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**Proverbs**  
**an expositional Bible study**  
**by Randall Radic, ThD**

**Chapter 3**

**Proverbs Chapter 3**

**Introduction**

Chapter 3 introduces the dividends of self-discipline, or rather self-control. For self-discipline implies not doing something that you would rather do, such as going on a diet. When an individual goes on a diet, he/she gives up ice-cream or cream puffs in order to lose weight; however, during the time frame of the diet the individual dreams of nothing but ice-cream and cream puffs and counts down the days until he/she may once again eat that which he desires. Self-control on the other hand, is akin to an athlete not eating certain food because he has his eyes on another goal altogether, such as the Olympic Games. Thus, this person does not even consider or desire such delicacies; in other words, it never enters his mind to eat ice-cream and cream puffs. Thus, the athlete makes a conscious CHOICE to live a lifestyle conducive to his goal and his way of life. The athlete does not WANT OR DESIRE such foods; in fact, he WANTS 'health foods' because he WANTS to achieve another purpose. Thus INTENT OR MOTIVATION is the difference between self-discipline and self-control. Self-discipline is an effort, whereas self-control is inactivity based upon a way of life. 'Wisdom,' then, provides self-control rather than self-discipline.

**An Anticipatory Overview of Chapter 3**

Proverbs 3:5-8 are the pregnant verses in chapter 3. 'Trust in the Lord with all your heart,' and 'in all your ways acknowledge him.' These are two characteristics of the 'wise man.'

'All your heart' refers to an undivided heart. The 'wise man' trusts God with all of his heart. The heart is the center of the person, the 'me' of the individual. And the phrase 'with all the heart' is synonymous, in Scripture, with 'pure in heart.' To be pure in heart is to have a heart that is directed toward one thing alone. And the word pure refers

to 'cleansing,' i.e., the removal of that which is foreign, to separate the impurities from, or to leave that which is unadulterated or unmixed. For instance, pure honey is not honey which has been washed, it is honey that is unadulterated by foreign particles that are not honey. Thus, the wise man's heart is fixed totally upon the Lord.

The 'foolish man' trusts only himself; when he loves another person he loves because he is getting something out of it. Thus his love is mixed; he is getting something back. And this love can turn to hate in an instant because it comes from a divided heart. The 'foolish man' loves himself so dearly that he can never give himself to anyone or anything undividedly. The foolish man loves himself and everything must please him. But nothing does. This person wants to compel life and people to provide him with happiness.

The foolish man does not come to God or worship God because God is God and God is right. He approaches God because he wants something from God: he wants his problems solved, he wants money, he wants things, etc. Thus, his motives are 'mixed.'

For example, Jacob cheated Esau, his brother, out of his birthright; then he tricked his blind father, Isaac. Then Jacob left and went to his uncle Laban; and on his way there he falls asleep in a valley of stones, and while asleep he dreamt of a ladder that stood between him and heaven. And he saw the angels going up and down the ladder, and God spoke to him. Then he made a deal with God; if you (God) give me this and that, then I will give you ten percent of all I make. And amazingly, God said OK. For God loved him with an unconditional love just as he was. And as far as Jacob was concerned God was just another business account. Eventually, though, Jacob's motives altered from mixed to unmixed, and he saw God for Who and What He is. And then Jacob's name was changed from 'cheat or chiseler' to 'Israel,' 'prince of God.'

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Being 'double-minded' has its provenance in the word 'doubt.' So the person who doubts is first this way, then that way. And this is why Elijah addressed the people, 'How long will you halt between two opinions?' And the word for 'halt' in the Hebrew means 'lame,' or 'limp.' Thus, 'how long will you be lame, limping back and forth between two opinions?' Or, 'how long will you doubt?'

The 'wise man' deliberately chooses to trust the Lord with all his heart. The 'wise man' LEARNS to trust God Himself rather than his feelings or perceptions about God, and life and circumstances. The 'wise man,' then, responds to God Himself and not to his feelings about God. He rests in God completely. Regardless of confusion, of evil circumstances, or what he perceives with his human eyes, the 'wise man' trusts that God IS, and that 'all things do work together for good,' because God is in control.

In Psalm 51:10, David prayed, 'Create in me a pure heart, O God.' And at this time David was 51 years of age and his heart was divided, or doubting. And again, in Psalm 86:11, David prayed, 'O Lord, give me an undivided heart.' And James said, 'Cleanse your heart, you double-minded.' Thus, the 'wise man' chooses to trust in God.

For if the heart sees God and only God, then it is able to trust God. Thus, if the heart is right, then the life will be right. But if I is the center of life, then the complaining begins; for nothing is right. And life becomes nothing but a complaint; in fact, the complainer becomes a complaint.

If life is nothing more than crying to God to make the bad things go away, then God is not seen or trusted. For if God is in control, if God is love, then the 'wise man' sees through the circumstances and sees God. And then life has purpose and is worth living. And if the heart 'sees' God, then it is reflected in one's ways. For Christ said, 'If your eye be single, your whole body shall be full of light.' And 'single' means 'undivided;' thus, if one sees God rather than what one wants, then the life is full of light. The darkness disappears, and the circumstances are also subject to God's Will and Power. Thus, God uses even the evil free-will choices of mankind for

good. And the 'wise man' sees through the evil to God.

Our Lord saw through the Cross to the Father and called the Cross a 'cup.' Thus, if the whole heart trusts God, God will be seen in everything.

### Patience and Love

In chapter 3 of Proverbs, and throughout Proverbs for that matter, the concepts of 'patience' and 'love' are presented. And, as the crown and the necklace of Proverbs 1:9, these characteristics, patience and love, are to be donned or put on and worn by the wise man and the wise woman. These two concepts will now be discussed; and to do so, the New Testament book of Colossians will be the starting block.

Colossians 3:12,13 and 14 read as follows: 'Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.'

And the Greek of verse 14 gives the impression of putting on love like a belt, for it holds all the previous virtues mentioned together. In other words, this is an all or nothing situation, and love is the common denominator that holds it all together.

And the word for love here is AGAPE, a Godly-kind of love; and all the virtues listed are in actual fact an expression of this AGAPE love.

And the author believes that patience is the heart of this list of virtues. When one can exercise patience as an attribute of love, then the other virtues tend to fall into place. I Cor. 13:4 describes AGAPE love: 'Love is patient....'

AGAPE is not simply revved-up or boosted human love. For the Greeks had another word for human love, and the word was EROS. EROS meant 'that I seek the highest and the best and the most beautiful for myself.' This, then, is the word that was used in the ancient world to describe what today is defined as human love. For the other word, AGAPE, was not used generally by the Greeks and the Romans; it was the Christians

that employed the word AGAPE. And the Christians bestowed a concrete definition upon the word, for to the Greeks it originally meant 'a weak, insipid, superficial type of love.' It was rarely used.

And it is fascinating to note that EROS is not employed anywhere in the New Testament.

God the Holy Spirit, then, as He inspired the writers of the New Testament, utilized this 'new' word for love. And the Holy Spirit's definition of AGAPE is: 'God is love.' This, then, is a God kind of love. Thus, this AGAPE love is antithetical to human love. For human love is something which happens to us; human love has to do with the OBJECT of affection. Human love says, 'You meet my standards; therefore, you draw affection from me.' So if you are not a kind person, you do not attract me; if you do not meet my standards, you do not inhale love from me. Human love depends upon the object because human love desires 'the best, the most beautiful.' And if you are neither the best nor the most beautiful, according to MY standards, then you have no chance of winning my love. Thus, the object of my love MAKES me love them.

God's love, on the other hand, reaches out to all. God's love originates in Who He is, for God is love. So God loves mankind not because we are 'the best, the highest and the most beautiful,' but because of Who He is. God's love depends on Who God is.

And that type of love comes into the believer. So the believer comes to the point of CHOOSING to love. The believer loves because the Spirit of Christ lives in him/her. This, then, is a volitional love, 'I choose to love you.' The believer puts this love on, as one selects and puts on clothing; for clothes do not fly out of the closet and adorn the human frame. One chooses them, and then puts them on. This is the love that Christ had. And the final definition of AGAPE love is the Cross; for here, God in Christ took our sins and died for us: self for others. And this love, in the person of Christ, triumphed and now sits upon the throne of the universe. And sitting upon His throne He now sends the Holy Spirit to mankind to communicate this lifestyle, this type of love, to mankind. This is the Christian life, this is the 'wise man.'

Thus, the 'wise man' is to love others by choice, with the love that has been demonstrated on the Cross and defined in the life of Jesus; and this is paralyzing! This is totally revolutionary when seen in a human life; there is nothing warm about it. This is a revolutionary type of premeditated action; this is a CHOICE to seek the 'highest and best' of another person. This is ME choosing and seeking to bring another to their fullest potential even at cost to MYSELF. And if you have hurt me or sinned against me, then I take the initiative to forgive you even when you do not want to be forgiven. When you want to continue hurting me, I CHOOSE to aggressively take the initiative to forgive you and to do everything possible to reconcile you. And this goes against human nature, and this is contrary to how one would normally think as a human being. This is AGAPE.

And patience is how love acts in specific circumstances. And the Greek word for patience is MAKROTHUMIA, which means to be 'a long way from anger.' This is not resigned patience, where one decides that one must put up with something. This is, in fact, patience with joy. This is how one handles people over a very long, very extended time. This is endurance. This is the problem of having to be around the same people for a very long time.

This type of love is tenacious, it does not give up -- no matter what! And this type of love implies loyalty and faithfulness; this type of love does not walk out on you. This type of love handles difficult people, and all people are 'difficult' people. For all people have vastly different personalities.

Patience is THE word for marriage; for the person one is around the most, and for the longest periods of time, is one's husband or one's wife. Therefore, patience should be seen here more than anywhere else. For in marriage, human love breaks down somewhere along the line. And that is when patience takes over. And patience is THE operative word for family. For loving members of one's family is extremely difficult. This is THE word for church membership; for a church that does not know patience will split.

Christ said, 'By this shall all men know that you are disciples, that you love one another.' This is beyond the comprehension of the 'world.' God

the Father said, 'I will never leave you, I will never forsake you.' And Ittai, the son of Ribai, stated to David, 'Whether for life, or for death, I am your servant.' Ittai told David, that despite David's failings, he, Ittai, would never give up on David; this was what David could expect from Ittai.

Patience, then, is love not giving up on another person. And this type of patience and love necessarily involves forgiveness. Just as Christ continually forgives us. The patient person, the 'wise man,' forgives all the time. Patience refuses to be rejected; it takes the initiative. Patience says, 'Whatever you do to me, you cannot make me hate you. You cannot make me seek revenge, hold malice or bitterness toward you. Whatever you do to me, I will seek your highest and your best.' In other words, self for others.

Whereas, human love tends to feed on the other person. Human love demands to have its needs met, and when the needs are not met, the love leaves. Thus, this AGAPE type love is supernatural.

I John says, 'We love because He first loved us.' Thus, when we see the love of God toward us, when we realize that we are infinitely and unconditionally loved by God, this knowledge satisfies the deepest needs of our inner hearts. For mankind was born needing, desperately needing, to be loved. And God Himself is the source of unending love. And when this is known, then mankind can love others without demanding to have needs met or fulfilled. This type of love sets mankind FREE to love. For the emptiness inside is gone, the vacuum has been filled, the needs have been met by the love of God.

This is supernatural! 'The fruit of the Spirit is patience.'

In practice, this AGAPE love does not expect the other person to be perfect. Because if one expects the other person to be perfect, then anger explodes when they are not. Indeed, when imperfection is manifest, one gives to the other that same grace that God has already given to all. When one hurts the other, condemnation is not dispensed, but patience. This is a CHOICE.

In practice, this is being there for all other believers when they are hurting. This is not being embarrassed by their hurting; for it is only human

not to want hurting people around oneself. And this abrogates expediency.

In practice, this is not being envious of other believers when they are being blessed, or when they are obviously more talented, or when they are wealthier, etc.; this is putting away jealousy and 'rejoicing when others rejoice.'

In practice, this is forgiving 'the little things,' the things that build up over time. This is not believing rumors or gossip about someone because forgiveness of 'the little things' was withheld. This is letting oneself be hurt rather than allowing the loved one to be hurt.

For remember, that not only did Peter deny our Lord, three times, in the courtyard of the High Priest, but also that John did by keeping silent. Yet our Lord freely forgave them. And only a supernatural love, the love of God could forgive such betrayal and disloyalty.

And it is to be remembered that this AGAPE love comes from within, by means of the Holy Spirit. For I Thessalonians 4:9 says, 'Now about brotherly love we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other.'<sup>113</sup>

**Proverbs 3:1,2 'My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart, for they will prolong your life many years and bring you prosperity.'**

Here, then, are the rewards of the disciplined or self-controlled life of the 'wise-man.' And Solomon is not to 'forget,' which is the qal imperfect of the verb *shakach*, which is found 102 times in the Old Testament; and fascinatingly, although *shakach* is defined as 'to forget,' the same root in Aramaic means 'to find,' and this bipartite usage is discovered in Jer. 50:6, 'They have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten/they cannot find their resting place.' In other words, because they have forgotten they cannot find their way. And the implication to the 'wise man' is obvious: if you do not know it and remember it, then it cannot be used when needed. To forget God is not to know God.

<sup>113</sup> Based upon the works of Bishop Smith; from notes, handwritten, undated.

And Scripture indicates that self-satisfaction and self-sufficiency are the primary reasons that mankind forgets God. Thus, forgetting here is not just an intellectual mislaying of knowledge; it is rather an act of choosing to ignore God. And according to Isaiah 51:13, to forget God is to live in confusion and terror: 'That you forget the Lord your Maker, who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth, that you live in constant terror every day because of the wrath of the oppressor, who is bent on destruction?'

The 'commands' are to be 'kept' or 'guarded' in the 'heart,' which is *leb*, that place in which the real person, the 'me,' lives. And if this is done, the 'life will be prolonged.' The Hebrew term for 'life' is *chayyim*, which is the status quo of being alive as opposed to the status quo of being dead. And the word implies life at its very best, i.e., health, prosperity, success in every area and, interestingly enough, the 'incredibleness' and 'joy' that should accompany living. For recall that God never has been under any pressure to provide life, or to create for that matter. And the very fact that He did provide life and create the universe implies more than a purpose and a plan, it implies that He desires to share His love, His endless life, and His incredible happiness with mankind.

And if 'wisdom' is not forgotten, two things will be 'prolonged:' length of time or years, and prosperity. And the term for prosperity is *shalom*, which is 'wholeness, completeness; to be at peace, in friendship with any one.'<sup>114</sup> Here, then, is God's promise of prosperity, mental tranquillity (including sanity), and an intimate friendship with Him; not to mention a long life of such blessings. The Hebrew term for 'prolong' is the hyphen imperfect verb of *Yuasa*, which means 'to do again, to add to, to multiply, to increase,' and may even be translated 'more also.' This is the term that was used in Isa. 38:5 as regards Hezekiah, where the Lord promises, 'I will add fifteen years to your life.' And Rachel, in choosing a name for her firstborn child Joseph, prayed, 'May the Lord give me [literally, add to me] another son.' (Gen. 30:24) Thus, both Isaiah and Rachel 'acknowledge that longevity and progeny are at the sovereign

discretion of God.'<sup>115</sup> And the idea is carried over into the New Testament in Acts 2:41,47; 5:14; and 11:24, where 'believers were continually added to the Lord,' i.e., 'the Lord was adding them to the church.'<sup>116</sup>

Thus, 'wisdom' in the soul of the believer results in not only the multiplication of prosperity and blessings, but in the addition of years to the believer's life. Thus, it is startling that believers fail to seek knowledge of the One who decides *when* they will die, and *how* they will be blessed.

**Proverbs 3:3 'Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart.'**

The Hebrew term for 'love' is *chesed*, which is a term that has fascinated and confounded Hebrew scholars for centuries. Up until 1927, the word was generally translated 'mercy, kindness, loving-kindness, love;' however, in 1927 a young German scholar, by name of Nelson Glueck, published a doctoral dissertation entitled *Hesed in the Bible*. And the gist of this dissertation was that *chesed* denoted God's loyalty to His covenant obligations. Other notable scholars, nevertheless, note that Glueck's analysis is perhaps flawed; according to these scholars, Glueck has forgotten that covenants arise on the basis of a relationship and that the responsibilities of the covenant are many times more extensive than simply that of the covenant. For example, in I Sam. 20:17, where Jonathan makes covenant with David, the covenant was actuated by Jonathan's love for David. Furthermore, when Jonathan died, David grieved for him not out of any covenant obligation (for how does one simulate grief based upon a covenant?), but from love. Thus, it would seem that *chesed* definitely connotes 'freedom of decision,' and not merely an obligation. For Dom Sorg noted that *chesed*, when applied to God, is in fact the Old Testament image of 'God is love.' And when both *chesed* and '*emet*' occur in close proximity, as they do in Prov. 3:3, most scholars believe that the conjunction is a hendiadys,<sup>117</sup>

<sup>115</sup> Harris, Archer, Waltke, Eds. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*; vol. i, page 385.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*; page 386.

<sup>117</sup> A hendiadys is a figure of speech in which two nouns connected by *and* are used instead of one noun or a noun and an adjective.

<sup>114</sup> Wilson, William. *Old Testament Word Studies*; page 305.

with one noun describing the other. In other words, love is a truth, and the truth is founded in, and includes, love. And thus it would appear, keeping in mind that all of God's actions toward mankind, whether in covenant or otherwise, point toward the Cross which is the epitome of love, or self for others, that the word does indeed mean 'lovingkindness.'

Indeed, the word for 'faithfulness' is *'emet*, which is 'truth' or 'sureness;' thus, David enjoins Solomon to never let 'lovingkindness' (grace in action or mercy, perhaps) and 'truth' leave him. And the Hebrew word for 'leave' is *'azab*, in the qal imperfect, and is defined as 'to leave, relinquish, desert a place, God, a law, a covenant.'<sup>118</sup>

And to make sure that they are never lost, the qal imperative of *qashar*, is used; thus, they, lovingkindness and truth, are to be 'bound' around the 'neck.' And the imperative of the verb denotes a mandate. Moreover, they are to be 'written on the tablet of the heart,' and the word for 'tablet' is *luach*, which is a wooden tablet. And the term is used figuratively as in Prov. 7:3, Jer. 17:1, and Hab. 2:2. Solomon, then, is to inscribe or engrave 'wisdom' upon his 'heart' so that he will never forget it.

It is interesting to note that the 'binding about the neck' is a reference to the signet ring of the ancient world. The signet ring of the ancient world was engraved with the owner's name or crescent, or both, according to Ex. 28:11 and Esther 8:8. Indeed, Babylonian seals or cylinders may be traced back to the Uruk or Warkan period, circa 400 BC. And these seals would be worn about the neck on a cord, according to Gen. 38:18 and Jer. 22:24. The seal was used to sign official documents. Indeed, reference is made to the seal in Rev. 5:1, which reads, 'Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals.' And the analogy is this: that through 'wisdom' the wise man 'cashes checks drawn upon God's account.'<sup>119</sup>

**Proverbs 3:4 'Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man.'**

<sup>118</sup> Wilson, William. *Old Testament Word Studies*; page 247.

<sup>119</sup> Thieme, Robert. *Proverbs*; from notes, undated, handwritten.

Put simply, this verse states that 'wisdom' makes one popular with mankind, and makes one pleasing to God. And this is corroborated by Luke 2:52, which states, 'And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.' And again by I Sam. 2:26, which reads, 'And the boy Samuel continued to grow in stature and in favor with the Lord and with men.' 'Wisdom,' then, is the key to success and popularity, not muscles, beauty, wealth, knowing the right people, driving the right kind of car, or flattering people. And obviously, anyone that exhibits 'lovingkindness,' and 'truth,' and the forgiveness and patience that accompany them, will necessarily be popular and well-liked by other people. But more importantly, this verse declares that such an individual will receive 'favor,' or grace, and 'good success' from God. This, then, is the direct imputation of blessings to the 'wise man' from God Himself.

### Forgiveness

In the last lesson on Proverbs, 'patience' and 'love' were discussed; and within the Bible Study group at the First Congregational Church a statement was made that was quite correct, 'forgiveness does not mean letting people walk all over you.' As a result of that statement, the author was left with a nagging question: where does one draw the line between forgiveness and allowing someone to abuse you? This will now be discussed.

People generally have a problem with 'forgiveness' because they do not understand the concept. Many people are afraid to forgive because they believe that it would mean allowing the abuser to win. Is forgiveness, then, letting the abuser win? Is it becoming a door-mat? Is it a surrender to the enemy? Is forgiveness admitting that the other person is right? No. If forgiveness is any of the foregoing, then the forgiver is betraying himself or herself.

The first thing, then, that must be understood about forgiveness is that one cannot forgive anybody unless one admits that others have hurt you. So this silly, pseudo-religious idea that once you become a Christian you no longer get hurt is bunkum. Of course Christians get hurt. Being a Christian is not about not getting hurt; being a Christian is what you do with the hurt.

For example, Joseph, twenty to twenty-five years after the fact, said to his brothers, 'You meant it for

evil.' In other words, he could still remember the hurt. Or as our Lord said, 'Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.' We are talking about debts here, someone owes you; someone has abused you, or defiled you, or hurt you, etc. And forgiveness is not absolving someone of their sins - only God can do that. When someone sins against you, they have sinned against God the Creator, and they have sinned against the whole concept of the human race being made in the image of God, i.e., the concept of unconditional love.

Forgiveness is that I release the person into the hands of God. And this means, then, that I have no personal vendetta against you. I have given you to the only Judge. I have given you to the only one who can absolve you from your sins, and that means that you are out of my hands. And this means that now I am free to give you my love and my patience.

Indeed, the word 'forgive' in some dictionaries is defined as 'to send away.' Thus, to release a person. Therefore, I come to the person of God and tell Him that I will not be the judge. In other words, I no longer have to dream, fantasize, will, and plot revenge. For it is out of my hands; for only God knows the entire truth anyway. And now I am in a position to pray for the person; and I pray that they may come to see that their sins have been laid upon our Lord Jesus Christ. And I release this person, then, into the hands of God's love. That He will do what has to be done. And I aggressively pray that their eyes may be opened so that they may receive the mercy that is already theirs. I pray that they will see that Jesus bore their sins. And this is important because so many people feel 'that someone has got to pay for this.' Our sense of justice pops up, as it were. And many feel that by just releasing the person to God, that God will let them get away with the evil because of who and what God is -- love.<sup>120</sup> So our sense of justice cries out, 'Someone has to pay for this!' And Christ from the Cross answers, 'I have.' And the perfect Justice and Righteousness of God also answer, 'Christ has.' And this, the Cross, makes it possible to release the wrongdoer with sanity.

<sup>120</sup> It should be noted that God is not just love; He is also Justice and Righteousness; thus, no one gets away with anything, in reality.

For on the Cross, I, too, was forgiven. In other words, look at the author's life, look at his sin (self-sufficiency/self for self) and his sins -- someone has to pay for that, too! And Jesus said, 'I have.' Thus, we forgive as we have been forgiven; and how was that? In the context of the Cross. I release them into God's hands, and I pray that they may see what I see.

And this was probably what Stephen was alluding to when he said, as he was being stoned to death, 'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.' A very fascinating expression. For it immediately brings to mind the question, 'Then to whose charge is it to be laid?' This is the bill being put on the table at the restaurant and as you reach out to take it your dinner companion grasps it, and turning to the waiter says, 'Put it on my card.' So Stephen is saying that they are murdering me, but do not put the charge of murder on their account -- put it on someone else's account. Well, whose? Jesus. Stephen, then, in this last utterance was in effect seated with God the Father on His throne in heaven, and he was saying, 'I agree with you, their sin was laid upon Christ.'

Now, he is not saying that they got away with it, he is saying that love, along with Justice and Righteousness, has wrapped up the loose ends. The sin has been paid for; and that is why he could pray that they would see that and receive the forgiveness that was purchased by the Blood. And it is the author's consideration that because Stephen released his murderers, and remember that the instigator was Saul of Tarsus, that God was free to work in Saul's life and bring him to Christ. And of course that means that the Apostle Paul and his epistles and work for the Church of Christ on earth were emancipated by God through the intercessory dying prayer of Stephen.

Overpowering, is it not?!

The author also believes that if one does not forgive, one places oneself in a jeopardizing position -- one short-circuits love. We do not pay for our own forgiveness by forgiving. And more often than not, the person who cannot forgive, cannot forgive because they cannot find complete assurance that they themselves have been forgiven.

Thus, if I am bitter against a person for hurting me, the first step is that I must confess this

bitterness to God. Then, a proposition, make a list of the people who have hurt you and whom you have not released. In other words, come out of denial and admit that that person hurt me, and that I am angry with them. But now I release them to God, and I ask God to forgive me my anger.

Begin at the beginning and forgive.

And *if* it is convenient, go to the person and tell them that they are forgiven. And why the *if*? Because if the person did not know that you were bitter against them in the first place, then going to them will only start the whole thing all over; indeed, it may backfire and they will become bitter against you. In other words, if only God knows your thoughts, then only God can forgive.

And if it is a family member, it may be best not to tell them. In other words, do not set yourself up for more abuse. For Scripture says, 'If it be possible, live peaceably with all men.' Thus, 'Honoring your father and your mother' does not mean to present yourself daily or weekly for more abuse. You honor your father and your mother by *you* living a Godly or Christian life. Your life honors your parents, not by going back and groveling for more abuse. Forgiveness, then, is not 'being a doormat,' it is rather living a Christian life toward others, and that can include forgiving and separating from.

By going back and listing those who have hurt you, you may find that you have re-written your entire life. And by doing so, you may see how God was working in your life at every step of the way; and just like Joseph you may say, 'And the Lord was with Joseph.' And remember that God's specialty is using the *worst* for the *best*.

### The Covenants

In an effort to enhance our understanding of Proverbs, the Old Testament in general and, for that matter, the entire Bible, the author is going to interrupt Proverbs to examine the concept of 'covenant.' The motivation for this is the word *Jehovah* or *Yahweh*, the tetragrammaton, which again appears in Proverbs 3:5. And as will be seen, *JHWH* always speaks of the God of Covenant.

Psalm 25:14 reads, "The Lord confides in those who fear him; he makes his covenant known to them." And have you noticed how no matter

where one stops to do a study in the Bible, whether it be Moses or Joshua, or Samuel, or David, or Jeremiah, or Ezekiel, or Isaiah, or even our Lord in His Incarnation in the New Testament, that *they* know something? It is almost as if they look across time and space and wink at each other. For the way that Elijah lived, prayed and depended on God has a parallel in Joshua's life. Abraham and Jeremiah seem to be almost identical in their 'faith-walk' with God. It is as if they know a secret. And the author maintains that this secret is an understanding of 'covenant.'

Therefore, if we can know that same secret, we, too, perhaps can live like these great 'lions of God.' This 'confiding' might put us in the same old boys' club as these great believers. Psalm 103:7 reads, "He made known his ways to Moses, his deeds to the people of Israel." That is God told Moses 'why' He was doing certain things; He took Moses into His confidence, His motivation. Whereas with Israel, they only saw what God did. They did not know why He did it, they did not know where it was leading. And this is why each miracle stood alone; Manna comes from heaven, but a few days later they are complaining that they are thirsty. The people received God's blessings, but Moses knew why they were there and Moses knew why he could approach God and make requests.

And the concept of 'covenant' explains why blessings exist. The Bible, then, is a covenant book; it declares a covenant purpose. And no other religion has such an idea: that a god, of his own free will, his own initiative, would enter into covenant with a people. Covenant, then, is not just another subject in Scripture; it is much more. Covenant is the very foundation upon which everything in Scripture is sustained. Covenant couples the Old Testament with the New Testament.

What, then, is a covenant? Covenant is a blood pact for life or death between two participants. And covenant was *always* made escorted by the shedding of blood and the swearing of an oath. Covenant, then, is a life and death relationship that can never be disregarded or abrogated. Never. And in the Bible, it is God that takes the initiative and makes a covenant with mankind. Thus, in Scripture covenant is a blood pact for life or for death between two parties, attended by a



sacred oath, inaugurated and administered by a Sovereign God.

Since covenants had no 'escape clause,' they were never entered into haphazardly. In fact, the covenant concept prevailed over even family ties. Indeed, at the present juncture in Arabia, the maxim exists, "Blood is thicker than milk." By this is meant that even though we had the same mother, and are 'milk brothers,' the blood covenant is more vehement than this familial bond.

And this concept is foreign to Western philosophy, where we have accepted mendacity as a way of life. For no one really believes politicians or their press secretaries. In the West, individuals give their word until it hurts them, and then they break it. For the concept of covenant is not typical to rational human beings. In contrast, though, undying loyalty and absolute faithfulness is typical of God. And when covenant is abrogated, even between human parties, it is as if they have slapped God in the face. For Amos 1:9 says, "For three sins of Tyre, even for four, I will not turn back my wrath." That is God will not withhold discipline to Tyre. Why? "Because she sold whole communities of captives to Edom, disregarding a covenant of brotherhood." Tyre abrogated covenant. And in Joshua 9, the Gibeonites deceived Joshua and entered into covenant with him. Thereafter the other tribes of Canaan attacked the Gibeonites, and the Gibeonites requested aid from Joshua. And even though he had been lied to, and had been instructed by God Himself to obliterate all the tribes of Canaan, Joshua honored his covenant. And God agreed with Joshua, and God performed a miracle to honor this counterfeit covenant -- the sun stood still! Thus, regardless of the circumstances, from God's viewpoint, covenant *cannot* and *should not* be invalidated. Covenant is immutable.

For example, suppose two nations desired to enter into covenant. Each nation would select a representative, and the representatives would meet; weapons would be exchanged, i.e., the strengths of each nation would be swapped. Cloaks would be exchanged; for the cloak was the 'selfhood' of each man and thus each nation. Then, covenant sacrifices were brought, two bulls. The bulls would be split down the middle, and between the halves would be a pool of blood.

Then the representatives would walk through the blood and around the drawn carcasses in a figure eight (this is the provenance of the symbol for infinity). And they would finish their promenade standing in the blood, facing each other. And the statement being made was this: "this covenant is to life, and if it is broken, I will die even as this animal has died. Unto death I make my vow." And it is fascinating to note that the Hebrew word for covenant, *berith*, is defined as "to cut."

And in the Old Testament, the life of the animal is declared to be in its blood. So blood represented life in this ceremony; thus to shed blood was a judgment on life. The concept, then, was loyalty to the point of death. Only death could discharge the obligation of the covenant.

Then the treaty would be written, i.e., what each nation would do for the other. Then it would be signed by the representatives and sealed before all the witnesses. Then the representatives would be cut; in some instances the palm would be cut and the two representatives would clasp hands, intermingling their blood. And Scripture confirms this in Isaiah 49:16, "See, I (God) have engraved you on the palms of my hands." Or, in many cases, the wrists of the representatives would be cut, and the arms (the symbol of strength) would be raised to God as the blood ran down the arm, and the oath of efficacy would be taken. Then the wrists would be brought together. And Scripture confirms this method in Isaiah 62:8, "The Lord has sworn by his right hand and by his mighty arm." Here, then, is God taking oath by his Omnipotence.

And it is fascinating to note that the flags of most nations of the world contain the color red. And the red is the reverberation of ancient covenants, i.e., the people of that nation have declared that they have been forged together as one nation, for life or for death.

The scars of the two representatives were the living seals of the covenant. A living reminder of a covenant to death. Then the representatives would exchange names, i.e., each nation would add to their reputation the other nation's reputation. And this exchange of names meant "bloodbrothers." The two nations were now closer than bloodbrothers, closer than family. And this is probably the provenance of a woman taking

the name of her husband in marriage, or at least hyphenating her name.

And the covenant implied two things: lovingkindness and remembrance. All actions would be based upon lovingkindness and the covenant would always be in the forefront of each nation's mind.

Then, the covenant meal would be celebrated. The eating was a statement of covenant. The two representatives would sit down to a meal with their hands upon the table. Each would eat bread, signifying 'all that I am is yours,' and each would drink from the same cup, signifying 'I will shed my blood for you.'

And what is so significant concerning this process is that God Himself has entered into covenant with mankind from the beginning. No other religion in the world has such a marvelous article of faith and covenant.

As illustration, I Samuel 18 and 19 relate the covenant of David and Jonathan. These two men performed the aforementioned rituals. And remember, that Jonathan was the son of Saul ben Kish, who hated and despised David. Both these men, David and Jonathan, were the representatives for all their descendants, for their houses, for their tribes. They vowed never to leave, never to forsake. Jonathan later had a son, Mephibosheth, who was raised in the royal palace of Saul, whose passionate hatred of David pervaded his entire family. Then Saul and Jonathan were both killed while in battle against the Philistines. David's lament was heartbreaking. While David cried, the family of Saul fled, taking Mephibosheth with them. For they were convinced that as soon as David became king he would murder them all. But as his nurse was racing down the stairs, Mephibosheth was dropped, and both his legs were broken. He became a paralytic for the rest of his life. He was raised to hate David by his family. His was brainwashed against David. The entire family lived as outlaws. In the meantime David searched relentlessly for some relative of Jonathan to whom he might fulfill the covenant; for everyday David looked at the living reminder of that covenant: the scar on his wrist. Finally, David located Mephibosheth, and sent troops to secure him.

And there, as he crawled in before the King of Israel, Mephibosheth waited to be murdered. Yet miraculously, David stated that you are now a prince. You are accepted as if you were Jonathan. Why? And David pointed at the scar on his wrist. Because of the covenant made before you were born. And Mephibosheth had to make a decision. He had to change his mind about David. And he did. He changed his mind because he was accepted; he was not accepted because he changed his mind. In effect, then, he was accepted before he was born.

And here, of course, is the family of mankind portrayed; for born into mankind was the representative of God, God Himself as Man. This Man, this Christ, was our covenant representative. Mankind was accepted before being born. And Christ walked through the shed blood of Himself. And when He rose from the dead in Resurrection, this was the sign that the covenant was sealed. And most interesting, our Lord, even in His resurrection body, bears the scars on His wrists where the nails went in. And when He entered the upper room, the first thing our Lord did was show His wrists.

And like Mephibosheth, mankind is born suspicious and wary of God. If God gets us, because of our sins, we will be destroyed. But just as when David met with Mephibosheth, David was being faithful to Jonathan, so also when we meet with God, i.e., when we change our minds about God, God is faithful to His Son. For covenant has been made. And lovingkindness and remembrance are the foundation of His present actions toward mankind.

Psalm 63:3 reads, "Because your love is better than life." The word for "love" here is a covenant word. It is defined as "steadfast love." And remember, that in his song, Moses said, in Exodus 15:11, "Who among all the gods is like you, O Lord? Who is like you --

majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?" And in some strange way, we, at our present juncture in history, have lost sight of this aspect of God.

We speak the word, "Hallelujah." And this word is usually translated "praise." However, it means "to boast, to rave, to brag." And how many of us "boast" or "brag" about our God? A God that has

entered into covenant with mankind. Where has the excitement about God disappeared to? We have become hypercivilized epicenes, politely acknowledging God, yet never knowing Him, or rejoicing in His covenant with us.

What kind of God would do such a thing? Answer: God is love. Thus, the God that is always there, the God that is all-powerful, the God that is all-knowing, the God that is perfect Righteousness, the God that is perfect Justice, Sovereignty, and Veracity, is Love. For the Apostle John hears in Revelation that "the Lion of the Tribe of Judah has overcome." And John turns, and rather than beholding a terrible, ferocious beast, he sees a Lamb that has been slain. Thus, God is Love.

This word, love, in today's society, is almost useless. For it is vastly overused: "I love ice-cream. I love baseball." Eighty percent of all songs are written about love. It is nothing more than a sound of appreciation anymore. For mankind discards the objects of his love capriciously.

Love, then, is the way God is. God's love reaches out and down. God's love reaches even to His enemies. God, then, is the reverse of everything that mankind would expect it to be. For He reaches out to all. To all races, to all religions, to *all*. Even to those that mankind would call "trash." Now be careful, the author is not saying that sin is not sin or that mankind is worthy. But Christ said "they are lost." And remember, God does not 'fall into love.' God is love; God has chosen to love because He *is* love; God does not just love the best and the highest, the most beautiful. For if this were so, then today we would be saved, and tomorrow we would be damned -- for we might do something that would cause God to fall out of love with us.

This, then, is the God who enters into covenant. When mankind enters into covenant, mankind negotiates. When God initiates a covenant, He does not negotiate; no vote is taken, no opinion is sought. Mankind's only choice is to enter or not, to obey or not. And God enters into covenant on the basis of grace, i.e., He does it because He wants to, not because mankind asked Him to.

And the single word that describes covenant is "lovingkindness." When mankind made

covenants it was strained. And this is the reason for the elaborate ritual: blood, vows, the death of animals. Mankind begins with the covenant, the ritual, and through this life and death binding, hopes that the covenant can be fulfilled, and that lovingkindness will be a result. Whereas with God, because of His lovingkindness, He enters into the covenant. So with God the ritual of a sacred oath is that mankind might understand what is taking place. For mankind is suspicious of just His word.

Lovingkindness, then, is indicative of a love founded in a covenant. Lovingkindness is "tenacious love; a love that will not let go." It is loyalty even when acknowledging a failure. It is the love of a mother for her child. It is a love that "pursues." Lovingkindness is an "action word." It is something that is done, not something that is discoursed about, analyzed and dissected.

Exodus 33:18 reads, "Then Moses said, 'Now show me your glory.'" And in Exodus 34:6,7, Who and What God Is was revealed to Moses: "And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, 'The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation.'" Here, then, God states unreservedly that He is "lovingkindness," and that He punishes only those who abrogate His covenant, i.e., those who commit the sin of their fathers, which sin is self-sufficiency, or cutting themselves off from the life and love of God. In other words, mankind *must fight* his way through the love of God to receive punishment!

And this is why, in Psalm 63:3, the Psalmist states that he will "boast" of his God, of the "lovingkindness" of his God. Hebrews 13, verses 5 and 6, state, "...because God has said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.' So we say with confidence, 'The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me.'" And the same passage from the Contemporary English Version reads: "The Lord has promised that he will not leave us or desert us. That should make you feel like saying, 'The Lord helps me! Why should I be afraid of what people can do to me?'"

This, then, is “lovingkindness;” and this is the way God *is*. And this is the reason that God entered into covenant with mankind.<sup>121</sup>

### **Covenant of Beginnings (The Edenic Covenant)**

#### **The Adamic Covenant**

Genesis 1:26ff. reads, ‘Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.’ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.’ Then God said, ‘I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground.’”

The word ‘covenant,’ *berith*, does not occur in this particular passage; however, the passage contains all the aspects of covenant, except one, and even that one eventually appears; and Scripture, in retrospect, describes this passage as a covenant. Jeremiah 33:20 reads, “This is what the Lord says: ‘If you can break my covenant with the night, so that day and night no longer come at their appointed time...’” This verse refers back to a covenant that God made in which day became day, night became night, and the physical laws of the universe were established. Thus, this covenant provided order to the universe. Hosea 6:7 reads, ‘Like Adam, they have broken the covenant -- they were unfaithful to me there.’ Here, then, God accuses Israel of breaking covenant just as Adam did.

Thus, when Adam fell, he broke covenant with God. Thus, *if* this passage in Genesis chapter one is a covenant, then God has committed Himself to the wise ordering and continuation of the universe, i.e., God did not initiate Creation and

then allow the subsequent sequence of events to happen haphazardly. Creation, then, was not a casual or chance event. This is not God the dilettante dabbling in His workshop.

Man, then, is not a sophisticated ape, the product of evolution. Man was made ‘in the image of God.’ And this means that mankind has a purpose, a meaning, a reason. And part of that intent is a covenant relation with God -- to demonstrate Who and What God is. For Adam did not have to seek after God; he was immediately introduced to God, a Personal Creator.

The covenant in Genesis 1 contains no blood; however, the concepts of life and death are present -- a pact of life and death. Obey and live; disobey and die. And the participants of the covenant are: God, the Creator, the originator of the covenant; and God chooses to create. And this is pellucid Omnipotence; for God required no raw materials - - out from nothing something was instantaneously produced. And the other participant is man. Adam was the covenant representative of all mankind. Robert Thieme denominates this concept as ‘federal headship.’ In other words, all the future, unborn, members of the human race were in Adam. And God makes man in His own image. There are certain aspects of man, then, that are similar to God -- thus, man can understand something of God.

Man was part of the Creation, yet he was to be lord over the earth. The ‘image of God’ is intelligence or self-consciousness, i.e., the ability to recognize that one exists. ‘The image of God’ also contains free-will and the idea of work, or limited-creation. Thus, people, the concept of individuals, takes on a whole new meaning. And this is why mankind rages when human beings act like animals, i.e., mankind *knows* that human beings were made for something better. ‘And rage is part of compassion’ in this instance.

#### **The Edenic Covenant, or Covenant of Beginnings**

The terms of this Covenant of Beginnings are:

1. Reproduce, ‘be fruitful and increase in number.’
2. Administrate over the earth and its inhabitants.

<sup>121</sup> Based upon the scholarship of, and unabashedly borrowed from, Bishop Smith, E.W. Bullinger, Robert Thieme, Merrill F. Unger, and M. Weinfeld.

3. Maintain a relationship with God; and according to Bishop Smith this is the Sabbath, or 'rest.' And the Sabbath is 'satisfaction;' that is, God observes what He has done and said, 'it was very good.' (Genesis 1:31) And mankind was to 'rest' in God; in other words, mankind was to be 'satisfied' with, and delight in, God; and mankind was so created.

And it is interesting to note, that our Lord Jesus Christ chose to be in the tomb on the Sabbath; that is, He took the Sabbath into the tomb with Him. And by so doing, He fulfilled every Sabbath hope. Thus, the end of laboring to rest (the end of the Law), for now we just rest, and our work flows from this rest.

Then God ordained marriage. Man, then, was created to be social; and more importantly, by ordaining marriage God declared that man would never truly 'live' until he became a 'lover.' And not just the love between a man and a woman, but mankind was made to share and to love in an *agape-love* sense; and here, too, is the 'image of God' concept: *agape-love*. Thus, part of worship of God, to have it be complete and fulfilled worship of God, is love (*phileo-love*) for God.

Then God took Eve 'from' Adam, literally, 'from the side of Adam.' And most commentators interpret this to mean just the rib of Adam; however, Bishop Smith augments this idea with the following: 'from the female side of Adam;' that is, from the female constituent or feminine quantum of Adam's nature. And God also physically built Eve from the rib of Adam, and Robert Thieme once defined this as 'right woman,' i.e., there is corresponding, fulfilling, 'fitting' female for every male, and *vice versa*. And this concept is found and sustained in the term 'helpmeet;' which is more correctly rendered 'corresponding;' that is, 'one who stands eyeball to eyeball and aids.'

And in the woman, Adam recognized one like himself, but different: *Ishah*. This term provides personhood, self-hood, uniqueness and individuality to women. Females, then, are people.

Before the Fall, then, she was *Ishah*, 'this beautiful person,' and after the Fall she was Eve. And Eve means 'mother;' the mother of all living.

And this Covenant of Beginnings, thereupon, provides a reason for marriage; for marriage says that mankind is different -- made in the image of God. Thus, mankind does not just 'mate' like the lower animals. Man and woman, then, don't just produce children; they do more, much more, they celebrate love for each other, and love for God. This covenant, then, precludes homosexuality, polygamy and divorce. And our Lord, later said, 'Divorce is allowed because of the hardness of your hearts; but it was not so in the beginning.'

This Covenant of Beginnings also ordained the concept of 'work.' Animals exist. Mankind changes things; mankind is allowed to create in a finite, limited manner. And this explains the concept of change: new models of cars, poetry, books, new TV shows, symphonies, dance, operas, rock n' roll, etc. These concepts speak of the 'image of God.' For mankind creates through work. Work, then, when viewed from this new perspective, actually glorifies God. Adam's work, of course, did not involve sweat originally, and the earth did not strive against him.

Genesis 2:16 ff. reads, 'And the Lord God commanded the man, 'You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.' This is quite clear; this is not just a suggestion, it is a command.

What was this 'tree of the knowledge of good and evil?' It was a choice. For if there is no choice, there is no free-will, i.e., mankind is innocent, and yet not a finished human being if his free-will is not intact and operative. And the concept of choice involves an alternative. The question, then, is: to eat or not? And the choice is: obey God or not? For mankind did not know what 'good and evil' were, nor did they know what 'death' was. And Genesis 3:6 states that the tree was 'also desirable for gaining wisdom.' So Satan did not declare that the tree would make Eve like him, he said, rather, that the tree would make her wise.

The choice, again, is trust God or not. Commitment to God or not? And commitment is the definition of covenant. *If* they had chosen correctly, it looks as if Adam and Eve would have eaten of the tree of life and would have been secured in their condition, i.e., this would have been their first and last choice, and they would

have entered eternal life by stepping from the dimension of time into the dimension of eternity. But they did not.

They made a choice and entered into an understanding of evil as a system of thought: self for self, independence from God. Satan sows the seeds of suspicion about God, for the question is, in effect, 'Are you sure?' And then, of course, Satan lies. And Adam and Eve distrusted God, trusted Satan, and decided to depend upon themselves. For Satan said they could, 'Be as God.' So mankind went from being a giver to being a grabber, a taker.

God said, 'Eat it and you die.' And this is only natural. If mankind walked away from self-giving love, to self-indulgent love; if mankind walked away from worshipping God, to worshipping himself, then mankind has walked away from Life Himself. This is un-life, and what is un-life? It is death. And this is not mere physical death; this is being cut-off from relations with God Himself who is Love and Life -- and this is spiritual death. So mankind's body may be alive, but he is separated inside, spiritually, from God. So death here is not physical extinction, but separation. Thus, Adam was dead while he lived.

God, though, immediately instituted another covenant. Why? Because God is Love, Justice, and Righteousness. And remember, He had committed Himself by means of the Covenant of Beginnings to arranging the universe. And God being God, that is, if God is God, then His Will, Purpose and Plan cannot be hindered by the mere Fall of mankind, which, of course, God knew ahead of time would happen. And this interposes the question: Why didn't God, knowing ahead of time that mankind would sin, make mankind not sin? Because to do so would have made mankind not human beings, but robots. Robots without free-will; and if there is no free-will, then there is no love. For love is a choice made by free-will.

### The Adamic Covenant

The next covenant is the Adamic or Redemptive Covenant. Thus, all the covenants direct us toward what God willed for mankind all along, or from the beginning. For Isaiah 42:6 reads, 'I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the nations.' So when Christ comes, He rectifies the Fall. He takes

mankind back to where he was supposed to be: for when we eat of Christ, we eat of the tree of life and enter eternal life.

And note that mankind still works, still marries, and still reproduces; but all within the context of death and cursings: for work is debilitating, marriages fail because of a paucity of *agape* love, and child-bearing is accompanied by great pain. In other words, mankind works for himself, not for God. Me, me! Self for self! And this is the direct result of the Fall and its consequences.

The Adamic Covenant presents the nucleus of a Savior. For when God cursed the results of the broken Covenant of Beginnings, He gave the next covenant, that of redemption. First, God spoke to the serpent, then to the woman, then to the man. And this was the order of disloyalty.

The serpent was possessed by Satan, upon this most scholars are agreed. Genesis 3:14 reads, 'So the Lord God said to the serpent, 'Because you have done this, cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life.'" And God is addressing Satan, saying, 'dust you shall eat all the days of your life.' Thus, Satan will always be humiliated no matter what he does.

And note that God takes the initiative in this covenant. For the glory of God has been assaulted. Satan has, as it were, declared war on God. Therefore, God not only will vindicate His glory through this covenant, but also redeem mankind. For Revelation 5:9 states, 'You are worthy to take up the scroll and to open its seals, because you...purchased men for God.' God, then, is vindicating His glory and this vindication, as He willed it from the beginning, involves and includes mankind's salvation. Satan and sin have ushered discord into God's universe.

The Bible declares that God will put 'enmity between you and the woman.'<sup>122</sup> This, then, is enmity between Satan and mankind, which is fascinating. Thus, God is stating that Satan's present (in the Garden) allies will, in the future, become his adversaries. Satan's defeat will come from the one Satan deceived, Eve. And why is the enmity specifically related to Eve, and not Adam?

<sup>122</sup> Genesis 3:15

Because the woman was deceived, she was beguiled. She was guilty, but she was beguiled. Adam knew precisely what he was doing. Thus, womankind is just a little less guilty than man. She will produce the Christ-child. No physical father is mentioned in this statement; and this is the first intimation of the Virgin birth.<sup>123</sup>

And what of the word 'seed?' Is this the whole human race? No, for Cain, Eve's first child, is defined, in I John 3:12, as 'of the evil one.' Thus, by natural birth mankind is on the devil's side. But God places a supernatural 'enmity' against Satan through regeneration or salvation. Thus, the seed are those that have faith in Christ, faith in the promise of Christ.

And 'he will crush your head.' The seed narrows down to One who will destroy Satan. Hebrews 2:14 states, 'Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death -- that is, the devil.' Jesus Christ, then, in the final analysis, is the 'seed of the woman.' And Joshua 10:24 reads, 'When they had brought these kings to Joshua, he summoned all the men of Israel and said to the army commanders who had come with him, 'Come here and put your feet on the necks of these kings.' So they came forward and placed their feet on their necks.' Thus, 'crushing the head' also signifies total defeat.

The 'striking of the heel' refers to the Cross, as the nail was pounded through the overlapped feet of our Lord. For only in crucifixion can the heel be so 'bruised' or 'struck.'

Then God spoke to the woman. The blessing was that she would have children and, specifically, that one child who shall be the Deliverer. The curse is that 'with pain you will give birth to children.' Then Genesis 3:16 also states that, 'your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.' The Hebrew term for 'desire' is *teshuqah*, which is also used in Gen. 4:7, and therein may be rendered 'dominate' or 'overcome.' The question, then, is this: is this intellectual, psychological, spiritual and sexual desire? Or is it a desire to dominate her husband? Bishop Smith asserts that since the Fall, the 'desire' of the woman is to dominate the

man. However, God continues, 'he will rule over you.' And according to Bishop Smith, this explains the mess the world is in: woman says, 'I want to rule.' Man says, 'You will not.' Thus, marital imbalance. However, it must be noted that many scholars do not sustain this interpretation; most assert that it refers to the female 'longing for,' or 'needing' the man. Nevertheless, both may indeed be true: she desires her husband, but also, when the 'flesh' commands, she desires to 'dominate him.'

Note, too, that God placed man in control. Why? Many reasons are propounded, yet none suffice or may be confirmed. God Himself must be interrogated for the answer. But it is fascinating to note that the woman defeated man in about three minutes at the Fall; if God had not classified man as the authority, one suspects that the woman would have defeated him even more rapidly from a position of equality. And is it not fascinating, although deplorable, that in most cultures and in most nations, man not only 'rules over' the woman, but denigrates her.

To the man God said, you will have adequate food, but you will have to fight the ground for it. Man will have to sweat when he works; for the first time, then, work becomes debilitating. And to 'dust shall you return;' i.e., separation from God results in physical death. And it is interesting to note that this verse, Gen. 3:19, explains mankind's fear of death. For mankind, as originally created, was not to die physically. Mankind was presumably designed to pass from time to eternity in the same manner as Enoch and Elijah, without physical death. After the Fall, though, death entered. This clarifies why 'that pious rage' rises up inside mankind when he views the death of his kind.

And note, that life for most people is nothing more than work, getting enough to eat, having and raising children, bearing pain, and facing death. However, Gen. 3:15 gives mankind hope; there is, then, more than just this.<sup>124</sup>

<sup>123</sup> For a fascinating dissertation on the Virgin Birth, please refer to Robert Thieme, *Romans*.

<sup>124</sup> Based upon the scholarship of: Bishop Smith, Robert Thieme, Leon Poliakov, H. A. Ironside, Merrill F. Unger, and Allen Edwardes, and Bishop Lightfoot.

### The Covenant with Noah (Noahic Covenant)

Genesis 3:21 reads, 'The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.'

Here, then, is the essential aspect of all covenants: the shedding of blood. For you remember that just subsequent to their Fall, Adam and Eve made coverings for themselves of fig leaves. Then the blessings and curses took place (see lesson #11). And then, here, in verse 21, God provides them with new clothing. And the clothing is composed of animal skins. When Adam and Eve sinned, immediately thereafter, they covered themselves. Why? Because they were ashamed, they realized they were naked. Spiritual death has entered into them, and this state is accompanied by shame; the shame of what they have done before God, and the shame in the presence of another human being. Further, Bishop Smith contends that 'the nakedness' referred to here is the loss of their 'glory,' which glory was a type or form of clothing; an emanating light or effulgence, as it were. Mankind lost their 'glory' and stood naked. Mankind, then, tried to cover themselves up, almost a means of acting as if the effulgence has not been lost.

At this point, God arrives with the covenant to Adam. Nevertheless, the Edenic Covenant was broken by mankind, and the consequences cannot be disregarded. Sin has entered the world. And the penalty for the transgression was spoken by God Himself in Genesis 2:17, 'for when you eat of it you will surely die.' The race of mankind was not decimated physically, yet they have lost contact with, or been cut off from, God; but God is God, and He cannot condone sin or consort with sin. Yet He makes another covenant with Adam, and continues to have a relationship with the man and the woman. Again, though, the penalty must be invoked; but, again, mankind was not wiped out. Then who did die? For someone or something had to die; the penalty cannot be disregarded by a perfect and holy God.

Genesis 3:21 says, 'The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.' And this was an adequate covering. And to wear the skin of an animal, the animal must die. Thus, God Himself killed these animals. Something must die to satisfy the demands of the broken Covenant. And the skin of the animal is the

announcement that blood has been shed. And the animal, of course, is a shadow-type of, an expectation of, Christ on the Cross. Thus, to be restored to fellowship with God, blood must be shed.

Thus, at this juncture Adam and Eve have the promise; the promise that the seed of the woman would crush the head of Satan. This is their gospel, their hope. They know that the Deliverer is coming through the woman. And it is fascinating to note Genesis 4:1, which reads, 'Adam lay with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain. She said, 'With the help of the Lord I have brought forth a man.'" This is a very strange utterance; and this is the only recorded post-Fall articulation of Eve. Thus, this must be much more than Eve stating, 'It's a boy!'

Indeed, some scholars translate this phrase as follows: 'I have gotten a man, the Lord.' Or others, 'I have gotten a man, even the Lord.' And the Hebrew does permit this rendering. Thus, Eve is saying, 'I have given birth to the Man,' i.e., the One that was promised, the Deliverer. Eve, then, understands that the Deliverer would be the God-Man, true humanity and true deity in One Person. Eve believed the promise.

Genesis 5:29 reveals that Lamech names his son Noah, whose name means 'rest.' Lamech, like Eve at the birth of Cain, believed that Noah was to be the Deliverer. Therefore, these people had faith, they believed the promise of God. So strongly did they believe that they expected the Deliverer at any moment.

Simultaneously, the pervading influence of sin accelerates mankind's general degeneration. Compare Cain's sin with the original sin of Adam and Eve. Cain committed murder with pre-meditation after he has been warned. God Himself warns Cain in Genesis 4:7. And after murdering his brother, he denies it. Indeed, he is defiant: 'Am I my brother's keeper?' And later he asked God to place a sign upon him so that others would not murder him in turn. He was not concerned with the fact that he murdered his brother; he was afraid of being murdered himself. Adam's sin, in comparison, appears slight on the surface. And this, in turn, emphasizes the intensifying character of sin.



Thus, here is the emergence of two spiritual courses within the human race: the line of Cain, which was sucked down into the vortex of sin, and the line of Seth, which still believed in the promise. And the latter line ultimately produced our Lord Jesus Christ. And the line of Cain is referred to as the 'great city-builders.' The cities became cesspools of unbridled sin. Most interesting; for the line of Cain has almost no sense of sin, of wrongdoing. And music and musical instruments were utilized by this segment of mankind to celebrate, and sing of their sins. Moreover, polygamy became pervasive; and human women consorted with demons (Gen. 6:2-4).

The line of Seth were few, and nurtured the promise. And this line included Enoch, Methusaleh, Lamech and Noah. Moreover, during this period of time, evil, sin and iniquity almost swallowed up good. In the end, just prior to the Flood, there was one family that still believed in the promise from God. Genesis 6:8 reads, 'But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.' Noah, then, was one of those in whom the supernatural 'enmity' toward Satan was placed; for Noah was a believer and trusted in God. And Hebrews 11:7 states, 'By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.' Noah had cast himself on the hope of the Deliverer. And Genesis 6:8 declares that Noah was 'blameless.' This means that he was 'complete,' or 'whole;' and this word is a reference to Noah's *agape-love*. For it was this love that made him plenary as a human being. It is not a reference to sinless perfection.

And then the flood came. And Noah took two of each species, and seven of the clean animals into the ark. Then an ocean of water, which was in the form of a band above the earth, collapsed upon the earth, and volcanic eruptions from beneath the earth exploded. At this point, the face of the earth was totally changed by water and vast explosions; thus, present day mankind has never seen the earth that God originally created. Then the ark came to rest upon Mount Ararat. Here, Noah took the clean animals and sacrificed them. The first act of man in this 'new' world was the shedding of blood.

Regarding the ark of Noah, the remains of which reside upon Mount Ararat -- "Mount Judi near Lake Van" -- the ark is mentioned by Josephus who quotes Berossus and other historians; Berossus had stated that the Kurds still chipped pieces of bitumen from it for use as amulets. A recent American expedition claims to have found half-fossilized timbers there dating from about 1500 BC. And the Armenian historian, Moses of Chorene, calls this sacred site Nachidsheuan ('the first place of descent'). 'Ararat' appears in an inscription of Shalmanassar I of Assyria (1272-1243 BC) as *Uruatri* or *Uratri*. Later it becomes *Urartu*, and refers to an independent kingdom surrounding Lake Van, known to the Hebrews of Biblical times as the Land of Ararat (2 Kings 19:37; Isaiah 37:38).<sup>125</sup>

Genesis 8:21,22 read, 'The Lord smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: 'Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done. As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease.'

Note that God said He would not destroy mankind even though he thinks evil; whereas before the Flood, God said that He would destroy the earth because of the evil that men thought. Is this a contradiction? No, for when God disciplined with the Flood He was demonstrating that He, God, and evil cannot exist in harmony. After the Flood, God states that despite all the judgment, i.e., the Flood and the decimation of almost the entire human race, the heart of mankind and mankind's sin has not changed. In other words, all the judgment and all the death that could ever be brought to bear upon mankind has not changed the way men think, i.e., mankind is unsalvageable. Thus, God's attitude toward sin was depicted in the Flood. God then demonstrates His grace: mankind cannot be salvaged through this type of judgment; therefore, God states that He will bring the Deliverer out from the human race and that this judgment will be sufficient to salvage mankind. And this, this is Love. For why else would God *choose* to save that which cannot

<sup>125</sup> Graves, Robert; and Patai, Raphael. *Hebrew Myths*; page 117.

be save, which should not be saved, which does not deserve to be saved?

And the 'seedtime and harvest, summer and winter' of verse 22, chapter 8, discloses and proclaims a very fascinating fact: that weather is from God. God ordained weather, summer and winter, etc., thus drought and/or abundance is directly related to God. In other words, weather is a 'theological problem.'<sup>126</sup> This is part of the covenant. Remember, the prophet Elijah, through the power of prayer, stopped all rain because of this covenant.

Genesis 9:2, furthermore, states that 'the fear and dread of you will upon the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air.' Thus, the animal kingdom, too, has changed because of the Fall of mankind.

Also as part of this Noachic covenant, God stated in Genesis 9:6, 'Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God been made.' This is fascinating; for this verse provides the explanation and justification for capital punishment. And not just to deter others from murder; no, this is not mere defense. But 'for in the image of God has God made man.' In other words, murder is the violation of one who has been made in the image of God. Therefore, the murder of a human being is tantamount to touching God Himself. Thus, capital punishment, too, becomes 'a theological question.'<sup>127</sup> 'To kill another human being is to touch God.'<sup>128</sup>

Thus, this concept, that man is created in the image of God, underlines the sacredness of human life, which is 'in the image of God.'

Then in Genesis 9:12,13, God provides the 'seal of the covenant,' the 'scar,' as it were. He placed the rainbow in the sky. And remember, Noah and his family had never seen rain or a rainbow before the Flood. So rather than looking at the scar on His arm, God and mankind look at the rainbow which reminds them of God's promise in this covenant. God stated, then, that He would preserve the human race; and this in spite of sin and mankind's perverseness.

<sup>126</sup> Smith, Bishop M. *The Seven Covenants of God*; from notes, handwritten.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*

And Bishop Smith points out that the rainbow is reminiscent of the ancient bow and arrow. The bow was a weapon of war. And God placed in the sky His bow; i.e., God had gone to war by means of the Flood against the human race and sin. However, as the seal of the covenant, God turns the bow toward Himself. And this is a slight trace that God has now turned His wrath, the wrath of perfect Righteousness and Justice, toward Himself; and this turning would culminate in the Cross. For at the Cross, the blood of the Son of God was shed so that mankind might be saved.

Then, in Genesis 9:22, Ham sees his father's nakedness. Here, some scholars interpret, if not the act of homosexuality, then the lust of homosexuality. And quite plainly, the lexical evidence sustains this interpretation. On the other hand, the Midrashic tradition interprets this passage not as homosexuality, but rather as the castration of Noah by Canaan or, perhaps, Ham. And interestingly, to those whose faith is non-existent, this is nothing more than a myth, told to 'justify Hebrew enslavement of Canaanites.'<sup>129</sup> And Ham, according to Genesis 10:6, was 'the father not only of Mizraim (Egypt) but of Put (Punt), the Negroes of the Somali Coast; and of Cush, the Negroes of Ethiopia, imported to Palestine as slaves. That Negroes are doomed to serve men of lighter colour was a view gratefully borrowed by Christians in the Middle Ages: a severe shortage of cheap manual labor, caused by plague, made the re-institution of slavery attractive.'<sup>130</sup> And, it should be noted, lucrative. Such mythologizing, though, denies the interior distinctions, i.e., the inspiration by the Holy Spirit of the Scriptures; and it denies the exterior distinctions, i.e., the teleological, and cosmological testimony, etc., of empirical and rational evidence.

When Noah awakes, he curses or blesses the entire human race; for remember, that all of mankind descended from Noah's three sons. And it should be noted that many scholars place the Hamitic curse upon all melanoderms. Bishop Smith disagrees vehemently. And indeed, he has lexical, grammatical and syntactical evidence to support him: Canaan, the youngest son of Ham, was cursed. Thus, this one particular segment of the

<sup>129</sup> Graves and Patai. *Hebrew Myths*; page 122.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

Canaanites emulated Ham in his sexual proclivities. This would explain the subsequent edict from God that all of the land of Canaan must be destroyed.<sup>131</sup>

Shem is then blessed. And the blessing specifically utilizes the covenant name of God, *Yahweh*. God, then, gives Himself to the Semites. And this passage forecasts the later covenants. Thus, God blesses the semitic race(s), not the melanoderms or the leukoderms.

Then, Japheth; here are the whites, the leukoderms, the Europeans. 'He (Japheth) will occupy the tents of Shem.' And to 'occupy the tents' is a Hebraism for invading and conquering. But when he conquered he found the God of Shem. So even here exists the concept of evangelism, through being conquered; and this verse, 9:27, also forecasts the concept of 'client nation,' or 'holy nation,' and the covenant to Israel.<sup>132</sup> The Messiah, then, comes through Shem; and Japheth, or the white races (Gentiles), will discover the Messiah through the tents of Shem.<sup>133</sup>

Thus, 5000 years ago, the entire human race entered into a blood covenant with God through Noah.

### The Abrahamic Covenant

Genesis 12:1ff. read, 'The Lord had said to Abram, 'Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.'" This is the beginning of the covenant with Abram.

One portion of Shem's descendants eventually moved into Ur of the Chaldees (Iraq of present day). And here, even today, still exist the remains

<sup>131</sup> Thieme, Robert; and Smith, Bishop M. The works of both these great scholars should be studied for a full comprehension of this subject. The author has attempted to integrate the inferences of both, perhaps unsuccessfully; for integration many times results in flimsy harmonizing. Thus, if any errors persist, blame must be laid at the author's door.

<sup>132</sup> Thieme, Robert. From handwritten notes, undated and without reference.

<sup>133</sup> Smith, Bishop M. *Ibid*.

of a temple that was dedicated to the moon god, Nanna (*su-en*, in Sumerian), and his wife, Nin-gal ('the great lady'). And Ur of the Chaldees of the ancient world was a sacred city, a city consecrated to the worship of Nanna and Nin-gal. And all the citizens of Ur were sacred servants of the moon god.

Within this city, Terah, a descendant of Shem, lived and worked, according to tradition, as an idol-maker. Terah had three sons: Nahor, Abram, and Haran. Haran had a son called Lot before he died. Thus, Terah and his family were moon worshippers. In some manner, 'the God of glory' revealed Himself to Abram in Ur of the Chaldees. At this point, God commanded Abram to leave Ur. For having discovered the Living God, Elohim, Abram had to separate himself from the moon worshippers. And Abram responded to his God.

However, Abram was commanded to leave his family and his father behind, for Terah had not believed in the revealed God. But Terah and Lot went with Abram. Terah accompanied Abram perhaps because of family ties, but more probably because of impulse. And Lot accompanied Abram because part of the promise from God included a child. But Abram was 75 and Sarai 65 at this time. Now why didn't God select a young couple in the prime of their sexuality? To demonstrate Who and What He was and is. 'God specifically chose Abram and Sarai because they could not have children. And this demonstrates that helplessness is the way to faith.'<sup>134</sup> Thus, Abram carried Lot along to assist God in keeping His promise, i.e., Abram thought he had discovered a *reasonable* method to facilitate the fulfillment of the promise. For both Abram and Sarai were unable to propagate due to the sexual decline of age.

And as Abram traveled up the Fertile Crescent, Terah became lonely for his god, Nanna. For this reason, they went to the city Haran rather than Canaan. Eventually, Terah died in Haran. Then Abram went to Canaan. And Canaan was a land of idolatry and religious sexual perversions, including lesbianism, bestiality, and homosexuality. While in Canaan, both Lot and Abram were successful in business and both became wealthy. However, they argued and went separate ways.

<sup>134</sup> Smith, Bishop. *Seven Covenants*; from notes, undated.

Abram at this juncture was discouraged; for he saw no hope of the promise of a child being fulfilled. Then he has an idea: he decides to adopt one of his servants, Eliezer. At this point, God again entered. God said, in Genesis 15:4, 'This man will not be your heir, but a son coming from you own body will be your heir.' And here the blood covenant between God and Abram is 'cut.' Genesis 15:18 reads, 'On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram and said, 'To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates -- the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites and Jebusites.'" Thus, Abram became the covenant representative of all the descendants that would come from him. The other representative was God. Genesis 15:1 reads, 'Do not be afraid Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward.' God here, then, gave Himself as the sign of the covenant. For remember, each party of the covenant would give an emblem of their strength. But God has no physical sword or physical shield to give -- for God is God and does not carry or require implements. Yet He gives Himself to Abram as a shield. This is awesome, striking, and grand in its implications. This is beyond words. This is nonpareil! And remember, each representative would then walk through the blood of the animals. Here, though, God places Abram in a supernatural sleep; for Abram sees what transpires. And God, as a great furnace of fire, moved through the pieces. Fantastic! This is God walking through the halved carcasses of the slain animals and their blood. God commands Abram to rest in Himself. For God takes the place of both representatives in the covenant. God Himself took the place of Abram! God took an oath by Himself 'that in blessing I will bless you.' God, then, is the sole representative. Thus, God entered into covenant with Himself in Abram's behalf, and Abram became the inheritor of the covenant. God took the initiative, and Abram understood in faith. That is all that Abram could do -- for he is resting. Abram did absolutely nothing but believe! The ramifications are extravagant, to say the least.

A question dramatically imposes itself in one's mind: Why would God do such a thing? Why? Hebrews 6:17 provides the answer: 'Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his

purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged.' In other words, God performed this remarkable act to demonstrate Who He is, and how He operates: He is unconditional Love, and He functions on the basis of Grace. There is no linear logic, no worded thought that can express what this implies to mankind -- it can only be acknowledged and *felt*. The emotions of any believer should demand an explosive burst of fanfare at this moment; one should stand, arms outspread, and bellow in response to God's Love and Graciousness. This is irresistible, if one comprehends it! For here is the definitive verdict! This is our inheritance from God. And as believers in the Church Age we have an even more intimate relationship with God; for we are *in* Christ, and He *in* us! For we are the Bride of Christ. We are wedded *into* the very family of God.<sup>135</sup>

Although Abram, at this juncture, had come to that point of rest in God and response to God's word, Abram still has much to learn about faith and the essence of a promise from *Yahweh*. For when a famine descended upon Canaan, Abram hurriedly left and traveled to Egypt. He failed to trust God to provide for him in Canaan (Abram failed, but he is not a failure, for his faith is growing and God is growing Abram up.)

And as they entered Egypt, Abram notified Sarai that since she was so beautiful the King of Egypt would desire her for his own; thus, Abram advised Sarai that she was to pretend that they were brother and sister because Abram refused to risk death just because his wife was so desirable. In effect, then, Abram morally abandoned his wife. Abram has misunderstood the meaning of 'faith,' and the meaning of 'the promise' concerning the son he is to beget. Abram defines the word 'promise' as God instructing him, Abram, in how to achieve the promise. Abram interpreted this as 'you, Abram, must find a way to have a son.' Abram did not understand that

<sup>135</sup> This portion of the Abrahamic Covenant is based upon, borrowed from, paraphrased from, without apology, the fastidious scholarship of: Bishop Smith, Merrill F. Unger, E.W. Bullinger, Robert Thieme, Alfred Edersheim, Allen Edwardes, Helmer Ringgren, Adolf Deissmann, and A.T. Robertson. The author makes no claims of originality or scholarly innovation.

God made the promise, therefore God must fulfill the promise. And *how* is up to God and God's omnipotence.

And Sarai, too, has misunderstood the promise and its method of fulfillment. For she decides to help God. She presents Abram with a servant girl, and the servant girl, Hagar, is to bear Abram's child. At the birth of the child, the child was placed in Sara's lap (a type of adoption), and then Sarai presented the child to the Abram. This child, then, was to be the fulfillment of the promise from God. This was Ishmael. And Ishmael was told that he was the covenant child, until he was 13 years old.

At this juncture, Abram is 99 and Sarai is 89, and Abram has forgotten about the fulfillment of the promise, for he has the son, Ishmael. Then God entered and re-iterated the promise, but this time God stated that Sarai would bear the child. At this point, Abram started to laugh -- a laugh that began deep in his belly and worked its way up to a full-blown bellowing guffaw. Have a son? Me and Sarai? Ha, ha, ha, ha! I'm 99 and she is 89, there is no possibility. Abram thought God was crazy. And God, as it were, laughed with Abram; for He declared that Sarai that would have a child. And they were to call the child Isaac ('the sound of laughter'). God laughed at human helplessness and *reasonable* human attempts to resolve impossible obstacles. For with God, 'nothing is impossible.'

At this juncture, then, Abram had arrived at the position of total helplessness. For God had allowed Abram and Sarai to try every possible method of fulfilling the promise. And then, then, when every possible avenue had been explored, and they were way too old to even think of ever having a child of their own, then God said, 'Now you are ready. Now you have no one and nothing to trust in but Me.' God's power, then, must now fulfill the promise.

### Circumcision and Name Change

Now God changes Abram's name. For remember, that in the ancient covenant ritual each nation would alter its name to include the other's name. Abram meant 'exalted father.' Abraham meant 'the father of a multitude.' And this name change was a statement of faith. For to change your name to 'the father of a multitude' at age 99 is either

sheer insanity, or sheer faith in the power of God to effect the name change.

And it is interesting to note that the median sound of *Yahweh* is 'aha,' and that Abraham is formed by adding the 'aha' infix, as is Sarah, being changed from Sarai by changing the suffix. And more, *Yahweh* Himself became known as 'the God of Abraham.' The covenant continues.<sup>136</sup>

Moreover, from the physical/sexual death of Abraham and Sarah came life; in other words, Abraham and Sarah had to be sexually and physically resurrected to have a child. Again, a picture of the Cross to come. *Yahweh* swallowed up death through resurrected or, in this case rejuvenated, life. Just as Christ swallowed up the spiritual and physical death of mankind on the Cross and by means of resurrection.

The sign or seal of the covenant was circumcision, which is the cutting away of the foreskin of the male phallus. And at the juncture that this 'cutting' took place, Abraham was 99 years of age. This 'cutting' or circumcision represented not only the sexual/physical rejuvenation of Abraham, but also commemorated the establishment of a new race, the Jews. For before the 'cutting,' Abraham was an Akkadian, through Shem. And remember, that Abraham was the representative of all that were in him; thus every Jewish male thereafter was to be circumcised -- the living scar or seal of the covenant. Thus, every time a Jewish male urinates, he is to be reminded of the covenant with God, the Grace of God, the Promises of God, and God's power to fulfill those promises. For to Abraham, God's promise had more power and more meaning than his own sexual impotence. In other words, God's promise became more corporal to Abraham than the reality of his physical existence.

And it is interesting to note that circumcision was customary among many ancient peoples: for the Egyptians it was a hygienic precaution; for the Africans it represented a tribal initiation; to others it was used as a substitute for human sacrifice, an offering to the gods.<sup>137</sup>

<sup>136</sup> Smith, Bishop. *Seven Covenants of God*; from handwritten notes.

<sup>137</sup> Thieme, Robert. *Circumcision*.

The prophet Jeremiah, in Jer. 6:10, reminded the Jews of the covenant God that they had forgotten about: 'To whom shall I communicate God's word? To whom shall I give a warning that they will listen? Behold, their ears are uncircumcised. They will not listen. Behold, the word of the Lord has become a reproach to them. They have no delight in it.'

Furthermore, in Jer. 9:25, God Himself attempted to remind the Jews of the covenant: 'Behold, the days are coming,' decrees the Lord, 'that I will punish all who are circumcised and yet uncircumcised.'" And in Deut. 10:16, 'Moses said, 'Therefore circumcise your heart and resist no more.'" And according to Ex. 12:48, no Jew could participate in the Passover Feast without having been circumcised.

'The Hebrews deemed themselves invincible, the Chosen People, by virtue of the Yahwic mark of a covenant cut in the sacred flesh of their infancy.'<sup>138</sup> Indeed, the location where Joshua circumcised the Jewish males in Canaan was thereafter 'known as *Gilgil*, the 'Circle,' in allusion to the denuded corona and circular scar of circumcision: And Jahweh said to Joshua, "This day I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you."<sup>139</sup>

Moreover, the phrase, 'bridegroom of blood,' is the traditional name for every newly circumcised Jewish infant. And this phrase, *Chathan damim*, has its provenance in the words spoken by Moses' wife, Zipporah, in Exodus 4:25, when she called him 'a bloody bridegroom,' and then abandoned him.

### The Covenant Meal

Genesis 18 narrates the Covenant meal. Three men arrived to Abraham's tent, one of which was the Lord Himself. As the meal took place, Sarah was secreted, listening from behind the curtain to what was taking place. And remember, Sarah is about 90 now. And as the Lord declared, 'I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son. Now Sarah was listening at the entrance to the tent, which was behind him. Abraham and Sarah were already old

and well advanced in years and Sarah was past the age of childbearing. So Sarah laughed to herself as she thought, 'After I am worn out and my master is old, will I now have this pleasure?' Then the Lord said to Abraham, 'Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Will I really have a child, now that I am old?'" (Genesis 18:10-13)

And Hebrews 11:11 states, 'By faith Abraham, even though he was past the age -- and Sarah herself was barren -- was enabled to become a father because he considered himself faithful who had made the promise.' So both Abraham and Sarah came to believe in God's promise, and God's power. And for this to occur, i.e., the physical rejuvenation necessary for pregnancy, Sarah would have had to become young once again. And, indeed, she did. For in Genesis 20, Abraham again ventured into Egypt, Gerar to be specific, and again Abraham stated that Sarah was his sister. And because she was so beautiful, King Abimelech took her. In other words, a woman of about 95 years of age has been so restored to youth, that she is the most beautiful woman in Egypt.

Isaac, then, was born. Isaac was the first son of Abraham, and Jesus Christ was the last. And *Yahweh*, God, has laughed at mankind's helplessness.

### Provisions of the Abrahamic Covenant

The Abrahamic Covenant constantly refers to 'the land' and Abraham's 'descendants.' And the term for 'descendants' may also be translated 'seed.' Who, then, are the 'descendants' of Abraham? All of the Semitic peoples would certainly be included in this term, including the Arabs. However, the covenant refers to a specific group; for God is selective.

Isaac had two sons: Esau and Jacob. However, Jacob is the bearer of the promise. Jacob emerges into twelve tribes, but only one of those tribes is the specific bearer of the covenant promise: Judah. The promise would come through Judah, and His name shall be Shiloh, which means the 'worthy one.'

So within Israel there comes to be 'a remnant.' There is, of course, the collective Israel, those who descended from Abraham; but there are also those who are 'like Abraham.' This group consists of

<sup>138</sup> Edwardes, Allen. *Erotica Judaica*; page 22.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*; page 23.

those who have 'faith' in God and the promise. The remnant are those who are the true Israel, those who have faith. They have a faith, a heart that comes from God; and true Israel also has the blood of Abraham in their veins.

Matthew 3:9 reads, 'And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham.' Here, then, John the Baptist told the collective Israel that they were not true Israel. In other words, John the Baptist said *prove* that you are the children of Abraham -- do the works of Abraham, i.e., have 'faith.' John 8:33ff. reads, 'They answered him, 'We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?' Jesus replied, 'I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin... If you were Abraham's children,' said Jesus, 'then you would do the things Abraham did... You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire.'" Our Lord, then, is stating that these Jews are Israelites, they are the descendants of Abraham, but they are not really true Israel, even though the blood of Abraham flows in their veins. So a very fine distinction is being drawn.

And in Luke 19:9, our Lord made the following statement: 'Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham.'" Thus, Christ said that Zacchaeus' heart was like Abraham's: a lifestyle of love and of salvation, and 'faith.'

And Paul, in Romans 2:28, said, 'A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a man's praise is not from men, but from God.' Paul said, then, that a real Jew is one by faith like Abraham.

Gal. 3:6ff. states, 'Consider Abraham: 'He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.' Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham.' A son of Abraham, then, has nothing to do with the blood in one's veins, but everything to do with what is in the heart.

Then, in Gal. 3:26,29 Paul is speaking to Jews and Gentiles: 'You are all sons of God through faith in

Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.' Who, then, is a descendant of Abraham? Anyone who believes in Christ. Thus, anyone who believes in Christ is an heir of the promise that God made to Abraham. Paul is insisting, then, that the covenant is for both Jew and Gentile.

Who is the seed? Gal. 3:16,17 provide the answer: 'The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say 'and to seeds,' meaning many people, but 'and to your seed,' meaning one person, who is Christ.' Christ is 'the seed.' And all those in Him become the descendants of Abraham. So what does that make you, the reader? If you are in Christ, a believer, then you are related directly back to Abraham, and you are 'true Israel' or 'Abraham's offspring'. Not by blood, but by 'faith.' Thus, in effect, you are on every page of the Bible. Again, not by blood, but by 'faith.'

So all those in Christ are blessed. And the word blessing means 'empowered, and successful' in body, mind, spirit and thought. Thus, when the Church Age believer is filled with the Spirit, this believer is blessed or empowered with success in every way. For 'through you (Abraham) all nations of the world will be blessed.' (Gen. 12:3)

For Gal. 3:13 states plainly, 'Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: 'Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.' He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.' So your receiving of the Holy Spirit was the promise that God promised to Abraham in Genesis 12. Then, when you believe in Christ, you are an heir of the promise. Thus, you also may be 'like Abraham' and walk with God, and express and receive *agape love*. So if you are in Christ, then you are in the real family of God, a descendant of Abraham. Again, not by blood, but by faith.

What of the 'land?' When Adam fell, he ceded rulership of the earth to Satan. However, when the end comes, man will again be lord of the earth. Thus, the 'land' becomes salient of what is to come. The 'land' is a shadow of something to

come. The receiving of the land was part of a covenant; Deut. 5:32,33, state that if the covenant was obeyed they would live long in the land. Deut. 6:3, states that if they obey God, they will live in the land. Deut. 8:19,20, state that if they fall into idolatry, they will lose the land. Deut. 11:13-15, state that if they obey, then good weather will be theirs, if not, they will perish from the land. Thus, the land was 'conditioned' by obedience. The land was a reflection of their hearts. They could not sin against God and stay in the land. For the land is conditional; for the land is that place where faith in God exists and persists. Thus, when the Jews became apostate, they began to lose the land; for, again, it is a 'land' of 'faith.'

And Romans 4:13 states that Abraham was to inherit the whole world. And according to Hebrews 11:10, Abraham was looking beyond the 'land' to the 'city that God would build.' God, then, gave Abraham the 'land' in a geographical sense, but Abraham saw beyond the shadow 'land,' the geographical land, to 'the new heaven and the new earth.' And remember, the 'land' was given to Abraham as an 'everlasting possession.' This, then, would be a 'land' in God's scope, and of God's making. Thus, Abraham finally understood God's promise. He saw the 'everlasting' aspect of the promise; and he looked forward to the 'real' land that was promised, not just the physical/geographical land of Canaan. So Abraham saw beyond the 'shadow land,' the one made of dust and dirt, to the land that was promised. For the covenant spoke of a covenant land, a heavenly land.

The geographical/physical/shadow land of the covenant was given to Israel, according to Joshua 21:44,45; I Chronicles 18:3-8; and II Chronicles 8:7,8. Yet the 'real' land of the promise, the heavenly land, the 'everlasting' land, was that which Abraham saw in the future. And for this reason, he lived in a tent, because he 'believed in the promise of God,' and he believed 'that what God had promised, He is able to do.' Thus, those scholars that maintain that the land portion of the covenant has yet to be fulfilled are correct, as long as they comprehend that the portion that remains to be fulfilled is the 'everlasting' portion. And Abraham saw this, and believed it.

The 'everlasting' city or land that Abraham awaited is the New Jerusalem of Revelation 21.

This Holy City is described as a 'city in the clouds,'<sup>140</sup> i.e., one that hangs above the earth. And this Holy City is that one 'made by God,' and it is specifically for the Jews, those that comprise 'the true Israel' (Jews by blood and by 'faith'). For it is the fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant. And this is why Abraham resided in a tent while living here on earth; for Abraham knew that his permanent residence, the 'everlasting' aspect of his covenant with God, was still to come.

Abraham's inheritance of 'the whole world,' found in Galatians 4:13, refers to the inheritance of Abraham's seed, i.e., those who though not Jewish by blood, are Abraham's seed by 'faith.' These, then, will inherit the 'new earth' of Rev. 21:1, which reads, 'Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away; and there was no longer any sea.'<sup>141</sup>

### The Covenant with Moses (Mosaic Covenant)

The Mosaic Covenant, or Covenant at Sinai, is also called the 'old covenant.' And this phrase will be elucidated as this lesson unfolds.

Exodus 19, verses 1-6, contain the introduction to the Mosaic Covenant. And verses 5 and 6 read, 'Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites.'

After God made covenant with Abraham, He then reaffirmed the Abrahamic covenant with Isaac. Thus, Isaac himself received a covenant: the promises of the Abrahamic covenant would be fulfilled through Isaac and his descendants. And Isaac was to pass the promises down to his children. Isaac's wife, Rebecca, before her twin sons were even born, received from God a

<sup>140</sup> Thieme, Robert. *Revelation*; from handwritten notes, undated. This terminology is borrowed from Robert Thieme.

<sup>141</sup> This dissertation on the Abrahamic Covenant is based primarily upon, and in many cases borrowed from, the scholarship of Bisop Smith; and the foundation of the author's data on the 'covenants,' generally, is based upon the categorical expositions of, and the categorical genius of, Robert Thieme. The author must also acknowledge the brilliant scholarship of E. W. Bullinger, Helmer Ringgren, and Clarence Larkin. *Bible Works*, CD-ROM, by Hermeneutika, was graciously donated to the author by Hermeneutika. And this CD-ROM was frequently consulted, especially the original Hebrew OT.



revelation that the eldest twin would not inherit the blessing, but the younger twin would be the recipient of the blessing. And so it was. Jacob had a heart for the word of God, while Esau had no interest in God or the promises. But Isaac favored Esau because Isaac enjoyed good food and Esau provided it. Then Jacob lied and cheated his father with his mother's help. And then Jacob ran, fearing retribution.

And in a valley full of stones, named Luz, God came to Jacob. This, then, was where Jacob saw the ladder ascending into heaven with angels upon it. And at the top of the ladder was the Lord God Himself, and here the Abrahamic covenant was passed on to Jacob. And in the last chapter of Genesis, the family of Jacob, approximately 70 people, entered into Egypt and received the Land of Goshen. And these 70 people comprised the future of what would become Israel; and with them they had the promises and the God of covenant.

Then Joseph, because he remembered and believed in the promise of God, refused to be buried in Egypt. And his casket was carried for hundreds of years.

Then the Pharaoh of Egypt placed the Hebrews under slavery, for he was afraid that they were becoming too numerous. And at this point, the Hebrews remembered the God they had forgotten for so long, and cried unto Him. And God, according to the conditions of any covenant, had not forgotten them, but had constantly kept them in mind. The covenant had been in effect all along from God's point of view; God has not stopped saying, 'I will never leave you, I will never forsake you.' And this is where Moses entered history. For Moses was, in effect, a contract or covenant attorney. God sent his attorney to the Pharaoh of Egypt to declare that the Hebrews were His people, that a covenant existed. And the attorney, Moses, provided Pharaoh with a warning.

And as an attorney, Moses began his legal presentation with, 'Let my people go.' Moses was not giving a dissertation on slavery; he was citing the terms of a covenant. For 'my people' is a covenant phrase which delineates a blood covenant, i.e., a contract based upon blood that cannot be abrogated for any reason. Then followed the ten plagues, the first nine of which

exhibited the patience and long-suffering of God; for nine times God allowed Pharaoh to 'harden his heart;' and then came the final plague, the judgment of the firstborn. And it should be noted that the judgment of the firstborn was forestalled only by the grace of God, for the judgment should have been immediate. Indeed, Psalm 136:10ff., calls the nine plagues 'acts of lovingkindness' from God. The act of freeing the Hebrews from oppression need not be expanded upon, but the delaying of judgment upon the Egyptian firstborn was also an 'act of lovingkindness' to the Egyptians. They were given an opportunity to change their minds, to behold and believe in the Living God. And interestingly, each of the nine plagues involved one of the 'gods' of the Egyptians. For example, the Egyptians worshipped the River Nile as a god: it was the source of life and fertility. And this explains why all the male infants were ordered to be thrown into the Nile River by the Pharaoh; it was a sacrifice to the crocodiles, which the Egyptians also worshipped as gods, in the Nile River. The Egyptians also worshipped the frogs in the River Nile. And by demonstrating patience and delaying judgment, Jehovah Elohim, the God of covenant, made it clear to the Egyptians that each of these 'gods' was false, and that He was the only true God. And by these acts, these nine acts of 'lovingkindness,' God also demonstrated to the Egyptians that He loved them, and would allow them to change their minds and enter into a relationship with Him.

And at the conclusion of the nine plagues, the only god left was Pharaoh himself, for he believed that he was the incarnation of light. That is why *Ra* is the medial infix of the word Pharaoh. For *Ra* was the deity of light. And the Pharaoh of the Exodus was Ramses; and his very name spoke of his deity. And the ninth plague, the supernatural darkness that enveloped Egypt demonstrated that the last remaining god, the god of light, Raamses, was also impotent. For Raamses was impotent in the face of this darkness. Thus, the idols were dethroned.

And during this darkness, Moses told the Hebrews to take a lamb, kill it, and catch the blood in a basin. Then they were to take the weeds that grew in the cracks in the walls; it was called hyssop. They were to dip the hyssop in the blood and paint the two sides and top of the doorway

with the blood. Then all the members of each family were to walk through the doorway and sit down at the table and eat of the lamb. The wall of blood was a picture of the covenant that protected them. And the meal on the other side of the door was the covenant meal, eaten once again. And as they ate they were to be dressed for a long journey. This was a statement of faith: God said they were leaving, and they believed it.

The Hebrews, at this point, became the slaves of God, which is true freedom. And at Sinai, God was to meet with them. And on Mt. Sinai, God met with Moses and tendered the next covenant. And it is important to note that this covenant does not replace the other covenants: the covenant of life, the covenant of redemption, the covenant with Noah, or the Abrahamic covenant; for all these covenants go on to be fulfilled in Jesus Christ. The Mosaic covenant is different.

With the Mosaic covenant, God asked, shall we enter into covenant? In all the others, God came and stated what was to take place. This covenant, then, is different from the others. 'If you will obey, and if you will keep my covenant.' Here, then, is a conditional covenant for the first time. And this covenant also contained a clause that stated Israel would be a 'nation of priests,' i.e., they will represent God before the world.

And Moses presented the terms of the covenant to Israel; and they said, 'Yes. This we will do.' Then, at this point, God exhibits His 'awesomeness,' i.e., He shows Israel with Whom they are in relationship: thunder, lightning, and an earthquake, i.e., the Omnipotent God. And then, in chapter 20, most markedly, God spoke to all of Israel, to 3 million Jews. But the Jews refused an *immediate* relationship with God; they wanted a *mediate* relationship. For they said to Moses in Ex. 20:19, 'Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die.' In other words, they requested that Moses be their mediator.

And from then on, God spoke to Moses, and Moses spoke to the people. Then, from Exodus 21 through Exodus 24, the expansion of the ten commandments is given. Then they built an altar with twelve pillars; the altar represented God and the twelve pillars represented Israel. And offerings were made; blood was shed. And half

the blood was spread on the altar, which represented God. And again the Law was read. And again, for the third time, the people said, 'Yes. This we will do.' And then the other half of the blood was sprinkled upon the pillars, which represented the people, and upon the people themselves. A covenant had been made. 'Moses then wrote down everything the Lord had said. He got up early the next morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain and set up twelve stone pillars representing the twelve tribes of Israel. Then he sent young Israelite men, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls as fellowship offerings to the Lord. Moses took half of the blood and put it in bowls, and the other half he sprinkled on the altar. Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it to the people. They responded, 'We will do everything the Lord has said; we will obey.' Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said, 'This is the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words.'" (Exodus 24:4-8)

And in Exodus 24:9, a group of men beheld God and ate a covenant meal in the presence of God. 'Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel went up and saw the God of Israel. Under his feet was something like a pavement made of sapphire, clear as the sky itself. But God did not raise his hand against these leaders of the Israelites; they saw God, and they ate and drank.' This is unprecedented!

Forty years later, this covenant was repeated to the next generation; and this repetition is called the Book of Deuteronomy, 'the second Law.' And chapter 28 provides the details of the covenant clauses, both the blessings and the cursings.

Tragically, within six weeks of having entered into the covenant on Mt. Sinai, the Jews were dancing around a golden calf. The covenant had been broken.

### Why the Covenant of Law?

First, the Mosaic Covenant was given in order to demonstrate man's guilt before God. The Law proves mankind's sinfulness before an Holy God, Who is Perfect Righteousness. And the Law challenges the inner heart of each person: has the Law been broken by thought, or by deed, or by word? The Law penetrates to mankind's guilt.

And the Law provides a standard of right and wrong.

And the Law demonstrates the character of sin: God is love, *agape love*; and God is true and eternal life (He does not have life, He is life); and to be *alive*, then, is to live in *agape love*. And therefore, if a person is truly alive, then this person lives in *agape love*. And mankind was made in the image of God; thus it was God's original intention that mankind mirror His love and His life. And the glory of God is His Justice, His Righteousness, and His Lovingkindness. But 'all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.'

Thus, sin is failure to act as the God Who is love acts; it is failure to love others with *agape love*. It is falling short of the glory of God. Thus, sin begins with rebellion against God's love, but is expressed in failure to utilize *agape love*. Sin, then, is taking for self rather than giving. Too, sin is breaking away from the life of God, from true life. And such a breaking away is death. Thus, sin is mankind choosing to operate independently from God; sin is mankind choosing un-love and un-life over love and life. Sin is mankind choosing *self for self*. And once this posture is assumed, then mankind, when faced with *agape love*, does not understand or like God's love. Because this type of love goes against self for self, which fallen mankind has selected. Thus, God's love, to the unenlightened, is terrifying; 'It is foolishness to those who are perishing.' For this type of love is absurd to fallen mankind's previous choice of *self for self*. And God's type of love, *agape love*, or *self for others*, says to mankind that mankind is wrong; that self-centered self is wrong; that manipulation of others for self is wrong. *Self for others*, then, is the direct opposite of that which fallen mankind desires to do. It is foreign to fallen man's method of operation, and method of thinking. Thus, when fallen mankind comes into contact with God, God seems to be contradictory to mankind. Example: God says, 'If you would live and be happy, you cannot do this and that.' Whereupon fallen mankind responds, 'Yes, but that is precisely what I wanted to do; in fact, I was just planning on doing this and that.' Another example: 'Thou shall not have any other gods before me.' This negative command, then, is a statement of God's *agape love*, for God so loves mankind that He tells mankind that to do otherwise is incorrect,

unhealthy, against God's original intention for mankind; that to do otherwise results in misery, death, and unhappiness. Thus, the Law is a statement of God's love, and a statement of what *agape love*, or correct love, is not. The Law, then, defines *true* life, love, joy, and peace.

The Law, then, tells mankind that beyond this is death, or un-life. For if mankind truly understands unconditional or *agape love*, then mankind would never even desire any other gods; mankind would only desire a God Who has *agape love*. Or if mankind truly and correctly loves other members of mankind, then mankind would not desire to lie, or cheat, or steal. For mankind would understand that the God of *agape love*, because of this very love, has already provided *more* than all that mankind would or could gain by lying, cheating and stealing.

The Law also demonstrates that fallen mankind's religion, i.e., man by man's works attempting to gain the approbation of God, is wrong. For mankind constantly attempts to bridge the gap to God. For fallen mankind is lost and helpless and in darkness. Thus, fallen mankind looks at the Law and says, 'I can do that. Now I know what God wants; I know the rules.' And then fallen mankind attempts to keep the letter of the Law. And by so doing, fallen mankind has missed the whole thrust of the Law. For the Law is love, not just rules. For one can keep the letter of the Law and still hate and despise God and one's fellow mankind.

Thus, the Law was given for another reason: 'that sin might abound.' (Romans 7) In other words, the more fallen mankind tries to keep the letter of the Law, the worse fallen mankind discovers that he is. For fallen mankind can keep the letter of the Law, but fallen mankind cannot achieve *agape or unconditional love* on his own. For the Law's defect is that it cannot help you. For the Law says, 'Fulfill it or die.' The Law only condemns; the Law drives fallen mankind to helplessness. For when fallen mankind reaches the tenth commandment, 'Thou shall not covet,' fallen mankind inevitably fails. For the tenth commandment states, 'thou shall not even desire to break the other nine.' In other words, you not only do not overtly commit adultery, but you do not lust for another man's wife in your heart. For the tenth commandment totally rejects the concept

of *self for self*. Thus, the Law is not an outward observance; the Law speaks to the inner heart, the inner self.

Thus, God gave the Law to fallen mankind to show mankind how helpless he is. Therefore, the Law was set in place to goad fallen mankind to the Abrahamic Covenant, which says, 'I rest in God; I respond to God,' and by so doing, righteousness is credited to mankind, just as it was to Abraham. God resolves fallen mankind's helplessness. The Law, then, exhibits to fallen mankind that the Cross of Christ is the only hope of salvation. Because mankind is helpless before the Law, and the Law offers no help. And at that point, God says, 'I will help. I will provide a way.'

The Law, then, is a mirror that shows mankind that he is sinful; the mirror, or the Law, was not designed to solve the problem, it was just designed to demonstrate that mankind is wrong. The Law, then, goads mankind to another solution: the offering. And this concept of 'offering' explains the animal sacrifices: that another must take fallen mankind's place. The Law, then, goads mankind to salvation.

And the feebleness of the Law, i.e., that the Law offers no help, was constantly demonstrated in the repeated failures of the Jews and Israel: mankind cannot keep the Law. And this failure explains the words of Hosea to Israel: 'there is no more lovingkindness left. You are no longer my people; I am no longer your God.' The covenant was over. And then Jeremiah stated to Judah: 'The God of covenant, who was married to you at Sinai, has written out a bill of divorce.' Thus, God said, 'Mankind cannot on his own keep this covenant. Therefore, this covenant is old.' Jeremiah, therewith, conducted the funeral of the Old Covenant. Then, graciously, God told Jeremiah that He, God, would 'cut' a new covenant: 'One that would be written on their hearts.'

Christ, then, is the end of the Law to those who believe. Believing in Christ is throwing the Law out the door; for Christ fulfilled the Law -- He lived the letter of the Law and He lived *agape love, self for others*. And believing mankind, now, may keep the Law without appealing to the Law: for God the Holy Spirit empowers mankind to *agape love*. Because mankind cannot achieve *agape love* on his own, i.e., by keeping the Law.

The Mosaic Law, therefore, is not the way to God. There is another way, and this way is the Cross of Christ. And this way is like that of the Abrahamic Covenant: resting in another, counting on another. Christ on the Cross stated that there is another way: and this new way achieves that which the Law demanded.<sup>142</sup>

'At Sinai He tested them. He rehearsed all He had done in their behalf. He had brought them thus far on eagles' wings. Would they, henceforth, cast themselves in obedient and dependent faith upon Him; or, would they by relying upon their own strength, their own wisdom, walk in their own righteousness and earn their way into the Promised Land? There was only one true course to follow. They should have confessed their helplessness and cast themselves wholly upon the omnipotence and the grace of God. They did nothing of the kind. With consummate spiritual blindness and offensive self-sufficiency they agreed to earn and merit their way into the Promised Land. With united voice they said: 'All the Lord hath spoken (that is, all He required of them) we will -- do.' By that response they repudiated the grace of God, set aside the Abrahamic, unconditional covenant and placed themselves on the ground of Law. It was a fatal act.'<sup>143</sup>

### The Covenant with David

The Words of the Lord, conveyed through the prophet Nathan, to David as recorded in II Samuel 7:12ff., read, "When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with the rod of men, with floggings inflicted by men. But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from

<sup>142</sup> The above dissertation on the Mosaic Law is based upon, and borrowed directly from, the works and scholarship of: Bishop Smith, Robert Thieme, and I.M. Haldeman. The author makes no claim to originality in either induction, deduction or word; moreover, the author begs the indulgence of these great scholars for adopting their thoughts and words.

<sup>143</sup> Haldeman, I.M. *The Tabernacle Priesthood and Offerings*; page 10-11.

before you. Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever."

This is the statement of the Davidic covenant. The covenant that God made with David concerning the Kingdom of God, i.e., God's determination to establish on earth His Kingdom.

Before the Davidic covenant is discussed, it is necessary to understand the place of David in the Old Testament. For David overshadows the entire Old Testament and he penetrates into the New Testament so much so that one cannot understand the New Testament without comprehending the place of David in the unfolded purposes of God in the Old Testament.

David's place goes back to the book of Genesis, chapter 49. In chapter 49, Jacob is dying and he called a convocation of his sons. The convocation was for the purpose of blessing and passing on the promise that was made to Abraham. And Genesis 49 records the blessings of Jacob to each of his sons. And in Genesis 49:8-12, Jacob pronounces his blessing upon Judah. With his hands on Judah's head, Jacob said, "Judah, your brothers will praise you; your hand will be on the neck of your enemies; your father's sons will bow down to you. You are a lion's cub, O Judah; you return from the prey, my son. Like a lion he crouches and lies down, like a lioness -- who dares to rouse him? The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his. He will tether his donkey to a vine, his colt to the choicest branch; he will wash his garments in wine, his robes in the blood of grapes. His eyes will be darker than wine, his teeth whiter than milk." And note, that the name Judah, in the Hebrew, means "to praise."

Notice first, that Judah is to receive the praises of his brothers; Jacob is looking down the corridors of time; and one shall come from Judah that will call forth the praises of the earth. And then Jacob portrays Judah as a lion, in poetic and prophetic language. And who dares to disturb the lion? This lion of the Tribe of Judah will conquer, and he will bear the scepter, the royal emblem. Thus, the kings of Israel will come from the tribe of Judah. And the "ruler's staff" refers to the king as the lawmaker of Israel. Thus, he is the purveyor of

justice; and the phrase, "between his feet," refers to all the coming generations. And this will be true until the arrival of "to whom it belongs," or *shiloh*. Thus, the tribe of Judah will be kings until the one "who is worthy of praise," *shiloh*, comes. And he will be the final and everlasting King. And to this one, all the nations will belong. And the expression implies that this one is magnetic, this is the one that the nations desire.

And this prophecy and blessing resided in the tribe of Judah. It was passed down from generation to generation of the tribe of Judah.

Moses was not a king; Joshua was not a king; and all the "judges" were not kings, they were dictators or deliverers. And then the final judge came, Samuel, the prophet. And God ruled the Jews through Samuel. But then the people came to Samuel and told him that they were weary of him, they desired a king like other nations. And Samuel attempted to dissuade them, for he said that God ruled over them. But the people wanted to be like other nations. And it is always dangerous to want to be like everybody else. And so God allowed it: God gave them what they wanted, one of the worst judgments that God can inflict upon a people or an individual. Saul was made the king. However, Saul came from the tribe of Benjamin, not Judah. So when God said, here is a king from Benjamin, God was saying this is not *my* king. And Saul was popular, good-looking, tough, tall; but he had a problem with his heart: Saul was bitter, jealous, threatened.

And then, finally, God said that Saul is finished. I will provide my king. So God sent Samuel to Bethlehem to select His king. And Bethlehem was in the tribe of Judah. The house of Jesse was visited. And God rejected all Jesse's sons. Finally, Samuel said, "Are you sure you have no other sons?" And David was brought in from the fields. So Samuel poured the anointing oil over David and anointed him as the first lion of the Tribe of Judah; Saul was the abortion.

And as soon as David became king, he performed a significant act. For remember that the throne of God was atop the Ark of the Covenant in the Tabernacle; and here resided a light uncreated and unradiated, the Shekinah Glory, the manifestation of the Glory of God. And recall that the people had become apostate under King Saul; then the

Philistines came, and the Jews called for the Ark of the Covenant, but they now viewed the Ark as nothing more than a lucky charm. But God would not allow Himself to be used as a lucky charm, and the Philistines captured the Ark. And the Philistines carried the Ark to the Temple of Dagon, their god. But Dagon kept falling and breaking, bowing down before, as it were, the Ark of the Covenant. So the Philistines moved him to another of their cities, and all the people became ill. Finally, in frustration and despair, the Philistines returned the Ark to Israel. And the Ark, because of Saul's apostasy, ended up in a farmhouse.

So David's first act was to *recognize God as the true King of Israel*. And David returned the Ark to Jerusalem. And at this point, David wrote Psalm 24; and the choirs of Levi sang in antistrophe as the Ark came into Israel. And the Ark was placed on Mount Zion, and there the Glory of God resided in a tent.

Then David realized that he lived in a palace and the Ark resided in a tent. Thus, he decided to build a house for the Ark; and David consulted the prophet Nathan. And Nathan said, "Do all that is in your heart." However, Nathan was wrong, for he did not consult with God. Then Nathan returned to David and spoke the words of II Samuel 7:1-11. God said, "I do not want you to build Me a house; but I will build you a house, a dynasty. There will always be a king from the line of David; and the first of your descendants will build me a house." Thus, the throne of David and the throne of God became linked. And one of David's sons would rule forever and ever. And David understood the essence of this covenant with God. The Promise that was made to Adam and Eve has now narrowed down to one family, the family of David.

David's throne on earth would be a shadow on earth of the true throne of God in heaven. And David's throne would be forever and ever; and this can only refer to God, for only God is everlasting. Thus, this covenant speaks to the immediate descendants of David, but it also speaks of "enduring forever." So the covenant speaks also of an everlasting throne. Thus, David's dynasty will go on, and on, and on; but in the end, the son of David and the Son of God will

be One Person, and He will sit on the throne of David forever.

II Chron. 9:8 confirms that the descendants of David were placed upon the throne of God.

David, then, was the ruler for God on earth, as was his son, Solomon. "Praise be to the Lord your God, who has delighted in you and placed you on his throne as king to rule for the Lord your God. Because of the love of your God for Israel and his desire to uphold them forever, he has made you king over them, to maintain justice and righteousness." (II Chron. 9:8)

Recall the oil that was used to anoint David. Because of this oil David coined the phrase, *Messiah*, which means, "the anointed One," *christos*, in the Greek. This term had never been used before; David originated the term *Messiah*. And then David wrote Psalm 2. For David comprehended the extravagant and extreme graciousness of this covenant; and more, David recognized the resplendent God.

And Psalm 2 states that "the One enthroned in Heaven laughs;" and at the Cross "God laughed." And in Matthew 28, Christ said that "all authority is given to me." This covenant, then, looks forward to the Son of God on His throne. And Revelation 5 records, "that the Lion of the Tribe of Judah has overcome." And then John heard a trillion voices proclaim, "Worthy is the Lamb!" This, then, is *Shiloh*, the "worthy one," the one "to whom praise belongs." And in Psalm 45, David again wrote of this "worthy one."

In the Old Testament, then, shadows exist. And this is why after Christ came, and the New Covenant became a reality, that there are no building/temples on earth. The 'church' in the present age is each and every individual believer; the real temple exists in each believer through the power of the Holy Spirit. And that explains why our Lord said, "The hour is coming and in fact now is that you shall worship in the Spirit." Thus, the physical throne of David was the shadow of the throne of God; for the throne of God is everlasting, while the actual physical throne of David would one day vanish. So the true everlasting throne of God will exist forever; the real throne of God is in heaven. However, the two thrones were so merged that they sometimes exchange names: the throne of David is called the

throne of God, and the throne of God is called the throne of David. The two are one. And David *comprehended* this remarkable fact of God's covenant with him.

And subsequent to David's death, God reaffirmed the Davidic covenant with Solomon, for II Chron. 7:18 reads, "I will establish your royal throne, as I covenanted with David your father when I said, 'You shall never fail to have a man to rule over Israel.'" Now God and Solomon were linked together. Solomon's besetting sin, however, was women; and Jerusalem soon was filled with foreign gods and their temples. And eventually, even Solomon turned from God, yet just prior to his death he returned to Yahweh, the Living God, the God of covenant. Additionally, Solomon's building program was so vast that he imposed more and more and more taxes on the Israelites. Subsequent to Solomon's death, his son, Rehoboam, was approached by the people and they asked that he reduce the taxes. But Rehoboam took the advice of his peers, who said double the taxes, show them who is the king! So Rehoboam went to the people and said, my father whipped you with whips, but I will whip you with scorpions. I will double the taxes. But the leader of the people, Jeroboam, said, NO! Enough is enough. We will secede. So ten tribes formed Israel or Samaria in the north, and two tribes, Judah and Benjamin (with a few from the tribe of Simeon), formed Judah in the south.

Jeroboam's reaction was understandable; however, Jeroboam erred. Because Rehoboam, though a fool, was in the line of David, through whom the Messiah was to come. Additionally, the Davidic covenant was vested in the Davidic line, i.e., in Rehoboam. Furthermore, the Temple and the Ark of the Covenant were in Jerusalem, and the throne of David, which was the shadow of the throne of God, was in Jerusalem. Thus, when Jeroboam seceded, he departed from the covenant, the royal family of Judah, and the hope and promise of the Messiah. And this explains Jeroboam's label from then on, "Jeroboam, who caused Israel to sin." For Jeroboam removed the people from God.

Then Jeroboam instituted his own priesthood, and his own temple, and he set up golden calves in Dan; and thus began Baalism in the northern kingdom. And Rehoboam ruled over a phantom,

a tragic vestige of a kingdom that had once existed.

And then the prophets came; and the prophets spoke ubiquitously concerning that which God had promised He would do with David. For example, Isaiah prophesied in the time of Uzziah the king. And after Uzziah died, first Jotham then Ahaz ruled over Judah. And Ahaz had no respect for God; yet he was of the tribe of Judah and the line of David. Thereupon, the king of Syria planned to attack Judah; and all Judah and the southern kingdom were terrified. And Ahaz began to plan for a siege of Jerusalem. And Isaiah told king Ahaz to relax, that the God of the Davidic covenant would not desert him, not because of Ahaz, but because of who and what God is, because of the covenant. But Ahaz paid no heed. And again Isaiah spoke to Ahaz and said, "Ask a sign from God and He will answer to demonstrate His faithfulness to the covenant." But Ahaz would not ask. Then Isaiah turned and spoke to the descendants of the house of David, 'You are wearying me and God. Therefore, God Himself will give you a sign:' "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel (God with us)." (Isa. 7:14) That son would be the son of David, "God with us." Thus, when God gave this sign, He stated that His purposes and the covenant would be fulfilled. God was so with them that, literally, "God would be with them, Immanuel." For "He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever." (Isa. 9:7)

Isaiah, then, was reiterating the Davidic covenant. And in chapter 9, Isaiah said, "A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit." And this One, "He will raise a banner (*nissi*; here, then, is *Yahweh Nissi*) for the nations and gather the exiles of Israel."

And John the Baptist recognized our Lord as the Messiah because he had read Isaiah 11:2-3, which say, "The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him -- the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord -- and he will delight in the fear of the Lord." And recall, that John beheld the Spirit of the Lord descending upon our Lord.

At almost the same time, as Isaiah prophesied in Jerusalem, the prophet Micah spoke to the rural areas in Judah. Micah said that the King of Kings would come from Bethlehem, a city so small that it was hardly included in the census. For Micah 5:2 reads, "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from old, from ancient times."

It is interesting to note, that if all one had was the Old Testament, then confusion would reign. For the only method for fully understanding the Old Testament is to comprehend the New Testament, which is the Holy Spirit's commentary on the Old Testament.

And at just about the same juncture in history, Israel, the northern kingdom, was twisting down into total apostasy and idolatry. And God sent Hosea to Israel; and Hosea was instructed by God to marry an infamous call-girl, and through this marriage and its infidelity, promiscuity and betrayal, Hosea was taught by God the meaning of *agape love*, forgiveness and faithfulness. And Hosea and his wife were a picture of God and His Bride, Israel, who was portrayed as a harlot. Finally, God spoke through Hosea and said, "The covenant is over; the lovingkindness is gone." Yet God remained faithful to the covenant even then; for God continued to love Israel. God said, "There will come a day that those who have left me will come again." They, the Jews, would seek David, the final David, the Anointed One, the One who is Worthy. And this David will be Christ Himself, God Himself.

And when did this happen? When did the Jews again seek for David? I Peter 1,2. For Peter spoke to the Jews and Gentiles who sought Christ, and Peter said that those of you who were not the people of God, you are now the people of God; for now you have lovingkindness again. You came seeking Christ and you found David.

Eventually, the northern kingdom was taken captive by Assyria. And again, in the south, in Judah, spirituality worsened. And God sent Jeremiah; and Jeremiah told Judah that God still remembered His covenant to David, and that even though the southern kingdom, too, would go into captivity, that "'The days are coming,' declares the Lord, 'when I will raise up to David a righteous

Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The Lord Our Righteousness.'" (Jer. 23:5-6) And then the southern kingdom went away into captivity in Babylon.

Recall Luke 1, when the angel spoke to Mary, "'Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end.'" This is a quotation of the Davidic covenant; and Mary was from the tribe of Judah, the line of David. And then Joseph and Mary traveled from Nazareth to Bethlehem. For Mary was about 14 years old at this time; and if a Jewish girl was not married by the time she was 15, she was considered an old-maid. And a few weeks prior to this point in time, across the ocean on the Isle of Capri, the old Emperor Augustus had had a quarrel with Herod, the king of Judea. And because of this quarrel over tax revenues, each citizen in Judea was required to return to the town of their fathers to register for taxation. Thus, with Mary almost nine months pregnant, Joseph, a descendant of David, had to return to Bethlehem. Fantastic! For if the Emperor Augustus and Herod had quarreled one week earlier or two weeks later, then Jesus would not have been born in Bethlehem. The Hand of God is fantastic! For the quarrel took place at just the right moment.

Acts 2:29ff., read, "Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay. God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, 'The Lord said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand until I make



your enemies a footstool for your feet.” Thus, when our Lord arose again, He was crowned King, and he sits now upon the throne of David, the real throne, not the shadow throne. For He is seated at the right hand of God the Father. And His Kingdom is in the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is in the believer; thus, believers are the Kingdom of God even now.

And this is why, with a loud voice, our Lord cried on the Cross, “It is finished!” The covenants are fulfilled, all of them. And what is left? Only the physical consummation. But the real Kingdom of God is now, for the Holy Spirit is now with us; Immanuel, “God with us,” is *now* with us through His Spirit.<sup>144</sup>

### The New Covenant

Jeremiah 31:31ff., reads, “‘The time is coming,’ declares the Lord, ‘when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them,’ declares the Lord. ‘This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time,’ declares the Lord. ‘I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,’ declares the Lord. ‘For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.’”

This is the statement of the New Covenant to Israel. And always remember that when God starts something, He finishes it. When God began, the end is assured. So what God planned for mankind in the Garden will ultimately be done. And even though mankind continually abrogated the covenants that God provided, God’s faithfulness continues unabated. And it is very important to note that Old Testament Israel is the only nation to ever have been chartered by God,

and it was based upon the Sinai covenant and the Davidic covenant.

And as the book of Jeremiah opens, the northern kingdom has been taken captive by Assyria and scattered; in effect, they have disappeared because they left the God of the covenant. And the southern kingdom has been sucked down by the swirling vortex of idolatry and evil. Then God sent Jeremiah. Josiah is the king and he is trying to revive spirituality; but Jeremiah tells him that it is too late. Jeremiah declares that Babylon, under Nebuchadnezzar, is going to take Judah captive. And it is interesting to note that Nebuchadnezzar came from the revived empire of Chaldea, where Abraham had lived when he recognized the One True God, Jehovah Elohim. Thus, God is saying, “You are going home.” So totally had the Jews broken the covenant that He was sending them back to square one. God is divorcing them and sending them back home. Thus, God sent Jeremiah, and God sent Nebuchadnezzar. And Jeremiah told the Jews that when Nebuchadnezzar arrived they were not to resist or fight; that God was on the Babylonian King’s side. The Jews accused Jeremiah of being a traitor and tossed him into jail for making this statement. And Jeremiah added that the captivity would last 70 years, and then God would start again.

But even as Jeremiah spoke the words of the *Diaspora*, he spoke of God’s faithfulness in Jer. 23:5ff.; for God cannot break His Word, His Oath, or His Covenant. And remember that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, as prophesied, but went back to Nazareth to reside. And the gospel of Matthew states that He would be, “He who shall be called a Nazarene.” Yet in none of the prophets can this statement be found. So what was Matthew referring to? The word Nazareth translated from the Hebrew means “the village of the Branch.” Therefore, by the Providence of God, He who was born in Bethlehem was placed in *Nazareth* to be raised. And He was given the common name of Jesus. And this explains why He was known not as Jesus, but as Jesus of Nazareth. And every time this was said, it meant He was “Jesus of the Branch.” Thus His name is forever linked with the Branch. And this in turn explains the statement of Isaiah, “That out of the root would come a sprout.” Too, it explains the statement Jeremiah

<sup>144</sup>The above dissertation on the Davidic Covenant is dependent upon the scholarship of Bishop Smith, Robert Thieme, and I.M. Haldeman; the author claims no originality in thought or word, and begs the indulgence of these great scholars for having adopted their material.

made in Jer. 23:5, "When I will raise up to David a righteous Branch."

Jeremiah was the sad prophet; for his success and his ministry was to conduct the funeral of Judah; for he sent them into captivity. And this is why he is called the "weeping prophet."

And since true Israel, according to Scripture, is a believer with the 'faith,' not the blood or racial characteristics, of Abraham, this New Covenant to Israel is the harbinger of the covenant to the Church. And this explains Rahab the harlot's inclusion into Israel, and Ruth the Moabitess' inclusion in true Israel; and both are included in the line of our Lord. For God makes covenant with those of 'faith.' And this New Covenant is 'new' not in its terms, but in its administration. For the terms are the terms of all the past covenants; however, the administration of the covenant is now placed *inside* the people of 'faith.' It is no longer written on scrolls or on tablets. It is written on the heart. And in this New Covenant, God again takes the initiative, for He says, "I will do it." For remember that in the Sinai covenant the people said, "We will do all that God asks." God, then, is saying, "They cannot do it; they broke it." Here, though, God says that He will supernaturally intervene with this New Covenant. This, then, is the statement that mankind may stop struggling to deserve God's favor and grace and salvation. This is the statement that mankind may now rest in God, for "It is done."

Additionally, Jeremiah 31:34 states, "No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the Lord." This verse, according to Archbishop Smith, refers to the mediator or representative who symbolized the assembly in all the previous covenants. Some representative stood between mankind and God as the mediator. No one except Moses knew God *immediately*; Israel knew God *mediately*, i.e., through their representative, Moses. Thus, the people of Israel had to go to their 'neighbor,' Moses, or the Tribe of Levi, who constituted the priesthood of Israel, to receive knowledge of the Lord. And the word 'know' here is the Hebrew word that defines a marriage relationship, i.e., to know intimately, as "Adam knew his wife Eve." Thus, in this covenant each man will be married to

God, and will know God intimately and immediately. And in this marriage concept is seen the harbinger of the Bride of Christ, which is found in the New Covenant to the Church.

Other scholars, however, maintain that this passage refers to the Jews, and specifically to the Jews during the Millennial Dispensation; see Jer. 31:31-34 cf. 32:36-44; Ezek. 11:16-21; 36:21-28. And this interpretation *would appear, ipse dixit*,<sup>145</sup> to sustain more homogeneity based upon the concepts of dispensations and Scriptural analysis. The author, however, must admit that the New Covenant to Israel, the Church and the unique ministry of God the Holy Spirit to the Church, and the blood of Christ are all so closely interdependent that further research into which interpretation is correct remains vital. And the author also timidly suggests that neither interpretation may be precisely and entirely correct for the very fact that the plexus is intricate, to say the least. Furthermore, the author suspects that the New Covenant to Israel is just that, to Israel, but that it has pervasive and distinct ramifications to the Church.<sup>146</sup> For both 'new covenants' are founded in the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross.

But the bringing in of this New Covenant must deal with sin; and this demands the Cross. Thus, this New Covenant is the harbinger of the covenant to the Church. For the phrase 'the New Covenant' refers to the blood of Christ. And the New Covenant to Israel is totally dependent upon this blood of Christ, both as to its fulfillment and to its employment.

Ezekiel 34:11-12 read, "For this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I myself will search for my sheep and look after them. As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness." And recall that "clouds

<sup>145</sup> *Ipsa dixit*: 'an unsupported assertion,' i.e., this statement is authoritative only to the extent that the reputation of its composers merits trust.

<sup>146</sup> Indeed, with more study and with more knowledge, the author hopes to clarify the precise aspects of the 'New Covenant.' Time, though, is the necessary ingredient. With all due respect to Archbishop Smith and Robert Thieme, the above presentation is provided only as a temporary, provisional and impermanent exposition.

and darkness" refers to two days: the day of the Cross, and the day of the Second Advent (the concept of dual fulfillment).

The prophet Ezekiel came from the priestly tribe and was taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon. And Daniel was already there in Babylon and being trained by Nebuchadnezzar to become one of the 'wise men' of Babylon. And Daniel was to speak directly to Nebuchadnezzar; for God's plan for Daniel included being a prisoner of war, and leading the most powerful king of the world at that time to the Lord.

Ezekiel, however, has often been described as the strangest of the prophets. And in chapter 34 of the Book of Ezekiel, Ezekiel speaks of Israel as a flock of sheep, and he refers to their leaders, the kings of Israel, as the shepherds of the people. But according to God, the shepherds have not done what they were required to do. And Judah has been scattered; and the city of Jerusalem is almost uninhabited. And Ezekiel 34:11 and 15 declare that God Himself will be the shepherd. Then, in verses 23 and 24, God states, "I will place over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he will tend them; he will tend them and be their shepherd. I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David will be prince among them. I the Lord have spoken."

And God does not mean that David himself will be raised from the dead; rather, He is speaking of the son of David, the Son of God, the One who will come. This explains why Jesus called Himself "the Good Shepherd." He did not say, "I am a shepherd" because Ezekiel called all the shepherds "bad" in Ezekiel 34. And when God Himself came to seek and save the lost, He would be the "good shepherd," and He would be the descendant of David, the Messiah. And Jesus quoted Ezek. 34 when He said, "I am the Good Shepherd. I am come to seek and to save that which is lost." Thus, Jesus was claiming to be the fulfillment of Ezekiel's prophecy; he was claiming to be the descendant of David.

Ezekiel 36:22 reads, "Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone.'" And the phrase

"my holy name," refers back to Exodus 33 and 34, where Moses asked God His name; and God answered: "lovingkindness, lovingkindness, lovingkindness." That is God said, "I am faithful to my word; I am a keeper of covenants." Thus, Ezekiel 36 is a reference to the covenant that God had made with David. And these words, as spoken by God, have a dual fulfillment: 1) the books of Ezra and Nehemiah clearly state that the Jews did return to the land under Zerubabel; 2) the books of Joel and Revelation denote that the Son of David will rule over Israel during the millennial state and thereafter, forever.

And then in Ezek. 36:26-27, Ezekiel makes a statement parallel to the one made by Jeremiah: "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws." Here, again, God is stating that He will place His love within mankind, and will place His Spirit within mankind. And Romans chapter 5 verse 5 says, "And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us."

Remember that Jesus said, in John 3:5, "Jesus answered (to Nicodemus), 'I tell you the truth, unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.'" And Nicodemus was frustrated and confused; and Jesus asked him, "'You are Israel's teacher,' said Jesus, 'and you do not understand these things?'" In other words, Jesus was saying this is not a new idea, Nicodemus; for this was prophesied in Ezekiel and Jeremiah and, Nicodemus, being a teacher (Rabbi or scholar), should have known this. For Ezekiel declared that when the Messiah came, the son of David, the Son of God, that He would "sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you." (Ezek. 36:25,26a) Thus, Ezekiel stated that the people of the Kingdom of God will be washed with God's water and filled with God's Spirit. Jesus said, "Unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." (John 3:5) Ezekiel stated that the people of the Kingdom of God, the one ruled by the son of David, would

have "a new heart and a new spirit." Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3)

So the New Birth happened in Jesus.

Ezekiel 37 relates the story of the Valley of Dry Bones. And in the valley are dead, dry bones of some vast nation. And God asked Ezekiel, "Son of man, can these bones live?" And Ezekiel answered, "O Sovereign Lord, you alone know." Then Ezekiel was instructed to preach to the dry bones. And Ezekiel preached to the bones that God would cause them to be 'born again.' And as he preached the bones remained dead. Then God instructed him to call upon the 'breath;' and the 'breath' (God the Holy Spirit) came upon them, and the bones were "born again" 'out of death.' And then God went on to explain that the dead bones were the bones of Israel; and that the covenant had been broken and their "hope is lost."

But God said that He would raise them up again, they would be 'born again;' and "I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the Lord have spoken, and I have done it (kept His covenant promise), declares the Lord." (Ezek. 37:14)

Again, remember that Christ said, "Unless a man is born again, he will not see the kingdom of God." And Paul states that the characteristic of every person in the Kingdom of God is "resurrection." Just as the bones in Ezekiel 37 were resurrected.

Ezekiel 37:24ff. states, "My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd. They will follow my laws and be careful to keep my decrees. I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant...and I will put my sanctuary among them forever." This "sanctuary" is the Temple; and this Temple is the church age believer filled with the Holy Spirit, and Christ in the believer. And, of course, in the millennium Christ will "be among them forever." For He is the Shekinah Glory.

And recall the dream of Daniel 2; the image of different metals. And Daniel 2:44 states, "In the time of those kings (the Romans), the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It

will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever." This, in different words, is the Davidic covenant that David received from God. And this statement, in context, was made to the nations, to Nebuchadnezzar. For the nations needed to hear that God will set up His Kingdom.

Then in Daniel 7:13ff., Daniel describes the coronation of this eternal son of David, who will rule forever. "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days (the Eternal God the Father) and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshipped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed." These same words were spoken to David; this passage speaks of David's descendant, the One who will rule forever. And Revelation 5 quotes this verse.

When Daniel was an old, old man, God the Holy Spirit reminded him that after 70 years the Jews would return to the land. And Daniel prayed concerning guidance, and received the prophecy of Daniel 9:24, which reads, "Seventy sevens are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression (known sins of individual believers/the apostasy of Israel as a nation), to put an end to sin (unknown sins of individual believers at the First Advent/the restraint of sin in the Tribulation-Second Advent), to atone for wickedness (justification/removal of the apostasy of the nation Israel), to bring in everlasting righteousness (imputation of righteousness to believers/an everlasting nation to God), to seal up vision and prophecy (no prophecy in the church age/no prophecies concerning Israel unfulfilled after the Second Advent) and to anoint the most holy (the baptism of Christ with the Holy Spirit/the eternal temple)."<sup>147</sup> In other words, God said that between you, and the coming One there will be 490 years. And at the time the Worthy One comes (Christ's first Advent), six things will be accomplished by Him: to finish the

<sup>147</sup> Subsequent to each of the six accomplishments the author has placed in parentheses: 1) the fulfillment of the prophecy to the Church, 2) the fulfillment of the prophecy to Israel. The concept of dual fulfillment cannot be tossed aside.

transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophecy, to anoint a most holy place.

### The Dual Fulfillment of Daniel 9:24ff.

The "Anointing of the most holy," refers to the cutting off of Christ, i.e., the crucifixion. And this cutting off does cause sacrifices to cease; for no more sacrifices are necessary; the final sacrifice took place at the Cross. And at His Second Advent, Christ will be anointed the eternal King of the Jews, the eternal Lion of the Tribe of Judah. Additionally, at the First Advent, the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants will be "confirmed." However, what of the 3.5 years left after the crucifixion, referred to in Daniel 9:27? Approximately 3.5 years after the Cross, Stephen stood before Israel and confronted the leaders of Israel -- and they stoned him. Thus, at this point they said a final "no" as a nation to the Gospel of Christ. And in 70 AD, Jerusalem was razed to the ground.<sup>148,149</sup>

### The New Covenant to the Church

The Greek word for covenant is *diatheke*, and this covenant was made by God to the Church; it is effective at the point of salvation, at the point of 'faith.' This new covenant has as its foundation the historic reality of, and the efficacious sacrifice of, our Lord Jesus Christ. And this historical reality and efficacious sacrifice is so far-reaching that it demands two new covenants: one to Israel, and one to the Church.

This new covenant to the Church institutes a Royal Family, and authorizes a new Royal Priesthood. And this new covenant to the Church is for Church Age believers only and, like the Davidic covenant, is eternal in nature. Indeed, none of the previous covenants could be fulfilled without the reality of the final, real sacrifice of Christ on the Cross. Scripture references to this new covenant

<sup>148</sup> The above interpretation of Daniel 9:24ff., admittedly, goes against the scholarship of the dispensationalists and the non-dispensationalists. However, the author deems both 'schools' as being correct, but incorrect, too, in that they have dis-carded the concept of dual fulfillment. If wrong, all responsibility must be laid at the author's door.

<sup>149</sup> The above dissertation on the New Covenant to Israel, again, is based upon the scholarship of Archbishop Smith, Robert Thieme, Merrill F. Unger, and I.M. Haldeman.

to the Church are: Matt. 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; I Cor. 11:25; II Cor. 3:6; Hebrews 7:22, 9:15-20, 10:29, 12:24.

And in this new covenant to the Church the 'old' covenant, the Sinai covenant, is abrogated on the one hand, and finds its fulfillment on the other hand. Thus, the 'shadows' are replaced by reality. And in the reality of the Cross all of the unconditional covenants to Israel discover their basis for fulfillment; for the "Worthy One, Shiloh," has come. Thus, although there is a distinction between the New Covenant to Israel and the New Covenant to the Church, there is a connection: Christ and His resurrection, ascension and present session on the throne of David, the eternal throne.

Under this new covenant to the Church a new priesthood is established, i.e., each and every believer is his/her own priest before God. There is no longer a Levitical Priesthood required between man and God. Furthermore, under this new covenant to the Church the Law was finally and irrevocably kept, in its entirety, by our Lord in His Humanity. For He kept the letter of the Law, and He kept the 'heart' of the Law; i.e., He was Incarnate Love. For He did not "covet;" indeed, He was Living *agape-love*, self for others.

Hebrews 9:15 reads, "For this reason Christ (the anointed One) is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance -- now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant." And Hebrews 5:5ff., reads, "Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said: 'Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me; with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased. Then I said, 'Here I am -- it is written about me in the scroll -- I have come to do your will, O God.'"<sup>150</sup>

The will of God, then, has always been and always will be the seeking of His lost sheep, them that He Loves with an infinite Love.

### Provisions of the New Covenant

Recall that the provisions of a covenant are those that each representative swore to one another. And recall that the nature of a covenant was a

<sup>150</sup> Thieme, Robert. *New Covenant to the Church*; from handwritten notes, undated.

bond of life and death; thus, a covenant presumed commitment. Covenants, then, were not casual relationships. Each party was to die before abrogating the covenant. And for this reason, blood was shed as part of the oath.

Therefore, when God entered into a covenant, He was declaring that He would cease to be God if He reneged on the covenant. And God being God, this possibility does not exist in any way, shape or form. Unfortunately, in our modern world, many believers do not take God seriously.

Jeremiah 31:34 provides the provision upon which all the other factors of the covenant hinge: "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more." This is the underlying promise of the New Covenant to Israel and to the Church. And recall that according to the Mosaic Law there was no forgiveness for sin, only condemnation. Indeed, under the Mosaic Law (the Sinai Covenant) adultery and murder could not be forgiven. For under the Mosaic Law the perpetrator was taken outside the camp and stoned to death. This explains why David wrote Psalm 51; for David was both an adulterer and a murderer. And in Psalm 51, David said, "Sacrifice and offerings you do not desire," i.e., 'under the Mosaic Law there is no forgiveness for me (David).' Knowing this, David then appealed to the Heart of God; he bypassed the Law and placed himself upon the ground of grace and God's lovingkindness.

And recall, that to break or abrogate a covenant demanded death. This, then, meant that either the abrogating party had to die, or that a substitute had to die. And under the Mosaic Law, substitute offerings in the form of animal sacrifices were offered. Yet everyone was aware that the animal sacrifices could not really pay the penalty; the animal sacrifices were only shadows which pointed to a human sacrifice which would pay the penalty. And this understanding explains the Great Day of Atonement; on this day the High Priest sacrificed two goats. As the first goat was sacrificed, the High Priest would *lean* on the animal and confess all the sins of the nation for the entire year; and as the blood was shed, the participants knew that its blood carried all the sins of the abrogating parties. And then the High Priest would carry the blood into the Holy of Holies and sprinkle the blood onto the Mercy Seat,

the throne of God, which stood atop the Ark of the Covenant between the two golden Cherubim. But this blood was still only the blood of an animal; it was, then, an invoice or IOU that remained unpaid. This blood said, that we have faith and hope that one day a sacrifice will be made that will indemnify, or pay off, all the Days of Atonement. Thus, the sins were 'covered over', as it were, but they were not paid off; the invoice still remained to be paid.

But Jeremiah said, "Your sins will be remembered no more." Thus, there would be no more Days of Atonement. In other words, the invoice would be paid. In the new covenant, the Mosaic Law would end. This occurred when Christ came; for in every way he was the final, the true sacrifice. This is why Isaiah used the language of the High Priest: "The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all." And the term for "laid on" is the same word that was used for the High Priest "leaning on the goat." Thus, God the Father, as He sacrificed His Only Son, "leaned" our sins on Christ on the Cross. Thus, Christ died for all the sins that the Law could only condemn. Therefore, when our Lord died on the Cross, sin was no longer just 'covered over,' it was now 'gone.' And the resurrection of our Lord is God declaring that sin is indeed gone; the sins have been paid for.

This is why the New Testament uses the word "justified." For the word "justified" fares far beyond just simple 'forgiveness;' it declares that pardon from every sin has been granted because payment has been made. Moreover, it states that the believer is declared righteous by the Judge of the Universe. And that the believer stands before God as if he/she was Jesus Himself; for the believer now 'stands under' the Blood of Christ; thus, it is no longer a 'covering up' until the ultimate sacrifice takes place. For the ultimate sacrifice was Christ, the Son of God, God Himself in true Humanity, on the Cross.

Now then every believer in the Church Age stands before God as his/her own High Priest, and confesses his/her own sins to God and is instantly forgiven, for the sin(s) have already been paid for. Thus, we, the believers of the Church Age, are a "new creation." For we are *in* Christ, and He is *in* us; and more, His Holy Spirit is *in* us.

And these new covenant people can live in, and produce, the *agape Love* of God Himself. And this is done by the empowering ministry of God the Holy Spirit; it is supernatural; it is not man producing *agape Love* in his own strength; for this is impossible. It is possible, though, through the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus, there is now a new nation; mankind is no longer of the race of fallen mankind; now, because of the Blood of Christ, the believer is "born again" into another race, another nation. The believer is still human, but he/she is now in union with Christ, i.e., united to the *agape Love* of God. And that means that he/she does not *try* to keep the Law, because the Person who wrote the Law and kept the Law now lives inside of him or her. Thus, what the Law could never dream of, or produce, God the Holy Spirit produces in believer. This is a miracle!!

And more, we (believers) now journey far beyond the Law, for the Law said, "Thou shall not kill." Instead, *agape Love* says, "Die for your enemies," i.e., self for others. Thus fallen mankind has died to "self for self." The Law also said, "Thou shall not steal." Now, though, we not only do not steal, *agape Love* causes us to 'give' to others. The Law said, "Thou shall not hate." Now, though, we love others as God has loved us. We do not just *not hate*. From this, then, it is to be understood that Jesus does not just 'help' believers by adding to their own strength; rather, He is their *life*. He is now their power source by means of the Holy Spirit.

Jeremiah 31:34 also states, "Because they will all know me." The word "know" here means to be "united with," or to "penetrate;" the term is also used of marriage, i.e., the wedded couple "know" each other in a very personal and intimate sense, both physically and soulishly. And under the Old Covenant, recall, that the Jews settled for a second-hand knowledge of God; they asked Moses to speak to God and then relate God's words to them. But when Moses "penetrated," or came to "know" God, he discovered that God was lovingkindness.

The Old Covenant, then, had Moses and the Law standing between God and man. But the new covenant states that "each will know God for himself." For in John 17:3, Christ said, "Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent." Thus, eternal life is "knowing" God not only face

to face, but behind the face. The implication, then, is that eternal life is not simply 'a quantity' or 'length' of life; it is not just that you will live forever; eternal life is a 'quality' of life. Eternal life does not begin after I die; eternal life is also that life lived now, since I received Christ. It is a quality of life in which we "know" the Lord. For at this very moment Christ is in you, and you are in Him.

Ephesians 3:14-19, relate the wondrous prayer of the Apostle Paul for the believers in Ephesus: "And to know this love that surpasses knowledge -- that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God." (Eph. 3:19) Paul prays that they will know the 'unknowable' -- *agape Love*. Thus, this love is beyond the power of man by himself to produce.

Yet this knowledge of God is not simply intellectual knowledge; i.e., "knowing" God is not just an intellectual exercise. This knowledge of God is experiential, and it manifests itself, or shows itself in one's life. And this is why the Apostle John wrote, in I John 4:7, "Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God." Thus, to "know" God inevitably makes one an *agape Lover*. Because to "know" God is to do acts of love; because His love is in us.

For example: when light penetrates a prism, the light, which was basically invisible before, is released into its many colors. So also, when God, Who is invisible, penetrates the believer and the believer penetrates God through knowing, then His love is released in the believer and the rainbow of the fruit of the Spirit. And now the world can see it, and know what God is like. And at this point, the believer is no longer just a mere human, he/she is indeed "born again," i.e., a person in whom Christ lives, the love that is God. Thus, this 'life of love' is not for saints or mystics; it is for all believers. This is serious business; this is not make-believe, or something we hope for, or a dream; this exists; it is reality.

Remember that God said, "You are my people and I will be your God." And this has occurred. For through Christ and in Christ, the believer is now united with God. God is *your* God; you are special to Him. God, in effect, winks smilingly at you

when He sees you. And just like Abraham, we now rest and watch God work.

#### Fulfillment of the New Covenant to the Church

Ezekiel was the prophet that reminded Israel of the covenants, and of God's promises, while they were in captivity. Ezekiel told Israel that they would return to the land, and rebuild the Temple. And subsequent to this, Ezekiel prophesied of the shepherd King that would reign over Israel forever.

And remember, that every time a worship place was to be built, God provided precise details -- for every pin, board, and curtain in the Tabernacle spoke of Christ's saving work. Thus, in Exodus, Moses was provided with the blueprint for the Tabernacle. And David was given the blueprint for the Temple that Solomon was to build. Likewise, Ezekiel was given a blueprint of a future Temple; and in his vision Ezekiel saw something unusual. For from out of his Temple flowed a supernatural river of life.

And of course, the captives did return to the land, and they did re-build the Temple. This temple was later embellished by Herod and our Lord taught from its gates. But the river of life still had not come. Yet in John 7:37,38, Christ made reference to Ezekiel's prophecy: "If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.'" And it is interesting to note that Ezekiel, the strangest of the prophets, was the only one to speak of such "living waters." And we know now that the "living water" was a reference to the Holy Spirit, whom was given after our Lord was glorified; it was also, though, a reference to the Temple which would reside in the New Jerusalem, the city in the clouds, in the future.

The disciples had seen our Lord's Passion, and the subsequent glorification. They then awaited the coming of the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem. Then, during the Feast of Weeks or the Feast of Pentecost<sup>151</sup>, which took place 50 days after the Passover Feast, something happened. The day of the Feast was 10 days after the Ascension of our

<sup>151</sup> Pentecost or Feast of Weeks: the thanksgiving for the harvest, during which two loaves made from the grain of the new harvest were offered to God in thanksgiving.

Lord in glory. On that day, 120 of the disciples were at the temple; and at approximately nine in the morning, a loud susurration was heard throughout the entire city of Jerusalem. And on Solomon's Porch, at the temple, there appeared flames or tongues of fire. And each disciple was quickly swallowed up by the miraculous fire -- and the fire sat upon them and radiated, but did not burn. The beauty of God's love, *agape Love*, was made lucidly clear to each of them; and to such a degree that they began praising God as never before (perhaps as David before the Ark of the Covenant). Then a supernatural knowledge of languages and dialects was given to them. And as the pilgrims gathered in the temple -- the result of feast and the roaring wind -- the pilgrims heard men and women who were obviously ignorant Galileans speaking fluently in the pilgrims' dialects. And the pilgrims said, "Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born?.....we hear them in our own tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God." (Acts 2:7-8, 11)

Some of the pilgrims were afraid; others were simply bewildered; and still others said mockingly, "They are full of sweet wine." (Acts 2:13) The Apostle Peter, however, spoke and provided an explanation; what they were beholding was the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy; the Spirit was being poured out upon all flesh. "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know -- this Man, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. And God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power....This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear.....Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God had made Him both Lord and Christ -- this Jesus whom you crucified."



Thus, just as the baptism of John had placed men into the medium of water, so the baptism of the Lord placed believers into relationship with the Holy Spirit. John the Baptist had administered his baptism; and Jesus had ministered this baptism from His Heavenly Throne.

At this point, then, the Holy Spirit was working through the disciples just as He had worked through and empowered our Lord Jesus Christ while He walked upon the earth. Thus, they had a wisdom and a knowledge beyond their own abilities. And the result of the clarifying ministry of God the Holy Spirit on this day? The pilgrims cried out to the disciples, "Brethren, what shall we do?" And Peter commanded them: "Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and your children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God shall call to Himself." (Acts 2:38-39)<sup>152</sup>

They were to repent. This term means to change the mind. For the Jews had viewed Jesus of Nazareth as a blasphemer and common criminal, who claimed to be the Son of God. His resurrection, however, had sustained His claims; and God the Holy Spirit made this clear to all.

They were to be baptized. This baptism was the physical response of faith. As the believer went under the water he was saying that I am burying (drowning) my former life of 'self for self;' and as the believer rose from the water, he identified himself with Christ and 'self for others' -- 'being born again,' as it were.

This was the promise. This was the promise made to Abraham 2000 years before: fallen mankind could be delivered and granted the Holy Spirit through the seed of Abraham. And thereupon approximately 3000 pilgrims responded to Peter's command and became believers on the Day of Weeks.

Thus, Ezekiel's valley of dry bones started to come together and a vast army of living (resurrected) beings started to arise.

And remember, that during our Lord's earthly ministry He had entered the synagogue on the

<sup>152</sup> Note that scholars vary as to the continuation, or not, of the gift of tongues.

Sabbath, and being given the scroll of the Prophet Isaiah, read: "And he opened the book, and found the place where it was written, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are downtrodden, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord.'" (Luke 4:18-19)

And in his words, Isaiah took one of the ancient customs of the Jews and prophesied concerning the coming Messiah. The custom was the Year of Jubilee, which occurred every fifty years; and in Luke 4:19, it is referred to in the phrase, "the favorable year of the Lord." Jubilee was the restoration of the nation of Israel to right-minded wholesomeness. Anyone who had lost property due to poverty or indebtedness had the property returned. Slaves were given the option of freedom, and all bankruptcies were wiped from the record. It was a year of "rest" in God.

Isaiah saw the Coming One, the Messiah, as the fulfillment of every concept of the Year of Jubilee. All would be set free from the slavery of sin; all debts would be paid; and instead of one year of "rest," the "rest" would be perpetual. All of mankind would be restored to the wholesomeness of light, and freed from the slavery of guilt and the darkness.

And Jesus, after he had finished reading the words of Isaiah from the scroll in the temple, added in a resonant voice, "Today this Scripture had been fulfilled in your hearing." (Luke 4:21)

Isaiah had seen the root out of Jesse as being empowered by the Spirit: "And the Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of council and strength, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord." (Isa. 11:2) Thus, with truth, wisdom and understanding He would heal the sins, and the minds, and the bodies of the helpless and the condemned. And for this reason, "He called His miracles, *works*, which spoke of them as being normal marks of the kingdom being present among men."<sup>153</sup> In other words, there would come a time when the empowering ministry of

<sup>153</sup> Smith, Archbishop. *Kingdom Living Here and Now*; page 126.

God the Holy Spirit would be customary. And He added, "But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you." (Matthew 12:28)

Zephaniah, too, saw the fulfillment coming; for he wrote in Zeph. 3:14,17: "Shout for joy, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! .....The Lord your God is in your midst, a victorious warrior. He will exult over you with joy, He will be quiet in His love, He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy."<sup>154</sup>

### The Covenant Meal

Luke 22:14ff., reads, "When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. And he said to them, 'I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God.' After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, 'Take this and divide it among you. For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.' And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, 'This my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.'"

These verses speak of the New Covenant to the Church and, indirectly, to the New Covenant to Israel. When our Lord said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood," He brought together everything that has been delineated in the last seven lessons. In a simple meal, in the Upper Room, Christ connected all the teachings and statements of the entire Old Testament. The phrase, "This cup," brought it all together.

And as has already been discussed, the Western world does not fully understand the covenant concepts behind eating a meal with others. Indeed, all the way through the New Testament our Lord continually told stories of wedding feasts, banquets, kings who had parties. For example, when the father welcomed home the Prodigal Son they killed the fatted calf, they ate

together. And it was not just because they were hungry. Thus, in the Bible eating a meal takes upon enormous importance. Because eating a meal was always connected to a covenant. And when someone sat down to eat with you, you were entering into a limited type of covenant. And all covenant rituals culminated with the covenant meal. Even today in the Middle East eating has covenant implications.

In fact, even in the Russian-Afghanistan War of the 1980's, if the Russians had realized the importance of covenant meals to the Afghanistans, the war might have been precluded if not mitigated. This demonstrates the power of eating to those who understand covenants. For when covenant meals take place, both parties are stating that they are lavishing a part of their lives and themselves to the other party.

Recall, then, that after God had made covenant with Abraham the final act of the covenant was God Himself coming across the desert in the form of man; and this man sat down and ate a meal with Abraham. Or the Sinai covenant; after the covenant had been given, received, and the blood shed, the elders of Israel along with Moses and Aaron went up on the mount and ate and drank in the presence of God. And if one does not understand the concept of covenant, these meals appear as nothing more than appendices; however, upon full comprehension these meals become an essential part of the covenant.

The covenant meal that dominates the Old Testament is the Passover Meal. The Passover Meal reaches forward as well as backward, and simultaneously, it celebrates God's love for His people, and His power in setting free Israel from Egyptian oppression. Recall that God sent Moses as His covenant attorney; and Moses, when he realized who he was, and who the God of covenant was, resigned his position as an Egyptian general and royal prince of Pharaoh's palace. He, in effect, took up residence with the people of the covenant -- the Hebrew slaves. And initially, Moses, because of his background and training, attempted to free the slaves through his own abilities and violence. But the Jews were unimpressed. So Moses left Israel and became a shepherd for 40 years; and then, just as he turned 80 years old, God told him to go back into Egypt and deliver his people.

<sup>154</sup> The above dissertation is based upon the scholarship of: Robert Thieme, Archbishop Smith, Clarence Larkin, and I.M. Haldeman.

And remember, that at this time Egypt was the greatest nation on the face of the earth; and Pharaoh was 'the king of kings' by earthly standards. And it says that Moses went into Egypt "riding on the back of a donkey with a staff in his hand." Moreover, the Egyptians hated shepherds; and of course Moses reeked of sheep; additionally, Moses was probably hirsute, and the Egyptians despised body hair; indeed, they shaved their entire bodies. And to enter the court of Pharaoh implied that one was an ambassador of some foreign king; thus, Moses entered the court of Pharaoh as the ambassador of Yahweh. And there, in the middle of finely dressed princes caparisoned in silks and linens, carrying gifts of gold and incense, attempting to curry Pharaoh's favor, stood a massive hairy 80 year old man with a staff in his hand stinking of sheep. And he said to Pharaoh, "Let my people go." And as he looked Pharaoh in the eye, he looked at the emerald eyes of the golden snake-crown that surrounded Pharaoh's head and sat just above Pharaoh's nose and between his eyes. And on either side of Pharaoh stood his magicians; and they held snakes that looked like staffs; the snakes were hypnotized and perhaps demon possessed.

Then Moses tossed down his rod and it changed to a snake; but so did the staffs of the magicians. Only the snake of Yahweh devoured the magicians' snakes. The first of Egypt's god was defeated. And of course, as Pharaoh and the Egyptians worshipped the great mother goddess, the Nile River, as it was about to crest, Moses arrived and stretched his rod over the river, and the river turned into dead stinking blood.

Finally, Moses instructed the Jews to prepare to leave Egypt; they were to take a spotless lamb on the 10th of Abib-Nisan (March-April); they were to set the lamb aside and everyday they were to go and examine it for blemishes -- it must be perfect. Then on the 14th day of the month, they were instructed to kill the lamb, catching its blood in a basin. Then take a weed called hyssop, and paint the blood onto the top and sides of the doorway. A wall of blood, just like the blood of the slain animal that the covenant representatives walked through in a figure-eight (see lesson #10). In this case, the whole family walked through the doorway of blood; and on the other side the lamb had been prepared: not a bone was broken, and it

was roasted. And every piece of the lamb had to be eaten. On either side of the lamb was unleavened bread (leaven was a picture of sin) and bitter herbs (the bitter herbs were to remind the Jews of the bitterness of slavery); and as they ate they were dressed as if for a journey; they were prepared to go (a picture of faith in God's promise). As they ate, the entire lamb was devoured; thus, as they walked out, each family carried, as it were, one whole lamb among themselves. They were a walking lamb. They walked out because judgment fell on the lamb rather than them. But the judgment of God also fell on the firstborn of Egypt; and the wail of death covered Egypt -- their gods were dead, and now their firstborn were dead. And to the Egyptians the firstborn were their future, their eternal life, their future inheritance, their ongoing life. They have lost everything. The lamb of God had conquered the snake of Egypt.

It is interesting to note that whenever God provides a symbol of Himself, it is as a lamb. In fact, 22 times in the Book of Revelation, the Apostle John portrays Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God. For a lamb is dependent, and helpless; indeed, a lamb is the only animal that presents itself for death without struggling at the abattoir.

And the Bible says that as the Jews left Egypt, "there was not a feeble one among them." This was a miracle; no disease, no handicaps, no illnesses, etc., as Israel left.

Thereafter, the Passover was celebrated once a year (they were to remember that God remembered the covenant), on the 14th of Nisan. On the tenth, separate the lamb and examine it, on the 14th bring it. And gather in your homes, eat the unleavened bread, eat the bitter herbs, eat the lamb and remember that you are who you are because of the God of covenant. Thus, the Passover Meal takes on the semblance of the ongoing meal of all the covenants -- for it fits them all.

Later, though, just before Judah was taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar, the prophet Ezekiel had one of the most horrifying of all visions (Ezekiel 10), for in this vision the Glory of God, the Shekinah Glory, left the temple. And Ezekiel saw the Glory go to the door, it had left the center; then the Glory moved to the courtyard, and no one noticed! And

then the Glory came to the edge of city, and no one noticed! And the last thing that Ezekiel saw was the Glory going over the mountains to the east. And no one noticed! They had forsaken the covenant. God left.

And then captivity. And while in captivity, Israel repented and re-instated the Passover Feast. In captivity, the Jews took three pieces of unleavened bread and placed them in one pouch, and it would lay on the table. And at a certain time during the meal, the host would take the middle piece of bread from the bag, break it, and pass it around the table in silence. And throughout the Passover Meal, a number of times wine was drunk from cups; however, in the captivity, a certain cup of wine was added: it sat at the end of the table with an empty chair. This cup was called THE CUP. And it was there for ritual purposes only, for no one ever touched it. It was the cup that awaited the coming of David's descendant, the cup that awaited the Messiah. And when Messiah came, the last words of hope that Jeremiah had spoken would come to pass. The new covenant would be brought by the Messiah. And they would go through the entire meal, and after the meal the table would be cleared and with awe, they would take away THE CUP. Another year had passed without the Messiah. For when he comes he will take THE CUP.

And the getting of unblemished lambs became a problem. So the order went out, an entire flock of sheep was to be bred specially for the Passover every year. These lambs were born to die. And according to Hebrew law, the only flock of sheep that was allowed near a city was the Passover flock; and they were allowed only during the week before they went into the city on the 10th of Nisan.

And have you ever wondered why our Lord made such a fuss about Palm Sunday? For it appears that He precisely arranged things for a specific purpose. Well, the date was the 10th of Nisan, and as Jesus went in through the east gate of Jerusalem, the Passover flock went in through the west gate; and Jesus went into the courtyard of the temple. And just over there, also in the courtyard, in the corner were the Passover sheep. And each day thereafter, the Levites would examine them for blemish.

This was our Lord announcing Himself to the nation: your Passover Lamb is now coming in. On the right day to the right place. And every Pharisee, Sadducee, and Herodian converged on the temple to question our Lord. Why? Because the Lamb of God is being examined. And it all happened in the courtyard of the temple. And just across the way, the Passover flock was being examined by the Levites. And no flaw was found in Him! Their mouths were shut; they left in embarrassment.

And the 14th of Nisan began at 6 PM on the 13th. Thus, on the night of what we would call the 13th, but is according to the Hebrew calendar the 14th, the Passover day, Jesus had a very special Passover. For the Passover will not be until 3 PM on the 14th; at 3 PM the knife of the Levite would flash and kill the first lamb.

And the disciples realize that something inordinate is taking place because it is the right day, but the wrong time to have a Passover Meal. So they gathered in the Upper Room. And the roast lamb was present, the three pieces of unleavened bread in the pouch, the bitter herbs, the cups of wine around the table, and THE CUP at the end of the table. And the host is our Lord.

They pass around the cups of wine; and then He took the little bag, and He took out the middle piece just as any other host would do, and He broke it; but He broke the silence that was mandatory as it was passed around. He broke the silence of the centuries, for He said, "This is my body which is broken for you." Thus, Christ said, "I am the coming One. I am the Messiah."

Thus, the Jewish people had held the Trinity in their hands for centuries: one bag, three pieces. One essence, three Persons. And the middle piece was removed: the Son, who came to earth and His body was broken. This piece of bread was designated the *aphikomen*, Greek for "the coming one." It symbolized the coming Messiah. And then, after the meal was over, and everyone is just about to leave, our Lord took THE CUP! No one was to touch that cup! The disciples must have been riveted to their seats. He took THE CUP, and said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood." And no one had ever mentioned those words since the prophet Jeremiah in chapter 31, about 500

years before. They had waited and waited and waited.

When our Lord took THE CUP, He was saying that He was now going to make covenant between man and the Father. And He would not walk between the pieces of an animal, He would walk among the pieces of His own death, and He would represent both parties: mankind and God. Thus, just like Abraham, mankind would *rest* while God represented both parties. Not by the blood of an animal, but by His blood a covenant would be made.

The life that the Sinai covenant demanded would be forfeit for the whole of mankind. God was going to pardon mankind's sins, He was going to write the law on mankind's hearts. But blood must be shed, the penalty must be paid first. So when our Lord left the Upper Room, He left as the Lamb of Passover. He was to die instead of us; and because He was *man*, He can, for He is one of us. But because He is God He is worth all of us. Thus, one *man* can die for everybody. And it was His choice to do so. On the Cross, then, our Lord died *as if* He were a covenant-breaker, i.e., us.

By 9 am the next morning, the lambs were in the temple courtyard; the pens were taken down. And it would take most of the morning to arrange the accouterments. And at the end of the same hill, at 9 am in the morning, Jesus was being prepared for sacrifice -- He was being nailed to a cross.

And at precisely 3 PM that afternoon, Jesus cried with a loud cry, "It is finished!" And He voluntarily yielded up his spirit and died. And in the courtyard, at that same moment, 3 PM, the knife of the Levite flashed and the first Passover lamb of that year died. But they were not valid anymore because THE PASSOVER LAMB has just died. He has come!

Recall that the Romans, when they wanted to hasten the deaths of the crucified, would break the legs of the victims. For on the cross, the victim died from suffocation, they could not breathe. And the only way to breathe was to push up on the nail that was driven through the feet so as to relieve the stress on the paralyzed chest muscles. And the legs would spasm in pain, and the nerves of the foot would scream mercilessly in agony. Then, again, breakdown from sheer paroxysm and

imminent suffocation. On and on, the cycle would be repeated for sometimes days.

But when they wanted you to die in a hurry, they would take out the nail from the feet, pull out the legs and break them; then there was no way to press the body up so that one could breathe. And remember that they came to our Lord to break His legs, and one soldier said to the other, "Stop. For he is dead already." And John was there. And he remembered that Scripture said, "That not a bone of him shall be broken." Not a bone of the lamb was to be broken.

And when He arose from the dead; the Living Lamb walks to His throne, but He bears on His body the scars and signs of death; but death is dead, for the Lamb Lives. So our Lord carries on His body the proof that He died, but He lives! And that means that in the death of Jesus, death died! And because death died and judgment was fulfilled, then Christ was resurrected! Again, why?! Because death died at the Cross; spiritual death had occurred, the penalty had been paid, and now there is no longer any death; therefore, our Lord could be resurrected. And forever and ever He will be a man as well as God, for the instant He is no longer a man, then the covenant is broken.

And in Revelation, it states that the saints gathered around the throne and sang a "new song." "Worthy is the Lamb." And it had to be a new song, for the Law is fulfilled, the covenants are fulfilled; and the new covenant is here.

And Christ said, "Do this in remembrance of me." And 'remembrance' is a covenant word; it does not mean to send one's mind back and try to catch hold of details; it doesn't mean that you sit in a morbid service and try to remember the sufferings of Jesus. It means that you hold the parting in your mind and remember the terms of the covenant.

For recall that our Lord instituted the new covenant meal; the Passover connected all the old covenants, and He fulfilled them all. The Passover is over, He said. And He took two pieces of the Passover and made them the covenant meal of the New Covenant. And He said when you sit down and do this, remember this: that I live! And we live in Him! And as the wine is drunk and the bread is eaten remember this: that your sins are

remembered no more. For His law is written on our hearts and the Spirit lives with us! For us to live is Christ. And we can say, "You are my God." And the Spirit says, "You are my people."

And if we examine ourselves for guilt, we become excited. For we discover that in the new covenant we are declared the righteousness of God in Christ; the Holy Spirit lives within us; we can do all things through Christ; we are His special treasure and He is our God. And this is what we do during the covenant meal, the Eucharist; we remember and re-enact, and celebrate covenant. And we realize that when we eat the bread and drink the wine that we are not just human beings, but that Christ lives in us. He lives! And we live because He does!

And many present day Christians are afraid of the phrases, "This is my body. This is my blood." This is why they are called 'sacraments,' and a sacrament is a symbol that conveys what it symbolizes. And it cannot be explained scientifically; it is a mystery. Thus, the sacraments are somehow a means that God conveys Himself to us through created stuff. The elements, then, are the Body of Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit; the bread not only symbolizes the Body of Christ, but actually conveys to us what that means. (I Cor. 10:16-17)

And right now, the Ruler of the Universe, seated at the Right Hand of God is a human being, Who is God, but is a human who sits down. So the cup and the bread of the present day Eucharist declare, "Eat of my humanity that lived out the life of God." And that is what weak mankind needs -- the humanity of Jesus that overcame. He did not say eat of my Person -- for we cannot eat of the Son of God; nor did He say eat of my Divine Nature. He said eat of my body and my blood. Eat of my human-ness that was like you and overcame and lived in *agape love*; thus, He is saying let my Life come into you.

The New Covenant, through the power of the Holy Spirit, gives us the very Life and the very Love of Jesus. And the bread and the cup make it real to us just as He was a real human being, spirit encased in flesh. And He, as spirit in flesh, lived in *agape love*; and when we partake of the Eucharist we participate in our spirit and in our flesh, in all our senses, in the Life that was His

Life, the Life that is His Life now. For He is even now, although glorified, flesh and blood. He has a body, a glorified body, but a body nevertheless.

As we eat and drink, the Holy Spirit makes it real to us, causes us to participate in, partake of, not only Him, but everything that comes with Him: the terms of the new covenant. He is no longer the coming One, He is now come!<sup>155</sup>

**Proverbs 3:5-6 "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight."**

The Hebrew term for "trust" is the qal imperative of the verb BATACH; and the root meaning of the word is "'to feel secure, be unconcerned,' or, specifying the reason for the security, 'to rely on something or someone.'"<sup>156</sup> And Robert Thieme, agreeing with G. R. Driver, J. Blau, and L. Kopf, states that the word is a technical term for a "body slam in wrestling."<sup>157</sup> Therefore, "the feeling of being secure in God is the only certain support for human life."<sup>158</sup> The statement is very clear: the only person that mankind can "trust" is God; thus mankind cannot even trust their own knowledge, feelings, observations, etc. Only God may be trusted in totally and completely; and to do otherwise is to trust in nought. This implies, then, that mankind is entirely dependent upon God, and thus mankind is not the independent, self-sufficient creature that they imagine themselves to be. And the inference is that mankind was thus created. Psalm 55:22 states, "Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall." It is evident, then, that God concerns Himself not just with spiritual or exalted matters. No! God concerns Himself with the most mundane problems and minute details of anyone's life.

And the one specified to be relied upon? *JHWH, Jehovah, or Yahweh!* This is the 'covenant name' of God. Here, then, is the God who cares, who

<sup>155</sup> The above dissertation on the Covenant Meal is based upon the scholarship of: Archbishop Smith, Robert Thieme, I.M. Haldeman, and George Every's *The Mass*.

<sup>156</sup> Botterweck, Ringgren, Eds. *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*; vol. ii, page 89.

<sup>157</sup> Thieme, Robert. *Proverbs*; from notes, handwritten.

<sup>158</sup> Botterweck, Ringgren, Eds. *Ibid.*; page 93.

initiates, who seeks out those He loves. Here is the self-existing One; here is Life unbegun, the source of life.

Many scholars contend that Yahweh represents the qal imperfect of the verb HAWA, "to be." Others, though, maintain that JHWH does not represent the verb HAWA, and that the term is the harmonic of a name and that its meaning is not etymological. In any event, 'Yahweh,' or 'faithful presence' is the covenant name or nature of God. And "ultimately the connotations of the name Yahweh are fulfilled in the 'covenant of peace,' when the God who has been present from the first will be full present at the last (Isa 41:4); cf. Ezekiel's stress upon God's 'sanctuary in the midst of them forevermore' (Ezek 37:26) and his eschatological city's being named YHWH SHAMMA 'Yahweh is there.'"<sup>159</sup>

For names to the ancient mind, and especially to the Hebrews, "came to mean the person's character, their track record of living out that character in real life situations, and their reputation for being that kind of person. Therefore, God's name is synonymous with His character, with who He is, His reputation in history as it is recorded in the Bible, and His track record in His dealings with mankind today."<sup>160</sup> This, then, is the God who always *IS*; He *IS* life, He *IS* always faithful, He *IS* there for every trouble, every heartache, every circumstance of mankind's life. For He cannot be other than what He *IS*; and by His very name He *always IS*!

"And lean not on your own understanding." The word for "lean not" is the niph'al imperfect of the verb SHA'AN, which means "to trust in, lean upon, to rely upon." And the word is used figuratively of an attitude of trust in something or someone that is weak, namely, in context, oneself. And the word for "understanding" is the noun construct suffix of BIN (BINAH), which means "understanding;" and the attendant conditions of the word connote "human understanding," or "human ability." This, then, would be self-sufficiency, or confidence in one's innate talents and abilities. And such self-sufficiency or independence from God is almost akin to an

occupational hazard in mankind; for mankind detests his own weakness and recoils at the thought of admitting dependence upon God for anything. For mankind desires to be strong, capable, forceful and resourceful, i.e., to be in control of, and maintain control of, his own life and circumstances. But this is *the Lie* of Satan in the Garden of Eden: "And you will be like God, knowing good and evil." (Genesis 3:5) And this is the *hubris* of the Greeks; and the Greeks traced it with withering accuracy, watching it lead to *ate* -- the point at which evil is mistakenly believed to be good. The evil is the Lie of Satan, that mankind can be like God, i.e., in control, self-sufficient, independent of any other being. This real evil is perceived as good, for few would be of the opinion that independence is in fact weakness, that self-sufficiency is in fact feebleness, that individuality is in fact the hubris of self for self. Yet when mankind swallows the Lie, that he can be like God, then mankind is at risk of believing evil to be good.

"In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight." The Hebrew term for "ways" is DEREK, which refers to "a path worn by constant walking." And metaphorically, the word is used to denote the actions and behavior of mankind, "who either follow the way of the righteous or the way of the wicked."<sup>161</sup> Thus, the word refers to every facet, every action, every thought, every emotion of one's life. YADA', is in the qal imperative verb form; the meaning of the verb is "to make to know," and is so employed in Deut. 4:9, and Judges 8:16, Job 32:7, Psalm 90:12, and Proverbs 9:9. Thus the phrase could be translated, "Know God in all your ways." But it is to be understood that this "knowing" is taught in the form of wisdom; this is not inherent knowledge or knowledge dependent upon innate intelligence.

If the imperative is fulfilled and one "knows God," then "He will level your path;" and the term for "level" is the Hebrew verb YASHAR, in the piel imperfect. And in the intensive (piel) the word is literal and means "to make (a way) straight, i.e. direct and level and free from obstacles, as when preparing to receive a royal visitor. This is the

<sup>159</sup> Harris, Archer, Waltke, Eds. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*; vol. i, page 212.

<sup>160</sup> Smith, Archbishop M. *The Healing Heart of God*; pages 5-6.

<sup>161</sup> Harris, Archer, Waltke, Eds. *Ibid.*; vol. i, page 197.

work of God for man.”<sup>162</sup> The implication is threefold: 1) that God will smooth the mountains and valleys of life’s journey, i.e., that God Himself will go before one; 2) that God treats each and every such individual as royalty; 3) that such treatment is founded upon the God of covenant. Here, then, God is portrayed as a servant clearing the path for the master; this is self for others, and is a direct reflection of the *agape-love* of God.

This concept of God smoothing the paths of life is not just a pretty notion or abstract ideal that is ‘nice’ to think about. This is reality; this is the God of the universe, the covenant God pledging His Love and Omnipotence to the hurts and heartaches of any believer. Illustration: Joseph as he confronted Potiphar’s wife. This woman was desperately lonely, and since Potiphar, upon promotion to chief of the national police, had been emasculated (eunuchism), he had no sexual interest in her nor could he satisfy her physically. Thus, she attempted the seduction of Joseph. And recall that this was not some kitchen maid, this woman was beautiful, powerful, talented and she was an Egyptian. And more, she *desired* Joseph and stated so boldly. Remember, Joseph is alone in a foreign country, he is a slave, he has no hope of succor; all of his senses and reasoning faculties declare that he has been abandoned by everyone. Thus, the temptation was not just about sex and loneliness. No! The temptation was to depend upon another person to satisfy the deepest needs of his soul and spirit rather than upon God. For if mankind does not “know” the love, acceptance and fellowship of God, then mankind will seek the fulfillment of these needs in other ways, in false ways. For the human heart aches for, and craves, unconditional love and a meaning to life.

Genesis 39:2 reads, “The Lord was with Joseph....” In other words, God was smoothing the path before Joseph. And not by just simply removing obstacles, but by providing Joseph with what he needed: unconditional love and significance in the person of God Himself. Thus, because of Joseph’s very real relationship with God, he knew the Presence of God. And this Presence was so satisfying that Joseph could resist the seduction of a beautiful woman. For remember, if Joseph had been lonely and feeling sorry for himself because

of his circumstances as a slave, then Joseph would have succumbed; for he would have sought unconditional love and soul satisfaction in the arms of this woman.

Joseph “knew” the God of covenant; Joseph knew that God had taken an oath upon Himself never to leave, never to forsake His people or Joseph. God could not break the covenant; Joseph realized this and actively placed his faith in God. Thus, Potiphar’s wife pursued Joseph to no avail, yet Joseph pursued God and God allowed Himself to be caught. Joseph believed that his life had a meaning and that God was working out His will in Joseph’s life. Joseph believed that his life was in God’s hands and that God was preparing the way before him, smoothing the way. For Joseph trusted in God, not in what he saw, or felt, or reasoned.<sup>163</sup>

Indeed, the prophets Jeremiah and Isaiah corroborate the certainty that God smoothes the paths of believers: “I know, O Lord, that a man’s life is not his own; it is not for man to direct his steps.” (Jer. 10:24) “I will raise up him (Cyrus) in my righteousness: I will make all his ways straight. He will rebuild my city and set my exiles free, but not for a price or a reward, says the Lord Almighty.” (Isa. 45:13).

Concerning Proverbs 3:5 and 6, Dr. H.A. Ironside wrote: “Solemn the admonition, and precious the assurance here for all who would be guided in the way of peace. ‘He that trusteth in His own heart is a fool’ (chap. 28:26), but happy is the man whose trust is in the Lord. Confidence in self is like leaning on a broken reed. God has given His Word to guide in every detail of life that thus our sanctification might be by the Truth, and it is therefore inexcusable to lean upon our own poor finite intelligence. If He be acknowledged in all our ways we shall not want guidance, for He is faithful who has promised to direct our paths. ‘If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light’ (Matt. 6:22).”<sup>164</sup>

Proverbs 3:7,8 "Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and shun evil. This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones."

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*; vol. i, page 417.

<sup>163</sup> Smith, Archbishop M. The above dissertation on ‘Joseph’ is based upon the scholarship of Archbishop Smith.

<sup>164</sup> Ironside, H.A. *Proverbs*; page 37.



In verse 7, the student is warned not to become wise in his/her own eyes; and the Hebrew word for 'wise' is the adjective CHAKAM, which is "used to represent the discernment of good and evil. In the reflexive form it signifies to be wise in one's own eyes, and hence to outwit another."<sup>165</sup>

In other words, one should not place confidence in one's innate intelligence and ability. For it is at this juncture that one attempts to outwit God, i.e., one believes that he/she is at least as smart as God, if not superior to Him. Thus, one believes that self-control, and self-sufficiency are attainable and mandated.

The Hebrew term for "eyes" is the noun 'AYIN (dual construct suffix), which connotes much more than just the physical eyes. The eyes in the Old Testament are often portrayed as spiritual faculties; and the 'eyes looking to the self' represent expectancy and confidence. In other words, the person who is 'wise in his own eyes' places utter confidence in his opinion or judgment. Thus, in Scripture the eyes depict the process of perception and by mental connection, of understanding, attitude, inclination, and opinion. "The eye is a good barometer of the inner thoughts of man."<sup>166</sup> Thus, the man who is 'wise in his own eyes' has dismissed God as unnecessary, even redundant, because his own wisdom is greater than anyone else's. And, as shall be noted, this attitude is 'evil' in the sense that it substitutes evil for good, and believes that that which is evil is good.

Indeed, Jeremiah 5:21 states, "Hear this, you foolish and senseless people, who have eyes but do not see, who have ears but do not hear."

Rather, the student is commanded to "fear the Lord and shun evil." The Hebrew term for "fear" is the qal imperative of the verb JARE', which means "to fear from an apprehension of danger and a sense of our own weakness, joined therefore with trembling; to fear, venerate, religiously reverence; to worship."<sup>167</sup> It is seen, then, that this

word JARE' has a 'big' definition. It is 'fear' in the sense of awe, respect, and the recognition of omnipotence; yet simultaneously the word connotes worship in the most devout sense. And whom is one to 'fear'? JHWH, the proper noun, the covenant name of God; the God who pursues His creatures with unconditional *agape love*; the God who inaugurated the covenants to fallen mankind.

The Hebrew word for "shun" is the qal imperative of the verb SUR, which is defined as "to turn aside out of the way, to depart; to remove from calamity of any kind is to escape from it, Job 15:30; so Prov. 13:14, 'to escape from the snares of death.'"<sup>168</sup> And indeed this is an escape from death, for "evil" is a system of thought that eschews any reference to, or acknowledgment of, God. Since God is Life, to dismiss Him is death. Evil is an independence from God -- self for self! And the term for "evil" is the adjective RA', which means [that which] "generally indicates the rough exterior of wrongdoing, as a breach of harmony, and as a breaking up of what is good and desirable in man and in society. Whilst the prominent characteristic of the godly is lovingkindness, one of the most marked features of the ungodly man is that his course is an injury both to himself and to every one round him."<sup>169</sup> Fantastic! For here Robert Girdlestone has pinpointed the definition of RA': the opposite of "lovingkindness" (which is self for others) is self for self, or pre-occupation with self, or, simply, solipsistic arrogance. The command, then, is to reverence God, who is the epitome of self for others, rather than worshipping one's own wisdom, which is self for self. And here, therefore, is the essence of sin: a breaking away from God, from the Life Itself, from the Self For Others to the small, pathetic *self for self*.

And remarkably, verse 8 attaches physical health as an adjunct to "shunning evil." Again, fantastic! This demands careful study.

Exodus 15:26 reads, "He said, 'If you listen carefully to the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his

<sup>165</sup> Girdlestone, Robert. *Synonyms of the Old Testament*; page 74.

<sup>166</sup> Harris, Archer, Waltke, Eds. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*; vol. ii, page 662.

<sup>167</sup> Wilson, William. *Old Testament Word*

*Studies*; page 159.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*; page 116.

<sup>169</sup> Girdlestone, Robert. *Synonyms of the Old Testament*; page 80.

commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the Lord who heals you." Proverbs 4:22 reads, "For they are life to those who find them and health to a man's whole body." Job 10:11 states, "With skin and flesh hast Thou not clothed me? With bones and sinews strengthened my frame?" And Job 21:24 declares, "His breasts are full of nourishment; his bones with marrow are well moistened, [and fresh]."

And, once more, Proverbs 3:8 reads, "This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones." The implication, then, is that "trusting in God, acknowledging Him," and "fearing the Lord" along with "shunning evil" results in health and/or healing. And the Hebrew term for "health" is the common noun RIP'UT, and there is no doubt that the definition is "healing." And interestingly enough, the term for "body" is the common noun SHOR, which means "umbilical cord."<sup>170</sup> William Wilson defines the word as "the navel, the region around the navel, the belly." And Gesenius defines the term as "navel; nerve; muscle." And based upon E.W. Bullinger's translation of the word in Job, the expression strongly suggests "tone, or firmness," and from thence, "general internal health." Indeed, Dr. Merrill F. Unger states, "there will be physical health, **health to thy navel**, denoting the softer parts of the anatomy, and **marrow**, 'moistening' or vital moisture 'refreshment' **to thy bones**, the harder parts, both denoting the whole body (Job 21:24)."<sup>171</sup>

The word translated "nourishment" is the Hebrew common noun SHIQQUY, which means "drink, or refreshment." And the word for "bones" is the feminine plural form of the noun 'ETSEM, which means "bones," but in context defines and describes figuratively the emotions of the soul, and the soul itself. And the prophet Jeremiah used the term thusly in Jer. 20:9 and 23:9, which read, "...his word is in my heart like a burning fire, shut up in my bones. I am weary of holding it in; indeed, I cannot." (Jer:20:9) "My heart is broken within me; all my bones tremble." Too, David used this

<sup>170</sup> Harris, Archer, Waltke, Eds. *Ibid.*; vol. ii, page 957.

<sup>171</sup> Unger, Merrill F. *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*; vol. i, page 988.

currency of the same word in Psalm 38:3: "Because of your wrath there is no health in my body; my bones have no soundness because of my sin." And again in Psalm 42:10-11: "My bones suffer mortal agony as my foes taunt me, saying to me all day long, 'Where is your God?' Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me?"

Thus it is quite evident that SHOR, or "navel," refers to the nerves and internal organs, whereas 'ETSEM, or "bones," refers to the soul and its emotions. Therefore, both physical health and mental (soul, emotions) health are direct results of "trusting in God."

With this information at hand, the author offers the following translation of Proverbs 3:8: "Healing will happen to your body and refreshment will happen to your soul and its emotions." And since "healing" in any form is such a misunderstood concept in Christianity, this subject will now be considered.

### Healing

The definition of "heal," is as follows: "to make sound, well, or healthy again; restore to health; as, *heal* the sick. To cure or get rid of (a disease); restore (a wound, sore, etc.) to a healthy condition. To free from grief, troubles, evil, etc. To remedy or get rid of (grief, troubles, etc.); to make up (a breach, differences, etc.); reconcile."<sup>172</sup>

Acts of healing are generally considered to be miracles, which they are in the sense that they happen at the direction of some individual, or in the sense that they transpire through the direct intervention of God, thus transcending 'scientific' or natural laws.

The healing acts of our Lord often involved His touching the afflicted. These were not medical treatments; they were miracles. Our Lord's most common method of healing was to inform those who were to be healed that their sins were forgiven. Could it be inferred that by relieving them of their infirmity of sin they were automatically relieved of their physical ailments? Or was the forgiveness the prelude to the miracle,

<sup>172</sup> *Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary*; page 836.

i.e., the first step in the process? For what good is physical health if the soul is damned?

It is interesting to remember that the book of Revelation states, "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, 'who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.'" With this passage in mind, it should be considered that in performing miracles our Lord was motivated not by mere omnipotence, but by *agape love*, self for others, to give of Himself. Yet if He is "the same today as He has always been," then does it not follow that healing is still motivated by His love, and is still possible?

The Christian Gospel provides healing to the whole person. The human spirit is opened up to God, i.e., the believer has life in the spirit. But the Gospel also provides mental, physical and emotional healing and wholeness.

Healing as a 'meeting of needs' was not the consideration; this was not the motivation of our Lord as He performed miracles. He was not 'meeting needs.' No! Our Lord healed because He was moved by compassion out of His love for humankind. Ill-health, unemployment, divorce, etc., are usually the needs that Christians want healed. God, however, has revealed to us Who He is. The revelation about Who God is, and His love for us is focused in the Cross and Jesus Christ -- His resurrection and ascension. Because of this event, salvation and healing may take place. Thus, the church does not come together to 'meet needs.' However, when the church gathers and worships God, a result is that people are healed. The emphasis, then, is not on human needs or attempting to manipulate God into meeting those needs, but rather upon what God has done and is doing through Christ; and one of the results is healing.

In today's mainline Christian churches healing is viewed as either fakery, or as some type of demon-possession. It is taught that the miracle of healing, and the 'gifts' of the Spirit, specifically healing, ceased with the last of the Apostles. While the 'gift' of healing appears to have been temporary and removed (cf. Acts 19:11,12; Philippians 2:27; II Timothy 4:20), this does not imply that God no longer heals. Indeed, He does continue to heal, however, the methodology now is not the 'gift,' but the Gospel itself, prayer, and knowledge of the

Person of God concomitant with the response of faith. In other words, the extant Canon of Scripture itself is presently the existing means of healing; that is, all that the Canon speaks of regarding prayer, faith, and the Will of God (cf. I Cor. 13:10).

Indeed, the first six centuries after the Cross are rife with documented cases of miraculous healings, not the 'gift' of healing, but miraculous healings nevertheless.

The primary reason that the church ceased to credit healing to God began when the church dismissed the physical body and its place in mankind's relationship to God, and mankind's worship of God. Recall that the Jews believed that the physical body was estimable; they noted that when God created flesh from the dust of the earth, He then pronounced it "good." Thus, God is not anti-body. And that means, then, that all the normal appetites and needs of the human body, including food, drink, clothing, shelter, bathing, sensual satisfaction, and sex, are "good," they were given by God. In essence, then, even physical beauty is not evil, nor is the enjoyment of eating, drinking, dancing, wearing pretty clothes, etc. The enjoyment of art, music, literature, etc., are all legitimate. For remember, the Jews danced before and to God.

The church decided to dismiss the body; the church decided that only the 'spiritual' is spiritual. But mankind is spirit housed in mud, in flesh. And this fact cannot be denied. Even the Law takes into account the body of mankind, the physical; many of the ordinances concern what is put into the body, how the body is bathed, general hygiene, even sex. "The Ten Commandments describe mankind as he is responsible to God in terms of how mankind acts toward his neighbor's physical existence."<sup>173</sup> For example, adultery cannot be committed without a body, right? You cannot murder *anybody* without a body. The body, then, is part of mankind's walk with God. The Law stipulated how the orphans, the widows, the homeless, the slaves should be treated; and this treatment necessitates a body.

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Smith, Archbishop M. *The Power of the Holy Spirit in Liturgy.*

In fact, the Creator Himself, God, took upon Himself a human body and did so in a human womb. Thus, God made the woman's body so that it could house God during the Incarnation on earth, not just so it could house the human spirit. Thus, before the Fall, the body of mankind was made to function correctly and healthily. God, Jesus Christ, had a body: He bathed, He ate, He thirsted, He slept, He feasted, He danced during the Feast of Tabernacles, He laughed, He wept, He even had sex organs. His first miracle was turning water into wine at a wedding feast. And subsequent to the resurrection his first question was, "Is there anything to eat?" He was in a glorified human body, but a human body nevertheless.

Christ healed disease. And there is no hint that this was part of, or the reason for, the first advent; healing was not His purpose, for if it was, then He was remiss in not healing the whole world of all their diseases. His purpose was to provide salvation; the healing miracles were, in a way, just a postscript. Indeed, in many cases of healing our Lord is portrayed as being angrily compassionate when faced with disease and physical suffering. And it is significant to note that our Lord never used healing as a mode to ingratiate Himself to men's spirits. No! He healed them whether they believed or not; example, the ten lepers, and only one believed after the fact. Thus, our Lord healed the body because the body was of value.

And recall that our Lord stated that God the Father cares "what you shall wear, what you shall eat," and these are 'body' words. Thus, even God the Father takes the physical body into account. Recall, too, that our Lord died on the Cross in His body, and that He bore our sins in His body. I Peter 2:24 reads, "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed." Thus, sin was paid for while our Lord was in a body.

Therefore, the healing of the whole person of any man, is accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ. He did it all at the one place called the Cross; on the Cross He totally rescued mankind. Thus, healing life is connected to the Cross and the salvation that was provided thereupon. Just as in baptism mankind is branded by God as His property, so also healing is found at the Cross; and while

neither baptism or healing are the emphasis of the Cross, they are contiguous to the Cross.

Certainly, when mankind believes in Christ and thereafter learns that he is not just some meaningless pawn in life, but that in reality he has meaning and purpose, that he is loved by God, certainly this knowledge is a miraculous healing, and not just of the soul and spirit, but also of the body. To know this is the beginning of healing.

The Eucharist, too, through the power of God the Holy Spirit actually brings the believer into oneness with the Body and Blood of Christ; and the 'livingness' of Christ, the Man who conquered death, heals the infirmities of mankind. In this sense, then, the Eucharist is medicine. For through the Eucharist the individual is coupled to true Life, eternal Life.

Health is not just the want of disease; many are not diseased but still are not healthy. Health is also the presence of God, which is manifest in peace, joy, love. For He is the Life. On the Cross He bore all; an exchange took place. He paid the penalty, we accepted His Life.

Notice, though, that our Lord, after the resurrection, never healed anyone. Interesting. However, noting this, how does one touch the garment of Christ today? "They shall lay hands on the believers and they shall recover." And Acts 4:30 reads, "Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus." Is the laying on of hands, then, still valid? Perhaps, perhaps not. However, in either case the empowering agent is God the Holy Spirit; and He *is still valid!* And if the laying on of hands is performed, the hands are only hands -- that is all they are. They merely convey that which they represent or symbolize: the power of Christ through the Spirit.

Note, too, the phrase "in the name of Jesus Christ." It means that through prayer the Person of Christ Himself may be touched, as if He were there, which He is, for He is *in* the believer through the mysterious power of the Holy Spirit. The believer, then, touches Christ, and Christ touches the believer. This is consecration.

James spoke of anointing with oil. The oil always symbolized the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. However, in the present Church Age, the Holy

Spirit indwells each and every believer; thus, 'the unique oil' of the Holy Spirit can heal. And James told the truth of it: the oil symbolizes and conveys the power of the Spirit through Christ, but the 'gift' is not of healing; no, the healing process is through the power of prayer, yet the anointing is also accomplished. "Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven." (James 5:14-15) Here, then, is Christ healing after the resurrection but without touching -- yet He does touch through the Spirit, for it says "the Lord will raise him up." So believers touch Christ now through prayer and God the Holy Spirit.

Could the oil, then, be the instrument of connecting physically? Not the instrument of healing, not an instrument of 'giftedness,' not an instrument of power, but the means of touching and being touched by Christ sacramentally. This would indeed appear to be the case based upon the definition of the Greek term for "anointing," which is ALEIPHO, and is defined as "to anoint with oil or ointment. (Indicates the anointing for festal purposes, health or embalming.)"<sup>174</sup> And some authors claim that the use of ALEIPHO rather than CHRIEIN alleviates the liturgical or sacramental aspects of this passage in James. However, "no traces of such a distinction appear in the N. T.; ALEIPHEIN is used indiscriminately of all actual anointings, whether with oil or ointment; while CHRIEIN, no doubt in its connection with CHRISTOS, is absolutely restricted to the anointing of the Son, by the Father, with the Holy Ghost, for the accomplishment of his great office, being wholly separated from all profane and common uses."<sup>175</sup>

Thus, this anointing in James is to remind the sick of their very real and very present calling and rank *in Christ* through the indwelling Holy Spirit. It is sacramental, it is liturgical; for it speaks of that which has already been accomplished for the

saints by Christ on the Cross, and in His present Ascension. This is the conveyance of that which already exists. Never forget, though, that the main verb of James 5:14 is "let them pray." And this asserts the principal action to be taken, and the mechanism of the healing: prayer!

Interestingly enough, Chester A. McCalley makes the following observation: "Verse 14 speaks of prayer and anointing; verse 15 speaks of prayer and faith. Is faith a synonym of anointing in these verses? If so, the oil is a tangible symbol of faith. In John 9:1-7 Jesus anoints the man's eyes with spit, which is obviously symbolic."<sup>176</sup> And although Rev. McCalley does not agree that the oil is sacramental or liturgical, he does, in the above quote, note that even our Lord recognized and used *physical symbols*.

Does healing take place? Yes. Through prayer and the power of the Holy Spirit. Are the sacramental use of the name of Jesus Christ, anointing with oil, and the laying on of hands still valid? The author states, Yes; as long as it is comprehended that the sacraments are just symbols, i.e., the hands are just hands, the oil is just oil, and the name of Christ is the name of Christ, nothing less and nothing more; there is no magic in these sacraments. There is, though, the signification and the conveyance (if only in their palpability) of that which already exists: the believer's union *in Christ*, the *indwelling* ministry of the Holy Spirit, and the eternal Life of Christ, which has been given to those that believe.

It is to be noted, also, that what is being discussed is not *faith healing* in its worst possible, modern sense. For *faith healing* is "based on the false premise that it is the will of God for all to be in robust health."<sup>177</sup> What *is* being discussed is the very real power of God, the Cross and the finished work of Christ, and the indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit. For Christ is alive! And faith as a response heals the mind, the soul, the emotions and, God willing, the body.<sup>178</sup>

<sup>174</sup> Bullinger, E.W. *A Critical Lexicon and Concordance to the English and Greek New Testament*; page 54.

<sup>175</sup> Trench, Archbishop Richard C. *Synonyms of the New Testament*; page 136-137.

<sup>176</sup> McCalley, Chester A. *James: A Commentary Outline*; page 39.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*; page 38.

<sup>178</sup> The above dissertation on *Healing* is based upon the scholarship of Archbishop Smith, Chester McCalley, Robert

"The Lord will sustain him on his sickbed and restore him from his bed of illness. I said, 'O Lord, have mercy on me; heal me, for I have sinned against you.'" (Psalm 41:3,4)

Luke 17:11-19: "Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance and called out in a loud voice, 'Jesus, Master, have pity on us!' When he saw them, he said, 'Go, show yourselves to the priests.' And as they went, they were cleansed. One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him--and he was a Samaritan. Jesus asked, 'Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?' Then he said to him, 'Rise and go; your faith has saved you.'"

As this healing miracle unfolds it is important to note that Jesus is between Samaria and Galilee. And great hatred existed between the Samaritans and the Jews. Indeed, when they would meet on a road, as soon as they saw one another the curses would begin, then they would throw stones at each other and, often, fistfights would break out. Teenagers from each district would cross the borders to burn houses at night; it was, in fact, as close to outright war as could be without ever quite making it. And when Jews traveled from Galilee down to Judea, they would travel along the border of Galilee and Samaria, cross the Jordan River, and then down that side, and then back over the Jordan to get to Jerusalem. So as Luke 17:11 opens, Jesus is on the border of Galilee and Samaria and He will eventually end up in Jerusalem.

He comes to an unknown village, and there are ten unknown men standing outside the village -- ten lepers. And lepers were not allowed inside a village, on a sunny day they had to remain six feet away, on a windy day (with the wind blowing behind them) they had to remain 150 feet away,

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Thieme, and Robin Lane Fox's *Pagans and Christians*. In many cases the words and thoughts of Archbishop Smith have

been adopted; the author begs the indulgence of this great expositor and makes no claim to originality in such instances.

they had to cover their faces, dishevel their hair, tear their clothes, and shout, 'I am unclean.' And the fact that "they stood at a distance" indicates that this was probably a windy day, and they were 150 feet away, shouting, "Unclean, unclean!"

But when they saw Jesus they raised their voices; and this is more than just shouting louder, for leprosy in the ancient world attacked the vocal cords first. The vocal cords became ulcerated, and the voices became raspy and harsh. So when "they raised their voices," Jesus was hearing the harsh, cackling cry of lepers. All ten were trying to cackle in unison so that He might hear them.

And they are crying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" And this cry tells us that they recognized Him from a distance. These are the last few weeks of Jesus' ministry; He is on His way to the Passover where He will be crucified; and by this time, anywhere He went in Israel, He was known by sight. The term "Master" means that they believe that He can do what they ask. This term means that they recognize His power, His authority. They had heard about every miracle He had performed, for the miracles and Jesus are constantly talked and gossiped about throughout the country.

And the word "mercy" is a cry for compassion, for sympathy. And quite unusually, our Lord neither touches these men, nor commands the disease; nor are there any symbolic actions: mud, spitting, etc. And note that He does not attempt to elicit any faith response.

Rather, He gives *them* a command to an act of faith that is wonderful. He says, "Go now to the priests." And this is a reference to the fact that the priests were the health department of the ancient world; and if you had a disease, you were on file with the priests. And once you thought you were clean, you went to the priest who examined you and gave you a certificate of health.

Jesus looks at these men and they are full of leprosy; and without doing any healing touching, or speaking any healing words, He just says, "Go to the priest and get your health certificate." This is sheer absurdity from the human perspective: there is no way anyone in their right mind can follow this order; because Jesus has not done anything, they have not changed or been cured, they are still lepers which means that they are not

allowed to get close to where the priests are; they are not allowed into the town in this condition.

But Jesus is saying, 'Look at yourself, go and get your certificates of health.' This is irrational. But they do it! And they do it instantly -- no argument. They do this totally irrational thing solely on the word that Jesus spoke to them. They trusted; they obeyed His word because they believed that He had power and authority. And they allowed that authority to spill over from the disease onto their minds: their going was a response to His word, which in turn was a response to whom they perceived Him to be.

And note that it is highly unlikely that all ten of these lepers came from the same town and would thus go in the same direction to the priest. They were together because of their disease. But to gain certificates of health, they would probably have split into ten different directions going to their priest. And this likelihood is sustained by the one leper who returned; for if he had just split off to return, one or two would probably at least have traveled with him; additionally, he would have looked at the others and asked them, 'Aren't you coming, too?' He would have manipulated them through guilt and badgering to return.

"And as they went they were cleansed." And the emphasis is on "went" in the sense of, 'can you believe this? they are going! they are crazy!' Amazement is definitely connoted. And they were cleansed as they were in the act of going. Remember, these are men who are lepers. They have no hope of ever getting better. They are under a death sentence. And what a coincidence: on this one day, at the right place, at the right time, all together, they have their only chance to see Jesus, and they recognize Him. This is the day of their lives! This is their only chance! *And they leave Him without being healed! They leave Him solely on the basis of His word, but no healing has taken place!*

They are still lepers as they begin to walk away. Unbelief or doubt would have turned and argued with Jesus. "You have to do something!" Some act, some visible sign of healing would surely be necessary. Knowing these men are lepers and the circumstances of this chance meeting, these men would only have left if they *believed* that they

would be healed before they got to the priest. They left without any evidence in their bodies.

They left because they knew they were healed. Their actions were based on a *fact* that had not yet occurred -- a *fact* that did occur because our Lord said it would. These men, then, did not *earn* their healing by this action; they did not earn their healing by doing something they should not have. They would not have done this unless He told them!

Jesus said this to them! He did not say that this was a universal healing principle: that you can earn healing by confessing that which does not exist.

And the term for "healed" means that God has stepped in and taken action. The man *saw* that he was healed. In other words, *life* actually surged through this man's cells; he could actually *see* this occurring, *feeling and seeing combined* -- perhaps a kind of electricity sparking through the body. He knew! And he knew that God had moved in his body -- God did it! And it says that he praised God in a "loud voice." In other words, his vocal cords were healed: that which before took ten men to be heard, now takes only one.

And he returns to Jesus and gives thanks to God. Interesting. For if he just wanted to give glory to God, he could have done that anywhere. But he returned to Jesus; he recognized that God was specifically revealed in this person he called Jesus. Jesus was God -- Jesus is God, and he recognized it as such. But recall that the Pharisees saw these same works and called Jesus Satan.

"Praising" God means 'to acknowledge God which honors Him.' And it is also recognizing 'truth.' This is standing with an open mouth before God. And this term is also used to mean "repent" in Scripture: "glorify God by confessing it;" that is, acknowledge that God is God, and because He is God you have sinned against Him; and therefore you acknowledge He is God by confessing your sin. So when mankind comes to God with "repentance," they are glorifying Him: they are saying, I sinned against you who are God.

And along with that idea of repentance goes believing and trusting. He is a God who is believable and who can be trusted. And when one trusts Him, one glorifies Him. So this is not just

the healed leper saying, "Praise God!" This is a heart thing; a wholehearted acknowledgment of God. This is the healed leper saying, "I have met God through this incident. I have met God and this meeting has affected my whole life!" So by saying, "Praise the Lord," this man is saying that he has given his life to this God.

And the "loud voice" refers to something other than private thanks. And he prostrates himself before Jesus. So he lifts his voice, and he uses his body to glorify God. This man converges his whole body in giving glory to God. And when one gives "thanks," one is acknowledging receipt of that which was undeserved. Thanks, then, is a very humbling attitude. And Paul, in Romans 1:21, states that failure to give thanks was part of the Fall of mankind: "For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened."

So the Apostle Paul, then, states that the heart of sin is not acknowledging that God is God. Mankind constructs his own God, rather than accepting the revelation of God that God has given to mankind.

This healed leper, then, is a picture of the whole Gospel -- the antithesis of the Fall. And remember, praising God, confessing, repenting, does not *earn* us anything -- these are responses to who and what God is. And the word for "thanks" here is the Greek word EUCHARISTO. [Thus, communion is doing what this leper did: glorifying God, and giving Him thanks for what He has done -- for we live in Him who LIVES.]

But what of the other nine? They received the healing but never thought about the God who gave it. Certainly, we ask, why didn't they come back and at least say thanks? Answer: They took it for granted. They expected Him to do something and He did. In other words, they lost sight of the *wonder* of what God gave them.

And notice that Jesus could not believe it: "Where are the other nine?"

Or perhaps the nine were so absorbed by their healing that they missed God; they are so excited that they are no longer lepers that they are now blinded to the grace, favor and wonder of God. They are so self-absorbed by their new found

health that they have lost sight of the idea of *self for others*; they are *self for self*. They failed to see that the change in their bodies was due to God. Divine healing, then, is not a magical medical clinic. For in healing God reveals Himself to us, so much so that the healing becomes secondary to the revelation of God. Healing is a sacrament; God comes through my own stuff, my body, and reveals Himself to me.

So the nine lepers received a blessing from Jesus, but they did not receive Jesus in the blessing. They did not discover God in what He did for them -- and in reality, that is why He did it for them: to reveal Himself to them.

And note that Jesus did not remove their healing. But obviously, He is amazed! Just as He was amazed at the Roman Centurion's faith, so here He is amazed at their unbelief and that they did not come back to give thanks.

God blesses even if thanks is withheld. Luke 6:35 reads: "...and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked."

None came back, then, save the foreigner, the Samaritan. And what does this tell us? This man had no claims on the covenant; he is outside the covenant. This was sheer grace. It also speaks of not how much one knows, but what one does with what is known. He had a little ray of light, and he acted upon it. And Jesus said, "Your faith has made you whole (or saved you)." In other words, the other nine have been healed of leprosy in their bodies, but you have laid hold upon not only healing, but also upon 'wholeness;' i.e., he has been saved and received more than temporal health and life, he has received eternal life.

The nine believed that their bodies would be healed, and they were. But that is all they received. They were simply healed. They received a blessing from God, a kind of sacramental door was given to them in the healing, but they became so enamored with the healing that they missed the sacramental door. To open the door is to meet God. And the healing itself is just a means of revealing Himself to you. So the nine were healed of physical leprosy, but retained their spiritual leprosy as they walked away.



One, though, was made whole, physically and spiritually,<sup>179</sup> because he saw what it was all about.

Proverbs 3:9,10 "Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine."

First, it should be noted that this is not a 'tithing' passage. Rather, the text moves naturally from "fearing the Lord and shunning evil" in verse 7, to the result of such recognition of God and dependence upon Him: "honoring the Lord with all your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops." And the Hebrew term for "honor" is the piel (intensive) imperative of the verb KABAD, which is defined as "to regard, treat, or practically declare one as worthy of honor; to promote, to honor."<sup>180</sup> Thus, it is evident that this "honor" is a result of an inborn desire from 'wisdom,' and does not indicate a method of 'getting something' from God, i.e., giving money back to God in exchange for future considerations from God. God cannot be 'bought' or 'bribed.' Indeed, God approaches mankind and says the exact opposite: "I will give to you freely, because I love you."

And the Hebrew term for "wealth" is HON, which means "wealth, but its use is poetic. The basic meaning of the noun is 'goods' or 'substance' in sufficient quantity to be considered 'riches' or 'wealth.'"<sup>181</sup> However, the root meaning of the word is that which "makes life easy." And what, according to the book of Proverbs, makes "life easy?" 'Wisdom!' Thus, this passage is a direct reference to 'good' wealth, i.e., wealth or substance of the soul; whereas in Prov. 1:13, 'bad' wealth was referred to as that which the criminal seeks, i.e., illicit lucre. And according to Prov. 11:4, riches do not save on the day of judgment,

<sup>179</sup> The above dissertation on the *Ten Lepers* is based on the scholarship of Archbishop Smith; the author has adopted the words

and thoughts of Archbishop Smith and humbly begs this great scholar's indulgence. The author makes no claim to originality.

<sup>180</sup> Wilson, William. *Old Testament Word Studies*; page 221.

<sup>181</sup> Harris, Archer, Waltke, Eds. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*; vol. i, page 213.

but Prov. 24:4 calls knowledge of God precious riches. Additionally, the material riches of Tyre are condemned in Ezekiel 27:12, but Psalm 112:3 states that wealth is the reward of the godly man.

In light of this rendering of the word "wealth," i.e., 'spiritual wealth,' the 'wise man' is to honor God with the "firstfruits of all" that he has. This, then, is mankind 'honoring or hallowing' God's name; and the overflow of such right recognition of God is more spiritual and material wealth than one could ever have expected. This is in line with David's famous thought: "my cup runneth over."

### Honoring God

This concept of "honoring God," especially since it is in the imperative mood, demands further discussion.

Many times the word "honor" is translated "hallow" in the different versions of the English Bible. In the Greek, the term is HAGIAZO, "to make holy, sanctify; i.e., to set something into a state opposed to KOINON (common); or, where the something is already KOINON, to deliver it from that state and put it into a state corresponding to the revealed nature of God."<sup>182</sup> And the word "hallow" is derived from the Middle English HALOWEN and/or the Anglo-Saxon verb *halgian*, or the noun *halig*; and the term means "to make holy; to consecrate; to sanctify; to reverence; to honor as sacred; to venerate."

All very interesting; yet what does the word mean when practically applied to God by mankind? First, this term has everything to do with God and His name, JHWH, and probably has its most practical application toward God in prayer. And prayer is not trying to make God do what I want Him to do. Prayer and "honoring God" are totally submitting myself to His name, His kingdom and His will. "Honoring God," then, is giving God His rightful and deserved place. And only when He is given his rightful place is God honored. "Honoring God," then, is rowing our boats to God's shore; it is not us trying to drag God's shore to our boats. It is not bringing God to accomplish that which I want Him to accomplish; it is coming into alignment with God's will, purpose and plan.

<sup>182</sup> Bullinger, E.W. *A Critical Lexicon and Concordance to the English and Greek New Testament*; page 350.

So the word "hallowed," or "honor" means to set apart, to give respect, to hold in awe as totally different from everything else. And it can be defined as 'holy;' and connotes the Hebrew term JARE', or 'fear.' Fear, here, is to reverence as unique, as honored, as respected because of totally different, yet holy, attributes.

And whom are we commanded to "honor?" JHWH, YAHWEH, the covenant name of God. And in the ancient world, false gods had names and carried connotations; most of these gods had been created by humans, extensions of their own selves, i.e., their fears, their immoralities; they created them and gave them names: such as Baal, Molech, Asherah, etc. And many of these gods were demonically inspired and these demons, of course, had names; and people feared these names (gave them honor) as deities.

Into this world, God came to Abraham and said my name is JHWH. God spoke His personal, intimate name to man; thus, uniquely among all religions, God revealed Himself -- He is the self-revealing God. And such revelation implied that He would continue to be that way, the way of His name, to generation after generation of mankind.

And it is in this honoring of the name of God, that the results of such "honoring," that the name, who God is, and the way He acts, shall be seen and revealed to all. And because His name is thus honored, His name will dazzle the world; or to put it simply, God will look good. Or, perhaps, God's name will be magnified.

One of the first names that God revealed of Himself was EL SHADDAI, God Almighty, the Nourisher, the Supplier; and the Hebrew word SHAD is "breast." So the term could be translated "the many breasted one;" as if God nourishes us at His breast like a nursing mother; or as if He pours Himself into us and sustains us.

But God being God, cannot be limited by one, single definition; and Moses wanted a more expansive, yet simultaneously more precise, definition of God. And God revealed His personal name to Moses: YAHWEH, or "I am that I am." Thus, God is the self-existent One; God is Life. And the term YAHWEH implies that He is "fullness, or the becoming One;" that is, He becomes whatever He needs to become to mankind. And remember, that Moses asked to see

the "glory of God." God said that He would show Moses the name that was behind the name YAHWEH; in other words, God consented to reveal His inner Heart to Moses. And what was that name behind the name? CHESED, or "lovingkindness." This is the heart of God.

Thus, only God can explain God. So God sent God from God to reveal God: Jesus. Hebrews 1:1-3 state: "In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word."

Thus, Jesus took everything that God ever said in the Old Testament and brought it to mankind in the context of a human life. He said, "I am that." Jesus manifested the name of God -- He made it known, and His lovingkindness was made known at the Cross. And the blazing light of Who God is at the Cross blinds mankind many times. Why? Because they have heard before, they have become *used to it*, they take it for granted in some cases. Pagan gods demand sacrifice; this God gives Himself as a sacrifice. This God took to Himself Humanness, and gave Himself as the sacrifice that He Himself as God demanded. This is the name of God!

And when Jesus rose again, His name was "honored:" "So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs." (Heb. 1:4)

So what does "to honor" God mean? It means that God may be revealed to such an extent that people stand in awe when they see what He is really like; that they shout and sing. And they do that because they know it is so.

Remember, the essence of sin is attempting to "honor" or "hallow" one's own name, i.e., *self for self*. Sin is mankind not liking the idea of "honoring" God's name; I want to set aside *my* name as "hallowed." I want to be revered and respected. This becomes the end all and be all of life. Thus, in essence, "to use God's name in vain" is not just cursing, but is to trample upon the name of God; to place one's own name above the name of God.

And note, that in “honoring God” there is no solicitation for mankind to become ‘holy.’ This is unique; for every religion in the world tells its proselytes that they must be holy. But this is to set oneself apart, self for self. Every other religion states that you must be holy: you must do this, do that, wear this, wear that; and at that point our god will accept you. But “honoring God” simply says, “Hallowed be THY name.” It says, “Honor God, trust Him, and you will be set apart.” Just as you are, believe in God and you will be changed. Hallow God, set His name on high and you will be changed.

For example: when the Pharisee and the tax-collector prayed. The Pharisee hallowed his own name, not the name of God, for it says, “that he prayed to *himself*.” Whereas the tax-collector hallowed the name of God, “let your lovingkindness be made known in my life.” Thus mankind is not saved by his own name, or for his own sake; mankind is saved by the name of God, for His sake. Thus, mankind becomes the showcase for the lovingkindness of God.

And this is why Scripture states: “Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Mankind calls upon Who HE is! He told us His name: Lovingkindness! And now He says, “Believe it! I AM that way.” But to do so mankind must reject all hope in *self* and “honor” in his own name. And some won’t do that -- pride!

Calling upon the name of the Lord, then, is saying AMEN (I believe it) to all that He is and all that He has done. Calling upon the name of the Lord is “honoring God;” it is saying thank you to God; and the worse mankind is, the ‘*gooder*’ God appears. So mankind shouts to God out of the undersurface of sin and self for self. And mankind shouts because God *said that He is lovingkindness*.

This is why David could be, and was, forgiven by God; and David was an adulterer and a murderer. And this is why David was such a great believer; this is why Scripture declares that “David was a man after God’s own heart.” Because David saw to the heart of God, David understood who and what God is: God is lovingkindness. David called upon the New Covenant when he was living in the Old Covenant. David went straight to the name that was behind the name of JHWH, he went directly to CHESED: *the lovingkindness* of God.

How do you “hallow” or “honor” the name of God? By walking through life trusting in who He is. He is the life-giving Spirit. We “honor” the name of God by recognizing that the life-giving Spirit of Christ lives in us. And then we make *faith-choices*, choices to order our behavior to be consistent with His name. And since His name is *Love*, I will order my life after love. Since His name is “I forgive transgressions,” then I will forgive my enemy for I am a person who lives by His name. I “honor” His name.

I live continually aware that He is, in His name, all that I need, and more than I need. If I require strength, I say, “The Lord is my strength.” I don’t say, “O Lord become my strength.” Instead, I “honor” His name by saying, “You have already told me that you are my strength.” For He made us His “honored” or intimate friends by telling us His name, and we “honor” Him by saying, “You are my strength.”

And remember, that Proverbs 1:7 stated that “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” And ‘wisdom’ is living well or ‘easily,’ and dying well or ‘easily.’ Wisdom is the perfect end arrived at in God’s perfect way. It includes prosperity; it includes peace in all my relationships; it includes joy in every hour. And notice that it does not say to pursue these things; rather, it says “have the fear of the Lord,” and that’s the beginning of wisdom.

For you see if I try to find peace, I will never find it; if I look for joy, it is a mirage that shimmers on the horizon -- I can never quite attain it. They are all postscripts to “honoring” the name of God. If I live in such a fashion that God looks good, if I live in such a way that people see who He is, if I live in such a manner that I become the magnifying glass that exposes clearly who God is, then prosperity, joy and peace are mine because they are appended to God.

And “honoring” God refers to giving also; it means that I will give of my “substance” in such a way that is consistent with whom I know God to be. Or as Jesus said, “They will see your good works and give glory to your Father which is in heaven.” They will see the way I live and recognize that only the God I worship could make me live like that.

For recall, that the Jews "tithed" up to 30%; they had two tithes or taxes every year and the third year there was another tithe; and then the firstfruits had to be offered to God, and anytime you entered the temple you offered a lamb. Moreover, they were to give to any in need -- generosity. And the whole ancient world observed the Jews of Israel and said, "They're crazy! They worship a God who is forever giving away; for the way they act is consistent with such a God." Here, then, is the real meaning of *giving*: the way I live and give tells the world what God is like. This is "honoring" or "hallowing" the name of God. We set His name apart when we give -- for He gave to us. We are not giving in order to get. NO! We give to demonstrate what God is like: *giving and lovingkindness*.

And when we do not give it is because we are "honoring" or "hallowing" another name: Money! To illustrate: Psalm 23 as it would be stated by a person who "honors" or "hallows" money.

"Money is my shepherd, if I have it I shall lack nothing.

Money makes me lie down in green pastures, money leads me to quiet waters.

Even if I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear nothing, for my American Express card is with me.

Credit card, you prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.

O' checkbook, you cause my cup to overflow.

VISA Platinum card, with you surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life."<sup>183</sup>

Whereas, when mankind "honors" or "hallows" the name of God, then he is set free to be generous. For he recognizes that his supply comes from God, not money. Thus, to "honor" God means to invite Him into every area (substance) of one's life. Therefore, no matter what we do, what we say, what we pray, what we are really doing and saying is this: that God will be seen in this situation, that His name will be known, and known in such a way that everyone will have to

admit, even if they don't want to, that they have been dazzled by the name and person of God.

So "honoring" God is not getting God to do what we want Him to do by bribing Him, or buying Him, or badgering Him. God cannot be manipulated. "Honoring God" makes God look good, not us. That's it! Thus, we *brag* (*hallel-ujah: brag on Yah(weh)*).

Concerning this passage, Proverbs 3:9,10, H.A. Ironside has written eloquently: "Having learned to depart from evil, the Lord becomes the object of the heart. It is not giving Him the *first* place merely. It is a poor thing when Christ has but the first place in the soul. He must have all if one is to go on with Him in holy joy and unhindered communion. The Israelite brought the first fruits as a token that He acknowledged Jehovah's sole ownership of the land of Canaan. The giving of the firstfruits was the recognition of this. So, as the believer honors Him with his substance, he gladly owns that all is the Lord's to be used as he directs. All comes from God; yet He graciously receives from those He has redeemed and delights to ever be Himself the greatest give. None shall find Him in their debt."<sup>184</sup>

And Chester A. McCalley wrote: "Proverbs 3:9 instructs a son to 'Honor the LORD from your wealth, and from the first of all your produce....' This involves learning how to spend and how to give, how to earn and how to save. There is warning about investing money in the speculative investment of another or of backing up another by co-signing."<sup>185</sup>

And regarding Prov. 3:9-10, the New Interpreter's Bible records the following: "All things and persons belong to God, Israel's creator and redeemer, and the gift of the first fruits and the redemption of the firstborn acknowledges this (Deut. 26:1-11). But first fruits/firstborn also are a sign and a promise of the full harvest to come, a matter taken up in New Testament representations of Christ and his people (Matt 2:15; Rom 8:29; Rev.

<sup>183</sup>

Smith, Archbishop M. The author first heard this Psalm so used by Archbishop M. Smith.

<sup>184</sup>

Ironside, H.A. *Proverbs*; page 38-39.

<sup>185</sup>

McCalley, Chester A. *Portraits In Proverbs*; page 63.

1:5). Genuine faith is sometimes called upon to 'fear God for nothing' (see Job 1:9-11).<sup>186</sup>

Finally, it should be noted that the offering of the firstfruits were intended for the Levites, according to Deut. 18:1-5, of which verse 3,4, and 5 are herein quoted: "This is the share due the priests from the people who sacrifice a bull or a sheep: the shoulder, the jowls and the inner parts. You are to give them the first fruits of your grain, new wine and oil, and the first wool from the shearing of your sheep, for the Lord your God has chose them and their descendants out of all your tribes to stand and minister in the Lord's name always."

The Levitical priesthood, then, got the best of the best. Why? Because only the 'best' makes God look 'gooder.' And that is what it is all about: that God might be seen or "honored," or "hallowed."<sup>187</sup>

Proverbs 3:11-12 "My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline and do not resent his rebuke, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in."

The New Testament counterpart to these verses is found in Hebrews 12:5-11. And Job 5:17-18 read, "Lo! Happy is the man whom God (ELOAH) corrects; the Almighty's chastening oh! spurn thou not. [Reason:] For He it is who wounds, yet bindeth up; He smiteth; yet 'tis His own hands that heal." And Psalm 94:12 reads, "Blessed is the man you discipline, O Lord, the man you teach from your law." Quickly, note that ELOAH is the God who is to be *worshipped* and *reverenced*, the living God, the God before whom mankind should stand in open-mouthed awe, the God whose lovingkindness can never be fully grasped.

The Romans said, "*qui bene amat bene castigat*" , "he who loves well chastises well." This was the Latin argument opposing permissiveness in raising children and favoring frankness of expression in dealing with all people that one loved or respected. Thus, the meaning of the Latin was quite different from that found in Proverbs.

**186**

Van Leeuwen, Raymond C. *New Interpreter's Bible*; vol. v, pages 49-50.

**187**

The above dissertation is taken from, and adopted from, the scholarship of Archbishop M. Smith and Robert Thieme.

These two verses in Proverbs obliquely present that great conundrum of life: that there "are gaps between what humans expect and what actually happens."<sup>188</sup> And this is the mystery of Jehovah's involvement in evil, and this evil, on the surface, would appear to call God's holiness and Truth into question. And this is the story of Job and Joseph. For God is not the author of evil, yet He uses the evil of men and Satan to "make acceptable," or "bring man to" the final destination that God has purposed: that mankind be brought to the end of himself (self for self), that mankind might know "the end of the Lord:" that God blesses, that God gives, and the destination is God's word, and God's love; and put simply, the 'end' is God. And for this reason God uses the evil of men to "correct" and enlighten and enrich His people.

This is the reason that Joseph, abused by his family, betrayed, abandoned, unjustly incarcerated, forgotten by all and victimized, wrote: "So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt. You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives." [Gen. 45:8; 50:20] In other words, God used the evil of men, Joseph's brothers, Potiphar and his wife, etc., to bring Joseph to an even greater understanding of who God is; thus Joseph, through suffering, came to have an even closer relationship to God. And this is "the end of the Lord."

The term "discipline" does not primarily have the meaning or sense of punish, although it is not to be supposed that God does not directly chasten the members of his royal family. Rather the primary meaning is discipline in the sense of "training that develops self- control, character, or orderliness; submissiveness to control."<sup>189</sup> This is not punishment for sin!

This interpretation is sustained by the nouns for "correction" in verse 11: MUSAR and TOKACHAT. MUSAR "denotes correction which results in education. The theological basis for

**188**

Van Leeuwen, Raymond C. *New Interpreter's Bible*; vol. v, page 50.

**189**

Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary, page 520.

discipline is grounded in the covenant relationship which Yahweh establishes with his people. This discipline then might be considered education that is theocentric, which are expressions of an interpersonal relationship of love. Hence, discipline gives assurance of sonship, for MUSAR primarily points to a God-centered way of life, and only secondarily to ethical behavior.<sup>190</sup> Through such discipline, then, *God is the more to be seen.*

And in verse 12 the Hebrew word for “loves” is the qal imperfect of the verb ‘AHAB, which is God’s infinite love for His own people. This term coupled with the above words for “discipline” or “reproof,” explains II Chronicles 20:7, where Abraham is described as the “friend” or “lover” of God. This, then, is the reason for correction from God: to make His people His “friends.” And a more appropriate translation of the term in context might be “prince” or “princess.” “....And give it forever to the descendants of Abraham your friend (lover, prince).” [II Chron. 20:7] Remember, too, that Abraham was a recipient of a covenant relationship with Jehovah, who is lovingkindness, thus God worked in Abraham’s life to make Abraham His friend, lover and prince.

God uses the evil that men produce to dance His dance with those that He loves with an unconditional love. And these beloved ones are described by the phrase “delights in,” in verse 12. This is the qal imperfect of the Hebrew verb RATSA, which is defined as “favor, pleasure or delight,” but may also be translated as “those He is determined to be favorable to.” Thus, correction is God working benevolently and lovingly in the lives of those He ardently desires to bless. And to do so, He brings them a more profound understanding of Himself. Correction, then, is not God attempting to change behavior, it is God changing the *hearts* of those He loves so that they love Him more than before.

### WHY?

These two verses in Proverbs 3, verses 11 and 12, in a roundabout way cause one to stop and pause, and wonder, Why? Why does evil exist? In other words, how can the existence of evil be reconciled

with representations of a personal God? And this problem of evil is not one that captures the interest of many twentieth-century writers or theologians.

The question, then, is this: “If God loves mankind and is all powerful, why did He allow this to happen? Why doesn’t he stop these things and make everything right?” Why did God allow me to be beaten and abused by my parents? Why did God allow my mother to become an alcoholic and neglect her family? Or why did God allow me to make these wrong choices?

And beneath these questions lies another more singular question. For we not only ask God, “Why?” But we are also daring to ask, “How could God allow this to happen to me?” He has all the power; how could he let this happen to someone who believes in Him and worships Him, to someone He *supposedly* loves?

On the inside of these questions lurks a terrified, paralyzing, horrifying helplessness: If God is doing this, then we have no hope! We are not only victims of evil men and circumstances, but also the *victims of Almighty God Himself!*

Sadly, the Church as an organization and theologians provide little succor here. For they teach that this is the way things are. They explain that the cruelty and viciousness that pass through our lives are the products of God’s bizarre strategy of love. The Church teaches that tragedies caused by nature gone berserk are ‘acts of God,’ and that these calamities are ‘the will of God.’

I, for one, scream in protest to such words. For the intimation is that the Christian God is One Who positively enjoys, with a malicious glee, killing loved ones and destroying possessions and memories. This is dire slander and blasphemy against the God Who was revealed to us in Jesus on the Cross. But this blasphemous slander is not only believed but promulgated by many Christians. And if this slander is accepted, then we can only sit paralyzed, blaming Satan and mankind for the ills of the world; but ultimately, we blame God. And if, for a fact, it is God who is sacrificing us as victims on His altar, what recourse is there but to fatalistically, despairingly accept it, and wait for whatever evil He chooses to next inflict on us, and curse Him for what He has already done.

<sup>190</sup> Harris, Archer, Waltke, Eds. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*; vol. 1, pages 386-387.

If our God is indeed the One who murders babies, destroys lives, and damages property, then He must be a monster. In other words, did God sit down and plan the evil or bad things that have befallen you? Do we worship a God who sits in Heaven on His throne scheming in His Omniscience how to hurt, abuse, destroy, and crush mankind? Does He empower child sex-abusers? Does He empower rapists? Does He give wisdom and skill to con artists? Does He weave the circumstances that cause three young girls to be killed in a drunken car crash? Or worse yet, is our God an impotent and pathetic deity, shrugging in defeat as He turns His head away from the latest tragic victims? Is He embarrassed by His own impotence? Has He lost control?

If this is the Christian God, if this sadistic picture is our God, then we either masochistically welcome His tortures saying, "It is God's will," or we should stand and fight, and at least go down honorably.

Rather than blaming God by placing the tragedies of the world on His shoulders, we should take the consequences of sin seriously. The word of God states clearly what is wrong with the human race. Scripture informs us that mankind fell, that mankind sinned, and that he is now separated (and against) from the God who created him. By default, then, mankind is presently resisting and rejecting the original design of his Creator, and he is pursuing his own design: self-destruction.

For the truth is this: that apart from the salvation that is provided for us by God as Jesus Christ, we will all demolish ourselves and those around us. Indeed, natural disasters, i.e., tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, and earthquakes are merely a physical expression of the spiritual state of mankind who was once the ruler of the planet -- until his sin entered the world.

Thus God is not the source of the evil that comes into mankind's life; nor does God authorize those responsible for evil deeds and acts. Mankind resides in a fallen and sinful world, a world where individuals make imperfect and selfish decisions. Indeed, somewhere, at this very moment, persons are concocting and performing evil deeds so that they might selfishly gain, or so they might provide a distorted meaning to their barren lives. The world is self-centered, greedy and malicious, and

as a body and individually the world makes wrong decisions. Why? Because mankind is sinful and has no 'wisdom' as taught in Proverbs.

Axiom: life in a sinful world is not ever fair, nor will it ever be. At best, the pain that comes into one's life is the result of fallen mankind disobeying God; and at worst, malicious souls, out of the evil in their souls, deliberately cause pain to others.

Axiom: God created mankind in His image, and that image includes free-will, as it must. And the awesome reality of free-will is this: that mankind's choices are significant and have impact. Mankind is not a race of machines without free-will. Indeed, to remove the free-will of mankind would abort mankind -- mankind would no longer be human, they would be androids, mere manikins. In the face of evil, though, mankind desires that God remove the free-will of some; not ours of course, but that of others.

Why does God permit evil and suffering? The question has no answer *because it is the wrong question -- the question does not exist!* For mankind is responsible for his evil, God is not.

Immediately, then, another question pops up: is God then powerless in the face of evil and evil men? Of course not! The numinous beauty is this: that God actively uses the evil decisions of mankind, and He works His lovingkindness within mankind's evil. Man must trust Him! And as man trusts in God, He accomplishes His end in man's life. Recall what Joseph declared to his evil brothers: "You meant it for evil against me, but God meant it for good."

The awesomeness of God is this: that God is there, working, when our free-will is employed and when evil men make free-will decisions to destroy us. When I make selfish, self-destructive decisions -- God is there, working; when evil men concoct and implement their evil machinations -- God is there, working, and to the dismay of these evil men, God uses their evil for good. For God *IS* infinite and unconditional love; therefore He actively seeks to convert every free-will decision that is made, to the good of those He loves and to His glory. How? That is the *secret* of God; that is why believers stand speechless before their Living God!

Thus faith does not merely see *what* is happening, but faith sees *through* what is happening to God, who is working invisibly, converting the evil that mankind does to good. Faith reaches through the evil, the pain and the suffering, and the apparent senselessness of life, and embraces what God is doing with man and in man. And this is not God just impotently saying, "It will all be OK." Nor does God wish that it had not happened, nor does He say, "Well, if you had only done what I told you to this wouldn't be happening."

Remember that God *IS* love! He *is*, and the verb of being is active in voice; thus God is vigorously and assertively and dynamically LOVE. So when believers, *through their free-will* (remember that our decisions have significance and impact), surrender to God when faced with suffering and evil, then God launches into the situation and makes it His. God takes the circumstances of our sorrow and pain -- pain cause by the evil decisions of evil men -- and declares that the situation is now His! And in this place of sorrow He will bring to pass all His loving plans for us. God declares war on evil on the very platform that evil has constructed. God crashes the party of evil men, as it were.

Man cannot change the evil, selfish decisions of others, or his own selfish decisions. And when one perceives the results of personal wrong decisions and the evil decisions of others, one does not blame God, nor does one become paralyzed with fear or remorse or regret. If paralyzed by fear, one sits helpless; but faith can actively make another decision: to surrender the circumstances to God, thus moving the circumstances into God's arena, that arena where God works. Thus faith chooses not to concede the situation to wrong decisions, but actively gives the situation to God.

Faith faces the reality of wrong choices and does not fantasize about what might have happened or what could be...not even what God might be doing. Instead, through faith, man chooses to work with God in the present circumstances -- whatever they might be. And this submission to God is the beginning of REAL movement -- it is NOT the passive acceptance that what is now happening is the will of God.

And this type of faith is not just biting the bullet and saying, "What will be will be." It is the acceptance that one made a wrong decision, but

that God is with us. And it is actively accepting that God is even now working in the situation. It is not resigning oneself to the situation. The secret then is offering oneself to God in whatever the situation, and in that manner, abetting what He is doing. It is *choosing* to dare to believe that God is working in the present circumstances even though we ourselves may be the authors of the present situation.

Illustration: As Joseph was carried off into slavery and imprisonment, He KNEW that this was not the end that YAHWEH, the God of unconditional love had in store for him. Yet Joseph did not dream about a future that as yet was not. What did Joseph do? He grabbed onto the *now*, as it was, on his way to the future, and realized that God was *now* working in the present moment. Joseph realized that faith is not a power that God gave him to make circumstances the way *he* wanted them to be; nor did Joseph attempt to use faith as a power to make God change the circumstances. Rather Joseph comprehended what faith truly is: the response to a relationship with the covenant God of infinite, unconditional love.

Thus God is not the author of evil, nor will God be manipulated by faith. God's end for mankind is that mankind know Him and have an intimate relationship with Him. And out from that relationship proceed all the blessings that the Loving God has promised. Therefore when the believer comes face to face with evil, pain and suffering, he does not run and hide or become paralyzed by fear. Instead, he reminds himself that there is more here than meets the eye, more than evil. Thus the believer *chooses* (remember choices have significance and impact) to see *all* that is, which is more than just the evil. For *all* that is includes the reality of the evil, yes; but *all* that is also includes the overpowering reality of God. For the believer knows that his God is omnipotent, that his God is more mighty than all the evil men and their evil deeds. Additionally, the believer knows that Christ has risen from death, and has *already* overcome every enemy and every evil. And in the radiant glory of Christ, the believer perceives evil for what it is, evil indeed; yet it is also the opportunity to demonstrate the glory of the risen Christ.



Thus, when I make a wrong, evil decision, what do I do? I “repent,” which means I change my mind; I realize that my decision was wrong and I turn from it, *because I choose to*, to a new decision, I turn to God and realize that He is with me and working in my life. I begin by turning my trust and faith to God -- I choose not to trust myself. This does not mean that I am not responsible for that wrong decision, for I am; but I know that, as I turn to God, God loves me -- always! I recognize that I am personally responsible for the way I live my life and make my decisions, and that I am responsible for how I see my circumstances: do I look *at* them and become paralyzed, or do I look *through* them to God and choose to surrender to Him? This means I define my selfishness and error, my envy, my bitterness, and my self-pity by their proper name, *sin*. I receive His forgiveness which has already been given because of the Cross. Then I choose to believe that God is working here and now, converting these circumstances into His arena of blessing and love. And I do this knowing full well that: evil choices in their selfishness cause sorrow and pain; and that God then chooses the platform constructed by evil choices to work out His good; and I choose to cast-off my self-pity and work with God in these circumstances.

Thus, I know what I did, what they did, what she did, what he did; I know the circumstances that I am in; but triumphantly, I choose now to acknowledge these circumstances, precisely as they are, as the platform upon which God is going to now work and silence evil.<sup>191</sup> **Personal note:** This is truth, for as I, the author, look back over my life and see all the evil that I have done, and that others have done to me, God has led me to Himself and to His love.

Thus, God does correct and discipline those that He loves, as stated in Prov. 3:11-12. He works through correction and circumstances to bring us to His end: an intimate relationship with Him.

### The World View of Why Evil?

#### 191

The above dissertation on ‘Why Evil?’ is based upon the scholarship, thoughts and words of Archbishop M. Smith. The

author makes no claim to originality; indeed, the author acknowledges his debt to Archbishop Smith for every jot and tittle.

The world cannot explain evil. The world perceives evil as senseless and irrational -- for the world discounts the concept of sin. “Here is how Philo, in David Hume’s *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, phrases the argument: ‘Is he [God] willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then is he impotent. Is he able, but not willing? Then is he malevolent. Is he both able and willing? Whence then is evil?’”<sup>192</sup> The world declares, “The universe would be better off if no human life existed. Better off for whom? For humanity!

Gardener calls life “that terminal disease.” Other philosophers state that God is fundamentally good, but troubled by evil impulses. Still others say that God is getting ‘better’ as time passes. To others God is good and all-powerful but not wise. To others God is wise but absent-minded. And some, the Hindus and the Christian Scientists, state that evil is an illusion, or *maya* (as the Hindus term it). These, of course, are impious and risible.

However, the only way the world has found to justify evil is this: that evil exists because it is necessary to bring about the greatest good. Yet even the philosophers admit that this is no solution. For it leaves evil as a mystery beyond understanding.

The variants propounded by the world’s philosophers are endless; yet they all discount two things: 1) sin and its consequences; 2) ‘faith’ as a viable and legitimate system of thought. Gardener almost grasps it, when he states, “Moral evil is explained along Augustinian lines. It is the inevitable consequence of free will. God could have created angels and human beings unable to sin, but they would not then have been angels or human beings. They would have been automata of the sort that Thomas Huxley, in a careless moment, said he would like to be. The question is obviously intertwined with the mystery of human will and how it differs from the will of God.”<sup>193</sup> Sadly, though, this man of tremendous erudition and scholarship denies ‘faith,’ and, one assumes, has either neglected or misunderstood one salient

#### 192

Gardener, Martin. *The WHYS of a Philosophical Scrivener*; page 243.

#### 193

*Ibid.*; page 259.

idea: that without free-will, there is no such thing as love.

Bertha von Suttner, in her magnificent yet specious book, *The Inventory of a Soul*, presents an entire chapter to the idea of "The Principle of Evil a Phantom." In this chapter, she denies the existence of evil, calling it an illusion, a phantom. And the philosopher, Herbert Spencer, maintained that the concepts of 'good' and 'evil' remained entirely subjective; in other words, what is good to me, may be evil to you -- thus, good and evil are relative and cannot be defined. The flaw, of course, is that Mr. Spencer's model of reality is, in and of itself, relative, if no absolute exists.

And Dr. Paul Carus states correctly that "God is the *raison d'être* not only of the world as it actually exists but of any possible world."<sup>194</sup> But then he goes on to ridicule the theology of Schleiermacher, who defined religion as the "feeling of absolute dependence." And Dr. Carus states, "Truly, if we cannot have a religion which makes us free and independent, let us discard religion! Man's....aspiration is to become independent and to become more and more the master of his destiny."<sup>195</sup> To the author's ears, this is the Lie of Satan: "You will become like God." And it echoes the five "I wills" of Satan himself.

Finally, in his *Conclusion*, Dr. Carus makes the following startling statement: "For God and the Devil are relative terms, and God would cease to be God if there were no Devil."<sup>196</sup>

"Good is good only because there is evil, and God is God because there is a Devil. And without evil there would be no need of working out our salvation."<sup>197</sup> This statement equates the Devil with God, i.e., Satan is not a creature made by the Creator, he is an independent life form -- albeit evil! Trash! And the conclusion is that mankind can work out his own salvation! Then why did Christ die on the Cross? Why did God become true Humanity? For fun?!

<sup>194</sup> Carus, Paul. *The History of the Devil and the Idea of Evil*; page 466.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*; page 471.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*; page 483.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*; page 484.

Thus it may be perceived that the world cannot explain 'evil,' because the world will not acknowledge that mankind is accountable for evil.

"Proverbs 3:13-20 "Blessed is the man who finds wisdom, the man who gains understanding, for she is more profitable than silver and yields better returns than gold. She is more precious than rubies; nothing you desire can compare with her. Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor. Her ways are pleasant ways, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those who embrace her; those who lay hold of her will be blessed. By wisdom the Lord laid the earth's foundations, by understanding he set the heavens in place; by his knowledge the deeps were divided, and the clouds let drop the dew."

These verses again portray 'wisdom' by means of that figure of speech called *personification*; moreover, 'wisdom' is herein not just personified, but is personified as a beautiful woman. And just as a woman's beauty camouflages her more abstract virtues so also the beauty of 'wisdom' conceals other qualities which are beyond fathoming. Thus, if one "trusts in the Lord," and does not refuse His "correction," one may enter into the opulent joy of the above verses.

Dr. Merrill F. Unger categorizes the "felicitations of the man who finds Wisdom" as follows:

1. Such a person is truly happy, verse 13.
2. Such a person will be materially wealthy, and more, will be spiritually rich, verses 14-15. And this spiritual richness is assayed in Job 28:14-19: "Th' abyss exclaims '[Wisdom] is not in me.' And ocean roars -- 'Nor with me dwelleth it.' Fine gold cannot be given in its stead, neither can silver for its price be weighed. With Ophir's gold it never can be bought; nor with the onyx or the sapphire gem. Crystal and gold cannot compare with it; nor vessels of pure gold be its exchange. Corals and diamonds can not be named; the worth of wisdom far excelles pearls. the topaz gem of Cush equals it not; and purest gold with it can not be weighed."
3. Such a person will have long life, wealth, and honor, verse 16.
4. Such a person treads a path of total peacefulness in body, soul and spirit; here, then, is sanity and mental health which in turn translate into physical health, verse 17.

5. Such a person is 'whole' spiritually, i.e., has a full spiritual life and an 'undivided heart,' verse 18. And 'wisdom' conveys true *life* to the one who embraces her, "as the tree of life in paradise would have done to Adam and Eve had they not forfeited it by falling prey to the devil's lie."<sup>198</sup> And this *life* is a life of joy, peace and happiness that is beyond imagining; it is life free from fear, worry, hatred, anger, and self for self -- it is life without a care; for it is a life that rests in God.

6. And finally, the person who embraces 'wisdom' has in his life that very same omnipotence of God that created and now sustains the earth and the laws of the universe, verses 19-20. For just as the evaporation of the oceans provide for a "soft, gentle rain," so also God "works all things together for good to them that love Him."<sup>199</sup>

And of these verses H.A. Ironside has written eloquently, "she [wisdom] gives what earthly stores often detract from: peace and quietness of soul. To thus find the true wisdom, is to feed on the tree of life. No happiness such as men in the flesh enjoy, is to be compared with this."<sup>200</sup>

So in the same manner that mankind pursues wealth and riches, the 'man of God' is to pursue and attempt to acquire 'wisdom.' And it is interesting that in verse 19 'wisdom' is declared as the means that God used to "lay the foundations of the earth, and set the heavens in place;" thus, 'wisdom' is equated to the thoughts of Christ. And how are thoughts expressed? By words. Thus with words of wisdom God created the heavens and the earth's. *God spoke and it was:* "God said, 'Light be!' And light was." And remarkably, wonderfully, this same *power/ words*, this omnipotence of God, is available to the man who pursues 'wisdom.'

### The Tree of Life

Proverbs 3:18 sets forth the "tree of life." And since this is a most interesting subject, and has definite connections to the concept of 'wisdom,'

<sup>198</sup>

Unger, Merrill F. *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*; vol. i, page 988.

<sup>199</sup>

*Ibid.*; pages 988-989.

<sup>200</sup>

Ironside, H.A. *Notes on the Book of Proverbs*; page 43.

the tree of life will now be discussed from a number of different viewpoints.

Proverbs 3:18 "She [Wisdom] is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, and happy are all who hold her."<sup>201</sup>

Hebrew mythology relates the following narration: "...and Jehoshua reported to Gamaliel as follows: 'Paradise has seven gates, each leading to the next. The First House, facing the entrance, holds converts who came to God of their own free will. Its walls are crystal, its beams cedar, and Obadiah the righteous prophet rules over it. The Second House is similarly built, and holds the penitents of Israel. Manasseh ben Hizkiyahu rules over it. The Third house is of silver and gold. There grows the Tree of Life, under whose shade sit Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the patriarchs of the twelve tribes, all those Israelites who went out of Egypt, and the whole generation of the Wilderness; also King David, his son Solomon as all the kings of Judah -- except Manasseh, who lies in Hell. Moses and Aaron guard this house, which contains fine silver vessels, costly oils, couches, stools, canopies, and candelabra of gold, pearls and precious stones."<sup>202</sup>

The phrase, tree of life, which is '*etz ha chayyim*, literally, "tree of lives," occurs in four distinct settings in Scripture: in the Garden of Eden; in Proverbs; in the apocryphal writings; and in the Book of Revelation. A summary of each is now offered:

The tree of life in the Garden, according to some interpretations, represents 'possibility,' i.e., the possibility of immortality or eternal life. And once sin occurred, immortality was denied fallen mankind. However, through God's gracious intervention, everlasting life has been give in another way.

In the Book of Proverbs, the "tree of life," is defined by some scholars to be a poetic simile used to picture tremendous blessings. And as portrayed in Proverbs the concept is much more than that of mere immortality; it is a "spiritual

<sup>201</sup>

As translated from the Hebrew by Robert Thieme.

<sup>202</sup>

Graves, Robert; Patai, Raphael. *Hebrew Myths*; page 72.

source of a full life, mental, moral and spiritual, which will potentially last forever. Life, long life, is here attributed to a certain possession or quality of mind and heart. Wisdom is a source and supply of life to man. Hence a man truly lives by reason of this relationship."<sup>203</sup>

In the apocryphal writings, the tree of life is almost always associated with ointments or sweet odors as of incense. Thus, the representation is totally distinct from other literature.

And in the Book of Revelation, the tree of life is depicted as everlasting life, an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ forever and ever. Here, then, the tree of life is presented as that which never fails, that which continues forever: the word of God, 'wisdom,' God Himself, and Jesus Christ who is the Living Word.

### The Orthodox Doctrine of the Tree of Life

According to Gen. 2:9 and 3:22, the tree of life represents perfect life and perfect environment as found in the original Garden of Eden, and it is indicative of a personal relationship with God. When man sinned, he was forbidden to re-enter the Garden and was excluded from the tree of life. And according to Rev. 2:7, 22:2,14, mankind will not again have contact with the tree of life until the eternal state.

Proverbs 3:18 equates the tree of life to 'wisdom.' And Proverbs 13:12 goes even further and equates the tree of life with human free-will. And Rev. 22:14, equates the tree of life with eternal, numinous joy. And according to Rev. 22:2, the tree of life, literally, will be forever in the New Jerusalem.

Gen. 2:9 reads, "Every tree being desirable to the sight, and those good for food, and the tree of life in the middle of the Garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." Here, then, four distinct trees are depicted:

1. "Those desirable to the sight." These trees were to provide delight to the soul through the instrument of the eyes. Therefore, this tree teaches that true happiness is found in the soul, not in circumstances or what is happening to one. If one's soul is happy, then happiness exists

<sup>203</sup>

*International Standard Bible Encyclopedia;* vol. iv, page 3009.

regardless of external realities. And the implication is that mankind was created to be consummately happy, and that this happiness is entirely dependent upon a relationship with God. Thus, mankind was created totally dependent.

2. "Those good for food." These trees provided physical sustenance and health. Mankind has a body, he is not just a spiritual being floating in space. Here, then is refreshment for the body, too.

3. "The tree of life." This tree is connected with that Who is Life and happiness -- God. And again, mankind was created to be happy, to be dependent upon God for this happiness, to receive pleasure for body, soul and spirit from God. The tree of life, then, was mankind's free-will choice to recognize that he was totally dependent upon God, and not upon self for happiness. Too, the tree of life represented God's divine, ineffable happiness.

Question: what would have happened if mankind had eaten of the tree of life after the Fall? Mankind would have had everlasting life -- but in sin. In other words, mankind would have been eternally immured in self for self. And what is eternal self for self? Hell. "Too late, we find ourselves alone with the self that we have so carefully crafted. What is this place where the self exists in isolation? It is the abode known as hell."<sup>204</sup> Thus, if mankind had partaken of eternal life after sin, *all* of mankind would have spent eternity in the Lake of Fire.<sup>205</sup>

God's infinite good and infinite happiness can have no intercourse with sinful selfishness and sinful disconnection from *Life*. Thus, mankind could not and cannot choose both: mankind cannot have eternal association with that which is *Life Itself*, God, and self for self, which is cutting oneself off from God. And what is one when one is cut off from *Life*? Dead. Spiritually dead, and dead in true happiness.

So God, being the infinite self for others, graciously excluded mankind from the Garden, so that mankind might make another choice for another tree of life: Jesus Christ. So another tree

<sup>204</sup>

Forbes, Stephanie. *Help Your Self*; page 59.

<sup>205</sup>

Thieme, Robert. *The Doctrine of the Tree of Life*; revised and altered by R.E. Radic.

was provided; and again, mankind must make a choice for life and happiness, or self and misery. For remember, mankind was created totally dependent upon God. Mankind is not independent. Mankind cannot find, shape, manufacture, create or mold his own happiness.

Thus the sins of the world were reserved for another tree: the Cross. Here is *life, life eternal and true happiness*.

4. "The tree of the knowledge of good and evil." In the Garden, in relationship with God and Life Itself, God again, mankind did not need the knowledge of good and evil to be happy or have life. "Good" is the infinite goodness, will, love and life of God; "evil" is the totally selfish system of thought devised by Satan, who would be God; thus, Satan is complete self for self selfishness. However, Satan came to the woman with The Lie: "You will be as God." That's why He doesn't want you to eat of the tree, He doesn't want you to be like Him. Thus, the first sin was not a moral sin; it was a *choice for self*, a choice to cut oneself off from *Life*, which is death.

When Eve chose for *her self*, she did so because she desired (was beguiled into desiring) to have everything in creation, including the Creator, revolve around her *self*. She thought that she would be free: free from anyone's authority over her, free from all restraints; she could worship her *self* in her new independence from God, and perhaps she might even allow God to worship her, too! And Adam, the poor sap, he KNEW exactly what he was doing when he joined Eve in sin. Additionally, his rebellion was that of a *new pseudo-idolatry*, that of loving and accepting and placing his confidence for happiness in his wife more than He did in God. And from that point on, mankind reasoned that their own ratiocinative powers and conclusions were more trustworthy than God and God's promises. And thus anger, hatred, bitterness and envy replaced love, joy and peace.<sup>206</sup>

Romans 1:25 describes the above choice: "They exchanged the truth of god for a lie, and

<sup>206</sup> Portions of the above dissertation on the 'Tree of Life' are based upon the works and scholarship of Archbishop M.

Smith and Robert Thieme. Revised and altered by R.E. Radic.

worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator..."

The possibility of the tree of life and eternal life was exchanged for spiritual death. For God *IS Life*, that is, all life has its source in Him and is from Him and is dependent upon Him; no creature invented his own life or sustains his own life. Thus to choose to turn from God is to choose to separate from *Life*, which is death. And this death is not ceasing to exist or to live, but a condition in which mankind's spiritual life is cut off from *the Life*. Thus, at the point of spiritual death mankind exists physically but has no purpose to his life, for the purpose to mankind's life, as he was created, is to have a relationship with God, but mankind cut himself, voluntarily, from that purpose. So now mankind has no meaning to life! And thus he now gropes frantically after one -- for life must have meaning!<sup>207</sup>

And the prophecy of another tree of life is first found in Gen. 3:15, which reads, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between you seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel." Here, then, is the Cross, for only on the Cross is the heel bruised as the feet are overlapped so that the nail might be driven through both. And naturally, the bottom heel is bruised against the wood as the hammer pounds home its steel sliver. Thus, Christ on the Cross is the tree of life, just as Christ as Jehovah Elohim was the tree of life in the Garden of Eden.

Proverbs 3:21-26 "My son, preserve sound judgment and discernment, do not let them out of your sight; they will be life for you, an ornament to grace your neck. Then you will go on your way in safety, and your foot will not stumble; when you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet. Have no fear of sudden disaster or of the ruin that overtakes the wicked, for the Lord will be your confidence and will keep your foot from being snared."

The Hebrew term for "you" in verse 22 is *wpn*, *nephesh*, which is defined as the "animating principle of the body," and thus, in such a context, may be rendered correctly, "life." And the Hebrew

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*

term for "life" in verse 22 is *chayyim*, which the author defines as "everlasting or eternal life," thus agreeing with M. Dahood's analysis based upon the Ugaritic. In fact, the author would go further and state that *chayyim* might also connote "purpose or meaning to that which is everlasting." Thus Prov. 3:22a might be translated: "They [judgment, discernment, 'wisdom'] will give meaning to your life [soul]." If, then, this notion and its application are not rejected, this verse almost echoes verse 18, in the sense that 'wisdom' from God is here definitively declared to provide meaning to the life of man. And this is crucial because the author maintains that all mankind is literally starved for two things: love and a meaning or purpose to life.

It is *fascinating* that mankind seeks meaning to his/her life, even, in many cases, a false meaning, but meaning nonetheless. Why? Because man *must have* purpose; without it he is empty inside, in his soul. The human soul craves love, too, even counterfeit love if the real thing cannot be found. And *fascinatingly*, remarkably, both meaning to life and unconditional love are only found in God and God's word, which is 'wisdom,' and these are the two *wants* that mankind discarded when he declared himself independent from God.

Independence, then, has its deficiencies in spite of the glamour which it spuriously presents. The implication of independence from God is this: "that the person involved is of such Jovian potency that all difficulties dwindle to contemptible triviality."<sup>208</sup> Yet the reality is stark: mankind cannot obtain the love he requires nor the meaning to life. And this craving for love and purpose is so cogent within mankind that it injects a peculiar quality of susceptibility, a fervor, indeed an urgency. This is "the tragic pavanne to which all step"<sup>209</sup> if they do not have God, 'wisdom,' or God's infinite, unconditional love. And perhaps, sadly, this explains that most trivial of human activities: fun. Through fun mankind seeks meaning and purpose.

Verse 23 through 25 state that 'wisdom' provides safety from sudden disasters, fear of the unknown,

<sup>208</sup> Source unknown.

<sup>209</sup> Source unknown.

the malicious onslaught of evil men, and sleep free from dread. And although these protections are being quickly cited they are *real*, and are not to be discounted as secondary in any sense. For they are the *real fulfillment* of Romans 8:38, "God working all things together for good to them that love Him."

Indeed, verse 26 states that God Himself, *Yahweh*, is the advocate, the guarantor of this "confidence." And the Hebrew noun for "confidence" is *kesel*, which is "confidence and hope related to trust in God."<sup>210</sup> In Lev. 3:4,10,15, and Psalm 38:7, *kesel* is translated "flanks;" thus, this is confidence in the strength of God rather than in one's own strength. God will, without fail, utilize His strength, His omnipotence, to guard those that guard 'wisdom' in their souls.

The Book of Job speaks of the folly of trusting in one's own strength, and then declares the truth: The folly: "His confidence shall worthless prove to him; and that on which he trusts, a spider's web." The reality: "But upright men God never casts away; nor takes He by the hand the evil doers. [Then wait]; and He'll thy mouth with laughter fill, and also fill thy lips with shouts of joy. [While] they who hate thee shall be clothed with shame, and tents of wicked men seen no more."<sup>211</sup> (Job 8:14,20,21,22)

Proverbs 3:27-35 declare "the duty of the Wise Man."<sup>212</sup> However, these are not 'duties' per se; they are more, they are the natural results of inculcated 'wisdom.' They are the natural desire or *response* to that which resides within one's soul. For if one has received the unconditional love of God, can one do less than dispense that same type of love to others? In other words, if self for self is no longer the dynamic within one's life, then self for others is the new dynamic -- the result of *agape love*. Thus the following verses are the statement of treating others *in love*, and thus one does not

<sup>210</sup> Harris, Archer, Waltke, Eds. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*; vol. i, page 450.

<sup>211</sup> Bullinger, E.W. *The Book of Job*; pages 81-82. The above translation from the Hebrew was accomplished by E.W.

Bullinger.

<sup>212</sup> Unger, Merrill F. *Ibid.*; page 989.

'do' it from a sense of duty, but actually receives enjoyment from such actions toward others. Here, then, is the empowering presence of God, the reality of *agape love*, and not the feeble-mindedness of the mystical-Gnostic statement "that every human thought disturbs the psychic parasphere."<sup>213</sup>

Proverbs 3:27-28 "Do not withhold good from those who deserve it, when it is in your power to act. Do not say to your neighbor, 'Come back later; I'll give it tomorrow'-- when you now have it with you."

These two verses are practical as well as spiritual, that is, practically, money owed is to be repaid; but also, material assistance and spiritual assistance are not to be withheld when the power to aid exists. This is the law of love as found in Lev. 19:18 and Romans 13:8: "Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord." "Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellow man has fulfilled the law." And Romans 13:7 adds the following: "Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor." Furthermore, Gal. 6:10, states, "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers." James 2:15-16 summarizes the pragmatic side of love: "Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, 'Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,' but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it?"

The Hebrew word for "good" is the noun *tob*, which is "intrinsic good," or "that which is absolute in nature; God's goodness." Thus, the term might even be translated that which is "beautiful" in an absolute sense. Put simply, it is the will of God; but it is more than simple, for it contains the perfect Righteousness, the perfect Justice, and the infinite Love of God. It is that which is infinitely opposed to selfishness, the infinite Good of God. It is, then, the self for others Love that was demonstrated by Christ on the Cross. And in that sense it is supernatural, and cannot be

accomplished by man's own power or efforts; it must be done in and through the empowering presence of God.

Therefore, this is *agape love* manifested toward others; this is *agape love* being acted out, this is love as a response to the love one has received from God. This is true compassion toward one's fellow man. In a word, it is 'lovingkindness.'

Proverbs 3:29 "Do not plot harm against your neighbor, who lives trustfully near you."

The Hebrew term for "harm" is the adjective *ra'a*, which can mean "bad, evil, ill-treatment, malice, or distress," and the word carries the idea of "consuming or feeding upon." Thus the injunction is not to devour one's neighbor by evil or mean acts; and the word is diametrically opposed to *tob*, or absolute, intrinsic good. It is, then, that which is not 'good' according to the absolute standard of God's Holiness and His *agape-love*. For if one truly loves one's neighbor, then one will not cause misery to him.

Proverbs 3:2 and 3:16 both directly state that "long life" is one of the results of 'wisdom;' additionally, verses 3:18 and 3:22 indirectly imply long life to the one who gains and guards 'wisdom.' Thus the concept of *time* is thereby being considered; and *time* from God' viewpoint and the believer's viewpoint is a fascinating subject for it affects mankind's *modus vivendi*, *modus operandi*, indeed, mankind's very thinking processes. Therefore, because of *time's* impact upon mankind's thinking, which is at once connected to 'wisdom' or 'evil,' this subject will now be discussed.

Lamentations 3:17ff., reads, "I have been deprived of peace; I have forgotten what prosperity is. So I say, 'My splendor is gone and all that I had hoped from the Lord.' I remember my affliction and my wandering, and the bitterness and the gall. I remember them, and my soul is downcast within me. Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope. Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, 'The Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait for him.'"

And in verse 22 the Hebrew word that is translated "love" in the NIV translation, is *chesed*,

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This quote was taken from the writings of Jack Vance, however, the source was not noted.

which means "lovingkindness(es)," for the noun is in the plural form.

'Here, then, is Jeremiah, the author of Lamentations, declaring that he could not be in a worse situation; he is in despair, he is broken, he is bereft, he has lost all hope, even his hope in God. When suddenly, he says, I remembered something: the Lord's lovingkindnesses never cease, His compassions never fail; they are new every morning. Thus, the compassion of God is "new every morning."

"New every morning;" let roll off the tongue. And let it take on the concept of time and life, and again let it roll off the tongue. For as we sit here, it is a fact that some of us are hurting and have troubles. But we sit looking pious and religious, and we look spiritual; but honestly, we all have our Christian masks on to make sure that no one really sees what is going on. We have perfected the art of saying, "praise the Lord," even though we are bleeding on the inside. You know: "How are you, brother?" "Fine, fine; praise God." But we just kicked the dog, yelled at the kids, and felt like punching our wives as we left for church. People hurt; indeed, some people are in such pain that they can hardly reach down to touch it. They face disappointment; they can't get it all together; they feel that the bottom has fallen out of their world; people who are lonely. Have you ever felt that feeling -- real, tangible loneliness? Have you ever felt like you were wrapped in Saran Wrap? People can see in, and you can see out, but you can't touch anyone? You're alone! Have you ever felt like you don't belong, like you're not part of the human race? You can be in a crowded room, but you somehow feel like you don't belong? Some people are afraid of the future for they have no idea what is going to happen. People want to be loved, want to be accepted, but feel too guilty; they are so ashamed of who they are and of their past, that no one could ever love them if the truth were known. And these people are believers in Jesus Christ.

But isn't everything rosy when you come to Christ? In fact, no. Coming to Christ is the beginning of a journey, it is not the end of everything. And here in Lamentations is one of the keys of 'wisdom,' the key to life.

For Lamentations is the story of Jeremiah's announcing the end of the old covenant, of God's divorcing of the Israelites. But Jeremiah could not just announce it; for he was part of Israel, and it was his story too. And when the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem, Jeremiah was left, and around him were smoking ruins. The end of a dream, the end of a life. And Jeremiah sat in despair. Utter desolation of soul; vain regrets hung in the air like smoke. He had only "bitterness and gall." And then he remembered: the lovingkindnesses of God, the compassions of God are "brand new every morning." They are custom made for each new day.

And this was the beginning of Jeremiah's personal revival.

"New every morning." Let it roll off the tongue; say it slowly. They are brand new every morning; not a midnight, not at lunch time, but every morning. And did you know that God created "days." Have you ever tried to imagine what could have been, what might have been? What isn't? Can you imagine life without morning and evening? It was God that invented days, nights, seasons, etc. And this happened on the fourth day of creation. God made it; it is a principle. God created days, and weeks, and years so that you could be you. So time comes in packets. Time is not just *is*; it is an *is* in packets of twenty-four hours. God placed time in packets. And this is how things work.

When God created, He did so in 24 hours packets. And every day was a new revelation of what God was. "Let there be light!" I didn't know He could do that! And having done it, that was it for that day. And by the last day, you stand there with your mouth open, "I never knew God was like that!" But God did it that way so that it established the way life would work. Six days you labor, the seventh day you rest. And notice that He didn't just say, "well, work for a while, then rest." No. Six days! One, two, three, four, five, six. 24, 24, 24, 24, 24, 24 hours, followed by the seventh. And if you don't get it, you don't function. Every seventh month had special feasts; every seventh year was fiesta year -- no work that year! God will take care of that year. And every 50th year is the year of Jubilee -- no work for a year, slaves set free, etc.



This was part of Creation. This is the way we are made. Jesus was in the tomb three DAYS, not just for a while. And the day He rose was Sunday! And when He rose, God didn't just pour out the Spirit; Jesus hung around for 40 days, not 38, not 41, 40! And then He said, "wait for ten more." And on the 50th day, the Holy Spirit came -- the Day of Pentecost.

If you don't live in the packets of time, the 24 hours, you won't function. Mankind was created by God to live day by day by day, in bite-sized segments. Just like tea bags, there is just enough tea in the bag to handle one cup of water. No more, no less. So with life; it comes to mankind in bags, in pouches, in packets. Just enough grace, just enough lovingkindness from God to handle one packet. And it comes "every morning." And it is perfect. We put the bag of today into the cup of God's grace. Thus mankind is created, spiritually, to function in life in the packet of a day. And unless one learns to live in these packets, one falls apart. This is the way we were created. This is not just some happenstance.

Jesus thought this way. For recall that when discussing the raising of Lazarus, He said that there are 12 hours in a day, meaning that He had 12 hours to work, and 12 hours to rest and come to rest. And then He said, "Do not be anxious for tomorrow; tomorrow will care for itself." Irresponsible? No, He knew that we live day by day. You don't drag one day into another.

Or take for example the Lord's Prayer: "Thy will be done." Now, now, now! But so many believers think of the will of God as being in the future, some great destiny that awaits us. We seek the will of God; we walk on the stage of life and the world applauds: he's in the will of God! But the will of God is NOW!

Or the story of the Israelites in the desert: they received and had beheld the power of God as they were delivered. But in the wilderness they ran out of food. And all of a sudden it was very personal. They were not watching a plague of frogs, which can be kind of fun. This is very real, there is no food on the table! They are face to face with their impotence. Utter helplessness. The result: manna, bread from heaven. And the manna was given morning by morning. You couldn't take enough for tomorrow or it turned to worms. So

every night they went to bed with no more food left -- no breakfast. They had to sleep trusting God. And the next morning there was the white stuff, called manna, which means "what on earth is it?" And that's what they called it.

Why didn't God give them a month's worth, or a year's worth? Why not? Because that's the way God works. Enough for today. This is our dependence upon God.

Or recall Jehoshaphat; he had nothing but a few old men, women and children to fight the allied armies of his enemies. And the combined armies arrived to wipe him out; it was, in effect, *apocalypse now!* And what happened? First, Jehoshaphat prayed; then a word came from God that said don't worry the battle is the Lord's; and they were just preparing to go out to fight when God said, Go to bed. Go to bed!? Yes. God said, "Tomorrow, go, and stand and see the salvation of the Lord on your behalf." Why tomorrow? Because today's packet had been used; today's packet was a packet of grace to take away their fears; today's packet provided grace which produced faith and expectancy in what God would do; and today's packet was preparing the enemies for God's victory, but they were not ready to be wiped out yet. For God had not yet placed them correctly. So go to bed, go to bed. And the snores of Jerusalem gave glory to God as they slept.

And the next day, "they arose." And there was grace in that morning that brought action and victory. "New every morning." A new packet of lovingkindness and time was provided for that day.

**Proverbs 3:30 "Do not accuse a man for no reason -- when he has done you no harm."**

This verse precludes unjustified disputes and frivolous lawsuits. And the Hebrew word for "accuse" is the qal imperfect of the verb, *rib*, which is defined as both "verbal combat, i.e. to quarrel, to chide one another, and by another easy transition it takes on a legal-judicial significance." This, then, is forgiveness in every sense of the word.

**Proverbs 3:31-35 "Do not envy a violent man or choose any of his ways, for the Lord detests a perverse man but takes the upright into his**

**confidence. The Lord's curse is on the house of the wicked, but he blesses the home of the righteous. He mocks proud mockers but gives grace to the humble. The wise inherit honor, but fools he holds up to shame."**

The wise man is not to imitate the lifestyle of the violent man, because the "perverse man" is an "abomination to the Lord," according to Prov. 11:20. Moreover, God's "familiar intimacy," or *sod*, which could be translate "secret," is with the wise man. And 'envy' is the foundation of these verses; mankind covets what others have and they have not, even when what they have has been obtained by crime or evil means. Shakespeare described this type of envy:

"And look upon myself and curse my fate,  
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,  
Featured like him, like him with friends possess'd,  
Desiring this man's art, and that man's scope,  
With what I most enjoy contented least." [Sonnet 29]

### Envy

The Hebrew word for 'envy' in Prov. 3:31 is the piel imperfect form of the verb *qana'*, which is defined as "a very strong emotion whereby some quality or possession of the object is desired by the subject. It may prove helpful to think of 'zeal' as the original sense from which derived the notions 'zeal for another's property = 'envy' and 'zeal for one's own property = 'jealousy.' It expresses the feeling which barren Rachel had toward prolific Leah (Gen. 30:1). Joseph's brothers were similarly related to him after his fateful dream (Gen. 37:11). Edom's deep jealousy of Israel's favor before God accompanied anger and hatred (Eze 35:11). So, this root does not express superficial emotion. So the word is used to denote a passionate, consuming 'zeal.'"

I Samuel 26:21 records some of the final words of Saul ben Kish, to David: "Then Saul said, 'I have sinned. Come back, David my son. Because you considered my life precious today, I will not try to harm you again. Surely I have acted like a fool and have erred greatly.'"

So when Saul summed up his life, he did so with the words, "I have acted like a fool."

Whereas in II Samuel 23:1ff., David summed up his life: "These are the last words of David: 'The oracle of David son of Jesse, the oracle of the man exalted by the Most High, the man anointed by the God of Jacob, Israel's singer of songs: The Spirit of the Lord spoke through me; his word was on my tongue. The God of Israel spoke, the Rock of Israel said to me: When one rules over men in righteousness, when he rules in the fear of God, he is like the lift of morning at sunrise on a cloudless morning, like the brightness after rain that brings the grass from the earth. Is not my house right with God? Has he not made with me an everlasting covenant, arranged and secured in every part? Will he not bring to fruition my salvation and grant me my every desire?'"

David stated that "he ruled righteously," and that he was "like the light of morning at sunrise." David stated that he was radiant, that his life had meaning. Quite a difference from the words and life of Saul.

Saul chose, very deliberately, to destroy the life of David; the result? He destroyed himself. David, on the other hand, chose to forgive Saul; the result? He lived with a radiance like the dawn of a new day. How did this happen?

David learned how to become a Man of God; Saul learned how to destroy himself. Saul did not become Saul by accident; he worked at it. Saul's besetting sin was *envy*.

The seed of Saul's destruction was based upon a choice. When Saul heard the words, "Saul has slain his thousands, David has slain his ten thousands," -- he made a choice for envy. So if one wants to know what self-destruction feels like as it enters one's soul, place yourself in Saul's boots as he stood at the window and heard the people sing the praises of David. At this point in time, then, the hideous desire to kill David entered into him. For Saul felt hurt, he felt slighted; this was not right! They should not be praising David; don't they know who I am? The spotlight should be on me, not on David. He has no right to more attention than the king, than me! They like him more than they like me. I want to be liked like that!

The seed was planted in Saul's heart; the flower from that seed had two petals: at the end of his life, Saul visited a witch at Endor; and from there,

Saul went onto the battlefield and, when all was lost, he committed suicide. And envy was the seed.

Envy was the seed, suicide was the flower. At that window, hatred for David became Saul's ruling passion. Scripture says, "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath." Saul, rather than forgiving, nursed the envy in his soul. Saul said to himself, "Poor me." And he meant it; he felt sorry for himself. For whenever one is envious of another, that person haunts us. David haunted Saul. Saul so hated David that Saul could not live -- for David kept getting in the way. Saul kept banging into David in his mind; for the one we hate dominates us; and the dominated one lives in a prison of his own making.

Remember how you used to like a certain color -- it looked good on you. Until she began to wear the same color. And now you wouldn't be caught dead in that color. Or the mention of a certain name sets you off -- your lips go tight, you grow pale, you go for your gun. Just like Saul sitting at the table with his son, Jonathan. Jonathan brought up the name of David, and what happened? Saul went berserk, cursed at his wife, threw a javelin at Jonathan! Hatred makes one irrational; one is no longer able to evaluate life and circumstances. Everything passes through the prism of envy and becomes hatred as it comes out the other side.

Saul began to interpret all of life through David. So when Jonathan entered into covenant with David, Saul assumed that David and Jonathan were conspiring against him. And Saul murdered all the priests; for Saul assumed that old Ahimelech had also conspired with David to destroy Saul.

Have you ever felt this way? Someone you are envious of, and thus hate, enters the room and stops to talk with someone else, and immediately you assume that they are talking about you?! Right? It all passes through the hideous grid of envy that surrounds our minds. We become suspicious! We become irrational! Saul could not see two people getting together without immediately suspecting that they were conspiring with David against him. And when other people did not agree with his suspicions, Saul then accused them of conspiracy, too!

Thus, envy produces certain behavior patterns; and Saul was a classic example of what happens to an envious person. Scripture says, "He who hates his brother lives in darkness." [I John] Thus, John is stating that envy and hatred are unique from other sins: the sin of *un-love*, or *self for self*, which here is *envy* and its resultant *hatred*, causes inner blindness [soul darkness], and the results are just like those of a physically blind person: tripping and stumbling over everything.

Saul, then, was filtering his life through the darkness of his hatred for David. David's destruction became Saul's obsession. And Saul involved all of Israel in his obsession; the entire army was used to pursue David. And Saul spent his entire life trying to recruit others to his hatred for David. All of Saul's brilliance and creativity were channeled to the destruction of David.

Has anyone ever come to you and confessed that they have hated you? And you didn't even know about it? This is the tragedy of hatred and envy: Saul took all the physical power, all the spiritual power, and all the mental power of an entire lifetime (and life), and poured it all out to one end: kill David. No wonder that in the end Saul said, "I have played the fool."

Remember that our Lord said, "That he who hates his brother is guilty of murder." In other words, envy and hatred are the embryo of murder. That is, the feelings of hatred and envy, if they continue their course, will end in murder.

What is envy? Envy, simply put, means that one wishes the envied person dead: "I wish they were dead." For if they weren't here, then I would be there where they are. Envy's ultimate goal is to remove the other person. So the heart of envy is murder.

Many times, then, we get it all backwards. We condemn the sins of the flesh; but the sins of the spirit are condoned, or at least tolerated. You know, I don't smoke, I don't drink, I don't chase wild women -- but I am full of bitterness, envy, hatred and potential murder.

Do you know why some people don't sin? Because it's not convenient. We can't do it, so we condemn it. Or we envy those who do it, so we condemn it. If my name was Saul ben Kish, and I sat with a javelin in my hand, and if I knew that no

one would condemn me if I killed him. ....would I do it?

And Saul had no restraints. He was the king; he had total power; no one would stop him. He did what others would do if they could. Why? Because of anger. What is anger? Anger is me considering myself the judge of all men. And I will now judge you; and seeing that I do not have the power to execute my judgment, I will instead do it with words. Scripture says, "Judge not that you be not judged." Many times, this is interpreted to mean that I have no right to judge if a person is a Christian or not. However, Christ never said, "Be stupid." For He also said, "You shall know a tree by its fruit." Thus, of course one knows the difference between the saved and the unsaved. Then to what was our Lord referring? He was speaking of 'anger' and its condemnation by words.

Saul said, "I am David's judge. And I don't like him. He should be removed." And the result? Saul became physically haggard, weary; emotionally drained, angry at the world; he was sullen, joyless; he would sit staring into space for hours. In short, he was depressed. Thus, *some types of depression are caused by sin. Some!* Not all. Thus, some depressions can only be solved by repentance. For his real problem was this: "Saul has slain his thousands, David has slain his ten thousands."

Saul made choices, choices, choices, and spiraled down into a black hell of his own making. Saul was like a shark following the scent of blood; and like an injured shark who begins to eat itself, Saul began to feed on his own hurt. And the end result? He destroyed himself, literally; he committed suicide.

David was the object of Saul's hatred. How did David handle this? David believed that God was the ultimate judge of all men, and that judge would do right. Therefore, David never lost his temper with Saul nor did he pursue his anger with Saul. David refused to become Saul's judge. Now David recognized that Saul was wrong, but he refused to execute judgment upon Saul. God is all knowing and all powerful -- He is the perfect Witness; He is His own witness. And His power is well able to pronounce and execute judgment.

Thus, David said, "I need do nothing; Saul will be judged by God."

Saul was unquestionably wrong; and David was unquestionably right: David was framed and pursued for being right. And remember that the people adored David; he could have easily led a revolt.

Indeed, the name "David," means "beloved, the darling, the favorite." And some scholars maintain that the name "David" was David's nickname, his real name perhaps being "Elhanan," which means "God has been gracious." This ostensible reference is found in II Sam. 21:19 and I Chronicles 20:5. Some scholars maintain that the text here is corrupt, and that the passage should read "who slew the brother of Goliath of Gath," rather than "who slew Goliath of Gath." In any event, the essence is this: that David could have incited rebellion without fault.

In fact, no Israelite would have condemned David for killing Saul. But what did David do? He did not condone what Saul was doing, i.e., David did not pretend that Saul was not doing evil. Instead, David asked of God justice; yet David refused to take the administration of that justice into his own hands. David lifted Saul up to God. And David continually committed what was happening to him to God, so that David fulfilled the words: "do not let the sun go down on your wrath."

David always crystallized his depression, his fears, his worries into Psalms to God; he told God how he felt, and then left it to God. Thus, just like Christ on the Cross, David did not retaliate: "When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly." [I Peter 2:23] Moreover, I Peter 2:21 states, "To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps." And the Greek word *hupogrammos* is translated "example;" and this word is extracted from the schools of the ancient world, where a child learned to write by copying under the lettering of the teacher, or an "example." Thus the way Jesus forgave is the example for every believer to copy, just as in the classroom.

Even Jesus, who was God Himself, in His humanity, did not have fantasies of destruction or *dream* of getting even. Instead, in His humanity,

Christ “entrusted” Himself to Him Who judges righteously. And the word “entrusted” means to place something that one owns into the hands of another to manage on their behalf. Thus, Jesus turned over all the hurts and sufferings to His Father, leaving the Father to manage them, realizing that He is the only true judge.

And when thus viewed, it is perceived that forgiving another person involves much more than deciding to forget the past. It is, in fact, at the heart of our faith in God. For to forgive is to comprehend that we do not have the requisite omniscience that is necessary to truly judge, nor do we have the love, grace and mercy to temper justice. Thus, forgiving another human being is an act of faith in God, that He is God, and that only He has all the capabilities to truly and fairly judge.

If, like king Saul, I am envious and seek revenge, then I don't just say, “an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.” [Matt. 5:38] Rather, I demand the whole mouth in revenge for one tooth hurt; if it were left to me to judge, the whole world would be blind. And this was what Saul did. David had indirectly hurt Saul because David was the subject of a song that compared him with Saul; for this oblique hurt Saul demanded that David die! Saul, then, in effect, traveled from envy to attempted murder, from necromancy to suicide, over the lyrics of a song sung by women.

Recall Peter's question in Matt. 18:21, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?” This sounds like a spiritually mature believer speaking, someone who will forgive as many as seven times over. And that's not bad, for before I became a believer and understood grace and love, I had never seriously considered forgiving anyone even once. However, Christ was speaking of God's kind of love, of *agape-love*. Thus, Peter's approach was like the Pharisee who said, “Tell me the law, and whatever it is I will do my duty and keep it.” This is like the man who asked how many times a week he must kiss his wife or hug his children. Peter was trying to reduce *love* to a formula that he could check mathematically.

What was Jesus' response? It was and still is, shocking to the natural, logical mind of mankind: “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.” And I suspect that our Lord

smiled as he said this to Peter. Thus, He said, “Not seven, but if you are looking for a number for your formula, try 490!” And this number, 490, is an oblique reference to Lamech in Genesis 4:24, where Lamech boasted that he would avenge himself on his enemies 490 times. Thus, Christ was expressing God's love in parallel terms, terms that even the unbelieving, revenge-seeking man can understand. Christ was saying that there is no limit -- for who is going to count 490 acts of forgiveness!? Think of all the notebooks you would have to carry with you everywhere you went. You'd need three or four *Kenworths* following you around. Additionally, the numbers 7 and 10 are the numbers of completion and perfection in Scripture. Thus, Christ was saying that Peter was to forgive as completely as does God, whose love is perfect and unconditional.

Recall when David entered the camp of Saul and found Abner, the captain of the guard, asleep; and David and one of his 'mighty men stood above the sleeping Saul. And beside Saul lay his spear and water jug. And David's captain asked for permission to strike “but once.” But David said, “No, it is not ours; we are not the judge of men.” This is the reverse of losing one's temper. Then David took the spear and the water jug and left the camp, waiting at the top of the hill. And Saul, when he realized that David had had the opportunity to kill him and did not, uttered his famous words, “I have played the fool.”

Once one gives judgment into the hands of God, then one can 'outlove' the other person. For if one is busy executing judgment, one cannot love at the same time. For only God can be *just* and *love* simultaneously.

And never forget that David cried many tears because of the evil of Saul; yet he never chose to retaliate. Additionally, remember that a sword in the hand is only the steel extension of words in the lips. One can destroy with words just as surely, perhaps even better, than one can destroy with a sword or bullets -- because the one you are destroying is alive to watch themselves die. I can use words to execute people!

This does not mean that David did not *feel* like taking revenge upon Saul, or killing him. But David *CHOSE* to do what he did and act the way he did. Behind David's choice was a philosophy:

“A patient man has great understanding, but a quick-tempered man displays folly.” [Proverbs 14:29] “A man’s wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offense.” [Proverbs 19:11] “Like a city whose walls are broken down is a man who lacks self-control.” [Proverbs 25:28] “A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control.” [Proverbs 29:11]

The Bible, then, says that you are a fool if you let your temper out; whereas, the psychiatrist who says it is dangerous to hold it in, is wrong. I can hold it in if I choose to do so, and without damage to my soul and spirit. I am not an animal that merely reacts to life, I am a person made in the image of God, a self-determining actor, not a reactor. David, then, must have forgiven 70 times 7 where Saul was concerned.

In fact, when Saul and Jonathan died, David composed one of the most beautiful poems ever written, II Samuel 1:19-27. These are real words, real feelings. David did not have grilled Saul for dinner every night; he did not discuss Saul with everyone at every opportunity. David’s view of life was God-ward; and this, too, was a *choice*. David chose not to live in self-pity.

The result? The unbounding joy that one reads of in the Psalms. Whereas Saul sat staring into space

in a deep depression, mumbling, “I’m right...I’m right.” Thus, by forgiving, David became increasingly a real, solid, man. Saul, by his bitterness, hate and unforgiveness, gradually disintegrated as a man; he became a shadow of a man; Saul crumbled away; he smelled of a decaying soul. For every word he spoke was tainted with unforgiveness and hate, the results of envy.

Saul’s epitaph was spoken by himself: “I have played the fool.” Two men, then, who arrived at their end by *choices*, by very costly choices. One chose self-destruction, the other chose forgiveness.

And remember that one of the titles of Jesus was “the Son of David.” David was the first Lion of the Tribe of Judah. Jesus was the last Lion of the Tribe of Judah. In David, we have a faint reflection of Jesus on the Cross, when He said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” And we, too, are the descendants of David, for we are *in Christ*; thus, we should walk through life ‘forgiving.’ We pass the judgment back to God. For what is the alternative? Envy, hatred, self-destruction, just like Saul.