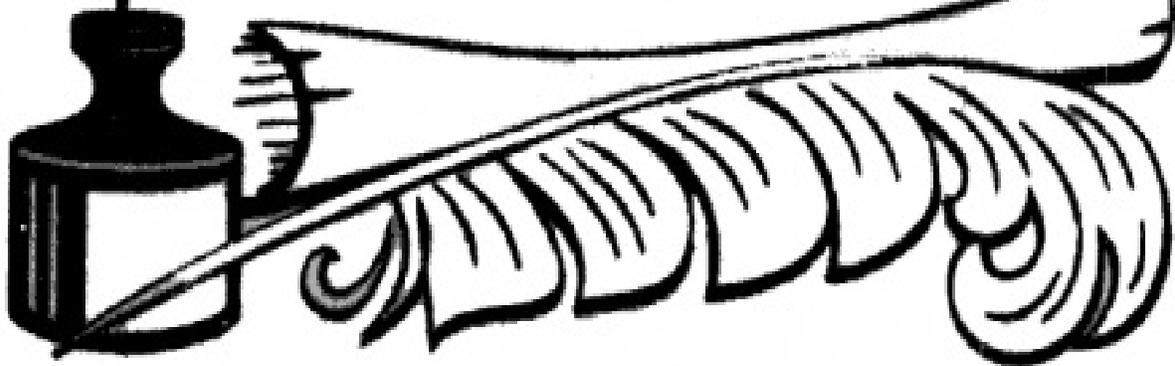


THE TRUTH CONCERNING

- The Old Testament Ordinances
- The New Testament Ordinances
- The Two Resurrections – Physical & Spiritual
- The Final Judgment

Earl R. Borders



The Truth Concerning:

The Old Testament Ordinances

The New Testament Ordinances

The Two Resurrections – Physical & Spiritual

The Final Judgment

by Earl R. Borders

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Foreword

Before you is a book we have entitled *The Truth Concerning: The Old Testament Ordinances, The New Testament Ordinances, the Two Resurrections—Physical & Spiritual—and the Final Judgment*. At first glance it might appear that this is a strange array of subjects to consider together. However, there is a commonality that unites these truths. Each has been subjected to what I term "hyper-spiritualization." This means truths or topics that when properly studied, "being rightly divided" (2 Timothy 2:15), that have a physical or literal aspect to them, are having any physical aspect totally discounted and denied and purely viewed and taught through being hyper-spiritualized. While I do not discount that there are spiritual realities underlying these Biblical truths, it is errant to take these applications to the extremes that they eliminate clear Bible truths.

One of the more pronounced of these errant teachings is what is commonly known as "The Anti-Ordinance Doctrine." Throughout the years, I have seen this teaching unseat pastors, split congregations, and pull whole congregations out of fellowship with the truth. This is very sad, my brethren! A number of years ago, I was holding a revival meeting in a certain place and had one proponent of this doctrine jump up and disrupt the service twice while I was preaching. Unfortunately, I had to rebuke him twice. The spirit that promotes this teaching is not "easy to be intreated" (James 3:17). One must remember that behind every false teaching is "the spirit of error" (1 John 4:6) and many times there is also a spirit of preeminence or arrogance as well. In the first century, the Apostle John and the brethren were laboring against the heresy of Gnosticism and antinomianism. I will not digress into describing the errors of those teachings, but it produced an arrogance in its adherents. They considered themselves to be the spiritually elite. My observation of some who adhere to and propound the anti-ordinance position, or hyperspiritualization, is that the spirit back of it produces this same attitude; an arrogance and feeling that they are a spiritually elite and have a superior knowledge and understanding. This certainly flies in the face of the many Biblical injunctions to humility and "in honour preferring one another" (Romans 12:10).

Over the years, I have seen good brethren who were caught up with this teaching and adamant proponents of it see the error of this teaching and denounce it. For this I am very thankful! One dear brother who did so is greatly gifted and being used of God in a mighty way.

My burden is not to "wrestle ... against flesh and blood" (Ephesians 6:12). I am not laboring against, nor intending to demean any individual who may hold to these positions, but rather my burden is to set forth a clear exposition of those Scripture texts that are commonly used to supposedly support these fallacious teachings. I trust that an honest exposition of the various Scriptural passages will enable those entangled in this falsity to recover themselves out of the snare of the devil" (2 Timothy 2:26).

It is with a burden and heart "set for the defence of the gospel" (Philippians 1:17) that I present this book to you. May God use it to enable "The eyes of your understanding [to be] enlightened" (Ephesians 1:18).

Brother Earl R. Borders
Newark, Ohio

Introduction

Some may question, "Why is it important to study the doctrines of God's eternal Word?" One reason is because the Scriptures set forth an injunction to do so (2 Timothy 2:15). Also, because the Apostle Paul wrote to the minister Titus, in Titus 2:1, saying, "But speak thou the things which become sound [in the Greek this actually means 'healthy or wholesome'] doctrine." Our spiritual experience will only be as healthy and wholesome as the doctrines that we adhere to. Doctrines are what formulate our belief system. What we think and believe is crucial. Proverbs 23:7 says, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he." If our thinking is wrong, then our belief system is incorrect, and it will affect the health and wholesomeness of our experience.

The Apostle Peter warned in 2 Peter 3:15-17 that because some Scriptures do not lend themselves to easy understanding ("hard to be understood"), because the truth of them does not necessarily lie on the surface, people "wrest," or twist those Scriptures "unto their own destruction." When those falsities are propagated to others, then others fall into the "error of the wicked." The error is for Scriptures and teachings to be wrested and twisted to the place where the truth of them is not being set forth. Thus, ones do not believe correctly and as a result act incorrectly. This is why doctrine is vital.

We read in Isaiah 28:7-9: "But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, [Just as these ones erred through literal wine, if we are not cautious, we can err by partaking of Babylon's wine, or her teachings. Just as wine dulls sensibilities, slows perceptions, and reduces inhibitions, Babylon's wine has the same effect on people, spiritually speaking.] they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment [all this is fulfilled in spiritual Babylon yet today]. For all tables are full of vomit, and filthiness, so that there is no place clean. Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine [an understanding of doctrine can prevent us from being under the influence of things that hinder us from walking straight]? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts [or those who begin to mature in their experience]." A saint starts as a babe in Christ, but he or she cannot stay a babe. One may start on milk but cannot stay on milk. To grow and develop requires meat. The meat, or doctrine, is necessary to prevent ones from coming under the influence of false teachings, false doctrines, and false thoughts that impact lives and practices.

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CHAPTER ONE

The Old Testament Ordinances - Part One

Colossians 2:13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

15 And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:

17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.

Hebrews 9:7 But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people:

8 The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing:

9 Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;

10 Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.

Some Fundamental Biblical Principles

There is one expression employed that unites our Scripture texts. The commonality is found in these verses of these two passages (Colossians 2:14 and Hebrews 9:10), and it is the consideration of the Old Testament "ordinances." Sadly, there are those who are confused concerning the proper place and practice of New Testament ordinances, and many use the Scriptures of our text to decry the practice of New Testament ordinances. As we begin this study, there are some fundamental Biblical principles of which we must ever be reminded. First and foremost, God never sent His Word to be a source of confusion (1 Corinthians 14:33). Whenever confusion enters into the equation, it is because there is "another spirit" working, attempting to produce "another gospel" (2 Corinthians 11:4). There is only one true Gospel. When Christ commenced His public ministry, we read in Matthew 4:23 that He "went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom." There is just one Gospel. It is exclusive.

When one begins to "pervert the gospel of Christ" (Galatians 1:7), it is because there is "another spirit" at work. This is why we are admonished in 2 Timothy 2:15, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." The expression "rightly dividing" means "lay it straight, cut it straight." Isaiah 28:17 states, "Judgment also will I lay to the line [so that it can be straight and clear], and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail [solid doctrine, solid truth] shall sweep away the refuge of lies" Truth will reveal and expose falsities. There is a harmony and scheme to the Scriptures, and when we rightly divide the Word of Truth, we will find that the Scriptures are complementary, not contradictory.

In our text (Colossians 2:14), the Apostle Paul proclaimed that the redemptive work of Christ blotted out the "ordinances that was against us ... nailing it to his cross." There are some who would advocate that all the ordinances have been taken out of the way by being nailed to His Cross. However, we must pause, consider, and examine these words. We must recognize that "Every word of God is pure" (Proverbs 30:5). There is divine design, intent, and importance behind every word incorporated in the sacred Scriptures. That is why we are exhorted to study.

Let us consider, if all the ordinances were taken out of the way, why would the same Apostle Paul, penning under divine inspiration, admonish in 1 Corinthians 11:2 to "keep the ordinances"? The same truth is reiterated in 2 Thessalonians 2:15, which states, "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions [the same Greek word translated as 'ordinances' in 1 Corinthians 11:2] which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle." This is an example of how if we do not study and rightly divide, the Word becomes apparently contradictory. To reconcile such a supposed disparity, let us look closer at the words employed in 1 Corinthians. Keep in mind that the original language of the New Testament is not English but Greek. Thus, we need to look beyond the surface.

The word "ordinances" in 1 Corinthians 11:2 and the word "traditions" in 2 Thessalonians 2:15 are both translated from the same Greek word: *paradosis*. According to *The New Strong's Expanded Dictionary of Bible Words*, which includes additional definitions adapted from W. E. Vine, this word means "a handing down, or on." It is from the root word *paradidomi*, which means "to hand over, deliver." This word that Paul employed in the Corinthian and the Thessalonian

letters is in direct fulfillment of our Lord's command, which was given prior to His ascension: "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:20). There is only one way to teach someone to observe, and that is to observe it yourself by way of example.

Let us examine the words of the Apostle Paul in the Colossian epistle, which seems to be standing in contradiction to what he penned in the Corinthian and Thessalonian epistles. A superficial perusal of Colossians 2:14 would seem to convey that the ordinances have been eliminated, but let us look closer. The Greek word translated as "ordinances" in this verse is a totally different word than what is used in the Corinthian and Thessalonian epistles. It is also used in the Ephesian epistle, which is a companion epistle to the Colossian epistle. Ephesians 2:15 reads, "Having abolished in his flesh [speaking of Christ] the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in [the] ordinances."

The Greek word used in both Ephesians and Colossians is the Greek word *dogma*. *Strong's Concordance and Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* defines it as "primarily denoting an opinion or judgment, hence an opinion expressed with authority; a doctrine, ordinance, decree." *The New Analytical Greek Lexicon* defines it as "decree, statute, or ordinance." *Thayer's Greek Lexicon* defines it as "doctrine, decree, or ordinance." This same Greek word is translated as "decree" (Luke 2:1) and "decrees" (Acts 16:4; 17:7). These words are speaking of separate things than the "ordinances" (1 Corinthians 11:2) and "traditions" (2 Thessalonians 2:15) Paul wrote about in these letters. In Corinthians and Thessalonians, the Greek word is *paradosis*, which means "a handing down, or on." That is exactly what Paul did. He wrote in 1 Corinthians 11:1-2: "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances [*paradosis*: a handing down or a handing on], as I delivered them to you." In other words, Paul handed it down to the brethren, and they were to hand it down perpetually, throughout the generations, from saint to saint. First Corinthians 11:23 tells us that is how Paul received it.

Bear in mind, Paul was not in the upper room during the Last Supper nor was he of the original twelve disciples. He was not even a Christian at that juncture. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 11:23-26: "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." Paul used the word "ordinances" (1 Corinthians 11:2), or *paradosis*, to let them know he was handing down (or handing on) that which had been handed to him: "I have received of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 11:23). It is clearly evident that these Scripture texts are speaking of two separate and different things. What Paul set forth in Corinthians and Thessalonians was to be handed down, observed, and kept, but what was spoken of in Ephesians and Colossians has been nailed to the Cross and is blotted out.

Carnal Ordinances Put Man in a Justified State

Our companion text speaks of "carnal ordinances" (Hebrews 9:10). This is another Greek word, distinct from *dogma* (Ephesians 2:15 and Colossians 2:14) and distinct from *paradosis* (1 Corinthians 11:2 and 2 Thessalonians 2:15). The word used in Hebrews 9:10 is the Greek word *dikaïoma*, and it is best described as "a concrete expression of righteousness." It comes from the root word *dikaioo*, and as a verb it means "to deem to be right: a fulfillment of the law of God to provide a basis of justification in His sight." This is another line of thought described altogether, because the Hebrew writer was speaking of the old economy. We read in Hebrews 9:7-8: "But into the second [the second room of the tabernacle; Hebrews 9:3] went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing."

Once a year, on the Day of Atonement, only the high priest could go into the second room. Under the old economy, man could not go into the presence of God and enjoy the presence of God, because man was still under the bondage of sin. The most those ordinances could do, under the old economy, was put man into a justified state, but they could not bring deliverance or regeneration. Until Christ ushered in a new economy (Hebrews 9:11-15), people were under the Old Testament dispensation, "Which was a figure for the time then present ... Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances" (Hebrews 9:9-10). When we again consider the Greek root word for "ordinance" and that the definition is "to deem to be right: a fulfillment of the law of God," we understand that they were walking in all that was capable of being walked in in that day. This provided a basis of justification in the sight of God.

I trust you can see the error of assuming that just because a word is the same in the English in different passages, it is the same word in the original or that it conveys the same meaning. Many people do what is called "word studies." Using a concordance, they look up an English word and follow that word through the Scriptures, attempting to tie together all the various Scriptures with that English word. Dear heart, be very cautious of this study method. Just because a word is the same in the English does not mean it is the same word in the original language, nor does it always mean that it is conveying

the same thought. Each Scripture must be viewed in its context and also in the scheme and harmony of the entire Scriptures.

In this chapter, we have found there are at least three different Greek words the translators have rendered as "ordinances," but they do not all mean the same thing. It is important to understand that in the New Testament there are ordinances we are instructed to keep and to hold. There are other things spoken of in the English as ordinances that are more appropriately described as doctrine, or decrees, which were a basis of justification under the old economy. When people under the old dispensation looked forward (in faith believing on Him "which should come"; Acts 19:4) and were obedient to the Law (performing a concrete expression, or those "carnal ordinances"; Hebrews 9:10), it brought a justification to them. Romans 2:13 says, "For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified." They were not justified merely by the doing of the law, but they were justified by also looking forward and believing on Him "which should come." This is verified in Hebrews 12:23, which reads, "To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect." There were "just men," or men in a justified state under the old economy.

Let us come back to our text and see what was taken out of the way. Colossians 2:14 begins, "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us . . ." First, it speaks of "the handwriting." This is the only place, in either the English or the Greek, that this word is used in the Bible. The Greek word is *cheirographon*, and it literally means "a charge list." It was a hand-signed note by a debtor, acknowledging his indebtedness. It was almost exactly what today we would call an "I.O.U."

Under the Old Testament, men's sins were not taken away, and a vast list of sin debt piled up. Although these men were able to be put into a justified state in the eyes of God, they were not in a position where their sins were taken away. We read in Hebrews 10:1-4: "For the law having a shadow of good things to come [the New Testament dispensation], and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. [Perfect in what way?] For then would they not have ceased to be offered? [In other words, if those sacrifices were adequate, they would not have had to have been offered every year. They would have only had to be offered once.] because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices [the old Levitical sacrifices] there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. [Why?] For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins."

It was not possible, under the old economy, for people's sins to be taken away. They "continually" went through a practice once a year, on the Day of Atonement, where the high priest made an offering, not just for their sins but for his as well; he was just as bound by sin as they were. It justified them, but it did not deliver them; it did not take away sin. Because of that, their charge list continued to grow. In other words, they continued in sin. This is made very clear in Galatians 3:22, which reads, "But the scripture [speaking of Old Testament Scriptures at this juncture; the previous verse is talking about the law] hath concluded all under sin . . ." At the close of the canon of the Old Testament, the last word is "curse" (Malachi 4:6), and that is right where it left man. Galatians 3:13 tells us what kind of curse: "the curse of the law." The "curse of the law" was that the law could bring men knowledge of sin but no deliverance.

Romans 3:20 says, "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin." The law brought knowledge but no power. They could not be "justified" by the "deeds of the law." Justification was more than just a form, more than just doing the "deeds of the law." It took having faith in Him who was to come. Those Pharisees in Jesus' day followed every jot and tittle of the law. However, Jesus let them know they were not justified, because they had only a dead form (Luke 18:10-14).

"The Handwriting of Ordinances That Was Against Us"

Let us look at the "handwriting," or the charge list. Perhaps you may remember the old country stores where customers could have a charge list. As items were continually added, that charge list continued to grow. There had to be a time when it was dealt with. Under the old economy, man could not deal with the charge list of sin. It just kept getting larger, continuing to grow until Jesus came. When Jesus came, Hebrews 9:15 says, "And for this cause he [speaking of Christ; verse 14] is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption [to buy back] of the transgressions that were under the first testament . . ." The first thing Christ's death did was buy back (redeem) the charge list of all those just men who "were under the first testament." Hebrews 12:23 tells us that "the spirits of [those] just men [were] made perfect [the Greek word is *teleioo*, which means complete]." Christ completed their justification by taking away their sins, by cancelling out the charge list. Praise God!

We each had a charge list. We could not do anything about it, but Jesus nailed our charge list to the Cross. We were Gentiles (uncircumcised; Colossians 2:13), we were "aliens . . . and strangers . . . having no hope" (Ephesians 2:12). What a pitiful position we were in! But thank God, Colossians 2:13 tells us, "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened [or made alive] together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses." Not only has Christ forgiven us of all our trespasses, but He has given us a new life. We no longer have to continue to be "dead

in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1). All this is possible because Christ took care of the charge list, "the handwriting ... that was against us." I think of the song by Frank M. Graham entitled "The Old Account Was Settled." Verse 2 reads, "*The old account was large, and growing every day.*" That is an accurate description of the charge list.

How did the brethren under the old economy know anything about their sin debt? What brought that knowledge to them? Romans 3:20 tells us that "by the law is the knowledge of sin." In Romans 7:7 the Apostle Paul wrote that he "had not known sin, but by the law." The knowledge of their sin debt was brought about by the law, or the "ordinances [or statutes]" (Colossians 2:14). The law and the statutes are the same thing (Deuteronomy 17:19). They are synonymous terms, spoken of as different facets of the same thing. Psalm 119:16 says, "I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word." Is the Word the same as the law? Look at Psalm 119:25-26 and 29: "My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word. I have declared my ways, and thou heardest me: teach me thy statutes.... Remove from me the way of lying: and grant me thy law graciously." These various expressions denote the one and selfsame thing. The law is the statutes, and that word "ordinance" means statutes as well.

Man learned of his sin under the old economy through the words of the law. It still works that way yet today. Romans 7:13 says: "Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful." It is the "commandment," or the Word, that brings knowledge of sin. It is the Word that makes sin "become exceeding sinful." I trust it is becoming clear that it was the *dogma* (the statutes, the decrees, the doctrines of the law) that continued to produce what Colossians 2:14 calls "the handwriting." Prior to salvation, each of us had that same "handwriting," that same charge list. Our personal charge list was written by our own knowledge and guilt. No one else could write it; no one else was responsible for it. Each of us was responsible for our own "handwriting," our own charge list. This is why Colossians 2:14 lets us know it was "against us." It is personal. The decree, the statutes of God's eternal Word, brought knowledge and understanding to me. It made me accountable. Yet, because of my powerlessness, my charge list just continued to grow, and my debt became higher and higher. This continued to produce "the handwriting" that was against me. It was not God who was writing it, but it was my own knowledge that condemned me.

In John, Chapter 8, men brought a woman, taken in the very act of adultery, to Jesus and said, "Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?" (verse 5). Jesus just bent over and started writing in the sand. When He finished writing, the accusers were all gone. What caused them to just melt away? Verse 9 says, "And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last" Their own knowledge began to convict them in their conscience.

What does Colossians 2:14 mean when it says "the handwriting of ordinances that was against us" was nailed "to his cross"? Many times we are removed by custom and culture and do not understand such references. In the ancient world, when an ordinance was cancelled, it was fastened to a board, and a nail was driven clean through it. Likewise, that is how the Old Testament law was cancelled. We read 2 Corinthians 5:21, "For he hath made him [speaking of Christ; verse 20] to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." In other words, Christ assumed "the curse of the law" (Galatians 3:13). He was made to be sin for us. He assumed "the curse of the law" and all "that was against us, which was contrary to us," and He "took it out of the way, [by] nailing it to his cross" (Colossians 2:14). This revealed that our charge list, our sin debt, was cancelled.

For those under the first testament, for those whose "handwriting of ordinances" was against them, Christ went to Calvary and nailed their charge list to the Cross. He redeemed, or bought back, their sins. Therefore, that "handwriting," or *dogma* (the statutes and teachings of God's Word which showed man he was exceedingly sinful), was all taken away. Verse 1 of the song "All Taken Away" by Kelso Carter says: "*Did you hear what Jesus said to me? They're all taken away, away.*" This is how the debt was cancelled. In reality, Colossians 2:14 is not speaking of ordinances, as we commonly think of them. When we rightly divide the Word of Truth, we find it has no reference to New Testament ordinances whatsoever.

"A New and Living Way"

If you read a little further in Colossians, Chapter 2, you will see that the Apostle Paul described the things that were "contrary to us," things that were unable to meet the spiritual needs of man, things they no longer needed to hold on to. Verse 16 says, "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days." Then, verses 20-22 read, "Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?"

Paul was teaching that "the rudiments of the world" (those worldly observances), or the "ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary" (Hebrews 9:1), no longer needed to be observed. Christ came to usher in "a new and living way" (Hebrews 10:20). The charge list has been dealt with; the sin debt has been cancelled. Not only have our sins been forgiven, but they have been taken away, "As far as the east is from the west" (Psalm 103:12). They are "cast ... into the depths of

the sea" (Micah 7:19) of God's forgetfulness, never to be remembered against us again. We have been given new life; we are no longer under the bondage of sin.

Looking again at the words of our text, "Blotting out," emphasizes another tremendous distinction between the old covenant and what Jesus ushered in. The Greek word for blotting out is *exaleiphein*. To understand this word, we must realize the ancient documents were written on papyrus or velum, which was made of animal skins. Both were expensive and could not be wasted. Ancient ink had no acid in it, and therefore it laid on the surface of the paper. Often, a sponge was used to wash out the writing, so it could be clean and reused. When Jesus paid the price, when He was nailed to the Cross, it was just as if He took a big sponge and erased all that "handwriting." First John 1:7 tells us that "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." Thank God, we can be clean!

One last thing we want to view in our text is that Jesus did not just deal with the deeds or the condition, but He went on to deal with what produced them. We read in Colossians 2:15, "And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it." One rendering says, "... he stripped the demonic powers and authorities of their powers." Christ not only dealt with the deeds of sin, but He also dealt with the demons, or the spirits, behind those deeds. He not only gave forgiveness of sins, but He also broke the power the spirits of the devil held that caused us to commit sin.

The conditions at the end of the old economy and what Christ came to bring when He ushered in this new economy parallels our personal experience prior and subsequent to conversion. Whether we look at it through prophetic application or personal application, both are very similar. We read Zechariah 13:1-2: "In that day [a prophetic expression of this Gospel Day] there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness. And it shall come to pass in that day [the Gospel Day], saith the LORD of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered: and also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land."

Notice, this fountain deals with two aspects: "sin" (verse 1) and "uncleanness" ("the unclean spirit"; verse 2). When this fountain was opened, John 19:34 tells us that "forthwith came there out blood and water." The "blood" is what deals with sin. Romans 3:25 says, "Whom God [speaking of Christ Jesus; verse 24] hath set forth to be a propitiation [*The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* says 'mercy seat'] through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past" This part of the fountain deals with the deeds, or the act: "sins that are past." The other part of that fountain was "water," and that water is described in John 7:37-39: "In the last day, that great day of the feast [the Feast of the Tabernacle], Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)"

This "water" is the Holy Ghost, and Titus 3:5 tells us what the Holy Ghost does. It says, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." What is this "washing of regeneration"? In the words of Zechariah, this fountain would be "for sin and for uncleanness." What needs to be cleansed? It is the spirit that needs to be cleansed. One who is stronger than the strong man (Luke 11:21-22) cleanses us of the unclean spirit (the very thing that caused us to sin); He cleanses our spirit through the "washing of regeneration." What a beautiful picture! Christ not only deals with the deeds, but He also deals with the spirits that produced them. This is why Paul told us in Colossians 2:16 that the measurement was no longer in the tenants of the old law. They were "a shadow of things to come" (verse 17), but we are no longer under the shadow. Thank God, we have the reality, the body of Christ!

I trust it is plain that the words of our Scripture texts have no reference to New Testament ordinances at all. In reality, they are not speaking of actual ordinances under the old covenant, but rather the Colossian verses of our text speak of the charge list, which the knowledge of sin (brought about by the law, or the statutes) produced. To lift this particular Scripture and try to nullify the validity of the New Testament ordinances is to do as Peter said in 2 Peter 3:16, "... which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures" By the help of God, we will go a little further in the following chapter concerning the Old Testament ordinances, as portrayed in our companion text in Hebrews, which speaks of how the Old Testament brethren were justified. I trust the Holy Spirit of God has given understanding concerning those erroneous teachings that would attempt to use these passages to nullify and negate the New Testament ordinances, which is certainly an unsound position of teaching or application of these scriptural passages. John 8:32 says, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Free from what? Falsity. We do not want to give vent to falsity, because there is a spirit that goes behind error, and that spirit can be deadly. I trust the Lord will help us to see it clearly.

CHAPTER TWO

The Old Testament Ordinances - Part Two

Hebrews 9:7 But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people:

8 The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing:

9 Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;

10 Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.

Hebrews 6:1 Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,

2 Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

A Distinction Between Old Testament Washings and New Testament Baptism

Our Scripture text is commonly quoted by brethren of the anti-ordinance persuasion, because Hebrews 9:10 speaks of "ordinances" and Hebrews 6:2 mentions "baptisms." However, if we allow the Holy Spirit to enable us to rightly divide the Word of Truth (2 Timothy 2:15), we will see that the sacred writer was speaking of that which pertained to the old covenant and has no reference to the New Testament practices at all. Let us consider why this is important. One advocate of the anti-ordinance doctrine posed this question: "The Day of Reformation is past; so why are people still practicing water baptisms?" This writer was referring to verse 10, which tells us that these things were only "imposed on them until the time of reformation." He then went on to ask, "Since we have entered into that time ['Christ being come'; verse 11], why are we still practicing water baptism?" Let us examine this passage and understand if that is a sound question.

First, let us study the wording of these expressions. One writer said, "The word *washings* came from the Greek word *baptismos*; so we could read this verse like this: 'baptisms.'" In other words, rather than saying "divers washings," this writer is saying we could say "different baptisms." However, concerning the word *baptismos*, *Strong's Concordance* and *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* both say that it means "ablution, ceremonial." The word *ablution* means "cleansing or washing." Thus, the Greek word translated as "washings" in verse 10 does not represent baptisms, but rather the ceremonial washings performed by the priests under the old covenant. *Strong's* and *Vine's* both substantiate that the word *baptismos* is distinct from the Greek word *baptisma*, which indicates the New Testament ordinance.

The Greek word *baptismos* is also used in Mark 7:4, which speaks of "the washing of cups, and pots, brassen vessels, and of tables" and in Mark 7:8, also speaking of "the washing of pots and cups." This is certainly not talking about baptizing cups and pots. That word means "washings." It has nothing whatsoever to do with baptism.

Thayer's Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament describes the word *baptismos* as "washings prescribed by the Mosaic Law." It references our companion text (Hebrews 6:2), which talks about "the doctrine of *baptisms*" (the same word rendered in Hebrews 9:10 as "washings"). According to the scholars, this is "an exposition of the difference between the washings prescribed by the Mosaic Law." The word portrays a very vivid distinction between washings prescribed by the Mosaic Law and Christian baptism. It is necessary to understand this distinction because there are those who say that since "the time of reformation" (or Christ) has come, we no longer need to keep ordinances, such as water baptism. However, that is a failure to understand the truth of this text, which is not dealing with the New Testament ordinances.

We must remember this letter was being penned to Hebrew converts, those who were of Jewish stock. This is made plain in Hebrews 1:1, which reads, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past [the Old Testament Dispensation] unto the fathers [They were descendants of the Jewish fathers; that is from where their lineage sprang. They were of Jewish stock, Hebrew converts.] by the prophets." The Hebrew author was speaking of what occurred under "the first covenant" (Hebrews 9:1), or the Old Testament. Do not lose sight of that truth. To take this passage and attribute it to New Testament practices is wresting the Scripture.

Let us read the entirety of Hebrews 9:1. It states, "Then verily the first covenant had also *ordinances* [the same Greek word used in verse 10] of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary." The Old Testament sanctuary was a literal affair, made out of curtains, silver, gold, and brass (worldly elements). It was a literal sanctuary built by man. However, in this new covenant, our services and sanctuary are spiritual. Hebrews 8:2 tells us Jesus is the "minister of the sanctuary," and He is the One who "pitched" this "true tabernacle." We have a different sanctuary, a different tabernacle than that which is written

of in Hebrews 9:1-5, which reads: "Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary. For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary. And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly." It is plainly apparent that these verses are speaking of the Old Testament sanctuary. Man put it together, according to the pattern shown in the mount, but it was still "a worldly sanctuary." In other words, it was composed of elements taken from this world.

We read in Hebrews 9:6-11: "Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But into the second [the second room, or the holy of holies] went the high priest alone once every year [the Day of Atonement, or Yom Kippur], not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest [under the old economy, man could not go into the presence of God], while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: Which was a figure for the time then present [verse 1 tells us it was the time of 'the first covenant'], in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; [What kind of conscience were these sacrifices unable to perfect? Hebrews 10:2 tells us it is 'conscience of sins.' That is what the Old Testament could not address; that is what the first covenant could not remove.] Which stood only in meats and drinks [in other words, external practices], and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation. But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building." Hebrews, Chapter 9, continues by speaking of the redemptive work of Christ. However, the first ten verses are not speaking of what occurred when Christ came; they are speaking of the practices under the first covenant. The "ordinances of divine service" (Hebrews 9:1) is speaking of that which was under the old economy, not the new.

Old Testament Ordinances Provided a Basis of Justification

Let us look at the word "ordinances" used in Hebrews 9:1 and 10, and consider three things: (1) What is the meaning of the particular word employed in this passage? (2) What were the practices being referred to in this passage? and (3) Why did the divine penman reference it? The word "ordinances," according to *Strong's Expository Dictionary of Bible Words With Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary*, is best described as "a concrete expression of righteousness." It comes from the root word *dikaioo*, which means to "deem to be right: a fulfillment of the law of God to provide a basis of justification in His sight." The same Greek word (*dikaioma*) that is translated here as "ordinances" is rendered as "righteousness" (Romans 2:26; Romans 5:18; Romans 8:4; Revelation 19:8) and "justification" (Romans 5:16). This gives insight into the fact that it is not referencing New Testament ordinances at all. It also tells us that even under the old economy, it is not speaking of what we would consider ordinances. Rather, it is speaking of practices that were in obedience to the law of commandments. These external practices, when coupled with faith, were able to deem one to be right; they were a basis of justification. Under the old economy, their righteousness was not as our righteousness, for our righteousness comes through Jesus Christ. Second Corinthians 5:21, speaking of the work of Christ, says, "For he hath made him [Christ; verse 20] to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

Our righteousness comes from the reality of Jesus Christ. We are able to have an indwelling Christ, an indwelling righteousness, but under the old economy, that was not so. There was certainly a righteousness that came with the law. In Philippians 3:5-6 the Apostle Paul set forth his Jewish credentials, stating he was "an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." What righteousness was in the law? When they looked forward, in faith to Him who was to come, and then practiced the law of commandments (looking at those external observations as the shadow of the reality that was to come), it made them "just men" (Hebrews 12:23), or provided a basis of justification. Although they were not delivered from sin, they were put in a justified state in the sight of God. That enabled them to maintain a relationship with God as His old covenant people.

When rightly divided, it is very obvious that these expressions have no reference to New Testament ordinances whatsoever, because New Testament ordinances do not provide a basis of justification. It does not matter how many times one is baptized, it will never justify him or her in the sight of God. However, what the author was referring to in Hebrews 9:1 did provide a basis of justification under the first covenant. New Testament justification has a different measure. Justification, or having "peace with God," comes through faith in Jesus Christ (Romans 5:1). Galatians 3:24 says, "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith [in Christ]."

The measurement of justification is different in this New Testament than what it was in the old. There is a similarity in that they looked forward to Him who was to come, and we look back to the work that He came to perform; but there is a very vivid distinction. They looked forward in faith but never received the promise (Hebrews 11:39), in the purest sense

of the word. They merely had the shadow and went through the law of commandments contained in the ordinances. In the new economy, our faith is in the redemptive work Christ did on Calvary's tree. When we take hold in faith, because we are in a different dispensation, we are able to have the Holy Spirit bring about a new birth, make us a new creature, take up His indwelling in our flesh (in our hearts and our minds), and empower us to live in holiness and righteousness.

This leads us to the next question: What were the practices being referred to in this passage? Again, we must view the context. In Hebrews 9:1 the writer was speaking of "the first covenant ... ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary." In verses 2-5 he described the Old Testament tabernacle and its articles of furnishings. Then in verses 6-7 he described the performance of "the priests" and "the high priest." In verses 8-9 the penman proclaimed those articles and performances were "a figure for the time then present," or the Old Testament dispensation. Verse 8 tells us they could not enjoy New Testament realities and benefits under the old economy because "the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing."

Jesus made it "manifest," made the way into "the holiest of all" now possible under the second covenant. We read in Hebrews 10:16-20: "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them [under the old economy, it was written on tables of stone]; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is [thank God, there is not just justification, but there is 'remission of sins that are past'; Romans 3:25], there is no more offering for sin [it is no longer necessary to return yearly and make a new offering for sin: once and for all is sufficient]. Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, [Jesus made the way into the holiest of all possible. How?] By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh."

Old Testament Ordinances Were a Concrete Expression of Righteousness

Let us look at the components spoken of in our text, referring to what verse 1 called "ordinances of divine service." Verse 10 describes them as "meats and drinks." The famed Scottish scholar, William Barclay, said, "Founded as they are upon laws about food and drink and different kinds of ritual washings, they are no more than external regulations." You can read of these external practices concerning meats in Leviticus 11:1-4 and in Deuteronomy 14:3-8. You can read of what Hebrews 9:10 called "drinks" in Leviticus 10:9, which says, "Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation . . ." Our text is setting forth some of the tenants to which the Old Testament "priests" (Hebrews 9:6) and the "high priest" (Hebrews 9:7) had to adhere to in order to show a "concrete expression of righteousness" (the definition of the word translated as "ordinances").

Verse 10 is where anti-ordinance folks accent the words "divers washings." Verse 7 of our text refers to the day that happened "once every year." Notice verses 7-10 are all one sentence. They are speaking of one event. This is the Day of Atonement, one particular day per year when the high priest went into the second room. He had no more access to the presence of God than anyone else, except on one day of the year when he made atonement.

To understand what the high priest did on that day and the different ritual washings that he partook of, I will quote from *The Daily Study Bible Series* by Dr. William Barclay. Speaking of the Day of Atonement, he wrote: "Let us then see what happened. Very early in the morning the high priest cleansed himself by washing. He donned his gorgeous robes of office, worn only on that day.... The high priest began by doing the things that were done every day. He burned the morning incense, made the morning sacrifice, and attended to the trimming of the lamps on the seven-branched lampstand. Then came the first part of the special ritual of the day. Still dressed in his gorgeous robes, he sacrificed a bullock and seven lambs and one ram (Numbers 29:7). Then he removed his gorgeous robes, cleansed himself again in water, and dressed himself in the simple purity of white linen. There was brought to him a bullock bought with his own resources. He placed his hands on its head and, standing there in the full sight of the people, confessed his own sin and the sin of his house . . .

"The priest turned to the slain bullock and goat and prepared them for sacrifice. Still in his linen garments he read Scripture—Leviticus 16; 23:27-32, and repeated by heart Numbers 29:7-11. He then prayed for the priesthood and the people. Once again he cleansed himself in water and re-arrayed himself in his gorgeous robes. He sacrificed, first, a kid of the goats for the sins of the people; then he made the normal evening sacrifice; then he sacrificed the already prepared parts of the bullock and the goat. Then once again he cleansed himself, took off his robes, and put on the white linen; and for the fourth and last time he entered the holy of holies to remove the censer of incense which still burned there. Once again he cleansed himself in water; once again he put on his vivid robes Such was the ritual of the Day of Atonement, the day designed to cleanse all things and all people from sin. That was the picture in mind of the writer to the Hebrews and he was to make much of it. But there were certain things of which he was thinking at the moment." Did you notice how many times washings took place? That is the "divers washings" the Hebrew writer was talking about in this text. It has nothing at all whatsoever to do with New Testament ordinances or baptisms.

Reverting Back to the Old Testament Ordinances

Let us progress to our third question, Why did the divine penman refer to this Old Testament practice? Keep in mind, he was writing to Hebrew converts, those who were of Jewish stock, people eminently familiar with the articles and practices of the first covenant. We must also recognize the writer penned this epistle under divine prompting to deal with certain conditions. At the juncture in which this was written (approximately A.D. 63-69), a short 30-36 years after Pentecost, many people were becoming disillusioned with Christianity due to a false assumption and unrealistic expectations. Because of that, some had reverted back to the practices of old Judaism (the first covenant) and others were being tempted to do so. That was the burden behind this Hebrew epistle. One of the reoccurring themes of this epistle is the word *better*, showing the superiority of the new covenant over the old. Unrealistic and false expectations concerning the new covenant were causing people to return to the practices of the old. That should serve as a warning to us yet today. The enemy can set us up with unrealistic expectations that are not scripturally sound, that are extra Biblical (beyond Bible bounds), and then when those expectations do not occur, disillusion and discouragement come to us. The enemy causes us to begin to think that the past days, the former days, were better than these. Ecclesiastes 7:10 says, in essence, "You are not wise when you think that way." For this very reason, many people have left this precious truth and gone back to the things they once laid aside.

To see if this is what was happening in our text, go back to Hebrews 2:1, which states, "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard [evidently, some were not giving the more earnest heed], lest at any time we should let them slip." Some things were obviously in danger of slipping. Hebrews 2:3 says, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation." It becomes obvious that some were becoming negligent. Divine inspiration does not inspire admonitions and warnings to be written that are unnecessary or inapplicable. These injunctions were important, and they were beginning to slip from the people. They had become dull of hearing.

We read in Hebrews 3:12, "Take heed, brethren [notice he was writing to the brethren], lest there be in any of you [brethren] an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." Unbelief was what he was dealing with. We read in Hebrews 4:1-2: "Let us therefore fear [some had already fallen by the wayside, just as those in the Exodus who could not enter in because of their unbelief; Hebrews 3:19], lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. [What would cause them to come short of it?] For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." It takes more than just hearing the Word being preached. It must be mixed with faith. Many of the people to whom the Hebrew writer penned this epistle were dull of hearing. When they heard it, they did not mix any faith with it, and it did not profit them. Thus, unbelief was raising up, negligence was becoming paramount, and truths were slipping away. They were apostatizing, defecting from the truth, and reverting back to the practices of old Judaism.

Hebrews 5:11 reads, "Of whom we have many things to say [speaking of Christ and 'the order of Melchisedec'; verses 5-6], and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing." These people were becoming "dull," or tired, of hearing; that is a dangerous position to get into. Hebrews 6:4-6 tells us: "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened [past tense], and have tasted [past tense] of the heavenly gift, and were made [past tense] partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted [past tense] the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away [the Greek word is *parapipto*, and it means apostasy], to renew them again" Renewing them was impossible because a great deception comes with apostasy. You cannot renew someone who still thinks they are new. You cannot help someone who does not think he or she needs any help. To receive help you must recognize that you need help. Christ could not help people who did not think they needed any help. We see this in Matthew 13:58, which reads, "And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief."

Hebrews 10:25-26 says: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is [one of the first evidences that people are getting in trouble spiritually is that they start missing services]; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." These people were leaving truth and going back to the Old Testament sacrifices of Judaism, thinking they could just go back to where they used to be. However, once light is come, you cannot go back on that light; you cannot go back to your former practices. We can compare this to coming out of sectism. When you were in sectism, you did not know about the evils of sectism; you did not know about the sin of division. You were walking in all the light you had, and God accepted that. But when the light on sectism came, you walked in that light. Now, if you try to back up on that light, there is "no more sacrifice." The author of Hebrews was telling them that they could not go back to those Old Testament sacrifices and have them do for them what they did before.

We read in Hebrews 10:35-39: "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience [they were looking for an immediate Second Coming, and when it did not come, they started casting teachings away], that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall

have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back [in other words, going back to the old practices] unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul." The inspired penman was dealing with ones who were tempted to revert back to the practice of the law and also what is called "sacrifice for sins" (Hebrews 10:25). This is why he referred in Hebrews 9:1 to "ordinances of divine service," or the Amplified Bible says "rules and regulations." He was trying to show that these were not realities, and they could not go back to them. Hebrews 9:9 describes them as "a figure for the time then present," or *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* says "figurative representation." The Amplified Bible says "visible symbol or type." Hebrews 9:24 calls them "figures of the true."

Once the reality comes, you cannot go back and try to grab the shadow. When a man is walking around the corner, often you can see his shadow and know something is coming; but when the reality comes, you cannot go back to the shadow. The figurative expressions, or symbols, were, as Hebrews 9:9 states, "for the time then present [or the Old Testament dispensation]," but this was only, as verse 10 says, "imposed on them until the time of reformation," this New Testament dispensation. The reason is given in verse 11: "Christ being come." When He came, thank God, the way into the holiest of all (which under the old economy "was not yet made manifest"; verse 8) was made available. Now, through Jesus, we have "boldness to enter into the holiest" (Hebrews 10:19). We have access to the presence of God and have the ability to enjoy a relationship with God.

I trust it is plain that in this passage the sacred writer was not addressing New Testament ordinances, much less abolishing them. He was attempting to address a condition working amongst the New Testament, morning-time, Jewish converts. I trust we can see what is set forth in this passage in Hebrews, Chapter 9, and what is not. We will consider Hebrews 6:1-2 in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

The Principles of the Doctrine of Christ

Hebrews 6:1 Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,

2 Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

"The Order of Melchisedec"

In this passage the sacred writer spoke of "leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ" (verse 1), and one of those "principles" is "the doctrine of baptisms" (verse 2). Unfortunately, this text is lifted by those who propound the anti-ordinance teaching, attempting to scripturally substantiate that baptism is a practice we should abandon. One writer penned, "He not only commands us to leave the doctrine of laying on of the hands, but also the doctrine of baptisms." However, when we put "precept upon precept; line upon line" (Isaiah 28:13), we will see that the sacred writer was not conveying any thought of abandoning the practice of New Testament water baptism.

As we begin to examine these verses, we must recognize that this is part of a larger context. It was an epistle (a letter), and as such was written in continuity. In its original form, it was not written in chapters or verses. (Chapter divisions were added in A.D. 1227 by Steven Langton, the Archbishop of Canterbury. The first Bible with chapter divisions was in 1382, and in 1551 verse divisions were added to the Greek New Testament. The first translation to employ versification was the Geneva Bible in A.D. 1557. This was not incorporated in the whole Bible until A.D. 1560.)

As we look at what is termed Chapter 6, we find it begins with the word "Therefore." *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary* defines this word as "for that reason, consequently, because of that." Anywhere the expression *therefore* is used, it is because of what was said previously. To read what the sacred writer said previously, go back to Hebrews 5:10-14, which states: "Called of God [speaking of Christ; verse 5] an high priest after the order of Melchisedec. Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."

By reading the preceding context, the writer was letting the Jewish converts know that a new order had been established. Under the old economy, the order of the priesthood was after Aaron. He was made the first high priest, and the Aaronic Priesthood followed down through his lineage. But through Christ, a new order, the "order of Melchisedec" (verse 10), had been instituted. As the author of Hebrews discerned their spiritual sluggishness, he digressed from his teaching about the new order of priesthood, dropping that particular line of thought until the last verse of Chapter 6. At that point he picked back up his teaching about Melchisedec, continuing on into Chapter 7.

The Hebrew author was ready to engage in teaching about the "order of Melchisedec" in Hebrews 5:10. He was ready to go into some depth; but then the Spirit revealed to him that the people were not spiritually in a position to receive it. They were not able to receive this depth of teaching. It is sad when God desires to teach His people greater truths, but because of slothfulness and other factors working, they are not spiritually in a position to receive them. That is what was working amongst these Hebrews. They were "dull of hearing" (Hebrews 5:11). The Amplified Bible says, "Concerning this we have much to say which is hard to explain, since you have become dull in your [spiritual] hearing and sluggish [even slothful in achieving spiritual insight]."

In our spiritual walk, we are either progressing or regressing. There is no in between; there is no standing still. Sadly, many of those Hebrews were regressing; not only that, but they were in danger of reverting as well. Many of those who had been Hebrew converts had reverted back to the tenants and practices of the Jewish law. Others (those who were being addressed in this epistle) were being tempted to do so. This was the larger truth that burdened the writer's heart. Thus, that was the reason the author began verse 1 of our text with the word "Therefore."

Oracles Are God's Divine Utterances

As we look at the expressions employed in Hebrews 5:12, we must keep in mind the writer was speaking in terms with which the Jewish converts could relate. Consider the expression employed in verse 12, which says, "For when for the time

ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God." The word rendered "principles" in Hebrews 5:12 is a different Greek word than the one employed in verse 1 of our text ("leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ"). Concerning this word, *Word Studies in the Greek New Testament, Volume Two* by Kenneth Wuest tells us the original word in Hebrews 5:12 is from the Greek *stoicheion*, "which refers to rudimentary ideas." If you look up the word *stoicheion* in *Strong's Concordance* and *Vine's Greek Concordance and Dictionary of New Testament Words*, it is defined as "fundamental, initial, and any first things from which other in a series, or a composite whole, takes their rise, a first principle."

Looking at Hebrews 5:12, let us continue reading from *Word Studies in the Greek New Testament, Volume Two*, which says: "The word 'first' in the Greek refers to, first in a series, the very beginning of things; 'oracles' refers to, divine utterances. Thus, these Hebrews again needed someone to be teaching them, and the start should be made with the rudiments of the very beginning of the divine utterances in the New Testament truth." When Hebrews 5:12 talks about "the first principles of the oracles of God," it has reference to those most rudimentary New Testament teachings. It is speaking of the very beginning of the divine utterances in the New Testament. The word "oracles" is the same word used in 1 Peter 4:11, which reads, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ."

This word "oracles" in the context of Hebrews 5:12 is related to the New Testament ministry, that which comes through New Testament truth as established by Jesus Christ. This concept of oracles was a term with which a Hebrew was very familiar. This word is found in Stephen's message. Speaking of Moses, he said in Acts 7:38, "This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina [Sinai], and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us." Stephen was speaking of those divine utterances that were given on Mount Sinai. The same word is used in Romans 3:2, which says, "Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them [the Jews] were committed the oracles of God [the divine utterances, or the truth of His Word]."

The same word used in reference to Moses receiving the word on Mount Sinai is used here in speaking of the Jews and the advantage they had because they were entrusted with the "oracles," or God's divine utterances. Reading this in the context of Hebrews, Chapter 5, we understand that because there is a new order (a new priesthood and a new high priest), now "the oracles of God" (verse 12) are New Testament realities instituted by our "high priest" (verse 10), Jesus "Christ" (verse 5). Just as there was an old economy with a high priest, an old covenant entrusted with the utterances, or the "oracles of God," now there is a new order with a new "High Priest of our profession" (Hebrews 3:1). The "oracles" have been entrusted to this New Testament dispensation.

This is important. The Hebrew writer was letting his audience know that they had become "dull of hearing" (verse 11). He said in verse 12 that they needed "one [to] teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God." Again, this chapter is speaking of New Testament realities. Wuest wrote in *Word Studies in The Greek New Testament, Volume Two*: "The word "principles" in these verses comes from two different Greek words. The expression in Chapter 5 and verse 12 refers to the elementary teachings in New Testament truth, and the one in Chapter 6 and verse 1 to the teachings of the first testament where Messiah was first spoken of." Verse 12, which speaks of the first principles, also says, "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers ..." Was the author desiring them to be teachers of the Law, or of the old covenant? Certainly not! That type of thinking was condemned by the Apostle Paul in 1 Timothy 1:5-7, which says: "Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm."

Paul let us know that we have come to a time when that portion of God's Word has had its fulfilment. It has served its purpose; it was a "schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ" (Galatians 3:24). For those who were "desiring to be teachers of the law," this thought certainly needed to be abolished, because that is not what we are under in this dispensation. The God who breathed into the Scriptures (2 Timothy 3:16) and made them that Living Word would not inspire the Apostle Paul to decry those who were desiring to be teachers of the Law in his letter to Timothy and then inspire the Hebrew writer to pen in Hebrews 5:12, which reads, "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers," advocating that they teach the Law. It is needful that we establish this. Chapter 5 is not speaking of the Law but of those first principles, the fundamental, rudimentary truths of this new economy.

Hebrews 5:12 talks about "such as have need of milk." This is clearly speaking of those who have been born again, those who were taking "the sincere milk of the Word," those who have tasted the Lord, or taken the Lord into their lives (1 Peter 2:2-3). However, he was letting them know they had been saved long enough that they should not be on just milk. They should have advanced past the infancy stage and become spiritually mature. Just as a parent would be very disturbed if an older child only wanted to drink milk, so it was with the Hebrew writer. Sadly, those Hebrews were still trying to make a meal out of the milk ("are become such as have need of milk"; Hebrews 5:12). They had not advanced to the meat. So,

their growth was not as it ought to be. They should have progressed and matured to where they were taking meat and were able to be teachers and feed milk to new Christians.

Leaving Practices Rooted in the First Covenant

As we progress to our text proper (Hebrews 6:1-2), we will see where the writer now speaks of something different than New Testament principles. If these verses were speaking of New Testament realities, would the author be encouraging them to be, as verse 1 says, "leaving the principles"? Was the writer telling them to abandon New Testament "repentance" or to discard "faith toward God"? Certainly not! These are crucial tenants of the new economy. The New Testament is strewn throughout with references to repentance. John the baptizer preached repentance (Matthew 3:1-2). Jesus commenced His public ministry with the message of repentance (Matthew 4:17). On the Day of Pentecost, Peter preached repentance (Acts 2:38). When Paul stood on Mars' hill in Athens, Greece (a paganistic stronghold and culture), he said in Acts 17:30 that God "now commandeth all men every where to repent." Repentance is a critical component of the New Testament economy. Certainly, the writer of our text was not encouraging it to be abandoned.

Likewise, the author was not advocating abandoning faith. Hebrews 11:6 says, "But without faith it is impossible to please him." It certainly cannot be discarded. The same is true with the truths of Hebrews 6:2, which speaks of the "laying on of hands." This practice has not been abandoned by those in the truth. In Mark 16:17-18, Jesus promised this would be a sign of those who believe: "... they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." In 1 Timothy 4:14 Paul wrote the young minister Timothy, "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery." It is the same with these other truths incorporated in these verses, including the "resurrection of the dead" (verse 2). The Apostle Paul was expressly clear of the vital role that the Resurrection plays in the faith (1 Corinthians 15:12-21). The truth of the Resurrection is the centermost truth of Christianity.

Verse 2 of our text speaks of "judgment," and certainly this truth is something that is not discarded. Romans 14:10 tells us that "we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ." Second Corinthians 5:10 says that "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." I trust it is becoming plain that the Hebrew writer was not saying these New Testament truths were to be laid aside. These are vital truths.

The truths being set forth in our text are at least two-faceted. When verse 1 speaks of "the principles of the doctrine of Christ," in many Bibles the margin says, "The word of the beginning of Christ." One scholar offers it in this manner: "Let us leave the doctrine pertaining to the beginning of a Christian man." Another scholar offers it like this: "Let us leave the doctrine pertaining to the beginning of a Christian life." Upon first perusal, it may appear that this expression "the principles of the doctrine of Christ" is speaking of New Testament realities, but in reality it is addressing where they are introduced. The first messianic prophecy is found in the book of beginnings (Genesis 3:15). We need to keep in mind this was written to the Hebrews, and to them the doctrine pertaining to the beginning of a Christian life was found in "the law" (Galatians 3:24).

In Hebrews 6:1 the word "principles" is the Greek word *arche*. As a noun it means "a beginning," and as a verb *archo* it means "to be first." Where was the actual beginning for a Jew? Where were they first introduced to Christ? Wuest described it in *Word Studies in the Greek New Testament, Volume Two* as, "The teachings of the first testament where Messiah was spoken of." The Hebrew writer was admonishing those who were becoming disenchanted with truth (because their expectations had not been met) to not revert back to that which was familiar (the old Law, the first testament, the first covenant). The things he was admonishing them to get past were practices rooted in the first covenant.

The Hebrew writer encouraged the Hebrews to "go on unto perfection" (verse 1). Although there is certainly more than one application of the term "perfection," let us look at it textually. How did the penman utilize this word and with what did he associate it? Hebrews 7:11 tells us, "If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?" The Levitical Law and the priesthood could not bring spiritual perfection. Yet, that is what they were regressing to. The author was letting them know there was no perfection in that. What kind of perfection was he initially talking about? In Hebrews 9:9 he wrote that it was perfection "as pertaining to the conscience." Hebrews 10:2 tells us it is the "conscience of sins." That is what the old covenant could not bring, but Hebrews 10:14 says, "For by one offering [sacrifice of himself; Hebrews 9:26] he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

This perfection is a spiritual perfection, a perfection from sin that, according to Hebrews 7:11, the "Levitical priesthood" could not bring. This is the same truth the Apostle Paul taught in Colossians 2:10, which says, "And ye are complete in him [Christ; verse 8]" They had been looking for Christ and something else. They had become disenchanted because their expectations were unrealistic, and to them the truths of Christianity were not adequate; to them, it needed something else. (That is where false religion is today. Because they do not have a full revelation of truth, they

have to have Christ and something else.)

Those to whom the Hebrew author was writing were "dull of hearing" when they "ought to be teachers." They were being tempted to revert to prior Jewish practices. Those old things were a "shadow of heavenly things" (Hebrews 8:5). They were shadows forerunning the reality, a basis upon which the New Testament realities were to be built. The Apostle Paul described them in Colossians 2:17 as "a shadow of things to come." However, because of their disillusionment, they were reverting back to the shadow, moving away from the light and going into darkness. They were moving back to the Old Testament practices upon which New Testament realities were built.

Let us look deeper at the expressions in verse 1. We have already found that there is a New Testament application which certainly the author was not saying we should leave or abandon, but when we study and rightly divide, we learn that these expressions were initially practices of the Old Testament. The author let them know they needed to get past that. Why is it necessary to understand that? In view of our study, one reason is because "baptisms" is listed in verse 2. This verse is not talking of a New Testament reality at all, but of Old Testament practices. Those of the anti-ordinance persuasion take this verse and say that we should leave off water baptism. That is not what is being dealt with in this text. These expressions in verses 1-2 (repentance, faith, baptisms, and laying on of hands) were Jewish practices of the Old Testament. Yes, there is a New Testament aspect, but in reality, that is not what the writer was dealing with in this context. Let us look at a couple examples of these Old Testament ordinances. Hebrews 6:1 talks about "not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works." Repentance was an Old Testament teaching. Certainly, there is viability to that teaching as a New Testament reality, but it was also taught long before under the old economy. (Read Ezekiel 14:6 and Ezekiel 18:30.)

When we read in verse 2 about "laying on of hands," we think purely of a New Testament setting, but under the Levitical Law, this was done upon the sacrificial animals. Leviticus 1:4, speaking of the priestly duties, says, "And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him." There is the "laying on of hands." Leviticus 3:2 reads, "And he shall lay his hand upon the head of his offering, and kill it at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: And Aaron's sons the priests shall sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about." Leviticus 4:15 states, "And the elders of the congregation shall lay their hands upon the head of the bullock before the LORD: and the bullock shall be killed before the LORD." Because of their disenchantment, the Hebrews were going back to the Old Testament sacrifices. The Hebrew writer warned against this in Hebrews 10:25-26, writing: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." They could not go back to the Old Testament sacrifices once they had New Testament light.

Let us come to the expression that engenders the question concerning New Testament baptism. Hebrews 6:1 says "leaving," and then verse 2 says "the doctrine of baptisms." The word for "baptisms" here is the Greek word *baptismos*. *Strong's Concordance* and *Vine's Dictionary* tell us that this means "ablution" (a cleansing, ceremonial), which is distinct from *baptisma*, the ordinance. In our prior study, we found this word *baptismos* is used in Mark 7:7-8 to describe "the washing of pots and cups." That same word is incorporated in Hebrews 9:10, which talks about "divers washings." In other words, those washings that were practiced by the priesthood under the old economy. They have no relationship to the New Testament ordinance of baptism whatsoever. These verses are referring, as Wuest said, "To the teaching of the first testament where Messiah was first spoken of." The writer was certainly not instructing his readers to abolish New Testament truths that were recently instituted, but rather he was warning them to not revert back to the Old Testament practices upon which the New Testament practices are the reality.

The Hebrew writer warned against slothfulness in Hebrews 6:12. That is what was working; that is why they were becoming dull of hearing; and that is why they were not in a fit position to teach. Immaturity made them susceptible to the powers of apostasy that had already worked on their brethren. They had become disenchanted and disillusioned because they had a false concept concerning the Second Advent of Christ. Hebrews 10:35-37 and 39 say: "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition: but of them that believe to the saving of the soul." Look at the warning given in verse 38: "If any man draw back" They were drawing back because of their false conception, their disillusion, their disenchantment. They were regressing, becoming slothful and dull of hearing. Thus, they were moving away from the first principles, those New Testament, rudimentary, fundamental truths of which Chapter 5, verse 12, speaks.

Let us look at Hebrews 6:1-6, which says: "Therefore [because of this spiritual condition] leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection [then he began to explain what was hindering their perfection, or the work that Christ came to bring to mankind]; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit. For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened [past tense], and have tasted [past

tense] of the heavenly gift, and were made [past tense] partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted [past tense] the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away [the Greek word is *parapipto*, which means apostasy], to renew them"

Apostasy, or a defection from truth, was working. Right in the midst of this discourse concerning the new order of Melchisedec, the author's mind was divinely turned to the condition of the recipients of the letter. So, he left this truth concerning Melchisedec and did not pick it up again until the last verse in Chapter 6 and more definitively in Chapter 7. However, in the interim verses, the author was very concerned that they were becoming susceptible, as their brethren had, to the powers of apostasy.

The Necessity of "Leaving" an Inclination to Revert Back to Jewish Practices

Let us consider the expression "leaving" (verse 1). The Greek word is *aphiemi*, which comes from the root word *apo*, meaning "completion." The word *aphiemi* means "passing by the consideration of, with a view to advance to something higher." The burden of this text is expressed in verse 1, which challenges the readers to "go on unto perfection." We viewed one aspect of that perfection, the perfection that Christ's one offering brought, the perfection that is pertaining to the conscience, to remove the conscience of sins; but it goes deeper than just that. He was letting them know that they needed to go on to something higher. There are those who would say: "Yes, let us move on to perfection. Water baptism is a practice of a spiritually immature and uninformed mind." Certainly not! That is not what the writer was dealing with at all.

Remember, the writer was trying to prevent them from "fall[ing] away [or apostatizing]" (verse 6). The latter phrase of Hebrews 6:5 talks about "the powers of the world to come." The Jews only believed in two ages: the age which now is (the age of the Law) and what they called the age to come or "world to come" (the new covenant, or the Messianic era). The Hebrew writer was letting them know that they were in that Messianic era; they could not revert back. Once the Law brought them to Christ, they could not go back to it. Just as school prepares you for life, once you go through it and graduate, you do not go back to it. It has served its purpose, and it is gone.

We cannot fail to progress and mature in our experience to where we are reduced to a level of form and then count on certain acts or practices to convince ourselves that we are right. That is what was happening with the audience of our text, and that is what happens with people today when they lose the reality. They begin by becoming slothful, failing to give the more earnest heed to the things which they have heard, and become dull of hearing. As reality begins to ebb low, form begins to raise high. It was crucial for these Hebrew converts, and is crucial for us yet today, to do as verse 1 says: "go on unto perfection." *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* states it in this manner: "We should progress toward maturity." The Amplified Bible states it this way: "Therefore let us go on and get past the elementary stage in the teachings and doctrine of Christ (the Messiah), advancing steadily toward the completeness and perfection that belong to spiritual maturity."

We can see the same truth being dealt with in Ephesians 4:13-15, which reads: "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect [complete or mature] man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ [that is what the perfect man is]: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ."

Let us read this same passage in the Amplified Bible. It states: "[That it might develop] until we all attain oneness in the faith and in the comprehension of the [full and accurate] knowledge of the Son of God, that [we might arrive] at really mature manhood (the completeness of personality which is nothing less than the standard height of Christ's own perfection), the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ and the completeness found in Him. So then, we may no longer be children, tossed [like ships] to and fro between chance gusts of teaching and wavering with every changing wind of doctrine, [the prey of] the cunning and cleverness of unscrupulous men, [gamblers engaged] in every shifting form of trickery in inventing errors to mislead. Rather, let our lives lovingly express truth [in all things, speaking truly, dealing truly, living truly]. Enfolded in love, let us grow up in every way and in all things into Him Who is the Head, [even] Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One)."

I trust it is becoming plain that the Hebrew writer was not advocating abandonment of the "principles of the doctrine of Christ" (verse 1), but rather that they abandon their infancy, their immaturity, their instability, and their inclination to regress and revert back to the schoolmaster, the practices of the Law. When the light of truth is put upon these verses and these Scriptures are soundly examined in the light of their context, with the meaning of the words that are incorporated within it, it can be clearly seen that they have no reference whatsoever to abandoning New Testament truths.

CHAPTER FOUR

One Baptism

Ephesians 4:1 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;

3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;

5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

Does "One Baptism" Negate the Ordinance of Water Baptism?

In verses 1-3 of this passage of Scripture text, the Apostle Paul set forth seven necessary components to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called." One rendering says, "Live and act in a way worthy of those who have been chosen." Then in verses 4-6, he set forth the seven unities of the church: one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God. Sadly, one of the truths set forth for unity is being used as a basis for division, and that is the "one baptism."

As we begin to consider this text, let us lift the words of one writer to see how some have viewed this text: "Most everyone believes that there is one body, one Spirit, one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one God and Father, but not many people really believe that there is just one baptism. Almost everyone believes there are at least two for us in this day and time. You will have to take your pick; it is either water baptism or the Holy Spirit baptism." Let us consider this statement and determine if the expression "one baptism" (verse 5) negates the New Testament ordinance of water baptism. When verse 4 says, "There is one body," we know it is speaking of the church. This is confirmed in Colossians 1:18, which states, "And he [Christ, or 'his dear Son'; verse 13] is the head of the body [singular], the church [singular]." Although there is only "one body," clearly described in our text in 1 Corinthians 12:12, the same Apostle wrote, "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members [plural] of that one body [singular], being many [plural], are one body [singular]." Verse 14 lets us know that "the body is not one member, but many." Romans 12:4-5 clearly says, "For as we have many members in one body, and all members [plural] have not the same office: So we, being many [plural], are one body [singular] in Christ, and every one members [plural] one of another."

Since there are "many members," does that mean there are many bodies? Just because there are many congregations, does that mean there are many bodies? Certainly not! "There is one body," but it has "many members"; it is comprised of many people. It is in many localities, yet it is still "one body." Likewise, neither does "one baptism" mean you must "take your pick": either water baptism or the Holy Spirit baptism.

Let us look further at another one of the seven unities set forth. Verse 4 speaks of "one Spirit." We read in 1 Corinthians 12:7-11: "But the manifestation of the Spirit [*the* Spirit, one Spirit] is given to every man [There is a plurality. It is one Spirit, but the manifestation is through everyone who has that Spirit; there are, in essence, many manifestations.] to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom [not everyone receives that gift]; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit [not everyone is given that gift]; To another faith by the same Spirit [not everyone receives that gift]; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers [or different] kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit [one Spirit], dividing to every man severally as he will."

Although there is "that one and the selfsame Spirit," he described it as "dividing to every man severally as he will," or in essence, as many manifestations of the Spirit. So, because there are many manifestations of one Spirit, does that mean there is more than one Spirit? First Corinthians 12:4 tells us, "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit." Because there are many manifestations and many gifts, is there more than one Spirit? Certainly not! Would it be correct to say that you must "take your pick" between the Spirit and one of His outward manifestations? Certainly not!

Verse 5 of our text speaks of "One Lord." However, in Acts 3:19-20 Peter preached: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you." After conversion Jesus Christ is sent to every individual heart as an indwelling, abiding presence. How many Lords are there? Jesus Christ has been sent unto every individual who has experienced a conversion. There are multiple manifestations, or multiple saints who have His indwelling presence, but there is still only "one Lord."

Verse 6 of our text tells us that there is "One God and Father," yet the end of that verse says, "... and in you all." Again, there are multiple recipients of His presence. In John 14:2, prior to going to Calvary, Jesus said, "In my Father's house are many mansions." The Greek word for "mansions" is *mone* and is translated as "abode" in John 14:23. The interlinear portion of the Greek tells you that word is "dwelling." In other words, there are many saints in whom the presence of God resides, or dwells. There is just one God (our Father), but in His house are many abodes, or many dwelling places.

Jesus let us know in verse 23, "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." Is there more than one Father because there are many abodes? Certainly, no one would say that you have to choose between the scriptural truth of "one God" or the practical experience of Him being "in you all"; they are both part and parcel of the whole. The singularity of these seven unities (verses 4-6) deals with the principle, not the practical aspect. There is "one body," but there are "many members." There is "one Spirit," but there are many manifestations and many gifts. There is "one God," but there are many abodes.

Paul's Burden in Writing Was to See Unity

It is important when reading our text to recognize that the Apostle Paul was writing to a congregation. According to Ephesians 1:1, he was writing "to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus." The predominant burden, which Paul desired to convey, is found in Ephesians 1:9-10, which says, "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him." The underlying burden of this epistle is unity.

Sadly, an epistle written with the desire to create greater unity has been used by the enemy to foster division. The burden of every true man of God yet today is to see God's people together. There is no greater grief that can strike the heart of a parent than when there is aught and separation between their children. A parent will do everything possible to resolve that. Just as you, as a parent, do not want your children to be at odds with one another, neither does God.

We read in Ephesians 2:6, "And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places . . ." Although He "raised us up together," in the spiritual sense, we were not all raised up together in a literal or practical sense. We were saved at different times, places, circumstances, and ages. He was not conveying the practical sense but the principle that we were all brought to the same spiritual position in Christ Jesus. The Apostle Paul was dealing with the principles of unity. Look at Ephesians 2:15, which states, "Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in [the] ordinances [the law of commandments, the doctrine, the statutes of the Old Testament were abolished]; for to make in himself of twain [or two] one new man . . ."

The unity he was speaking of in this context was between the Jews and the Gentiles. In verse 11 he said, "Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh," and then he wrote in verses 13-14: "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one [Jew and Gentile] . . ." Christ brought a unity amongst mankind. This is supported by Ephesians 2:19-22, which reads: "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners [those of the 'uncircumcision'; verse 12], but fellowcitizens with the saints [no longer Jew or Gentile but 'saints'; He has made both one], and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building [both Jew and Gentile] fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." The key word is "together." The essence of this epistle is unity.

Water Baptism Is a Representation of the Work of Salvation

In our text the Apostle set forth seven truths essential for us to have unity of experience, and what he termed in Ephesians 4:13 as "unity of the faith." When he wrote of "one baptism" (verse 5), he was revealing that which enables us to be an adherent and participant in the one faith: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." Wuest offers it in *The New Testament Expanded Translation* as, "One placing into the body of Christ by the Holy Spirit." The Greek word for "baptism" in verse 5 is *baptisma*. It is used speaking of the New Testament ordinance, but it is also used to reveal what the New Testament ordinance represents. The same word is used in 1 Peter 3:21, when the Apostle Peter wrote, "The like figure whereunto even baptism . . ."

The Emphatic Greek Diaglott renders this portion of this verse as "immersion, a representation." The New Testament ordinance of water baptism is "a representation." (The word "figure" is rendered "representation" in *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott*.) There is no power in the water to save from sin or to wash away sin; it is a representation. Because of lack of Biblical understanding, some intending to stand for truth have lost their credibility. They have taken Scriptures that were

not speaking of water baptism whatsoever, but because they read the word "baptism," they automatically think of it as water. We must recognize this is a "figure," a "representation."

Yet, because baptism is a figure does not mean we should dismiss water baptism. It is kind of like the old adage, "Don't throw the baby out with the bath water." Because there is a truth behind it, we have to ask the question of what is it a representation? When our text speaks of "one baptism," it is speaking of the reality of which water baptism is the representation. Man cannot see that internal work which is wrought by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, God ordained an outward expression, a public profession, a way to witness to the community, that we have experienced that inward work.

In all four Gospel accounts, the same truth concerning water baptism being a representation is recorded. The words of John the Baptizer are found in each Gospel. Matthew 3:11 says, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." Mark 1:8 reads, "I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost." Luke 3:16 states, "I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost" John 1:32-33 tells us: "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." These Scriptures are in clarity and unity in stating that Christ would baptize with the Holy Ghost.

According to *Strong's Concordance* and *Vine's Dictionary*, the words "baptize" and "baptizeth" in these four Gospel accounts are the verb form of the same Greek word *baptisma*, which is used in our text. The verb form in the Greek is *baptizo*. The same Greek word is used in each of these verses to speak of both the water baptism and the Spirit baptism. According to these four Gospel accounts, the baptism that Christ brought to man is, as Matthew 3:11 says, "with the Holy Ghost." In other words, it is a Spirit baptism, it is a work of the Holy Spirit, a spiritual experience.

To receive this experience consists of many aspects, which could each be a study in themselves, but we want to limit ourselves to the burden of this study. The same Greek word (*baptizo*) is used in the following Scriptures as well. Acts 2:37-38 says: "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Here is where those who have not studied sufficiently to be "rightly dividing the Word of Truth" will tell you that you should repent and then be water baptized. However, that verse is not speaking of water baptism because the end of that verse says, "for the remissions of sins." Does water baptism remit sins? No. Does water baptism enable you to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost? No.

When you truly repent, when you have a desire to change direction in your life, you will receive the "remission of sins," but that alone does not bring a conversion. Conversion consists of more than just remission; you must have *remission* and *regeneration*. Where does the regeneration come from? The Holy Ghost. Romans 8:10 tells us that "the Spirit is life." Romans 3:25 says, "Whom [speaking of 'Christ Jesus'; verse 24] God hath set forth to be a propitiation [mercy seat; *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott*] through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past" When you come in old-time Bible repentance, taking faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ and the atoning work wrought on Calvary's tree, that faith will remit the sins that are past, but you are not saved yet.

We read in Romans 5:1-2: "Therefore being justified by faith, [Once faith in His blood is exercised, the remission of sins takes place, and our sins are put behind us. In the eyes of God, we are in a justified, or clear, state.] we have peace with God [not the peace of God but *with* God; we have been reconciled, we are no longer at enmity because the sin has been remitted] through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace" Ephesians 2:8 tells us very clearly what this grace will do, stating, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God."

Peter said, "Repent ... and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). This gift is not the ability to "jibber-jabber" in some unknown tongue, roll on the floor, froth at the mouth, do cartwheels, or throw songbooks. The gift of the Holy Ghost is the Holy Ghost. He is the One who enables us to have this grace. We are saved by grace, and it is the Spirit of God that gives us "life" (Romans 8:10). When Peter wrote about the repentance that brings remission of sins, he was talking about that portion of the spiritual experience which puts one into a position to "receive the gift of the Holy Ghost," the gift of spiritual life. In order for that to happen, there are things that must take place.

Romans 6:3-4 says: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death [the word 'baptism' in all these verses is the same word used in our text]: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." When verse 3 talks about those who were "baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death," this reveals part of what is necessary to receive the true experience. According to verse 2, we die out to sin. Jesus died for sin, and we are to die to sin. "Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into death."

Water baptism is a figure of the spiritual gift we received, that work which was wrought by the Holy Spirit. While the blood of Jesus Christ can remit the sins that are past, it will not enable you to die out to sin. To have your sins buried in the sea of forgetfulness, never to be remembered against you again is the work of remission, then to be resurrected to newness of life with the power to live victoriously is the work of the Holy Ghost. Verse 4 describes it as being "raised up from the dead ... so we also should walk in newness of life." It is the Holy Ghost, not blood and not water, that enables us to do that.

The Apostle wrote in Colossians 2:12-13: "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened [made alive] together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses." These Scriptures are all portraying that spiritual work, the various aspects and components of that one baptism. First Corinthians 12:13 says, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body" Galatians 3:27 states, "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." Water baptism does not enable you to "put on Christ," but it is "a representation" of that spiritual work which enabled you and me to "put on Christ."

Our text clearly denotes "one baptism" in verse 5 (we certainly do not discount that in any way whatsoever), but although there is one baptism, there are many facets. Another aspect of Holy Ghost baptism that is symbolized by water is found in Titus 3:5. There the Apostle wrote, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done [in other words, salvation is not of external works], but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." This is where the water figure comes into focus. Water is always that which was used for washing and cleansing. Thus, this is another representation of spiritual baptism, a portrayal of the washing of regeneration, which is a spiritual act. This is where the stronger than the strong man cleanses our spirit.

Water Is a Symbol of the Spirit That Brings Regeneration

When the Holy Ghost brings conviction and it begins to seize our hearts, there is "godly sorrow [that] worketh repentance" (2 Corinthians 7:10). Conviction reveals the need to change our ways and to change the direction of our life. That is what repentance is: changing direction. According to Romans 10:17, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." When we have heard the Word of God, our faith is inspired. Ephesians 2:8 tells us that "faith ... is the gift of God." God gives the faith that comes through the preached message. When dear hearts embrace it, repent, and change direction; they take faith in His blood that remits the sins that are past. However, it must go deeper than that. Zechariah 13:1 describes "a fountain [which was] opened ... for sin and for uncleanness." John 19:34 reads, "... and forthwith came there out blood and water." The blood was for remission, and water is a symbol of the Spirit that brings the regeneration. When we come in old-time Bible repentance, taking faith in His blood, thank God, that remits the sins that are past and puts us in a justified state. Then we have access to this grace. The Spirit of God moves on the scene, and He cleanses (or washes) our spirit. This is vital because the reason we did what we did and lived how we lived was because of the unclean spirit we possessed. (Read Zechariah 13:1-2.)

The unclean spirit has to be cleansed out. The stronger than the strong man cleanses our spirit and takes out the unclean spirit. When He does that, the Holy Spirit regenerates us and makes His advent into our lives as an abiding presence, thus giving us the power to live right. We read in Luke 11:20-22: "But if I with the finger of God ['Spirit of God'; Matthew 12:28] cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you. When a strong man armed ['devils,' or devilish spirits; verse 20] keepeth his palace [the place where he resides and rules; his abode is the heart of man], his goods are in peace: But when a stronger than he [the 'finger of God' or the 'Spirit of God'] shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils."

Luke 11:24 says, "When the unclean spirit is gone out" The Holy Spirit comes in, binds those unclean spirits, and casts them out. Man does what he does and lives how he lives because of the spirit he possesses. It does not matter how many times you go to an altar and ask for forgiveness of sins. Until the unclean spirit that is causing the sin is removed, you will never be able to live differently. Thank God, through real salvation, real conversion, the stronger than the strong man gives us "the washing of regeneration," takes the unclean spirit out, and then He replaces it with His abiding presence, which Romans 1:4 calls "the spirit of holiness." The Spirit of God enables us to live a life of holiness. These are the aspects this baptism consists of: death and burial (Romans 6:3-4); the washing of regeneration (Titus 3:5); the acceptance of the Holy Spirit as a gift (Acts 2:38), which brings a spiritual resurrection (Romans 6:4; Colossians 3:1); and being inducted into the body (1 Corinthians 12:13). These are the truths being portrayed in this experience of the "one baptism."

The word "baptism" in our text is used broadly and symbolically on occasions. To say that every Scripture which uses the word *baptism* is speaking of water discounts and discredits the truth in the eyes of others. Look at the words of Jesus in Matthew 20:22. He said: "Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" Jesus was not talking about water baptism, neither was He talking about

Holy Ghost baptism here. Many of these Gospel writers said you would be baptized "with the Holy Ghost, and with fire" (Matthew 3:11). The baptism with fire is different than Holy Ghost baptism. Peter alluded to that fire in 1 Peter 4:12-13, when he wrote, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings." The baptism with fire is the fiery trial of suffering. This is the baptism Jesus was speaking of in Matthew 20:22.

First Corinthians 10:1-2 tells us: "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers [the Hebrew ancestry] were under the cloud [referring to Exodus, Chapter 14, where the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night represent the presence of God], and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized [the same Greek word as used in the other text] unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." Although this verse says they were "baptized ... in the sea," this is not water baptism. Remember, the children of Israel went through on dry ground. Not a one of them got any water on them. Likewise, they were not baptized in the cloud, because they were not in the cloud. This verse is teaching us that there is a symbolic approach, or application of the word "baptized."

Concerning 1 Corinthians 10:2, *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges* says, "Baptized under Moses, that they had become connected with him, dependent on his commands and guidance." *Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown's Bible Commentary* says, "Baptized here is equivalent to 'initiated'." When the Israelites were baptized "under Moses," it was not water baptism or Holy Ghost baptism. Here baptism is being used as an initiation and identification. They were connected with or identified with Moses. In John 9:28 the Jews said, "We are Moses' disciples." In other words, they were identified with Moses and his work.

There is indeed, as our text says, "one baptism," and it is a spiritual reality. Just as the other unities have many manifestations, so does this "one baptism" have many manifestations or representations as well. Water baptism, or the ordinance, is a representation of the spiritual work wrought in our life. First Peter 3:21 says, "The like figure [*The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* says 'a representation'] whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." In other words, it portrays a spiritual work that produced a good conscience. What kind of conscience was there prior to the Advent of Christ and the institution of the New Covenant? Hebrews 10:2, speaking of the Old Testament sacrifices, tells us, "For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins." The old economy could not remove men's conscience of sins. Hebrews 9:9 says, "... could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience." The old covenant could not eradicate sin, but thank God, Jesus did! He brought "a new and living way" (Hebrews 10:20).

There is now no more "conscience of sins"! We have a purged conscience, and baptism is a figure, or a representation of that purging. This is a spiritual work where you experience "a death" (Romans 6:3), where you "are buried," where you are "in the likeness of his resurrection" (Romans 6:5), and where you "walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4). This is what the ordinance is a figure, or a representation of: these spiritual features. In reality, it is as verse 5 says: "one baptism." It is *one* experience, an experience within with a manifestation without, but it is all part and parcel of one divine work, just as it is with holiness. First Thessalonians 4:7 tells us very clearly, "For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness." There is only one holiness, but there are two aspects: "the flesh and spirit" (2 Corinthians 7:1).

May God help us to understand the truth concerning what verse 5 of our text denotes as "one baptism." The spiritual reality certainly does not negate the physical ordinance, or manifestation. I trust you will allow the Spirit to enable "the eyes of your understanding [to be] enlightened" (Ephesians 1:18). The Lord does not desire confusion or contention on this very vital subject, but rather He desires enlightenment. These issues are important!

I have seen a time when pastors were unseated because this false teaching became prevalent in some areas. I have seen it affect entire congregations, taking them out of fellowship of the truth. This same teaching is doing a resurgence today, and I bring this, as Paul said, "in the defence ... of the gospel" (Philippians 1:7). Jesus said in John 8:32, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Only truth can dispel falsity. If we allow ourselves to entertain falsity, our thinking will affect our belief system. If our belief system is wrong, we will live wrong. Back of it all is the "spirit of error" (1 John 4:6). I say with love and kindness, there are, no doubt, good brethren enveloped in this falsity. My burden is that they might come unto a knowledge of truth, see the precious truths, and see the enemy behind the teaching of "anti-ordinance."

CHAPTER FIVE

Water Baptism

Matthew 3:13 Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.

14 But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

15 And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Matthew 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

This Ordinance Was Established by Christ

As we consider the thought of water baptism, we do so because there are those who propound, as one writer said, "I am against water baptism." Those who are advocates of the anti-ordinance heresy tout it as new light and greater understanding. In reality, this doctrine was introduced in "the cloudy and dark day" of which Ezekiel 34:12 speaks. This doctrine was introduced in the Protestant era. It was popularized by the Quakers, and it is a falsity that the sixth-seal brethren contended with as they worked to bring a people out of Babylon to the truth. Brother H. M. Riggle refuted it extensively in his book entitled *Christian Baptism, The Lord's Supper, and Feet Washing*. In that writing, he labored extensively to lay forth the truth, refuting the teachings of Quakerism predominately, as they have reference to the anti-ordinance position. This teaching is not new light, but rather it is old darkness. In Matthew 6:23b Jesus said, "If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"

Isaiah 5:20 speaks of a people who "put darkness for light." There are those who teach the anti-ordinance doctrine, spiritualizing the ordinances of the New Testament, teaching that this is light. They discount, discredit, denounce, and deny the New Testament ordinances. What they consider to be Biblical light is actually darkness. The antiordinance doctrine is a product of sectism, and when properly examined and exposed, it is proved to be clearly scripturally unsound.

There are seven distinct points, or principles, we want to consider concerning water baptism. The first principle is that this ordinance was established by Christ. Water baptism is an ordinance because Christ established it as such. In our text, John initially attempted to dissuade Christ, and Jesus clearly told him in Matthew 3:15a, "Suffer [or permit] it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* renders it, "Thus, it is becoming us to establish every ordinance." On this occasion, Christ was instituting a new ordinance. As we go through our study, we will find that this has nothing to do with an Old Testament practice, rather Christ was instituting a New Testament practice.

The occasion of Christ's baptism is so notable, it is related in all four Gospel accounts (Matthew 3:16; Mark 1:9; Luke 3:21; John 1:31-33). There are those who would say, "This was on Old Testament rite, ritual, or practice, and Christ was finishing (or completing) it," using for supposed proof the part of Matthew 3:15 that says, "it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." Looking at the expression "fulfil," they say that it is a completion, a fulfillment, or an ending. The Greek word used for "fulfil" is the word *pleroo*, the same word used in Acts 2:4, which tells us on the Day of Pentecost "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." Certainly, that was not a finishing, a completion, or an elimination of something. The word in the Greek actually means "furnish," and on the Day of Pentecost, they were *furnished* with the Holy Spirit. Previously, they did not have the indwelling presence, but on the Day of Pentecost, they were furnished with that abiding presence.

There is not one Old Testament Scripture that shows Christ's baptism was an Old Testament type, ritual, rite, or practice. There is not one Old Testament Scripture that taught a practice such as John performed on Christ and that Christ and the disciples performed on others. The Apostle John said that this was done "that he should be made manifest to Israel" (John 1:31). We must also take into account the words of Jesus in Luke 16:16, when He said, "The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it." The Kingdom of God began to be preached with John. In other words, when John came, there was a transition. John had a different message.

Matthew 3:1-2 says: "In those days came John the Baptist [the expanded Greek says 'the Baptizer'], preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Mark's rendering talks about "the kingdom of God" (Mark 1:15), letting us know that they are interchangeable and synonymous terms. Although the Kingdom

of God did not come with power until the Day of Pentecost, it was preached beginning with John. In Mark 9:1 Jesus told of when "the kingdom of God [will] come with power." That power came on the Day of Pentecost, but Jesus plainly let them know that "the law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached" (Luke 16:16).

This baptism of Christ, recorded in all four Gospel accounts, was not the termination of something old. Brother H. M. Riggle, in his book *Christian Baptism, The Lord's Supper, and Feet Washing*, stated on page 123: "I have failed to find a single citation to a clear example of one immersion administered to the people by the Old Testament ministry. There is not one. There is nowhere in the Old Testament an account of one administration of water baptism as that administered by John, Christ, and the apostles in the new." This was the institution of the new. When Jesus, in our text, spoke of fulfilling "all righteousness," what did Jesus actually come to fulfill, or furnish man with?

If you go to Daniel's prophecy of the seventy prophetic weeks, you will read that one of the things the Messiah would do when He ushered in that seventieth week was "to bring in everlasting righteousness" (Daniel 9:24). When Jesus said in Matthew 3:15 to "Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness," He was instituting an ordinance that portrays the experience we can receive in this New Testament dispensation.

Notice that this was sanctioned by the Triune Godhead. Matthew 3:16-17 says: "And Jesus [the Son], when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God [the Holy Spirit] descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son [the voice of God the Father]" This is the same Triune Godhead by which (according to our companion text) this ordinance is to be performed in the name of: "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

Water Baptism Was Practiced by the Apostles

The second truth or principle we must consider is that water baptism was an apostolic practice. The apostles practiced water baptism during Christ's earthly ministry. We read in John 3:22, "After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judaea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized." This could not have been Holy Ghost baptism because the Holy Ghost was not given until the Day of Pentecost. John 4:1-2 says: "When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples)." We see it was a practice of Jesus' disciples under His guidance and authority.

The baptism of Christ in our text was not the end of a practice, but rather it was the commencement of an ordinance, one which is to be performed until the Consummation. Prior to His Ascension, some of the last words Jesus spoke to His disciples are found in Matthew 28:18-20: "All power ['authority'; *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott*] is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things [the only way you can teach someone to observe is by observing it yourself] whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." How long were these practices to be performed? Until "the end of the world."

Some writers try to disclaim this, saying: "They did not understand. They continued an Old Testament practice because they were not enlightened." This is untrue for two reasons: (1) it was not an Old Testament practice; and (2) they were explicitly enlightened by the words of our Lord. There was no misunderstanding in their minds, as we will see as we continue our study. They took these words of Christ, went forth, and put them into practice. They observed, just as Jesus instructed them to observe.

When John the Baptizer exclaimed in our text, "I have need to be baptized of thee" (Matthew 3:14), some say, "He was talking about Holy Ghost baptism." However, that was not the discussion at hand. Jesus came to be baptized of water of John; that was the discussion at hand. In our companion text, Jesus uttered these words of instruction, including baptism, saying, "Go ye" The antecedent of that pronoun "ye" is found in Matthew 28:16: "the eleven disciples." This command was given to the disciples, those who were committed to following the discipline of Christ. Disciples cannot baptize people with the Holy Ghost. Disciples cannot perform spiritual baptism. The only type of baptism that the disciples could perform was water baptism. One writer, referencing this text and others, said, "It is very plain to see they are speaking of the baptism of the Spirit." However, nothing could be further from what is actually being said here.

Some try to explain this passage away by saying, "Jesus was telling the disciples to go teach and preach, as Mark rendered it in his Gospel, and it was the teaching and preaching that brought the Holy Ghost baptism." I do not discount that the teaching and the preaching introduces people to the need of salvation where they can receive the Holy Spirit baptism. Yet, that is not what He was referring to in this passage. The construction of the words and Scripture is of such that this is a baptism, or a baptizing, that the disciples could themselves perform. Again, man cannot perform Holy Ghost baptism. These brethren understood what Jesus was conveying. There was no confusion in their minds.

Water Baptism Was Practiced by the Morning-Time Church

The third principle that we want to consider is that water baptism was a practice after Pentecost performed by the morning-time church. Let us substantiate this with some Scriptures. Acts 8:12-13, speaking of when Philip was down in Samaria, says: "But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip" We can be sure that this was not Holy Ghost baptism because verses 14-16 tell us: "Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them)." They had not received Holy Ghost baptism. Therefore, the baptism Philip performed was water baptism. Philip was an evangelist, and he was doing that which he and the brethren were commissioned to do: he baptized.

We read in Acts 8:26-36 the account of Philip and the Ethiopian. Verse 36 says, "And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" Why did he bring up water? It must have been part of what Philip preached, when he "preached unto him Jesus" (verse 35). The thought of water baptism came from the Gospel. How else would the eunuch have known about being baptized? He did not even know whom Isaiah, Chapter 53, was speaking of until Philip began to enlighten him. We read in Acts 8:38, "And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him." This clearly reveals that water baptism was practiced by the morning-time brethren.

Let us consider the Apostle Paul in Acts 9:17-18: "And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost [there is Holy Ghost baptism]. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized." If the last part of that verse is talking about Holy Ghost baptism, why did Paul have to arise, or change positions? This was water baptism.

We can read of how Peter practiced this New Testament ordinance when he was at Cornelius' house. Acts 10:44-48 tells us: "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word [Holy Ghost baptism]. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost [Holy Ghost baptism]. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized" They had already received the Holy Ghost baptism, but now Peter was speaking of being baptized in water. Ones may try to discount this, but I will stick with the Word of God and stick with Peter. God used him on the Day of Pentecost, God used him at Cornelius' house, and God used him to write two epistles included in the Scriptures.

Let us consider Lydia. Acts 16:15 tells us that she and her household were baptized. In Acts 16:30-33 we read that the Philippian jailer and his household were baptized. We read in Acts 18:1, "After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth." Also, Acts 18:8 says, "And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagoge, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized." To those who say, "That has to be spiritual, that has to be speaking of the Holy Ghost," look at what Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 1:14. He said, "I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius." The baptism Crispus received (Acts 18:8) was water baptism, because he was baptized by Paul. You cannot baptize someone in the Holy Ghost. This was a baptism Paul performed; this was a water baptism. He continued in 1 Corinthians 1:16, writing, "And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other." Paul performed water baptism, and this was many years subsequent to Pentecost (in the proximity of A.D. 54-57).

There are some who would quickly seize verse 17, where Paul said, "For Christ sent me not to baptize" They say that Paul regretted that he had ever baptized. This text must be taken in the context to understand what Paul was dealing with in Corinth. First Corinthians 1:10-11 tells us: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing [obviously some were not, or he would not have had to admonish that], and that there be no divisions [the Greek says 'schisms'] among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you." This was Paul's burden. He heard that there were contentions (verse 11), and his burden was to deal with this so that there would be no divisions (verse 10).

The divisions had not come yet. However, the enemy was working through the contentions, and if they were not dealt with, it was going to bring division and separate the people. What were the contentions over? It was the same thing people divide over yet today: preachers. This is revealed when Paul said in 1 Corinthians 1:12-13: "Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. [Those were all preachers. When people's

spirituality begins to ebb, they begin to become clickish, clannish, and they begin to have a favorite preacher.] Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? [Should Paul no longer preach the Crucifixion because some were honoring him beyond degree? That would be foolishness.] or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" He was not decrying or discounting baptism, but he was dealing with their spiritual condition. The contentions were due to lifting men up beyond where men should be lifted and becoming divisive over various preachers.

When the people at Corinth became weak in their experience, they began to rest in externals. They began to rest in things, such as: who baptized them, as if somehow the spirituality of the man who baptized them was transferred to them. This is the context in which these words were penned. That is why when Paul said in verse 17, "Christ sent me not to baptize," he was not disparaging the ordinance of water baptism nor the practice of it. He was just simply saying, in essence, "The way you are acting, being proud of who baptized you, I am glad I did not baptize more of you than I did." Keep in mind that when Paul said he only baptized Crispus and Gaius and the household of Stephanas, he was referring specifically to Corinth. We previously read where he baptized people in other localities.

Let us look at another example where Paul baptized the Samaritan brethren in Ephesus. Acts 19:1-6 says: "And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. [John baptized concerning He who was to come. These brethren had embraced John's baptism. Communication and travel were not as today. Christ had come, had His ministry, been crucified, died, resurrected, and ascended; yet, they had never heard about any of it. The Day of Pentecost had come, the Holy Ghost had been given, but they had heard nothing since what John told them. Therefore, when Paul asked, 'Unto what then were ye baptized?' and they said, 'John's,' then he knew what they were talking about.]

"Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him [that is the baptism John performed], that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this [that Christ had come], they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them." In this passage, we see two separate things: receiving the Holy Ghost was one thing and being baptized by Paul was another thing.

Water Baptism Is to Be by Immersion

The fourth principle we want to consider is that there is only one acceptable mode of baptism. Matthew 3:13 reads, "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized [immersed]; *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott*] of him." Verse 16 in *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* says, "Jesus being immersed." There is only one acceptable Biblical mode of water baptism, and that is immersion. Matthew 3:16 tells us, "And Jesus, when he was baptized [immersed], went up straightway *out of* the water." One does not need to go into the water to be sprinkled or poured. John 3:23 says, "And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there." You do not need "much water" for sprinkling or pouring. We also see this example beyond Pentecost in the story of Philip and the eunuch. Acts 8:38 tells us that "they went down both into the water . . . and he baptized him." Then we read that "they were come up out of the water" (verse 39). Why was it necessary to "come up out of the water"? Because Philip was baptizing by immersion, not sprinkling, not pouring; he was immersing him under the water.

Why is immersion the only acceptable Biblical mode? We know that baptism is a "like figure" (1 Peter 3:21), or *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* says "a representation." What is it a representation of? Romans 6:3 tells us that we are "baptized into his death," and verse 4 says that "we are buried with him by baptism." We read in Colossians 3:3, "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." We are "dead to sin" (Romans 6:2); then "we are buried with him," and then we are "raised up from the dead" and able to "walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4); or "in the likeness of his resurrection" (Romans 6:5). Baptism shows the spiritual work of our death, burial, and resurrection. That is why the symbol, or the figure, is immersion. It portrays that our sins are buried in the sea of God's forgetfulness, never to be remembered against us again, that our life is hid with Christ in God, and then we are resurrected in newness of life. This figure shows that our relationship to sin and the world is dead, and it shows "the likeness of his resurrection," new life. Just as He came out of the tomb in newness of life, we are resurrected through that spiritual experience. If we are dead to sin, if we have been buried and are "in the likeness of his resurrection," we should show it in the figure, or the representation, by having the ordinance of water baptism performed upon us.

This reminds me of a story. Years ago, in the deep south, back in the days of slavery, there was a master who was a very devout man. He was in a sectarian organization, for that was all the light they had. When he went to the church services, he would take his slave with him, and the slave would sit outside on a rock and listen through the window. One

day there was a baptismal service, and the minister proceeded to tell the candidates to come up front. He told them that he was going to baptize them, to bury them in Christ, and he began to sprinkle them, saying, "You are dead; you are buried; and you are resurrected." The slave was sitting outside, taking all of this in. About a month or so later, one of the owner's prized horses died. He told his slave, "Take that horse out beyond the hill and bury him." A few weeks later, the master was out riding, and he smelled a foul odor. As he came up over the hill, there laid the dead horse with a few handfuls of dirt on it. He came back to the house very disturbed, and he asked his servant, "Did I not tell you to bury that horse?"

"Yes, Master."

"Well, that horse is laying up there on that hill, and he is not buried."

"Oh yes, he is, Master."

"No, he is not! Do not lie to me!"

"Yes, Master, that horse is buried. The preacher done said so."

"What are you talking about?"

"Master, at that baptismal service when the minister sprinkled water all over them people, he told them they were buried. That is the same thing I did with your horse."

Sprinkling is not buried, and pouring is not buried. It is like a man once said, "If you have spotted religion, then you ought to be sprinkled; if you have striped religion, you ought to be poured; but if you have pure religion, you ought to be completely covered and immersed."

The Biblical Formula for Water Baptism

Let us proceed to our companion text where we find the fifth principle we want to consider, and that is concerning the only acceptable formula for baptism. There are those who discredit these expressions, but Jesus made it expressly clear in Matthew 28:19, saying, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." There are those who say Jesus never intended to set forth such a formula. They claim Christ never intended to have strict adherence to these words. Those advocates purport that the morning-time brethren certainly never practiced using this formula, because there is nowhere else in the Scriptures where it is recorded. In the same line of thinking, there are only two places where being "born again" is spoken of expressly in the Scriptures. Does that negate the vital importance of being born again because it is only mentioned in two places? Certainly not.

There are those who say baptism should be performed in Jesus' name only, bringing other Scriptures to bear (Acts 8:16; 10:48; 19:5). They say, "This must be the Biblical formula," and they view it as superseding what Jesus said in Matthew 28:19. Each of these verses in the Book of Acts include the expression "baptized in the name of the Lord." The Greek word in every one of these verses for "name" is *onoma*, and it means "authority." Both *Strong's Concordance* and *Vine's Expository* tell us, "Phrases rendered 'in the name' may be analyzed as representing the authority of Christ." The brethren in these Scriptures in the Book of Acts were not instituting a different or a new formula than what was established by Christ. Rather, they were letting the candidates and the audience know by whose authority they were operating.

It is the same way when we anoint people for healing. We come down to the close of the prayer, and we say "in the name of Jesus." That means we are operating under His authority; it is His authority that has enabled us to lay hands on the sick, anoint them with oil, and pray the prayer of faith. In accordance with the premises set forth in the Scriptures, we are operating under His authority. When this expression is used concerning the various baptisms in the Book of Acts, it is not decrying or ignoring the formula that Jesus set forth, but merely recounting that these things were done under the authority of Christ.

Matthew 21:23-25 tells us: "And when he [speaking of Christ] was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority? And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men?" When Jesus was asked, "By what authority?" He brought up "The baptism of John." Jesus was equating the validity of baptism with the source, or the authority, by which it was done. Likewise, in Acts they were merely validating their authority, not setting forth a new formula.

In our companion text, Jesus invoked the three personages of the Trinity because each plays a role in what Hebrews 2:3 calls "so great salvation." First is "the Father." The Father is the originator of the plan. John 3:16 tells us that "he gave his only begotten Son." The plan originated with God. Next is "the Son." The Son is the implementer of the plan. John 15:13 tells us that He laid "down his life." He implemented the plan. He "died for the ungodly" (Romans 5:6).

Lastly, the Holy Ghost is the administrator of the plan. Romans 5:5 says that "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." They are appropriately accorded recognition. It is through the working

power of each of these divine personages that we have gained the experience and the reality of which water baptism is a representation. Without any of these divine personages, there would not be an experience, there would not be any "so great salvation," we would not be able to be recipients of baptism with the Holy Ghost. All three of these personages of the Triune Godhead played a vital role and, as such, should be appropriately recognized. It was in the name of, under Their authority, by the work They wrought, that we can even have an experience. This is why Jesus set it forth in such a manner.

The sixth scriptural premise, or principle, that we need to cover comes into focus by again viewing Jesus' instruction in Matthew 28:19. It states, "Go ye [the disciples; verse 16] therefore, and teach [an act that they were to perform] all nations, baptizing them [an act they were to perform] in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The Scriptures are replete with references stating that we are not to add to or diminish from the Word of God (Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32; Proverbs 30:6). Revelation 22:18-19 tells us, "... If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." That should bring a very sober and somber consideration concerning what we do with the teachings of Christ in God's eternal Word. To take away this New Testament ordinance of water baptism is a very dangerous position to occupy.

We Are to Follow Christ

The seventh and final principle we need to understand is that Jesus is our example. First Peter 2:21 reads, "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps." What were some of His steps? He was baptized of water. First John 2:6 says, "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked." When Jesus instituted the ordinance of feet washing, consider what He admonished the brethren in John 13:14-15: "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." We are clearly enjoined to follow Him in water baptism. If you have been saved, baptized "with the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 3:11), if you are indeed "dead to sin" (Romans 6:2), and if you have been "buried with him" and "raised up ... in newness of life" (Romans 6:4), then you need to follow Him in the watery grave through the ordinance of water baptism.

To those who were baptized once before in sectism, I would ask if the man performing that practice was, as Ephesians 5:27 says, "holy and without blemish." If you were baptized in sectarian religion by one who did not have victory over sin himself, who taught that you have to live in sin, then he is a minister of sin and you should be re-baptized by a man who preaches and lives the holiness message. If you have backslid subsequent to your salvation, if you have gone into open, public sin, discarding the faith, then you need to (as Jesus said in Matthew 3:15) "fulfil all righteousness." You should receive the ordinance of baptism again.

I trust the truth concerning this New Testament ordinance of water baptism is plain. It is a New Testament ordinance, not an Old Testament practice. Our text in Matthew 3:15, in *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott*, says, "It is becoming us to establish every ordinance." Christ was establishing a New Testament ordinance. I trust the Holy Spirit has enabled us to clearly see these precious Biblical truths. Isaiah 35:8 says that his truths would be such that "the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein." If we have "an honest and good heart" (Luke 8:15), He will enlighten the eyes of our understanding through the Spirit (Ephesians 1:17-18). Sad to say, some are being taught erroneous teachings by men whom they revere and respect. Because of that, they are not doing as the saints in Berea who "searched the scriptures daily, [to see] whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11). Truth will stand examination. You never have to be fearful of the truth.

We need to "Study to shew thyself ... a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). I do not discount every dear man who propounds the false teaching of anti-ordinance; he may be doing it in honesty or ignorance, but back of this teaching is a spirit working, a spirit of error that works contrary to God's will, God's Word, and God's purpose. Because of that, we need to "know the truth," because "the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

CHAPTER SIX

Feet Washing

John 13:1 Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

2 And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him;

3 Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God;

4 He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself.

5 After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.

6 Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?

7 Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.

8 Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

9 Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.

10 Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.

11 For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

12 So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?

13 Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.

14 If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

15 For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

16 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.

17 If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

The Danger of the Anti-Ordinance Teachings

In this passage of Scripture text, we find recorded the account where the Lord instituted the New Testament ordinance of feet washing. Sadly, this is another New Testament ordinance that has come under assault. There are those who deny it as an ordinance and denounce its practice. As with baptism, there are those who propose a hyper-spiritualization of John, Chapter 13. They regard it as new light, greater understanding, greater depth or insight, but this is not so. The anti-ordinance position concerning this text is a product of what Ezekiel termed "the cloudy and dark day" (Ezekiel 34:12). This is not new light, but old darkness. It is not a teaching of enlightenment, but rather the product of the confusion and darkness of the Protestant era. Martin Luther, the one who was instrumental in bringing in what is termed the Lutheran era, which commenced the cloudy day, using the truth of the Scripture that says "the just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17), laid a deadly wound (Revelation 13:3) to the papal beast and broke the exclusive night of papal Rome forever. However, he then healed that deadly wound (Revelation 13:14) by turning around and building an image (a system that mirrors) to the very thing he had been protesting against. In Luther's sermon for "Maundy Thursday" (the Thursday before Easter), we read: "It is evident that our Lord, by His action in the Gospel, did not intend to teach us the outward washing of feet, which is done by means of water He simply gave us by His example an important lesson, that we should be humble, and ... that we should despise no one In this sense, washing of feet must be practiced not merely upon this day, but every day of our life."

Those who, in this twenty-first century, try to apply a hyper-spiritualized application to John, Chapter 13, and think it is new light, are about five hundred years behind. Martin Luther taught that in the Sixteenth Century Reformation, the first segment of the Protestant era. Luther and Zwingli had a very pronounced difference over this teaching to the place where Luther refused to fellowship with Zwingli. This is not "new" light (Ecclesiastes 1:9). It is merely old confusion and darkness.

Another validation of this fact is that in 1809 Thomas Campbell and his son Alexander Campbell began an organization known as "The Disciples of Christ." They went on to become more well-known as "The Church of Christ," and later, after some splits occurred, as "The Christian Church." In their writings, the Campbells denoted that feet washing was

"nonessential." They worked to discount it as an ordinance by the argument of what is termed the "Bethany Supper Teaching," which we will explain as we proceed through our study. This is an example of where the enemy is trying to insert "a little leaven [which] leaveneth the whole lump" (1 Corinthians 5:6). In the Scriptures, leaven signifies corruption, impurity, or corrupt doctrine. Even a little false doctrine has a massive effect, and it affects "the whole lump." We would term "leaven" in modern times as yeast. Once yeast is inserted in the bread, try separating or removing it; it affects the whole loaf.

This is the reason no place must be given to false teachings. We need to understand that by attempting to bring in sectarian darkness for light, we risk injecting "leaven" into "the whole lump." I speak with love and kindness. I have no animosity toward those who are adherents of this erroneous position, but rather my burden is to set forth the truth in such a way that dear ones may see the error of that position. There are those, no doubt, who are simply uninformed or mistaught, but there is still a danger. Behind every false teaching is a false spirit, and that spirit will not stop with just one erroneous teaching. A little false doctrine will, in time, cause people to completely be moved away from the path of righteousness.

When we bring sectarian teaching into the church, we are putting "darkness for light" (Isaiah 5:20). In 2 Corinthians 6:14 the Apostle Paul asked, "What communion hath light with darkness?" The obvious answer is that "darkness" and "light" have no "communion." They are incompatible; they are opposites. One will dispel the other: either light will dispel darkness, or if given a prominent position, darkness will dispel light. That is what brought in the dark age and the dark and cloudy day. First John 1:5 tells us, "God is light." If that is so, why did a dark age ensue? It was because an apostasy took place, and when people came under a spirit of apostasy, they began to put "darkness for light." Amos 8:9 tells us that "the sun [went] down at noon."

There was a spiritual eclipse, right in what should have been the zenith of the day, because people fell prey to "seducing spirits," and that produced "doctrines of devils" (1 Timothy 4:1). The Apostle Paul gave instructions in Ephesians 5:8, saying, "For ye were sometimes darkness [prior to conversion], but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light." Light is progressive; that is what the word "walk" indicates. Describing this day and time in which we live, Zechariah 14:7 says that "at evening time it shall be light." As "children of light," we certainly cannot walk in the sectarian darkness of the cloudy day.

There Are No "Nonessential" Portions of God's Word

Let us begin by considering arguments set forth by those who hold the erroneous position that feet washing is "nonessential," the position of the anti-ordinance teaching. The first truth and principle we must consider is that there are no "nonessential" portions of God's Word. When Jesus was tempted of the devil, look at His response. We read in Matthew 4:4, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

Let us go back to Deuteronomy to read the very verse Jesus was alluding to. Prior to stepping off the stage of action, Moses was giving the book called "Deuteronomy" to the new generation, those who were ready to go in and possess Canaan land. The word *Deuteronomy* comes from the Greek words *deuteros*, which means "second," and *nomos*, which means "law." Deuteronomy is the second giving of the Law. Much of it repeats what was written earlier in other Mosaic writings. This second giving of the Law happened after the "carcasses [of the older generation] fell in the wilderness" (Hebrews 3:17). The new generation was ready to enter into Canaan land, and Moses was rehearsing much of what occurred throughout the Exodus. In Deuteronomy 8:3 he said, "And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna [talking about that which occurred during the forty years in the wilderness], which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out the mouth of the LORD doth man live." This lets us know that the Word of God has a life-giving quality.

James 1:18 tells us, "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth" The Word of Truth has a life-giving quality. This is why the enemy is always working to disparage, alter, wrest, and twist the truth. He wants to choke off that life-giving quality which is vested in the Word. Every word of God is divinely inspired. Second Timothy 3:16 states, "All scripture [every word]; Proverbs 30:5] is given by inspiration [the Greek word is *theopneustos*, which means, 'God breathed'] of God"

According to Genesis 2:7, when "God formed man," He "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." (A better rendering is "living being" because the soul was created first, and then He formed the body. Jehovah's Witnesses refer to the Scripture that says all beasts "have all one breath" [Ecclesiastes 3:19] and say that the soul is nothing more than breath. Therefore, a more correct rendering of Genesis 2:7 is "a living being.")

There is a life-giving quality to the breath of God. That same breath is what brings "inspiration" or profit to the Scriptures. The enemy is ever working to mar that benefit, that life-giving quality. We read in John 21:25, "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself

could not contain the books that should be written. Amen." This reveals that the Bible, and especially the New Testament, is an extremely divinely condensed Book. Therefore, every word has a high premium associated with it. There are not any "nonessential" portions, especially concerning the "things which Jesus did" (John 21:25). Christ put a high premium on His words and on adherence to His words. In Matthew 7:24-25 Jesus said, "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock [*The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* says 'the rock,' and 1 Corinthians 10:4 says, 'that Rock was Christ']: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock [again, the Greek says 'the rock']."

Here, Jesus clearly stated that we are not only to hear these sayings but also do them. It is foolhardy to hear and not do. The reason He desires we hear is so that we can incorporate it into our living; so that we can do. In Matthew 7:21 Jesus said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth [a present and continual tense; to do and keep doing] the will of my Father which is in heaven." In these verses Jesus correlated "heareth" with "doeth." James, the brother of our Lord, reiterated this truth in James 1:22, saying, "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." Those who are not doers, who deem the words (or teachings) as "nonessential," are "deceiving your own selves." In other words, when people can hear the Word but not do the Word, they are placing themselves under a deception.

After instituting the ordinance of feet washing, Jesus said in John 14:15, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* renders it in this manner: "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." First John 5:3 tells us, "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." I trust it is becoming clear concerning the position of those who say that feet washing is a "nonessential." That is not a scripturally sound position. Verse 15 of our text reads, "For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." That is expressly clear.

Frequency Is Not Necessary to Validate Authority

Another argument set forth by some is concerning the fact that the ordinance of feet washing is only set forth in one gospel account: John. This leads us to the second principle: frequency is not necessary to validate authority. Second Timothy 3:16 tells us, "All scripture is given by inspiration" This is not based on the frequency or reoccurrence of a passage. Psalm 23 is only recorded once, yet people make tremendous usage of it. John's Gospel, which was the last Gospel account written, is an extremely unique Gospel. If we were to be consistent with their thinking and discount what is only mentioned once, if we were to discount what was only recorded in John's Gospel, consider the truths that we would lose: Christ as the Word (John 1:1,14); Christ's first miracle (John 2:1-11); and Christ's discourse with Nicodemus and those inspired words "Ye must be born again" (John 3:7). No other gospel writer related those accounts.

No other Gospel writer related the account concerning the woman at the well, and Jesus' teaching concerning the "living water" (John 4:10). Only John recorded the words of Christ when He said He was "the bread of life" (John 6:35); "the living bread" (John 6:51); "the door" (John 10:9); "the good shepherd" (John 10:11); and "the true vine" (John 15:1). Only John related the truth concerning "the Comforter [the *parakletos*], which is the Holy Ghost" (John 14:26). Only John recorded that High Priestly prayer (John, Chapter 17). There are many more examples we could cite as well.

Should we discount these truths because they are only mentioned in one Gospel? Certainly not! Frequency is not needed to validate scriptural authority. If that were true, much of our Bible would need to be removed because there are many truths that are only mentioned in one book. Many of the things written in the books of Esther, Job, and Ruth are only mentioned in those writings. If we were to use that faulty test of frequency, we would have to discount and dismiss those divinely inspired writings. However, frequency is not the test necessary to validate authority. We must take the sacred canon as it exists, and realize that each word is inspired. We must not allow the enemy to wrest or twist it to our own destruction.

A Spiritual Function, Not a Common Occurrence

The last fallacious argument we want to consider is the one used by the Campbellites (the so-called disciples). According to N. A. McConnel, a disciple minister, their position in discounting this text is found in John, Chapter 13. An excerpt from N. A. McConnel's writings states: "The supper at which Jesus washed his disciple's feet was not the Passover supper mentioned by Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Simon made a supper for Jesus in the town of Bethany. This was the supper at which Jesus washed feet, in the private house of Simon, where a common meal was served. Where did He do it? In a private family. When did He do it? Before retiring to rest. Why did He do it? For purposes of cleanliness and comfort. Where was the place? At Bethany in the house of Simon."

To see if any of this is true, let us examine the Scriptures to which they allude (Matthew 26:6-16; Mark 14:3-10). In neither account is feet washing observed or even mentioned. Also, these texts are dealing with what occurred in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper (Matthew 26:6; Mark 14:3). Matthew 26:2 and Mark 14:1 tell us exactly when this took place: two days before "the feast of the passover." This was the same time Judas Iscariot went to the chief priests to betray Jesus (Mark 14:10).

We read in Mark 14:12 where the disciples asked Jesus, "Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the passover?" This verse is speaking of the first day of unleavened bread; it was two days later. This had nothing to do with being in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper. They were still in Bethany when, in verses 13-15, Jesus told His disciples: "Go ye into the city [the city of Jerusalem, a distance of about two miles; they were going to leave Bethany and go to Jerusalem], and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him. And wheresoever he shall go in, say ye to the goodman of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guestchamber [not Simon's house], where I shall eat the passover [not a common meal] with my disciples [not a civil purpose but a spiritual purpose]? And he will shew you a large upper room furnished and prepared: there make ready for us."

The passage of Scripture in Mark is very clear. Jesus and His disciples came into this upper room on the first day of unleavened bread when they "killed the passover" (verse 12); they were instructed to "go ye into the city [Jerusalem]" (verse 13); "they made ready the passover" (verse 16); "And in the evening he cometh with the twelve" (verse 17). Mark 14:22 says, "And as they did eat" What were they eating? It was the Passover. Here also in this passage, we read of the betrayal of Judas. This is very similar to the words we see in verse 11 of our text and also in John 13:21.

In these Gospel accounts, we see several truths that contradict the teachings of the Campbellite Doctrine: (1) the account related in our text was in Jerusalem, not Bethany; (2) it was in a large upper room, not a private home (Mark 14:15); (3) Jesus said to make ready the Passover, not a common meal (Mark 14:14); and (4) Jesus wanted to eat the Passover with His disciples. It was a spiritual function, not a common occurrence. It was not a private home, nor with a private family. It was not a common meal, and it was not at Simon's house. It was not for purposes of cleanliness, and it was not before retiring to rest, because after this occurred, they went "out into the mount of Olives" (Mark 14:26; Matthew 26:30), and Jesus was awake all night. I trust you can see the falsity of this religious teaching.

Let us come to our text proper and begin to consider what is incorporated in John, Chapter 13. The first verse begins, "Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come" Why did "his hour ... come" at Passover time? The Scripture clearly states in 1 Corinthians 5:7 that "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." He was to be our sacrifice on the same day that the pascal lamb was slain under the tenants of the old economy. Matthew, Chapter 26, tells us that the ordinance of the Lord's Supper was instituted while they were eating, and John, Chapter 13, lets us know that the ordinance of feet washing was instituted before the ordinance of communion. We know that because after Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper as an ordinance, they sang a hymn and went out (Mark 14:26). That lets us know that the institution of feet washing preceded the ordinance of communion. All three synoptic writers agree.

Matthew 26:26 says, "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body." The ordinance of the Lord's Supper was instituted as they were eating. Mark 14:22 reads, "And as they did eat [the Passover], Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body." This took place while they were eating. Luke 22:17 tells us, "And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves." Verse 15 tells us when He did that, saying, "I have desired to eat this passover with you." This ordinance of the Lord's Supper, according to all three synoptic Gospel writers, was instituted as they were eating. The ordinance of feet washing was instituted prior to that.

After this ordinance of the Lord's Supper was instituted, Matthew 26:30 says, "And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives." There would have been no time at that juncture to institute the ordinance of feet washing. Therefore, the ordinance of feet washing was instituted prior to the Lord's Supper. Likewise, supper could not have been ended as the King James version renders it in John 13:2 ("And supper being ended") because He instituted communion while they were eating. After He instituted that ordinance, they went out. Supper could not have been ended, as we think of ended, for then there would have been no time to institute this ordinance of feet washing.

The word "ended" is better rendered as *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* says, "As supper was preparing." That is a much more accurate description. This also helps to establish the chronology of these ordinances. Both feet washing and communion were established the same night, but there is a Biblical sequence (order) to the observance of these ordinances. One reason for the order of these ordinances is, if one is not willing to "wash one another's feet" (John 13:14), he is not in a proper spiritual position to "be partakers of the Lord's table" (1 Corinthians 10:21).

The Ordinance of Feet Washing Is for the Saints

Let us notice several truths contained in this Scripture text. Who is this ordinance for? Is it for the world? Is it for unbelievers? We know at this time, Judas was in trouble spiritually, but he did not wash any feet. That brings us to the third principle: this ordinance is for saints. According to verse 1 of our Scripture text, this ordinance is for "his own." First Timothy 5:10, talking about a widow being taken into a position of support, says, "Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet" This ordinance is for the saints. It is not for the world, and certainly much of Babylon does not accept it. You can show them clearly what the Scripture says, and you will get a response, such as, "Well, our church does not teach that." If your church does not teach the Bible, you might want to rethink whether that is where you should be.

The fourth truth about this ordinance is that it was instituted by Christ. Verses 4-5 of our text say: "He [Jesus; verse 3] riseth from supper [one rendering says 'rose from the table'], and laid aside his garments; [*The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* says 'put off his mantel'; another rendering says 'took off his outer clothes.' Christ laid off His outer garments. They were too cumbersome, too loose. He did not want to have a *clothes* washing; He wanted to have a *feet* washing.] and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded." The practice of feet washing was initiated and instituted by Christ. No other occupant of that upper room initiated this practice. These verses are very plain concerning the intricate details this practice entails: "He ... laid aside his garments [or his outer clothes]" (verse 4); He "took a towel, and girded himself" (verse 4); and He "poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded" (verse 5).

In a Bible that is the most condensed Book in mankind, in a Bible that is using an economy of words, why is there extensive detail of this ordinance recorded and related? When John 21:25 says that "the world ... could not contain the books" of all the things Jesus did and taught, that lets us know there is a premium on every word in a book that uses such an economy of words. Why is such extreme detail recorded and related? If these are superfluous words, "nonessential" words, an unnecessary practice, He would have never incorporated such extreme detail in the sacred Scriptures. There is no way that our Biblical accounts have record of thirty-three years of Christ's life. God divinely selected what should be incorporated within the canon of Scripture. If feet washing is a "nonessential" (as the false teachers advocate), then why give it such space? It is because His intention and His instructions were, as verse 15 of our text says, "that ye should do as I have done to you." If we are going to do as He has done, we have to know specifically what He did. This ordinance was instituted by Christ as "Master and Lord" (John 13:13). He was not washing them for comfort or cleanliness (Jesus said in verse 10 that "ye are clean") as the Campbellite writer supposed. This was not a civil performance but a spiritual enactment and institution in His role as "Master and Lord." He did this in His spiritual capacity.

Let us look at the fifth principle: this ordinance has the force of command. John 13:14-15 says: "If I then, your Lord and Master [Jesus was giving an instruction in His spiritual capacity], have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." Some people say this is optional because Jesus employed the words "ought" and "should." There are those who say that this merely is suggestive, without the force of command. I pose this question: Does the inclusion of these words make this practice "nonessential"? Look where these same words are used elsewhere in the Scriptures and see if those practices are optional or "nonessential."

In Matthew 23:23 Jesus said, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." Does that mean tithing is optional, a "nonessential"? The word "ought" does not mean it was merely suggestive. Luke 18:1 tells us that "men ought always to pray." Does that mean praying is optional? Acts 5:29 says that "We ought to obey God rather than men." Does that mean obedience to God is optional? Certainly not! That would be a tremendous wresting of the Scriptures to say that any place where this word "ought" is used implies something optional or "nonessential."

What about the word "should" used in verse 15? Let us look at other verses where it is mentioned. Ephesians 5:27, speaking of the church, tells us "it should be holy and without blemish." Does that mean being holy and without blemish is optional? If so, that would certainly destroy the entire intent of the Scriptures. First Thessalonians 4:3 tells us that "ye should abstain from fornication." Is that optional? Is it really "nonessential"? To make the word "should" have the force of command in some verses and then try to denounce it as not having the force of command in our text is inconsistent and incorrect.

Titus 2:12 tells us that "we should live soberly, righteously, and godly." Is that just a good idea but not absolutely necessary? Is it an option? If all these things are optional, why put them in a Book that is using an economy of words? If they are "nonessential," if they are not inspired, if they do not hold the force of command, why incorporate them in the

Scripture? (Other examples to consider are 1 Peter 2:9, 21; 1 John 3:11, 23.) Certainly, no one would claim that the instructions in these verses are optional or "nonessential." Neither is our text, where Jesus (speaking of feet washing) said, "Ye should do" (verse 15).

Some people struggle with the terms "ought" and "should," but we are not living in an age of the Levitical law where the cry of command was "Thou shalt" and "thou shalt not." We are in a different dispensation. Concerning this New Testament dispensation, Ezekiel 36:26-27 says: "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." When God puts His Spirit within you, when His Spirit writes His Word on the "fleshy tables of the heart" (2 Corinthians 3:3), when our precious Lord employs words, such as "ought" and "should," that is all that is necessary for a right heart and a right spirit. It takes the force of command.

We need to understand that the enemy is working against the welfare of men's souls, striving to cause people to set darkness for light. There is a spirit in back of error. If we allow ourselves to accept fallacious and erroneous teachings, then we are giving vent to that spirit. That spirit may come in initially on just one point of truth, but like the little foxes, it does not stay little. It will begin to develop other teachings, and that erroneous spirit will begin to move people away from spiritual life. If we allow that spirit to invalidate the truth of God's Word, we are moving away from the life-giving substance of God's Word. I trust the Spirit of God has made it clear.

Thus far, we have begun to prove that the argument that feet washing is "nonessential," supposedly supported by that which is termed the "Bethany Supper Theory," is not scripturally sound and is erroneous. There are twelve points we have begun to consider. We have examined the first five: (1) there are no "nonessential" portions of God's eternal Word; (2) frequency is not necessary to validate authority; (3) this ordinance is for saints; (4) this ordinance was instituted by Christ; and (5) this ordinance has the force of command.

Feet Washing Instituted by Christ Is Not the Custom

The sixth principle we want to consider is: it was not a custom. Although there was a custom in that day for feet to be washed, we need to understand what the custom was. What was performed by Jesus in our text was not the custom. One way we know is by the incredulity of Peter's question and Jesus' reply in John 13:6-7. When Peter asked, "Lord, dost thou wash my feet?" he was shocked and astounded at the action Christ was taking. This had never been done before. Jesus' answer was, "What I do thou knowest not now [if it were the custom, Peter would have known it; Peter knew the customs of the day]; but thou shalt know hereafter." Why could Peter not know it at that time? It was because he was not converted at that juncture, and unconverted people cannot understand this truth yet today.

In John 16:12-13 Jesus told His disciples: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come [the Holy Ghost had not yet been given], he will guide you into all truth." Jesus also told them in John 16:7, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter [the Holy Ghost; John 14:26] will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." John 16:13-14, speaking of the Holy Spirit, says: "... for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.... for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." The "hereafter" Jesus told Peter about (John 13:7) was referring to after his conversion, after he received the Holy Spirit.

At this point in time, Peter was not converted. In Luke 22:32 Jesus told Peter, "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." His conversion was on the horizon, but as of yet (John, Chapter 13), Peter was not converted; he did not have the Holy Ghost. Jesus told His disciples what would happen after His ascension. He said in Luke 24:49, "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." What was Jesus talking about? In Acts 1:8 Jesus said, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." They did not have much understanding on some of the spiritual truths, but when the Holy Ghost came, "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:4).

Acts 2:14 tells us that Peter began to preach a prophecy out of Joel, Chapter 2. How did he understand that? It was because he had the Holy Ghost. However, in the upper room, Peter had not yet received the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit had not yet been given (John 7:39). When Jesus said, "What I do thou knowest not now; but shalt know hereafter" (verse 7), why did He not explain it to Peter then? Romans 8:7 tells us, "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."

At this juncture, Peter's mind was carnal. This is made plain when we read Peter's response once Jesus told him that He needed to wash Peter's feet. Peter said, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head" (John 13:9). He wanted a whole bath. Peter did not have any understanding at all of what was taking place because he had a carnal mind. (That is

also why he drew the sword in the garden and cut off Malchus' ear; John 18:10.) This is why many people do not want to participate in this ordinance. The attitude of some is, "Me, wash dirty, stinky, deformed feet?" They are viewing it with a carnal mind. When this observance transpires in many localities, there are those who conveniently miss that night. Why? They view it carnally.

To understand the custom of feet washing, let us go back to the Book of Beginnings. Genesis 18:1-4 tells us: "And the LORD appeared unto him [speaking of Abraham] in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground, And said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant: Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet" The very Lord of glory and two angelic creatures came to favor Abraham with a personal visit; yet Abraham did not wash their feet. Upon entering an abode, the custom and the courtesy was to give them water and to wash one's own feet. It was not because Abraham did not recognize his visitors that he did not wash their feet, for Genesis 18:25 makes it plain that he knew who the Lord was: "the Judge of all the earth." Another example is found in Genesis 19:1-2. There Lot met "two angels ... in the gate of Sodom." Lot invited them to his house, saying, "tarry all night, and wash your feet." The custom and the courtesy was to provide water so they could wash their own feet. Genesis 43:24 says, "And the man brought the men [Joseph's brethren] into Joseph's house, and gave them water, and they washed their feet." That was the custom and the courtesy.

Some may feel that this was only in the Old Testament. Let us read some examples in the New Testament. Simon the Pharisee was reproved by Jesus for not observing the custom and the courtesy. When Simon became indignant because the woman in Luke 7:38 was washing Jesus' feet, drying them, and pouring ointment over them, Jesus said to Simon in Luke 7:44, "I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet." This man had treated Jesus rudely. This Pharisee, who had an overinflated sense of himself, did not offer that common courtesy to Christ, and Jesus called him on it. He reproved him. Travel in that day was not as travel is today. They lived in an arid Middle Eastern climate, where there was an abundance of dust. People were very apt to get their feet dirty and dusty in their travels. So, the water was for two things: (1) it was to clean the feet; and (2) it was to relax the feet after having walked, which was the general mode of transportation. The custom was to wash your own feet upon entering a house.

In our text, it is obvious that Jesus and His disciples had been in the upper room for a while. It is reasonable to assume that if they had observed the custom, they had already washed their own feet. This was another reason Peter was mystified. He must have been thinking: "Lord, we already washed our feet. What are You doing?" The custom was to wash upon entering, and they had already entered and were at the table. This was not as the Campbellites propounded when they said in their writings that "this was for the purpose of cleanliness." What was done here by Jesus in John, Chapter 13, was not for cleanliness. Jesus made that expressively clear when speaking to Peter in John 13:10, saying, "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean." Contrary to the Campbellite teaching, Jesus was not washing their feet to clean them; they were already clean.

There were customary occasions where one would assume the role of servitude and wash another's feet. We see this with Abigail. When the servants of David came back to secure Abigail and bring her back to be his wife, we read in 1 Samuel 25:41 that Abigail said, "Behold, let thine handmaid be a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord." This reveals that there were occasions, especially within a wealthy household with servants, where a servant may be the one to wash the feet of a visitor or the master. Being a servant is one of the roles that this ordinance portrays, and Christ personally became our example of assuming the role of a servant.

Feet Washing Is a Test of Fellowship and Was Practiced by the Morning-Time Church

The seventh truth portrayed in this passage is that it is a test of fellowship. Jesus made this expressly clear to Peter when Peter said, "Thou shalt never wash my feet" (verse 8). Jesus' answer was, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me" (verse 8). That was pretty stern. One rendering says it in this manner: "You will have no fellowship with me." Christ instituted feet washing to also be a test of fellowship. Paul also let us know this same truth. In his writings to Timothy, he set forth this principle in 1 Timothy 5:9-10: "Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old [sixty years old], having been the wife of one man, Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet" Some may say this is referring to a poor widow who was a servant, but the verse particularly says "wash the *saint's* feet." If she were a servant in a wealthy home, she would wash everyone's feet. Others say she was a nurse. Again, if she was a nurse, she would wash everyone under her care, not just the saints. This lets us know the importance attached to this ordinance of feet washing by the morning-time church. According to Paul, a widow was not worthy of support if she had not washed the saints' feet. As a pastor, if I had people who would not come

to the ordinance services and would not wash feet, I could not put them in positions. I could not let them be in leadership roles. Why? They do not meet the qualifications, and they are not truly in fellowship. The word "fellowship" means "to share in common," and if they do not participate in this ordinance, they are not sharing it in common; thus, they are not in fellowship.

The eighth truth is that feet washing was practiced by the morning-time church. The very fact that Paul did not have to elaborate, explain, or qualify it lets us know that it was a practice with which Timothy was familiar. This epistle to Timothy was one of the last of Paul's writings. In these last of Paul's inspired writings, prior to his martyrdom, he was setting forth essentials. He was endeavoring to help ground this young minister; so, he laid forth those things that were essential.

The ninth truth about this ordinance is that it goes beyond physical performance and provides a spiritual blessing which can be received in no other manner. Jesus clearly said that "happy are ye if ye do them" (John 13:17). The Amplified Bible renders it in this manner: "If you know these things, blessed and happy and to be envied are you if you practice them" The only way to get a "feet washing blessing" is to wash feet. There are those who hold to the substitution doctrine. They will use Scriptures such as Matthew 25:35-40. These verses are certainly true, telling us that we have an obligation: "I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink" (verse 35). However, these words of our Lord, while being injunctions that are to be followed, are not substitutions for other clear commands in the Scripture. Some try to advocate the idea, "Feet washing just means be your brother's servant, help your brother, and show humility; so I will take him a few bags of groceries." Nay, nay, dear heart! Though you may feel impressed to take someone a few bags of groceries (and that is commendable), that is not to be a substitution for clear Bible teaching. It is to be done in *addition*, not as a *substitution*. It does not take the place of the clear command in our text: "ye should do as I have done to you" (verse 15). There is no other way to receive this blessing but to "do them" (verse 17).

King Saul believed in the substitution doctrine. When he was told to "utterly destroy" all the Amalekites and their animals in 1 Samuel 15:3, he succumbed to the substitution doctrine. He did not kill them all, but he brought back some for sacrifice. He was trying to substitute sacrifice for obedience. That is the substitution doctrine. When Saul tried to justify this, the Prophet Samuel told him: "Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft ..." (1 Samuel 15:22-23). There are people yet today who subscribe to the substitution doctrine, saying: "Well, I will sacrifice. I will take part of my hard earned money, part of my paycheck, and I will go buy groceries, or I will do some other good thing." God does not delight in sacrifice near as much as He delights in obedience. "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft." That is how repugnant and repulsive disobedience is to God. The substitution theory will not provide the spiritual blessing that comes with obedience.

What Is the Purpose of Feet Washing?

The purpose of the feet washing ordinance is to remind us of our position in the body, to remind us that in relationship to our brothers and sisters, we are servants. John 13:16 tells us that "The servant is not greater than his lord." We are the servant. These morning-time brethren, as well as successive brethren, understood that. Survey some of the epistles and look at how they commenced: "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ" (Romans 1:1); "James [the brother of our Lord], a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ" (James 1:1); "Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:1); and "Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ" (Jude 1). Feet washing reveals our position: to be at our brother's feet. This is the tenth principle. The physical enactment of bringing the body down reminds us of the spiritual role that we fill. It is a graphic reminder. You can buy and carry in groceries, you can do any other number of good deeds or works, and it does not necessarily exhibit any humility. However, getting down at one another's feet takes a certain element of humility.

None of these ordinances are to be just empty forms. That is why many decry and denounce the ordinances. In too many realms, it has become just an empty form. None of these ordinances are designed to be an empty form, but they are designed to be a physical portrayal of a spiritual act or a spiritual condition. It is not to be a mere physical performance. It is to come, as Jesus' initiation of this act did, from the heart.

Look at what verse 1 of our text says about Jesus prior to feet washing: "... having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." This ordinance is to be an act of love. Jesus went on to say in John 13:34-35: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love [this is the Greek verb *agapao* that comes from *agape*, meaning a commitment] one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another [not *for* another, but *to* another; we need to get this love across to one another]."

The ordinance of feet washing is to help us to express our love "to" our brothers and sisters. Many times in the busy program of life, in the hustle and bustle of coming and getting ready for a service, we do not always take the time perhaps

as we ought to express our love and appreciation for one another. Therefore, when that special occasion comes and we partake of the ordinance of feet washing, we can get down at our brother's feet and stop and take the time to say: "Brother, I love you. I really appreciate you. I appreciate what God has done for you. I love you; you are my brother." We show our "love one to another," and we show our role at our brother's feet by being our brother's servant. We are told "by love serve one another" (Galatians 5:13). This puts us in a position that gives us perspective. This ordinance is not to be a dead form. It is not to be "a form of godliness" that denies "the power" (2 Timothy 3:5), but rather, it is an expression that shows the power we have in our life and how that power causes us to show our love to one another by getting down at their feet and assuming the role of a servant to our brother and sister. It is a visible manifestation of our spiritual attitude.

Philippians 2:3-5 tells us: "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Through this ordinance of feet washing, we are manifesting the mind of Christ. He is the One who got up from the table, laid aside His outer garment, girded Himself with a towel, poured a bason of water, washed the saint's feet, and dried them with a towel (John 13:4-5). Why did He do it? He loved His own, and He wanted to show that love by example, through assuming the role of a servant.

Romans 12:3 says, "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think [getting down at your brother's feet helps put that thinking into perspective; it helps us recall where we should be, what our position in the body is, and what our position concerning our brother and sister actually is]; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." Thinking "soberly" causes us to embrace and manifest humility. Granted, people can wash feet and not have an ounce of humility. They can even do it with pride, saying, "Well, I washed feet." It is not merely the physical act, though that is necessary, but it is the attitude and spirit of heart with which the act is being performed. James 4:10-11 tells us: "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up. Speak not evil one of another, brethren."

If you have done ill against your brother, it takes a couple of hard swallows to get down at his feet. If you have talked about him, stabbed him in the back, or been at his throat, so to speak, it is awfully hard to get down at his feet. It will cause you, as 2 Corinthians 7:11 describes, "yea, what clearing of yourselves." First Peter 5:5-6 says: "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another [this is what feet washing portrays and why it is good for all of us: we need to be subject one to another; there are no exemptions], and be clothed with humility [that is a garment you do not have to take off]: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time." The purpose of this tenth principle is to remind us of our role and of our position as a servant: humble yourself.

Christ Is Our Example

The eleventh truth is that Christ is our example. Our text teaches us this very expressly, when Jesus said, "For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you" (verse 15). What example did He actually give us? It goes deeper than laying aside His outer garment and washing their feet. Jesus showed that He was humble and that He was "meek and lowly in heart" (Matthew 11:29). Matthew 21:5 tells us that "thy King cometh unto thee, meek." This was part of His example.

Jesus was also the Lord (John 13:13-16). In His spiritual capacity as "Lord and Master," He was not washing to clean their feet, nor was He observing a custom; but He was instituting a practice. When Jesus said, "The servant is not greater than his lord," in other words, He was saying if He could show that He was meek and lowly, we should be able to follow His example and be meek and lowly, exhibiting our love in the same manner He exhibited His. Jesus was very unequivocal in verses 14-17 of our text. He made it expressly clear that this was a definite New Testament Bible ordinance.

Prior to His ascension, Jesus said in Matthew 28:20, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." That included the ordinance of water baptism, which we considered in our prior study, and it also incorporates this ordinance of feet washing. It goes even further than that. When Jesus instituted this particular ordinance of feet washing, He said, "If ye know these things [plural], happy are ye if ye do them" (John 13:17). Succeeding the ordinance of feet washing, He instituted the ordinance of the Lord's Supper on the same night, and there is a happiness or blessing that can come no other way but in the observance of these ordinances.

The twelfth and final principle is that we are to do all things "decently and in order" (1 Corinthians 14:40). That is why when it comes time for the observance of the ordinance of feet washing, the brothers are in one portion of the building and the sisters in another. Why? To be decent, so we can conform to the Biblical standards of modesty.

I trust we can see these truths as they are, not as men misrepresent them, but as they are in truth. It is a sad commentary that the ordinances have been under assault, and they remain under assault. We are on the highway of holiness, and the devil

does not care which ditch he gets us in. He tries to get some in the ditch of an empty form, just going through the physical motions. There are religious organizations that do that, and it is powerless, empty, and hypocritical. Or the devil will try to move others to the opposite end of the spectrum and dismiss the practical performance of this ordinance and spiritualize it all and thus disobey clear Biblical injunctions. Neither position is correct.

The enemy has used these tactics throughout the history of this Gospel Day to be divisive. "God is not the author of confusion" (1 Corinthians 14:33), and He never sent His Word to engender strife or to bring confusion. When we study and allow the teacher (the Holy Ghost; John 14:26) to rightly divide the Word of Truth (2 Timothy 2:15), He will make straight paths for our feet (Hebrews 12:13). He will enlighten the eyes of our understanding (Ephesians 1:17-18); and we will be able to see eye to eye and to speak the same thing (1 Corinthians 1:10).

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Lord's Supper (or Communion)

First Corinthians 11:20 When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper.

21 For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken.

22 What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.

23 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread:

24 And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.

25 After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.

The Lord's Supper Is Not to Be a Meal

In this passage of Scripture text, the Apostle Paul set forth the truth concerning what he termed "the Lord's supper" (verse 20), or "communion" (1 Corinthians 10:16). As we begin to give consideration to this ordinance, perhaps no other ordinance has had such a vast and varied array of misrepresentation, been more mistaught, misunderstood, and misconstrued than this particular ordinance. This first Corinthian epistle, written in the proximity of A.D. 54-57, was the third of the Pauline epistles. Just a few scant years after this congregation was established (A.D. 50-52), this text clearly portrays that the Corinthians were already observing the ordinance of "the Lord's supper" in an unscriptural and inappropriate manner.

A very short space of time had elapsed from the time Paul established and taught this congregation concerning the truth and the time he penned our text. (Read Acts 18:1, 8-11.) In this first epistle to the Corinthians, Paul had to deal with problems and practices that had arisen in that congregation. Abuses and incorrect practices had arisen. One of these was that they were preceding what was supposed to be the observance of this ordinance with a complete meal, and they were each bringing "his own supper" (verse 21). God never ordained that we make a meal out of "the Lord's supper." That is not the purpose. Not only were these folks making a meal, but every man was bringing "his own supper." No doubt, those who were poorer were not able to bring what the more affluent brethren could bring. Those who were unable to bring a meal had to sit and watch while others partook of their meal: "and one is hungry" (verse 21). Paul said in 1 Corinthians 11:22, "What [or what are you doing]? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? [I have heard this verse used to say that a church building should not have a dining room attached. Paul was not dealing with that. When we have a fellowship meal, the sisters prepare a meal, and everyone has the opportunity to partake of the same meal. That is not what was happening here. Each one was bringing 'his own supper.' There were other brethren who were going hungry.] or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not."

They were, in essence, shaming the brethren who had no food. While eating their ample meal, they were causing those who had no meal to feel ashamed. This practice was an abuse. It was not the Biblical practice. It was not what Paul had taught them. Therefore, he had to correct them. Paul reprovved them in verse 20, saying, in essence: "This is not the way to eat the Lord's Supper. What you are doing is not the practice or the ordinance that I taught you." He said in verse 22, "... have ye not houses to eat and to drink in?" Then in verse 34a he said, "And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation."

Verse 22 tells us the condemnation was to "shame them that have not." This erroneous practice was contrary to what Paul had taught them. Paul told them in 1 Corinthians 11:2 to "keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you." We can see that they were not keeping them as he delivered, for in 1 Corinthians 11:34b, he said, "And the rest will I set in order when I come." They were out of order.

This erroneous practice resurfaced during the Protestant era, amongst a sect known as the "Dunkard Brethren." The Dunkards began in Germany in 1708 (the first segment of the dark and cloudy day). They proclaimed, under the heading of *Our Belief*, "Take the communion at night after supper." The Dunkards partook of a full meal and then tried to engage in the Lord's Supper. They observed this ordinance in just the manner that the Apostle Paul in the Scriptures said not to do: "... this is not to eat the Lord's supper" (verse 20). In this fourth period of the Gospel Day (1530-1730) is when the leaven is depicted as being injected.

In Matthew, Chapter 13, there are seven prophetic parables that correlate with the seven periods which comprise this Gospel Day. The fourth parable correlates with the fourth period (1530-1730). We read in Matthew 13:33, "Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took [Jezebel; Revelation 2:20], and hid [this leaven] in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." The whole lump of the Protestant era was truth mixed with error; light was mixed with darkness. This teaching of observing a meal and then trying to conduct "the Lord's supper" was a Protestant abuse; it was not the light of truth.

No doubt, due to the falsities and abuses associated with this ordinance, there is a proclivity in some quarters to disdain and dismiss it. As human creatures, we are prone to extremes and overcorrections. Those who drive are very familiar with overcorrection. You feel like you are starting to go off the shoulder of the road, and if you are not careful, you will overcorrect and go over the middle yellow line. It is a human inclination. This is why the Scriptures admonish us in Philippians 4:5a, "Let your moderation be known unto all men."

False Doctrines Concerning the Lord's Supper

The highway of holiness has a ditch on each side, and the enemy does not care which ditch he moves us into, as long as he wrecks us and removes us from the highway. Therefore, the Scriptures advocate moderation, or balance. Certainly, the enemy works on these inclinations to extremes with "the spirit of error" (1 John 4:6). "The spirit of error" coordinates with seducing spirits to produce "doctrines of devils" (1 Timothy 4:1). These doctrines have been produced in relation to the ordinance of what is called "the Lord's supper."

The move afoot among some today is to hyper-spiritualize this ordinance, and this move also has its roots in sectism. It began as an incorrect response to prior abuses concerning this doctrine. It is an overcorrection. Again, there are those who proclaim this spiritualization of communion as new light, greater spirituality. However, the spiritualization of this ordinance of communion goes back to the Quakers (also known as "The Society of Friends"). They stipulate their stance in the *Friend's General Conference* by saying: "For Quakers, sacraments are understood as an inward, spiritual experience. We don't have a custom of performing sacramental ceremonies." *Newsmax* reports it in this manner: "When it comes to communion, instead of the Lord's Supper, Friends subscribe to the theory of 'spiritual communion with God,' experienced during silent meditation." Earlier in the article, it says that "formal observances are not necessary."

Thus, what is being touted in some circles as new light is nothing more than Protestant darkness. This is a resurgence of old error. Ecclesiastes 1:9 says that "there is no new thing under the sun." Rather, it is a part of the leaven that was injected in the Protestant era. It is certainly a misnomer for this society, the Quakers, to be called "Friends," for Jesus said in John 15:14, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." His clear command was recorded in Matthew 28:20, which reads, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." The religious society of Friends, according to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, was founded in England in the seventeenth century. Again, right in the midst of the first segment of that dark and cloudy day.

What would induce such an excessive response? What would cause people to go to such an extreme? It was because of the repugnant and repulsive practices of papalism and Lutheranism. This excessive response was due to the prior abuses. For instance: Roman Catholicism (the beast of Revelation 13:1-10) in their celebration of the mass has the priest consecrate the wafer (or the host) and supposedly, mystically, according to Catholic Catechism, it becomes "the body and blood, the soul, and divinity of Jesus Christ, under the form and appearance of bread and wine."

In the celebration of the mass, which is their religious service, they have what is called a "monstrance." It is a holder in which they put this wafer (what they term the host, which is similar to a cracker). If you study the monstrance, it has a sunburst appearance, going right back to old paganism and the worshiping of the sun. The priest prays over that wafer, and when he is done praying, it is supposedly no longer just a wafer; it is now "the body and blood, the soul, and divinity of Jesus Christ." They teach that Christ has moved into that wafer. That is called "transubstantiation." They have changed the substance from a wafer to Christ, and then they begin to pay homage to that wafer. They begin to worship that wafer as God, as Christ; that is idolatry.

It is taught that as one takes in the wafer, he is taking in Jesus Christ; that is where they rest their salvation. In partaking of the sacrament of the eucharist, or taking in that wafer, they believe they have Christ in their lives. They worship that

wafer as Christ. They do not claim it represents Christ, but they claim it *is* Christ. They worship that wafer. Then, when they take it in, they are taught that is how they have Christ within. That is blasphemy and idolatry!

Because of that terrible doctrine, people have overreacted. This doctrine is known as "The Doctrine of Transubstantiation," and it is one of what Paul called "lying wonders" (2 Thessalonians 2:9). That is a lying wonder when a man says he can call Christ's body, blood, soul, and divinity down out of Heaven and put it in a wafer. Roman Catholic catechism tells them expressly how to dispose of the remaining host after it is utilized in a service, because it is so sacred.

Second Thessalonians 2:9 says, "Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan" What was Paul talking about? Second Thessalonians 2:3-4 says: "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, [The Greek word for 'falling away' is *apostasia*. It is the word from which our English word *apostasy* is derived. Here Paul was prophesying of the morning-time apostasy, and it was out of that apostasy that the system of Roman Catholicism arose.] and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." The fulfilment of that Scripture is the office of the popes of Rome. For years, when the mass was performed in Latin, the words "Dominus Deus Noster Papa" was a part of every one of those celebrations of the mass. The English translation is "Our Lord God the Pope."

Revelation 8:8 tells us, "And the second angel [symbolic of a ministry in this second period of time; A.D. 270-530] sounded, and as it were a great mountain [representing the church; Revelation 21:9-10] burning with fire was cast into the sea." Two things happened when this mountain was cast into the sea: (1) the fire was extinguished; and (2) as it sunk into the sea, it went out of public view. That which had been the morning-time church went out of public view from A.D. 270 to 1530. That mountain went into the sea, the sea of apostasy. (The sea represents the "wicked," or those who produced false doctrines; Isaiah 57:20 and Psalm 50:16-17.) Revelation 13:1 tells us, "And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a breast rise up out of the sea" This papal beast rose up as a product of the morning-time apostasy. The Apostle Paul gave the morning-time brethren warning concerning this move of apostasy. God is faithful. He does not do anything or allow anything, "but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7).

Acts 20:29-30 says: "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise [there is the beast arising], speaking perverse things" Several renderings say "distort the truth," and another rendering says "deviant doctrines." Where did they arise from? "Also of your own selves" (verse 30). Men who at one time were right amongst the Church of God apostatized (that word means "a defection from truth"). They defected from truth, and from that apostasy rose religious individuals who wanted to profess, practice, and even preach, but cast God's Word behind them (Psalm 50:16-17). They would not continue to take truth and began to produce "deviant doctrines," "doctrines of devils." Why? Because they departed "from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and [the spirits came first, and then they produced] doctrines of devils" (1 Timothy 4:1).

We read in 2 Thessalonians 2:9, "Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan [the 'him' reverts us back to verse 3: 'that man of sin ... the son of perdition,' the office of the popes of Rome] with all power and signs and lying wonders." The Amplified Bible renders it in this manner: "... with all sorts of [pretended] miracles and signs and delusive marvels—[all of them] lying wonders." These wonders are not truth. There is no priest who can consecrate the host, and pull the body and blood of Jesus Christ, His soul and divinity, out of Heaven into a wafer. There is no truth in such a practice; rather it is papal idolatry. John wrote in 1 John 5:21, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols." He must have understood what was working. There is no truth in such a practice; it is heretical. Paganistic teachings, such as this, have prompted some in Protestantism to go to an opposite extreme.

Then there are the Lutheran sects that teach the false doctrine of "Consubstantiation." (I might mention when we speak of these religious systems, we are not speaking of individuals but rather of systems that are contrary to God's Word. We "wrestle not against flesh and blood"; Ephesians 6:12. I am not speaking against dear hearts or individuals but against these religious systems.) This heretical teaching holds that during the sacrament, the substance of the body and blood of Christ are present alongside the substance of the bread and wine. This particular teaching advocates that it is still bread and wine, but Christ's body and blood is alongside. That, too, is false. These false teachings deceive their recipients into trusting this physical ritual to provide spiritual benefits, and it is a lie. They have "changed the truth of God into a lie" (Romans 1:25)! These and other practices, such as the Church of Christ partaking of communion every week, are unscriptural, inviting ones to overreact and eliminate the physical observance of this ordinance altogether.

What Does God's Word Say About the Lord's Supper?

Let us do as 2 Timothy 2:15 says and "Study"; let us lay "line upon line" (Isaiah 28:13) and let "the Spirit of truth" (John 16:13) clarify "the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). Certainly, as with each of the ordinances, there is a spiritual

aspect, or a reality, that is being represented. Jesus clearly declared in John 6:54, "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." No studied individual would discount that this is certainly a spiritual reality. His "flesh" and His "blood," of which we can partake, are not here in a corporal sense. Surely, this is a spiritual reality, but it does not invalidate the observance of this ordinance. We will deal with that later in our study.

Neither the Quakers nor the Salvation Army observe this ordinance. They spiritualize it, but let us not bring a Babel "stone" into the church (Jeremiah 51:26). In the song entitled "The Holy Remnant," Brother D. S. Warner penned in verse 2: "*Then I rose and fled the ruin, Taking not a Babel stone.*" We cannot build God's true church on error, or "Babel stones," no matter how well-intentioned.

The expression in our text "the Lord's supper" (verse 20) only appears one time in the Bible as such. However, what occurred when Christ instituted this ordinance is recorded by four scriptural writers: the three synoptic Gospel writers (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) and by the Apostle Paul. I believe God, in His omniscient wisdom, knew of the substantial abuse and mispractice that would be attached to this particular ordinance, and He wanted to make it expressly clear. In a Book that has an economy of words, when you see repetition, it stands for a purpose. God wants to reiterate those truths in a forceful manner. Let us read the four accounts of the Lord's Supper.

Matthew 26:26-30 says: "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom. And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives."

Mark 14:22-26 tells us: "And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body. And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many. Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God. And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives."

Luke 22:17-20 says: "And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you."

First Corinthians 11:23-26 says: "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."

The Physical Aspect of the Lord's Supper

There are two aspects of this observance: the physical and the spiritual. First, let us consider the physical. Why is there a physical aspect? The first truth we want to consider concerning the physical aspect is it was designed to stir remembrance; "this do in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19). He said the same thing in verse 25 of our text: "This do ye ... in remembrance of me." Paul was quoting our Lord. This was not a doctrine or teaching that he had devised. Rather, verse 23 of our text says, "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you" Paul was not one of the initial twelve; he was not in the upper room that evening when this was originally observed. He received it from the Lord.

Why is a physical component of this observance necessary? Man is a forgetful creature. This is why Paul wrote in Philippians 3:1: "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe." Every pastor who has pastored any length of time knows that there are some truths which have to just be preached and re-preached periodically. Why? Because "it is safe." It is done so that we do not become forgetful. Human nature is such that we are forgetful creatures. When the Apostle Peter wrote Second Peter, he had already been told by the Lord that he would be shortly putting off his tabernacle. In other words, he was going to die, and he wanted to do everything he could to reinforce the truth before he stepped off.

Second Peter 1:12-13 says: "Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them [the reason people know the truth is because they are continually reminded of the truth], and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance." Then 2 Peter 3:1-2 says: "This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before [our pure minds need

to be stirred up by way of being reminded] by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour."

In every age, the Lord has established commemorations. This was one reason for the many Jewish feasts: to keep the people in remembrance. Consider what Joshua told Israel after they crossed the Jordan (Joshua 4:1-7). The Jordan was swollen beyond its banks, and the river was running swift. Crossing it looked impossible. But when the priests took the ark with the presence of God and stepped out by faith in obedience to the Word, the waters parted, and the people went through on dry ground. Joshua then appointed twelve men to take twelve stones from the Jordan and make "a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever." What was it for? It was a memorial. When the children would ask, "What mean ye by these stones?" (verse 6), their parents could say, to paraphrase, "Let me tell you what the Lord has done." (Read verse 7.)

What is the lesson to us? When we partake of this ordinance and the children say: "What is this? Why are we eating this bread? Why are we drinking this juice?" we can say, "Well, let me tell you what Jesus did." We are able to bring up a memorial; we are able to bring them to a remembrance. Christ also established memorials. After the woman poured out the ointment on His body, Jesus said in Matthew 26:13, "Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her." The same thing is recorded in Mark 14:9, which tells us "that [which] she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her." There are New Testament memorials; there are things that are to be remembered and observed as remembrances. This ordinance of "the Lord's supper" is one of those memorials.

Let us examine the physical aspect. Any honest-hearted student must admit and acknowledge there is a physical component, or aspect, to this teaching. Look very closely at our text. Paul, speaking "Unto the church of God" (1 Corinthians 1:2), said, "Take, eat" (verse 24 of our text). This was something that was *literally* performed in that upper room. Verse 23 says that He (Jesus) "took bread." (The Scriptures are very clear concerning of what the bread is to consist. Christ and His disciples had been at the table partaking of the Passover meal. They were observing the Feast of Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Exodus 29:2 clearly tells us what type of bread was to be eaten: "And unleavened bread, and cakes unleavened tempered with oil, and wafers unleavened anointed with oil: of wheaten [whole wheat] flour shalt thou make them.")

Verse 24 of our text says, "And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat." This was a physical command and an action, not only initially, but one to be observed perpetually. Verse 26 tells us, "For as often as ye eat this bread" This was not something to be done just once. Christ was instituting something that was to be observed repeatedly or perennially. Then the Apostle Paul wrote that Christ "After the same manner also he took the cup" (verse 25). Matthew's Gospel tells us He said, "Drink ye all of it" (Matthew 26:27). It was something that was to be *literally* ingested.

Concerning the cup, in several references many theologians refer to it as "wine." I want you to notice that all three synoptic Gospel writers use the expression "fruit of the vine." Not one of the passages says "wine." (Read Matthew 26:29; Mark 14:25; and Luke 22:18.) The Greek word refers to fresh grape juice. How do we know that? Two reasons: (1) the reference Jesus made; and (2) Jesus took the cup from the table of the Passover meal. During the Passover there was to be no leaven, nothing unclean, nothing symbolizing corruption. Fermentation is corruption. Therefore, there would have been no fermentation at the time of the Passover. It was not an alcoholic beverage, it was not fermented wine, but it was "fruit of the vine," or fresh grape juice.

The Physical Observance Was Instituted by Christ

The second truth we must recognize is that this physical observance has the force of an ordinance because it was instituted by Christ. The apostles did not take the initiative and institute it; Christ did. Look at the words of our text: "the Lord Jesus ... took bread" (verse 23); "when he [Jesus] had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat" (verse 24); "After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me" (verse 25). Christ instituted this ordinance. To put it in proper sequence, go back to John's Gospel, Chapter 13. Jesus and His disciples came into the upper room for the purpose of observing the Jewish Passover. Verse 2 tells us, "And supper being ended" Dr. Adam Clark, in his commentary, renders the translation in the Greek as "while supper was preparing." While the meal was being prepared, He laid aside His outer garment and instituted the ordinance of feet washing. Then it tells us in John 13:12, "So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again" Where did He "set down again"? It was "at the table" (verse 28); and when He sat down at the table, then He gave a discourse. Judas went out, and then Jesus instituted the ordinance of "the Lord's supper." After that, Matthew 26:30 says that "they went out."

There are those who try to discredit this ordinance, claim it was a part of the Passover observance, and say that it was an Old Testament rite. That is not so! Luke made this very clear. Take note, especially of what Jesus said in Luke 22:15,

which reads, "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer." The margin tells us that the Greek says: "I have heartily desired." The King James Version says, "I have desired to eat this passover with you." Some go to one extreme, saying, "Oh, they did not eat the Passover." Yes, they did eat the Passover. Others say, "This ordinance was an Old Testament practice." No, this ordinance was not an Old Testament practice. The Passover meal was an Old Testament practice but not "the Lord's supper" observance He instituted.

Read closely the words of Luke 22:15-18, and 20: "And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament"

There were two different cups and two different times. The verse where it says "he took the cup" (Luke 22:17) refers to one of the cups of the Passover. Verse 20 says, "Likewise also the cup after supper." These were two different things and two different cups. Verse 17 was a fulfilment of the old. *Barnes' Notes on the New Testament* tell us this, speaking of verse 17: "This was not the sacramental cup, for that was taken after supper. This was one of the cups which were usually taken during the celebration of the Passover and pertained to that observance." When Jesus gave them that first cup, it was fulfilling the Old Testament practice and the Feast of Passover. That coincides with what He said in Luke 22:15, "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you"

Further explanation is found in Matthew 5:18, which says that "one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." However, when Jesus took that second cup (Luke 22:20), He was instituting the New Testament ordinance. This was not a continuation of the old, but this was a New Testament ordinance. Jesus said in Matthew 26:28, "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." In Mark 14:24 Jesus said, "This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many." Luke 22:20 says, "Likewise also the cup after supper, [Jesus] saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you." Our text tells us, "After the same manner also he [Jesus] took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me" (verse 25). Each one of these books, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Corinthians, lets us know that cup represented the blood of the New Testament.

The Physical Aspect Is Not an Old Testament Practice

That leads us to the third truth concerning the physical aspect: it is a definite New Testament ordinance, not an Old Testament practice. Verse 27 of our text speaks of drinking "this cup ... unworthily." If this was solely a spiritual communion, how could one partake of it "unworthily"? If it was solely a spiritual communion, one who was unworthy would not be able to partake of it. The only way to partake of this "unworthily" is to partake of the physical element of the ordinance but not be in proper spiritual position to do so worthily. This practice is one in which we literally partake: "eat this bread, and drink this cup" (verse 26); "eat this bread, and drink this cup" (verse 27); "eat of that bread, and drink of that cup" (verse 28); "eateth and drinketh" (verse 29).

The fourth truth we want to consider is, it is a physical observance to be perpetuated. Jesus clearly said, "this do in remembrance of me" (verses 24-25). Then the Apostle Paul told us how long this ordinance is to be observed: "till he come" (verse 26). It is a physical observance to be perpetuated till He comes again. Notice, also, verse 26 does not tell us how often; it just says "as often." To do as those in sectarian religion, who partake each week, is to risk it becoming "a form of godliness" (2 Timothy 3:5). Also, many of those who observe it weekly do not observe the preceding ordinance of feet washing.

James 2:10-11 tells us: "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law." That principle applies. We could just as easily pose the question, "If thou perform communion, yet do not practice feet washing, art not thou a transgressor?"

The words of our Lord ring clear in John 13:17, where He said, "If ye know these things [plural; that night He instituted feet washing and the Lord's Supper], happy are ye if ye do them [plural]." In John 14:15 Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." He also said in John 15:14, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." One of the things He commanded was, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:20).

The Spiritual Aspect of the Lord's Supper

There are two aspects of this ordinance. The Lord wants the spiritual component to be as it ought, so that the physical component can be as it ought. When we rightly divide the Word of Truth, we can see that each of these ordinances have two aspects, just as Christ Himself did: "the Word [spiritual] was made flesh [physical]" (John 1:14). Let us consider the spiritual aspect or the realities this ordinance represents. Verses 27-29 of our text give insight that there is a spiritual connotation and qualification attached to this practice, because it does indeed represent a spiritual reality. In verse 24 Jesus said, "Take, eat: this is my body." Contrary to the teachings of Roman Catholicism, this obviously was not Jesus' literal body. He was standing there before them in His corporal body when He said, "This is my body." His body was not in that bread; His body stood before them. His literal body is never in that bread. When Jesus told His disciples to "drink this cup" (verse 26), He said, "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28). Yet, His blood had not been shed at that juncture. This was the day before He went to Calvary. Jesus was dealing in representations, or symbolism. It is a representation of a spiritual reality.

This is why the caution is given in our Scripture text: "let a man examine himself" (verse 28), and we are told "if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged" (verse 31). Why? Because verse 29 says, "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself" Why did the Apostle Paul teach that in such a strong manner? Because if one "eateth and drinketh unworthily," he is practicing hypocrisy. He is drinking damnation. Job 27:8 poses a question, asking, "For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?" The strongest denunciations of our Lord were toward those who practiced hypocrisy. (Read Matthew 23:27-28.)

Let us consider the spiritual reality that enables one to be a qualified candidate for this ordinance. What does the "bread" and the "cup of the Lord" (verse 27 of our text) or "the bread" and the "fruit of the vine" (Matthew 26:26 and 29) represent? Verse 27 of our text tells us clearly that it refers to "the body and blood of the Lord." In 1 Corinthians 10:16 the Apostle Paul referred to the blood and the body as "communion." The Greek word is *koinonia*, which means "share in common." This is the same Greek word that is translated as "fellowship" in many Scriptures (Acts 2:42a; Galatians 2:9; 1 John 1:3). This reveals the reality of what we enjoy.

What is it that we "share in common"? First John 1:1 describes it as "That which was from the beginning" After receiving the Revelation and getting an understanding of the apostasy that was working, John's burden was to get the saints back to "That which was from the beginning," or back to the original! Too many people today say, "Let us get back to the reformers." We do not need to get back to the *reformers*; we need to get back to the *former*, Jesus Christ, back to "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard [this was not a second-handed Gospel to John], which we have seen with our eyes [John was an eye-witness], which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, the Word of life." In John's Gospel, Jesus let us know that the express purpose for which He came was to bring life to men who were "dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1). John 10:10 tells us, "... I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

John styled Christ as "the Word of *life*." Notice, there is a semi-colon at the end of 1 John 1:1. Notice the emphasis in these verses. First John 1:2-3 reads: "(For the *life* was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal *life*, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you [the *life* that was manifested], that ye also may have fellowship with us [or *koinonia*; share in common]" What is it that we "share in common" with the Father, the Son, and with every other brother and sister? We share this "life." John 6:53-57 says: "Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no *life* in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal *life*; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall *live* by me." What is the emphasis all the way down through these verses? Christ equated His "flesh" and "blood" with "life" (verses 53-54 and 57).

Our Daily Communion With Christ Is Through the Word and the Spirit

The next truth we want to consider concerning the spiritual aspect is that the ordinance of communion represents our daily communion with Christ. That is why He talked about eating or drinking unworthily. If we are not in communion with Christ spiritually, to represent that physically is hypocrisy. In reality, how do we partake of Christ? Let us look closely, because here is what the practice of the ordinance represents. A literal rendition of John 6:53 would be ridiculous, because after His resurrection, Jesus came back with a glorified body, and that glorified body ascended to Heaven. There is no manner in which we can literally partake of His flesh and blood. There is no mystical maneuver that a supposed priest can

perform over a wafer that causes that wafer to turn into the body, blood, divinity, and soul of Jesus Christ. That is a "lying wonder."

What was Jesus conveying when He said, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you" (John 6:53)? According to verse 54, there is a quality here that brings "eternal life." Keep in mind that Jesus was dealing with a spiritual reality. When He said "whoso eateth my flesh" (verse 54), John 1:14 tells us to what He was referring: "And the *Word* was made flesh" We partake of the Lord through His Word, not through a wafer or unleavened bread. It is representative of how we partake of Him through His Word. Jesus said, "I am the living bread" (John 6:51). When we observe this ordinance and eat the bread, it is showing our communion with Christ and taking Him in through His Word.

John 6:54 speaks of "drinketh my blood." To understand that, we must understand the position of the blood. Deuteronomy 12:23 tells us that "the blood is the life." In this New Testament dispensation, Romans 8:10 lets us know that "the Spirit is life," and 1 Corinthians 12:13 tells us that we "have been all made to drink into one Spirit." When Jesus spoke about "drinketh my blood," He was talking about drinking in of His Spirit, which produces and maintains life. Notice that Jesus employed the present and continual tense: "eateth" and "drinketh." In other words, eats and continues to eat; drinks and continues to drink. Not only is this necessary in an initial experience, but it is to be a continual practice in our experience. We continually partake and have communion with Christ through His Word and through His Spirit.

Some people might reference 1 Corinthians 10:17, where the Apostle Paul wrote, "For we being many are one bread, and one body" and say the "bread" is speaking of the church. Likewise, Colossians 1:18 lets us know that "the body, [is] the church." That is true, but the last part of 1 Corinthians 10:17 tells us that "we are all partakers of that one bread." What makes us a part of that one bread (the church)? What makes us a part of the body of Christ? What is it that we all "share in common"? It is this "life." The church is called the "church of the living God" (1 Timothy 3:15). It is because we share this God-life that we comprise "the body, the church." According to James 1:18, it was "the word" that "begat" us. It is through the Word that we have been born again. Peter wrote in 1 Peter 1:23, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." Life comes by partaking of the Word, and then certainly the Spirit has His aspect in bringing about this life. We are all partakers of that "one bread," the church, because of that life!

In John 6:56-57 Jesus said: "He that eateth [present and continual tense] my flesh, and drinketh [present and continual tense] my blood [in other words, he that eats and continues to eat My Word, he that drinks and continues to drink in My Spirit], dwelleth [present and continual tense] in me, and I in him. [If we quit eating, and we quit drinking, we will quit dwelling in Him. It is in the eating and the drinking through which we have our "communion," or "share in common" with Christ this God-life.] As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth [eats and continues to eat] me, even he shall live by me." This life is where our "communion" is, where our "fellowship" is, and is what we "share in common." Communion with Christ comes by eating His Word.

Concerning the Word, there are a number of Scriptures that say: "eat ... it up" (Revelation 10:9); "eat that I give thee" (Ezekiel 3:3); and his "words were found, and I did eat them" (Jeremiah 15:16). It is not only what we do initially but continually which brings life. The Scriptures are very clear. When we continue to eat and drink, we will continue to live. First John 1:7 tells us, "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship [or we share in common]" John 1:4 tells us what the light is: "In him was life; and the life was the light of men." This light is life! That is what makes us the church, "all partakers of that one bread" (1 Corinthians 10:17). The Lord adds to the church, "such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47). You are saved when you are born again (the Greek says "born from above"). John 3:6 calls it a spiritual birth. That is what we share in common.

The Anti-type, or Spiritual Reality, of the Passover

Let us consider one more aspect of the truth concerning "communion." Why did Jesus institute this at the time of the Passover? There are those who say, "They did not eat the Passover," but that is not true. In Luke 22:15 Jesus said, "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer." He initiated and instituted this ordinance at the time of Passover because it serves to fulfill a type; it serves as an anti-type. First Corinthians 10:11 says, "Now all these things [the preceding verses speak of things that occurred in the Exodus, Old Testament events] happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." The word "ensamples" in the Greek is *tupos*, which means "types." *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* renders this portion of the verse as: "these things occurred to them typically." *Webster's New World Dictionary* defines "type" as "a person; a thing; or an event that represents or symbolizes another, especially another that is to come."

It has been said that an Old Testament historical type is "the mystical sense of Scripture, whereby things acted or done

in the Old Testament prefigured things acted in the New Testament times, with respect especially to Christ the anti-type, who is, as it were the kernel enclosed in all those shells of Old Testament ceremonies, types or actions, and etc."

Let us go back and view the type in Exodus, Chapter 12. Verse 2 says, "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months." Why would God commence the Jewish year with this event? Why would He terminate the prior practice and make this now the first month of the year? It was because it designated a new beginning. Likewise, the Lamb of God enables men and women to have a new beginning. Hebrews 10:20 calls it "a new and living way." This is typical, or representative, of a new beginning. Exodus 12:5 says, "Your lamb shall be without blemish" John 1:29 tells us who this lamb represents: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Jesus is the Lamb. Exodus 12:5 very clearly states that the "lamb shall be without blemish." First Peter 1:19 tells us that Christ was "as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." The paschal lamb was a type, a representation, and the anti-type, or the reality, is Jesus Christ.

What were the Israelites to do with the lamb? Exodus 12:6 says that they were to "kill it." Its life was to be forfeited, and then verse 7 tells us that they were to apply the blood "on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses." Verse 8 says that "they shall eat the flesh," and verse 13 reads, "... and when I see the blood, I will pass over [speaking of the death angel, who was going to kill every first born in Egypt]." Verse 11 tells us that "it is the LORD's Passover." This is the type, but let us consider the anti-type, or the reality.

We found that Christ is our Lamb and that He is without blemish. He is the One who lays "down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). When we through faith have the blood applied and "eat the flesh," or take in the conditions of the Word, then we are "born again ... by the word of God" (1 Peter 1:23). When that occurs, we have a Passover. In John 5:24 Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed [here is your Passover] from death unto life." This is the anti-type, or the spiritual reality. We have experienced a Passover. Thank God, our Lamb was slain!

Spiritual death was the position we were in. Ephesians 2:1 says that we "were dead in trespasses and sins." The only thing that kept us out of hell was the mercies of God. Thank God, in the fullness of time, Jesus came upon the stage of action, and He died in our stead! The Lamb was slain, and when we, by faith, obey the Word of God (just as they did in the Exodus) and apply the blood, there is a Passover from death to life! When we take the message concerning the atoning work of Jesus Christ, "we have passed from death unto life" (1 John 3:14). We have had a Passover! First Corinthians 5:7 says: "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us." Christ is our Passover, our paschal lamb. He yielded His life that His blood may be applied, and we could partake of the Lamb by the Word so that we could pass from death to life. This is the reality. This is why He was crucified on the same day (the fourteenth day of Nisan) as the paschal lamb, and why He gave up the ghost on Calvary's tree the same hour when they slew the Passover lamb. Christ became our Passover; He is the reality!

Exodus 12:14 tells us, "And this day [the 'LORD's passover'; verse 11] shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations [the Passover feast was partaken of during the Old Testament dispensation, but then there was a change]; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever." Now, it is not a literal feast, but it is an ordinance. Christ is our Passover, and when we partake of Christ, we partake of the Lamb. We read in Revelation 19:9: "And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God." What are we eating? We are eating the Lamb. We are eating the "true sayings," or the truth. We are eating the Word, and Christ is the Word. We are eating the Lamb just as they were.

How were they supposed to eat it? Exodus 12:9 says to "Eat not of it raw." Exodus 12:8 tells us, "And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire" The Word is to be anointed with the Holy Ghost. The Word of Truth with the Spirit of Truth will feed your soul. That is how we are sharing in common this life with the Father, with His Son, and with each other. This God-life is sustained through sharing in common the Word and the Spirit. We read in Exodus 12:9-10: "Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water [God does not want any watered-down Gospel], but roast with fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof. And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning."

We are to take the whole counsel of God. Too many people look at the Bible like it is a cafeteria; they take what they like and leave the rest. I trust the lesson is becoming clear. The representation is in Exodus, Chapter 12, and the reality is found in Jesus Christ. The Passover lamb in the old economy was the type, and Israel observed it as a memorial throughout their generations as a feast. Today we observe Passover through an ordinance, and we enjoy the realities. They were eating a literal lamb; we eat a spiritual Lamb. When they observed the Feast of the Passover, they ate the lamb. When we observe the ordinance of communion, we are portraying the partaking of our Lamb, Christ, by eating His Word and drinking in of His Spirit.

The practice of this ordinance of "communion" is not to be a dead form. It portrays our relationship with Christ. This is why the stern admonition and warning is found in our Scripture text. To partake "unworthily" is to bring "damnation" to one's self. Why such pronounced retribution? Revelation 22:15 describes it as one who "maketh a lie." The Amplified

Bible renders it in this manner: "... deals in falsehood (untruth, error, deception, cheating)." God hates hypocrisy! Making a lie, in essence, is when someone is living a lie. To partake of the physical aspect of this ordinance without being a participant in the spiritual aspect of this ordinance is making a lie and practicing hypocrisy. In many sectarian realms, when they weekly partake of this ordinance but they do not enjoy "communion" with Christ in their lives, they "maketh a lie."

The final truth set forth in these verses that we want to consider is the definite consequences of unworthiness. Again, this speaks to the truth that this ordinance (as set forth in the Corinthian letter and throughout the Gospel accounts) could not completely be referring to something totally spiritual. Otherwise, you would not be able to partake "unworthily." If it were all spiritual, you could not partake if you were not right. It is immediately obvious that this ordinance is an outward portrayal of an inward work, or an inward experience. This ordinance, as with feet washing, was established the day before the death of Christ. There are those who would say these ordinances were nailed "to his cross" (Colossians 2:14). However, it would be the height of foolishness for Christ to institute two New Testament ordinances, feet washing and the Lord's Supper, the evening before His death and then turn around the next day and nail it "to his cross," invalidating them. That sounds like a "double minded man" (James 1:8), and Christ certainly was not "double minded"!

When we look at the ordinances—water baptism, feet washing, and the Lord's Supper—all have physical components because they are physical expressions of spiritual realities. Each reveals a position that a saint is to occupy: water baptism shows our relationship to sin and the world—dead to sin and buried, or put away; feet washing reveals our relationship to our brother—we are servants at our brothers' feet, and communion represents our relationship to Christ—in communion and sharing in common that life which He came to bring to mankind. They all have spiritual realities that lie behind them, but they also have physical practices which Christ commanded we observe.

Unfortunately, there have been false teachings associated with these ordinances and erroneous practices performed. Because of that, some have hyper-spiritualized them, going to excess and creating other erroneous teachings. Every spiritual reality—salvation, the standards of holiness, separation from the world, being a separate distinct church, and coming out of Babylon—has been subject to false teaching and erroneous practices, but we do not discard those truths and neither should we discard the New Testament ordinances. Christ is revealed to our day as "the faithful and true witness" (Revelation 3:14). We must be honest-hearted and accept the truth when He reveals it to us. He will be true to us, but we must discard our thoughts and the teachings of men when He is faithful to reveal the truth to us. Isaiah 35:8 tells us that "the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein." We do not have to err. Isaiah 30:21 says, "And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left." The Lord is faithful and will be faithful to every individual. When He brings understanding, we must embrace truth rather than continue in men's teachings.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Truth Concerning the Physical Resurrection

Psalm 8:4 What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

John 5:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.

26 For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;

27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

28 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,

29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

Man Is a Three-Fold Being

The previous chapters of this book have dealt with the New Testament ordinances. We have concluded that portion of our study. In the final chapters of this book, we will consider two other doctrinal truths that have been maligned and misrepresented as well. At first glance, it may seem to be a strange succession to the previous study. However, there is a commonality between these truths that unites them: each of these has been subjected to the errant position of hyper-spiritualization. There are those who have taken the truths concerning a physical resurrection and attempted to spiritualize it; thus, eliminating the reality of a physical, literal resurrection. By the help of God, we want to "study," "rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15).

As we begin to approach the subject of the resurrection, we must again recognize the timeless words of the wise man penned in Ecclesiastes 1:9, which says that "there is no new thing under the sun." The denial and dismissal of a physical, coming resurrection is as old as the Scriptures. In the Book of Job, which chronologically is the oldest book of the Bible (written in the proximity of 2058 B.C.), this timeless question was posed and addressed: "If a man die, shall he live again?" (Job 14:14). The Apostle Paul, in his writings, let us know that it was maligned and misrepresented as early as A.D. 54-57, the time when he penned the First Corinthian epistle. In 1 Corinthians 15:12 he wrote, "Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?" Paul was addressing "the church of God which is at Corinth" (1 Corinthians 1:2).

This heresy was being propagated very early in the morning time. Paul was still dealing with this erroneous position in his final epistle, prior to his martyrdom. He wrote to the young minister Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:16-18, saying: "But shun profane and vain babblings [because wrong talking leads to wrong living]: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker [or the margin says 'gangrene']: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some." In this letter, Paul not only denounced the doctrine but also its advocates: "Hymenaeus and Philetus" (verse 17). Again, the resurgence of teachings that discount a literal, physical resurrection is not new light, as touted by some, but rather it is where "darkness" is being put for "light" (Isaiah 5:20). Let us see what the Scriptures teach concerning this very vital doctrine.

To understand this truth, we must understand man and his nature. In our text, the Psalmist David posed a question, asking, "What is man?" The Scriptures are expressly clear regarding this query. We read in 1 Thessalonians 5:23, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly [*The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* says 'entirely'; then Paul elaborated upon what 'entirely' consisted of, or what constitutes the whole man]; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Here we find that man is a trichotomy, or a three-fold being: "spirit and soul and body." This was the design from the beginning. Genesis 1:26 tells us, "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." This was spoken before He ever made a man. The "us" and the "our" to whom God was speaking are the other personages of the Triune Godhead. God the Father was speaking to God the Son and God the Holy Ghost.

The word "God" in this verse is the Hebrew word *elohiym*, which is a plural word, but it is always used with individual or singular verbs. This denotes that there is one Godhead, but it is comprised of three personages: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The Triune Godhead here speaks of a trichotomous man. When Genesis 1:26 says "man," that word in the actual Hebrew is "Adam." According to Dr. Adam Clark, "It is intended to designate the species." It represents or refers to the physical component, or the body. Genesis 1:26 proceeds to speak of the creation of man and describes that he was created "in our image." What was that "image?" The New Testament gives us an insight. In Colossians, Chapter 3, the

Apostle began to describe re-creation, that time when man, through a real experience of salvation, experiences re-creation. Second Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature [or the Greek word says 'creation']."

Colossians 3:10 tells us, "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." Salvation, that which re-creates man, has created him (or renewed him) "after the image of him that created him." In other words, it restores man to his original state. To understand what this image is, go to Ephesians 4:24, which says, "And that ye put on the new man [referring to the same experience], which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." This reveals what man's original state was: a holy state. Salvation re-creates, or restores, man to that holy state. This "image" (Genesis 1:26) is referring to the spiritual state of man, the spirit, one of the aspects of trichotomous man. Then Genesis 1:26 concludes the description of man's composition by proclaiming "after our likeness."

There is a part of every man that is like God. What part is that? Deuteronomy 33:27 refers to God as the "eternal God." We each have an eternal soul. These three portions of man's being are what composes the whole man. He is three-fold: spirit, soul, and body. We need to understand that our nature is comprised of these three portions, which enables us to interact in the various spheres of life. You have a body, and you possess a spirit; but the real you is the soul.

The Soul Is Our Self-Consciousness and The Body Is Our World-Consciousness

We read in Psalm 139:13-17: "For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well [the real 'me' is 'my soul']. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth [the marital act that brings pro-creation]. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them [before there were any members of the physical form of the body, there was a 'me': the soul]. How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!" Again, when he spoke of "my" and "me," he was speaking of "the soul" (verse 14), because verse 16 says "as yet there was none [talking about our members, our physical frame] of them." These verses clearly state that the real "me" is the soul. Ezekiel 18:4 says, "Behold, all souls are mine."

When conception takes place, God immediately places a soul within. Job 10:10-11 says: "Hast thou not purged me out as milk, and curdled me like cheese [a figurative expression of the act of conception]? Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh [the real me must be something other than skin and flesh], and hast fenced me with bones and sinews." The "me" that has the clothing of skin and flesh and bones and sinews is the soul. Man is a soul, and the soul is our self-consciousness. It is the real you; it is the one who looks out through the eyes and hears through the ears.

Our body is our world-consciousness. Genesis 1:26 tells us that man is to "have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." What is it that has "dominion" over the earth? It is the body of man. It is our body that engages with the things of this earth. Our body is how we operate, how we relate, and how we interact in this time world. The body is also the instrument of the soul. The state of the soul determines the actions of the body. This is imminently related to our subject, because unless we understand what man is, the various components that comprise man's being, and then what occurs with each of those components at death, we will never understand the truth concerning the resurrection.

Romans 6:12-13 tells us: "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members [of 'your mortal body'; verse 12] as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members [your 'mortal body'; verse 12] as instruments of righteousness unto God." Romans 6:19 says, "I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members [your 'mortal body'; verse 12] servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness." He was letting us know it is the state of the soul that determines the actions of the body.

Romans 6:17-18 tells us: "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." Romans 8:11-14 says: "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies [This is not talking about the literal resurrection at this juncture, because the body is still 'mortal.' Mortal bodies need to be 'quickenened,' or made alive, because they were 'dead in trespasses and sins'; Ephesians 2:1. He was talking about a spiritual experience.] by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

"Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify [*The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* says 'put to death'] the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God" We "mortify," or put the body under, "through the Spirit." The body is an

instrument of the soul, and this is a factor in both the resurrection and the judgment. When we were in an unregenerate state, our bodies were the members of sin and were used to commit sin; but thank God, when real salvation comes in the heart and the nature is changed, those same members are members of righteousness. Where they used to hold a cigarette, now they hold a Bible; where they used to sing the blues, now they sing praise. We need to understand that the body is an instrument of the soul, and the nature (or the condition) of the soul dictates the actions of the body.

The Spirit Is Our God-Consciousness

The third portion of man that we want to consider is the spirit, and it is different than the soul. Although, in some places in scriptural use it is used interchangeably, it is a different portion of man. It clearly tells us in Hebrews 4:12, "For the word of God is quick [or alive], and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of [they are just as distinct as] the joints and marrow" There is a distinction: our spirit is our God-consciousness. It is how we relate to God. Ezekiel 36:26-28 tells us: "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God."

We only need this God-consciousness (or the spirit) during our lifetime. Once we enter the eternal realm that God inhabits, we no longer need the spirit to relate to Him. God "inhabith eternity" (Isaiah 57:15), and when we rend this veil of flesh and move from time to eternity, or when Jesus splits the clouds and time is ushered into eternity, we will no longer need our spirit. Ecclesiastes 12:7 talks about what occurs at death. It says, "Then shall the dust [man is dust of the earth] return to the earth as it was [talking about the body]: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." Why? We do not need it any longer.

Look at some of the final words of Jesus prior to giving up the ghost. Luke 23:46 says, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Immediately following that, "he gave up the ghost [or He gave that spirit up]." Where did His spirit go? It went back "unto God who gave it" (Ecclesiastes 12:7). We do not need that spirit once we move into the realms of eternity.

Understanding Psalm 8:4 and the question that was posed is crucial, because understanding what man is and what happens to the various portions of man at death is extremely germane to understanding the truth of our study. We must consider what occurs at death. We just read in Ecclesiastes 12:7 that "the dust [shall] return to the earth as it was [in other words, the body is placed in the ground and begins its decaying and decomposition to return to its original element]: and the spirit shall return unto God" There is no longer a need for our body. Once we pass from this earth, we no longer need the earthly body. We no longer are operating where we need a world-consciousness. The spirit, that which enabled us to relate to God, is no longer needed when we go into eternity where God is.

The body returns to the earth, and the spirit returns unto God. What about the soul? In Luke, Chapter 16, Jesus uncapped eternity and allowed us a glimpse. There He related the account of the rich man and Lazarus. (I might say that this is not a parable. The Scripture clearly lets us know that "There *was* a certain rich man" (Luke 16:19), and "there *was* a certain beggar named Lazarus" (Luke 16:20). There is not a single parable in the entirety of Scripture that uses a personal name. That is one reason we know this is not a parable.)

Jesus said in Luke 16:22, "And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom." To understand what "Abraham's bosom" is, look at what Jesus told the thief in Luke 23:43: "Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Who was the "me" Jesus was speaking about? Jesus' body went to a sepulcher; He was buried in Joseph of Arimathea's tomb. He commended His spirit back to God who gave it. What went to Paradise? The soul. It was the same with this thief; his body hung on a cross until they took it down, but he was already in Paradise. "Abraham's bosom" is Paradise. The soul of the saved goes to "Abraham's bosom," or to "Paradise."

Luke 16:23 tells us, "And in hell [speaking of the rich man, who 'also died, and was buried'; verse 22] he lift up his eyes" The Greek word here is *Hades*. Thus, when death seizes upon one, the "dust [shall] return to the earth" and "the spirit shall return unto God" (Ecclesiastes 12:7), and the soul, according to its spiritual state, either goes to "Abraham's bosom" (Paradise), or to "Hell" (Hades). "Abraham's bosom" is for the saved; Hades is for the lost. There is no soul sleeping. As soon as he died, Lazarus went from this time realm to an eternal realm. Likewise, the rich man went from one realm to another with full cognizance and awareness: "being in torments" (Luke 16:23).

The Apostle Paul said in Philippians 1:23, "For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart [talking about stepping out of this veil of flesh into an experience called 'death'], and to be with Christ; which is far better." There is no soul sleeping. As soon as our eyes close in physical death, we go into a realm of eternity. The soul is as alert and awake—perhaps more so—as it was before we left this time world. What was Paul talking about when he said "to depart,

and to be with Christ; which is far better" (Philippians 1:23), or in Philippians 1:21 when he said, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain"? He was talking about what the experience of death brings to a saved individual.

The soul, that eternal part of man is ever awake, aware, and cognizant. The body is considered to be sleeping. It is in the grave. The spirit has gone back to God who gave it; there is no need for it any longer. But, the soul is enjoying the bliss of Paradise or the torments of Hades. There is no soul sleeping, but the body is considered to be sleeping. There is a reason it was referred to in that manner. John 11:11-14 tells us: "These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well [they misunderstood His meaning]. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead." The Bible refers to physical death as sleeping, not just here, but in other Scriptures as well.

Physical Death Is Described as "Sleeping"

After Paul had given understanding concerning the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, he gave the saints admonition and warning to consider their worthiness. He talked about those that "eateth and drinketh unworthily" (1 Corinthians 11:29) and "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep" (1 Corinthians 11:30). What was he talking about? First Corinthians 15:51 tells us, "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." He was talking about physical death. First Thessalonians 4:14 says, "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him." What does the word "sleep" mean? It is just as Jesus told the disciples about Lazarus when He said, "Lazarus is dead." Jesus was talking about physical death. Why is the death of the body referred to in the Scriptures as "sleep"? Just as sleep is only temporary, physical death is only for a time. When one sleeps, he will rise soon, and when one has encountered physical death, it is referred to as a "sleep" because it is only temporary. There will come a day when these bodies will be awakened.

First Corinthians 15:20-22 tell us: "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept [He was resurrected first, but there is coming a day when all will be resurrected]. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." That is not talking spiritually. Just because Christ came does not mean that everyone is saved. This is talking about that restoration of physical life at the resurrection of the dead. It is referred to as "sleep." The employment of that expression alone is an indication that there is a literal, physical resurrection coming when that body will be awakened.

What Will Take Place on "the Last Day"?

Let us consider what occurs on what Jesus termed "the last day." It is amazing the religious advocates who can concoct so many things that are to happen beyond the last day. Friend, the last day is the last day. Nothing follows or succeeds it but eternity. In John 6:39-40 Jesus said: "And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day."

In John 6:54 Jesus said, "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." There are those who would say, "Well, these verses should be taken in a spiritual context, not literally." I would agree that there is certainly a spiritual resurrection, and we will deal with that in a subsequent chapter. The fact that there is indeed a spiritual resurrection does not eliminate the reality of a literal resurrection, that which occurs on what Jesus termed "the last day." Notice the clear words of Jesus in our text (John 5:28-29) when He said: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming [future tense], in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

We need to understand that "Every word of God is pure" (Proverbs 30:5). There is divine design, intent, and truth incorporated into every single word incorporated in the Scriptures. What was Jesus addressing? What is "in the graves"? Only the body. The minute death seizes upon one, the spirit returns to God who gave it, and the soul goes to Paradise or Hades. So, when Jesus said, "... all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth ... unto the resurrection," the only thing in the grave is the body. Job 19:25 says, "For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth." In these words, Job was envisioning the First Advent of Christ, the time when He would stand upon the earth. We can be certain of that because at the Second Advent, Jesus will not be upon the earth. First Thessalonians 4:17 tells us, "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air." His foot is never going to again touch this earth! So, what Job was envisioning here, under divine inspiration, was the First Advent.

Job 19:26-27 says: "And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold [Him], and not another; though my reins be consumed within me." It has already been over 4,000 years since Job lived, and I would say he is, as he said, very "consumed" by now. When Job said that after "worms destroy this body" that he would "see God," he was talking about the Second Advent, what will occur at the resurrection. How will this happen? Read his inspired words in Job 14:12, which states, "So man lieth down, and riseth not [the Septuagint says 'man that is lain down in death'; talking about physical death]: till [What does that mean? There is going to come a time when man arises, but it is not 'till' a certain point. He goes on to give us some insight.] the heavens be no more [The Septuagint says 'till the heavens be dissolved'], they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep." Job 14:14 says, "If a man die, shall he live again [the answer is decidedly 'yes']? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come."

Second Peter 3:10-11 says: "But the day of the Lord [obviously Peter was not speaking of the First Advent, for it had come and gone; this expression now refers to the Second Advent] will come as a thief in the night [in an unguarded hour]; in the which the heavens [Job said that man would not rise 'till the heavens be no more'; when is that going to occur?] shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved" All these things will take place on "the day of the Lord," that last day, the Second Advent, the resurrection. This is an event that is yet on the horizon: "The day of the Lord will come [future tense]" (2 Peter 3:10). This does not lend itself to hyper-spiritualization because of the very clear physical connotations.

Verse 10 says that "the heavens [the aerial heavens, the firmamental heavens] shall pass away ... the elements shall melt ... the earth ... shall be burned up." This is a cataclysmic event that is yet to come. Peter was speaking of the Second Advent of Christ. On that "day of the Lord," when the heavens shall pass away, and all these things shall be dissolved, that is when the dead are going to rise. That is when Job tells us very clearly "in my flesh shall I see God" (Job 19:26). How is that going to occur? Through a resurrection. Job said, "in my flesh," even after there is nothing left, he was going to see Jesus. The "change" (Job 14:14) will come on the day of resurrection.

Job was speaking, under divine inspiration, of the same thing which the Apostle Paul penned in 1 Corinthians 15:51-53. It says: "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep [Sleep is physical death. In other words, the Apostle Paul was simply saying that when Christ comes, there will still be people alive.] In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." There was the "change." This was how Job was going to see Him with his own eyes, in the flesh, even after the skin worms had finished with him. On this day, the dead are going to rise, and they are going to be changed and have a glorious body. In their flesh, they will see Him. Every eye will see Jesus!

It is important that we make this clear. We all will be changed from corruptible to incorruptible, from mortal to immortal (1 Corinthians 15:53). There will be a change of our physical nature. Jesus made it very clear in John 6:40 when this would take place: "at the last day." First Corinthians 15:35 records some questions that had been posed, when the Apostle Paul wrote: "But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?" When man comes forth in the resurrection, there will be a changed body. We read in 1 Corinthians 15:36-38: "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: [In other words, when farmers sow a seed, that seed has to die; but out of that death comes great life. The nature of that seed changes.] And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body."

Our Resurrected Body Will Be Like Jesus' Resurrected Body

First Corinthians 15:42-44 says: "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body." The nature changes. They are raised up with a "spiritual body" (verse 44). They clearly are different, in many ways, than the seed that was sown.

This also clearly tells us there is going to be a body raised up. This is dealt with throughout 1 Corinthians, Chapter 15, in explicit detail, but it is specifically and succinctly addressed in Philippians 3:21, which says, "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body" This lets us know that there is going to be a change of the nature of this body: "a spiritual body" (1 Corinthians 15:44), a glorified body, like unto His glorified body. Christ [is] ... become the firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Corinthians 15:20). If we want to know what the rest of the fruits look like, look at the "firstfruits." If we want to know what our resurrected body will be, look at Jesus' resurrected body. First Corinthians

15:23 says, "But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." When the question was posed, "With what body do they come?" (1 Corinthians 15:35), it was a body fashioned like unto "his glorious body" (Philippians 3:21). This begs the question, Then what is "his glorious body" like? How was His body "spiritual" (1 Corinthians 15:44) or "glorious" (Philippians 3:21)? We can read about Christ after He had been resurrected in Luke 24:36-43, which says: "And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them."

Jesus is the firstfruits of the dead. Our vile body will be fashioned like unto His glorified body. His glorified body had flesh and bones. Notice the absence of any mention of blood. Why? The corruption is in the blood; so, a glorified body that is incorruptible has no blood. The Apostle Paul mentioned the same thing, concerning the body of Christ, the church. In Ephesians 5:29-30 he said: "For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." There is no mention of blood. Also notice, Luke recorded that Jesus had a physical body, even one capable of eating. In the resurrection, we will receive a physical body, one fashioned like unto His glorious body, and it will have recognizable qualities.

John 20:24-28 tells us: "But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days [in other words, the next Sunday service] again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, [This body has a strange quality to it: it is a physical body, but it can walk right through the door. This is one of the paradoxes because it was also called by the Apostle Paul 'a spiritual body'; 1 Corinthians 15:44.] and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God." Jesus had hands with the scars, and He had the side that had been riven. In the glorified body, He had identifying factors. Thomas doubted it was the Lord, but by the time the Lord was finished with him, he knew Who it was.

Let us look at the sequence of events concerning this resurrection. On the fateful day that Jesus styled as "the last day" (John 6:40), the one 1 Thessalonians 5:2 denotes as "the day of the Lord." Jesus will empty both Paradise and Hades "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" (1 Corinthians 15:52); one scholar says "the time it takes to blink an eye." He will call forth all the bodies and reunite them to take them to the judgment seat of Christ. Jude, verse 14, says, "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands [there is no Greek word for millions; *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* says 'myriads,' which means an innumerable number] of his saints." Where did that innumerable number of saints come from? He emptied out Paradise. If one is saved and he dies prior to the Second Advent, his soul is in Paradise and his body is in the grave. In the twinkling of an eye, Christ is going to split the clouds. He will have emptied Paradise out, and He will reunite the body with the soul. First Thessalonians 3:13 says, "To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints." All these saints with Christ are from Paradise. He is going to empty Paradise out. The graves are going to burst forth, and the soul and the body (the instrument of the soul) will be reunited. For those who are not saved, Revelation 20:13 tells us, "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them." When it talks about "death" and "hell," the Greek word here is *Hades*. It is the same Greek word used when speaking of the rich man: "And in hell he lift up his eyes" (Luke 16:23).

The Expanded Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words says this about the word *Hades*: "It never denotes the grave, nor the permanent region of the lost; in point of time, it is for such, intermediate between decease and the doom of Gehenna." Death is where the bodies are held, and on the fateful day, the bodies will come forth out of the grave and be reunited with the souls of the lost who have been in Hades. In John 5:28-29 Jesus said: "Marvel not at this: for the hour [singular] is coming [future], in the which all that are in the graves [bodies of both the saved and the lost] shall hear his voice, [This is a physical resurrection because the only thing in the grave is the body. When He talked about the spiritual resurrection in verses 24-25, which we will study in our next chapter, nothing at all was said about graves, because He was not talking about the bodies. He was talking about those who are dead in trespasses and sins, but in these verses, He said, 'all that are in the graves.' The only thing in the graves is the bodies.] And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

The Soul and the Body Will Reunite

On the last day, death will deliver every body, and from Paradise and Hades every soul will be delivered up. First Thessalonians 4:13-17 tells us: "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep [that means physical death had overtaken them], that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him [in other words, when Jesus comes, He is going to bring the soul and reunite it with that portion which sleeps, the body]. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain [he is talking about two classes of people here: those who are dead, or that 'sleep,' and those who will still be alive at the Second Advent] unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, [That eliminates a secret stealing away. You do not usually shout and make noise when you are coming to steal something. Also, He bought and paid for the church with His own blood. You do not steal something you bought.] with the voice of the archangel, [This is not Gabriel blowing his horn. This word, 'archangel,' is only mentioned twice in the Bible: here and in Jude, verse 9, which says, 'Yet Michael the archangel.' In both places it is used in the singular. The word means 'master or chief of angels.' This describes Jesus who could have called 'twelve legions of angels' (Matthew 26:53). The word *Michael* means one who is like God. Again, this describes Jesus. Read John 14:9; John 10:30; Daniel 12:1. The prince of peace, one who is like God, this voice of the archangel is the Lord Himself.] and with the trump of God: [Who has 'the trump of God'? Revelation 1:10-11 identifies Him as the 'Alpha and Omega.' Revelation 22:13 and 16 lets us know who that is: 'I, Jesus.' These expressions 'descend from heaven with a shout,' 'the voice of the archangel,' and 'with the trump of God,' are interchangeable terms, denoting the one and self-same act by the Lord Himself.] and the dead in Christ shall rise first: [According to dispensational teachers, that is the rapture. They say the church is raptured, or resurrected, first, and then 1000 years later the resurrection of damnation occurs. That is not so! Look at the verse. It is an incomplete sentence. The end of verse 16 ends with a colon. 'The dead in Christ shall rise first:'] Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them"

The word "first" means before those who are alive and remain, not first before the unsaved. There are not going to be two literal resurrections. John 5:29 speaks of the "resurrection of life" and the "resurrection of damnation," but these are not two separate resurrections. Rather, these are two different states of the same resurrection. The distinction is the state of the soul, not the act of the resurrection. It is very clear in John 5:28-29, when Jesus said: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming [one hour, singular; one time, one event], in the which all that are in the graves [saved and lost] shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." Two different conditions, but the same event, occurring in the same hour. Acts 24:15 tells us, "there shall be a resurrection [singular] of the dead, both of the just and unjust." It is going to be just one resurrection.

Why does the body need to be resurrected? Second Corinthians 5:10 tells us, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." The body is the instrument of the soul, and it will receive reward, or retribution, based on that which was done in the body. Thus, the necessity for the body to be resurrected. This is why the Judgment cannot occur when death occurs. Judgment cannot occur until the end of time, because the influence of that body (its acts and deeds) will go right on and could go on until time stops (Revelation 14:13). The Apostle Paul has been dead for centuries, but every time people gain help and understanding from reading or hearing his words preached, it enhances his reward; so the true measure of judgment cannot be given until time ceases.

The question may arise, "Is there any spiritual aspect of the resurrection?" Certainly so. Revelation 20:6 says, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection." There is nothing in a physical resurrection that alters man's spiritual state or makes him "blessed and holy." It only amplifies man's spiritual state. What is altered in the literal resurrection is not man's spiritual state but his physical state: his vile body is "fashioned like unto his glorious body" (Philippians 3:21). Revelation 20:6 indeed is speaking of a spiritual experience. Also, the thought of bringing an enumeration in as the "first" implies that there is more than one. Otherwise, it would not be numbered.

Our text reveals that there are two distinct resurrections: one spiritual and one physical. However, those who hyper-spiritualize do not recognize (or acknowledge) the physical (or literal) resurrection at all. We certainly do not discount the first resurrection (or the spiritual experience). It would not be Biblically sound to do so, but neither is it sound to discount the physical, literal resurrection. The Scriptures are expressly clear. From the incarnation, Christianity has been a blend of spiritual and physical. John 1:14 says, "And the Word [spiritual] was made flesh [physical]" Certainly, the Scriptures, when rightly divided, set forth both resurrections.

The Truth Concerning the Spiritual Resurrection

Psalm 8:4 What is man, that thou art mindful of him?

John 5:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.

26 For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;

27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

28 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,

29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

Man Is a Creature of Choice

Our text in John speaks of a resurrection that "now is" (verse 25). This is a spiritual resurrection, and that is what we want to address in this segment of our study. To understand the truths concerning the spiritual resurrection, we must again consider the question posed by the Psalmist David in Psalm 8:4, but we must view it from another perspective. In answering the question, "What is man?" we found in the previous segment, one aspect the Scriptures reveal is that man is a trichotomous being: "spirit and soul and body" (1 Thessalonians 5:23). In this chapter, we want to approach this question to reveal another aspect of truth that it conveys, the truth that man is a creature of choice, a free moral agency. Repeatedly, throughout the Scriptures, man is enjoined to make the proper choice. Prior to stepping off the stage of action, Moses spoke to a new generation, a generation whose fathers' "carcasses fell in the wilderness" (Hebrews 3:17). In Deuteronomy 30:19 he told them, "... I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." Old Israel was enjoined to "choose life"; that choice rests with man. As Joshua neared the end of his earthly sojourn, he put forth a similar challenge in Joshua 24:15, saying, "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve."

Centuries later, as Elijah stood on Mount Carmel, he brought a challenge to all of Israel (who had been turned away from truth to idolatry), saying: "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him" (1 Kings 18:21). Elijah was encouraging choice. In the dawn of Creation, when man was placed in the garden, Adam was told by the very Lord Himself, "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:17). This tree was placed there for one reason: to afford man choice. When we begin to give consideration to our Scripture text, the question that may arise is, "Why is this germane to our study?" It is because the revelator penned in Revelation 20:6, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power" There is a "first resurrection," and there is a "second death." For there to be a "second death," there must, of necessity, be a first death.

What is the first death? Why does it occur? To answer these questions requires an understanding that man is a creature of choice. Acts 10:34 tells us that Peter perceived this truth: "God is no respecter of persons." In the context of our study, this reveals that every person has the power of choice. To understand the choice man is confronted with, we must understand the original nature of man. We read in Genesis 1:26, "And God said, Let us make man in our [own] image" Man's original state when he entered this time world was in the image of God. In Colossians, Chapter 3, we see that in re-creation, man is restored to that image. Speaking of what occurs in regeneration, verse 10 tells us that the "new man ... is renewed," or brought back, to the very "image" of original creation. Ephesians 4:24 tells us, "And that ye put on the new man [describing the same experience of regeneration], which after God is created [after the image of him that created him]; Colossians 3:10] in righteousness and true holiness."

When Adam was formed and then placed in the garden and occupied this time world, he was made in an upright state, spiritually speaking. He was righteous, and because of the principle of God, that "God is no respecter of persons" (Acts 10:34), if Adam came into this world in the image of God (righteousness), then every other person who comes into this world initially has the same image: righteousness, or are in a right state with God. Speaking of the time before the age of accountability, the Apostle Paul clearly wrote in Romans 7:9, "For I was alive without the law once: [To what was he referring? The law was given on Mount Sinai in 1491 B.C.; he never lived in a time prior to the Mosaic Law.] but when the commandment came, [In other words, what he was saying was, when it came to his awareness, his knowledge, or when

he reached an age of accountability. Prior to the age of accountability, Paul said he was "alive." Obviously, he was not speaking of physical life.] sin revived, and I died." He could not have been writing about physical death, or he would not have been able to write that epistle. He was speaking of a spiritual death that came upon him when he came to the age of accountability. Prior to that, Paul said he was "alive."

Every child is born in this righteous state. Ecclesiastes 7:29 tells us, "Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright [the Hebrew word is *yashar*; it means 'righteous']." God made man righteous. That was still occurring approximately 3,027 years after the Creation (the approximate date of the Book of Ecclesiastes being 977 B.C.). In Ezekiel 28:15 (written in 588 B.C.), speaking of the "king of Tyrus" (verse 12), we read, "Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created" This lets us know that 389 years further subsequent to Creation, God was still bringing children into the world in a perfect, upright state.

Look at the words of our Lord in Matthew 18:3, which reads, "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." "Little children," or children prior to the age of accountability, are "upright" according to Solomon and "alive" according to the Apostle Paul. But what happened? Paul said that "the commandment came" (Romans 7:9). It had already been in the world for over 1500 years. Where did it come? It came to him. When that happened, Paul said he "died." Ezekiel 18:4 says that "the soul that sinneth, it shall die." Romans 6:23 says, "For the wages of sin is death."

There is an age when we are in innocence (having no understanding), but we mature and reach that age where we know right from wrong. Then, because we have a knowledge, we become accountable. For sin to be charged, James 4:17 tells us, "Therefore to him that knoweth [there must be a knowledge] to do good, and doeth it not [there must be the exercise of will, contrary to the knowledge], to him it is sin." When children come to the age where the commandment comes to them and understanding comes to their minds, they have a knowledge of right and wrong. Then what happens? Because "we were yet without strength" (Romans 5:6), we did not have the indwelling power of the Holy Ghost. Then we were "without strength" to make the proper choice.

The First Death Is a Spiritual Death

Isaiah 53:6 says, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way." When that occurs, the Apostle Paul told us that "sin revived [or came alive], and I died" (Romans 7:9). This is the same kind of death Adam experienced when he disobeyed in the Garden of Eden. Adam did not physically die the day he ate of the tree. Genesis 5:5 tells us that he "lived ... nine hundred and thirty years." What type of death was it? It was a spiritual death, because he was told "for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:17). "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:4). He did experience a death on that day, not physically, but spiritually.

The first death that every man, woman, and child experiences is a spiritual death. Romans 6:23 tells us, "For the wages of sin is death." The Apostle Paul wrote to the young minister Timothy, "But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth" (1 Timothy 5:6). You can be physically alive and spiritually dead, and the hordes of humanity are in exactly that condition. They are physically alive, but spiritually they are "dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1). The first death is a spiritual death; it occurs when sin enters in.

What is "the first resurrection" of which Revelation 20:6 speaks? The Apostle Paul addressed it in Ephesians 2:1, when he said, "And you hath he quickened [made alive], who were dead in trespasses and sins." Another rendering says, "He raised from death to life." Ephesians 2:5 tells us, "Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened [made alive] us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)." "The first resurrection" takes place when you are saved. It is a spiritual experience. The Apostle Paul also spoke of it in Colossians 3:1, writing, "If ye then be risen with Christ" *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* says, "Raised," speaking of a spiritual resurrection. Since the first death is a spiritual death, the experience of the first resurrection is a spiritual resurrection. This is designed to occur because of what man is: a creature of choice.

Isaiah let us know that God knows "the end from the beginning" (Isaiah 46:10). The psalmist said that "his understanding is infinite" (Psalm 147:5). Because of that, God made a plan before He ever made a man because He knew what man would do. We read in 1 Peter 1:18-20: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation [or conduct] received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you." God's plan was that there would be a lamb, and that lamb (without spot and blemish) would come, offer a sacrifice, and yield His life so that we might have life.

The First Resurrection Is a Spiritual Resurrection

Let us consider what this first resurrection does. Revelation 20:6 tells us, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection." I am not dealing in this study with the prophetic content of this verse, or its prophetic time setting so much, but rather its practical aspect. Here is a resurrection that has a spiritual quality to it. In the song entitled "From Death to Life," in verse 3, the song writer penned: *"A resurrection, I confess, Has taken place within my breast; I've been awakened from the dead, And now I live with Christ instead."*

This first resurrection changes man's spiritual state. He was "dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1), but now he is alive and walks "in newness of life" (Romans 6:4). This resurrection changes a man's spiritual state. He becomes "Blessed and holy" (Revelation 20:6). There is nothing in a physical resurrection that makes a man holy or blessed. Those are spiritual qualities that come with this first, or spiritual, resurrection. Colossians 2:12-13 tells us: "Buried with him [Christ] in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened [or made alive] together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses." When does this take place? This first resurrection takes place when through a real experience of salvation, "ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God" (verse 12).

The physical resurrection is spoken of in verse 29 of our text. It clearly lets us know that the physical resurrection does not alter man's spiritual state, because this resurrection will find man in one of two spiritual states: a candidate for "the resurrection of life" or "the resurrection of damnation." When Jesus splits the clouds and the physical resurrection takes place, there is going to be some who are spiritually alive and some who are spiritually damned. That resurrection will not alter their spiritual state.

Notice also, concerning those who have experienced this spiritual resurrection, Revelation 20:6 tells us that "on such the second death hath no power." If "the second death" does not have "power" on those who have experienced this first resurrection, then this "second death" does have power over those who have not experienced it. The point we need to understand is that the literal, physical resurrection does not alter man's spiritual state. This spiritual resurrection alters man's spiritual state to where the "second death hath no power" over him. The power of the second death is determined by man's spiritual condition.

Contextually, Revelation 20:6 is speaking of those victorious saints in the catacombs and caves during the 1,000 years of the Dark Ages, but the principle and spiritual truths are the same. How does this spiritual resurrection occur? It is indeed the "first" (as Revelation 20:6 denoted), and Jesus mentioned it first when He said: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath [not going to have, but has it—present tense] everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live" (John 5:24-25).

What is the end result of being "passed from death unto life"? Notice this is an experience that "now is" (verse 25), or while time is yet standing. The words "now is" are in the present tense. This verse continues, speaking of "when the dead [those who are 'dead in trespasses and sins'; Ephesians 2:1] shall hear the voice of the Son of God." How do people now "hear the voice of the Son of God"? Verse 24 tells us, "He that heareth my word." When you hear His Word and when you believe (or accept) the teachings of that Word, it will take you "from death unto life," spiritually. You are already alive physically; therefore, this is speaking spiritually.

When our text speaks of "hear the voice" (verse 25) and "heareth my word" (verse 24), consider that the voice proceeds from the mouth. What comes out of the mouth of Christ? Words, but specifically what kind of words? Revelation 1:16 says, "And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword [the word of God'; Hebrews 4:12]." The Word of God is what comes out of His mouth, and hearing "the voice of the Son of God" comes about by hearing His Word. This spiritual resurrection occurs when one responds appropriately to the sound of the Gospel.

The Apostle Paul clearly wrote in Romans 1:16, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation" It is that power which has the ability to take man from being "dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1) to being "passed from death unto life" (John 5:24). When this occurs—when we hear, heed, and "believeth" (verse 24)—we find that "they that hear shall live" (verse 25). The purpose for which Christ graced the shores of time and implemented redemption's plan is found in John 10:10, which states, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." There was not a deliverance from sin available under the old economy. Thus, Jesus came to bring in "a new and living way" (Hebrews 10:20), "that they might have life" (John 10:10). This is not speaking of life physically, for these ones to whom He was speaking already had that. Rather, He was speaking spiritually.

John 3:36 tells us, "He that believeth [this is a present and continual tense, speaking of not just initially but continually] on the Son hath [not going to have; you enter into eternal life the day you are saved] everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth [present tense] on him." It is not going to abide on him; it is already abiding on him. The only thing holding him from the full blunt force of it is the fragile thread of life. It is important to understand that spiritual life comes when we believe and gain a real experience of salvation. When the Spirit of God

enters in at conversion, "the Spirit is life" (Romans 8:10); He brings spiritual life to us. What kind of life is it? The only one fit for eternity: a life that enables one to be "holy" (Revelation 20:6). This life changes man's spiritual state, not his physical state.

We have experienced a great portion of God's redemptive plan. Ephesians 1:6-7 tells us: "To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he that made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." Thank God for this redemptive work, but we must also recognize that although there is a first resurrection (that changes a man's spiritual state), that spiritual work does not change man's physical state. There is a portion of redemption that yet lies on the horizon, "to wit, the redemption of our body" (Romans 8:23).

Second Corinthians 5:4-6 states: "For we that are in this tabernacle [the physical composition of man, 'our earthly house of this tabernacle'; verse 1] do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. [An earnest payment is a down payment. We just have a down payment; we do not have the whole thing.] Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body" That is what Paul was talking about when he wrote of this "earthly house of this tabernacle" (verse 1) and when he talked about "in this" (verse 2) "tabernacle [earthly house]" we "groan" (verse 4). He is talking about being "in the body." When Paul spoke about "mortality" being "swallowed up" (2 Corinthians 5:4), he was talking about what will occur concerning the mortal portion of man at the physical resurrection. All these verses are describing what takes place in "the body" (verse 6) at the day we are "clothed upon" (verse 4) with immortality.

Romans 8:20-23 tells us: "For the creature was made subject to vanity, [The word 'vanity' in *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* is rendered as 'frailty.' The 'creature,' which refers to our mortal portion, has been subjected to *frailty*. These are frail bodies. It does not take much to affect it.] not willingly, [Did God ask our opinion? No doubt, we would not have chosen to have done it the way He does: weak, frail, and subject to sickness. So, He did not ask us. He has made us subject to frailty.] but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered [future tense] from the bondage of corruption [not spiritually, but physically, speaking about this corruptible body detailed more in 1 Corinthians 15:50-54.] into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."

Our "redemption" is not full, in the sense that our body has not yet been redeemed. The first resurrection (the spiritual) does not change man's physical state any more than the second resurrection (the physical) changes his spiritual state. They each have a place and a purpose, and they are distinct. We are studying concerning the first resurrection, that resurrection which will change the state of man's soul. It will change his spiritual state, but it does not negate nor nullify that another resurrection is coming that will change man's physical state: the redemption of his body. You can attempt to hyper-spiritualize it all you would like, but you are going to have great difficulty with these words so clearly penned by the Apostle Paul: "the redemption of our body" (Romans 8:23). There is a part of the redemptive plan that addresses what will happen to the body.

Thank God for the first resurrection, that which alters man's spiritual state and makes him a fit candidate for eternity. However, there is also (as we studied in our last chapter) coming a day (singular, the last day, as Jesus referred to it) when all will rise and their bodies will be changed. That is the "redemption of our body" (Romans 8:23). There are two resurrections, and they are distinct, designed for separate purposes.

The First Resurrection Is Optional

In our Scripture text, notice the very drastic distinction between the first resurrection that Jesus mentioned (verses 24-25) and the second resurrection that He mentioned (verses 28-29). The first resurrection, which "now is" (verse 25), is available to man now, but it is also optional. It takes place while time is standing: "now." Man is a creature of choice. He has the option to either accept the message and accept Christ or reject the message and reject Christ. God is faithful. Lamentations 3:23 says, "... great is thy faithfulness." Revelation 3:14 styles Christ as "the faithful and true witness." Titus 2:11 says, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men."

Somewhere along life's way, all men are presented with the Gospel message and an opportunity to receive spiritual life. Yet, it is optional, not mandatory. Adam could have eaten of the tree, or he could not have eaten of the tree; he had a choice. Moses called old Israel to record telling them they could either chose life or chose death; it was placed in their power. When Joshua and Elijah made the same cries, the people had a choice: accept or not accept. Verse 25 of our text clearly conveys this truth: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is [speaking of the spiritual resurrection, while time is still standing], when the dead [in trespasses and sin] shall hear the voice [my word'; verse 24] of the Son of God: and they that hear [those who accept the message and heed what the voice is conveying] shall live."

The phrase "they that hear" indicates there is a choice to hear it or not to hear it. There are people all over the world who have chosen not to hear. This spiritual resurrection is optional; it is a choice. "They that hear" (verse 25) is personal. Verse 24 puts it in this manner: "He that heareth my word, and believeth." That tells us that it is a personal invitation. The Amplified Bible renders John 5:24 in this manner: "... the person whose ears are open to My words [who listens to My message] and believes and trusts in and clings to and relies on Him Who sent Me has (possesses now) eternal life." "Now" is a key word in verse 25. It clearly indicates that while time is still standing, while men are physically alive, they have a choice to hear, to accept, and to determine whether they want to experience this first (or spiritual) resurrection or not. It is a choice.

However, look at the words of our Lord concerning the next resurrection, the physical resurrection. This is a different and distinct resurrection because Jesus proclaimed in John 5:28 that "the hour is coming [future tense, has not arrived yet; this hour is not 'now,' not while time is standing], in the which *all* [not an option] that are in the graves shall hear his voice." There is a vivid distinction between "the dead" who "shall hear [exercise proper choice]" (verse 25) and pass "from death unto life" (verse 24) and what is portrayed in verse 28 when it speaks of "*all* that are in the graves *shall* hear." In verses 24-25, speaking of the first or spiritual resurrection, there is no mention of graves. However, in verse 28 there is because it is speaking of the physical resurrection. Only the body (one part of the three-fold being) goes to the grave.

Verse 28 tells us, "... the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice." When does this occur? On that fateful day, when "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven" (1 Thessalonians 4:16), that is when they will hear His voice "And shall come forth" (verse 29). What will "come forth"? "All that are in the graves" (verse 28); in other words, every dead body. From time immemorial, all who are "in the graves shall come forth." There is no choice in that resurrection. Thus, it is readily apparent that these inspired words of our Lord in our text are speaking of two distinct resurrections: the spiritual one that "now is" (verse 25), which takes place when men who were "dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1) hear the Gospel and pass "from death unto life" (verse 24), and the physical one that takes place when all who are in the graves are raised. One is a present reality, and one "is coming [future tense]" (verse 28). With the spiritual resurrection, man has a choice, but with the physical, there is no choice.

When Christ rises from the mercy seat and splits the clouds to take mankind to the judgment seat, the fate of all souls are sealed for the ceaseless ages of eternity. It is the Lord's desire, as well as ours, that all would respond appropriately to the call of Christ to salvation. In 2 Peter 3:9 we read, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; [Peter was dealing with those who were scorning and scoffing (verse 3) at the Second Advent (verse 4), as many do today. Peter let them know that the only reason Jesus tarried was longsuffering.] but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish" Why? Because God is love. He does not want men to exercise the wrong choice and have to suffer the eternal ramifications of that choice. He pleads with men. The Apostle Paul put it in this manner: "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men" (2 Corinthians 5:11).

That is why we preach the Gospel. That is why we extend an invitation. That is why we do our best to persuade. Men learn about repentance when they hear the Word. That is the voice of Christ. There is coming an end to "the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2), a time when that day is going to end and "the day of the Lord so cometh" (1 Thessalonians 5:2). God is interested in the welfare of men and women. God does not want to see souls go into a lost eternity; that is why He gave His only begotten Son. But ones have to come by way of repentance. They must accept the Gospel and be willing to change. One day, God's longsuffering will expire, the "day of salvation" will end, and the "day of the Lord" (the Second Advent) will come.

While there is indeed a spiritual resurrection (one that takes man from a dead state in trespasses and sins and gives him newness of life, enabling him to be holy), we must "not err" (James 1:16) or give place to "the spirit of error" (1 John 4:6) and erroneously attempt to hyper-spiritualize very clear Scriptural teachings concerning the physical resurrection. Thank God, we enjoy the present reality of this spiritual resurrection, where the state of man's soul can be altered! Yet, because there is a first resurrection does not negate the physical resurrection of man's body. It is a day, an event, that "cometh."

I trust the Spirit of God will enable us to see the truth clearly. I am confident that if there are those who are confused upon this subject, if they will study, look at the Word of Truth, and allow the Spirit of Truth to enlighten the eyes of their understanding, the Word and the Spirit (who agree) will give a revelation of truth on these vital subjects. There are two resurrections: spiritual and physical. The first does not change man's physical state, but it changes his spiritual state; the second does not change man's spiritual state, but it changes his physical state.

As we found in prior studies, because the body is an instrument of the soul, the body will be reunited with the soul in order to receive what our final chapter explains in more depth: Reward or Retribution. I trust the Spirit of God has made these truths clear.

CHAPTER TEN

The Truth Concerning the Final Judgment

Hebrews 9:27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.

2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

A Time of Preliminary Judgment

In these passages of Scripture, the truth that unites these texts is that they both speak of the Judgment. We have been studying concerning several doctrinal truths that have been subjected to hyper-spiritualization. One of the doctrines that has been approached in this manner is the Judgment. Let me hasten to say, we realize and readily acknowledge that there is a spiritual aspect to the judgments of God, which are exercised while time is yet standing. However, these texts are not speaking of that.

In the morning time of this Gospel Day, Jesus spoke of a judgment in John 12:31-33, stating: "Now is the judgment of this world [He was teaching in a style known as parallelism, a Jewish style of teaching, where a truth is stated in one manner then restated, or clarified, in another manner]: now shall the prince of this world be cast out [then He began to elaborate on what would bring this about]. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die." Because Jesus died to purchase redemption's plan, it broke the power of "the prince of this world." As He was lifted up, it provided a judgment that cast the devil down from the exalted position he held in the world prior to Christ ushering in redemption's plan. Therefore, certainly, there was a judgment that commenced with the First Coming of Christ.

Also, the Apostle Peter spoke of a judgment. (This took place in the morning time of the Gospel Day.) In 1 Peter 4:17 he wrote, "For the time is come [present tense, this epistle was penned in the proximity of A.D. 63-65] that judgment must begin at the house of God." According to *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott*, the actual literal translation says, "the season; or to begin the judgment." Where was this to occur? "At the house of God," which is "the church of the living God" (1 Timothy 3:15). It is indeed obvious that the Apostle was speaking of a present, spiritual judgment. Certainly, this is even more valid in our portion of this Gospel Day, a time of preliminary judgment.

We are seeing the judgments of God set forth in this time of preliminary judgment. Revelation 15:4 says, "... for thy judgments are made manifest." Titus 1:3 tells us how they are made manifest: "through preaching." Revelation 19:11 tells us clearly, "And I saw heaven opened [not God's Heaven, the celestial realm, but rather 'heavenly places in Christ Jesus'; Ephesians 2:6], and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war." This is a symbolic representation of that which Christ is accomplishing right in this evening-time portion of this Gospel Day. Thus, we recognize that there is a spiritual element to the thought of judgment. However, the Scriptures are expressly clear concerning a coming judgment—the Final Judgment. An honest examination of the Scriptures will substantiate this truth beyond any fear of contradiction.

The Final Judgment Is Beyond Time

As we commence our study, it is notable that both of our Scripture texts speak of the "judgment" (singular), and they both speak of it as being beyond time. The divine penman wrote, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but *after this* ..." (Hebrews 9:27), letting us know that this is something beyond time, beyond the veil of flesh, in a realm beyond death. It is not something spiritual that we experience during time. We do not deny the fact of the spiritual aspect, but our burden is to eliminate the confusion, because "God is not the author of confusion" (1 Corinthians 14:33). In our Scripture text, the Hebrew writer was expressly clear when he said "after this." After what? After death. Hebrews 9:27 refers to a Judgment that takes place "after" we die.

Our companion text reiterates the same truth. It says that "every one may receive the things done in his body." The only place that could occur—"every one" of all ages (all humanity)—is beyond time. In this Scripture, the words "every one" are universal. This takes in all ages, all humanity, and all time. Therefore, the only place this Judgment could occupy is beyond time, subsequent to the resurrection of the body. Everyone would have to be resurrected from throughout the ages in order for them to "receive the things done in his body." This is the only time and position where it is possible that "all appear." That could not occur during this Gospel Day. If it is a spiritual judgment, produced by the Gospel, then "all" would not be susceptible to that, because many over the centuries of time have rent this veil of flesh and went into a realm beyond time

prior to this Gospel age. Previously, we studied and found that at death the body is separated from the soul, and it is only at the Resurrection that they are reunited. It is only then that this Judgment could occur.

Let us look at what the Scriptures reveal concerning the Judgment. There are seven principles we want to consider. First, there has been an age-old expectation of the Judgment. It is as old as the Book of Beginnings: Genesis. The Patriarch Abraham, as he was importuning over the cities that were going to be destroyed, posed this question to the Lord: "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Genesis 18:25). During the patriarchal period, a period when there was no written Word, when they were under the moral law, it was an established, revealed truth that there was a "judge of all the earth," and that a Judgment Day was somewhere on the horizon. This has been an expectation of all ages. It was not only a New Testament concept, but a concept as old as the annals of time.

Now, think with me, at what time and what position could it be possible to judge "all the earth"? Only on the Day of Judgment, after time has ceased. It is not possible or equitable to judge all the earth until time has stopped and a fair measurement can be given. This truth is reiterated throughout the Scriptures. Taking a jump from Abraham to Solomon, we find that as he came to the end of this writing of wisdom, he brought it to a focal point. Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 tells us: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work [of man; verse 13] into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." We see this expectation of a Judgment is throughout the Old Testament and throughout the Scriptures. It is very clear.

The New Testament is replete with references to this event. The Apostle Paul posed some questions and then brought some soberness to the matter. In Romans 14:10-12 he asked: "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." The Apostle Paul penned these words under divine inspiration, making it crystal clear. (Recall that "Every word of God is pure"; Proverbs 30:5. There is divine design and import behind every word incorporated in the sacred Scriptures. There are no non-essential words.) Notice the words in these verses. In verse 11 when he said, "For it is written," he was quoting Isaiah 45:23, which says, "That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." *Every knee! Every tongue!* Notice the inclusiveness. In verse 12 Paul said that "every one of us shall give account of himself to God."

In Matthew 16:27 we read the words of Christ, which say, "For the son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward *every man* according to his works." Again, when is it possible for every knee to bow, every tongue to confess, and for everyone, the hordes of humanity throughout all the ages, to "all appear" (2 Corinthians 5:10)? Only in a realm beyond time. This is substantiated by our Lord's teaching in Matthew 25:31-34, which reads: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Christ was speaking of something beyond time, of that which has eternal ramifications when He said, "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire ..." (Matthew 25:41). Again, speaking of the eternal realm, Matthew 25:46 tells us, "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."

I realize there are those who attempt to spiritualize this passage, but notice particularly the wording of Christ. Matthew 25:31 makes it specific of which coming Jesus was speaking. On that day, He will be bringing some things with Him. First Thessalonians 3:13 tells us on that fateful day, He is bringing "all his saints." Jude substantiated the same truth when he penned, "Behold, the Lord cometh [future tense], with ten thousands of his saints" (verse 14). Jesus made it very clear that He was speaking of a day that was yet to arrive: "When the Son of man *shall come* [future tense]" (Matthew 25:31). This refers to a particular event. Notice the implications are beyond time. Succeeding this event of Judgment, there will be "everlasting fire" (Matthew 25:41) and "everlasting punishment" or a "life eternal" (Matthew 25:46).

The Final Judgment Will Be a Specific Day

The second aspect to consider concerning the Judgment is that both of our lesson texts speak of it in the singular. Throughout the Scriptures, it is repeatedly referred to as a specific day. The Apostle Paul, preaching on Mars Hill in Athens, Greece, said in Acts 17:31, "Because he [God; verse 30] hath appointed a day [singular], in the which he will [future tense; if Paul was talking about a spiritual judgment, he would have spoken in the present tense] judge the world [future tense, a future event] in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained." *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* says "established a day." If this were a present reality, the Apostle Paul would have never spoken those words in that manner. Repeatedly, it

is referred to as a specific day.

In reality, it is the last day. There will be no more time or measurement by days succeeding that day. Romans 2:5 says, "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against *the day* of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." Romans 2:16 tells us, "In *the day* [singular] when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel." It is referred to repeatedly as a day. In 2 Timothy 4:8 the Apostle Paul wrote, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at *that day* [singular]: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." The day he was talking about was the day of "his appearing." That is when the Judgment Day will be.

The Scriptures are replete with references, letting us know that it is "the day," a specific "day," the "day of judgment." Second Peter 3:7 says, "But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against *the day* of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." We read in 1 John 4:17, "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in *the day* of judgment." It is obvious that these sacred writers clearly felt it was a day, a day that was yet coming. Jude, verse 6, refers to this Judgment as "the great day." Jesus spoke of it as a singular day as well in Matthew 11:24, saying, "That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in *the day* of judgment, than for thee." This lets us know several things: that it is "the day," singular, and also that it was not a present event. Jesus said that "it shall be" (future tense). This particular day has not arrived yet. Look at the words of Jesus in Matthew 12:36. He said, "But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they *shall give* [future event] account thereof in the day of judgment." This Judgment is not something that transpires during the Gospel Day, but these verses refer to "the day of judgment," a specific day.

Is it beyond time? Look at what Jesus brought up in Matthew 12:41-42: "The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here. [The men of Nineveh lived in approximately 862 B.C. Here, Jesus was referring to them around A.D. 31-32, a difference of almost 900 years. At this juncture, the men of Nineveh had long been in eternity. When were they going to be able to "rise in judgment"? Not in time, but only in eternity where they are.] The queen of the south [referring to the Queen of Sheba] shall rise up [again, this is future tense; this has not yet occurred] in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here." The Queen of Sheba lived in approximately 992 B.C. More than 1,020 years later, Jesus was speaking this. She was long in eternity when Jesus spoke these words. Thus, the place and time for the Judgment to take place is in eternity, or on the Day of Judgment, which is the last day of time, when time reels into eternity.

Christ Will Be the Judge of All Mankind

The third truth we need to understand is that Christ administers the judgment. In John 5:22 Jesus said, "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." In Acts 10:38 Peter, relating about Christ, said, "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power." Then, in Acts 10:42 Peter said, "And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he [Jesus of Nazareth; verse 38] which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick [or alive] and dead." In Romans 2:16 the Apostle Paul wrote, "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men [how?] by Jesus Christ" Second Timothy 4:1 says, "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick [or alive] and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom." Who is the judge? Jesus Christ!

The fourth truth we must recognize is that all mankind will be judged. It does not matter whether an individual is saved or unsaved, all are going to the Judgment. There are those who erroneously teach that if you are saved, you will not be subject to the Judgment. That is not so! The Scriptures are expressly clear! Romans 14:10 tells us, "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for *we shall all stand* [the Apostle Paul included himself] before the judgment seat of Christ." Salvation does not exempt us from the Judgment. Romans 14:12 says, "So then every one of us [again, Paul employed the plural, inclusive of himself] shall give account of himself"

In our text, Paul expressed this truth as well: "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." Whom was he addressing? He was writing to "the church of God" (2 Corinthians 1:1), letting them know that we (all the church as well as all of humanity) must appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ. Salvation does not exempt one. We must all appear. Our text in Hebrews 9:27 indicates very clearly that all who "die" will experience "the judgment," and all men will die, except for those who are alive when He shall appear. So, it is a universal certainty for all humanity!

We must next address the question, "Why is there a Judgment?" That leads us to the fifth truth we must consider: God is a God of justice. Many times this is a concept and a truth that is difficult for some to grasp. God is the Moral Governor of the universe. He has a moral nature. In this sense, in the sense of the Scriptures, that word "moral" merely means, "That which is right or just." God is right and just. He is a God of justice. From His moral nature emanates (or proceeds) moral

law.

Moral law is that which is intrinsically right and just. As the Moral Governor, God has moral law, and wherever there is a law, there is a consequence of law, which is what produces justice. Wherever there is a consequence of law, there must be an outcome of that law. There must be justice, and judgment must be meted out. It is just right. Psalm 22:28 says, "For the kingdom is the LORD'S: and he is the governor among the nations." He is the Moral Governor. God's nature is a moral nature. Again, moral means "that which is right or just." Isaiah 45:21 tells us that he is "a just God." In other words, He issues justice. Just and justice work together, and wherever there is justness and justice, there must be judgment. Wherever there is law, there must be a consequence of that law.

We need to understand moral law, because moral law is always in force. Moral law that emanates from God's moral nature has been in force since time began. Before God ever inspired man to set the Word of God down in written form, all through the Genesis account from Adam and Eve right up to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the patriarchs, it was in force. There was no written law until Moses. Prior to that, man was under moral law. Moral law preceded Mosaic Law, it was incorporated into Mosaic Law, and it succeeded Mosaic Law. We are still under moral law today. Moral law never alters. It is timeless, just as God is timeless. He said in Malachi 3:6, "For I am the LORD, I change not."

God's nature never changes. He is the Moral Governor who has a moral nature, and hence, a moral law. He is just, and He is a God of justice. Where justice and justness exists, there must be judgment. Why? It is just right. Where there is a law, there must be a consequence. In Genesis 18:19 (talking about Abraham) the Lord said, "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep [This is the Lord speaking; this is a Christophany, a pre-Christian era appearance of Christ. He has come down to visit with Abraham personally. Notice what He said.] the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment." That is "the way of the LORD"—"justice and judgment."

Psalm 89:14 says, "Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne." Because God has a moral nature, a nature of what is right or just, justice is issued. There are consequences of that law. Let us look at the age that was exclusively under moral law. Read what the Lord told Noah after he had come off the ark in Genesis 9:6. He said, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." That is a moral law. That is what is right. If you take a life, you should forfeit your life. People might take issue with that, but that is what God set down as a timeless moral law. Underlying this premise of "whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed" is the immutable law of retribution that is incorporated in Galatians 6:7, which tells us that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." That is justness and justice.

We also see this law in Proverbs 26:27, which says, "Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein: and he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him." In the Book of Esther, there was a man by the name of Haman who despised Mordecai, and he built a gallows to hang Mordecai on; but in the end Haman was hung on his own gallows. Here this moral law came into focus. Thank God for mercy, grace, and forgiveness, but there is still a moral law in place. There are still going to be consequences. That is just, and that is right. If people could live loose and licentious lives and do dastardly things and then just come and say, "Lord, forgive me," and all the consequences were removed, that would not be fair or just. It also would produce superficial, worldly followers. There is a Judgment because God is just and a God of justice, and it is just because it is right. Proverbs 16:11 says, "A just weight and balance are the LORD'S: all the weights of the bag are his work."

What Does the Judgment Determine?

The sixth truth coincides with this principle of justice: the Judgment determines the degree of reward or retribution. It may be startling to some, but the truth is that the Judgment does not determine man's spiritual state. We have already established that the Judgment occurs after time ceases, but notice what the Scriptures say concerning what Jesus styled as "the last day" (John 6:40). In 1 Thessalonians 3:13 we read that when He comes, He will come "with all his saints." They have already been determined to be "saints" before the Judgment. Jude 14 tells us, "The Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints." Again, they were already regarded as "saints," prior to the Judgment. The Apostle Paul wrote in Philippians 1:21, 23: "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.... For I am in a strait betwixt two [living or dying], having a desire to depart [to die; verse 21], and to be with Christ; which is far better." The Apostle Paul let us know that when he died, he was going to be with Christ. That is *before* the Judgment. Second Corinthians 5:8 says, "We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body [when you die, your soul moves out of the body], and to be present with the Lord." That is *before* the Judgment. When Jude 14 says He is going to come "with ten thousands of his saints," all of these were already determined to be in a right spiritual state prior to the Judgment. The Judgment does not determine man's spiritual state.

The Apostle Paul talked about "to be with Christ" (Philippians 1:23). When Jesus uncapped eternity and allowed us a glimpse in Luke, Chapter 16, He talked about "a certain rich man" (verse 19), and "a certain beggar named Lazarus" (verse 20). (Note: this is not a parable. Parables do not mention personal names.) In Luke 16:22-23 Jesus said: "And it came

to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom [no Judgment]: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes [no Judgment]" They went straight from time to eternity; one went to Paradise and the other went to Hades, prior to Judgment. Thus, Judgment does not determine a man's spiritual state. We find immediately succeeding physical death, Lazarus was in Abraham's bosom, and the rich man was in Hell, or the Greek word is "Hades." This was well before the Judgment. Consider what Jesus told the repentant thief when He said, "Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). It was before the Judgment. Jesus did not say to the thief, "At the Judgment you will enter Paradise," but He said, "To day."

If the Judgment does not determine man's spiritual state, what does it determine? What is it measuring? Let us go back and bring it through the Scriptures. I want you to notice a commonality between all of these Scriptures, the consistency of the scheme of the Scriptures. Ecclesiastes 12:14 says, "For God shall bring *every work* into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." "Every work" is what will be brought into judgment. Ecclesiastes 11:9 tells us, "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things [how you walk, what you do] God will bring thee into judgment." What will be judged? "All these things."

As we look into God's eternal Word, let us dismiss our preconceived notions. What do the Scriptures teach? In Matthew 16:27 Jesus said, "For the Son of man shall come [future tense; He was talking about a coming event] in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his *works*." Jesus expanded this in Matthew 25:31, where He said, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory." Jesus was talking about how He would separate the sheep from the goats, but look at what the measurement was. Look at what the Judgment was concerning. In Matthew 25:35-40 Jesus said: "For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it [it is based on what we do; our works] unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." What was the Judgment over? Was it over whether they were saved or not? No, it was over their works.

Judgment Is Based on Deeds

In Matthew 25:42-45 (talking to those on the left hand who were going into everlasting fire), Jesus said: "For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me."

The measurement was works. Remember, we found that the body is an instrument of the soul. The state of the soul governs the deeds, acts, and the works of the body. Since it is an instrument of the soul, that is why the body is reunited with the soul on the Day of Resurrection, and then both (after being reunited) are brought to the Judgment Seat of Christ. The state has already been determined, because the soul came out of Paradise or Hades, but the Judgment is going to be according to our works.

Let us look at some additional Scriptures. Romans 2:5-6 tells us: "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; Who will render to every man *according to his deeds*." Our Scripture text (2 Corinthians 5:10) says, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive *the things done in his body*, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." Colossians 3:23-25 tells us: "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons." Paul let us know that "ye shall receive the reward" based on "whatsoever ye do." God is no respecter of persons (verse 25), and He is "a just God" (Isaiah 45:21). In Revelation 22:12 Jesus said, "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man *according as his work* shall be." This certainly is not speaking of a spiritual coming; it is speaking about His Second Advent.

Because the Judgment will "reward every man according to his works" (Matthew 16:27), there is (of necessity) degrees of reward. Therefore, there is a need for the Judgment. In Matthew 23:14, speaking to the Pharisees and Jewish leaders, Jesus said, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive *the greater* damnation." There are degrees of damnation. God is a moral God with a moral

nature. He has established moral law, and a part of that moral law is the law of retribution: "for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7). Deeds have consequences, and when time stops, only then can God give a fair assessment and measurement to those deeds. That is why there is going to be a Judgment Day: to mete out judgment based on the deeds. Because of differing deeds, there are differing degrees.

In Luke 12:47-48 Jesus said: "And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more."

Jesus spoke of a "greater damnation" (Matthew 23:14), "many stripes" (Luke 12:47), and "few stripes" (Luke 12:48). Hebrews 10:29 speaks of "sorer punishment." There are degrees of punishment, and there are also degrees of reward as well. Second Corinthians 9:6 tells us, "But this I say [right back to that moral law], He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." There are going to be some whose reward is going to be "sparingly." There will be others, like the Apostle Paul and the Apostle John, who were greatly used, and their reward is going to be pretty bountiful. There are degrees of reward.

First Timothy 6:17-19 states: "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life." What is "the time to come" that he is talking about? It is eternity! *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* says, "A good foundation for the future." What future is there after life? Eternity! Look at Jesus' words in the inaugural message of His public ministry, the Sermon on the Mount, where He laid down the fundamental truths concerning this new economy. In Matthew 6:20 He said, "But lay up for yourselves treasures [plural] in heaven" Everyone does not lay up the same amount.

Our works do not only operate during this life. This is why the Judgment does not immediately succeed death. Revelation 14:13 tells us, "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." This is why the Judgment does not occur as soon as we die. The Apostle Paul has been dead for almost 2,000 years, but every time we gain help from reading part of his writings, it is laid up to his reward. Every time we benefit from something that the Apostle Peter wrote, it is laid up to his reward. Every time we sing one of Brother D. S. Warner's or Brother B. E. Warren's songs, and we get blessed, God lays it up to their reward. They have been long gone, but their influence and works live on. This is why there cannot be an accurate measure until time ceases.

Light and Opportunity

Let us look further at degrees, and one factor that determines these degrees. Jesus, talking to Pilate about Judas, said in John 19:11, "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin." I have heard preachers say, "All sins are the same." No, all sins are not the same. Judas had "the greater sin." Why did Jesus speak of Judas' sin as a "greater sin" compared to Pilate's sin? John 9:41 gives us an insight to one aspect that determines the degree. It tells us, "Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth." What we see or understand determines our degree. Jesus reiterated this in John 15:22, saying, "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin." Why? Light and opportunity had been afforded to them. In John 15:24 Jesus said, "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated [exercised choice] both me and my Father." Jesus was letting us know that one of the things which determines the degree is what we see or what we understand.

Look at Jesus' startling words in Matthew 11:20-22. It says: "Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not: Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you." Why will it be "more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon"? Because of the "mighty works which were done in you," and because they had greater enlightenment and greater opportunity than Tyre or Sidon. Cities that have a Church of God congregation are going to be held much more accountable than those who do not. They have opportunity.

In Matthew 11:23-24 Jesus said: "And thou, Capernaum, [Capernaum was His adopted hometown. When He began His ministry, He relocated from Nazareth to Capernaum; Matthew 4:13.] which art exalted unto heaven [the Lord of Glory moved and made it His hometown, His base of operations], shall be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which

have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained [or continued] until this day. [If what Jesus had done and what had been seen and done in Capernaum had been done in Sodom, it would have continued right to the day of Jesus and would have never been destroyed. Sodom did not have the opportunities Capernaum had.] But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee." Why did He say that? What makes the distinction? Light and opportunity!

In Luke 10:10-15 Jesus said: "But into whatsoever city [this is when He sent the seventy out] ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say, Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city. Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell." The measure was their light and their opportunity.

This leads us to the seventh and final truth we want to consider: the criteria for the Judgment is based on the spiritual enlightenment of the individual. We know the overall criteria, according to Jesus, is "the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge" you (John 12:48). However, not every age has had the same measure of understanding the Word, even in the New Testament dispensation. Prior to the Lamb being slain, we see "a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals" (Revelation 5:1). Then we find that He "hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof" (Revelation 5:5). The loosening of these seals has been progressive over the centuries. Certainly, those who lived prior to the New Testament dispensation, who were under the lesser light, were not held to the standard of the greater New Testament light. This is why Revelation 20:12 tells us, "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."

The Books of the Ages

The judgment of one's works is based on "the books." What are these "books"? I realize that there is a spiritual and symbolic connotation to Revelation 20:11-14 (that aspect is dealt with explicitly in Chapter 20 of my book, *The Book of Revelation Explained, Volume 6*), but that is beyond the scope of this study. Most prophecies (and we know this is prophetic) have a dual application, and so it is here. These books are not solely, in this sense, the sixty-six Books of the Bible. They are not merely just the Old Testament or the New Testament (in the strictest sense), but these books are the Books of the Ages, and there are at least four. These books govern the various ages in which man has lived.

The first book is the age of moral law, or the law of conscience. That is what Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and those brethren in the patriarchal period had prior to the authoring of any written Word. They will be judged by the moral law and the law of conscience. The second book is the age of Mosaic Law. God did indeed give Moses a tablet on Mount Sinai and several oral instructions that Moses set down in writing. This was called the Mosaic Law. The third book is the age of the law and the prophets, and the fourth one is the age of the law of Christ. Some may say that we are not under a law now. Yet, Galatians 6:2 lets us know, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." We are under a law! James called it "the royal law" (James 2:8), and he also called it "the perfect law of liberty" (James 1:25); but it is indeed a law.

I do not have the space to deal with this extensively, but suffice to say, a just God can only fairly judge a man based on what was available to him in his age. Adam, Noah, or Abraham cannot be judged by the light of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Nor could you even judge them by Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. It was not available; they did not have it. They were in an age of moral law, an age when there was the law of conscience, but conscience only convicts according to its education.

Fair measure can only be meted out based on opportunity and education. This is why the Bible tells us that "Noah had found grace in the eyes of the LORD" (Genesis 6:8) and that Noah was "a preacher of righteousness" (2 Peter 2:5). In other words, Noah preached what was necessary to be right with God. However, when he got off the ark, one of the first things he did was get drunk (Genesis 9:21). That did not alter his spiritual state because those truths were not available to him. Today, we know that we should not get drunk, but we do not live in that day and Noah did not live in our day.

Abraham deceived two kings about his wife. The first time is recorded in Genesis 12:13, and you can find out that Abraham was greatly reproved when it was found out (Genesis 12:18 and 20). Abraham did the same thing to Abimelech, telling him, "Sarah ... is my sister" (Genesis 20:2). This was told with intent to deceive and misrepresent. Yet, God did not hold him for it. Why? He was in a time of very little light and understanding. David had at least eight wives and ten concubines (2 Samuel 5:13; 15:16). We cannot live that way today, but David did not have the light we have. He was not in

the dispensation we are in. The criteria of the Judgment that determines whether there are many stripes or few stripes is the availability of light (or understanding), the opportunity afforded, and then the action taken in response to it.

I trust the truth on this vital subject is made clear. I trust we can see the seven principles that pertain to the Final Judgment.

- (1) There has been an age-old expectation of the Judgment. Abraham said, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Genesis 18:25).
- (2) It is repeatedly referred to as a specific day: "the day of judgment" (Matthew 12:36).
- (3) Christ administers the judgment: "[God] hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (John 5:22).
- (4) All mankind will be judged: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:10).
- (5) God is a God of justice; He is "a just God" (Isaiah 45:21).
- (6) The Judgment determines the degree of reward or retribution. The Judgment does not determine man's spiritual state, but it determines the degree of the reward or retribution based on the deeds (or the works) that are "done in his body" (2 Corinthians 5:10). This is why it cannot be done as soon as death seizes upon us because our influence and works live on.
- (7) The criteria for judgment is based on the spiritual enlightenment and education of the individual. God did not expect of the patriarchs what He expects of us. Consider someone who is a new convert, who has a meager knowledge, and then steps from the shores of time. A good example of this would be the thief on the cross who was saved just moments before he died. God is not going to hold him for what He holds Peter for. He did not have the opportunity and he did not have the education, or spiritual enlightenment.

I trust the truth has been made plain on this vital subject of the Judgment. May God help us to walk circumspectly and realize that we are preparing for this event as we work. Someone may say, "You make it sound like salvation is all works." No! The Bible says it is "Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:9). You cannot work your way in salvation; it is through grace and through faith, not of works: but if you are saved, you will work. Every man is doing works, every man is performing deeds "whether it be good or bad [evil]" (2 Corinthians 5:10), and the Judgment will be based on those deeds.

Although there are those who would try to hyper-spiritualize the Scriptures pertaining to the Judgment, just as they have attempted to do with the Resurrection and the ordinances, I trust we can see that the truths of this Gospel dispensation incorporate both physical and spiritual. The very Lord Himself embodied that truth in John 1:14 when He said, "And the Word [that is spiritual] was made flesh [that is physical]" They were conjoined in the person of Jesus Christ. Christ was the Word, Jesus was the flesh, and they were both brought together. Isaiah tells us, "... a child is born [Jesus, the physical], ... a son is given [the Eternal Christ, the spiritual]" (Isaiah 9:6). Much of what has been brought forth in the Gospel Day has an aspect that is physical and an aspect that is spiritual. We must let the Holy Ghost help us to realize the truth of the Scripture that says, "Let your moderation be known ..." (Philippians 4:5). In other words, do not run off to either extreme. Make sure you keep the divine balance that only the Holy Ghost can give to us concerning the Word of Truth. It is only the Spirit of Truth that can enlighten our understanding concerning the Word of Truth.

It is my hope and prayer that the truth has been made clear on these various doctrinal matters that we have studied: The Truth Concerning the Old Testament Ordinances, The Truth Concerning the New Testament Ordinances, The Truth Concerning the Resurrections (Physical and Spiritual), and The Truth Concerning the Final Judgment. I trust the Spirit of God has made His Word plain and clear. If this presentation has been different than what you have considered or accepted previously, I would encourage you to do as these diligent saints in Berea: "... they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11). The truth will stand examination, and I am confident that when examined by an honest and open heart, the Spirit of Truth will confirm the truth of the Word. I trust you will give these truths honest consideration.

Epilogue

It has not been our intention in this book to "gender strifes" (2 Timothy 2:23). As one songwriter so aptly penned, "*We need each other brethren.*" It has not been our desire to be either contentious or divisive, but rather to help repair divisions that have resulted due to erroneous positions taken concerning these vital truths. I have attempted to lay "precept upon precept; line upon line" (Isaiah 28:13) in order to do as Nehemiah described in his writings, when he spoke of Ezra, and said he "read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading" (Nehemiah 8:8). Our burden has been twofold in this labor: one, to provide those who have only been exposed to fallacious teachings on these lines a clear presentation of the truth so that the Spirit of God might enable "the eyes of your understanding [to be] enlightened" (Ephesians 1:18); secondly, to provide an exposition of the Scriptures pertaining to these truths that a younger ministry coming on may have a depth of teaching on these doctrines and material which they could reference.

It is a sad commentary, when we live in a period where we are entrusted with a glorious message on "the unity of the faith" (Ephesians 4:13) that the enemy of souls has used the doctrines we have discussed in this book to foster division. This ought not so to be! Our burden has been to present the truth to effect a greater unity amongst brethren. Dear brethren, there is a power in unity, which is why the enemy employs so many avenues to thwart it. I am confident that those who truly have "an honest and good heart" (Luke 8:15) will embrace the truth after it has been prayerfully considered.

I encourage those who may take issue with what has been presented to do as the noble saints in Berea did. "They received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11). The truth will stand examination. "The Spirit of truth" (John 16:13) will confirm "the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). The "two witnesses" (Revelation 11:3) will always "agree" (1 John 5:8).

Again, it has been our desire to eliminate confusion on these clear teachings. I trust that an honest consideration of the truths set forth in this book will both enhance your personal understanding and spirituality, as well as, effect a greater unity, thus storming the citadel of Satan and routing him from his hold in these areas of teaching. I trust the Spirit of God will use this writing to bring a people together to "stand on the sea of glass" (Revelation 15:2). May the Lord use it for such!