is simply the educator, the enlightening procedure. The law magnifies sin and displays it as **exceedingly** sinful.

This is how Kingdom Law schoolmastered us to Christ (Gal. 3:24). Kingdom Law highlights the impossibility of self-justification on the basis of personal merit. Kingdom Law illuminates this infinite gulf between God's righteousness and man's wickedness. Kingdom Law underlines our dependence upon a mediator, a champion, a savior. Kingdom Law cannot save us. It is simply our educator. It teaches us about the sin we are related to and the righteousness of God.

Does this world need to know about sin? The God appointed perfect educator about sin is Kingdom Law. Although Christ is the obvious conclusion of the law, he is not the true focus. The true focus is Yahweh. We should not make the same mistake as apostate humanity. Down through the millenniums men have mistakenly worshipped the features of God manifestation, the lenses through which Yahweh has displayed Himself. They have worshipped the creature rather than the Creator. They changed the image of the incorruptible God into corruptible man and birds and creeping things (Rom 1:19-23). Simply because the law schoolmastered us to Christ, we are not free to conclude that was its exclusive or even its foremost purpose. God's Kingdom Law, originally given at the formation of His Kingdom at Sinai, will become global law in the Millennial Kingdom.

We hope to be appointed the immortal priests who will teach and police Kingdom Law. Wouldn't it be wise to vocationally train now for the dream job of all eternity? Shouldn't we act like we want that position? Would any of us want our heart surgery performed by someone who had never cared to study or practice that discipline? It

is certainly recognized that there is no precedent for perceiving our acceptance or rejection at the judgment seat of Christ having any basis on our accurate explanations of the law given to Moses. Nonetheless, we do want to impress our judge that we want that assignment, that we want to be like him (a king-priest), that we want to be able to perform the work he will assign those he chooses to immortalize.

How and Why

Therefore this series will be about the law that will be taught in the Millennial Kingdom by the saints and why these things will be taught. What are the two great laws of blood and why are they so important? Why are there twelve applications of blood applied in three stages during the sin offering of the high priest and the nation? Why does the High Priest enter the Most Holy specifically three times on the Day of Atonement? Why are there four categories of blood offerings presented at the altar? Why were sin offerings demanded for atonement when men and women had not transgressed God's law and sometimes had performed a righteous deed? Why did the peace offering have to always be offered on top of the burnt offering? Why did the bread and wine offerings always have to accompany the burnt and peace offerings but never, ever accompany the sin or trespass offerings? Why were the burnt and peace offerings the only altar offerings ever to be consumed by fire from heaven? Why were there specifically three ritually unclean conditions under Kingdom Law? The principles displayed in the answers to these questions will highlight why Kingdom Law, established at Sinai, will go forth from Zion to all nations.... soon.

Jim Dillingham

Salvation: Written In Blood

Our premise is that the saints will serve as the spiritual educators and political authorities of the Millennial Kingdom. We hope to serve as priestly kings, as extensions of Christ and Yahweh in the restored Kingdom of God on earth. Kingdom Law will be restored along with that Heavenly Kingdom. According to the precedent of King David, we would be wise to prepare ourselves to become the living temple of Yahweh Elohim. David was forbidden to construct the temple but he still gathered the materials and prepared them for a glorious divine abiding place. We have a similar opportunity. We cannot serve currently as the eternal abiding places Christ went to heaven to prepare for the faithful. However we can prepare for that privilege, studying Kingdom Law, originally given at Sinai, which the immortal saints will teach and police. Kingdom Law stresses the righteousness of God while also teaching about sin and human nature. Wouldn't it be wise to consider that Law more diligently while we have the opportunity to prepare to serve as living divine sanctuaries, commissioned with the education and discipline of that law? One does not prepare for any significant and highly responsible vocation without training.

The Blood Trail

Blood has been a central divine theme throughout each of the Priesthood Ages. In the Patriarchal Priesthood Age God first permits mankind to eat flesh following the exit of Noah's family from the gopher wood ark. This is the point where blood is metaphorically defined and one of the two great laws concerning blood is expressed. Gen. 9:3-4 *Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things. But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat.*

There was no distinction between clean or unclean animals for flesh consumption during the initial priesthood age. Yahweh permitted man to eat **every** living thing that moved. However, the blood could never be eaten. This blood's significance had already been subtly emphasized in the covering of Adam & Eve's nakedness in Eden and separated Abel's acceptable offering from Cain's unacceptable offering.

In the subsequent (for the purpose of convenience we will call it the 'Mosaic' Priesthood Age) many laws change along with the priesthood. However the blood law remains constant. No blood could be eaten, under penalty of permanent ostracism without exception.

Lev. 17:10-11 *And whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood; I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people. For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.*

The significance of blood is dramatically emphasized by Kingdom Law. We will be tracking the blood trail through divinely appointed rituals to draw eternal divine principles into clearer focus.

Blood in the Ecclesial Age

Progressing into the Ecclesial Priesthood Age we see the wide field of the blood emphasis channeled into one single particular application: the blood of the Messiah presented in the ritual of the Memorial Service. A string of blood observations are noted throughout the New Testament writings, allowing us to border and structure the intended blood lessons that were more veiled during the previous Priesthood Ages. Many of the features of Kingdom Law are further defined by divine communication as the early rains of the word of God drew to a close on the Isle of Patmos. The promised famine of God's word (Amos 8:11-13) followed. Eventually that famine of God's word would end with the coming of the latter rains as God will roar like a charging soldier and cry out like a woman giving birth at the introduction of the Millennial Kingdom (Is. 42:13-14).

Amazingly, the issue of the powerful forbidding of blood consumption is reversed with equal emphasis in the Ecclesial Priesthood Age. Jesus tells those who chased him down across the Sea to get more food and be entertained with another miracle that they would have to eat his flesh and drink his blood if they wanted to live forever (John 6). Even some disciples were unprepared for such a reversal on the ironclad law denying blood consumption. Interestingly, Jesus even allows some disciples to walk away without explaining the lesson of his blood (John 6:66). The confused response to Christ's blood declaration draws a fascinating parallel from Jesus. John 6:61-62 *When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?*

This question is, rather oddly, often ripped out of its immediate context and forced into the far earlier statement concerning his genealogical heavenly descent from heaven and the heavenly commissioning that eventually led up to his blood eating thunderbolt statement. Jesus is simply saying that if his disciples are so agitated by the issue of eating his flesh and drinking his blood, then how would they deal with the event that would initiate that practice. How are they going to digest his ascension from the grave to where he was before... as a living man whose flesh they would have to eat and blood they would have to drink (if they ever wanted to ascend after him into that same everlasting life). If they couldn't mentally digest the metaphorical significance of Christ's flesh and blood then how were they going to deal with the truth concerning what that ritual would represent? The immediate context is eating the flesh/bread and blood/wine of Christ. These memorials represent his death and resurrection. They do not represent his ascension to heaven from the Mount of Olives. If this is not our understanding, then we have to ask ourselves why Jesus would ask his disciples that if they were offended by the thought of consuming his flesh and blood then how were they going to understand his return to heaven? There is no possible connection between eating-flesh/drinking-blood with his ascension to heaven. However there is a definite connection between eating the flesh of Jesus and drinking his blood with his resurrection from the dead, the ascending up to where he was before, from death to life. This is why the broken bread must always be ingested before drinking the wine in the memorial service, as originally performed and commanded. Elementally, the bread signifies the death of Jesus and the wine his resurrection (ie. Gen 40 with the death of the baker of breads after three days and the raising to the right hand of power after three days for the presenter of wine). Death preceding life is a divine principle veiled and shadowed throughout Kingdom Law and directly addressed throughout the New Testament. This death before life emphasis is stressed through a series of Old Testament dual Messiah memorials (the two fountain stones of Rephidim and Kadesh, the two sets of covenant stones and the two categories of sacrificial animals in the heaven and earth covenant of Genesis 15...the six animal halves and the two whole birds). The Ecclesial Priesthood Age introduced a reversal of the blood consumption laws maintained through the previous two Priesthood Ages, but limited that blood consumption application to the blood of the Messiah.

No Inheritance for Blood

One of those blood notations at the introduction of the Ecclesial Priesthood Age allows us to refine the symbolic definition of blood quite clearly. In the context of the resurrection to immortality (as opposed to the resurrection to judgment and accountability) Paul tells us that flesh and **blood cannot inherit** the Kingdom of God.

I Cor 15:50 *Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.*

Jesus defined his resurrection state to his disciples in that locked room as being *flesh and bone*. There could be no blood. Those who are born again are like the wind.

John 3:8. *The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.* This absence of blood in the immortalized bodies of the redeemed will be examined (in future commentary) in light of the blood being the avenue of atonement and the two great Kingdom blood laws that define the blood's primary lesson. This

statement concerning the absence of blood in the immortal composition allows us to focus our understanding of how blood represents life, as repeatedly defined by Yahweh.

Only Mortal Life

There are four forms of life presented in scripture. Blood only represents one of them. These four categories of life are: **1)** Yahweh's life, being described as **from** everlasting and **to** everlasting (Ps. 90:2); **2)** immortal life of Christ, angels and saints which is only **to** everlasting and not from everlasting (Matt. 25:46); **3)** the undying life of Adam and Eve when everything was **very good** by God's definition, prior to the introduction of death; and **4)** mortal life after the law of sin and death corrupted the features of creation. Since Paul tells us that blood cannot be a component of incorruption we are free to limit the relationship of blood to specifically mortal life. While that issue may appear to be simple and instinctively correct we should never, ever trust our instincts to understand divine principles. Precept must be placed upon precept. Truth (scriptural accuracy) must be deeply loved and lies hated passionately. Our hearts (instinctive thinking) are deceitful above all things and desperately wicked (Jer 17:9). One cannot approach the divine mind with a foundation of presumptions. That is building our house upon the sand as opposed to a rock foundation. We are free to build upon the rock foundation that blood represents strictly mortal life, as opposed to life in general.

The fourth Priesthood Age will be the restored Kingdom with the accompanying restored Kingdom Law. The lessons of the blood will focus on educating the rest of creation, following the circumcision of their hearts through the greatest of all educators: fear. The two edged sword of the word of God will issue from the mouth of our King of Kings as he commands the earth to open up in earthquakes, dormant volcanoes to rain fire, disease and panic to spread through God's enemies. The beginning of wisdom is the fear of Yahweh. Once the global hearts have had their conscience's seared crust cut away by the sword of the word of God their divine education can begin. They will have to learn about the excellency of the righteousness of God and the degradation of the sinfulness of mortal man. Kingdom Law is the appointed textbook. We hope to be among the classroom leaders. Blood will be emphasized again. We read of altar offerings in the fourth temple (1. wilderness tabernacle, 2. Solomon's, 3. post Babylonian captivity and 4. Millennial Kingdom temples).

The next commentary will examine the two great kingdom blood laws. That lesson will define the primary application of the blood through each variation of divine law and explain why flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. Blood procedures under Kingdom Law varied according to certain features that shadow the path of salvation. The three applications of blood on specific body parts of Kingdom Priests at their ordination is one such portrayal of that path to salvation that will be examined. Salvation is written in blood progressing through each of the four divinely appointed priesthood ages presented in scripture

Jim Dillingham

Blood Laws Through the Ages

Our premise has been that we hope to serve as immortal priests with political authority in the Millennial Kingdom. We can exercise wisdom now by studying the very Kingdom Law that we hope to be teaching and policing in the near future as the knowledge of the Glory of Yahweh spreads across the earth. Kingdom Law (the law of the original Kingdom and the future restored Kingdom) projects the immense righteousness of our Heavenly Father while also displaying the degrading sinfulness of human nature. We have started to consider the issue of blood. Blood laws change as priesthood mandates and divine laws change. This allows us to view all sides of the consistent principles being taught in the blood laws of God's word. We have determined that blood signifies mortal life.

The Two Great Blood Laws

There were two great blood laws during the first two Priesthood Ages. They define what could never be done with blood and what had to be done with blood. *Only be sure that thou eat not the blood: for the blood is the life; and thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh... the blood of thy sacrifices shall be poured out upon the altar of the LORD thy God, and thou shalt eat the flesh* (Deut. 12:23,27). Blood could never be eaten. Sacrificial blood had to be poured out at the altar.

The significance of the command to abstain from blood consumption was emphasized by expulsion without appeal for anyone (Jew or Gentile) who would disrespect this law. *And whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood; I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people* (Lev. 17:10). The universal seriousness of this blood law also emphasizes the divine principles being veiled.

The components of these two great blood laws are scripturally defined. We have determined that blood represents mortal life, therefore life cursed with sin and death. The altar at which the blood had to be poured out is defined in Hebrews. *We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle* (Heb. 13:10). In the Ecclesial Priesthood Age we eat the sin offering that was forbidden to the Mosaic Priesthood Age. The flesh of that bullock sin offering had to be burned outside the camp because its blood had entered God's sanctuary (Heb. 13:11). The altar from which we eat the sin offering of the High Priest and the nation is Jesus Christ. He is our altar. This relationship is further cemented by the understanding that the altar and Jesus shared a unique quality. Physical contact with either the altar or Jesus eliminated uncleanness by becoming holy. *It shall be an altar most holy: whatsoever toucheth the altar shall be holy* (Ex. 29:37). When Christ touched the leper he did not become unclean as would happen with any other man. The leper became clean. The same thing happened with the dead child of Jairus and when the woman with an issue touched his hem her blood issue was cleansed. Jesus did not become unclean, as anyone else would have. Jesus shared this unique feature with the altar, as well as the flesh of the sin offering (Lev. 6:25-27). Christ is the altar. He is the sin offering. His is the only blood by which atonement can be eternally achieved. With the components of the two great blood laws defined, the principles and exhortations draw into focus.

Fat Free Life

The forbidding of blood consumption along with the command to pour out that blood at the altar exhorts us to understand the nature of sacrifice. We are not life consumers. We are not allowed to indulge in this life, grabbing all the gusto, smelling all the roses, or enjoying the fat of this life. We are supposed to pour our lives out at the feet of Jesus Christ. The command to abstain from blood consumption reflects the principle that our cursed mortal life must be understood for the unclean thing that it is. This is not a life to think of as sanctified or

holy. This life must be poured out in sacrificial offering through our altar, through our Messiah. This is the overriding lesson of the blood that will be evident in all scriptural blood considerations.

This non-sanctity of human life understanding is not instinctively acceptable or comfortable. The global society presumes the sanctity of human life, despite the Creator's instruction to the contrary. Arguments rage over when life begins and how it should end, with great moral indignation. The basic false presumption is the sanctity of our divinely cursed mortal life. The God despising argument concerning capital punishment actually objects on supposedly moral grounds to taking any life, no matter how vile, dangerous and wicked that life may have been. This attitude degrades the righteousness of Yahweh, suggesting that He was unrighteousness for inflicting death on mankind for sin and reverses the status of mortality from cursed to holy. We must be willing to reject the indulgences of this life, pleasing ourselves, and recognize the righteousness of God in requiring death for sin. Pursuing this understanding we must pour this life out in sacrifice at the feet of the Son of God, our altar. These are the lessons of the two great blood laws to be taught in the age to come by the immortal priests.

Lose It to Get It

The principles exhibited by the two great blood laws confirm a theme lesson that saturates scripture. In order to have life we must be willing to give it up. *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service* (Rom. 12:1). The priests of the Ecclesial Priesthood Age are asked to understand and apply the principles behind Kingdom Law. Jesus expressed the principle of the two great blood laws in this way: *He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it* (Matt: 10:39). If we are obsessed with our own lives, we have already lost. 'Finding life' (indicating life that never ends) is only possible once we are willing to 'lose' our current lives for the sake of Christ (pouring out the blood at the altar).

Death must precede life. We must be willing to lose our cursed mortal life if we wish to find blessed eternal life. This principle of death before life is emphasized in Kingdom Law as well as Ecclesial Age Law. Two of the four Ecclesial Age, divinely appointed rituals display this progression of death before life. Baptism is a two stage progression where we join Christ in his death through water burial and then emerge from that watery grave as a statement of our hope to join him in his resurrection to a blessed life. Death precedes life. In the memorial service we are commanded to partake of the broken bread before taking the wine, indicating how we are reconciled by his death and then saved by his life (Rom. 5:10). Just as the baker of breads died after three days and the presenter of wine rose to the right hand of power after three days, so the memorial bread primarily indicates the death of the Messiah and the wine primarily represents his resurrection. Death precedes life. Paul confirms this same understanding in the context of the resurrection: *Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual* (1 Cor 15:46). Paul references the laws of creation to introduce this conclusion as he draws attention to the seed that must die that the fruit-bearing plant may live... *that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die* (1 Cor 15:36). Jesus directed our attention to the same creation based evidence of the same principle: *Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal* (John 12:24-25). The death-before-life divine progression is irreversible. We must reject the satisfactions of this 'natural' life if we want the glory and blessings of a 'spiritual' life, refusing to 'eat the blood.' It is only through death that we can be given life.

The Birds and the Goats

Under Kingdom Law we see the death before life theme maintained. A healed leper went through an eight day ritual in order to re-join the community of God. On the day of his cleansing the ritual required two living birds to be taken. The first was to be killed over running water in an earthen vessel. Following the death of the first

bird, four items are gathered: 1) the living bird 2) cedar wood 3) scarlet and 4) hyssop. These are swabbed in the blood of the dead bird and then spattered upon the healed leper seven times. The leper would be declared clean and the blood covered living bird was set free in an open field. This ritual is a snapshot of the process and mechanics of salvation. The incredible beauty and perfect symmetry throughout scripture for each of these symbols and steps are certainly amazing but will have to be addressed in a subsequent commentary. The current issue is the divinely appointed progression of death preceding life. The first bird dies. The second bird lives, flying into the heavens covered in blood. There is a clear relationship to the immortalized bride of Christ healed from the leprosy (a decaying living body) of mortality and covered with a linen wedding garment made white in the blood of Christ inheriting the Kingdom of Heaven (Rev. 7:14; 19:7-8).

We see the same death before life progression on the Day of Atonement. Two sin offering goats represented the nation. Only after the first was put to death and its blood was taken into the Most Holy Place was the second goat set free into the wilderness to bear away upon his head the iniquities of the nation. The first goat dies. The second goat lives. Death precedes life. We have to be willing to sacrifice this cursed mortal life if we hope to enjoy blessed immortal life. The blood could never be eaten. It had to be poured out at the altar for God's principles to be portrayed accurately. As is the case with the healed leper repatriation ritual there are certainly more lessons and principles veiled in the Day of Atonement laws. The incredible lessons wrapped up in the immortalization procedure presented by the two handfuls of aromatic dust transforming into the cloud... the three stages of immortalization in God's timetable being depicted by the three entrances and activities of the High Priest into the Most Holy ... and the fascinating command to spatter the blood eastward as well as in front of the mercy seat will each have to be considered in a subsequent commentary. Despite the wealth and beauty of the immediate scriptural vista our focus should be maintained for the sake of clarity.

Unholy Mortal Life

Mentally digesting the blood consumption ban matures our thoughts into the understanding that by rejecting this symbol of mortal life we declare it to be unclean (divinely unacceptable). Eating blood meant permanent expulsion, a forever rejection from God's community with no appeal. This is a symbol of perishing (eternal death, as opposed to death before resurrection to accountability). Blood signified mortal life. Mortality was the divinely appointed necessity for sin as it corrupted all of creation. The introduction of sin converted a clean, divinely approved creation (*very good* Gen 1:31) into an unclean creation that would need a healing of atonement. Blood was the appointed symbol of that mortality. Therefore by consuming blood, one would be questioning the very righteousness of God for demanding death for sin. By eating blood, the consumer pronounced his approval of what the blood represented: mortality. Despite the fact that the elevation of mortal life as a holy state is instinctively comfortable, the children of God must never embrace such a God-despising philosophy. We should never be swept along in society's river of thought, with all of their flesh exalting presumptions.

Divine laws and rituals have always stressed the recognition of Yahweh's righteousness in our death. We have to be willing to accept the understanding that it is absolutely right that we die for sin, that there is no inherent holiness in mortal life. Our dying and death is not simply legitimate. Death for sin is the righteous pattern. This understanding is witnessed in the fact that an offerer had to **personally** execute his animal offering at the door of the tabernacle, as he held one hand on the head of that animal. The offerer is recognizing in his divine approach and worship that God is right in requiring his death. He voluntarily and personally executes this representative animal. The righteousness of God in requiring death for sin is ritually testified.

Baptism teaches this same principle. We voluntarily enter the water grave, rejecting this dying and unholy life in the hope of inheriting an eternal and holy life. We pour out the blood of our mortal life upon our Christ altar in

baptism. By personal symbolic execution we declare Yahweh's righteousness in His requirement of death for sin. We voluntarily and personally project our own death in baptism, declaring the righteousness of God in that death.

Fulfilling All Righteousness

The principle of God's righteousness being presented in the ritual of baptism is powerfully presented in the baptism of Jesus. John objected to that assignment on the basis of personal unworthiness. Christ answered John: *Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness* (Matt. 3:15). What righteousness was fulfilled in the baptism of Christ? It was the righteousness of his Father that Jesus was declaring. It is significant to note that Christ's baptism displayed the full righteousness (**all** righteousness) of the Father. The two features of the Heavenly Father's righteousness displayed in Christ's baptism are the Creator's righteousness in our death (water burial) and the Creator's righteousness in our resurrection (rising out of the baptismal waters). There were no transgressions for which Christ's baptism could divert the emphasis away from his Father's righteousness (unlike our own baptisms). Christ's baptism, his voluntary death and resurrection simulation, validates the righteousness of Yahweh in originally demanding death for sin. However, despite the moral correctness of that death sentence, Yahweh extends Himself through grace and love offering life again despite being perfectly right in demanding death for sin. This righteousness by loving grace is the second category of divine righteousness reflected in the second stage of Christ's baptism, the arising out of the watery grave. First and foremost the righteousness of our Creator is declared in every true baptism. Divine principles are perfectly portrayed in Christ and Kingdom Law and ecclesial rituals

Consume Blood or Die Forever

Under the divine laws of the first two priesthood ages blood could not be consumed, under extreme penalty. Yet under the divine law of the third priesthood age blood is commanded to be consumed, also under extreme penalty. Jesus instituted the bread and wine memorials at his last meal as a mortal. He defines the wine as being his blood. He had previously warned that his blood and flesh would have to be consumed. *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* (John 6:53-54). If anyone will not drink the blood of Christ they will certainly perish. Even Christ's blood represents mortal life, however it is a mortal life of complete obedience without any transgressions whatsoever. This is the blood, the life, that we are commanded to consume. This is a life of sacrifice, of denial instead of indulgence, of meekness as opposed to self-promotion. This is a mortal life that reverses the emphasis, a life where the righteousness of God was projected seamlessly. We must empty ourselves of the natural, instinctively motivated, indulgent life (pouring out the blood at the altar) and fill ourselves up with the sacrificial life devoted to reflecting divine principles (drinking Christ's blood).

Under Kingdom Law, God received the sacrificial blood through the altar. Under Ecclesial Law the faithful receive the blood of the ultimate sacrificial lamb (memorial wine) through the altar (Christ). The divine principles are the same through both ages. However, the emphasis shifts to reveal more of the images producing the shadow lessons. Under Kingdom Law blood was not only acceptable but demanded with exclusivity at the altar. The blood of virtually all domesticated clean animals that were approved for altar sacrifice had to be brought to the altar (Lev. 17:3-5). Israelites were not allowed to kill and eat their own cattle, sheep, goats and birds in the wilderness. There is a distinction in the quality of blood that was acceptable on the altar which was the forerunner of the Ecclesial Law distinction that it is specifically the blood of Christ alone that we must partake. There is a distinction in the quality of the mortal life portrayed in the blood.

Under Kingdom Law there were many wild animals that qualified as clean. Israelites were free to hunt, kill and eat them. Their blood was never welcome at the altar. The blood of wild animals had to be poured into the dust

and covered with dust... *hunteth and catcheth any beast or fowl that may be eaten; he shall even pour out the blood thereof, and cover it with dust* (Lev. 17:13). The life of the wild, undomesticated, unwilling to serve animal was bound to the curse of the dust ... *dust thou art and to dust thou shalt return*. When Israel inherited the promised land they were allowed to eat their flocks and herds as God promised to consider those animals that were not brought to His altar as wild. *If the place which the LORD thy God hath chosen to put his name there be too far from thee, then thou shalt kill of thy herd and of thy flock, which the LORD hath given thee, as I have commanded thee, and thou shalt eat in thy gates whatsoever thy soul lusteth after. Even as the roebuck and the hart is eaten, so thou shalt eat them: the unclean and the clean shall eat of them alike. Only be sure that thou eat not the blood: for the blood is the life; and thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh. Thou shalt not eat it; thou shalt pour it upon the earth as water* (Deut. 12:21-24).

The Quality of the Blood

A difference between the quality of blood is being emphasized between the domesticated and wild animals, and therefore the quality of mortal life in relation to Yahweh. It is not **any** mortal life that is acceptable to our Heavenly Father. The divinely acceptable life that can approach God through Christ is one that lives sacrificially and obediently. The acceptable life is not rebellious and self-motivated. These issues are portrayed in the distinguishing qualifications for divinely acceptable blood under both Kingdom Law and Ecclesial Age Law. The mortal life reflected in the blood of the wild animal was bound to eternal death. The blood of the domesticated, obedient animal brought to the altar was related to a divinely acceptable life through the altar (Christ).

This uniqueness of the Christ flesh and blood consumption when compared to the divine precedents of the previous priesthood age is highlighted in Hebrews. *We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. 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* (Heb. 13:10-13). Christ is defined here as both the altar and the sin offering for the High Priest and nation. Our priesthood is different from the priesthood that served the tabernacle because we are required to eat from our altar exactly what was forbidden to the previous priesthood. When the blood of the bullock entered the Tabernacle, the priests were forbidden to eat the flesh of that sacrificial animal. It had to be burned fully outside the camp, specifically where the ashes of the altar would be poured out (Lev. 4:1-21). However, when that blood stayed at the altar and did not enter the Tabernacle the priests were allowed to eat of that sacrificial animal

The laws and rituals of Kingdom Law teach the same principles as the Ecclesial Age. There is simply a different emphasis, a different angle from which the divine light shines upon the Creator's eternal principles. When we recognize the same principles are being highlighted at different angles the richness, fullness and glory of those eternal principles are witnessed. More of the veil was drawn aside as the Ecclesial Age progressed to the point of the completed word of God. Full enlightenment certainly has not been achieved. We still look through a glass darkly (1 Cor 13:12). We await the time when we will see face to face, when the veil will be removed and the shadows eliminated. We will marvel at the depth of the divine mind as we work to spread the glory of the knowledge of God across the earth as the waters cover the sea.

Jim Dillingham

Blood Times Three

Our continuing foundational premise has been that we hope to serve as immortal priests exercising political authority in the Millennial Kingdom. This theocratic government and laws will require priestly education and policing. It is our hope to serve in that position educating, applying and monitoring Millennial Kingdom Law. Along with the restored Kingdom of God will come a restoration of Kingdom Law, originally mandated at Sinai. These laws shadow the same divine principles as the far fewer laws and rituals of the Ecclesial Age but from a different perspective. This new perspective for the same divine principles licenses a maturing understanding of the divine mind. Our current consideration of these laws and rituals projects an eager anticipation to serve our King in that future capacity.

Kingdom Law portrays the immense righteousness of our Heavenly Father along with the degrading sinfulness of human nature. We have determined that blood represents mortal life. Blood is the divinely appointed icon of atonement (Lev. 17:11). The two great blood laws commanded believers not to eat blood but to pour it out at the altar. The theme of the blood is sacrifice. We cannot be a life consumer (eating blood) but must pour our lives out at the feet of Jesus Christ (our altar). We have witnessed the repeated precedent within the framework of the blood theme that death must precede life, that we must be willing to give up this mortal life if we want to inherit immortal life. We have also recognized God's righteousness in demanding death for sin as well as God's further righteousness for offering life eternal, despite the righteousness of death due to sin.

We can use these understandings as foundational stairs as we slowly ascend to a greater understanding of how The Creator's glory is veiled and shadowed in Kingdom Law and how the knowledge of that glory will spread across the planet as the waters cover the sea. Our attention is now directed to three-stage applications of this life-blood that is given for our atonement.

Ordained as Priests

We have recognized the four distinct priesthood ages identified by a change in the priesthood, an accompanying change in divine law along with an incredible public outpouring of divine power to validate these changes. In the Mosaic Priesthood Age this priesthood became dramatically restricted to the blemishless male descendants of the divinely appointed High Priest. Aaron and his sons had to go through an eight day ordination procedure to consecrate them to their priestly vocation. There is an application extension in this ordination procedure as we hope to qualify for the same status: as the fully matured, blemishless, descendants of our High Priest Jesus Christ.

On the first day of this ordination procedure each priest-to-be was daubed by blood on three very particular parts of their body. Lev. 8:22-24 *And he brought the other ram, the ram of consecration: and Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the ram.* ²³ *And he slew it; and Moses took of the blood of it, and put it upon the tip of Aaron's right ear, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot.* ²⁴ *And he brought Aaron's sons, and Moses put of the blood upon the tip of their right ear, and upon the thumbs of their right hands, and upon the great toes of their right feet: and Moses sprinkled the blood upon the altar round about.*

It is the progression and specific applications of the blood-life that is significant to this priestly ordination. The lifeblood progresses from the right ear to right thumb to right large toe. Each point has obvious significance to

the body and portrays the three stage progression of priesthood in its pursuit of a sacrificial life. The right side is the side of strength and favor, indicating intensity and focus. The ear hears the words of life. This is a passive stage. The next stage is active and responsive as the thumb represents the hand and body's capacity to grasp. The blood on the thumb therefore represents a choosing and securing of that choice. The third stage is the large right toe. The large toe is the rudder of the body, also defining an active participation. It defines the preciseness of our walk and chosen path. This is the threefold progression of the priesthood ordaining blood: 1. hear and 2. choose and 3. walk.

The Shadows of A Moving Light Source

This ritual sustains two significant scriptural themes. There are many progressions of three represented in scripture, in both positive and negative contexts. The ear-hand-foot theme also appears regularly. The strobe-like appearance of these themes through all three priesthood ages leading up to the Millennial Kingdom underlines our understanding that each new set of priestly appointments display the same divine principles, yet not always from the same perspective. When the light source moves throughout the day, the shadows it creates define increasingly more features. In the same sense the light of God's truth has progressed through different stages of His plan shadowing and illuminating the same principles from different angles. It would be foolish to presume that any one perspective at any one point in the process somehow eliminates the value of all other perspectives for these same principles. This is why many features of the Kingdom Law mandated at Sinai will be restored along with the Kingdom itself. These laws and rituals display the same principles, but from a different divine perspective. Their education and enforcement during the Millennial Kingdom makes their value an unchallengeable reality.

Three separate stages are frequently presented in scripture to indicate a complete progression from beginning to end. An obvious example would be the three entrances to approach the presence of Yahweh in the Most Holy in the wilderness Tabernacle. The first entrance was into the courtyard with the bronze altar, bronze laver and Tabernacle. The second entrance was into the Holy Place within the Tabernacle with another three items: the golden table of showbread, the golden lampstand and the golden altar of incense. The third entrance is through the veil into the Most Holy where the divine glory could be seen above the Mercy Seat. There are three stages of progression in our approach to the divine presence paralleling the three lifeblood applications on the priest's body.

Hearing the word of life is not enough. Hearing and choosing the word of life is not enough. We must hear and choose and walk in the narrow, unpopular way of sacrificial life. When asked by a disciple at the last supper how Jesus would reveal himself to them differently from the rest of the world, Jesus answered, *If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me* (John 14:23-24). It is the **performance** of the requirements of the word of life (walking in the "way") that indicate whether or not our professed love of God and Christ is genuine or a self-delusion.

Washing the Disciples Feet

Interestingly, this is exactly the image Jesus portrayed to these disciples at this same meal. As Jesus was washing their feet, Peter objected. When Peter understood that unless his feet were washed by Christ their relationship would be severed, Peter asks for his hands and head to be added to Christ's cleansing. Peter's head-hands-feet cleansing request parallels the priestly ordination progression. However, Jesus responded, *He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean* (John 13:10-11). These disciples had already **heard** the way of life. They had already **chosen** the way of life. The part that was left was for them to walk in the way of life. The reason they were not all clean is that Judas Iscariot had chosen to walk in the way of death,

an unclean path. The significance of this foot cleansing and its relation to the third step of the priesthood ordination is punctuated by the divine warning for the Mosaic priests that they would have to wash their hands and feet before entering the tabernacle or approaching the bronze altar or they would die (Ex. 30:20-21). These priests already had heard the word of life. Now they had to have clean hands and feet, making the right choices and taking the right paths in their priestly service. The same divine principles are taught throughout each priest stage of the divine plan.

Adding to this observation is the fact that even the dogs would not eat the head, hands and feet of Queen Jezebel (2 Kings 9:35). Her thoughts, choices and paths were all wicked and filthy.

Dividing Between the Two Sets of Three

We were divinely designed with two ears, two thumbs and two large toes. The priest-ordaining lifeblood was limited to one set of three, not both. This was specifically the 'right' set of three which offered the correct progression of hearing, choosing and walking. The reason for this limitation to the right side is founded in the scriptural repetition of both positive and negative sets of three, like right and left sides. We listen to Christ define himself with the three issues of the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6). We also hear Paul define the great three behavior patterns of faith, hope and love (1 Cor. 13:13). However, we also read of the three categories of sin being the lust of the eye, lust of the flesh and the pride of life (1 John 2:16). James tells us of the three stages of sin being lustful temptation, the conception of that lust into sin and the maturing of sin into death (James 1:13-14). Paralleling these observations are the three distinct wilderness temptations of Jesus following his baptism. Jesus overcame. David did not overcome and was offered his choice of three out-workings of his sin: 3 years of famine, three months of military defeats or three days of plague. We have the three categories of ritual uncleanness under Kingdom Law being leprosy, bodily issues and touching the dead (Lev. 14,15; Num.19). As divine issues are always confirmed in the terms of creation we find this three stage progression reflected in the three distinct trimesters of a pregnancy leading to a new independent life. Paralleling this feature of creation is the distinct three stage progression of the life of Moses with three separate 40 year periods leading to the establishment of the Kingdom of God and the inheritance of the promised land. Jesus uses the three stage plant-life progression of blade then ear then mature grain to define the approach of the Kingdom of God (Mk 4:26-29). Jesus also defines the waiting time for the Kingdom as the leavening of specifically three measures of meal (Matt. 13:33). These lessons parallel the three divinely appointed priesthood ages leading into the Millennial Kingdom. Again, these three transitions are the Patriarchal Priesthood Age; Mosaic Priesthood age and the Ecclesial Priesthood Age preceding the new independent life of the immortal priest/kings of the Millennial Kingdom Priesthood Age. Similarly, Jesus declared a dramatic prophecy that confused the Jewish scholars during his ministry when he expressed that the temple made with hands would be destroyed but he would build another without hands in just three days. God appointed three days of preparation from his command to enter the promised land to the point at which the congregation actually crossed the miraculously dried Jordan River-bed. This historical parable-prophecy is comforting to our particular generation as that congregation was told to wait about 2,000 cubits away (Josh. 3:4) as the ark of the covenant's presence in the water reversed the flow of this water backwards from the mouth of the Dead Sea all the way to the city of Adam. This parallels how the faithful (all the way back to Adam) would wait about 2,000 years from Christ's victory over death to when we would join him in the promised land. The three days of preparation (Josh. 1:11;3:2) before entering the promised land blends perfectly with the consistent scriptural and creation pattern. There are also exactly three immortalization events that complete the creational harmony with the Creator. There is the immortalization of the true High Priest and then his family at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom and then the rest of the world at the end of the Kingdom. The process is completed with the third stage.

The three days Christ spent in the grave is a prophetic statement for how long creation would continue to bear the burden of death for three more periods. Just as death reigned over Jesus for three days, so creation would suffer under death for another three millenniums. *But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day* (2 Pet. 3:8; Ps. 90:4). Just as death would never have dominion over Jesus Christ again after three days in the grave, so death will be completely eliminated following the three 'divine days' from his resurrection.

666 and 888

The significance of the number three in relation to both positive and negative progressions is not whispered throughout scripture. It is shouted. The man of sin is identified by the three number string of 666. The man of righteousness is numerically identified by the three number string of 888, when the six letters of his Greek name are added up (iota=10, eta=8, sigma=200, omicron=70, upsilon=400 and sigma=200). However, once we recognize this pattern there are some powerful applications to consider. Our pursuit of true sin forgiveness is ritually portrayed in a three stage process.

There were many different procedures for the sin offering, but there was only one pattern when the blood of the sin offering actually entered God's sanctuary. This was the sin offering for the High Priest and for the nation. This is the sin offering whose body could not be eaten by the Mosaic Priests but had to be burned outside the camp (Lev. 4:2-24). However, we of the Ecclesial Age are required to eat of the flesh as well as the blood of the sin offering for the High Priest and the nation. *We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. 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* (Heb. 13:10-13). Jesus Christ is our altar, our High Priest and our sin offering. After he suffered without the camp (crucified outside Jerusalem) his life (blood of the sacrifice) was brought into the true Most Holy Place (the presence of Yahweh). We are required to partake of the very sin offering forbidden to the priesthood of the previous age. Therefore, the three stage progression of the blood in this ritual must have an application to ourselves.

The Blood Trail to Sin Forgiveness

The anointed priest made 12 applications of blood at three stations in order to complete the sin offering procedure. Tracking this blood trail unveils powerful divine principles concerning the nature of sin forgiveness. In the first stage we see the anointed priest spattering the blood exactly seven times before the veil separating the Holy from the Most Holy in the Sanctuary (Lev. 4:6,17). In the second stage the anointed priest smears blood on the four horns of the altar of incense (Lev. 4:7,18). In the third stage the remaining bulk of the blood is poured out at the base of the altar of burnt offering carefully noted as being at the door of the tabernacle. There are seven applications of blood in the first stage with four in the second stage and a single application in the third stage. This constitutes twelve applications of blood at three progressive stations in the ritual of the sin offering for the High Priest and the nation. Each station is clearly defined in scripture.

The blood has been defined in this continuous commentary as representing mortal life. The veil represents the flesh of the Messiah. *Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh* (Heb. 10:19-20). The altar of incense represents the offering of prayer (Ps. 141:2; Lk. 1:10; Rev. 8:3-4). We have already defined the altar as representing Christ (Heb. 13:10).

Sin's Influence Limited to Seven Times

The first stage is where the blood is spattered before the veil exactly seven times. The Hebrew verb does not indicate a dainty sprinkling but more of a violent spattering. This Hebrew verb (nazah) is exclusive to the

handling of the blood of the sin offering. The blood of all other offerings could actually be sprinkled. The blood of the sin offering was spattered harshly and not lightly flicked before the veil. Violence is the direct result of sin. Sin cannot be overcome gently. The seven splatterings define the time limitation for sin. Sin will endure for no longer than seven 'times.' At the end of Yahweh's seven thousand year plan, sin will be eliminated completely along with all of the horrible effects of sin. The blood had to be spattered before the veil, the flesh of Christ. This is the great tripping point for humanity and Christianity. The denial of the flesh of Christ was prophesied as being the doctrinal signature of the apostasy. *And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world* (1 Jn 4:3; 2 Jn. Vs. 7). The humanity of Christ is a pivotal issue in the forgiveness process. Paganism initially and Christianity subsequently reversed the divine progression and significance by making gods in their own image and likeness. Christianity demands that their god must reshape himself into their image and likeness and degrade himself to their level in order to save his wrecked creation. They see life preceding death, violating the progression of death before life that saturates scripture, by suggesting that an immortal god put on mortality like a disguise. Then their god pretended to be mortal, pretended to have the capacity to sin, pretended to die and pretended to come back to life. They worship a distorted reflection of themselves. They deny the humanity, the flesh, of Christ. They do not approach the veil at the first stage in the divinely appointed procedure for the forgiveness of sin.

The second stage is where blood is applied to the four horns of the golden incense altar. The incense altar presents the divine pattern for acceptable prayer. Horns are defined consistently throughout scripture as symbols of power. After we have come to Christ at the veil, recognizing God's truth concerning sin and its violent defeat, we have access to God through prayer. We must pray powerfully for forgiveness. We must consciously recognize our failures and beg forgiveness. We must be sorry for our failures in emulating our Heavenly Father. We must redefine ourselves into the image and likeness of our Creator. We all fail. These failures must be mentally recognized and powerfully repented. However, this is not the end of the procedure. The great bulk of the blood still remains to be applied.

Repentance Performance

The twelfth application of blood at the third station is where all the remaining blood of the bullock is poured out at the base of the altar of burnt offering... *pour all the blood of the bullock at the bottom of the altar of the burnt offering, which is at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.* We are not free to simply feel sorry for what we have done wrong and ask for forgiveness after coming to the knowledge of the truth. We must then pour our lives (blood) out at the feet of Christ (our altar). We have to validate our repentance by living differently. We must recognize our lives are not our own. We have been bought with a price. We must pour out our lives at the feet of Christ, indicated by the base of the altar of burnt offering. It is interesting to note how frequently the altar is identified as being "by the **door** of the tabernacle." We can identify that door to the tabernacle as our Messiah as well. He defines himself as the door. *I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved* (John 10:9).

There are three stages in sin forgiveness indicated in this unique ritual. They parallel the three priest ordination blood applications of ear to thumb to large toe. The first stage involves hearing the truth about the flesh of Christ. The second stage involves grasping, choosing that philosophy (prayerful repentance for our sinfulness). The third stage involves walking in the sacrificial way of life, pouring our lives out at the feet of Christ.

Every evening and morning there were three constant rituals displayed to the wilderness community defining this same progression. The lampstand had to be replenished. The incense had to be offered and the burnt offering had to be sacrificed. These highlight enlightenment, prayerful consideration and dedication. There are many, many more threefold progressions presented throughout scripture, but space does not permit. There is

great room for personal consideration in pursuing this scriptural pattern. Next we will pursue the precedent of Jesus Christ being our door. We will consider the three rituals in Kingdom Law performed at the door of one's home.

Jim Dillingham

Vocational Training for an Immortal Priesthood No. 5 July 2008

The Doors of Opportunity

In the previous commentary the consistent scriptural pattern of both positive and negative threefold progressions was introduced. The ultimate example of this pattern would be the three progressive immortalization events culminating in perfect divine harmony between all of creation and the Creator. The immortalizations of (1) Jesus Christ, (2) the family of the High Priest at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom and (3) the rest of the world that is divinely chosen at the end of the Millennial Kingdom are perfectly paralleled in the three entrances and activities of the High Priest into the Most Holy on the Day of Atonement. We will pursue this consideration in the subsequent commentary. At this time we will consider another of these threefold applications.

Kingdom Law prescribed quite a number of divinely ordained rituals to be performed at the door of the Tabernacle. However there were specifically three rituals that took place at the door of one's own home.

1. The first & greatest commandment had to be written on the doorpost of ones home (Deut. 6:4-9).
2. The blood of the Passover lamb had to be painted on the doorposts and lintel of ones home (Ex 12:7).
3. The ear of a Hebrew indentured servant who chose lifelong service over freedom and financial advantage was punched through at the door of the home of the servant's master (Ex. 21:6).

Christ defines himself to his disciples at the last supper in a way that illuminates the lesson that binds these three door rituals. *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me* (John 14:6). Jesus defines himself as the exclusive portal to his Heavenly Father. He does this in the context of being the very essence of the truth and the life and the way. These three features of the Messiah are displayed in the three door rituals being considered.

The principle of **the truth** is evident in the practice of the first and great commandment being written on the doorpost. The principle of **the life** is clearly evident in the preservation of life by having the Passover lamb's blood swabbed onto the doorposts and lintel. The principle of **the way** is displayed in the willing sacrifice of life-long dedication to serving ones beloved master as the ear is opened by an awl at the door.

The Exclusive Door to Divine Access

The image of the Christ-door is shadowed throughout scripture. Jesus solidifies this image when he defines himself as the door of the sheepfold. *I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture* (John 10:9). Additionally, Paul identifies the veiled entrance into the Most Holy as representing the flesh of Christ (Heb. 10:19-20). These references invite us to see our Messiah represented as the single door of the gopher wood ark, through which the family of eight passed for life preservation. The door to Rahab's home was the point of separation between destruction and sanctuary. Just as we are required to pray through Jesus to our Heavenly Father, so it was the door of the Tabernacle where God would meet and speak with Israel (Ex 29:42-43). All of the altar offerings, representing the Messiah, would have to be presented at the

door of the Tabernacle. The offerer had to kill the sacrificial animal specifically at the door of the Tabernacle. The lot to decide which Day of Atonement goat would die and which would live was performed at that same door (Lev. 16:7-8). In fact if anyone did not bring their sacrificial animal to the door of the Tabernacle, killing it anywhere else, they would be forever ostracized from God's community without appeal (Lev. 17:3-4). Jesus Christ is that door.

The Nazarite man or woman ended their vow ritual at the door of the Tabernacle (Num. 6:18), as did the healed leper (Lev. 14:10-11). Each of the three rituals that cleansed from a physically unclean state required the candidate to direct their activity to the door of the Tabernacle (leprosy, death contact and issues). Even assigning each tribe's promised land inheritance was determined at the door of the Tabernacle by the political and spiritual leaders (Josh. 19:51). Jesus Christ is the door, the only access available to approach the Creator of heaven and earth.

The same principles and exhortations are evident in these three door rituals as the three progressive blood applications of right ear to right thumb to right toe at the ordination of the priesthood under kingdom law (as considered in last month's commentary). We have seen how the hearing and choosing and walking displayed in this progression parallels Christ's claim to being the truth, the life and the way. This same Messiah theme was portrayed at the door of one's own home at various stages.

Door Number One: The Truth

It appears that even most Christadelphians would not answer the question about the first commandment of all in the same fashion as Jesus. Yet this difference sets us apart from virtually all other Christian denominations and defines the very plan of the Creator. Apparently (based on repetitive research), most of us would offer this as the first of all commandments: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and with all your mind and with all your strength." However this was only the second part of Christ's answer and would therefore be incomplete. This is how Jesus defined the first of all commandments.

Mark 12:28-30 *And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all? And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, **Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.***

A significant question would be why Jesus considers "*Hear O Israel, The Lord our God is one Lord*" to be a necessary part of the first-of-all divine commandments. We can see why Jesus emphasizes the extreme significance of this preface when we consider the quote from Deuteronomy 6:4-5. Inserting the Hebrew names yields this reading: *Hear O Israel, Yahweh our Elohim is one Yahweh and you shall love Yahweh your Elohim with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.*

However, substituting the meanings of the divine names projects the purpose of creation and **the reason** why this is the first of all commandments.

*Hear O Israel, **He Who Shall Be** (Yahweh) our **Mighty Ones** (Elohim) is **He Who Shall Be** (Yahweh) one.* This is a statement of intent, that One will become many who will all become one... a unity in multiplicity. This phrase defines the principle of God manifestation. God will expand Himself into many who all chose to reshape themselves into His image and likeness, thereby becoming one through that harmony of the divine intellectual principles and the outworking of those principles in behavior. **This is why** this is the first of all commandments. The destination is harmony with the Creator. The path to that destination is the most intense and consuming of all possible loves.

Balancing Love Categories

There are many categories of love distinguished by a hierarchy of order. Our love for our parents and family surrenders its elevated status when we marry. This greater love for our husband or wife is divinely mandated. If this balance is not achieved or maintained then conflict, sorrow and pain follow. The love of our children is incredibly powerful, yet must not overwhelm our love for our husband or wife or conflict, pain and sorrow will follow. This balance of separate categories of loves is addressed throughout scripture. There are three great divine laws of love that are defined by an order of significance.

The first commandment of all demands the most powerful of loves. We must love He Who Shall Be Our Mighty Ones (Yahweh Elohim) with all of our heart and all of our life and all of our physical and mental capacity. This love must be above all others. It must be greater than our love for our wife or husband, our children, our family, our Ecclesia and our neighbor. Jesus warned the faithful that choosing his path would sometimes invite betrayals from one's own family. Christ also highlighted the divine command to love our neighbor. However, the required intensity of that love was dramatically reduced to simply being equivalent to the love of self (Mark 12:31). Jesus also mandated a third love commandment at the last supper, wedging it between these two love commandments. Jesus commanded his disciples to love each other as he loved them, being willing to lay aside the concerns and ambitions of their own lives to care for each other (John 13:34; 15:12-13). Paul references this new commandment of Christ's when he instructs the Galatian Brothers and Sisters to *Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ* (Gal. 6:2). Paul goes on to show how our love for the brotherhood must exceed the love for our neighbor in verse 10: *As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.*

The love of our Heavenly Father must be our greatest love, exceeding all other loves. The other two divine love commandments are positioned in relation to self-love. We are only required to love our neighbor to the extent we love ourselves. However we must love our Brothers and Sisters in Christ **more** than we love ourselves.

Immediately following this first of all commandments, those subject to Kingdom Law were instructed to write the commandments of God on their doorposts and gates as well as signs on their hands and frontlets for their eyes (Deut. 6:6-9).

Door Number Two: The Life

The blood of the Passover lamb was painted onto the three parts of the door including the two doorposts and overhead lintel. There was no command to apply the blood to the threshold. We should not underestimate the unsettling power of this image. A blood soaked doorway is a very distasteful and disturbing sight. This would be the foundation for a horror movie or murder mystery novel in our current society. Blood doesn't clean up well, but the Israelites would forever leave their Egyptian homes with the blood soaked doors the next morning.

We have reviewed the theme lesson of the blood in the second and third installments in this commentary. Blood represents mortal life. Blood was divinely appointed as a focal point, a hinge-pin for atonement (Lev. 17:11). The two great blood laws portray the exhortation of the blood. Blood was never to be eaten. The blood of the sacrificial animals had to be poured out at the altar of burnt offering. We cannot be life consumers (blood eaters). We must pour our lives out at the feet of our Messiah, our altar (Heb 13:10). We must reject this mortal life as being cursed by sin and death, as inherently unclean or we will never enjoy eternal life, free from any curses and inherently clean and sin-free. A life of self-sacrifice for Christ, of pouring out the blood at the altar, is the exhortation of **Life** that is presented in the Passover blood painted on the door of an Israelite enslaved in Egypt.

Swabbing the three portions of the door (two doorposts and the lintel) with the life-blood of the sacrificial lamb underscores the three stage progression of the blood that is displayed in the ordination of the priesthood. The blood was placed on the right ear, the right thumb and the right large toe. This is the progression of hearing the truth about life, choosing eternal life (thereby rejecting mortal life) and walking in that way of life by living sacrificially. Once again, although a great deal more can be seen in the Passover ritual our primary focus has been the blood ritual performed at the door of one's home.

Door Number Three: The Way

Slavery was not divinely forbidden under Kingdom Law. This is another counter-intuitive issue. Slavery actually reflects both positive and negative principles, as we have been bought with a price (1 Cor. 6:20). However, maintaining Hebrew slaves was forbidden, with one exception.

Exodus 21:2-6 *If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself: if he were married, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master have given him a wife, and she have born him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him for ever.*

The freed Hebrew indentured servant expected a great bounty upon concluding his sixth year of service. Deut. 15 describes how this former servant would leave their master debt-free and supplied with many goods from the flock, the grain floor and the winepress. The forfeiting of debtless freedom coupled with great abundance while embracing the prospect of lifelong service would have to be counterbalanced by a very great motivation. That is love. When the love of the family and the love of the master overwhelms the prospect of a financially secure future of satisfying one's personal will, then that servant's ear was opened by a swift hammer blow against a sharp pin wedged against the ear which was hard against the doorpost. Legal, divinely acceptable, lifelong servitude followed this ritual.

No Negotiation or Self Promotion

This is 'the way.' It is the surrendering of self-will and committing oneself to serving the master forever. There are no union negotiations, and no cost-of-living raises or four week vacation packages. However, it is also a total reliance upon the master for preservation, provision and protection. The opened ear was a symbol of submission as opposed to stubborn self-will.

Rebellion and the Unopened Ear

Yahweh's complaint against the House of Jacob was that they were obstinate with a brass brow and iron neck. He declares: *Yea, thou heardest not; yea, thou knewest not; yea, from that time that **thine ear was not opened**: for I knew that thou wouldest deal very treacherously, and wast called a transgressor from the womb* (Is. 48:8). The RSV translates "transgressor" as *rebel*. In fact the Hebrew word translated "transgressor" in KJV is also translated rebel and revolt repeatedly in KJV. The unopened ear was the ear of a rebel, refusing to submit to the divine Master. A few chapters later the prophet presents how the Messiah would embrace the philosophy of the opened ear. *The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned. The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting* (Is. 50:4-6). The wakening of Christ's ear indicates the capacity to learn. However his 'opened ear' indicates submission and the absence of rebellious resistance, despite painful abuse and humiliation.

It was when the prodigal son recognized the servants of his father were more blessed than him, that repentance was achieved. The prodigal son wanted to be considered one of his father's servants. This was the key to his

elevation and the explanation of his father to the older brother that this younger son was alive again. It is the emptying of the human heart; the crushing of the ego and the abandonment of self-worship that constitutes the 'way' to life. It is the exhortation of the circumcised heart. The way is portrayed as the smallest of all mustard seeds of faith that grows into the greatest of all shrubs. It is the answer of the Lord to Paul's thorn-of-satan that the Lord's strength is made perfect in our weakness (2 Cor. 12:9). It is the reason Moses was the only prophet to whom Yahweh would speak without dreams, visions and dark sayings. Moses was the meekest man in the world (Num. 12:3-8).

Without exception, every form of false doctrine invariably degrades our Heavenly Father and improperly exalts the flesh. The only 'way' to come to a mature understanding of the truth is to cut away the crown of flesh and self-exaltation fueled by our relentless imaginations. Meekness and the servant mentality is what separates those who 'have' from those who 'have not' in Christ's answer to his disciples when asked why he exclusively taught in parables (Matt. 13:12, 34). The servant who surrenders their personal identity and aspirations to serve their beloved master for life is the 'way' of life. It was signified within Kingdom Law with the opened ear, performed at the doorpost.

These three door rituals reflect the lessons in how Christ is the truth, the life and the way. The same shadow is seen in the three step blood applications in the priestly ordination of right ear to thumb to large toe. In our next consideration of Kingdom Law the Day of Atonement will display why the concept of atonement should be understood as being associated with salvation and not simply forgiveness.

Jim Dillingham

The Day of Salvation

We continue our consideration of Kingdom Law initiated at Sinai, with much of it to be restored along with God's Kingdom when Christ inherits David's throne. This will be the fourth priesthood age, projected in the fourth maturity stage of almond fruitfulness on the rod of resurrection appointing Aaron as the High Priest of the second priesthood age, as reported in previous commentaries. This rod of resurrection was preserved in the golden Ark of the Covenant.

The Ark of the Covenant was the most restrictive point within the entire community of God's children. Restrictions indicate significance. The Ark was only used on one day each year, unlike the shewbread table employed once per week, the lampstand and the incense altar twice per day, and the bronze altar of burnt offering and laver that were active multiple times each day. Death sentences surrounded any interaction with the Ark. The High Priest was forbidden to enter the Most Holy in the Tabernacle under pain of death with the exception of one day per year when he entered three times (Lev 16:2). If anyone but the Levites came near the Ark they would die (Num 1:50-51), as evidenced by what happened at Bethshemesh (1 Sam. 6:19) and to Uzzah (2 Sam. 6:6-7). Aaron's first approach to the Ark upon entering the Most Holy on the Day of Atonement required him to create a cloud of incense to surround the Ark so that he would not die.

It should be understood that it is not 'death' that is being emphasized by these restrictions. Yahweh is not a God of death (Lk. 20:38) It is the Ark of life! The divine point being made was that if one interacted **correctly** with the Ark of the Covenant their life would be extended. These severe restrictions certainly underline the significance of the Ark. They also form the basis of its purpose and message. Respecting and interacting with the Ark **according to divine instructions** extended lives. It is the ark of life, emphasized by two components of the miraculous evidence stored within: the incorruptible manna and the rod of resurrection.

The Three Immortalizations

Once this foundational understanding about the 'Ark of life' is understood we can see more clearly the divine communication, lessons and promise subtly veiled in the rituals on the Day of Atonement. The High Priest enters the Most Holy, approaching this ark of life, three times during this exclusive access day. These three entrances and duties perfectly parallel the three immortalization events in our Creator's plan. In the first approach to the Ark of the Covenant the divinely appointed High Priest converts two handfuls of incense (aromatic dust) into a cloud through the fire from the altar. This act saves the life of the High Priest, but only the High Priest. *And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not* (Lev 16:13). This first Day of Atonement ritual with the Ark of life parallels the first immortalization when our High Priest (Jesus Christ) was changed from dust nature to spirit nature, qualified by perfectly enduring all his fiery trials. He joined his Heavenly Father in the clouds, indicated by his cloud ascension in Acts 1. His testimony of a glorious re-appearance in the clouds prompted Caiaphas's screams of blasphemy (Matt 26:64-65). This first Day of Atonement ritual in the Most Holy depicts the first immortalization, when the life of the true High Priest was saved... forever.

The second approach to the Ark of life in the Most Holy with the blood of the bullock was for the atonement of the High Priest's family. This parallels the first resurrection to immortality at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom when the brothers and sisters and children (Is. 53:10, Is.9:6) of the true High Priest will be immortalized.

The third and final approach to the Ark of Life with the blood of the goat on the Day of Atonement was for the benefit of the rest of the nation. The third and final immortalization event will be for the benefit of the rest of the world at the end of the Millennial Kingdom. The three entrances and activities of the High Priest on the annual Day of Atonement perfectly parallel the three immortalization events that will culminate with total harmony between Creator and creation, so making peace.

The Stumbling Stone of Oversimplification

Atonement is not a single stage process. If we try to restrict the concept of atonement to simply forgiveness we miss very significant issues, lessons and promises. We also have to work very, very hard to avoid witnessing the absolute impossibility of such a limited conclusion. Oversimplification (limiting divine expressions and applications) is assuredly one of the greatest stumbling blocks to understanding perfectly balanced Bible truths. The heart seeks to concentrate on one aspect of an issue rather than seek an inconvenient and uncomfortable balance. This heart generated challenge of oversimplification is why many Christians concentrate on grace and mistake salvation for an instant, guaranteed payment for verbally expressing a simple phrase. This same single focus stumbling block is the path for a major Christian organization concentrating on works, guilt and fear to keep the pews and collection baskets filled. Bible truth embraces both grace and works. The excessive concentration on any one issue at the expense of others imbalances our walk, encouraging us to stray into the broad path. The principle of the oversimplification stumbling block can be applied to many scriptural issues, especially the principle of atonement.

Atonement cannot possibly be oversimplified into the severely limited understanding of simply forgiveness. The whole burnt offering was expressed as making atonement for the offerer yet had no direct connection with forgiveness (Lev. 1:4). The lesson of the burnt offering was not forgiveness but dedication to the knowledge of God, as divinely specified. *For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice (zebach... exclusively identifying the peace offering); and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings* (Hos. 6:6). There were combination offerings to “make atonement” as in the case with a new mother offering the two turtledoves (burnt and sin offerings) to make atonement (Lev. 12:8). Another example would be the dedication of the Levites (Num. 8:12) where both sin and burnt offerings were combined to make an atonement. The divine intent was for us to understand atonement to be more than simply forgiveness, which was not the focus of the whole burnt offering.

More Than Just Forgiveness

Even the atonement of the sin offering was not always on the basis of forgiveness. There were several categories of sin offerings where there was absolutely no guilt and no forgiveness was required, yet a sin offering was demanded. A new mother had fulfilled the divine command to replenish the earth by having a child, yet a sin offering was demanded despite her righteousness (Lev. 12:6-8). This was the case for Mary when she gave birth to God’s son (Lk. 2:22-23). Mary certainly needed no forgiveness for giving birth to Jesus, but still had to make atonement for herself with the combination sin and burnt offerings of the two turtledoves.

A sin offering for atonement was required for the healed leper (Lev 14:19), the person recovering from a bodily issue (Lev. 15:15) and those who had come in physical contact with the dead (Num. 19:7, 19). Yet none of these physical conditions needed forgiveness for a transgression. There was no guilt for which forgiveness would be needed for any of these physical conditions. In fact the burying of a hanged man on the same day was commanded by God (Deut. 21:23). Despite the fact the buriers had righteously obeyed a divine command, they would still have to exit the camp for seven days and participate in the sin offering of the red heifer ashes on the third and seventh days. The bronze altar itself had to have seven days of sin offerings to make an atonement for the altar (Ex. 29:36-37). Bronze furniture certainly has no guilt and needs no forgiveness. The bronze altar had to have an atonement made for it every year (Lev. 16:18). This issue is not a whisper. The understanding that atonement involves more than forgiveness is shouted throughout Kingdom Law.

Why and How

It is common knowledge that the Hebrew word translated atonement means ‘to cover.’ The questions to address are **why** God wants us to identify the concept of atonement as a covering and **how** does He present this relationship. This covering focus of atonement is powerfully presented in the two divinely designed salvation arks.

Yahweh commanded Noah to pitch the ark with pitch. The first Hebrew word translated pitch (kaphar) is predominantly translated atonement. The second Hebrew word for pitch (kopher) indicates an unguent compound for sealing. Noah was instructed to cover (paint) the ark with this sealant. He was instructed to literally ‘make atonement’ on both the inside and the outside (*Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it **within** and **without** with pitch.* Gen 6:14). This dual covering emphasis is significant as it is repeated with the golden Ark of the Covenant (Ex. 25:11). It is interesting that there would be six interior surfaces and six exterior surfaces to cover (atonement) in both arks, since six is the numerical identification of the curse of sin and death along with its negative effects. The dimensions of Noah’s ark offer no representation of a boat-like shape, simply a box similar to the Ark of the Covenant. This dual emphasis is compounded during the Day of Atonement procedures. There are two handfuls of incense that transform into the one cloud to save the life of the High Priest. There are the two divisions of the Tabernacle the High Priest must enter to accomplish his duties (the Holy and the Most Holy). The High Priest must twice bring blood into the Holy Place to the Ark covered by gold inside and outside. Each entrance with blood requires the High Priest to spatter the blood in two separate directions onto the Mercy Seat. The command reads: *And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; and before the mercy seat* (Lev. 16:14). The High Priest is directed to spatter the blood both eastward as well as before the Mercy Seat. An eastward spattering direction would require the High Priest to walk behind the Ark and turn around so that he would face both the ark and the veil to his east. He would enter the Most Holy from the east, traveling west. From this direction it would not be possible to spatter the blood eastward onto the Mercy Seat. He would have to walk around to the rear of the Ark and turn to face the Mercy Seat. He was also instructed to spatter the blood ‘before’ the Mercy Seat as well as eastward. The repeated dual emphasis within the framework of the divine expressions of atonement offers a distinct and compelling pattern.

Ecclesial Ritual Validation

This dual emphasis continues into the rituals of the Ecclesial Priesthood Age concerning the death and resurrection of our Messiah. The broken bread and the wine of the memorial service present an undeniable dual emphasis. Baptism is a two stage ritual where the water burial reflects the death of Jesus while rising out of the watery grave reflects Christ’s resurrection. We willingly join him in death, validating God’s righteousness in demanding death for sin. In the second stage we rise out of the waters in the hope of joining our Messiah in the resurrection to immortality, displaying Yahweh’s righteousness in His grace for offering life renewal despite His righteousness in our death for sin. There is a repeated dual emphasis to atonement spanning the priesthood ages when divine laws change along with the priesthood. If we try to limit our understanding of the atonement to the single focus of forgiveness we are contradicting powerful divine patterns. Atonement is all about salvation, of which forgiveness is a part but not the whole.

We have already seen that the three rituals centering on the ‘inside-and-outside gold covered Ark of the Covenant’ on the Day of Atonement perfectly mirror the three immortalization events in our Heavenly Father’s plan: 1. Jesus Christ as High Priest, 2. his family and finally 3. the rest of the world. Immortalization (salvation from the curse of sin and death) is all about **covering**. This issue distinguishes truth from error. Apostate Christianity understands salvation to be an uncovering. It is presumed that upon death an immortal ghost-like consciousness is uncovered, released from its flesh covering and dispatched to either eternal bliss or eternal

torture. This God despising and flesh elevating doctrine reverses the righteousness status of Elohim and the serpent in the Garden of Eden. The serpent becomes the righteous source of truth and Elohim becomes the deceiver for all who embrace the understanding that a divine immortal nature is an unclean state capable of sin. The scriptural truth is that immortalization is a covering (an atonement of both inside and outside). This relationship between covering and salvation is emphasized repeatedly throughout the New Testament.

Immortality is a Covering

Paul inspires us with this commonly quoted expression of our hope: *Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must **put on** incorruption, and this mortal must **put on** immortality. So when this corruptible shall have **put on** incorruption, and this mortal shall have **put on** immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory* (1 Cor 15:51-54). Salvation is an addition and not a subtraction. Immortalization is a covering, like the two arks of salvation with their double coverings (inside and outside) identified with Noah and Moses.

Being born again into spirit nature (John 3:3-10) requires our fleshly bodies to be **covered** with spirit nature. Our bodies will be ‘redeemed’ (Rom. 8:23) by adding, not subtracting. Our bodies will ‘put on’ immortality and incorruption. Paul puts this heavenly covering into the context of a dwelling place and pulls together several atonement features in 2 Cor. 5:1-4: *For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved [if we died], we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens [This is our atonement, the spirit nature covering]. For in this we groan [along with all creation waiting for the redemption of our bodies Rom. 8:22-23], earnestly desiring to be **clothed upon** with our house which is from heaven: If so be that **being clothed** we shall not be found naked [This was the first recognition of Adam and Eve after sin, the shame of nakedness. When we are covered by the spirit nature we will no longer be naked or ashamed before our Creator]. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed [death], but clothed upon [eternal life], that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Paul confirms our understanding in his final comments of this fourth verse. He interprets that ‘nakedness’ as mortality and being ‘swallowed up of life’ as the heavenly covering-tabernacle made without hands. Immortalization is a covering, which is what atonement represents.*

Tabernacles and Mansions

Jesus uses similar terminology by identifying the transition to immortality as being an abiding place (tabernacle) to his disciples at the last supper in the upper room. Jesus comforts them by saying: *Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.* Jesus had to leave them to complete the salvation process. He was going to heaven to prepare these heavenly tabernacles made without hands, these “mansions.” Jesus explained that when he returned he would take his disciples to himself so that they might be where he would be, in nature. This understanding is confirmed later in the same chapter when the other Judas asks for clarification concerning how Jesus would come for them differently than the rest of the world. Jesus uses the exact same Greek word (mone) that was translated “mansions:” *Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our **abode** [mone = mansions] with him.* This is a repeat of the promise that Jesus will bring these mansions with him from heaven when he returns so that he might take his loving and obedient disciples to himself that they might be in the same immortal condition he was to enjoy. The disciples would become the abodes, the mansions of Yahweh and Jesus by the gift of these heavenly tabernacles, these coverings... this

atonement. They would not be naked before their Creator anymore. Jesus confirms this promise of the mansions, heavenly tabernacles made without hands that eliminate the nakedness of mortality, the redemption of our bodies in his final words to us when he assures us: *And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be* (Rev 22:12). Jesus comes to us with the reward. We don't travel to him to receive our heavenly reward.

Recognition of Divine Righteousness

Our Heavenly Father offers a number of atonement portraits throughout scripture as well as certain features of creation that can be paralleled to the events of the Day of Atonement. There are bridging themes that bind these atonement portraits together, such as the distinct dual emphasis. We will not enjoy the divine nature if we do not recognize and appreciate the righteousness of our Creator. Although this seems rather academic it is more difficult than first appears. There are specifically two aspects of Yahweh's righteousness that must be embraced, yet are denied by every other form of religion in existence. The failure in the Garden was in choosing the testimony of the serpent above the Creator. Death was the result of sin. We must recognize that death is the righteous answer for sin. Yahweh is perfectly right in demanding death for sin. It must be recognized that sin without death would be a great evil and degrading to our Heavenly Father. The righteousness of the Creator in our death for sin is opposed by every other form of worship including humanism.

Sin prone, mortal human life is considered sacred by the religious and frequently the non-religious. This is a contradiction to the divine righteousness of mortality being a morally legitimate curse for sin. This is the God-degrading presumption for all the debates over abortion, assisted suicides, capital punishment, removing medical life support systems, and stem cell research. The death sentence of mortality is the righteous answer for sin in any form. God's righteousness in our death for sin has been ritually testified to in Kingdom Law as well as Ecclesial Age law. Under Kingdom Law an offerer brought their living sacrifice to the door of the tabernacle, placed their hand on the head of the animal and then personally executed that sacrificial animal. The offerer had to recognize Yahweh's righteousness in their own death at that door of the Tabernacle. Under Ecclesial Age law a believer voluntarily buries themselves in the water grave of baptism, validating their recognition that our Heavenly Father is righteous in our death. Yahweh is not simply innocent in our death. He is **righteous** in demanding our death for sin! The universal doctrine of an immortal consciousness existing beyond death denies God's righteousness in our death. Eternal sin capacity is a degrading violation of divine righteousness in the requirement of death for sin. There is no atonement without an acknowledgement and embracing of this understanding.

The second testimony of divine righteousness achieved in baptism is communicated by rising out of that watery grave. This portrays the divine righteousness of offering life renewal despite Yahweh's righteousness in demanding death for sin. This resurrection snapshot of a baptismal exit spotlights the principle of grace. These are the two divine righteousness issues displayed in the baptism of Jesus when he explained to John: *for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness*. It wasn't the righteousness of Jesus that was displayed in his Jordan baptism. It was the righteousness of his Father and it was "all" that righteousness. It was a validation of both the righteousness of the Creator in mandating death for sin as well as His righteousness in offering life again despite His righteousness in our death. The human heart reverses these understandings, degrading the Heavenly Father and exalting the flesh with its presumptions of eternal sin capacity, sin without death and sacredness of mortal life.

The principles and promises shadowed within the Day of Atonement activities are repeated, emphasized and expanded throughout Kingdom Law, Ecclesial Age rituals and even the features of creation. These are the same

principles we hope to teach and the promises we hope to portray as the immortal priests of the Millennial Kingdom.

Jim Dillingham

Vocational Training for an Immortal Priesthood No. 7 September 2008

The Principal Principle

Our cherished hope is to serve as immortal priests, teaching divine principles to a worldwide community that will require its self worshipping hearts to be powerfully circumcised through the great educator known as the fear of God. The knowledge of the glory of Yahweh our Elohim will eventually cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. Despite the fact that our Creator's glory is currently everywhere, it is not recognized by eyes, ears and minds blinded and deafened by the serpent thought process. It is the recognition of the presence of this divine glory that must be accepted. The saints, the immortalized priest/sons of the High Priest, will serve as divine tools for this enlightenment. The role of the priest is that of an educator, enlightening and directing those assigned to him. The lips of a priest should guard knowledge (Mal. 2:7). The absence of a teaching priest is paralleled to being without God in apostate Israel (2 Chron. 15:3). The difference between our priesthood now and the immortal priesthood is the difference between finite and infinite. It is the difference between east and west. The priestly principle is the same but the specific application is far, far more expansive in the next divinely appointed age.

The Vanity of Mortal Life

We are now creatures whose existence is punctuated by extreme limitations. We begin and end our lives dependent on others. Every single day is a repeated progression through our limitations as we succumb to the necessity for replenishment, breathing in fresh air, constantly expelling waste, drinking and eating every few hours and finally surrendering to the unconscious replenishment of rest. Each single day is a microscopic view of our whole lives where the finiteness of our existence is emphasized by pain, hard labor, subjugation, frustration, disease, the sorrowful witnessing of death and injustice and the unending dependence on replenishment. Society blindly portrays divine principles such as atonement by covering the shame of their nakedness in getting dressed every morning. The principle of resurrection is ignorantly illustrated by arising from their death-like sleep as the darkness is replaced by the dawning light coming out of the east. They marry and raise families, deaf to the lessons of God manifestation being shouted through this divine institution. Good is redefined as evil and evil is hailed as sacred and holy by a self worshipping humanity that glorifies and exalts its limitations, rather than suffering the humiliation of embracing the divine lessons of our Heavenly Father.

It is this humbling perspective that licenses true enlightenment. It is one thing to make the significant step to even academically recognize the self-deprecating features of divine truth. It is quite another thing to embrace the divine principles radiating these divine truths. Enlightenment is a significant and rather rare experience in this last generation of the Ecclesial Age. Yet enlightenment is not enough. We have seen this displayed in the threefold blood progressions in divine law with the blood on the tip of the right ear followed by the right thumb and right toe. Enlightenment must be followed by commitment and then by performance. It is the blood that offers the exclamation point of the principle being communicated. The blood represents mortal life. Our lives must fully exhibit our enlightenment and our commitment through our performance. We must embrace the vastly different philosophy of divine principles. It is not possible to live without operating within the society ruled by the God-despising instincts of the flesh. However, a mental separation is achieved from the repulsion to these cherished values of the serpent philosophy. "It's the principle of the thing."

Divine expressions always exhibit our Heavenly Father's principles. It makes no difference whether the arena is Kingdom Law, the inspired written text of the Bible or the features of creation. Divine principles will be evident to those who have painfully rejected the mind of the serpent, thereby enabling their eyes to see and their ears to hear.

The fleshly mind craves simplicity. Society adores its acronyms and idioms and logos and capsulizations, mission statements and sound bites. Even the fleshly mind that pretends to respond to the divine invitation will superimpose its simplicity addiction on scriptural expressions, dramatically oversimplifying divine terms. By ignoring Christ's clear statement that his Father is truth and demands to be worshipped truthfully (John 4:24-25) some legitimize the thought that all we need to know is Jesus Christ and exhibit some level of sincerity in order to achieve divine acceptance. We human beings have a tremendous capacity to ignore the obvious. We frequently choose short term indulgence despite a subconscious awareness of long term harm. The natural philosophy springing from the deceitful heart is to buy now but pay later... if ever.

The Haves and the Have-nots

Divine creative activity and communications are never simple. The dominant divine teaching pattern is intentional complexity. It would be embarrassing to even question this basic premise due to its extreme emphasis throughout scripture. Yahweh has exclusively communicated through visions and dreams and dark sayings through all His prophets (with the illuminating exception of Moses; Num 12:3-8). Jesus exclusively taught the population in parables without explaining them to anyone except his disciples, privately. He separated the haves from the have-nots. He gave to those who had and took away from those who had not (Matt 13:10-16). Just like his Father, Jesus taught with intentional complexity. The reason Jesus offers for this 'intentional complexity' educational policy is this difference between those who have eyes but don't see compared to those who do see. It is not simply independent, academic features of truth that must be recognized. We have to embrace the divine principles from which these academic truths grow. This embracing of divine principles is what drops the scales from our eyes and removes the filters from our ears enabling us to see and hear the intentionally complex divine instruction. It is the divine principles that bind together the individual features of divine truth. This issue is powerfully exhibited throughout the three divine expressions of Kingdom Law, the Gospel of salvation and the features of creation.

This intentional complexity is clearly evident in Kingdom Law. There is not one altar offering, but several with variations in each category. There are many divinely designed articles employed in daily, weekly and annual worship. There are family laws, agricultural laws, dietary laws, commercial laws, government laws, worship laws, societal laws, construction laws and even clothing laws. There could be severe penalties for ignorance or noncompliance with laws. Priests had to wash their hands and feet before certain activities or they would die (Ex. 30:19-20). If a son or daughter wanted a long life they had to respect and honor their parents (Ex. 20:12). After appropriately burying a beloved family member a man would still have to exit the community for a week and participate in two cleansing procedures or they could never return under any conditions (Num 19). Yahweh Elohim did not command a simple set of laws that were easy to remember. However, just like the principle of God manifestation, those many laws and rituals were completely interconnected into a single unity. James recognizes this feature, expressing it this way: *For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in **one** point, he is guilty of **all*** (James 2:10). The principle of God manifestation is one of multitudinous singularity, where one becomes many who are all one, as defined in the greatest of all commandments (elaborated upon in the fifth installment of this series).

Mankind recognizes the principle but does not assign it to the Creator. We hear about synergy where the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. This is a derivative of the divine principle of God manifestation. They have eyes but they don't see. Humanity recognizes how a man and woman are married and eagerly produce children in their own image and likeness but still qualify as a single family, a unity in multiplicity. Yet they are willingly deaf to the eternal lessons expressed by this institution. They have ears but they don't hear.

The fact that the many commandments and rituals of Kingdom Law are inseparably bound together is a subtly but constantly repeated theme throughout the divine instructions. No feature of Kingdom Law can stand alone, separated from the rest of the Law. In the same way no foundational feature of the gospel can be separated out without affecting every other feature. Creation operates in the same complex interdependent fashion, where one small change in an environment can ripple through the ecological balance affecting everything. This is also true of the human body where a single bruise or infection on one part of the body affects the whole (1 Cor. 12). This singularity of interconnection through many applications is a feature of every facet of divine communication and activity. This perfect symphonic concert of divine expression is exclusively appreciated by those with hearing ears, invigorated by a circumcised heart. The recognition of this divine policy highlights the danger associated with the fleshly instinct of oversimplification.

Proving the Premise

The specific directions concerning worship under Kingdom Law blend separate features of that Law into a single tapestry. The bronze altar is repeatedly defined as the "altar of burnt offering." This identifies the altar with one specific offering. Yet the sin and trespass offerings are offered on this altar of *burnt offering*. It is not expressed that the sin offerings were offered simply on "the altar" or even the bronze altar. The sin and peace and trespass and grain offerings are always offered on the altar of *burnt offering*. This identification of the altar as being identified by the one specific altar offering known as the burnt offering is a distinct pattern. All one has to do is read the first few chapters of Leviticus to see this repeated constantly, no matter which altar offering is being described. The message is that the sin offering cannot be considered entirely separately from the *burnt offering*. No altar offering could be defined apart from the *burnt offering*. The Altar of burnt offering itself is constantly defined as being *by the door of the tabernacle* (i.e. Ex. 40:29; Lev 1:5; 4:7,18; 17:6). God could identify the bronze altar's location in a number of ways but chose to repeatedly associate it specifically with the *door of the tabernacle*. Obviously there is great significance here, as there is no waste in divine expressions (unlike mankind where waste is a continuous byproduct of life under the curse of mortality). However, despite that significance our focus should not be diverted from the inseparable interconnection of Kingdom Laws and rituals.

The directions for the sin offering for the High Priest and the nation include these details: *As it was taken off from the bullock of the sacrifice of **peace offerings**: and the priest shall burn them upon the altar of the **burnt offering*** (Lev 4:10). Despite the fact that these are the directions for an offering for sin, Yahweh intentionally associates certain features of the directions to other altar offerings where sin is not the particular focus. The carcass of this bullock sin offering was also commanded to be burned outside the camp in exactly the location where the ashes from the altar of burnt offering were deposited (Lev 4:12). Our Heavenly Father is intentionally associating certain features of one ritual with other specific rituals, articles and locations.

The Oil and the Incense

This pattern is also evident in the instructions for the divine sanctuary as well as the accompanying rituals. Each component is defined by other components to underline how they are all bound together inseparably into a single unit, despite the fact that there is certainly varying significance. Divine instructions required that the golden lampstand be replenished specifically when the incense was burned. *And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: **when** he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it. And **when** Aaron lighteth*

the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations (Ex. 30:7-8). These two rituals representing enlightenment and prayer had to be bound together by divine design. This repeated timing condition for both rituals highlights how enlightenment and prayer cannot be individually isolated. As a principle we would find this relationship confirmed in other ways. Proverbs 28:9 presents one chilling confirmation: *He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination*. If we refuse to listen to God by ignoring His law, it is not simply that He will ignore our prayers. It is far worse than that. Our prayers become an abomination to Him. If we shut off God's instruction (if we put out the light) and yet still expect attentive access to Yahweh in our prayers then our hypocrisy condemns our prayers to a status of constituting an abomination. We cannot burn the incense without dressing the lamps. The same divine principles embrace together all divine laws, communications, rituals, priesthood ages and features of creation. It is the principle of the thing.

It is fascinating to see the primary standard of reference in the Tabernacle to be the two stones upon which the finger of God wrote the words of the covenant. These stones were defined as the testimony. *And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God* (Ex. 31:18). After this "testimony" was deposited in the ark it became the ark **of the testimony**. The mercy seat is defined in reference to this testimony. The Tabernacle becomes the Tabernacle **of the testimony**. The incense and the incense altar and even the cloud over the Tabernacle are all identified by a relationship to these stones of testimony. The rods of the family leaders to identify the High Priest are recorded as lying all night before the testimony, despite the fact that the stones of testimony were behind the veil and within the golden ark underneath the mercy seat. It was the stones of testimony that served as the common point of reference for the Tabernacle, its contents and the activities surrounding it. This is appropriate as these stones were prepared exclusively by Yahweh. His finger wrote the words of the testimony directly into the stones' four surfaces. Aholiab did not use his exceptional skills with any Israelite donations from their Egyptian spoils. The stones of testimony came directly from the Heavenly Father without further embellishment or artistry. They became the center of it all, just as the stone the builders rejected, the cornerstone, the stone of stumbling, the rock of offense and the stone cut out of the mountain without hands... has become the center of all things spiritual. Jesus Christ is the center of all things that blend everything together into a single unity, despite having many components constituting that single unity.

All Parts Affect the Whole

We are not free to carve out any individual feature of scripture and dispose of it as if it were inconsequential. Everything is bound together in Christ. We are not free to minimize works and over-emphasize grace. We are not free to ignore judgment and adore mercy. We are not free to pray incessantly without reading God's word incessantly. We are not free to embrace the siren song of simplicity because everything is interdependent in the one-ness of Christ. If we ignore or minimize any one aspect of our divine relationship and responsibilities we might as well cut off an arm or remove an eye or a lung. We will not be whole. Our bodies have been divinely designed with many interdependent components. The foot cannot say it is not part of the body because it is not a hand. *If the whole body were an eye where would be the hearing?* Just as the body is a single unit made of many complimentary and interdependent components, so our spiritual relationship and responsibilities are complimentary and interdependent. Faith alone will not save us. Grace alone will not save us. Knowledge alone will not save us. Works alone will not save us. Oversimplification is part of the broad path to perishing. Beware those without as well as within our community who postulate that "all we have to know is this" or "all we have to do is that." The complex, interdependent features of creation and Kingdom Law and the gospel of salvation and the human body all stand together as subtle but powerful witnesses against this instinctive, heart induced, fleshly presumption of the minimalization of divine communication, laws and principles.

A Lie Cannot Stand Alone

We have probably all experienced the frustration of trying to limit our preaching conversations to a single focus at a time. The reason this is so difficult is that every feature of the gospel truth is interdependent. If we scripturally define death, we are invariably peppered with a series of “what about” questions. What about heaven and hell? What about the Kingdom of Heaven? If we address the nature of evil and the impossibility of an immortal having the capacity to sin there is another series of “what about” questions generated. The warnings abound throughout the New Testament that variations in the true gospel were both inevitable and divinely unacceptable. Once a single lie is told, two will have to follow to support the one. Then four more lies and self-delusions will be needed to support the two that support the first lie. The mistakes from the first lie expand exponentially. The first lie was that we don’t really die. If we embrace the serpent’s testimony then everything has to change. If we try to eliminate or minimize one feature of the Truth, we affect everything else. This is the divine pattern for creation, Kingdom Law, the human body and divine communication. There is a single, complex, interdependent unity displayed in all of our Heavenly Father’s activities and expressions. Our heart generated instincts oppose this uncomfortable and difficult pattern. We naturally prefer to compartmentalize, simplify, spout short inspiring phrases that supposedly ‘say it all’ and just plain: keep it simple. Surrendering to the deceptive philosophy of the uncircumcised heart is what prevents our eyes from seeing and our ears from hearing. We become the have-nots that would have what little they had taken from them by Christ’s parables and Yahweh’s visions, dreams and dark sayings.

The exact same divine principles are displayed in the laws and rituals throughout each of the subsequent divinely appointed ages where divine laws change with the priesthood. It is the divine principles that bind together all of these laws, rituals, temples, altars, lavers, baptisms, headcoverings during prayer, etc. It is not the individual laws and rituals of a rapidly concluding Ecclesial Age that are truly significant. These will be replaced by the very Kingdom Law and rituals that they replaced almost two thousand years ago. It is the divine principles that serve as the single foundation for all divine expressions and activity that are truly significant and eternal. All of these complex, interdependent divine expressions channel us to the divine principles from which they extend. As immortal priests we will not only teach and direct these divine laws and rituals, we will be portraying their foundational principles This is the principal principle.

Homework

I offer you a meditation exercise that beautifully highlights the elevation of the eternal divine principles generating Kingdom laws as being more significant than the temporary laws themselves. Why did Yahweh command contradictory laws? If a boy was circumcised on a Sabbath then the Sabbath law was broken, as there was no divine exception offered for Sabbath circumcisions. Yet if the boy was circumcised on the ninth day to respect Sabbath law then the law of circumcision was broken. We do know that the Jews correctly chose to circumcise a boy even on the Sabbath (John 7:22-23). But, why was this the correct choice? On what basis could the Sabbath Law be notched down below circumcision law? Hopefully, this quandary will gnaw at the recesses of our minds over the next month, lightening the shadows of the divine principles and prophecies extending out from these somewhat contradictory yet still complimentary laws. We’ll consider this briefly in our next commentary, God willing.

Jim Dillingham

The Path of Spiritual Balance

The previous commentary concluded by offering a meditational exercise concerning why our Heavenly Father would command opposing laws where one law could not apparently be observed without offending the other. The example given presented the choice of circumcision law or Sabbath law. There was no Sabbath exception ever mentioned for circumcision. Therefore the question remains as to whether the parents of the eight day old boy and the priests should offend the Sabbath law by circumcising the child on the necessary eighth Sabbath day or offend circumcision law by waiting until the ninth day in order to honor Sabbath law. It was also noted that Jewish practice highlighted circumcision law at the expense of Sabbath law. Jesus notes this in his Sabbath healing explanation (John 7:22-23). On what basis should circumcision law have been honored above Sabbath law?

The theme of the previous commentary was how divine principles are greater than divine laws. These God defining principles bind together all divine expressions into a complex interdependent unity, a singular multiplicity. Therefore we have to look to the principles from which these laws are radiated to understand why one law had to be preferred at the expense of another. These deeper principles are invisible to those seduced by the serpent philosophy, having eyes that cannot see and ears that cannot hear.

The Covenant Signatures

One highly significant fact was that each of these rituals served as signatures of their respective covenants. Circumcision was divinely ordained to be the token of the Abrahamic Covenant of faith, whose focus was righteousness by faith (Rom. 4). *And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a **token of the covenant** betwixt me and you* (Gen. 17:11). Sabbath observance was the divinely ordained token of the Mosaic Covenant of works, whose focus was sin education (Rom. 3:20; 5:20; 7:5,7,8,13). *Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a **sign between me and you** throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you* (Ex. 31:13). *Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a **sign between me and them**, that they might know that I am the LORD that sanctify them. But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness... And hallow my sabbaths; and they shall be a **sign between me and you**, that ye may know that I am the LORD your God. Notwithstanding the children rebelled against me* (Ezek. 20:12,20). It should be noted that the Hebrew word translated sign in relation to the Sabbath is the same word translated token in reference to circumcision in Genesis 17. This is also the same word used to identify the rainbow as the token of His covenant to Noah (Gen. 9:12-13). Yahweh explains that Sabbath observance was intended to remind the Israelites how He had saved them with a mighty hand from their Egyptian servitude (Deut. 5:12-15). Therefore, each of these two individual rituals of circumcision and Sabbath observance served by divine appointment as the specific tokens for the two independent covenants focusing on righteousness and sin education.

Eight Is Greater Than Seven

We can certainly see how the righteousness of the Abrahamic Covenant projected in circumcision should surely have been elevated above the sin education seen in the Mosaic Covenant's signature ritual of Sabbath observance. The emphasized days in each law further validate this instinctive understanding. The identifying of the seventh day of rest for Sabbath observance corresponds to the seventh millennium when creation will enjoy a thousand year rest from sin. The serpent, dragon, devil and satan will be chained in the bottomless pit for that seventh millennium (Rev. 20:2-3) but not eliminated until the very end (Rev. 20:14). Just as eight is greater than seven, so the cutting off of all flesh at the eighth millennium is greater than simply enjoying a rest from the sinful works of the flesh in the seventh millennium. The cutting off of the flesh on the eighth day of a boy's life

in circumcision is therefore a more significant ritual than simply resting from the works of the flesh on the seventh Sabbath day under Kingdom Law. It is the divine principles radiating these rituals that determine the order of significance between these laws. The shadowed principles define the proper balancing of these rituals.

Despite the fact that the Divine Lawgiver did not **directly** specify which of these rituals had to surrender to the other, it is the principles and prophecies seen in these rituals that do identify the correct divine sequence of significance. It is quite important that this issue is not decided definitively by divine mandate. We are being developed, coaxed to think more deeply by a loving Father. The minds of the enlightened are being gently channeled into the divine principles that can truly recondition us into the image and likeness of our Creator, as originally intended (Gen. 1:26). We need to think as our Heavenly Father thinks, so that we might do as He does. Maintaining simple puppetry of the Ecclesial Age rituals without pursuing the principles they veil offers no significant difference from The Jewish community maintaining the works of the law yet ignoring the principles underneath. Just like the divine rituals commanded through Moses, it is not baptism, memorial service, sisters' head covering during prayer and sisters' silence that are nearly as significant as understanding and embracing the principles from which these rituals are projected.

If You Had Known What This Meaneth

Jesus directs our thinking toward the principles behind Kingdom Law when he defends his disciples for harvesting grain to curb a Sabbath hunger (Matt. 12:1-8). The Pharisees were judging improperly concerning a divine ritual because they didn't understand the underlying principle. After noting how the priests guiltlessly profaned the Sabbath and David imitated the priesthood in eating the forbidden shewbread, Jesus offers this wisdom signpost: *But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless* (vs 7). The Pharisees had been too quick to condemn the disciples in their apparent violation of Sabbath Law. Yet, on what basis could this quote from Hosea 6:6 offer insight into the correct application and limitations of Sabbath Law, or any other Kingdom Law?

This Hosea quote Jesus offers is a divine bridging statement demonstrating that the principles behind the two rituals noted ("sacrifice" and burnt offering) were more significant than these rituals themselves. Jesus offers the understanding of this verse as a key to correctly judging issues of right and wrong among our brethren. It is the principle of the matter that is the key to a correct understanding, proper balance and divine approval.

Jesus quotes his Father from Hosea 6:6 *For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings*. The Hebrew word translated "sacrifice" is *zebach* which exclusively represents the peace offering. It is *mercy* (Hebrew: *chesed*), more fully understood as *merciful love*, that Yahweh wants more than the three categories of the peace offering. Yahweh wants the *knowledge of God* more than burnt offerings. It is merciful love and divine knowledge that are the principles and anticipated behavior patterns defining the specific features of the peace and burnt offerings.

Knowledge Before Love

The **burnt offering** was the foundational altar offering, beginning and ending every day. Therefore it should be expected that its principal application be quite valuable. **Knowing our Heavenly Father** (the application of the burnt offering) is what Jesus defines as being equivalent to immortality: *And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent* (John 17:3). The peace offering projected a benefit of divine fellowship, as it was the exclusive altar offering where priest, Yahweh and offerer each shared portions of the same offering. The principle is that merciful love (peace offering) is what must be built upon divine knowledge (whole burnt offering) in order to inherit the divine nature: *If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him* (John 14:23). This progression of knowledge followed by love is validated by the altar offering progression where the peace

offering could not be offered independently of the burnt offering, which had to serve as its foundation (Lev. 3:5). The unleavened bread and the wine offerings always accompanied the peace and burnt offerings but never accompanied the sin or trespass offerings. Additionally it was only the burnt and peace offerings that ever enjoyed the dramatic acceptance of fire from heaven (i.e. Lev. 9:24; 1 Chron 21:26; 2 Chron 7:1; 1 Kings 18:38). This never once happened to the sin or trespass offerings. This is because of the principles upon which all of these rituals were constructed and how they define the proper balance.

Jesus pointed out to the Pharisees that if they had understood the principles behind the very significant burnt and peace offerings they would not have condemned the guiltless. This is a danger we face as well. We are commanded to judge but cautioned to be very careful in the manner we judge and the decisions we make. Avoiding judgment is just as wrong as making a divinely unacceptable judgment. Avoiding judgment often springs from a combination of cowardice and insufficient love, but is rationalized as merciful. Yet the issue needing judgment remains unresolved and allowed to continue its leavening influence. It is only through understanding the divine principles from which these laws and rituals extend that will direct us to balance them for a divinely approvable judgment.

Which Comes First?

Jesus quotes his Father from Hosea and explains that understanding this statement is a key to judging properly. The Heavenly Father indicates that the peace offering is fulfilled in the application of merciful love and that the burnt offering is fulfilled in pursuing divine knowledge. This is the mind (academic knowledge) and the heart (emotional expression), as well as objectivity and subjectivity. Either one is worthless without the other in both divine service and worldly success. The key is the balance and the progression of these two philosophical motivators of human behavior. The world unanimously promotes the understanding that instinctive heart generated understandings must be the foundation from which the mind operates. We are told to follow our hearts and we will never be wrong. Yet divine wisdom warns us that the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked (Jer. 17:9). Scripture advises us that there is an absolute truth from which all emotional activity must operate, if we wish to continue living and thriving. The balance and progression between mind and heart are diametrically opposed between flesh and spirit. The flesh preaches that the heart is the foundation from which the mind must operate. Truth is understood as static, adjusting to the conveniences of current heart generated preferences. This provides the basis for the homogenization of a society, what is popularly understood as 'political correctness'. The spirit maintains that the mind must be the foundation for the heart, restraining its rebellious desires within the borders of an absolute truth. It is this progression from mind to heart that makes all the difference in making correct judgments.

As already indicated, this spirit approved progression of mind to heart is underlined in the two altar offerings in Hosea 6:6 from which our King and High Priest quotes his Father. By divine law the peace offering (the heart) could not be offered without the foundation of the burnt offering (the mind...Lev. 3:5). Merciful love (fulfillment of the peace offering) cannot be properly exercised without the foundation of the knowledge of God (fulfillment of the whole burnt offering). The heart should not be allowed free reign, unrestrained by the knowledge and wisdom of the mind. The correct progression is mind to heart. The fleshly promotion of the heart to the mind creates imbalance, leading to foolish judgments. This was the case with the Pharisees following Jesus in their charge against the disciples on the Sabbath.

The fact that the behavioral application for the peace offering is spelled out in Hosea as merciful love is a signpost to greater understanding of the principles from which this altar offering rises. There are many different applications of love in our lives, both appropriate and inappropriate. Understanding and applying the proper significance and balance to each category of love encourages divine approval. It is not coincidence that there

were three categories of peace offerings. These mirror the three great divine laws concerning love. Just as there is a clear descending significance to the three peace offerings fulfilled in merciful love, there is also a descending significance to the three great love commandments.

Order Establishes Balance

The three peace offering categories were the thanksgiving offering, the votive offering and the freewill offering (Lev 7:11-16). The application of this set of peace offerings is applied to the Ecclesial Age Priesthood in Hebrew 13:15-16. In the context of explaining how Christ is our altar, how he was our sin offering and how we must go outside the camp to him bearing his reproach we are given these three commands in the verses noted. *By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.* ¹⁶ *But to do good and to communicate* (Gk. is koinonia indicating to share) *forget not: for with such **sacrifices** God is well pleased.* The first sacrifice is praise through thanksgiving. This parallels the thanksgiving offering. The second sacrifice is the performance of good deeds, paralleling the peace offering for vow performance. The third sacrifice noted is sharing what we have, paralleling the freewill offering. Just as Jesus exhorted us to understand how the peace offering was fulfilled in love, Hebrews exhorts the believers to practice the peace offerings in our lives. The order of these three peace offering divisions noted in Hebrews is exactly the order of significance where relaxing restrictions signify a descending significance.

The thanksgiving offering had to be eaten the first day and could never be blemished (Lev. 7:15; 3:7). The votive offering could be eaten the first and second day and could not be blemished (Lev. 7:16-18; 3:7). The freewill offering could be eaten the first and second day and could actually have a certain blemish that was not allowed for any other offering (Lev. 22:23). This divinely appointed descending order of significance presents a balance for our understandings of the principles involved of thanksgiving to God, doing good and sharing what we have. It also presents the proper balance to the corresponding three love commandments, as merciful love is the divinely intended principle reflected in the peace offerings.

The Three Great Love Commandments

The greatest commandment of all is fulfilled in love. *And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord:* ³⁰ *And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment* (Mark 12:29-30). This commandment defines our destination and its path. Our fifth commentary in this series commented on how this commandment expresses the plan of God in its opening statement through the progression of the divine names. Harmony (oneness) with Yahweh is our destination. The greatest of loves is the path to that destination. In Mark's following verse Jesus goes on to note the chronologically second love commandment but now third in significance. *And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.* On Christ's last mortal night he issued a new love commandment that superceded this love for our neighbor, addressing a very limited class of people and a greater love. *A **new commandment** I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye **also love one another.** By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have **love one to another*** (John 13:34-35). Jesus is only addressing his disciples at the last supper. Jesus defines this as a new commandment. Jesus goes on to identify this as his personal commandment later that evening. *This is **my commandment**, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you* (John 15:12-14). The nature of this love the disciples must show for each other is greater than the standard of the previously second greatest commandment of only loving ones neighbor to the degree they love themselves. Those who claim to be the disciples of Christ must love each other greater than they love themselves, as Christ loves us. We have to be willing to set aside our own ambitions, needs and concerns to care for the brethren of Christ. Paul confirms this understanding of Christ's personal identity with this greater brotherhood love when he exhorts the Galatians. *Bear ye one*

another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ (Gal. 6:2). In verse 10 Paul confirms the greater love we must show our brethren and sisters above our neighbor. *As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.* Whatever level of good we do for men in general must be exceeded by the good we perform for the household of faith. That good must be **special**.

The third parable of judgment Christ offers following the Olivet prophecy highlights how the good we show to the household of faith will be a significant judgment issue (Matt 25:31-46). The sheep and the goats are separated on the basis of how they set aside their own concerns to feed the hungry faithful, to clothe the brothers and sisters and visit them in prison. Wouldn't it be wise to pay particular attention to the commandment personally identified with our ultimate judge? Jesus referred to the love of disciple for disciple as **his commandment**. Paul honors this by defining the bearing of each others burdens within the brotherhood as **the law of Christ**.

The Wisdom of Balanced Loves

We must balance these three love commandments or we risk divine disfavor. The variety of our loves must always be properly balanced. Our love for our spouse must exceed the previously greater love for our parents. The love for our children will be greater than the love for our parents but must be less than the love for our spouse. If these loves are not properly balanced then pain, conflict and sorrow are assured. This is also the case with the three love commandments. We are commanded to love our Heavenly Father with everything we have and make it the greatest of our loves. It must be greater than spouse and children and parents and brotherhood and certainly our neighbor. Jesus warned us that following him would encourage family divisions and betrayals (Mark 13:12; Luke 14:26). The next two love commandments use the same defining standard of self-love. We are only asked to love our neighbor to the degree that we love ourselves. This is far, far less than the love demanded for our Creator. Christ commands us to love our brothers and sisters in the faith greater than we love ourselves. This too will have to be less than the love we must exhibit for our Heavenly Father. The descending order of the peace offerings perfectly parallels the descending order of the love commandments. The greatest thanksgiving peace offering (fulfilled in merciful love) corresponds to the greatest love commandment for our Heavenly Father. The second performance of vows peace offering corresponds to the second (in significance) commandment to love our brothers and sisters greater than we love ourselves. The third freewill offering corresponds to the commandment to love our neighbors, equal but limited to the degree we love ourselves. It has been claimed by some in our brotherhood recently that the love of our neighbor actually fulfills the command to love our Heavenly Father. This is a great evil. This suggestion degrades the love of our Creator to the level of the love of self, the limited standard for the love for our neighbor. This imbalance of loves will only bring divine disfavor. In the society of the world it is self-love that is the greatest of all loves. The faithful are asked to exhibit two greater levels of love: for each other and the greatest of all loves for our Heavenly Father.

Understanding the principles from which divine laws and rituals extend offers the wisdom of balance. Our Creator sometimes commands opposing laws that require us to make a judgment call. It is the underlying principles that offer the true balance and direction toward divine acceptance.

Jim Dillingham

The Divine Prayer Pattern

Prayer is a great privilege. It is not a right, similar to political mandates which are inappropriately presumed to be inalienable by societies. A privilege is a conditional advantage. Privileges always have accompanying responsibilities, or the privileges are lost. This is the case with prayer. Specific conditions are required for addressing our Heavenly Father that can make prayer more successful. Their absence can make our prayers counterproductive. There are prayer patterns that can please our Creator and there are prayer patterns that can antagonize Him. Just as well intentioned ignorance is valueless in relation to salvation, it is also the case with prayer. Abundant instructions and patterns are presented throughout scripture so that we are left without any excuse for inappropriately addressing our Heavenly Father. One particular absence in our prayer pattern converts that prayer into an abomination to our God. What we believe is highly significant. How we pray is highly significant. We have to base our understandings and our behavior patterns on divine truth, including prayer.

Kingdom Law portrays the divine pattern for successful prayer through the incense offering along with its exclusive altar. This conclusion is not intuitive or imaginative. This relationship between incense and prayer is confirmed repeatedly. In Rev. 5:8 we see bowls of incense held by the four living creatures and twenty four elders interpreted for us as the prayers of the saints. Rev.8:3 tells us: *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.* King David recognizes this relationship when he asks: *Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense* (Ps. 141:2). The entire Jewish nation understood the relationship between the incense offering and prayer. The set time for the incense offering signaled community prayer at Jerusalem, prior to the birth of John the Baptist (Lk 1:10). Scripture makes it clear that the incense offering should be understood as being related to prayer. Therefore the divine instructions concerning the incense altar, the incense and the procedure should offer insights into the divinely acceptable and therefore effective prayer pattern.

Significant issues in this prayer template include the acacia wood frame, its gold covering; the foursquare design with the four horns and four spice components of the incense; the grinding and powdering preparation for the incense; the burning of the incense; the frequency and coordinated timing of the offering; the application of the incense apart from its altar on the Day of Atonement in the Most Holy; the application of the altar apart from the incense when the blood of a sin offering was smeared on each of its four horns; and lastly the physical transformation of the incense from aromatic dust to cloud. Although these eight issues are certainly not completely comprehensive they offer a solid platform for continued meditation centering on this relationship between the incense offering and divinely acceptable prayer.

The Divine Connection

The platform for offering the incense serves as a pattern for the faithful in offering our prayers to our Heavenly Father. There were two altars. The bronze altar was in the courtyard where blood was the main but not exclusive focus (due to grain/bread and wine offerings). The golden incense altar was placed at the veil just inside the Holy Place of the Tabernacle. Both altars were foursquare with four horns. This four and doubled four pattern is used constantly throughout scripture in relation to the theme of God manifestation. The weight of this frequently repeated relationship anchors the identification of this altar and incense with those who choose to manifest our Heavenly Father.

Examples of the relationship between the number four and the principle of God manifestation would include: the foursquare wilderness encampment, the four surfaces of the two stones upon which the finger of God wrote the ten commandments; the four items inside the golden ark of the covenant (rod of resurrection, incorruptible manna and two covenant stones); the four articles within the Tabernacle (ark of the covenant, incense altar, lampstand and shewbread table); the four rows of gems representing the tribes on the High Priest's golden breastplate; the four separation commandments of the Nazarite (no strong drink, no grape consumption, no death contact and no hair cutting); the four families saved on the gopher wood ark; the four divine sanctuaries (Tabernacle, Solomon's Temple, Post Captivity Temple, Millennial Kingdom Temple); the four musical instruments used for temple worship (cymbal, trumpet, psaltery, harp); the four cherubim of Ezekiel in a foursquare configuration with four wheels within four wheels; the four living creatures of Revelation; the four priesthood ages whose transitions are marked by changes in divine law & priesthood which are always accompanied by an incredible outpouring of miraculous, confirming divine power (Patriarchal, Mosaic, Ecclesial and Millennial); the four seen in Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace included one whose appearance was like the son of God; the New Testament parallel to this was Christ's inner circle of himself with Peter, James and John who shared the transfiguration, the raising of Jairus' daughter and served as the inner watch for our Lord's Gethsemane prayers; the four categories of earth in the sower parable representing those to whom the seed of God's word is sown, the four gospel accounts of Jesus who was God manifested in the flesh (Immanuel); the four cornered sheet in Peter's vision supporting the unclean animals referring to anticipated Gentile converts (similar to Israel's foursquare encampment when drawn out of Egypt); the four separate life categories (1. our Creator is from everlasting and to everlasting, 2. Christ, angels and saints are to everlasting, 3. the "very good" undying nature of Adam & Eve prior to the curse of death, 4. mortality); Christ died and rose to immortality in the fourth year of his ministry; and the four political/military empires that inflicted chastising divine judgments against Israel (Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome). The most significant example of how the number four identifies the principle of God manifestation is that the family name that the Creator shares with His angels, His son, the name into which we are all baptized and serves as a definition of the divine intention is comprised of the four Hebrew letters YHWH.

Creation's Validation

Each of these examples embrace a feature of how our Heavenly Father reveals or manifests Himself, a focus through which He radiates features of Himself. This is also true of His creative works. It is rather interesting to note how physicists point out the specifically four components that define our universe: space, time, energy and matter. Similarly they define specifically four categories of energy in the universe: electromagnetic, gravity, strong and weak. There are also specifically four dimensions limiting our current natural order: height, depth, width and time. Creation serves as another avenue of divine expression mirroring scripture. This is why men have no excuse before the Creator. What can be known of Him is evident in the things that have been made (Rom 1:18-20).

The Doubled Four Pattern

This pattern of four being associated with the principle of God manifestation is evident in the incense altar and its composition of four spices. We are the platforms from which prayer ascends to heaven, just as the burning incense ascended from the golden altar. The fact that the number four is doubled and tripled in this image is also significant. The construction is foursquare with its four horns. The doubling of the four in the construction of the altar is another repeated theme throughout scripture. This theme culminates in our Messiah whose divinely appointed name (Jesus) constitutes the numerical value of 888, by adding the values of its six Greek letters. Examples of this doubled four pattern tap into the previous examples. Israel was made up of a doubled foursquare configuration with the political outer square of the tribes and the spiritual inner square of the three Levite divisions and the Priests. There were two sets of covenant stones written on their four surfaces by God's finger, but the first set was broken at the base of Sinai. The foursquare bronze altar received four blood offering

categories (burnt, peace, sin and trespass); there were four men and four women on that gopher wood ark. The heaven and earth covenant with Abraham required a configuration of two rows of four animal components (Gen. 15). The four cherubim had four faces. The four cherubim had four wheels. There were four wheels within those four wheels. The four living creatures of Revelation had four faces. This pattern of doubled fours is evident in the golden altar of incense (with its foursquare configuration with four horns) where we look for the principles defining acceptable communication being offered to the Creator of Heaven and Earth.

The shittim/acacia wood frame identifies a humble tree that grows in the Sinai Desert. It is a hardwood, fairly resistant to insects and disease, straining above the dust floor of the earth for the heavens above by converting every infrequent drop of moisture into growth and health. It is not a glorious tree. It would have to die for its lumber to form the incense altar frame. This is our metaphorical frame for acceptable prayer. There is no room for pride or arrogance in our approach to the Divine presence. It is meekness and humility that is the greatest key to understanding the intentional complexity of divine communication available to us. It is also humility and meekness that serve as the foundation for acceptable communication directed from ourselves and to our Father. Believing the serpent and partaking of the fruit that they thought would make them like God is a philosophy we must abandon. Just as the acacia tree had to die to form the altar frame, so we must die to flesh based ambitions, thought patterns and behavior. We must accept the righteousness of the divine principle that sin **must** die. We demonstrate this understanding in baptism, mimicking the dying of the acacia to form the frame for the successful prayer pattern.

Golden Prayer

This acacia wood frame for the incense altar is then covered completely by gold. Gold scripturally signifies proven, tested and purified faith (1 Pet 1:7; Rev 3:18; Job 23:10). It does not signify potential or simply professed faith. This golden covering over the acacia frame underlines the relationship between our behavior to our accessibility to our Heavenly Father in prayer. Scriptural confirmation of this relationship opposes instinctive and popular opinion. A good intention is far less valuable than tested resolve when it comes to capturing the ear of the Creator and Sustainer of all things. *The LORD is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous* (Prov 15:29). *Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear* (Is. 59:1-2). *Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; **that your prayers be not hindered** ... For the eyes of the Lord are over **the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers**: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil* (1 Pet 3:7,12). A very powerful verse for prayer education in James 5:16 *The effectual fervent prayer of a **righteous man** availeth much*. Our behavior has a tremendous impact on the success of our prayers. Proven faith (the gold covering the incense altar) offers far greater access through prayer than merely good intentions without performance (a bare acacia wood altar without any gold covering). Our behavior can invalidate our words. There must be a symmetry between our intentions and our performance for our prayers to be effective.

Hopeful Confidence and Not Presumption

The golden prayer frame also exhorts us concerning prayerful confidence. We are also told we must have faith in our prayers. We must believe in our Heavenly Father's attentiveness to our words and thoughts, His capacity to comply and but hope in His willingness to make our prayers a reality. We should never presume. Presumption is not confidence. Presumption is a feature of arrogance. Despite the fact that David refused to eat, covering himself in ashes, ignoring affairs of state, and humbled himself before Yahweh asking for the life of his child by Bathsheeba, the child still died (2 Sam 12:16-18). Although certainly willing, Jesus asked that the cup might pass. Both prayers were offered in faith, but not presumptively. The golden covering for the wooden frame

indicates our confidence in the divine capacity to hear and respond fully. This gold also underlines the significance of offering a foundation of proven faith in our prayers through our faithful behavior in accordance with divine standards

The incense had to be composed of four sweet spices, each equal in weight (Ex. 30:34-38). This parallels the frequent divine design of foursquare patterns in the context of manifestations of the Creator. These spices were unacceptable in their unblended form. They had to be processed, just as we are not divinely acceptable in our natural state. We too must be processed to be divinely acceptable. We must be reshaped and reformed into the image and likeness of our Creator, as originally intended (Gen 1:26). After gathering the spices by separating them from other components they must be weighed for consistency. After separation, weighing and combining they must be pulverized. Like ourselves these spices had to be made small. They had to be beaten and ground down to a fine dust-like consistency (Ex.30:26). Dust is a defining feature of the curse of sin and death. We are made of dust and to dust we shall return. A redeeming feature of this incense is that it constituted a pleasant aromatic dust. It was defined as *sweet*. The problem with our natural state is the problem of the unrestrained human ego. We are naturally great in our own eyes. Even those who suffer with depression, marked by a focus of presumed unacceptability, are still quite self-consumed. This processing of the incense reflects the incredibly important stage of developing meekness for those who yearn to offer divinely acceptable prayers.

Beaten Very Small

This crushing and grinding of the incense to process it from large chunks into fine dust shadows the lesson of the circumcision of the hearts of the faithful. The fleshly philosophy of self-worship must be cut away. We must be made small in our own eyes so that Yahweh might be great and our prayers might be powerful. We are invited to become vessels for the divine Spirit, to inherit immortality. Our Heavenly Father defines where He will reside. *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). This is the only place this Hebrew word (daka) is translated *contrite*. It is also translated crush, bruise, oppress, beat, broken and humbled. In fact, it is used twice in Isaiah 53 in reference to our Messiah: *he was bruised for our iniquities... yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him*. Paul had to learn this lesson when he prayed three times for relief from the thorn of satan, inhibiting his preaching and his life. The Lord answered him: *My strength is made perfect in weakness*. So Paul concluded: *Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong* (2 Cor 12:10).

The processing of the incense is a common exhortation throughout scripture of the large becoming small for divine approval. The mustard seed of faith that could move mountains had to be the tiniest of all seeds with the capacity to grow to be the largest of all. David had to be the hunted outlaw before the glorious king. Joseph had to be the slave and prisoner abandoned by his family before he could gloriously save the world. Jesus had to be despised and rejected of men before he could inherit David's throne. We have to make ourselves small in our own eyes and the eyes of men if we are to have powerful prayers. We must be crushed, bruised, beaten small and humbled. When we are weak, then we are strong. *Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.* (Matt 5:3-5). Just as the incense had to be crushed in order to be burned from dust to cloud, our naturally self-worshipping hearts must be circumcised and our egos crushed so that our prayers may be powerful.

Refueling the Lamps and Burning the Incense

The timing for the burning of the incense also blends with common scriptural themes to emphasize features of successful prayer. *And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it. And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it, a*

perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations (Ex 30:7-8). The burning of the four processed incense spices had to follow the replenishment of the lamps in the Holy Place every morning and every evening. The four incense ingredients burned in the morning with the same four in the evening continues this theme of doubled fours. This is extended into the incense application on the Day of Atonement when it was specifically two handfuls of incense God commanded the High Priest to add to the fire in the Most Holy to make a cloud to shield the divine glory on the mercy seat, in order to save the life of the High Priest. The two handfuls of four incense ingredients mirrors the daily morning and evening four incense components. This further emphasizes this doubled four scriptural theme. The incense had to follow the lamp replenishment. The enlightenment achieved by the seven lamps clearly indicates promoting the understanding of divine principles.

The highlighted issue is that these two relationships cannot be separated. Just as the incense followed the dressing of the lamps so also prayer cannot be successful without the continuing replenishment of divine principles. Just as we must continue to replenish our bodies with fresh air and water and food to live, so we must replenish our minds with divine principles to live forever. Without renewal our naturally self-deceiving hearts will twist and turn divine principles into self-worshipping delusions... in the same way our bodies automatically turn fresh air, water and food into poison. We have to do our daily Bible readings. We have to attend our Bible classes, memorial service, study weekends and Bible Schools. If we do not, our prayers are weakened dramatically. We are not offering our incense after fueling our lamps. We are fearfully warned by Solomon: *He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination* (Prov 28:9). Thinking that we can have complete access to our Heavenly Father in prayer while ignoring our daily readings and studies is not simply counterproductive, it constitutes an abomination to the One we address in our prayers. Refusing to listen but expecting to be heard is offensive. It is unwise to offend the Creator of Heaven and Earth, who defines Himself as a consuming fire. If we want our prayers to be effective we will pay particular attention to first listening to the One to whom we pray. We will burn our incense when we dress our lamps.

Dust to Cloud by Fire

The burning of the incense changed its composition. The action of the fire on the aromatic incense dust converted it into an ascending cloud. On the Day of Atonement the transformation of the two handfuls of incense into the cloud through fire from the altar of burnt offering saved the life of the High Priest. *And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not* (Lev. 16:13). Life preservation (immortalization) is seen in this conversion of dust to cloud. Just as that dust is a creation symbol for the curse of sin and death, so the cloud is a perfectly consistent creation symbol for the presence, power and glory of the Creator. This is why Christ, the dead and the living were enveloped by the cloud at the transfiguration (Lk 9:34). This is why the living and dead meet the Lord together in the air and in the cloud and so shall they ever be with the Lord (1 Thess. 4:17). This is why the faithful of Hebrews 11 are described in the first verse of chapter 12 as a great **cloud** of witnesses. This is why Jesus was received up by a cloud as he ascended to the right hand of his Father from the Mount of Olives and will return in the clouds of heaven with great power and glory.

Following Our Lord into the Flames

Our prayers must burn. Mild, easily forgetful, sing-songy prayers do not burn. Careful consideration and intense concentration will generate prayers that ascend, not simply sit upon the altar with no spark. There is great benefit in pre-writing our prayers so that we do not offend our Heavenly Father by misspeaking. Well intentioned prayer-fumbling offers no flame, no capacity to ascend heavenward. Just as our faith must be tested in the challenging flames of a cursed creation, so our prayers must pass through the flames to be acceptable. It was the successful victory of our High Priest that saved both himself and ourselves. He flawlessly persisted through the fiery flames of insults, the death threats, the mocking humiliations, being constantly underestimated and belittled, his abandonment by those closest to him, his fierce temptations due to the incredible power at his

fingertips, the cruel tortures, being relentlessly baited by the hungry and those desperate for him to exhibit his power on their behalf, the constant rejection from those he came to save, and that powerful resistance to truly understand his preaching exhibited by even his closest disciples. His Gethsemane prayers were marked by the intensity of bloodlike drops of sweat. He deserves better than whatever we underestimate as our best efforts. We must follow him into the flames.

Scripture certainly offers a great deal more information about successful prayer. However our focus has been the golden incense altar and the incense. These serve as a divinely acceptable prayer pattern to the enlightened, to those whose great goal is to serve as their King-Priest's immortal servants in the approaching Millennial Kingdom, teaching the same divine principles that are evident in the laws and rituals in every divine age. Our prayers must be offered with confident assurance that our Heavenly Father hears us and has the capacity and hopefully (not presumptively) the will to perform our requests. We must understand the relationship between our personal behavior and our accessibility through prayer to our Father. We must listen eagerly to our Heavenly Father if we ever wish our prayers to be heard. We must carefully offer our prayers with a burning intensity. If we are ultimately acceptable it will be through the very fiery trials that we faithfully endure, so that we might be clothed with the heavenly nature where our dust becomes the cloud. Even so, let us pray.

Jim Dillingham

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Unity Through Separation

Many Israelites did not understand when Moses reported that Yahweh had appointed an extremely restrictive priesthood. Moses explained that his older brother, the man who had cast the golden calf, was divinely chosen to serve as the High Priest. Only the nephews of Moses and their descendants would qualify as priests. The entire tribe of Levi, Moses' tribe, would be the servants of these few priests. We can probably imagine Korah, Dathan and Abiram arrogantly encouraging the rebellious by quoting the covenant promise that *ye shall be unto me a **kingdom of priests**, and an **holy nation*** (Ex. 19:6). The terms of the covenant suggested no limited holiness or priestly status, as Moses insisted. The basis for the rebellion was a presumption of Moses and Aaron being inappropriately ambitious and self-promoting. The large group of respected community leaders made their serious charges at Moses and Aaron, boldly expressing their instinctive conclusions: *Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD?* With earthquake and heavenly fire the rebels were eliminated. The miracle of the resurrected rod with its four degrees of maturity would validate the divine appointment of Aaron as High Priest. Despite the fact that Yahweh had promised to (eventually) make them an entire nation of priests, a very restrictive priesthood was mandated within Kingdom law. However, another law provided an avenue for identifying oneself with the High Priest. This was the law of the Nazarite.

The law of the Nazarite primarily concerns itself with the issues of separation and unity. *When either man or woman shall separate themselves to vow a vow of a Nazarite, to separate themselves **unto** the LORD...* (Num. 6:2). The Nazarite man or woman voluntarily committed to separate themselves **to** Yahweh and **from** four specific categories, somewhat like the foursquare boundaries of the wilderness encampment. We do something similar when we erect barriers around personal property boundaries. We separate 'to' and we separate 'from'.

We keep our pets and toddlers inside this point of separation and we keep potentially harmful and disturbing elements outside that point of separation. The Nazarite's path to unity with Yahweh necessarily brought them through the principle of separation. The lesson of unity through separation is also displayed prominently in the divine institution of marriage. A man and woman achieve a singular unity by separating themselves to each other and from all other men and women.

High Priest Emulation

Although only the physically flawless male descendants of Aaron would qualify as priests under Kingdom law, everyone was free to emulate the High Priest through a Nazarite vow. Just as the High Priest was forbidden to drink alcohol during his Tabernacle service (Lev. 10:9-10) so the Nazarite had to maintain a separation from alcohol and even vinegar made from any form of alcohol during his vow term (Num. 6:3). The only person in the entire congregation (with the exception of the Nazarite man or woman) who could not touch any dead body at any time for any reason was the High Priest (Lev. 21:11). The lesser priests were allowed to touch the dead body of their father, mother, brother or unmarried sister (Lev. 21:1-3), but no other dead body. Only the High Priest and the Nazarites shared this particular death contact separation distinction. Additionally, the uncut hair of the Nazarite is defined as the *consecration of his God* being upon his head. The Hebrew word translated *consecration* is *nezer*. This word is primarily translated as crown. In fact it is the word used to describe the crown of the High Priest. *And they made the plate of the holy crown (nezer) of pure gold, and wrote upon it a writing, like to the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD (Ex. 39:30). And he put the mitre upon his head; also upon the mitre, even upon his forefront, did he put the golden plate, the holy crown (nezer); as the LORD commanded Moses (Lev. 8:9).* There is a direct connection between the terms of separation for the Nazarite vow and the laws distinguishing the High Priest. This relationship and the terms of Nazarite separation should be of particular interest to ourselves as we strive to emulate our High Priest and betrothed, the Lord Jesus Christ. We are the Nazarites of the Spirit, who hope to serve as immortal priests in the renewed Kingdom teaching the principles of unity and separation through the features of Millennial Kingdom Law.

The Strong Drink Separation

The Nazarite, seeking a separation **unto** Yahweh (unity), was required to separate themselves **from** any form of alcohol during the term of his or her vow. Consumption of strong drink (alcohol) is not inherently wrong, as wine is a divinely appointed memorial symbol of our High Priest's sacrifice and victory. Excessive consumption (drunkenness) is certainly divinely unacceptable. It wasn't simple alcoholic abstinence that was the divine emphasis in this separation issue. Yahweh explains **why** the alcohol abstinence was required for the High Priest immediately after Nadab and Abihu are executed by fire from heaven for demeaning the priestly ordination procedure. *Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations: ¹⁰ And **that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean;** ¹¹ And **that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the LORD hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses** (Lev 9:10-11). Alcohol consumption would cloud the conscious distinction between what was holy and what was unholy, offering an advantage to the instinctive, deceptive thought processes of the human heart. The distinction between holy and unholy must not only be understood but taught to the community of God today.*

Unity Through Avoiding Separation?

As the Nazarites of the Spirit we must be able to distinguish between what our Heavenly Father determines is holy and clean compared to what is unholy and unclean. Our generation is particularly challenged in this responsibility as the world reels with drunkenness from the cup of the wine of fornication poured out by the apostate harlot system (Rev 17:2;18:3). Holy and unclean blend together in the eyes of the world's political and religious leaders as toleration becomes their standard of godly love. Abominable behavior is redefined as simply an 'alternate lifestyle.' The standards of holiness plummet and the previously recognized borders of acceptable behavior are constantly being widened. This blurring of what is holy and unholy is a universal societal flaw,

infecting even the brotherhood. Scripturally, the application of fellowship withdrawal is presented as an educational tool. It is an act of love intended to reclaim what had already been lost. Fellowship withdrawal was divinely intended to extend from this same Nazarite theme of unity through separation, yet it is often improperly applied. It is sometimes used as a sword instead of a rod. It is sometimes presumed to be some kind of permanent banishing, being impossibly paralleled to 'stoning' under the Law of Moses. Others misunderstand withdrawing fellowship from those who do not separate holy from unholy as an act imposed on Ecclesial victims by the self-righteous. Withdrawing fellowship in the Ecclesial Age was initiated as a teaching tool, to save the indignantly unrepentant from themselves. This disciplinary procedure was intended as an extension of this same theme of unity through separation. We may possibly win back into unity, through Ecclesial separation, what has already been lost in the divinely appointed procedure of withdrawing fellowship. This can only happen if we love them enough to experience the torturous experience of social and fellowship withdrawal.

Cleaving

Separating holy from unholy is a major theme throughout scripture, extending through several avenues of thought. The issue of cleaving is one of these meditational avenues. The act of cleaving indicates a single definitive stroke separating a single unit into two separate units. This was portrayed on the first day of creation when the Creator 'divided' light from darkness (Gen 1:4). The Hebrew verb translated *divided* is also rendered separation, sever and asunder. Our goal is to be in the image and likeness of our Heavenly Father. We must be able to distinguish between light and darkness. We must be willing and able to separate them, as well as to cleave holy from unholy. This cleaving principle is evident in the breaking of the memorial bread (Matt. 26:26), the severing of the covenant animals in Genesis 15, the cleaving of the Christ-rock at Rephidim for its water of life (Is. 48:21; 1 Cor. 10:4), the cloven hoof identifying a clean animal acceptable for a meal (Lev 11) and that same cloven calf's foot seen on the feet of the Cherubim (Ezek 1:7). The Cherubim cloven feet reflect the divinely approved walk (the behavior patterns) of those who understood how to separate (cleave) the clean from the unclean. We must walk with the cloven foot of the calf and partake of the cloven hoofed (therefore clean) meal while refusing the unclean paths and unclean meals. We must cleave the memorial bread, as Christ's pattern indicates, and then partake of it before the wine. The Nazarite man or woman had to separate themselves from strong drink in their quest for unity with Yahweh to learn the compulsory lesson of defining and separating holy and unholy.

The Touch of Death

The Nazarite had to separate themselves from all dead bodies. Exclusively mirroring the High Priest, there were no exceptions to this command. It is the only separation commandment that is mentioned as invalidating whatever vow term had been completed, even if the commandment violation was accidental (Num 6:9-12). That unintended death contact is described as defiling the Nazarite's head of his consecration (crown) and also constitutes a condition for which a sin offering and burnt offering combination were demanded for the purpose of achieving a necessary atonement. This is simply because someone died unexpectedly and suddenly next to the Nazarite with unintentional contact being made with that newly dead body. Therefore the principles and exhortations concerning this separation from death commandment must be highly significant.

Physical contact with a dead body or another unclean item was defiling. This transmitted unclean condition required a compulsory procedure for cleansing. The only alternative was permanent expulsion from the community of God (Num 19:13,20), thereby representing the condition of perishing (permanent death). The principle of separation and contact avoidance from what God defines as unclean progresses through the Ecclesial Age, but without the ritual. We are expected to wisely apply the principle in our lives but are not required to perform the mechanical ritual. The developing bride of the King's son is expected to have reached a maturity stage where she is more self-aware and spiritually responsible for herself. The childlike education by ritual has surrendered to the more mature stage of correctly applying the principles of those rituals in varying

environments and challenges. *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty* (2 Cor 6:14,17-18). Unity with our Heavenly Father is only possible through the principle of separation, just like the Nazarite and just like a groom and bride.

This is exactly the opposite unity philosophy preached by the disciples of serpent wisdom, collectively deceived by their self-worshipping hearts. Religious and political leaders in societies around the planet call for unity on the basis of respecting diversity, of toleration and not separation. One is considered unloving and un-godlike if they cannot embrace and honor those who practice abominable behavior and express God-despising postulations. They define peace as the absence of disturbance instead of the presence of harmony. The serpent philosophy is exactly the opposite of divine wisdom due to its core of ego driven self gratification and mirror worship. The toleration of unclean behavior patterns and Creator-despising philosophies have become the new standards of righteousness. This is the philosophy of unity without any separation. This is serpent wisdom.

Towing Iniquity

This thought process was evident in the brotherhood during Isaiah's prophetic tenure. Interestingly this particular reasoning is expressed immediately after Yahweh's parable of Israel as a vineyard incapable of producing good fruit. This relates to the Nazarite separation from all grape products. (Is. 5:18-22) *Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope. These are people that tow sinful behavior, based on the vanity of personal significance, behind them wherever they go That say, Let him make speed, and hasten his work, that we may see it: and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come, that we may know it!* This is the rather odd attitude that these indulgent Israelites expected Yahweh to make His presence and will dramatically obvious or they saw no need to respond. This was the attitude of the Israelites who baited and taunted Jesus for miracle after miracle, but refused to respond to his ministry. *Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!* This is the reversal of right and wrong. It is calling holy 'unholy' and identifying what is unclean as clean. This is defining the serpent philosophy as divine righteousness with the subtle purpose of disengaging the inconvenient and uncomfortable conscience. *Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!* This is the true motivation. It is the vanity of self-worship. There are only two gods in existence. There is our Heavenly Father who created us. There is also the mirror. We human beings create gods in our own image and likeness instead of exhibiting the humility of reshaping ourselves into the image and likeness of our Creator. *Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink.* People actually boast about unclean behavior such as drunkenness, competing with each other to excel at the things that separate them outside the boundaries of holiness.

Unlike the Nazarite and the High Priest, physical contact with a dead body was not forbidden to the general population of God's community. In fact, burying a hanged man before darkness was a divine command (Deut 21:22-23). However, upon death contact, one always had to leave the community and participate twice in a sin offering over a seven day term (Num. 19). There had been no transgression of the law and yet participation in two sin offerings was mandatory. There was no guilt but a sin offering was demanded. This guiltless sin offering precedent is also displayed in a new mother's sin offering, the sin offering for those recovered from both leprosy and a bodily issue and the sin offerings for the bronze altar of burnt offering. Noncompliance with this death contact cleansing ritual demanded an irreversible and permanent expulsion. The person defiled by the dead had to have the ashes of the red heifer, an offering for sin, sprinkled upon them on the third and seventh days. These divinely appointed terms define the periods over which death would reign over the Messiah and

over creation. Christ's own testimony defines the period of his death as three days and three nights (Matt. 12:40). The divine plan portrays the limit for the reign of sin and death as seven divine days of 1,000 years each. This is why the number seven is so dominant in Kingdom Law with its sin educating emphasis. Sin, and therefore death, will not be allowed to continue beyond the seventh 'divine day.'

Touching

Divinely clean and unclean conditions due to physical contact is a fascinating scriptural theme surfacing at subjects like the contagious transference of ritual uncleanness by touch (Lev. 15; Hag 2:10-14); the automatic holiness from direct contact with either the sin offering or the bronze altar of burnt offering (Lev 6:27, Ex. 29:37); the seven day death contact cleansing ritual (Num. 19); Christ's elimination through touching of the unclean conditions of leprosy (Matt 8:3), bodily issues (Lk 8:44) and death (Lk 8:54-55); and the transference of the Holy Spirit power through the hands of an Apostle being placed on a baptized believer (Acts 8:15-17, 2 Tim 1:6). Therefore it is quite significant that Paul's exhortation to the Corinthians concerning unity with God through separation from being unequally yoked, along with separation from unrighteousness and darkness features this recommendation: *Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.* (2 Cor 6:17-18). Unity with our Heavenly Father is conditional upon our capacity to identify and then separate ourselves from what our Creator defines as unacceptable.

One cannot convert filthy water into clean by adding clean water. We have to carefully filter that contaminated water, separating out the impurities, so the foul waters might be clean enough to sustain life. This feature of creation represents the same principle we are addressing. The popular serpent philosophy of society preaches the godliness of toleration, of embracing what is unclean without embarrassing distinctions. The problem is that their god is the mirror. Their self-worshipping doctrines are instinctive and heart generated. A powerful paradigm is created by this aggregate perception-is-reality frame of reference. This paradigm of unity by abandoning separation is a philosophical venom that increasingly threatens the brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ. This mushrooming philosophy directly opposes the consistent divine principle of unity through separation, of cleaving between light and darkness and between clean and unclean.

The Nazarite man or woman and the High Priest under Kingdom Law had to separate themselves **from** all dead bodies so that they might separate themselves **to** the Creator of Heaven and Earth. We Nazarites of the Spirit in this Ecclesial Age must emulate our High Priest in striving to separate ourselves from what is related to death and not touching the unclean thing. In our next consideration we will examine the Nazarites separation from grape products and hair removal.

Jim Dillingham

Unity Through Separation No. 2

The Kingdom Law introduced through Moses dramatically restricted the priesthood, despite the terms of the national covenant promising their status of a nation of priests. Family patriarchs would no longer build altars, offer sacrifices and spiritually lead their communities. A High Priest was separated from the people and approached Yahweh on their behalf. Although almost all of the community was forbidden from serving as priests, they were offered an avenue to identify themselves specifically with the High Priest. This was the Law of the Nazarite.

A Nazarite man or woman could separate themselves **to** Yahweh by separating themselves **from** four elements, thereby pursuing divine unity through separation. There is a powerful association with the High Priest exhibited through these borders of separation. The Nazarites and the High Priest each had alcohol consumption injunctions. Exclusively the High Priest and the Nazarites were forbidden to ever touch any dead body, despite their personal relationship to the deceased. The Hebrew word used to describe the Nazarite's unshorn head of "consecration" is also the particular Hebrew word (*nezer*) used to identify the crown of the High Priest. We are the Nazarites of the Spirit, seeking identification with our High Priest Jesus Christ. We should understand this divine principle of unity through separation along with the reasons for these particular four elements of separation that bordered the divine unity being offered.

Our previous consideration centered on the Nazarites quest for unity with Yahweh based on separating themselves from alcohol and the dead. Like our High Priest, we Nazarites of the spirit must be able to define and separate between what is divinely acceptable and divinely unacceptable (holy and unholy, clean and unclean). Defilement by death contact demands a resolute personal policy of separation from all that is related to the curse of sin and death. We are exhorted to *touch not the unclean thing* so that our Heavenly Father will receive us unto Himself (2 Cor 6:17-18). These issues project the Nazarite theme of unity through separation.

Volunteer Status

The Nazarite man or woman volunteered, with few exceptions (i.e. Samson who was appointed a Nazarite before birth). The Brothers and Sisters of Christ in the Ecclesial Age are like the Nazarite under Kingdom Law who voluntarily declared a vow of service to separate themselves to their Heavenly Father. This was not true for circumcision under the covenant of works, as Hebrew sons did not volunteer for this ritual and undoubtedly protested loudly on that eighth day of their life. Entering into the covenant relationship today is strictly voluntary through baptism. The Nazarite volunteered their service for a specific term. We commit the rest of our life, our new life, to the service of our Heavenly Father, emulating His appointed High Priest. It is this voluntary and primary dedication of service that is exhibited in the third law of Nazarite separation from all grape products.

Creation's Gospel

One of the many great scriptural themes is the consistent parallel between the children of God and fruit bearing plant life. There are identifications of the enlightened with the vineyard, fig tree, olive tree, wheat, grain and fruit in general. The unenlightened and supporters of the serpent philosophy are consistently represented as non-fruit bearing plant life, such as briars, weeds, thistles and thorns. This fits a larger pattern where we see our Creator constantly defined by clouds; His spoken word and that word that was made flesh likened to the rain that issues from the clouds (Deut 32:2; Is 55:10-11; Js 5:7; Ps 72:1,6) ; bodies of water used as symbols of judgment between the sons of God and the sons of men (Red Sea parting and closing, the flood, 1st of 10

plagues in Egypt vs. 1st miracle in wilderness at Marah, etc); and plant life representing mankind but separating between enlightened and unenlightened on the basis of the presence or absence of some form of life sustaining fruit production. The key issue is that the Creator has every right to expect fruit when He plants good seed in good earth, protects the field from harm, provides nutrients (rain, sunlight and earth) and removes competing weeds. The Creator has every right to expect good fruit from this preparation and cultivation. This is Isaiah's parable song of the divine vineyard of Judah that bore wild grapes despite the vineyard's flawless resources, preparation and cultivation (Is 5:1-8). We are expected to bear **good** fruit, not just fruit in general.

This expectation of a return on investment is a universal principle blanketing both spirit and flesh philosophies. However, despite the fact that mankind understands this relationship of investment and return in their own lives they instinctively prefer the opposite understanding from the gods of their imaginations. They want something for nothing from whatever gods they prefer to worship.

Something for Nothing

Much of Christianity embraces the delusion concerning an instant guaranteed salvation. It is presumed a magic phrase spouted somewhat sincerely about taking Jesus into one's heart completely purchases an eternal life of bliss. The capacity of the deceitful heart to blind any who refuse to love truth (in all forms) is staggering. This philosophy of something for nothing contradicts divine principles in scripture and creation. An overemphasis on grace imbalances the principle of faithful service (works) in the blind groping for fearless comfort on a self-centered (instead of Creator-centered) worship platform.

We are the vineyard that is expected to bear sweet, plump grapes for the divine Husbandman. The harvest belongs to Him. The Nazarite agreed to separate themselves from any form of grape product during the term of their commitment, separating themselves unto Yahweh. This signified a recognition that the harvest belonged to the one with whom they sought unity. If we Nazarites of the spirit wish to pursue unity with our Heavenly Father we must recognize that our service belongs to Him. Earning a living and raising a family and enjoying our resources must be understood in the context of being underneath the significance of our divine service pattern. The sons of God are not to be parasites like the sons of men, whose philosophy is to take much and give little, if anything. Shepherds are expected to care for and protect the flock, not exploit the flock. The motivations repeatedly presented for the teachers of false doctrine within the brotherhood were coveting personal glory and personal wealth. *Through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you* (2 Pet 2:1-3). *Grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them* (Acts 20:29-30). *Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple* (Rom 16:17-18).

We are not only required to bear fruit to our Creator, it must be **good** fruit. The bounty of the vineyard belongs to the divine Husbandman. In the Ecclesial Age we Nazarites of the spirit demonstrate a benefit from our Heavenly Father's grace by actually partaking of the vineyard, unlike the Nazarite under the Law. We are commanded to consume the fruit of the grape. The wine of the memorial service represents the blood, the life of our Messiah. He is the true vine. *I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit* (John 15:1-2). We are invited to partake of the Creator's vineyard, the very life of His son in the wine. This lesson concerning our necessity to bear good fruit to our Creator is reinforced every Sunday morning when we partake of the fruit of the *true vine* to remember his death and resurrection. Jesus never once acted in his own exclusive, arrogant self-interest (as opposed to every one of us). He gave all of the fruit he generated in service

to his Father and that fruit was excellent. This is one of our inspirations as we partake of the memorial wine. We have been bought with a price (1 Cor. 6:20). We have had our ear bored through at the door (Christ) of our Master's house, volunteering for lifelong devotion (Ex 21:1-6). We must bear good fruit to our divine Husbandman.

The Devotional Badge of the Nazarite

The Nazarite was forbidden to cut their hair until the end of the term of their vow, when that hair had to be completely removed. This unshorn head during the vow term would be a publicly visible identification of their status as a Nazarite. This head of their consecration (nezer/crown), the uncut hair, was the public badge of their devotional commitment to the Creator of heaven and earth. The Nazarites of the spirit must also exhibit a public declaration of their commitment. Our reasoning for separating ourselves from political debates and activism, patriotic celebrations, inappropriate humor or entertainment, military service and society's brotherhood organizations will be public knowledge. We explain our motivations for separating ourselves from the political correctness of this behavior because we must be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks a reason for the hope that is in us, with meekness and fear. However there is a great deal more to the unshorn Nazarite head than its public nature.

The head was divinely designed to serve as the seat of authority and responsibility. This is divinely expressed through the features of creation, Kingdom Law, prophecy and terms of judgment. This issue is universally understood by all societies, evidenced by its consistent metaphorical expression in common language. Scripturally, kings and priests were anointed on their heads, validating their elevated authority. An offerer was required to place their hand on the head of a sacrificial animal at the door of the tabernacle as they personally killed the animal they were offering to God for their own behalf. The expression "blood on the head" indicated moral responsibility and guilt (Josh 2:19; 2 Sam 1:16; Ezek 33:4). It is certainly reasonable that the hair which issues from this head of authority and responsibility should therefore represent all that issues from the mind, including our actions, words and beliefs. The hair symbolizes all the activities, dedicated separation and motivational intensity during the term of the Nazarite vow. It is for this reason that this hair, that head of their consecration (nezer/crown), is completely shaved off at the conclusion of vow term (Num. 6:18). This is different from the ritual of the healed leper in that only the head of the Nazarite is shaved, as opposed to the entire body of the healed leper seeking to regain a lost unity with the Divine presence among the Heavenly Father's community of believers.

Kindling for the Flames of Divine Harmony

The shorn hair from the Nazarite's head is placed as kindling in the fire on the altar to specifically consume the peace offering. Although five of the six altar offerings are employed for this divinely appointed procedure at the conclusion of the Nazarite vow term it is only the flames accepting the peace offering that would consume the hair-symbol of the Nazarites thoughts and deeds. This distinction confirms the original premise that this vow roadmaps the pursuit of unity with Yahweh. Unlike any other altar offering, the peace offering represented fellowship. This is what peace is all about. Scripture defines peace as the presence of harmony (Eph 2:14-16). The sons of men horribly degrade this divine principle of peace into the dramatically minimized understanding of the absence of disturbance. The sons of God should never, ever think of peace in those terms. The peace offering was the only offering where all three parties involved in the sacrifice fellowshiped together. Yahweh received his portion on the bronze altar through the flames. The priest received the right shoulder and the offerer was allowed to partake of the same offering for one or two days depending on which of the three peace offering categories were being addressed. The peace offering indicated harmony and unity. This is where the hair, the consecration and crown of the Nazarite, was to serve as fuel for the flames of divine acceptance. A unity was intended and achieved in the vow of the Nazarite. It was accomplished through the avenue of separation. It was after the flaming hair consumed the peace offering that the Nazarite officially ended his or her

vow term by drinking wine (Num 6:20). The partaking of the wine at the conclusion of this vow term and ritual represents the same image as the memorial service. We hope to partake of the life (the blood seen in the wine) of the Messiah, thereby achieving perfect harmony with our Heavenly Father. When we partake of the life of our Messiah we will be born again of the spirit nature. We will be immortal and incapable of sin ever again. We will never again experience the curses of sin or its nature. Our divine unity will be complete.

Surely we have seen the parallels between ourselves and the Nazarites. But perhaps we haven't seen it all. We are the Nazarites of the spirit. We live in a different divinely appointed age where the educational focus is not sin identification but the promotion of imputed righteousness. The magnification of sin achieved by Kingdom Law schoolmastered us to Christ by underlining the impossibility of our self-justification. Our priesthood is quite different from the priesthood ordained at Sinai. Our High Priest is immortal and has not yet returned from the Most Holy where he resides in the presence of the glory of Yahweh. This alternating divine educational focus between priesthood ages will necessarily modify rituals but perfectly sustain the principles upon which these new rituals are constructed.

From Law to Grace: Reversing the Rituals

We can see a distinct difference between the Kingdom Age priesthood and the Ecclesial Age priesthood. The Aaronic priests were forbidden from ever partaking of the sin offering for the High Priest or nation when the sacrificial blood entered the divine Sanctuary. Yet our Ecclesial priesthood is commanded that we must partake of the sin offering of Christ, whose blood (life) was brought into the presence of Yahweh (Heb 13:10-13). Under Kingdom Law and Patriarchal Age Law no one was allowed to eat blood or they would be cut off permanently. Yet the Ecclesial Age community of believers is commanded to partake of the blood of our Messiah. We are warned that if we do not drink his blood as well as eat his flesh then we have no life in us. It is only by drinking Christ's blood and eating his flesh that we might have eternal life (John 6:53-57). These distinctions highlight the different educational focus of Kingdom Age laws and Ecclesial Age laws. The first focused on understanding the severe negative associations of sin and its effects. The second focuses on the wonderful positive associations of the divine grace of imputed righteousness only available through one source, Jesus Christ. This is why so many issues are reversed between the Kingdom Age rituals and the Ecclesial Age rituals. We are learning a greater measure of the divine mind and glory. Under Kingdom Law we learn what to separate ourselves from. Under Ecclesial Age law we learn what to separate ourselves to. This is why the specific features of the four points of separation for the Nazarite under Kingdom Law are exactly reversed within the four rituals of the Nazarites of the spirit under Ecclesial Age law.

Just as the Nazarite had four points of separation in order to pursue a divine unity so Christadelphians have four divinely mandated rituals to be observed in our pursuit of divine unity (baptism, memorial service, sisters' headcoverings and sisters' silence). The significant difference is that we are commanded to perform exactly what was forbidden to the Nazarite, but in a highly restrictive arena. Our performance is limited to a single focus, an attachment and identification with our High Priest. The Nazarite identified with his High Priest within the rules of his separation. We identify ourselves with our High Priest by binding ourselves to our High Priest in performing the very acts forbidden to the Nazarite.

Touching the Messiah's Dead Body

The Nazarite was never to touch any dead body, no matter what the personal relationship. There was no exception for parents, wife, children or others. We Nazarites of the Spirit are required to actually be buried with our High Priest in baptism. We aren't told to merely touch his dead body. We are commanded to join him in his death and burial through a baptismal grave. We cannot enjoy the intended harmony through joining Christ in his resurrection to immortality unless we first join him in his death, validating that our Creator is perfectly righteous in requiring death for sin. We must perform exactly what was forbidden to the Kingdom Law

Nazarite. The High Priest the Nazarite emulated was not immortal, unlike our High Priest. The Messiah's sacrifice for sin was still a mystery at that time, despite the overwhelming prophetic evidence in the Law that is now handily available to us through the New Testament and hindsight. The Nazarite ritual served its purpose when the divine educational focus was sin magnification. The rituals of the Nazarites of the spirit now focus on educating the faithful concerning the divine grace evident in imputed righteousness. Just as they had to separate **from**, we must separate **to**.

The Nazarite could not partake of any alcohol. We are commanded to partake of wine regularly to remember the sacrifice of our High Priest. We must do exactly what was forbidden to the Nazarite, even though we both are seeking that same divine unity. The divine principles are exactly the same but the rituals are different because our Heavenly Father is progressively showing us more of the picture, just as we do with our children as they mature.

The Nazarite could not consume any grape product. They were being taught that they were the vineyard and that the fruit of the vineyard exclusively belonged to the divine Husbandman. We are commanded to partake of the true vine, Jesus Christ. We drink his blood in the wine and we eat his flesh in the bread. The Nazarite could not partake of anything from kernel to husk. We must partake of the *true vine* in both body and blood. Just as the Nazarite had to separate himself 'from' in mirroring their High Priest, we must now separate ourselves 'to' in order to identify with our High Priest.

Uncovering According to Law - Covering According to Grace

The Nazarite could not cut his or her hair, but shaved it at the end of their vow to demonstrate the unity they sought by offering that hair in the flames of the sacrifice for peace (harmony). When we seek the presence of our Heavenly Father in prayer through our High Priest we understand that a sister must cover her hair, so that she doesn't have to shave her head (as the Nazarite did). *But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven. For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered* (1 Cor 11:5-6). The shaving of the head of the Nazarite is reversed in the Ecclesial Age ritual of headcoverings during prayer (or prophecy). Once again we see specifically four issues being highlighted in the headcovering ritual. These are the four divinely appointed headship stages. *The head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God* (1 Cor 11:3). God(1) is the head of Christ (2) who is the head of man (3) who is the head of woman (4). The Sister was instructed to cover her head whenever she spoke **directly to** God through Christ (bypassing her divinely appointed head – the man) or when she spoke **directly for** God and Christ in prophecy. In covering her head a Sister covers the glory of her head (man) as she seeks her Heavenly Father's attention through her High Priest. In covering her head she shields the glory of man (her head) from the face of the Father. The man cannot cover his head as he reflects Christ as his head. The sister shielding the image and glory of the man on her head in prayer is a highly respectful act. If a Sister refuses to cover her head in any prayer she is displaying the glory of man (her head) in the face of God and refusing to accept the divinely appointed order or the divine wisdom of the creational order. It is very confusing to understand how anyone might have the slightest imagination that this headcovering during prayer law could somehow be limited to Ecclesial community gatherings. No sister was ever allowed to pray or prophesy in any ecclesial environment by divine command, whether or not she was exhibiting the Holy Spirit gift of prophecy. In the context of the Corinthian Ecclesial abuses of the Holy Spirit gifts Paul makes this statement: *... as in all churches of the saints, let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law* (1 Cor 14:33-34). Sisters were never allowed under any circumstances to pray or prophesy in ecclesial environments. Therefore, it is completely impossible to conveniently limit the application of this ritual to any particular environment. There are many

layers of reasoning to consider the sisters' headcovering during prayer or prophesying ritual but that is not our current focus. There is a great wealth of foundational consideration for this ritual and its implications throughout scripture but that will have to be reserved for another time. We will have to be satisfied with the understanding that we reverse the separating rituals of the Kingdom Law Nazarite during the Ecclesial Age. Sisters do not shave their heads in seeking unity. They do exactly the opposite. They cover their heads pursuing that same unity with the Father through their High Priest. They **cover their head** as opposed to the Nazarite vow conclusion of **uncovering their head**.

The Nazarite ritual, when compared with the Ecclesial Age rituals, confirms the progressing educational policies of our Heavenly Father. We always have more to learn. This is even true of Christ who had to be given the Revelation which he gave to John through the angel. The principles displayed in Kingdom Law are evident in Ecclesial Age laws and rituals and will be evident in the laws and rituals of the Millennial Kingdom Age. Our Creator does not change. It is only His educational focus that changes. We are not free to ignore any part of divine communication or we become imbalanced in our understandings. If we hope to live forever in the future we must live correctly now, understanding the lessons of the past.

Jim Dillingham

Holiness by Touch

There is an undeniable and quite powerful **physical** defilement theme magnified under Kingdom Law. There is also a separate moral defilement (due to transgression) that is addressed by divine Kingdom laws and rituals. However, this moral defilement theme simply compliments and does not eclipse the physical defilement issue. The presence or absence of guilt separates these two defilement themes. This observation is not inconsequential. It has everything to do with our foundational understandings of what separates us from our Heavenly Father and the path of salvation.

One confirmation of this dual defilement issue is that while there are certainly sin offerings demanded for the appropriate guilt assigned to transgressing divine laws, there are also sin offerings demanded where no guilt existed whatsoever. This sin offering category was required on the basis of a physical defilement without attaching any moral guilt. In fact sometimes sin offerings are demanded as the result of righteous behavior (as in the birthing of a child and the burying of a hanged man before nightfall). Guiltless sin offerings are demanded for touching the dead, for giving birth, for leprosy recovery, bodily issue recovery and the atonement of the bronze altar of burnt offering.

Respect This Principle or Leave Forever

These transgression-less sin offerings could not be ignored without dire consequences. They could not be brushed aside as if the only real issue was the guilt from transgressional sin that required forgiveness, without inviting a divinely required permanent expulsion from the community. The sin offerings and cleansing procedures that cleansed from a physical defilement were mandatory and carried heavy penalties for non-compliance. If an Israelite righteously buried a hung man before nightfall (Deut. 21:23) he still had to reside outside the camp, away from his family, for seven days (Num. 19). He had to participate in two sin offerings over that period, despite his righteousness in carefully observing divine law. If that man refused to participate... if he presumed this cleansing ritual to be insignificant, claiming that he had done nothing wrong and was only doing what God had commanded ... he would have to leave and never return under any conditions whatsoever (Num 19:13,20). He was as good as dead to his family and the community of believers. The penalty was extreme because the principle this ritual spotlighted is extremely important.

An important feature in this physical defilement theme within Kingdom Law was the act of **touching**. When the covenant was established at Sinai the command from heaven was that no living thing should **touch** the mount. Touching that mount where Kingdom Law was initiated meant certain death. *There shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or man, it shall not live: when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount* (Ex 19:13). This covenant was based on works. This covenant magnified sin and school-mastered us to Christ in desperate need of an unattainable self-justification. It was perfect symmetry that touching this very Mountain where the vileness of sin and our incapacity to live without sin was being spotlighted would mean certain death for both man and beast.

Death by Touch

This injunction at the burning mountain mirrors the one law in Eden. Eve testified to the serpent that just **touching** the tree in the center of the garden would result in death. *But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die* (Gen 3:3). This failure of touching and then eating from the forbidden tree introduced death to man and beast. Death could never have been part of an entire creation divinely defined as *very good*. This is especially true when we see that

the one man who ever lived without practicing sin refused the definitely lesser title of simply *good* (Matt 19:17). What in all our current natural order could qualify as *very good* if the best thing that this current 'cursed' natural order has ever witnessed did not qualify as *even good* prior to his resurrection? Death was introduced upon man and beast for touching and consuming the fruit from the forbidden tree in the center of the garden. This was exactly the injunction at Sinai. The man or beast that touched the flaming mount would have to die.

Touching the Two Mountains

Now we serve our Heavenly Father under Ecclesial Age law and rituals. The borders of sin were established at Sinai. The borders of righteousness were established at Mt. Zion. Heb 12:18, 22-24 *For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched... But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant.* Just as Kingdom Law demanded a separation and an injunction against touching, so Ecclesial Age Law demands its counterpart, an embracing. In our previous commentary we noted how the Nazarites of the Law had to separate from the four items that the Nazarites of the Spirit under current divine ritual instructions must now partake. They touched not any dead body. We bury ourselves with Christ in baptism and eat his flesh at memorial service. They could drink no strong drink but we must remember Christ's sacrifice and victory with wine. They could not partake of any part of the grape but we must partake of the blood of the grape specifically in remembering Christ. They had to uncover their heads at the end of their vow in shaving the head of their consecration and placing it in the fires of the peace offering. Our sisters must cover their heads in any prayer so that they are not required to shave their heads for prayer. Each Nazarite sought unity with Yahweh. The Nazarite under Kingdom Law did it by touching **not** and the Nazarite under Ecclesial Law does it by **touching**. We are being taught to separate ourselves from sin and separate ourselves to righteousness. Neither part of the equation is dispensable. One does not replace or eclipse the other just as a western border cannot serve as an eastern border of a kingdom.

There is a touching imbalance demonstrated in the qualifying path of uncleanness versus cleanness by touch. Both defilement and holiness could be achieved simply by touch under Kingdom Law. However, the condition of being divinely unclean is a contagious state, while divine cleanness is an isolated, quarantined state. This distinction speaks volumes about our cursed condition and the path of salvation.

Contagious Uncleanness

Even **indirect** contact with an original unclean condition still established a divinely unacceptable 'uncleanness' that had to be addressed. However holiness came exclusively by direct contact with the specific holiness host. When one merely touched the bed or saddle upon which an unclean person had come in contact, they automatically were divinely unclean (defiled) until the evening. They had only touched what the unclean person had touched (Lev 15:4-12) and yet now had to address that contagious unclean status by washing and waiting for a new day marked by sunset. Unholiness (a physical uncleanness condition) was contagious. Anything coming in physical contact with an unclean host actually became a new unclean host capable of converting another clean person into an unclean person. This was definitely not the case when it came to conferring holiness by touch. The capacity to award holiness by touch was never transferred from the original two divinely established sources.

There were only two components under Kingdom Law with the authority to establish something as automatically holy simply by **touch**. These were the bronze altar of burnt offering and the flesh of the sin offering. *Seven days thou shalt make an atonement for the altar, and sanctify it; and it shall be an altar most*

holy: whatsoever toucheth the altar shall be holy (Ex 29:37). Whatsoever shall touch the flesh thereof [sin offering] shall be holy (Lev. 6:27).

The Creator does not want us to miss the significance of this difference. Between two short prophecies concerning the ultimate glory of the divine sanctuary along with the dismantling of the heathen's political structures the prophet Haggai must ask the priests of God's Kingdom about this touching distinction. *Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Ask now the priests concerning the law, saying, If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it be holy? And the priests answered and said, No. Then said Haggai, If one that is unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean? And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean. Then answered Haggai, and said, So is this people, and so is this nation before me, saith the LORD; and so is every work of their hands; and that which they offer there is unclean (Hag 2:11-14).* The skirt holding the holy flesh could not transfer holiness. It did not serve as a host. The skirt could receive but could not pass along that holiness by touch. However, the unclean status of the dead body was contagious. The one who touched that dead body not only received physical defilement but could also pass along that physical defilement. They became an uncleanness host, with the capacity to infect other people and things with this status of ritual uncleanness. This divine unacceptability (ritual uncleanness) could be received and then given under Kingdom Law, unlike holiness.

Gospel Confirmation

This distinction confirms many basic understandings of the true gospel that are opposed by the apostasy. We are born into an unclean state. A clean thing cannot come out an unclean thing (Job 14:4). We are born into a physically unclean state, from which we need redemption, just like our Savior. Mary had to offer the combination sin and burnt offerings for having given birth to Jesus (Lk 2:22-24). Jesus needed salvation from the same physically unclean state of mortality as those he came to save. Although he suffered with the guiltless physically unclean state he inherited from his mother, he never suffered with 'moral' uncleanness, which is exactly what qualified him as the perfect weapon to break the power of sin (just as we break the bread to remember his victory and what was accomplished).

We do not enter the world with an even playing field. Unclean begets unclean. We are born with a propensity to do what is wrong in our Heavenly Father's eyes. Children do not have to be taught to lie. It is instinctive. We do not have to be educated in theft or prideful arrogance or self-worship. It is the education of eternal principles that requires dedicated learning. These are not instinctive. The endless debate over whether man as a species is basically good or basically evil is clearly decided by this touching distinction under Kingdom Law. We are born with the most vile engine in our center, the human heart. It needs no replenishing fuel or training to validate its status as being deceitful above all things and desperately wicked (Jer 17:9). The heart's great enemy is the divine gift of the conscience, first witnessed in Eden when Adam & Eve were ashamed of their nakedness resulting from their sin. The power of the conscience can be diminished through crafty rationalization, searing that conscience with an insensitive crust. It is the gleaming, two edged sword of divine truth that has the capacity to cut through that crusted over conscience, circumcising the heart. Unlike sin energies, holiness energies are not inherent. They must be introduced again and again and again. Righteousness energies fade, unlike sin energies which have to be suppressed.

Reversing Divine Uncleanness by Christ's Touch

Jesus broke the touching barrier. When he touched the leper it was not Jesus who became unclean, like all other people. The principle was reversed in God's son. The leper became clean when Jesus touched him (Matt 8:2-3). All three physical defilement conditions were reversed in Jesus. When the woman with the twelve year bodily issue touched the one part of Jesus that identified the true source of his healing power (the blue fringe on his hem signifying the commandments of Yahweh; Num 15:37-41) it was the faithful woman that was cleansed (Lk

8:43-48). Just like the bronze altar and the flesh of the sin offering, direct physical contact with Jesus had the capacity to confer a cleansing by holiness. The twelve year old daughter of Jairus did not defile Jesus when he touched her (Lk 8:54-55). She came back to life, shedding her unclean state and her capacity to make others unclean by touching her.

Christ's reversal of the divine laws of physical uncleanness by touch speaks to us of our glorious hope of inheriting the holy nature of our Heavenly Father. It is truly sad that the serpent lie, embraced by all the major religions of the world, maintains that the divine nature is an unclean state. The serpent lie maintained that sin does not have to mean death (*You shall not surely die*). This is the basis for the God-despising philosophy declaring that immortals have the capacity to sin, that sin and eternal life are actually partners. This flesh cherished philosophy degrades immortality as an unclean state with its fallen angel delusions and the forever tortured immortal entities of unforgiven sinners. We know the truth of our Creator's blessed holy nature. We know the truth of our own cursed, unclean human nature and the true reason for death. We know that the wages of sin is certainly death and that eternal life is a hopeful gift (Rom 6:23). It is Christ we look to for reversing both the physical and moral defilement of our cursed nature. We must touch him, embrace him and all he represents as well as separate ourselves from everything that opposes the righteousness of our Creator. We must bury ourselves in Christ's water grave, validating the righteousness of Yahweh in demanding death for sin. We must eat the flesh of his sin offering from our Christ/altar of burnt offering, forbidden to the priests of the previous divine educational age and mandated for the priests of the Ecclesial Age (Heb 13:10-13). The scriptural theme of touching perfectly confirms what we understand to be the eternal principles of our Heavenly Father evident in the hope of the true gospel.

Holy Power by Touch

At the beginning of the Ecclesial Age an interesting extension of this touching theme is demonstrated in the awarding of divine power. A dramatically greater degree of divine holiness is demonstrated in the awarding of divine power to believers who were free to apply this holy power in both positive and negative ways. Peter explained that the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit would be offered to two generations of Jewish and Gentile believers. Acts 2:38-39 *Ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is unto you, and to your children [two generations of Jews], and to all that are afar off [Gentiles: Eph 2:13-17], even as many as the Lord our God shall call [limited to believers called of God during those two generations]*. There are only two recorded Holy Spirit dispensation procedures during those two initial generations of the Ecclesial Age. The first was a direct outpouring of holy power from heaven. The second was the indirect awarding of power by an Apostle's touch. The direct outpourings only happened on three highly significant occasions, reflecting the exact same significance as the three High Priest activities in the Most Holy on the Day of Atonement (as examined in our sixth commentary in this series). The three direct outpourings of holy power from Heaven were directed first to Jesus Christ exclusively, then to the 120 Jewish members of Christ's family on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4) and finally to the Gentiles at the home of Cornelius (Acts 10:44). The three High Priest entrances into the Most Holy on the Day of Atonement were 1) to save the life of the High Priest with the incense to cloud procedure; 2) the atonement of the family of the High Priest (blood of the bullock) and 3) the atonement for the rest of the nation (blood of the goat). This was shown to represent the three immortalization events in God's plan being the salvation of Christ after three days of death, the salvation of the family (brotherhood...bride...children) of Christ at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom and the rest of the world at the end of the Millennial Kingdom. The three outpourings of the Holy Spirit mirror this salvation progression plan with Christ first at his baptism, his Jewish brethren several years later and lastly the Gentiles (those *afar off* but brought nigh) after several more years, possibly over an appropriate seven year period. Outside of these three direct dispensation events the only way to receive the gift of holy power during those two generations was by touch, and only from a very few men. It is only recorded that three apostles (Peter, John and Paul) had the

ability to pass on that holy power to other believers by their personal touch. Although there may have been other Apostles who had this capacity the divine record is limited to these three men.

Peter and John were sent to Samaria after Philip's successful preaching. There had been no outpouring of power. They prayed that these believers might receive the Holy Spirit of power. It was only when these two Apostles touched these believers that they received the holy power. *Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money* (Acts 8:17-18). The Apostle Paul also had this unique capacity to award holy power by his touch (Acts 19:6; Romans 1:11; 2 Timothy 1:6). Once the men who had the capability of awarding holy power by their touch had died, there would be no possible way to receive that power. Paul prophesied that something greater than the gifts of holy power would replace them (1 Cor 13:8-10). When that which was perfect (the finished word of God) was come, then that which was in part (the Holy Spirit gifts) would end. John's record of his visions on Patmos during his exile completed God's Holy Word. *That which is perfect* had come. The availability of the holy power that came by an Apostle's touch had ended along with the death of the Apostles, confirmed by the arrival of that which is perfect. This timing also perfectly matched the two generation limitation for the gifts of holy power promised by Peter in Jerusalem at Pentecost.

Greater Holiness Means Greater Responsibility

Holiness had again come through touching. Under Kingdom Law holiness was awarded through direct physical contact with the flesh of the sin offering or the altar of burnt offering. This holiness was limited to a divinely acceptable 'cleanness' qualification. During Christ's ministry his personal touch had a greater holiness application in miraculously eliminating the physical effects of the curse of sin and death (leprosy, disease, defiling bodily issues, blindness, lameness, death). During the initial transition period into the Ecclesial Age the touch of certain Apostles awarded an even greater degree of holiness. A man or woman actually enjoyed the ability to consciously direct the miraculous holy power of God in whatever way they chose. They could even use it in unclean ways, for self-glorification and teaching lies. Paul addresses the abuses of the Holy Spirit gifts, their purpose, limited application and eventual terms of their unavailability in chapters 12-14 of 1 Corinthians. This increased exposure of divine holiness and activity also brought a greater level of responsibility. Blaspheming the Holy Spirit was an unforgivable sin. *Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this age, neither in the age to come* (Matt 12:31-32; Heb 6:4-8). The two ages (*neither in this age, neither in the age to come*) where one would have the capacity to blaspheme the Holy Spirit would be those initial two generations of the Ecclesial Age and the introduction of the Millennial Kingdom when God's power will be poured out again upon mankind. These two separate ages of Holy Spirit outpourings also encompass the continuing scriptural theme of the early and the latter rains. When the veil is drawn back and a greater measure of the divine presence and glory is revealed the accompanying responsibility to positively respond increases accordingly. Just as enlightenment brings responsibility, so greater enlightenment is bound to greater responsibility. To whom much is given, much is required (Lk 12:48).

How Could This Be?

By what divine principle could a degree of holiness be awarded by these apostles? Holiness by touch had been limited to the flesh of the sin offering, the altar of burnt offering and the Messiah. The awarding of holy power by touch was now possible through particular men. We certainly can't question the legitimacy of this dramatic change, as everything our Heavenly Father ever does is perfect and right. There can be no violation of His

principles, no contradictions in His activities. On what basis could the touch of sinful men become a conduit for any degree of holiness?

It is on the basis of the principle of God manifestation. Our Creator wishes to project Himself, to share Himself with those who love Him, embrace His principles and would prefer to die than live without Him. It is by the principle of God manifestation that our Heavenly Father shares many (but not all) of His titles with both Christ and the faithful: i.e. Father, King, Savior, Light, Judge, and even God (Elohim & Theos; Ex. 4:16; 7:1; Ex 21:6; Ps 82:6-7; John 20:28). Our Heavenly Father wants children in His image and likeness. We take His family name at baptism, the one name shared by the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Matt 28:19)... and the faithful. It was by the principle of God manifestation that Peter, John and Paul became extensions of that exclusive divine source of holiness.

As our Creator's plan progresses we see this holiness by touch theme expand from simply a qualification of divine acceptance and cleanness through the touch of the altar and sin offering... through the reversing healing power of holiness/cleanness by the touch of our Messiah... and through the miraculous capabilities that came with the gift of holy power from the touch of certain Apostles. Now we ourselves groan with all of creation waiting for the touch of our Heavenly Father, the complete embrace of spirit nature when the faithful will be born again, when our bodies will be redeemed from the power of sin and death, when we will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God, when our Messiah will take us unto himself so that we might be where he is and when mortality will be swallowed up of life. Holiness is our quest.

Jim Dillingham