

Summary of the Laws of the Pentateuch

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Table of Contents

Was the Law of Almighty God Known by Human Beings Before Moses? 2

Tithes..... 4

Circumcision..... 8

Nation Building Under Moses..... 9

The Exodus..... 10

Bride-Price 16

Do Not Kill the Innocent..... 19

Keep the Feasts..... 20

To Be Clean 26

The Angel of God..... 32

Work of the Sabbath..... 34

The Book of Leviticus..... 37

The Bread of Life..... 39

Bread Alone 49

From Religious Theory to Practice 51

Sacrifices to Demons..... 60

Vengeance..... 62

Reconcile with Your Brother..... 67

Separation from God..... 72

The Jubilee Year..... 73

Let No One Judge You 76

The Book of Numbers 77

A Vow..... 85

Importance of Passover 87

Seeking After a Sign 94

Lamb Without a Blemish.....101

Seraphim105

Egypt and the Feast of Tabernacles.....118

Table of Contents cont'd

The Book of Deuteronomy..... 119

Do Not Add or Take Away..... 120

Why Pagan Nations Were to Be Removed..... 126

Lender Not Borrower Be..... 129

Not Willing That Any Should Perish 131

Some Blessing for Obedience 143

Judged According to Works..... 146

The Warning to Nations..... 147

Children Should Observe..... 149

Benjamin..... 150

Joseph 151

The Three Tabernacles..... 153

For the purpose of this study, when the phrase "Law of Almighty God" is used, it is inclusive of the various laws, commands, ordinances, and statutes that are expounded from the beginning to the end of God's word, the Bible. Anyone wishing to serve and obey God must know these, explain them correctly to the best of their knowledge, and live by them (Mt. 4:4; cf. 2Tim. 2:15; Rom. 2:13; Jas. 1:22).

The Law of Almighty God existed in the spirit realm prior to the creation of the physical universe. Therefore laws that seem to apply only to human beings, actually exist and are observed, in one form or another, by obedient spirit-beings (Rom. 7:14; cf. 1Cor. 2:14-15). For instance, the many laws and ordinances that apply to the First Covenant sacrificial system reflect the spiritual law of sacrifice that existed prior to the sin of Adam (see study: What Was Christ's Gospel Message).

And all who dwell on the earth will worship him (Satan; cf. Rev. 13:4), whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of **the Lamb** (Christ) **slain from the foundation of the**

world (Rev. 13:8; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted).

This confirms that the spirit-being who became known as Jesus Christ was not only aware of God's law of sacrifice, but he agreed to fulfill the physical aspect of it by becoming a human being and shedding his blood so that every sinner who repents can be forgiven and inherit everlasting life (Jn. 1:29; cf. Ac. 2:38; Heb. 9:22; 1Cor. 15:50-54; 1Thes. 4:16-17). Again, this decision occurred in the spirit realm where the law of sacrifice was well known. Therefore, every person or group teaching that Christ's sacrifice removed any requirement for "believers" to obey whatever God commands is lying.

He who says, 'I know Him (Almighty God), and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him (1Jn. 2:4; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

It also confirms that disobedient individuals do not understand that the Law of Almighty God is spiritual, has always existed, and always will. Nor do they make a connection between God creating His many laws and commands and the well-being of His children. In other words, because God loves everyone He has created, He provided them with regulations that lead to peace and happiness.

For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome (1Jn. 5:3; emphasis added).

Christ used the 5th commandment as an example of the Law of Almighty God being observed in the spirit realm,

You (human beings) heard that it was said to those of old (in ancient times), 'You shall not murder,' and whoever murders will be in danger

of the judgment. ²² But I say to you that **whoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of judgment...** (Mt. 5:21-22a; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Therefore, **unresolved** anger in the spirit realm would be regarded as sin because it is a transgression of the 5th commandment (1Jn. 3:4; cf. Gen. 4:3-7; Eph. 4:26-27). This is the underlying principle behind the next prophesy, which teaches that the main reason for Christ's future return is to restore the Law of Almighty God that Satan obscured by his many deceptions (Ps. 2:1-3; cf. Rev. 12:9),

Now **it shall come to pass in the latter days** that the mountain (symbol of government authority) of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains (i.e. take over Satan's governing authorities), and shall be exalted above the hills (man's governing authorities), and all nations shall flow to it. ³ Many people shall come and say, 'Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; **He will teach us His ways, and we will walk in His paths.'** **For out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem** (Isa. 2:2-3; cf. Jer. 31:31-34; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

When Jesus Christ gave a prayer outline in the book of Matthew, he summarized what Isaiah prophesied,

Your kingdom come; Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven (Mt. 6:10).

No matter how many times people repeat this prayer, which was never its intention (cf. Mt. 6:7), the majority don't make any connection between God's kingdom coming to earth under Christ's leadership, and Christ enforcing His

Father's law and commandments for everyone's ultimate benefit, He (Christ; cf. Ps. 2:8-9) shall rule them (rebellious nations of the earth, including the fallen host) with a rod of iron; as potter's vessels shall be broken to pieces (i.e. humbled)' (Rev. 2:27; cf. Zech. 14:16-21; Ed. notes in parentheses).

With this brief introduction, many of the laws, commands, ordinances, and statutes that God has taught from the beginning of creation, will be examined with an emphasis on the spiritual lessons behind them.

This study will cover the first five books of the Bible chronologically, which means that some of the laws and commands of Almighty God will appear more than once. This principle is seen in the writings of the New Testament, especially in the four gospel accounts of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John which repeat many of the same parables and teachings of Jesus Christ.

Was the Law of Almighty God Known by Human Beings Before Moses?

Adam clearly understood God's command (Gen. 2:17) and decided not to act on it when he should have. If he trusted God's word and truly loved the "helper" God gave him, he would have intervened to prevent Eve from transgressing this commandment. Therefore, Adam sinned by breaking the two great commandments,

And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived fell into transgression (1Tim. 2:14).

Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law? ³⁷ Jesus said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.'³⁸ This is the first and great commandment. ³⁹ And the second is

like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself' (Mt. 22:36-39).

Following their sin, Adam and Eve were taught about the animal sacrificial system, which was as a temporary substitute until Christ came to shed his blood for repentant sinners (Jn. 1:29; cf. Heb. 9:22),

Also for Adam and his wife the Lord God made tunics (SHD 3801; coverings) of (animal) skin, and clothed them (Gen. 3:21; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Therefore, when he (Christ) came into the world, he said" "Sacrifice and offering You (Almighty God) did not desire, but a (flesh and blood) body you have prepared for me (Christ). ⁶ In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You (Almighty God) had no pleasure. ⁷ Then I (Christ) said, 'Behold, I have come – in the volume of the book (the Bible with its many teachings and prophecies about Christ) it is written of me – to do Your will, O God' (Heb. 10:5-7; Ed. notes in parentheses).

When a "clean" animal (Gen. 7:2, 8; 8:20; Lev. 11:47; 20:25, Dt. 12:22; 14:11, 20-22) was sacrificed to provide a temporary means of dealing with Adam and Eve's sin, God would have explained why this action was necessary. This understanding of the importance of a substitutionary sacrifice was passed on to Abel as the following scripture confirms,

Abel also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat. And the Lord respected Abel and his offering (Gen 4:4; cf. Nu. 18:17; Lev. 3:14-16; 7:23-25).

Christ mentioned that Abel was righteous, and righteousness by definition means that Abel obeyed God's commands. He couldn't do this

unless someone taught the Law of Almighty God to him,

That on you (rebellious religious leaders) may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of **righteous Abel** ... (Mt. 23:35a; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

...For **all Your commandments are righteousness** (Ps. 119:172b; emphasis added).

Because Abel's brother Cain disregarded the spiritual significance of the 5th commandment, his unresolved anger eventually led to the murder of his brother. Cain had no excuse because the spiritual implications behind unresolved anger were explained to him before he killed Abel,

So the Lord said to Cain, **'Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? ⁷ If you do well** (i.e. change your attitude/repent), **will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well** (refuse to change your attitude), **sin lies at the door** (i.e. the sinful act is the next step in this process). And its desire is for (toward) you, but you should rule over it (Gen. 4:6-7; cf. Jas. 4:7-10; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Many generations after Abel, another faithful servant of God is recorded as obeying the Law of Almighty God,

Then the Lord said to Noah, 'Come into the ark, you and all your household, because I have seen that **you are righteous before Me** in this generation' (Gen. 7:1; cf. Ps. 119:172b; emphasis added).

Noah's righteousness was confirmed by his obedience to God's word and this included the

law regarding what animals could, and could not, be eaten (Dt. 14:3-20),

Then Noah built an altar to the Lord, and took **of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar** (Gen. 8:20; emphasis added).

God taught Noah about other laws that predated the law and commandments being given to the nation of Israel from the time of their arrival at Mt. Sinai and afterward,

But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood (Gen. 9:4; cf. Lev. 3:17; 7:12, 26; 17:14; 19:26; Dt. 12:16, 23; 15:23).

Surely for your lifeblood I will demand a reckoning; from the hand of every beast I will require it (Ex. 21:28), and from the hand of man (Ex. 21:12; Lev. 24:17; Nu. 35:30-31; Dt. 19:11-12; 27:24). From the hand of every man's brother I will require the life of man (Nu. 35:19-21). ⁶ Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed ... (Gen. 9:5-6a; Ed. notes in parentheses).

By the time of Abraham, the Law of Almighty God was still known and practiced. One of these laws dealt with God's servants honoring Him by separating one-tenth of their increase,

Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. ¹⁹ And he blessed him and said: 'Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; ²⁰ and blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand.' **And he** (Abraham) **gave him** (Melchizedek) **a tithe** (one-tenth) **of all** (Gen. 14:18-20; cf. Lev. 27:30, 32; Nu. 18:26; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added; see study: The Tithing Law).

The writer of the book of Hebrews commented on Abraham's obedience to the law of tithing, and emphasized that Abraham was practicing it before the time of Moses,

Even Levi, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, so to speak (i.e. figuratively speaking), ¹⁰ for he (Levi) was still in the loins of his father (great-grandfather Abraham) when Melchizedek met him (Heb. 7:9-10; Ed. notes in parentheses).

According to the next scripture, Abraham taught the Law of Almighty God to his children,

For I (the Angel of the Lord; cf. Gen. 18:1-5) have known him (Abraham), in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and justice ... (Gen. 18:19a; cf. Ps. 119:172b) Ed. notes in parentheses).

During Abraham's time, even some Gentile nations were aware of the Law of Almighty God. The next scripture confirms that the 7th commandment dealing with adultery was known,

But God came to Abimelech (King of the Philistines; cf. Gen. 26:1) in a dream by night, and said to him, 'Indeed you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is a man's wife.'⁴ But Abimelech had not come near her, and he said, 'Lord, will you slay a righteous nation also?' (Gen. 20:3-4)

By definition, sin is the transgression of God's law (1Jn. 3:4), and this Gentile ruler was aware of God's law regarding adultery long before it was delivered to the nation of Israel at Mt. Sinai,

And Abimelech called Abraham and said to him, 'What have you done to us? How have I offended (sinned against) you, that **you have**

brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin (Gen. 20:9a; cf. 26:11; Lev. 20:10)?

Abraham's nephew Lot knew that homosexuality was a transgression of God's law, and he acted as a witness against those who practiced it in Sodom,

And they (the men of Sodom both old and young; cf. Gen. 19:4) called to Lot and said to him, 'Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may know them carnally (sexually; cf. Jgs. 19:22).'

⁶ So Lot went out to them through the doorway, shut the door behind him, ⁷ and said, '**Please, my brethren, do not do so wickedly!**' (Gen. 19:5-7; cf. Lev. 18:22; 20:13; Dt. 23:17; Rom. 1:26-27; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Abraham knew the law of circumcision before the time of Moses, and he obeyed it as the following scripture confirms. Today, this law is observed differently by everyone who is part of the Second Covenant. Instead of a physical act, those who humble themselves and repent of their sins are regarded as having a "circumcised heart" (Rom. 2:29; cf. Jer. 31:31-34),

Then Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, **as God commanded him** (Gen. 21:4; cf. Lev. 12:3; emphasis added).

For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh;

²⁹ But he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and **circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit** (following repentance and baptism), and not in the letter (through physical circumcision); whose praise is not from men but from God (Rom. 2:28-29; cf. Lk. 15:10; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Abraham also taught his son Isaac about the law of animal sacrifice,

Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and **offered it up for a burnt offering** instead of his son (Gen. 22:13; emphasis added).

The next scripture confirms that Abraham knew the Law of Almighty God and, because he obeyed it, "all the nations of the earth would be blessed." This promise of a blessing to all nations was prophetic as it foretold the coming of Jesus Christ through one of Abraham's descendants,

... in your (Isaac's) seed (descendant; referring to Jesus Christ) all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; ⁵ because **Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments** (SHD 4687), **My statutes** (SHD 2708), **and My laws** (SHD 8451) (Gen. 26:4b-5; cf. 26:24; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He (God) does not say, 'And to seeds,' as of many, but as of one, '*And to your Seed,*' who is Christ (Gal. 3:16; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Isaac's son Jacob was taught about God's tithe as well as animal sacrifice,

And this stone which I have set as a pillar shall be (the location of) God's house (cf. Gen. 28:19), and all that You give me (Jacob) **I will surely give a tenth** (tithe) **to You** (Gen. 28:22; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Then **Jacob offered a sacrifice** on the mountain, and called his brethren to eat bread ... (Gen. 31:54a).

Jacob acknowledged that God taught His truth to him and was merciful on those occasions when Jacob sinned and repented. God's truth is defined by all His commands,

I (Jacob) am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which You have shown Your servant ... (Gen. 32:10a; cf. Jn. 17:17; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

... And all **Your commandments are truth** (Ps. 119:151; emphasis added).

Jacob and his sons knew that having sexual intercourse before marriage is against God's law and, depending on the circumstances, could be regarded as harlotry (Gen. 34:31; cf. Lev. 19:29; 21:9; Dt. 22:20-21; 23:17-18), or rape (2Sam. 13:12-14, 22, 32),

And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her (Dinah, Jacob's unmarried daughter), he took her and lay with her, and violated (SHD 6031 forced; cf. 2Sam. 13:12-14) her (Gen. 34:2; Ed. note in parenthesis).

And the sons of Jacob came in from the country when they heard it; and the men were grieved and very angry, because he (Shechem) had done a disgraceful thing in Israel by lying with Jacob's daughter, **a thing which ought not to be done** (Gen. 34:7; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Jacob knew about drink offerings as well as the use of oil in the animal sacrificial system,

So Jacob set up a pillar in the place where He (God) talked with him, a pillar of stone; and **he poured a drink offering on it, and he poured oil on it** (Gen. 35:14; cf. Ex. 29:40-41; Lev. 23:13; Nu. 6:17; 15:5, 7, 10, 24; 28:7-10,

15, 24; 29:16, 22, 25, 28, 31, 34, 38; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

It was well known, prior to the time of Moses, that a son should not have a sexual relationship with his father's wife,

And it happened, when Israel (Jacob's new name; cf. Gen. 35:10) dwelt in that land, that Reuben (Jacob's firstborn son) went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine; and Israel heard about it (Gen. 35:22; cf. 49:3-4; Lev. 18:8; 20:11; Dt. 22:30; 27:20; 1Cor. 5:1).

Jacob and his sons knew that if a brother died, before having an heir, one of the next of kin was to marry the dead brother's widow. Otherwise, the widow could re-marry outside the family, and ownership of the dead's brother land would be transferred to another tribe,

And Judah said to Onan (Judah's son), 'Go in to your (dead) brother's wife and marry her, and raise up an heir to your brother' (Gen. 38:8; cf. Dt. 25:5-9; Ruth 2:20; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Jacob's family knew that one of the penalties for harlotry was death by burning,

And it came to pass, about three months after, that Judah was told, saying, 'Tamar your daughter-in-law has played the harlot; furthermore, she is with child (pregnant) by harlotry.' So Judah said, 'Bring her out and let her be burned!' (Gen. 38:24; cf. Lev. 21:9; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Joseph, who lived about two hundred years before Moses (see study: The Sojourn of the Children of Israel Was Four Hundred and Thirty Years), knew that adultery was a sin, and he risked his physical life to avoid it,

There is no one greater in this house (of Potiphar) than I (Joseph), nor has he kept back

anything from me but you (Potiphar's wife), because you are his wife. **How then can I do this great wickedness** (have sexual intercourse with Potiphar's wife; cf. Gen. 39:7), **and sin against God?**' (Gen. 39:9; cf. Ex. 20:14; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Joseph understood God's ordinance of having at least two witnesses to confirm any given truth,

The dream (Gen. 41:25-27) was repeated to Pharaoh twice because the thing (prophecy) is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass (Gen. 41:32; cf. Dt. 17:6; 19:15; Jn. 8:17; 2Cor. 13:1; 1Tim. 5:19; Heb. 10:28; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Joseph applied God's law, of adding one fifth for the purpose of redemption, to each year's harvest in order to redeem the entire nation of Egypt during the seven years of famine,

Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint officers (overseers) over the land, to collect one-fifth of the produce of the land of Egypt in the seven plentiful years (Gen. 41:34; cf. 45:7; Lev. 27:13, 27; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Jacob's oldest son, Reuben, reiterated what all ten of his brothers knew; that is, they were collectively responsible for kidnapping and possibly murdering their brother Joseph. Therefore, they were all under the death penalty (Gen. 9:5-6; Dt. 24:7),

And Reuben answered them (his ten brothers), saying, 'Did I not speak to you, saying, do not sin against the boy (Joseph)'; and you would not listen? Therefore behold, his blood is now required of us' (Gen. 42:22; cf. Ex. 20:13; Dt. 24:7; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Jacob continued to offer animal sacrifices throughout his life,

So Israel (Jacob) took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac (Gen. 46:1; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Jacob understood the ordinance regarding the firstborn son. However, Almighty God had something different planned for the descendants of Ephraim, who was Joseph's younger son,

And Joseph said to his father (Jacob), 'Not so, my father, for **this one** (Manasseh) **is the firstborn; put your right hand on his head.**'

¹⁹ But his father refused and said, 'I know my son, I know. He (Manasseh) also shall be great; but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his (Ephraim's) descendants shall become a multitude of nations' (Gen. 48:19; cf. Ex. 13:2, 13, 15; 22:29; 34:20; Nu. 3:13; 8:16-18; Dt. 21:16-17; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

By now, it should be clear that the Law of Almighty God was not introduced first by Moses. Instead, it was known from the time of Adam by many people. Moses delivered it to the nation of Israel following their exodus from Egypt, and was responsible for establishing a priesthood to administer it. Prior to Moses leading the Israelites out of Egypt, he spent forty years with the priestly family of Jethro whose lineage came from Abraham's son Midian through Keturah,

Abraham again took a wife, and her name was Keturah. ² And she bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, **Midian**, Ishbak, and Shuah (Gen. 25:1-2; emphasis added).

Jethro's name means "that which exceeds measuring; abundance" but he is also referred to as Reuel (Ex. 2:18; "friend of God"). These

two names could be describing his offices as secular ruler of his clan and head priest of Midian (Ex. 2:16; 3:1). Jethro would have known the Law of Almighty God because his forefather Abraham taught his descendants about it (Gen. 18:19a; 26:4b-5). Therefore, it is not a coincidence that Moses spent forty years with Jethro unlearning the pagan practices he had acquired during the previous forty years in Egypt (Ac. 7:23). Jethro and his family would have been aware of the Egyptian religious system, but they did not participate in it as Moses and the Israelites did. Jethro taught his children about the law of circumcision as confirmed by the action of his daughter Zipporah,

Then Zipporah took a sharp stone and cut off the foreskin of her son and cast it at Moses' feet ... (Ex. 4:25a).

Jethro was well aware of the animal sacrificial system as the next scripture confirms. It is also apparent that Jethro acted as a priest of God; otherwise his actions would have been criticized by Aaron and the elders of Israel, and his offering would have been unacceptable to God,

Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took a burnt offering and sacrifices to God. And Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God (Ex. 18:12).

The following scriptural reference confirms that after about two hundred years of living in Egypt, the Israelites had forgotten the laws their forefathers were taught and observed,

Now Amram took for himself Jochebed, his father's sister, as wife ... (Ex. 6:20a; cf. Lev. 18:12).

The law and commandments given at Mt. Sinai were a national restoration of the teachings that God gave Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob prior to

Joseph entering Egypt as a slave. This included replacing the calendar and holidays associated with the Egyptian system of worship with God's calendar and Holy Days. This began by teaching the Israelites when to start each year because the correct observance of God's Holy Days would hinge on this. Of note, God gave this instruction before the Israelites arrived at Mt. Sinai,

This month shall be your beginning of months (i.e. New Year); it shall be the first **month** (SHD 2320 – New Moon) of the year to you (Ex. 12:2; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

This first New Moon of God's calendar is also the first Holy Day of the year (see study: The New Moon) and it occurs in the spring (Ex. 13:4). Therefore, God does not start His New Year in the month of January as most people do according to a majority of the calendars used today. The second of God's Holy Day periods is the Passover/Days of Unleavened Bread, consisting of two High Days during which one's normal work and/or occupational activity is to cease (see studies: God's Holy Days). The first High Day is to commence at dark on the fourteenth day of this first month (Ex. 12:18; see study: How to Determine the Beginning and End of the Day),

On the first day (of Unleavened Bread) there shall be a holy convocation, and on the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation for you. No manner of work shall be done on them; but that which everyone must eat – that only may be prepared by you (Ex. 12:16; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Also, before the Israelites reached Mt. Sinai, God taught them other regulations associated with the correct observance of the Passover,

But every man's servant who is bought for money, **when you have circumcised him,**

then he may eat it (the Passover meal) (Ex. 12:44; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

In one house it (the Passover lamb) shall be eaten; you shall not carry any of the flesh outside the house, **nor shall you break one of its bones** (Ex. 12:46; cf. Jn. 19:33, 36; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

The Passover is still to be observed today, but with different symbols (see study: Christ's New Covenant Passover). Those wishing to participate have to be "circumcised of heart" which means they have repented of their sins, been baptized by immersion in water, and are living a new life of willing obedience to God's word (Mt. 4:4; Rom. 6:1-4).

The roasting of a whole physical lamb, with none of its bones broken, has been fulfilled by the sacrifice of the Lamb of God (Jn. 1:29; cf. Ps. 34:20; Jn. 19:33, 36). The symbols of the New Covenant Passover are unleavened bread and wine representing Christ's body and blood, which were offered as a means of covering the sins of those who have repented and been baptized. Another aspect involves God's people washing each other's feet (Jn. 13:13-17). This is as a reminder of the spiritual law of sacrifice, which every member of God's true church must be prepared to fulfill. In other words, following Christ's example, each person needs to be willing to humbly do whatever is necessary in order to serve Almighty God and our fellow man (Lk. 17:10).

Before leaving this section, it is important to note that Job sacrificed animals to God prior to the time that Moses gave the Law of Almighty God to the nation of Israel,

So it was, when the days of feasting (in association with the pagan custom of celebrating

birthdays; cf. Job 1:4) had run their course, that Job would send and sanctify (SHD 6942; consecrate, set apart as holy, dedicate to God) them, and **he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings** according to the number of them all. For Job said, 'It may be that my sons have sinned and cursed (blessed but in an evil sense) God in their hearts.' Thus Job did regularly (Job. 1:5; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

According to the Berlin Execration Texts the name "Job" (*'iyyob*) appears as the name of a prince in the land of Damascus in the 19th century B.C., and as Moses lived somewhere between 1319-1222 B.C., Job would have offered animal sacrifices prior to the Law of Almighty God being given at Mt. Sinai. Of note, "many scholars place the Exodus and the Conquest under Dynasty XIX: Raamses I (1319 B.C.), Sethi I (1319-1299 B.C.), Raamses II (1299 – 1232 B.C.), Merenptah or Merneptah (1232- 1222 B.C.). In the latter's famous stele, Israel is mentioned for the first time in Egyptian records as 'the people of Israel is desolate; it has no offspring'" (Egypt: Its History and Early Contact with Israel; p 87; Merrill F. Unger; published by Moody Press).

Nation-Building under Moses – The Exodus

It is important to note that God began teaching the nation of Israel in "real time." In other words, He did not wait until the Israelites reached Mt. Sinai to teach them about His New Year or the Passover/Days of Unleavened Bread. Instead, they were learning "in the moment" as they were experiencing all the miracles associated with their exodus from Egypt. A similar situation will occur when Jesus Christ returns to restore the Law of Almighty God. This is described in numerous prophecies,

Now it shall come to pass **in the latter days** that the mountain (symbol of government) of

the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains (governing authorities; including those of Satan), and shall be exalted above the hills (lesser governments; including those of man); and **all nations shall flow to it.** ³ **Many people shall come and say, 'Come let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.'** For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from **Jerusalem** (Isa. 2:2-3; 30:20-22; cf. Mic. 4:2; Jer. 31:31-34; Hos. 3:4-5; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

The foundation of the nation of Israel was built on the correct understanding and observance of God's word (Ps. 127:1). It was to be applied equally among all people. God did not create one set of rules for one ethnic group, and then a different set of rules for others,

One law shall be for the native-born **and for the stranger** who sojourns among you (Ex. 12:49; cf. Nu. 15:29; emphasis added).

For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who **shows no partiality** nor takes a bribe (Dt. 10:17; cf. Ac. 10:34; Rom. 2:11; Eph. 6:9; emphasis added).

The introduction, details of how to correctly observe and purpose behind the law of Almighty God, was given to ancient Israel with the goal that they would instruct other nations "by word and deed" (Jas. 2:17-26). God regarded the nation of Israel as His firstborn and, as such, they had the responsibility of a firstborn son to set an example of good conduct; thereby acting as a role model for other nations,

Then you (Moses) shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the Lord: **Israel is My son, My firstborn**'

(Ex. 4:22; cf. **19:5-6**; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

This principle is summarized by Jesus Christ in the following statement,

For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask more (Lk. 12:48b).

To keep the Israelites in remembrance of their national responsibility, God commanded that every firstborn male be dedicated to Him, and this command was given prior to Moses receiving the Law of Almighty God at Mt. Sinai,

Sanctify (set apart) to Me all the firstborn, whatever opens the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and animal, it is Mine (Ex. 13:2; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Because the nation of Israel failed to fulfill their God-given responsibility, Jesus Christ became the firstborn from the dead, following his sacrifice for the sins of the world. As a result, the world will eventually learn God's truth through Christ because the physical nation of Israel failed to teach it correctly,

And he (Christ) is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, **the firstborn from the dead**, that in all things he may have the preeminence (Col. 1:18; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

With this in mind, the blood placed on the lintel and doorposts during Passover was prophetic because it pictured Almighty God's future work of redeeming sinners through the shed blood of His firstborn son, Jesus Christ. Once redeemed, all sinners are to act quickly to remove themselves from the sinful way of living that necessitated the shedding of Christ's blood in the

first place. This was pictured by the Israelites leaving Egypt in haste because Egypt typified sin, just as Pharaoh symbolized Satan (Ex. 12:33; cf. Eze. 29:1-21; 30:20-26; 31:1-18; 32:1-21). Those who continue to remove themselves from sinful thoughts and actions are considered unleavened, or without sin. If they slip at a later date and sin, they can ask forgiveness in the name and by the authority of their High Priest, Jesus Christ.

For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted (proved; tested) as we are, yet without sin.¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace (unmerited pardon; forgiveness), that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help (be forgiven) in time of need (i.e. when we slip and transgress God's law and commandments) (Heb. 4:15-16; 7:24-25; cf. 1Jn. 1:8-9; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Again, the purpose behind God redeeming the nation of Israel from Egyptian slavery was to teach them about God's law in the hope they would teach other nations,

And you shall tell your son in that day, saying, 'This is done (partaking of the symbols of Passover/Days of Unleavened Bread) because of what the Lord did for me when I came up from Egypt.'⁹ It shall be as a sign to you on your hand and as a memorial between your eyes (figuratively representing actions and thoughts), **that the Lord's law may be in your mouth**; for with a strong hand the Lord has brought you out of Egypt (Ex. 13:8-9; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

The sacrifice of firstborn animals was an important lesson for the Israelites because it taught them the principle of a substitution for sin, which is an expression of God's love and mercy (Jn. 10:15, 17; 15:13; 1Jn. 3:16). In other

words, they should have died in Egypt but God granted them forgiveness and freed them from slavery. Therefore, the sacrifice of a firstborn animal was a reminder that a price still had to be paid for their sins (Heb. 9:22). Every firstborn animal that was sacrificed foreshadowed the firstborn from the dead, Jesus Christ, who willingly gave up his life as a substitute to cover everyone's transgressions (Rom. 6:23),

And it came to pass, when Pharaoh was stubborn about letting us go (just as Satan imprisons his subjects, cf. Isa. 14:12-17; Jer. 31:11), that the Lord killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of animal. Therefore **I sacrifice to the Lord all males that open the womb**, but all **the firstborn of my sons I redeem** (Ex. 13:15; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added; emphasis added).

All those who repent of sin, and begin living a new life of obedience to God's word, will be resurrected at Christ's return (1Cor. 15:21-23, 51-52; 1Thes. 4:16-17). One of the reasons these individuals are referred to as firstborn, is because they are fulfilling or have fulfilled, their responsibility, unlike the nation of Israel,

To the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect (Heb. 12:23; emphasis added).

At this point in the chronology of the book of Exodus, God confirmed the existence and knowledge of His law and commandments prior to the Israelites arriving at Mt. Sinai,

And the Lord said to Moses, 'How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My laws?' (Ex. 16:28)

This statement was made when some Israelites refused to obey the Sabbath day instructions (Ex. 16:16-27). Sabbath day observance has always existed in the spirit realm (Rom. 7:14a), and was introduced to mankind in 2:2-3. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob obeyed this commandment, but the nation of Israel had forgotten it after living in Egypt, with its polytheism, for many generations. Prior to reaching Mt. Sinai, Moses was judging matters that were brought to him by the people, and he was rendering decisions based on his knowledge of God's law and commandments. This confirms that Jethro had taught the Law of Almighty God to Moses during the forty years he lived in Midian. It also proves that the Israelites heard some of God's statutes and laws before they reached Mt. Sinai.

When they (the Israelites) have a difficulty (difficult matters), they come to me, and I judge between one and the other; and **I make known the statutes of God and His laws** (Ex. 18:16; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

For the Israelites to consider, and then agree upon, the terms of God's covenant before they arrived at Mt. Sinai (cf. Ex. 19:5-8), Moses must have explained the Law of Almighty God during the 49 days (see study: Pentecost) from leaving Egypt until God proclaimed the law and commandments at Mt. Sinai,

Now therefore, **if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant**, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine (Ex. 19:5; emphasis added).

Then all the people answered together and said, 'All that the Lord has spoken we will do.' So Moses brought back the words of the people to the Lord (Ex. 19:8).

A number of scriptures confirm that Moses discussed the Law of Almighty God starting with the elders who then disseminated this information among the general population (Ex. 4:27-31; 12:21; 17:5-6; 19:7). Again, these activities took place prior to God giving the nation of Israel His law and commandments at Mt. Sinai.

When the Lord descended upon Mt. Sinai, he began to declare the conditions of the same covenant that was given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, beginning with the 10 commandments. During his earthly ministry, Christ summarized this same legislation as follows,

Jesus said to him (a lawyer), 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.'³⁸ This is the first and great commandment.³⁹ And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'⁴⁰ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets (Mt. 22:37-40; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Many people claim they love God and their neighbor, but the only way to know for sure is to examine whether they obey God's commandments (Ex. 20:1-17; cf. I Jn. 2:3-5, 9-11; 5:2-3). By God's own definition of love, those who say they love Him but ignore His commands are liars, and unrepentant liars cannot enter God's kingdom (Rev. 22:15b). This is confirmed in both the First and Second Covenant writings,

But showing mercy to thousands, **to those who love Me and keep My commandments** (Ex. 20:6; emphasis added).

Now **by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.**⁴ **He who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar,** and the truth is not in him.⁵ But whoever keeps His word, truly the

love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. (1Jn. 2:3-5; emphasis added).

By this **we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments.**³ **For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.** And His commandments are not burdensome (1Jn. 5:2-3; emphasis added).

In summary, when people obey the first four commandments (Ex. 20:1-11), they are expressing their love for God. When they obey the last six commandments, they are expressing love toward their neighbor (Ex. 20:12-17). As mentioned previously, the commandment that Israel was tested on, prior to reaching Mt. Sinai, was the 4th (Ex. 20:8-11; cf. Ex. 16:16-28) and some of them disobeyed. It is no different today because very few correctly observe God's weekly Sabbath or His Holy Days, which include High Day Sabbaths. Therefore, very few people truly love God.

The next command, that followed the 10 commandments, dealt with how to correctly approach God in worship. The main lesson behind this command is for the worshipper to acknowledge that any meaningful spiritual relationship can only occur through God's action and workmanship, and not because we have any intrinsic talent or ability that allows us to become more righteous. This does not mean the worshipper should do nothing to improve their life, but they should not be deceived into thinking they can grow spiritually by their own power and ability apart from God's intervention,

And if you make Me an altar of stone, you shall not build it of hewn stone; for if you use your tool on it, you have profaned it.²⁶ Nor shall you go up by steps to My altar, that your nakedness

may not be exposed on it (Ex. 20:25-26; cf. Rev. 3:17b).

The apostle Paul confirmed that it is only through God's workmanship that someone can grow spiritually. Hence, the command not to build a physical altar with your own hands, or draw attention to yourself by ascending up steps to conduct a worship service,

So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but **God who gives the** (spiritual) **increase** (1Cor. 3:7; cf. Jn. 6:44, 65; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Every positive spiritual accomplishment is due to God's workmanship alone,

For **we** (God's people) **are His** (Almighty God's) **workmanship**, created in (as a result of) Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them (Eph. 2:10; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Next, God addressed various ordinances associated with servants as it was not an uncommon practice throughout man's history to purchase individuals to serve in a household (Ex. 21:1-11). From a spiritual point of view, every obedient servant of God was purchased by the blood of Christ, and therefore belongs to Almighty God. If the majority of Christianity understood this principle, they would not be teaching that it is acceptable to ignore, or transgress, the law and commandments of God. If a physical servant in a household thought in these terms, they would be disciplined for it,

Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit (of Almighty God) has made you overseers, to shepherd **the church of** (Almighty) **God which he** (Christ) **purchased with his own blood** (Ac. 20:28; Ed. notes in parentheses, emphasis added).

The apostle Paul referred to the relationship between a slave and his master when he compared himself to a bondservant of Jesus Christ, who is the master of every Christian (Rom. 1:1; Jn. 13:13). This relationship was described in the symbolism associated with a servant in ancient Israel who decided to remain with his master. It foreshadowed the repentant Christian declaring that he/she would forgo the freedom of living according to the ways of this present evil system (Gal. 1:4), to become a servant of Jesus Christ. Hence, the connection with some blood going on a doorpost as recognition that the sinner should forfeit their life. However, instead of this happening, the blood of the Lamb of God was shed to reconcile the sinner with Almighty God. This was also pictured figuratively when the blood of a clean animal was placed upon the doorposts and lintels of every family in ancient Israel (Ex. 20:7),

But if a servant plainly says, 'I love my master (type of the future Messiah), my wife (symbol of God's true church; cf. Rev. 12:17), and my children (fellow workers with Christ; cf. Lk. 8:20-21)); I will not go free,'⁶ then his master shall bring him to the judges (Heb. *Elohim*). He shall also bring him to the door, or to the doorpost, and his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him forever (Ex. 21:5-6; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Just as the bondservant's action was a declaration of enduring obedience to his master, so a Christian is not to turn away from the commitment made at baptism,

But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him (Heb. 10:38b; cf. 2Pet. 2:20-22).

Some of the general principles laid out in Exodus 21:1-11, regarding the relationship between

servants and their masters and vice versa, are mentioned again by some of Christ's apostles,

Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. ²³ And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men (Col. 3:22-23).

Masters, give your servants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven (Col. 4:1).

Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and His doctrine may not be blasphemed. ² And those who have believing masters, let them not despise them because they are brethren, but rather serve them because those who are benefited are believers and beloved. Teach and exhort these things (1Tim. 5:1-2; cf. Eph. 6:5; Ti. 2:9; 1Pet. 2:18-25).

Sadly, even in today's world, there are abuses by servants and masters. Employees rob their employers by taking time off work when it is not for a legitimate reason, stealing products and equipment, or performing shoddy workmanship. On the other hand, employers can exploit employees in many ways including poor or dangerous working conditions, unreasonably long hours with minimal compensation, little or no medical coverage, etc.

Following the ordinances governing servants, God provided more detail on the 6th commandment dealing with murder (Ex. 20:13). He distinguished between pre-meditated murder and manslaughter (Ex. 21:12-14). Manslaughter, which is killing someone accidentally, would not result in the death penalty. However, for the safety of that person, God established cities of refuge to protect them

from angry family members who might seek to kill them, even though it was an accident (Nu. 35:11-12; Dt. 19:2-4).

After expounding on the 6th commandment, God provided more detail on the 5th commandment (Ex. 20:12). Parents are not to be their children's equal, which is often the case in society today. Instead, children are to respect their parents and obey them, just as parents are to respect Almighty God and obey His representative (Ex. 23:20-22). Once this order is broken, a society will eventually collapse. This is a serious matter calling for serious measures, which explains the deterrent that follows,

And he who strikes his father or his mother shall surely be out to death (Ex. 21:15).

And he who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death (Ex. 21:17).

Stealing someone away from their family, friends, and community is compared to murdering them. Anyone unfortunate enough to have experienced kidnapping will probably concur. Hence the death penalty for "kidnapping",

He who kidnaps a man and sells him, or if he is found in his (the kidnapper's) **hand, shall surely be put to death** (Ex. 21:16; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Kidnapping for ransom is a common method of gaining resources in parts of the world today. However, once Christ's restrains the Adversary, God's law regarding this offense will be enforced and it is unlikely to be commonplace anymore (Rev. 20:1-3).

Personal injury laws were detailed next, and they were an extension of the second great commandment regarding "loving your

neighbor." Properly compensating for injury and any associated losses is an integral part of loving others (Ex. 21:18-27). It is important to stress at this point that the phrase "eye for an eye" is speaking about properly compensating for any loss. It is not a license for revenge. Insurance companies today have specific amounts that they pay out for specific injuries and this is the principle behind "eye for an eye." If there was any disagreement about compensation, a judge would make a final determination,

... and he (the perpetrator) shall **pay as the judges determine** (Ex. 21:22b; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Owners were responsible for the conduct of their animals. If an animal caused death or injury, witnesses would be asked to come forward and provide proof that the animal had done nothing previously that the owner was aware of. If the witnesses stated the owner was aware that his animal had a dangerous reputation, but did nothing to restrain it, he would be held accountable for its action (Ex. 21:28-36).

Stealing someone's livestock was a serious matter because it was the owner's livelihood. If they were slaughtered or sold to someone else, the thief would have to pay back four to five times the value of the animal/s he stole (Ex. 22:1).

If the thief was caught with the animal/s before slaughtering or selling them, he would have to pay double the value to the owner (Ex. 22:4; cf. 22:7, 9).

If a thief broke into someone's house during the night and the owner killed him in self-defense, the owner would not be held responsible for the thief's death (Ex. 22:2). However, if it was during the day, the owner would be guilty of murder if he killed the thief (Ex. 22:3a). Under God's system of government, thieves do not go

to jail and have their food, shelter, and clothing provided by taxpayers. Instead, they have to pay back the value of whatever is stolen. If they do not have funds to compensate for the items they stole, they have to work the equivalent hours until the amount is paid back,

... He (the thief) should make full restitution (for the value of the stolen goods); if he has nothing, then he should be sold (as a servant to pay back the value of the stolen goods) for his theft (Ex. 22:3b; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Allowing one's animals to graze on another person's property is regarded as theft and the owner of the animals has to compensate (Ex. 22:5). The loss of property due to reckless or negligent behavior required that the party responsible compensate for any damage,

If fire breaks out and catches in thorns, so that stacked grain, standing grain, or the field is consumed, **he who kindled the fire shall surely make restitution** (Ex. 22:6; emphasis added).

If someone received goods from his neighbor for safe-keeping, and any of these are stolen while in his possession, the owner of these goods is to be compensated. It would make sense in cases like this for the individual who agrees to look after his neighbor's goods, to create a separate agreement covering this possibility and absolving him from any responsibility (Ex. 22:12). In today's society, a homeowner's insurance may cover the cost of goods that are stolen, or accidentally damaged, but if these goods are only temporarily in one's possession, it would be wise to contact the insurance company to make sure they are covered under the existing homeowner's policy. If someone borrowed equipment, or an animal in the case of an agrarian society, from his neighbor and then damaged or destroyed it, he would have to

compensate unless the owner was present at the time the equipment was used (Ex. 22:14-15a). However, if the individual borrowing the equipment agreed to pay a rental for it, he would not be held responsible for damage. He would only pay the agreed rental fee,

... if it was hired (rented), it came for its hire (Ex. 22:15b).

The main purpose behind many of these ordinances was to teach personal responsibility and accountability. Counting the cost of our decisions, before making them, is central to God's legislation.

The next commandment may seem strange in today's society, but in earlier generations a father's daughter was regarded as both his responsibility and property. Therefore, if someone took her without his permission, it was viewed as theft and compensation was due,

And if a man entices a virgin who is not betrothed (engaged to be married) and lies with her (has sexual intercourse), **he shall surely pay the bride-price for her to be his wife.**

¹⁷ If her father utterly refuses to give her to him, he shall pay money according to the bride-price for virgins (Ex. 22:16-17; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Within this legislation is the moral principle that men and women cannot have sexual intercourse with whomever they want, whenever they want, without any responsibility or consequences. In the example above, the moment the man had sexual intercourse with the virgin, she was regarded as his wife unless her father disavowed the relationship. Even then, there were consequences for the male perpetrator as he had to pay the father 50 shekels (cf. Dt. 22:29). In ancient times, 50 shekels would have been a considerable penalty to pay. Unfortunately,

today, men can have sexual relationships multiple times with multiple women, and sire multiple children who often end up being taken care of through the taxes paid by other citizens who had no say or control over the actions of these promiscuous people. The financial cost of this behavior, not to mention the emotional cost to the children of these temporary relationships, is enormous.

The majority of mankind today does not understand the serious nature of Satan and his demons. Many of the travesties that take place around the world are instigated, in some manner, by rebellious spirit-beings that cannot be seen by humans. Witches, sorcerers, and mediums communicate, to varying degrees, with these fallen angels. Instead of communicating with evil spirits, mankind is to seek guidance and help from Almighty God. Those who consult a medium or sorcerer are actually guilty of seeking after a god (spirit-being) other than Almighty God, and therefore are breaking the 1st commandment, which carries the death penalty (Ex. 20:3),

You shall not permit a sorceress to live (Ex. 22:18).

In a similar manner, anyone who sacrifices to any god, other than Almighty God, is guilty of breaking the 1st commandment. As animal sacrifices were fulfilled by Christ's death and resurrection (Mt. 5:17; Heb. 7:27; 10:10), no one today should be sacrificing animals in religious ceremonies as it is an insult that demeans the sacrifice of Christ,

He who sacrifices to any god, except to the Lord only, he shall be utterly destroyed (Ex. 22:20).

One of the purposes for the sexual act between a husband and his wife, is to experience a oneness of mind and purpose that reflects the

relationship between Christ and his future wife (2Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:25-27; Jn. 17:11). Therefore, any sexual act other than between a husband and wife is a perversion of what Almighty God ordained, and nothing more than lust,

Whoever lies with a beast shall surely be put to death (Ex. 22:19).

As the second great commandment states, we are to love our neighbor as our self, it seems illogical that we would mistreat a stranger or oppress them. Sadly, this does occur in many societies today and God condemns it. As mankind's history has been replete with migrations from one region to another, everyone's families have been sojourners at one time or another, and therefore it is hypocritical to mistreat strangers. However, this does mean that current immigration laws can be abused by illegally entering a country,

You shall neither mistreat a stranger (sojourner) nor oppress him for **you were strangers in the land of Egypt** (Ex. 22:21; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Sadly today, widows and the fatherless are often mistreated. This comes in many forms including inflation that outpaces one's income, to unscrupulous financiers who bilk money from vulnerable people. Also, "dead beat dads" are often able to avoid paying court-ordered maintenance for the children they have abandoned. Eventually, the leaders of societies that allow these practices will find their own wives becoming widows and their own children fatherless, when God finally acts to deal with their sins,

You shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child. ²³ If you afflict them in any way, and they cry at all to Me, I will surely hear their cry; ²⁴ and

My wrath will become hot, and I will kill you with the sword; **your wives shall be(come) widows, and your children fatherless** (Ex. 22:22-24; cf. Mt. 23:14; Jas. 1:27; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

When someone is poor, the last thing they need is to be in a position where they must borrow money. When this occurs, whoever loans them funds must not charge interest. God condemns anyone who loans money to the poor and adds interest because this creates an even greater burden for them,

If you lend money to any of My people who are poor among you, you shall not be like a moneylender to him; you shall not charge him interest (Ex. 22:25).

Any form of surety that removes someone's daily needs, such as food, shelter, or clothing, is illegal under God's government. This is another safeguard designed to protect the poor from oppression,

If you every take your neighbor's garment as a pledge, **you shall return it to him before the sun goes down.** ²⁷ For that is his only covering, it is his garment for his skin. What will he sleep in? And it will be that when he cries to Me, I will hear, for I am gracious (Ex. 22:26-27; emphasis added).

There is a truth to the statement that mankind has the government it deserves. In other words, since the time of Adam's rebellion mankind has sought to have anyone except Almighty God ruling over them (1Sam. 8:7). Therefore, human governments exist today because mankind prefers to be ruled by physical leaders that can be seen and, in the case of democratic countries, influenced by the voting public. In reality however, all governments exist by God's pleasure and as mankind has chosen human

rulers, they cannot have it both ways. In other words, they can't reject God and then complain about the very human government they wanted in the first place. God states plainly they have to be subject to the governing authority they chose,

You shall not revile God (Ex. 20:7), **nor curse a ruler of your people** (Ex. 22:28; cf. 1Pet. 2:13-16; Mt. 22:15-21; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

With all His law and commandments, God expects His people to act quickly and not delay in performing their responsibilities. This point can be overlooked when reading the following scriptures. Therefore, the relevant section will be highlighted,

You shall not delay to offer the first of your ripe produce and your juices. The first born of your sons you shall give to Me (Ex. 22:29; emphasis added).

Christ illustrated this point in the following parable about a servant that did not act quickly on what he knew he should be doing,

And another (servant) came, saying, 'Master, here is your mina, which I have kept put away in a handkerchief (the servant did nothing with it even though he knew better) (Lk. 19:20; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Why then (said the master) did you not put my money in the bank, that at my coming (return) I might have collected it with interest? (Lk. 19:23; Ed. notes in parentheses).

At the very least, this servant should have delegated his responsibility to someone else if he was determined not to act on what he had been told to do. God does not take procrastination lightly,

And he (the master) said to those who stood by, 'Take the mina from him (the servant), and give it to him who has ten minas' (i.e. the one who is already diligently doing the things he has been told to do) (Lk. 19:24; Ed. notes in parentheses).

God created scavengers like vultures, crows, raccoons, dogs, bears, etc. for the purpose of cleaning up dead animals. These creatures have digestive and immune systems that can handle decaying and even diseased remains. In the seas, God created shellfish, like oysters, to clean pollutants from the water. Mankind was not designed for that purpose. Instead, mankind was made in God's image (Gen. 1:26) and God is not a scavenger. On the other hand, Satan is portrayed in scripture as a scavenger, which explains why he is compared to a lion that preys on those who are spiritually weak (1Pet. 5:8). This imagery is appropriate because lions do seek out slower or weaker animals and they sometimes scavenge dead animals, or animals that have been killed by another predator. Therefore, God's people should not be associated with scavengers or consuming them as part of their diet,

And you (God's people) shall be holy men to Me: you shall not eat any meat which is torn by beasts in the field; you shall throw it to the dogs (Ex. 22:31; Ed. note in parenthesis).

The difference between a legal system and a justice system cannot be overstated as many guilty people avoid conviction by getting off on some legal technicality. For instance, if someone accused of murder does not get to trial within a specific period of time, their case could be thrown out of court (see: www.theindychannel.com/news/murder...free-on-technicality). Witnesses lying about the facts, mob justice, and jurors being unduly influenced by the status of the accused all act to pervert true justice as the following scriptures confirm,

You shall not circulate a false report. Do not put your hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness.² You shall not follow a crowd to do evil; nor shall you testify in a dispute so as to turn aside after many to pervert justice.³ You shall not show partiality to a poor man in his dispute (Ex. 23:1-3).

You shall not pervert the judgment of your poor in his dispute (Ex. 23:6).

Failure to obey these commands can result in harm to innocent people, including their death in capital offense cases,

Keep yourself far from a false matter; **do not kill the innocent and righteous**. For I (God) will not justify the wicked.⁸ And you shall take no bribe, for a bribe blinds the discerning and perverts the words of the righteous.⁹ Also, you shall not oppress a stranger, for you know the heart of a stranger (i.e. how difficult it is), because you were strangers in the land of Egypt (Ex. 23:7-9; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Loving your enemy includes acts of kindness toward him no matter how difficult this might be. Situations like this can be a determining factor in an individual's relationship with God (Mt. 6:14; 18:35; Mk. 11:25),

If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey going astray, you shall surely bring it back to him again.⁵ If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying under its burden, and you would (prefer to) refrain from helping it, **you shall surely help him with it** (Ex. 23:4-5; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

In society today, people can work for decades until they reach retirement without more than statutory holidays off work. Sadly, by the time they retire many are burnt out, or have physical

infirmities that hinder their ability to enjoy their senior years. This is the way Satan has ordered this present world (2Cor. 4:4; cf. Gal. 1:4). He wants everyone working as much as possible with their main focus on material pursuits. In contrast, God wants His people to have a rest at the end of every six years, and a break from their normal activities during the year that follows (i.e. the seventh year). This creates an opportunity to concentrate on spiritual matters without the usual distractions associated with one's job. Sadly, society as a whole will not be managed God's way until Christ returns. This is why Satan is described as keeping his subjects in prison where they cannot escape from their spiritual deception, or preoccupation with physical matters (Isa. 14:12-1; Rev. 12:9),

Six years you shall sow your land and gather in its produce,¹¹ but the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, that the poor of your people may eat (what grows of itself); and what they leave, the beasts of the field may eat. In like manner you shall do with your vineyard and your olive grove (Ex. 23:10-11; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Thankfully, having a rest from work and the opportunity to escape material pursuits for one day each week is still possible for those who obey God's command regarding the weekly Sabbath (Ex. 20:8-11),

Six days you shall do your work, and on the seventh day you shall rest, that your ox and your donkey may rest, and the son of your maidservant and the stranger may be refreshed (Ex. 23:12; cf. Isa. 58:13-14).

Whether we realize it or not, much of the Judeo-Christian world makes mention of other gods by observing holidays that are pagan in origin such as New Year's Day, Easter, Christmas, etc. (see study: Pagan Practices). God condemns this

misappropriation of His name and the subsequent removal of His Holy Days (see: God Holy Days),

And in all that I have said to you, be circumspect and make no mention of the name of other gods, nor let it be heard from your mouth (Ex. 23:13).

In addition to the seventh-year rest and weekly Sabbath, God commands all people to observe His three annual festivals, and it is no coincidence that these are listed immediately after His warning "not to mention the name of other gods." In other words, do not replace God's Holy Days with holidays that originated from polytheism,

Three times **you shall keep a feast to Me** in the year (Ex. 23:14; emphasis added).

The main purpose for these festivals is to focus on the spiritual blessings that God provides for mankind. The greatest of which is a correct understanding of Almighty God's plan to reconcile all sinners to Himself. Satan's holidays obscure the truth about God's plan of salvation, and it is one of the methods used by the Adversary to deceive mankind (Rev. 12:9; see study: Hallmark of Satan's holidays),

You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread. You shall eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded you, at the time appointed in the month of Abib (Ex. 12:14-20), for in it you came out of Egypt; none shall appear before Me empty (i.e. an offering is to be presented);¹⁶ and the Feast of Harvest, the firstfruits of your labors which you have sown in the field (Pentecost; Ex. 34:22; Ac. 2:1); and the Feast of Ingathering, which is at the end of the year, when you have gathered in the fruit of your labors from the field (Feast of Tabernacles and Last Great Day) (Ex. 23:14-16; cf. Lev. 23:34-36; Dt. 16:13-15; Jn. 7:37).

God made it clear that there was to be no mingling of pagan practices with the observance of His Holy Days. To emphasize this, God provided one example of a fertility rite practiced by some pagan nations. This involved boiling a young goat in its mother's milk and then sprinkling the concoction on various plants and trees in an effort to make them produce more abundantly. This is not something God's servants ever needed to consider because He promised to bless their produce if they obeyed Him (Ex. 23:25-26; Dt. 28:1-14),

... You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk (Ex. 23:19b).

Many Jews today believe they should not eat any dairy products with meat, but this not what God commanded in Genesis 23:19b. If they refer to scriptures like Genesis 18:8, they will realize Abraham provided a meal to three of God's angels consisting of meat and dairy products (Gen. 18:8). Therefore, the oral law/tradition of the Jews about not eating any dairy product with meat is erroneous and misleading (cf. Mt. 23:13-35).

In the 24th chapter of Exodus, there is a summary account confirming that Moses wrote down the entire Law of Almighty God, read it to the nation of Israel, and they agreed to obey it. When compared with Deuteronomy 30:11-16, it confirms that carnal-minded people can understand what Almighty God expects from them, and it is not impossible for them to obey His law and commandments. Finally, it is clear that the nation of Israel entered into a marriage covenant with the Lord, but it was ratified with the blood of animals and not with the blood of Jesus Christ. Had the people fulfilled their part of this marriage covenant, there would have been no need for a Second Marriage Covenant (Heb. 8:7-13). However, as Bible history records, the Israelites were not faithful to the

terms of their marriage vow, which included teaching other nations about God's way of living. Therefore the Lord, who later became known as Jesus Christ, divorced them (Jer. 3:8; cf. I Cor. 10:1-4),

So Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord and all the judgments (ordinances). And all the people answered with one voice and said, 'All the words which the Lord has said we will do.' ⁴And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord (i.e. the Testimony) ... (Ex. 24:3-4a; cf. 24:7; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Because Almighty God is omnipotent and omniscient, He knew the Israelites would eventually reject His rulership in favor of human leadership, which would then lead the nation away from obedience to His law and commandments (1Sam. 8:5-8). Again, Almighty God's appointed spokesman and leader was the Angel of God, who later became known as Jesus Christ (Ex. 23:20-23; Isa. 9:6; Jgs. 13:18). God's foreknowledge of these events was pictured by Moses sprinkling blood on the altar. This blood pre-figured the blood of Christ being accepted, figuratively, by Almighty God on behalf of all sinners (1Jn. 3:4; Heb. 9:22),

And Moses took half the blood and put it in basins, and half the blood he sprinkled on the altar (Ex. 24:6).

The balance of the blood in the basins was sprinkled on the people, which foreshadowed the blood of Christ being shed for all sinners (Jn. 1:29). Because many angels have sinned, Christ's shed blood would also apply to them because God is not a respecter of persons, and He is not willing that any perish (Ac. 10:34; 2 Pet. 3:9). The shedding of Christ's blood would initiate the Second Covenant, and make the First Covenant animal sacrificial system obsolete (Heb. 8:13). However, the Second Covenant did

not annul the Law of Almighty God as many people seem to think. God's law is spiritual and will always be in effect,

And Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on the people, and said, 'Behold, the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you according to all these words' (Ex. 24:7; Rev. 1:5).

Next, God gave instructions for the sanctuary that would be in the midst of the nation of Israel (Ex. 25:8). Of note, God wanted His people to desire to be with Him. Therefore, their participation was voluntary. If they didn't want to contribute, they didn't have to,

Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring Me an offering. **From everyone who gives it willingly with his heart you shall take My offering** (Ex. 25:2; cf. 2Cor. 9:7; emphasis added).

An integral part of this sanctuary was a small ornate box, referred to as an ark, and it held God's Testimony (Ex. 25:10-22; Rev. 12:17). This ark would go wherever the Lord went because it had rings on the sides and two poles to transport it. Therefore, it symbolized that the law and commandments are inseparable from God. On top of the ark was a gold mercy seat, which pictured God judging His people by means of the Testimony, or Law of Almighty God. Whatever His judgments were, two witnesses heard what was said and they could be called upon in case there was any misunderstanding or dispute in the future. These two witnesses were symbolized by the two gold cherubim positioned either side of the mercy seat.

Instructions were then given for the table of showbread. This was also designed to be mobile picturing that Christ, the "bread of life", would always be working with God's people to assist

them in their relationship with God the Father (Jn. 6:35, 48; see study: David and the Showbread),

I (Christ) will not leave you (God's people) orphans; I will come to you (Jn. 14:18; cf. Mt. 18:20; Heb. 13:5-6; Ed. notes in parentheses).

The fact that there were twelve loaves on the table of showbread, symbolized that Christ's work with the descendants of Jacob's twelve sons would grow until all repentant sinners are grafted into the same spiritual house,

I (Paul) say then, have they (descendants of Jacob's twelve sons) stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall (trespass), to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles (Rom. 11:11; Ed. notes in parentheses).

And if some of the branches (i.e. descendants of Jacob's twelve sons) were broken off, and you (Gentiles), being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root (Jesus Christ) and fatness (richness) of the olive tree, ¹⁸ do not boast against the branches (sons of Jacob, or Israel) ... (Rom. 11:17-18a; Ed. notes in parentheses).

The lampstand is described next as having seven lamps (Ex. 25:37), and a lamp is used symbolically to represent God's truth, especially His law and commandments,

For the commandment is a lamp, and the law is a light ... (Prov. 6:23a; cf. Ps. 119:105).

According to Revelation 1:20 seven lamps represent the seven angels who have been given authority over seven churches. The term "churches" is used to describe those who are called out of this present evil age (Gal.:4), and

this process has been going on since the rebellion of Satan.

As Christ is the light of the world, he illuminates the law and commandments of his heavenly Father (Mt. 5:17-48),

Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, '**I am the light of the world.** He who follows me shall not walk in darkness...' (Jn. 8:12a; emphasis added).

Therefore anyone, who believes and teaches that Christians do not have to obey the Law of Almighty God, is in darkness and they do not "know the Lord" despite any claims that they do. The gold lampstand in God's tabernacle was made into one solid piece signifying complete unity of mind and purpose that is the goal of Almighty God's plan of salvation (I Cor. 15:28). This unity does not occur naturally or quickly. Instead, like any hammered work, it takes a lot of time, effort, and skill to finish it. By examining what Christ said in the book of Revelation, we can see that the seven lamps, representing seven angels, have a great deal of work put into them before they reach the point where they were all in harmony and bringing the light of God's law and commandments to the house of God in accordance with the will of God the Father (Rev. 2:1-29; 3:1-22),

The mystery (hidden truth) of the seven stars which you saw in my (Christ's; cf. Rev. 1:16) right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: **The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches...** (Rev. 1:20a; cf. Ex. 25:37; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

The lampstand was to be fueled by olive oil and burn continually (Ex. 27:20-21). Olive oil comes from the olive tree which is a symbol associated with spirit-beings (Zech. 4:11-14), including

Jesus Christ (see study: The Tree of Life and River of Living Waters),

And if some of the branches (descendants of Jacob's twelve sons) were broken off (separated from the olive tree – Jesus Christ), and you (Gentiles), being a wild olive tree (symbol of being under a different spirit-being - Satan), were grafted in among them (following repentance of sin and baptism), and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness (richness) of the olive tree (Rom. 11:17; Ed. notes in parentheses).

This symbolism confirms that God's Holy Spirit becomes available to repentant individuals, because of Christ's sacrifice, following their baptism (Ac. 2:38; Ac. 19:6). It is also another proof that anyone who has God's Holy Spirit will be living in accordance with God's law and commandments continually (Ac. 5:32b). Anyone who disagrees with this truth is deceived and not attached to the olive tree that represents Jesus Christ. The first physical High Priest, Aaron, was anointed with olive oil symbolizing his receipt of God's Holy Spirit, which enabled him to fulfill his responsibilities,

It is like the precious oil upon the head, running down on the beard, the beard of Aaron, running down on the edge of his garments (Ps. 133:2; cf. Ex. 29:7).

The ark, table of showbread, and lampstand were all contained within the tent of the tabernacle. In Exodus 26:1-37, this tabernacle is described in great detail, and it was comprised of many intricate parts. For this structure to function properly, every part had to be correctly "coupled together" (Ex. 26:24). It was to picture those who have God's Holy Spirit being "coupled together" with others to comprise God's spiritual tabernacle (1Cor. 3:16-17; 6:19-20; 12:12-31;

2Cor. 6:16). None of this would be possible without Christ fulfilling his work,

... Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone, ²¹ in whom **the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord,** ²² in whom you are being built together for a habitation (dwelling) of God in the spirit (Eph. 2:20b-22; cf. 1Cor. 1:10; 12:13-27; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

The altar for burnt offerings was also designed to be mobile picturing that the law of sacrifice, mentioned earlier in this study, would continue to be with God and His people (Ex. 27:4b-7). In other words, they must always be willing to put aside whatever is necessary to serve God and our fellow man. This characteristic is central to the love of God and will never change. As sin offerings also took place on this altar, it was meant to pre-figure Christ's willingness to be sacrificed on behalf of sinners, and to fulfill this he had to be sinless (Heb. 4:15).

The enclosure that surrounded the tent of the tabernacle, the altar, and the laver was the "court of the tabernacle" (Ex. 27:9-18). Within this area, the priests would eat their portion of the offerings but they were not to enter the Holy of Holies, inside the tent of the tabernacle, at any time. Only the High Priest could enter this area once a year on the Day of Atonement (see study: Atonement – Day of Covering). Therefore the court of the tabernacle was a reminder that even God's physical priesthood could not go directly to Him during the First Covenant period, due to sin. However following Christ's sacrifice, those who repent of their sins and are baptized, can go directly to Almighty God in prayer regardless of their status in society (Mt. 6:15; Heb. 4:16: see study: Confession To or Through a Priest),

And the remainder if it (the offering) Aaron and his sons shall eat; with unleavened bread it shall be eaten in a holy pace; **in the court of the tabernacle** of meeting they shall eat it (Lev. 6:16, 26; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Just as the tabernacle was constructed according to God's direction, so too was the clothing of the Levitical priesthood. As God's representatives on earth, these priests were to be dressed in a manner that reflected high quality, dignity, and refinement,

And you shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, **for** (a physical type of God's) **glory and for** (a physical type of God's) **beauty** (Ex. 28:2; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

As Almighty God's representative, Jesus Christ's garments were also made of high quality materials and workmanship. This is one of the reasons the soldiers cast lots for Christ's clothing after his death,

Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments and made four parts, to each soldier a part, and also the tunic. Now **the tunic was without seam, woven from the top in one piece.** ²⁴ **They said therefore among themselves, 'Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be'** ... (Jn. 19:23-24a; emphasis added).

The High Priest during the First Covenant period was to wear an ephod (shoulder cape worn over a tunic or robe) upon which were sown two onyx stones. These were engraved with the names of the twelve sons of Jacob. This symbolized the High Priest of the Melchizedek order (cf. Heb. 5:5-6), Jesus Christ, carrying the responsibility for the entire nation of Israel upon his shoulders. It is important to note that the entire nation of

Israel was not Jewish. Only one-twelfth of it comprised the descendants of Judah, or the Jews,

And you shall put the two stones on the shoulders of the ephod as memorial stones for the sons of Israel. So Aaron shall bear their names before the Lord on his two shoulders as a memorial (Ex. 28:12).

Next was the breastplate, which also displayed the names of Jacob's sons. Each son's name was engraved on a separate precious stone. This breastplate was attached to the ephod and positioned below it, which placed it over the heart of the High Priest. This symbolized the love of Jesus Christ for his spiritual bride. He will marry this chaste woman when he returns as King of kings and Lord of lords,

So **Aaron shall bear the names of the sons of Israel** on the breastplate of judgment **over his heart**, when he goes into the holy place, as a memorial before the Lord continually (Ex. 28:29; emphasis added).

Christ's love for the spiritual house of Israel, into which all repentant Gentile nations are grafted, was proven when he willingly gave up his life so that his future wife could be cleansed of her sins,

Husbands, love your wives, just as **Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it** (her). ²⁶ that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word (cf. Heb. 3:15; Rom. 10:14), ²⁷ **that he might present it to himself a glorious church**, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish (because of Christ's sacrifice) (Eph. 5:25-27; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

The judgment of the house of Israel rested with Jesus Christ. If he failed in the commission he

was given by his heavenly Father, Israel's sins would continue to separate them from Almighty God. By extension, the sins of the Gentile nations would also remain unforgiven, ...So, Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel over his heart before the Lord continually (Ex. 28:30b).

The robe of the ephod was an undergarment made of blue thread with multi-colored pomegranates, alternating with golden bells, sown on the hem (Ex. 28:31-35). The turban with a golden plate, mentioned in Exodus 28:36-38, was positioned so the engraved portion stating: HOLINESS TO THE LORD was on the High Priest's forehead (cf. Zech. 14:20-21). Therefore, it represented a crown worn by a king. This would be another reminder that no human being is worthy, of and by themselves, to approach Almighty God. This turban with its engraved plate pictured the King of kings, Jesus Christ, interceding on behalf of his people and requesting a pardon for their collective sins, as described in the next scripture,

So it (the turban) shall be on Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things (offered to God by the people) which the children of Israel hallow in all their holy (sacred) gifts; and **it shall always be on his forehead, that they** (the people) **may be accepted before the Lord** (Ex. 28:38; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

These garments represented another aspect of Christ's sacrifice, which "covered" the sins of the people. Symbolically, the priest's garments would completely cover him so his bare flesh would not come in direct contact with sanctified objects in the tabernacle, and contaminate them,

They (the garments) shall be on Aaron and on his sons when they come into the tabernacle of

meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister in the holy place, that they do not incur iniquity (guilt) and die... (Ex. 28:43a; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Spiritually speaking, God considers anyone who has repented of sin and been baptized as "covered" and "clean". This is one of the reasons that God's people, who are resurrected from the dead, are pictured as being clothed in white robes (Rev. 7:9). Anyone who rejects Christ's "covering" work (i.e. his sacrifice) is still regarded as "uncovered" and "unclean", and they are pictured in garments that are not acceptable to God (Mt. 22:11-13). Some individuals received God's Holy Spirit during the First Covenant period because they "believed" that Almighty God's Anointed would come and shed his blood to cover their sins (Jn. 1:29; cf. Ps. 2:2; Isa. 61:1-3; Ac. 10:38; Heb. 1:9). Therefore, they were considered "clean". Judas Iscariot did not have faith in this sacrifice, that was about to occur in his lifetime, and he was considered unclean as a result,

Jesus said to him (Peter), 'He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean (because of belief in Christ as Almighty God's Anointed; cf. 1Cor. 6:11), but not all of you.' ¹¹ For he knew who would betray him; therefore he said, '**You are not all clean**' (Jn. 13:10-11; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

The priests who served the nation of Israel were sanctified and considered * ceremonially clean through the blood of animals,

And you shall take some of the blood that is on the altar, and some of the anointing oil, and sprinkle it on Aaron and on his garments, on his sons and on the garments of his sons with him; and he and his garments shall be hallowed, and

his sons and his sons' garments with him (Ex. 29:21).

Because the blood of animals was only a temporary means of dealing with sin, the animal sacrificial system would cease when the ultimate sacrifice for sin was fulfilled through the death of Jesus Christ,

But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. ¹²Nor with the blood of goats and calves, but with his own blood he entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption (forgiveness that leads to everlasting life for those who repent of sin). ¹³ For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, * sanctifies (sets apart) for the purifying of the flesh, ¹⁴ how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit (of Almighty God) offered himself without spot (blemish – i.e. without sin) to God, purge (cleanse) your conscience from dead works (sins that lead to everlasting death) to serve the living God? ¹⁵ And for this reason he (Christ) is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of (his) death, for the redemption (forgiveness) of the transgressions (sins; 1Jn. 3:4) under the first covenant, that those who are called (cf. Jn. 6:44, 65) may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance (Heb. 9:11-15; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Even though Jesus Christ fulfilled the animal sacrificial system (cf. Mt. 5:17), the multi-faceted aspects of his work are imbedded in the animal sacrifices and act as a permanent reminder. The apostle Paul compared these important lessons to a school-master or tutor (see study: How did the early church understand the law of God and grace?),

Therefore the law (of animal sacrifices and associated ordinances) was our tutor to bring us to (a deeper understanding and appreciation of) Christ, that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor (animal sacrificial system) (Gal. 3:24-25; Ed. notes in parentheses).

For example, Jesus Christ was executed outside Jerusalem, and this was pre-figured during the First Covenant by a bull that acted as a temporary sacrifice for sin,

But the flesh of the bull, with its skin and its offal, you shall burn with fire (symbol of severe trial) **outside the camp**. It is a sin offering (Ex. 29:14; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. ¹² **Therefore Jesus also**, that he might sanctify (set apart) the people with his own blood, **suffered outside the gate** (Heb. 13:11-12; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

The Levitical priests were told to eat a portion of the meat and unleavened bread given to them from the offerings of the nation of Israel. These have now been fulfilled by Christ's sacrifice, but God's people today are commanded to eat unleavened bread and drink some wine during the New Covenant Passover service each year as a memorial of what Christ did for every sinner who has repented (see study: Christ's New Covenant Passover). If they fail to participate in this service, they are putting their relationship with God in serious jeopardy,

Then Aaron and his sons shall eat the flesh of the ram, and the bread that is in the basket, by the door of the tabernacle of meeting. ³³ **They shall eat those things with which the**

atonement was made, to consecrate and to sanctify them; but a stranger shall not eat them, because they are holy (Ex. 29:32-33; emphasis added).

I (Christ) am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is my flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world (Jn. 6:51; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Then Jesus said to them, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no (everlasting) life in you. ⁵⁴ Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. ⁵⁵ For my flesh is (true) food indeed, and my blood is (true) drink indeed. ⁵⁶ **He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him** (Jn. 6:53-56; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

The importance of eating unleavened bread, drinking some wine, and washing one another's feet during the New Covenant Passover service, was emphasized by Christ prior to his death on a stake,

Peter said to him (Christ), 'You shall never wash my feet!' Jesus answered him, 'If I do not wash you, you have no part with me' (Jn. 13:8; Ed. note in parenthesis).

If I (Christ) then, your Lord and teacher, have washed your feet, **you also ought to wash one another's feet.** ¹⁵ For **I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you** (Jn. 13:14-15; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Following the New Covenant Passover service, God's people are to continue together for seven days observing the Days of Unleavened Bread

(see study: The Feast of Unleavened Bread). This was pre-figured by the Levitical priesthood when they were commanded to remain together for seven days before going back to their regular duties,

Thus you shall do to Aaron and his sons, according to all that I have commanded you. **Seven days you shall consecrate them** (Ex. 29:35; emphasis added).

The next object mentioned in chronological order was the altar of incense. This was also mobile primarily because it pictured the prayers of God's people coming before Him continually, no matter where they were from generation to generation (Ex. 30:4). Incense being associated with the prayers of God's people portrayed how pleasant it is for Almighty God to hear from His people (1Pet. 3:12),

Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. And he was given much incense that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. ⁴ And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand (Rev. 8:3-4).

... and golden **bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints** (Rev. 5:8b; emphasis added).

The altar of incense was the closest object, in the tabernacle, to the ark which was located behind the veil in the Holy of Holies (Ex. 30:6). This pictured the prayers of God's people being very close to Him at all times. The prayers of those who do not seek to obey the Law of Almighty God are regarded as "strange incense" and are unacceptable to Him (1Pet. 3:12b),

You shall not offer strange incense on it ... (Ex. 30:9a; emphasis added).

If I regard iniquity (sin) in my heart, **the Lord will not hear** (Ps. 66:18; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

...Even if you make many prayers, **I (God) will not hear. Your hands are full of blood** (shed) (Isa. 1:15b; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and **your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear** (Isa. 59:2; cf. Mic. 3:4; emphasis added).

Even God's people can sometimes say things in their prayers or in conversation that are inappropriate. They can also sin after repentance and baptism (1Jn. 1:8-9). In the Levitical system, these would be cleansed once a year by the blood of a sin offering sprinkled on the altar of incense (Ex. 30:10). In the Second Covenant, these errors and sins are forgiven upon repentance because the Mediator between Almighty God and mankind, Jesus Christ, intervenes on behalf of God's people. Therefore, repentance is not a "once in a lifetime experience". Instead, it is an ongoing process for God's people as they "grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ" (Rom. 7:15-25; cf. 2 Pet. 3:18),

You ask (in prayer) and do not receive, **because you ask amiss**, that you may spend it on your pleasures (Jas. 4:3; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

And **the prayer of faith** will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And **if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven** (Jas. 5:15; emphasis added).

During the ceremonies associated with Day of Atonement, the High Priest would intercede on behalf of every sinner and ask God to forgive them. This was to picture the High Priest of the Melchizedek system, Jesus Christ, who would shed his own blood as the means through which every sinner could be reconciled to Almighty God. Again, this reconciliation was dependent upon the sinner repenting and beginning a new life in accordance with God's law and commandments (Rom. 6:4),

(Christ) who, in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him (Almighty God) who was able to save him from death, and was heard because of his godly fear (deep respect),⁸ though he (Christ) was a son, yet he learned obedience by the things which he suffered.⁹ And having been perfected, he became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him (Almighty God),¹⁰ called by God (Almighty) as High Priest 'according to the order of Melchizedek' (Heb. 5:7-9; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Another aspect of the Day of Atonement involved each person contributing a half shekel toward the service of the tabernacle (Ex. 30:16). This was not done because God needed the money. Instead, it was meant to teach important spiritual lessons, some of which follow:

- 1) Everyone owed the same debt to Almighty God for their transgressions (Rom. 6:23) and, whatever they attempted to pay, it would be wholly inadequate to cover the cost of their sins. Why? Because their iniquities necessitated the death of a sinless individual, Jesus Christ, and no amount of money could ever compensate for the loss of his life.

- 2) Because it is natural for human beings to regard some sins as greater than others, God determined that every person would give the same amount (Ex. 30:15). This was to teach that whenever an individual broke one law or commandment, they were as guilty as someone who broke every law and commandment (Jas. 2:10; cf. Mt. 5:19). This was to stress the serious problem of self-righteousness because if everyone is equally guilty, there are no grounds to claim that one person is less sinful than another.
- 3) Because each individual is as guilty of sin as another, God views all people as being the same regardless of their status in society. Therefore, they are to contribute the same amount during the Day of Atonement. This is to emphasize that God is not a respecter of persons and does not favor one sinner over another (Dt. 10:17; Ac. 10:34; Rom. 2:11).

Because of sin, God considers all human beings "unclean", spiritually speaking. Therefore, He instructed Moses to place a bronze laver (basin with water) between the tabernacle of meeting and the altar so the priests could wash their hands and feet before commencing their service (Ex. 30:18-21). This command still applies to God's servants in both a physical and spiritual sense. In the physical sense, no one can be part of the Body of Christ unless they participate in the New Covenant Passover service, which includes foot-washing (see study: Christ's New Covenant Passover),

Peter said to him (Christ), 'You shall never wash my feet!' Jesus answered him, '**If I do not wash you, you have no part with me**' (Jn. 13:8; Ed. notes in parenthesis; emphasis added).

If I (Christ) then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, **you also ought to wash one another's feet.** ¹⁵ **For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you** (Jn. 13:14-15; Ed. note on parenthesis; emphasis added).

Christ did not suggest that his disciples wash one another's feet. Instead, this was a command. It pointed to a much deeper spiritual lesson related to Christ's blood washing away the sins of those who repent and are baptized,

And from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. **To him (Christ) who loved us and washed us (thus freeing us) from our sins in his own blood** (Rev. 1:5; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

...These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and **washed their robes and made them white** (symbol of righteousness; cf. Rev. 3:4-5; 19:8) **in the blood of the Lamb** (Rev. 7:14b; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

As Christ humbled himself in order to wash our sins away through the shedding of his blood, his servants are to humble themselves by washing one another's feet at Passover. This ceremony reminds participants of Christ's humility when he died to "cleanse" every repentant sinner. It is only through Christ's shed blood that anyone is considered "spiritually clean" and able to serve Almighty God. It is this same attitude of humility that God's people are to emulate in their lives, and the foot-washing is an annual reminder of this.

The Holy Anointing Oil was prepared in a manner that made it completely unique. It was used to anoint the tabernacle and all those who served in it. This aromatic oil was not to be duplicated

and used as a regular perfume by anyone (Ex. 30:22-33). The reason is because this oil symbolized the Holy Spirit permeating the tabernacle, and it was meant only for those who God determined should receive it (Mt. 3:16; 1Cor. 12:3; cf. **Ac. 8:17-20**). The apostle Paul explained that the tabernacle of the Second Covenant period is not a physical building, but a body of believers who have repented of sin and possess God's Holy Spirit. For this reason, the members of the Body of Christ are considered holy,

Do you not know that **you** (repentant believers) **are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?** ¹⁷If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For **the temple of God is holy, which temple you are** (1Cor. 3:16-17; cf. 1Cor. 6:19; 2Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:22; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

The incense that was placed before the Testimony symbolized the prayers of God's people coming before Him (Ex. 30:34-38; cf. Rev. 5:8; 8:3). Because Almighty God regards His people as holy, their prayers are also holy. Consequently, no one is to duplicate the incense for private use. Instead, it was the exclusive property of Almighty God just as the prayers of God's true servants belong to Him alone,

And you shall beat some of it (the incense) very fine, and put some of it before the Testimony in the tabernacle of meeting where I (the Lord) will meet with you. **It shall be most holy to you** ³⁷ But as for the incense which you shall make, **you shall not make it for yourselves**, according to its composition. It shall be to you holy for the Lord. ³⁸ Whoever makes any like it, to smell it, he shall be cut off from his people (Ex. 30:36-38; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

The construction of God's tabernacle involved many people with different talents and abilities that God bestowed upon them. Each individual's contribution was as important as anyone else's in completing this structure (Ex. 31:1-11). The apostle Paul used the analogy of a human body, with all its parts working together, to show the importance of every member in the Body of Christ,

For in fact the body is not one member but many. ¹⁵ If the foot should say, 'Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body,' is it therefore not of the body? ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, 'Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body,' is it therefore not of the body? ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? (1Cor. 12:14-17ff).

One of the primary functions of God's tabernacle, and those who served in it, was to offer sacrifices on weekly Sabbaths, New Moons, and Holy Days (Ex. 31:12-17). These days of rest pointed to Jesus Christ who would eventually come to provide true and lasting rest from Satan's oppressive way of ruling his subjects (Isa. 14:12-17; 2Cor. 4:4),

For He (God) has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way: 'And God rested on the seventh day from all His work'; ⁵ and again in this place, 'They (nation of ancient Israel) shall not enter My rest.' ⁶ Since therefore it remains that some must enter it, and **those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience** (Heb. 4:4-6; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Because mankind as a whole has rejected the Law of Almighty God, the true Sabbath rest will not occur until Christ returns and restrains Satan who has deceived the whole world, and

prevented mankind from achieving lasting peace and happiness (Rev. 12:9; cf. 20:1-3),

For if Joshua had given them (ancient nation of Israel) rest, then He (God) would not afterward have spoken of another day (referring to the time of Christ's return).⁹ There remains therefore a rest (SGD 4530; sabbatismos - Sabbath rest) for the people of God (Heb. 4:8-9; Ed. notes in parentheses).

The writer of Hebrews pointed out that ancient Israel could have enjoyed lasting peace and rest in the land God promised to Abraham centuries previously (Ex. 33:1; Dt. 4:40). However, because of disobedience, the twelve nations of Jacob eventually went into captivity (2Kgs. 17:5-6).

The Promised Land was meant to be a physical "type" of God's spiritual kingdom. Therefore, just as the disobedient descendants of Jacob could not remain in the Promised Land, so the disobedient peoples of this world cannot enter God's spiritual kingdom, unless they repent of their sins and seek to willingly obey every word of God (Mt. 4:4; Rom. 6:4-6; cf. Rev. 22:14-15).

Shortly after receiving the Law of Almighty God, and agreeing to obey it (Ex. 24:3), the descendants of Jacob rebelled (Ex. 32:1-35). An important lesson associated with this rebellion is that Almighty God is always willing to forgive, and He takes note of those who place themselves at risk in order to serve others. In situations like this, these individuals are practicing the law of sacrifice. This is confirmed by the following scriptural example,

And it came to pass on the next day that Moses said to the people, 'You have sinned a great sin. So now I will go up to the Lord; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin.'³¹ Then Moses returned to the Lord and said, 'Oh, these people

have sinned a great sin, and have made for themselves a god of gold!³² Yet now, if You will forgive their sin – but **if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written.'**

³³ And the Lord said to Moses, 'Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book (pending future repentance).³⁴ Now therefore, go, lead the people to the place of which I have spoken to you. Behold, My Angel shall go before you (1Cor. 10:4; cf. Ex. 17:26; Nu. 20:16). Nevertheless, in the day when I visit for punishment, I will visit punishment upon them for their sin' (Ex. 32:30-34; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

At this point, an important principle needs to be emphasized regarding sin. God does not break His promises because individuals or nations sin against Him. Instead, He will punish them for their sins, and still fulfill what He has promised,

Then the Lord said to Moses, '**Depart and go up from here, you and the people whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt, to the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, To your descendants I will give it'** (Ex. 33:1; emphasis added).

Another important truth is also revealed in this section of scripture, and it relates to the spirit realm. Moses spent a great deal of time face to face with a spirit-being who represented Almighty God, and this individual was referred to frequently as "the Lord,"

So **the Lord spoke to Moses face to face**, as a man speaks to his friend... (Ex. 33:11a; emphasis added).

Jesus Christ stated emphatically that no one has seen or heard Almighty God; so this spirit-being that Moses spoke with was not God the Father,

No one has seen God (Almighty) at any time. The only begotten god (Gr. monogeneses theos) who is in the bosom of the Father, he spoke (Jn. 1:18; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

And **the Father** Himself, who sent me (Christ), has testified of me. **You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form** (Jn. 5:37; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Therefore, the spirit-being that Moses spoke with had to be the one who later became known as Jesus Christ. This truth is revealed in many scriptures,

And all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of **that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ** (1Cor. 10:4; emphasis added).

And **the Angel of God** (who Moses often referred to as "the Lord"), who went before the camp of Israel, **moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud went from before them and stood behind them** (Ex. 14:19; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

And they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that you, Lord, are among these people, that **you, Lord, are seen face to face and that your cloud stands above them; and you go before them in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night** (Nu. 14:14; emphasis added).

...The glory of **the Lord** (Christ) **shall be your rear guard** (Isa. 58:8b; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Christ carries many of the titles, as well as the authority of his heavenly Father (Ex. 23:20-22;

cf. Isa. 9:6-7). Consequently, as Almighty God's representative, Christ is to be obeyed. However, Christ is not to be worshiped as this would be transgressing the first commandment. Sadly, many Christians worship Christ today and are guilty of breaking the first commandment. Christ stated clearly that only God the Father is to be worshiped because He is greater than Christ (Jn. 14:28),

But the hour is coming, and now is, when the **true worshipers will worship the Father** in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. ²⁴ God (Almighty) is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth (Jn. 4:23-24; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

When Moses bowed down to the Lord, it was not for the purpose of worship. Instead, it was out of respect for Almighty God's representative,

So Moses made haste and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshiped (SHD 7812; show respect and honor toward a superior) (Ex. 34:8; Ed. note in parenthesis).

In order to confirm that the nation of Israel was to continue moving toward the Promised Land, despite their rebellion, God reminded them to observe His Holy Days, New Moons, and weekly Sabbath (Ex. 34:18, 21-23, 25; cf. I Sam. 20:18; 2 Kgs. 4:23; Ps. 81:3; Isa. 66:23; Eze. 46:1; Am. 8:5). Every law, commandment, ordinance, and statute was given to the nation of Israel prior to them building a golden calf. Following this incident, God's law and commandments were written down a second time (Ex. 34:1-4, 27-28, 32).

For a second time, God gave a command that is misunderstood by many Jewish people. It is dealing with one of the fertility rites associated with the pagan worship systems that were

extant in the land God was about to give to the nation of Israel,

...You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk (Ex. 34:26b).

God gave this command because the pagans worshiped the material world and numerous gods they believed could be "appeased" by certain rituals. Once appeased these gods were more likely to perform certain "favors" for the human beings who petitioned them. One of these involved boiling a young goat in its mother's milk, and then sprinkling the fluid on crops and fruit trees hoping the gods would make these more productive. In other words, it was a fertility rite. Instead of recognizing this, many Jews refuse to eat meat with dairy products. By doing so, they unwittingly accuse Abraham and three angels, of breaking God's law, because Abraham served meat and dairy products as the following example confirms,

So **he** (Abraham) **took butter and milk and the calf** which he had prepared, **and set it before them** (three angelic beings); and he stood by them under the tree as they ate (Gen. 18:8; Ed. notes in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Just as He did prior to Israel's rebellion involving the golden calf, God taught the people about observing His Sabbaths,

You shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations on the Sabbath day (Ex. 35:3).

As it was a normal daily routine to gather material for fires that were essential for heating, cooking, and other work-related activities (Nu. 15:32-33), God instructed His people to gather sticks and wood prior to the commencement of each Sabbath. This was the same principle that

God applied to gathering more manna on the sixth day of the week, or preparation day,

And so it was, on the sixth day, that they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for each one (person in a family) ... (Ex. 16:22a). Six days you shall gather it (manna), but on the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, there will be none. ²⁷ Now it happened that some of the people went out on the seventh day to gather, but they found none. ²⁸ And the Lord said to Moses, 'How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My laws?' ²⁹ See! For the Lord has given you the Sabbath; therefore He gives you on the sixth day bread for two days. **Let every man remain in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day** (Ex. 16:26-29; emphasis added).

As most societies today do not rely on gathering wood every day of the week, as part of their normal activities, the Sabbath regulations would be applied differently. For instance, the preparation day would be used to make sure all necessary food supplies were purchased and as much preparation as possible performed before the seventh day Sabbath, New Moon, or High Day Sabbath during one of God's appointed feasts. By doing this, there would be no need to go shopping or eating at restaurants where other people would be serving you (Ex. 20:10; cf. Isa.58:13). Some people have misinterpreted the command not to kindle a fire, and believe it means you cannot cook anything on the Sabbaths. This is incorrect as the following scripture confirms,

On the first day (of the Feast of Unleavened Bread) there shall be a holy convocation, and on the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation for you. No manner of work shall be done on them; **but** (except) **that which everyone must eat – that only may be prepared by you** (not by someone in a

restaurant, or a servant who works in your house) (Ex. 12:16; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

How serious a matter is this to Almighty God? Work shall be done for six days, but the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord. **Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death** (Ex. 31:15).

This means that anyone breaking the Sabbaths of God will be in the second resurrection, unless they repent and begin observing them according to God's instructions during this lifetime (Rev. 20:4-6; cf. 22:14-15). There are no exceptions based on ethnicity, or religious background, because Christ stated plainly "the Sabbath was made for mankind" (Mk. 2:27).

The last chapters of the book of Exodus describe the construction of God's tabernacle in the wilderness. Of note, all the materials were provided by voluntary or freewill offerings,

Take from among you an offering to the Lord. **Whoever is of a willing heart**, let him bring it as an offering to the Lord: gold, silver, and bronze (Ex. 35:5; cf. 35:21-22, 29; emphasis added).

Therefore, the attitude of the "giver" is more important than the gift itself. In other words, someone who is wealthy could easily give a lot, but with reluctance or indifference. While someone with limited resources could give a small amount, by comparison, but with a genuine willingness to help in whatever way they can,

Now Jesus sat opposite the treasury and saw how the people put money into the treasury. And many who were rich put in much. ⁴² Then one poor widow came and threw in two mites (Gr.

lepta, very small copper coins), which make a quadrans. ⁴³ So he called his disciples to him and said to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury; ⁴⁴ for **they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood** (Mk. 12:41-44; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

There is another important principle involved in the construction of God's tabernacle and it should be applied spiritually because God's tabernacle today is a spiritual building consisting of members who have repented of sin, been baptized, and are now living a new life of willing obedience to every word of God (1Cor. 3:16; 6:19; Eph. 2:19-22; cf. Rom. 6:4; Mt. 4:4). That principle involves the action of God's Holy Spirit in those who comprise His household (2Pet. 4-5, 9). Each member's contribution is important to the operation of God's household, but no one should be deceived into thinking it's by their talent and ability alone that various tasks are accomplished. Instead, it is God's Holy Spirit that imparts the necessary talents and abilities to each member. This is explained in both the First and Second Covenants,

And Moses said to the children of Israel, 'See, the Lord has called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; ³¹ and **He has filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom and understanding, in knowledge and all manner of workmanship** (Ex. 35:30-31; cf. 35:34; 36:1-2; emphasis added).

Now there are diversities (allotments) of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵ There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. ⁶ And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all (things) in all (everyone). ⁷ **But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all:** ⁸ for to one is

given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit,⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gift of healings by the same Spirit,¹⁰ to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues (languages), to another the interpretation of tongues.¹¹ But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing as He (Almighty God) wills (1Cor. 12:4-11; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Part of the workmanship of the tabernacle included artistic designs of cherubim on the ten curtains (Ex. 36:8). These angelic beings were not meant to be worshiped. Instead, they were a constant reminder that God's loyal angels serve His people by assisting and protecting them in many ways that are unseen by human eyes,

Are they (angels) not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister (serve) for those who will inherit salvation? (Heb. 1:14; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Some loyal angels have positions of responsibility over God's people,

At that time **Michael** shall stand up, **the great prince** who stands watch over the sons of your people... (Dan. 12:1a).

Yet **Michael the archangel**, in contending with the devil (Jude 8a).

And the angel answered and said to him (Zacharias), **I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God**... (Lk. 1:19a).

God's tabernacle was built of many different parts that had to fit together in order to make a

complete structure with each part working in harmony with all the others (Ex. 36:9-17),

He also made fifty bronze clasps to couple the tent together, **that it might be one** (Ex. 36:18; emphasis added).

The spiritual tabernacle, or temple, of the Second Covenant is constructed of many different members, which are meant to fit and work together in harmony. It is also described as "the household of God",

Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of **the household of God**,²⁰ having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone,²¹ in whom **the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord**,²² in whom you also are **being built together for a habitation (dwelling) of God in the Spirit** (Eph. 2:19-22; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

As the Second Covenant tabernacle is referred to as the Body of Christ (1Cor. 12:27; Eph. 4:12), there should be some similarities between the physical tabernacle and this new spiritual temple. For instance, the covering on the physical tabernacle was made from animal skins (cf. Ex. 36:19). However, the covering for those in the Second Covenant temple is provided through Christ's sacrifice (see study: Atonement – Day of Covering),

Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and **whose sins are covered** (Rom. 4:7; emphasis added).

As the First Covenant tabernacle depended on wooden boards standing upright (cf. Ex. 36:20), the Second Covenant tabernacle relied on

Christ's sacrifice that occurred on an upright wooden stake,

(Christ) **who himself bore our sins in his own body on the tree**, that we, having died to sins (symbolically at baptism), might live for righteousness – by whose stripes (wounds) you were healed (from everlasting death due to sin) (1Pet. 2:24; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

The First Covenant tabernacle required sockets of silver in order to be assembled (Ex. 36:24). The Second Covenant tabernacle did not commence until thirty pieces of silver were paid to betray Christ, which then led to his death,

Then one of the twelve (disciples), called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests ¹⁵ and said, 'What are you willing to give me if I deliver him (Christ) to you?' And **they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver** (Mt. 26:14-15; cf. 27:9; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

One of the reasons gold was used in the First Covenant tabernacle was to represent perfection or purity, which occurs as heat is applied to remove impurities from molten metal ore (Ex. 36:34-38). During the Second Covenant period, God's people are refined like gold and perfected by the "heat" associated with various trials. Christ himself experienced many fiery trials (Isa. 52:13-15; 53:1-12; cf. Heb. 5:8; 1Pet. 2:23). The table for the showbread, the lampstand, and the altar of incense were all composed of varying amounts of gold picturing the trials of God's loyal servants, which would include spirit beings with responsibilities over God's people (Ex. 37:10-28; cf. Dan. 12:1a, Jude 8a, Lk. 1:19a),

I counsel you to **buy from Me gold refined in fire, that you may be rich** (spiritually-speaking) ... (Rev. 3:18a; cf. Zech. 13:9; Jas.

1:2-4; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

The First Covenant tabernacle had a veil that separated the people from the Holy of Holies, which represented Almighty God's heavenly throne (Ex. 36:35). In the Second Covenant, Christ's death and resurrection removed this veil so that the prayers of God's faithful servants go directly to the Father,

Therefore, brethren, **having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus**, ²⁰ by a new and living way which he (Christ) **consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, his flesh** (sacrifice on behalf of repentant sinners) ... (Heb. 10:19-20; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father **in my name**, he may give it you (Jn. 15:16; cf. 16:23; emphasis added).

This veil was supported by four pillars which were located in close proximity to God's mercy seat (Ex. 36:36-38; 37:1-9). This pre-figured God's people being positioned very close to Him following their resurrection from the dead,

He who overcomes, I (Christ) will make him a pillar in the temple of My God (the Father; cf. Jn. 20:17), and he shall go out no more (compared to the Levitical priests who came in and out during their rotations while serving in the temple) (Rev. 3:12a; cf. Rev. 20:4-6; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Once all the parts were completed and assembled, the glory of God filled the tabernacle (Ex. 40:34-35). This was manifested as a cloud by day and fire by night (Ex. 40:38). When the

cloud was lifted up from the tabernacle, the nation of Israel knew it was time to leave and journey to a new location (Ex. 40:36). Today, God's people comprise a spiritual household, which is led continually by God's Holy Spirit under the guidance of Jesus Christ (Jn. 13:14),

And **they** (early church members) **continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread** (having meals together), **and in prayers** (Ac. 2:42; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

For here (in this physical world) we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come (at Christ's return).¹⁵ Therefore by him (by Christ's authority, which was delegated from his heavenly Father) **let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God** (Almighty), that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His (Almighty God's) name (Heb. 13:14-15; cf. Ps. 119:108; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Once the tabernacle was completed, the animal sacrifices could commence.

The Book of Leviticus – The Animal Sacrificial System – Taking Responsibility for One's Conduct and Relationship with Almighty God

The book of Leviticus provides detailed instructions for the sacrifice of animals. As mentioned previously, these "clean animals" were a substitute for, and constant reminder of, the sins that each individual commits against Almighty God (cf. Ps. 41:4). By forfeiting a valuable animal as an offering, it emphasized the serious consequences of transgressing God's word. These offerings also pointed to the future sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Burnt offerings, grain offerings, and peace offerings reinforced that

serving God sometimes requires personal sacrifice in one form or another,

Still others (who were serving God) had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment.³⁷ They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented (Heb. 11:36-37; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Personal sacrifice is also required when obeying the Law of Almighty God in this present world because friends, relatives, employers, and unconverted spouses can persecute someone who is trying to live by every word of God (Mt. 4:4),

Do not think that I (Christ) came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword.³⁵ For I have come to set a man against (alienate a man from) his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.³⁶ And a man's foes will be those of his own household (Mt. 10:34-36; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Personal sacrifice, in the form of fasting, is sometimes necessary when an individual's relationship with God has been neglected, or when praying for someone who is experiencing a trial (see study: Fasting for the Right Reason),

The effective fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.¹⁷ Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months.¹⁸ And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit (Jas. 5:16b-18).

When God's people sacrifice, in any of the above-mentioned ways, it is pleasing to Him like the burnt offering with its sweet-savor (smell),

And the priest shall burn all on the altar as a **burnt sacrifice**, an offering made by fire, a **sweet** (soothing or pleasing) **aroma to the Lord** (Lev. 1:9; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

The burnt offering was given as a gift because none of it was returned to the worshiper. In other words, the individual did what they felt was necessary without expecting anything in return. The entire burnt offering was consumed by fire as it belonged to God (Rom. 12:1),

And which of you, having a servant plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come at once and sit down to eat?'⁸ But (instead) will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink?'⁹ Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded? I (Christ) think not.¹⁰ So likewise you, **when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do'** (Lk. 17:7-10; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Because the entire burnt offering was consumed by fire, it confirmed that when Christ died and was buried for three days and three nights, he was not simultaneously alive in the spirit realm during the same period of time. The term "mystical union" is used by some religious groups to explain that Christ continued to exist in the spirit realm while his physical body was dead and buried on earth.

Christ fulfilled what the burnt offering pictured because he completed this aspect of his work under tortuous conditions (Isa.52:13-15; 53:1-12),

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life (as) a ransom for many (Mk. 10:45; cf. Heb. 9:11-14; 10:5-7; Php. 2:5-8; Ed. note in parenthesis).

During the First Covenant when someone offered a burnt offering, they were to place their hands on the head of the animal. This pictured "trusting" that the offering would be accepted by God,

Then he shall put his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and **it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him** (Lev. 1:4; emphasis added)

Therefore, one aspect of the burnt offering prefigured Christ being offered on behalf of every sinner, and then accepted by Almighty God as their substitute; thus, fulfilling the hope of every repentant sinner. Anyone who does not trust that Christ was resurrected and accepted by his heavenly Father, has no hope of everlasting life,

And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is vain and your faith (trust in God's word) is also vain (empty) (1Cor. 15:14; Ed. notes in parentheses).

As God does not expect people to offer more than they are able, He accepted a number of different "clean animals" as burnt offerings (Lev. 1:3-14). This way no one would be burdened beyond their means. However, those who had more were expected to offer more. This principle is found throughout God's word,

For everyone to whom much is given (by God), from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask more (Lk. 12:48b; Ed. note in parenthesis).

The next offering mentioned in the book of Leviticus was the grain offering. As the primary

use of grain was for bread and cakes, it pointed to the bread of life, Jesus Christ,

And Jesus said to them, **'I am the bread of life** (everlasting). He who comes to me (through Almighty God leading an individual to repentance; cf. Rom. 2:4; Jn. 6:44, 65; Ac. 2:39; Ps. 65:4) shall never hunger (cf. Mt. 4:4), and he who believes in me shall never thirst (cf. Jn. 7:37-39) (Jn. 6:35; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

I (Christ) **am the bread of life.** ⁴⁹ Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. ⁵⁰ This is the bread which comes down from heaven; that one may eat of it and not die (in the sense of everlasting death). ⁵¹ I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is my flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world (Jn. 6:48-51; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Therefore, various aspects of the grain offering would symbolize Christ's ministry to serve everyone who is separated from Almighty God, because of their sins. Christ achieved this by giving up his own life as a sinless sacrifice (Heb. 4:15; cf. 9:22),

But your iniquities (sins; cf. 1Jn. 3:4) have separated you from your God: and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear (Isa. 59:2; Ed. note in parenthesis).

The grain offering symbolized giving up one's substance to Almighty God and it represented Christ who gave up everything in service to his heavenly Father (cf. Lk. 21:1-4). To obtain fine flour, it has to be beaten, or "milled"; just as Christ was beaten beyond recognition by those who were serving the "god of this world" (cf. 2Cor. 4:4),

Just as many were astonished at you (Christ), so **his visage** (appearance) **was marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men** (Isa. 52:14; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

But **he** (Christ) **was wounded** (pierced through) **for our transgressions** (sins), **he was bruised** (crushed) **for our iniquities** (sins); the chastisement for our peace (reconciliation with Almighty God) was upon him, and **by his stripes** (blows that cut in) **we are healed** (upon repentance and baptism). ⁶ All we (sinners) like sheep have gone astray; we have turned ever one, to his own way (of doing things contrary to God's word; cf. Prov. 14:12; 16:25); and the Lord has laid on him (caused to land on him) the iniquity (sin) of us all (Isa. 53:5-6; Ed. notes in parentheses).

The instrument that Satan used to beat Christ beyond recognition was the Roman army,

Then he (Pilate) released Barabbas to them; and when he had scourged (flogged with a Roman scourge) Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified (Mt. 27:26; Ed. notes in parentheses).

The Romans used a scourge that would tear into flesh and, with enough force, cut down to bone. This is exactly what happened to Christ as the next prophecy confirms. The soldiers who scourged Christ are described as being like strong bulls, raging lions, and dogs because of the severity of their punishment,

Many bulls (reference to the Roman soldiers) have surrounded me (Christ); strong bulls of Bashan have encircled me. ¹³ They gape at me with their mouths, as a raging and roaring lion. ¹⁴ I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it has melted within me (in the midst of my bowels). ¹⁵ My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my

tongue clings to my jaws; you have brought me to the dust of death. ¹⁶For dogs have surrounded me; the assembly of the wicked has enclosed me. They pierce my hands and my feet; ¹⁷**I can count all my bones. They look and stare at me** (Ps. 22:12-17; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Christ's beating is also represented by green heads of grain that were beaten and then roasted on the fire. This offering during the early barley harvest pictured Christ as the firstfruits of God's spiritual harvest (cf. Lev. 23:10-14),

If you offer a grain offering of your firstfruits to the Lord, **you shall offer for the grain offering of your firstfruits green heads of grain roasted on the fire, grain beaten from full heads** (Lev. 2:14; emphasis added).

But **now Christ** is risen from the dead, and **has become the firstfruits** of those who have fallen asleep (died) (1Cor. 15:20; emphasis added).

But each one in his own order: **Christ the firstfruits**, afterward those who are Christ's at his coming (1Cor. 15:23' emphasis added).

Another aspect of the grain offering emphasized that Christ was only able to complete the difficult work he was given through the power of Almighty God's Spirit, which was symbolized by oil that was mixed with the fine flour of the grain offering (cf. Ps. 89:20; Heb. 1:9),

And you shall **put oil on it** (the grain offering) ... (Lev. 2:15a; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

And **the Holy Spirit descended** in bodily form like a dove **upon him** (Christ; cf. Lk. 3:21), and a voice came from heaven which said, 'you are

My beloved son; in you I am well pleased (Lk. 3:22; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Frankincense was also added to the grain offering and is associated with Christ, who was born to become the fulfillment of the grain offering,

And when they had come into the house (not a stable), they saw the young child (Christ as a young boy; cf. Mt. 2:16) with Mary his mother, and fell down and worshiped him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to him: gold, **frankincense**, and myrrh (Mt. 2:11; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

The grain offering was to consist of "unleavened" bread, cake, or wafers. This is because leaven is a symbol often associated with sin, and Christ was without sin (cf. Mt. 16:6; 1Cor. 5:8),

For we do not have a High Priest (Christ) who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted (tested and tried) as we are, **yet without sin** (Heb. 4:15; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Jesus Christ and those who follow his example of obedience to God's word (Mt. 4:4), are compared to salt because salt is a preservative and improves flavor. This pictures God's people striving to preserve the Law of Almighty God, and using it to improve the lives of others (cf. Mt. 5:13; Mk. 9:49-50; Col. 4:6),

And every offering of your grain offering you shall season with salt; you shall not allow the salt of the covenant of your God to be lacking from your grain offering... (Lev. 2:13a).

Aaron and his sons, who were part of the First Covenant priesthood, were to eat some of the

grain offering. This foreshadowed God's spiritual priesthood of the Second Covenant figuratively imbibing Christ through the unleavened bread that is to be eaten each year during the Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread,

And what is left of the grain offering shall be Aaron's and his sons'. It is a most holy offering of the offerings to the Lord made by fire (Lev. 2:10).

And as they (Christ's disciples) were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed it (gave thanks for it) and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body' (figuratively-speaking) (Mt. 26:28; cf. Mk. 14:22; 1Cor. 11:24; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Almighty God created the grain offering as a memorial, or reminder, of Christ's sacrifice on behalf of all sinners. Therefore, once Christ fulfilled all aspects of this offering by his death, God's people are to remember the sufferings he endured once a year as they observe the Passover (see study: Why Passover, Not Easter, Should Be Central to Christianity),

And **the priest shall burn it** (the grain offering) **as a memorial** made by fire, a sweet aroma to the Lord (Lev. 2:2b; 9, 16; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

And he (Christ) took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them (his disciples), saying, 'This is my body which is given for you; **do this** (a command to continue observing the Passover) **in remembrance of me**' (Lk. 22:19; Ed. notes in parentheses, emphasis added).

The next offering was the peace offering which pictured sinners being at peace with Almighty God as opposed to being in conflict with Him due to their sins, which create a wall of separation

(cf. Isa. 59:2). This peace was made possible through Christ's sacrifice,

And by him (Christ) to reconcile all things to Himself (Almighty God; cf. Col. 1:19), by him (Christ), whether things on earth or things in heaven, **having made peace through the blood of his *cross** (*SGD 4716; an upright "stake", esp. a pointed one, used as such in fences and palisades).²¹ And you (sinners), who once were alienated (because of sin) and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now he has reconciled²² in the body of his flesh through death, to present you (repentant sinners) holy, and blameless and irreproachable in His (Almighty God's) sight (Col. 1:20-22; cf. Rom. 5:1; Eph. 2:17-18; 5:27; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

There are vital keys that identify the peace offering with Christ. One of these states that the offering cannot have any physical blemish, which pre-figured Christ who was without blemish, spiritually-speaking. In other words, he was without sin (Lev. 3:1, 6),

For such a High Priest was fitting for us (Christ), who is holy (set apart by Almighty God), harmless (innocent), undefiled (by sin), separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens (Heb. 7:26; 4:15; Ed. notes in parenthesis).

How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit (of Almighty God) offered himself without spot (blemish) to God... (Heb. 9:14a; cf. 1Pet. 1:19; Ed. notes in parentheses).

The blood from the peace offering was to be sprinkled on the altar, which pictured Christ's blood being shed for sinners allowing them to be reconciled and at peace with their heavenly Father (Lev. 3:2, 8, 13),

Let us (repentant sinners) draw near (to Almighty God in prayer and thanksgiving) with a true heart in full assurance of faith (trusting God's word), having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience (repentant attitude because of Christ's shed blood on our behalf) ... (Heb. 10:22a; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Like the burnt offering, the individual presenting the peace offering placed his hand on the head of the animal in the hope it would be accepted by Almighty God (Lev. 3:8). This act pre-figured the prayers and actions of God's people being accepted by Him because Christ's sacrifice removed the veil that previously separated them,

Therefore, brethren, having boldness (confidence) to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by a new and living way which he consecrated for us, **through the veil**, that is, his flesh (Heb. 10:19-20; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Almighty God had the veil inside the temple at Jerusalem torn from top to bottom following Christ's death. This was to show that repentant sinners could now have access to Him in the name and by the authority of His son Jesus Christ (Jn. 15:16; 16:23),

And Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and breathed his last. ³⁸ Then **the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom** (Mk. 15:37-38; cf. Ex. 26:31-33; emphasis added).

The final injunction regarding the peace offering involved the consumption of blood and fat (Lev. 3:17). As there can be no life without the circulation of blood, and as Almighty God is the only Life-Giver, no one else has the authority to take blood in the context of murdering someone, or consuming blood as part of a pagan worship

system (see: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blood_ritual).

Fat represents an increase and, in a spiritual sense, growth which can only occur as a result of God's Holy Spirit adding to an individual's understanding of His truth. Human effort alone will not result in spiritual growth or increase; hence the command not to consume fat. In other words, do not think it is by human efforts alone that someone's understanding of God's truth will increase (Zech. 4:6),

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ... (2Pet. 3:18a).

I (Paul) planted, Apollos watered, **but God gave the increase** (1Cor. 3:6; cf. Zech. 4:6; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but **our sufficiency is from God** (2Cor. 3:5; cf. Jn. 15:5; emphasis added).

The next offering was the sin offering, and unlike the burnt offering there was no allowance made for the sinner's financial position. In other words, even if the guilty party was poor, they had to provide a goat or lamb (Lev. 4:28, 32). In contrast, with a burnt offering the poor could bring a pigeon or turtledove (Lev. 1:14). The main reason for this difference was to stress, through physical offerings, the serious consequences of sin which necessitated Christ's sacrifice. Therefore, the details regarding how this offering was to be handled mirrored events surrounding Christ's death,

The whole bull he (the priest) shall **carry outside the camp** to a clean place, where the ashes are poured out, and **burn it on wood with fire...** (Lev. 4:12a; emphasis added).

For **the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary** by the high priest **for sin, are burned outside the camp.** ¹² **Therefore Jesus also,** that he might sanctify (set apart for God's service) the people with his own blood, **suffered outside the gate** (Heb. 13:11-12; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

As Christ's shed blood completely removes the sins of repentant individuals, and as Almighty God uses the number seven to denote completeness, the blood of the sin offering was sprinkled in front of the veil seven times picturing the complete removal of any sin that was committed,

Then the priest shall dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle it **seven times** before the Lord, in front of the veil (Lev. 4:17; emphasis added).

This blood was also applied to the horns of the altar (Lev. 4:18, 25). As horns are used sometimes to represent positions of leadership in the spirit realm (1Sam. 2:10; Ps. 18:2; 132:17; Dan. 7:8, 11, 20-21; 8:5, 8-9, 12, 21-22), the blood of Christ would cover the sins of any leaders within that realm providing they willingly repent. It also implied that if any spirit-leaders rebelled against the Law of Almighty God, they would be held responsible for sins committed by anyone under their influence. For instance, Satan and the fallen host are ultimately responsible for the sins of mankind (Jn. 8:44, 47; see study: Atonement – Day of Covering).

The next section of scripture is replete with symbolic language describing four powerful leaders in Satan's government who cause havoc for some of God's people,

And I (Zechariah) lifted my eyes and saw and behold **four horns!** ¹⁹ And I said to the angel who talked with me, "What are these?" And he answered me, "**These are the horns**

(kingdoms or powers) **which have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem.**" ²⁰ Then the Lord showed me four smiths. ²¹ And I said, "What are these coming to do?" He answered, "These are the horns which scattered Judah, so that no man raised his head; and these have come to terrify them, to cast down the horns of the nations who lifted up their horns against the land of Judah to scatter it" (Zech. 1:18-21; RSV; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

The next scriptures show that there are faithful leaders in the spirit realm as well as rebellious ones, and eventually all evil spirit-beings will be dealt with,

I (God) said to the boastful, 'Do not deal boastfully,' and **to the wicked, 'Do not lift up the horn. ⁵ Do not lift up your horn on high; do not speak with a stiff neck** (insolent pride)' (Ps. 75:4-5; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

All the horns of the wicked I (God) will also cut off, but **the horns of the righteous shall be exalted** (Ps. 75:10; Jer. 48:25; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Going back to the symbolism associated with the sin offering, the High Priest would act on behalf of the people (Lev. 4:20, 26, 31, 35), just as Jesus Christ did when he offered himself on behalf of every sinner. However, as Christ is now the High Priest that cannot die, he is able to act as the Mediator between every sinner and Almighty God on a permanent basis (Heb. 8:1-6). This is extremely important because even repentant human beings still sin from time to time, due to their weaknesses which are exacerbated by Satan's influence (2Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2; Rev. 12:9). Therefore, the animal sacrificial system with its physical High Priest could never represent a final solution to the ongoing problem of sin. This is why Christ's

sacrifice, as foreshadowed in the First Covenant sacrificial system, was the answer. His death would provide the ultimate solution for the removal of sin. How? Again, following Christ's death and resurrection, he would act as the Mediator providing ongoing forgiveness when individuals repent of sin. Also, Christ's role as King of kings and Lord of lords would enable him to deal with the author of sin once and for all. This will involve the permanent removal and judgment of Satan at a future date (Jn. 16:11; Rev. 20:1-2, 7-10; see study: Atonement – Day of Covering),

For **the law** (of animal sacrifices), having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, **can never with these same sacrifices**, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect (because they continue to be influenced by Satan's values; 2Cor. 4:4; cf. Eph. 2:2; 6:12). ² For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purged (cleansed of sin), would have no more consciousness (SGD 4893; remembrance) of sins. ³ But **in those sacrifices, there is a reminder of sins** every year. ⁴ For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins (on a permanent basis) (Heb. 10:1-4; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Following on from the sin offering, the trespass offering dealt primarily with offenses resulting in harm to others (Lev. 6:1-7). Therefore it stressed the "cause and effect relationship" between the offender and their victim. As the second great commandment deals with love toward your neighbor, any action that transgresses this command is considered a sin (Mt. 22:36-40). God then provided a few examples but these were not intended to describe every situation that may, or may not, occur between people. The first trespass is

withholding evidence that might assist in solving a crime. In a case like this, if the witness does not testify, it could result in the death of an individual accused of a capital offense. Therefore, it is a serious matter,

A man should have come forward to give evidence when he heard the formal adjuration, having seen the incident or known the facts; but he has not spoken out, and so bears the consequences of his fault (iniquity) (Lev. 5:1; The Jerusalem Bible; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Another trespass involves the careless handling of body fluids, or dead bodies, which can result in the transmission of harmful diseases. Some of these diseases end up causing the death of many people (Lev. 5:2-3). Therefore, this negligent behavior is regarded as a serious offense by God (see: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Contagious_disease). The rapid spread of Ebola has been linked to family members in West Africa being exposed to the corpse of their deceased relative (see: www.washingtonpost.com/...west-africa.../fc260920-4...).

We can trespass with our mouth, which is why God does not take frivolous statements lightly (Lev. 5:4-5). Because some people are proud, they can make boastful claims to appear more important to others who are listening. Alternatively, some people blurt out statements without giving much thought to what they are saying, or the impact it may have on other people's feelings. Therefore, God expects His people to think carefully about what they are going to say before they open their mouth. Failure to do this can be harmful to those who hear these statements, or anyone who takes action based on someone else's ill-conceived verbiage (Ps. 119:150; cf. Eze. 13:3),

But I (Christ) say to you that for every idle word men speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. ³⁷ For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned (Mt. 12:36-37; Ed. note in parenthesis).

But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one (Mt. 5 :37).

The next section in Leviticus confirms that God did not intend the nation of ancient Israel to have prisons. Instead, He expected criminals to restore what was stolen and, in many cases, this included adding one-fifth to the value of what had been taken,

If a person sins and commits a trespass against the Lord by lying to his neighbor (deceiving his associate) about what was delivered to him for safekeeping, or about a pledge (an entrusted security), or about a robbery, or if he has extorted from his neighbor, ³ or if he has found what was lost and lies concerning it, and swears falsely (i.e. keeps it for himself) – in any one of these things that a man may do in which he sins: ⁴ then it shall be, because he has sinned and is guilty, that he shall restore (return) what he has stolen, or the thing which he has deceitfully obtained, or what was delivered to him for safekeeping, or the lost thing which he found, ⁵ or all that about which he has sworn falsely. He shall restore its full value, **add one-fifth more to it, and give it to whomever it belongs**, on the day of his trespass offering (Lev. 6:2-5; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Not only was restitution to a neighbor required, but also toward God. In other words, if someone broke the first great commandment by disobeying God's instructions, they were to restore and add one-fifth,

If a person commits a trespass, and sins unintentionally in regard to the holy things of the Lord (cf. Lev. 22:14), then he shall bring to the Lord as his trespass offering a ram without blemish from the flocks, with your valuation in shekels of silver according to the shekel of the sanctuary, as a trespass offering. ¹⁶ And he shall make restitution for the harm that he has done in regard to the holy thing, and shall **add one-fifth to it and give it to the priest**. So the priest shall make atonement for him with the ram of the trespass offering, and it shall be forgiven him (Lev. 5:15-16; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

When someone sins unintentionally against the Law of Almighty God, that person is still guilty, and the punishment is everlasting death (Lev. 5:17; Rom. 6:23; 1Jn. 3:4). There are no exceptions. Consequently, it is foolish to think that sinning is excusable if it is done in ignorance. This misconception is often based on the fact that God does not punish everyone the moment they sin. In other words, it is assumed that God does not view sins done in ignorance as being that serious, but there is no such distinction in God's word (Mt. 4:4). Everyone still dies eventually because they have sinned in one form or another. The only hope of everlasting life is the forgiveness of sins provided by Christ's shed blood, whether those sins were done intentionally or not (Heb. 9:22; 1Cor. 15:17-19),

Therefore, just as through one man (Adam) sin entered the world, and (everlasting) death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned (cf. Mt. 26:41; Mk. 14:38) – ¹³ For until the law (was given to the nation of Israel) sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law (therefore the Law of Almighty God always existed even though many break it in ignorance). ¹⁴ Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the

likeness of the transgression of Adam... (Rom. 5:12-14a; cf. Mt. 4:4; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Following the details for each of the offerings, God gave specific instructions to His priests so that every aspect was carried out in an orderly manner (1Cor. 14:33). When reviewing the burnt offering, God stressed that the fire was never to be extinguished. The symbolism associated with this command was extremely important because this was the fire that God initiated, and it represented the power of His Holy Spirit in the midst of His people. Therefore, as Almighty God is eternal, so is the power of His Holy Spirit which emanates from Him,

A perpetual fire shall burn on the altar; it shall never go out (Lev. 6:13).

Again, this was the fire that came from God and was meant to burn continually. Therefore, the priests would have to remain vigilant and add fuel when needed,

And fire came out from before the Lord and consumed the burnt offering and the fat on the altar... (Lev. 9:24a).

Anyone who took this instruction lightly would be in serious trouble. Unfortunately, this occurred when two of Aaron's sons became intoxicated and allowed this fire to be quenched, or extinguished (cf. Lev. 10:8-9). When they awakened from their drunken stupor and realized the fire had gone out, they resorted to their own means to reignite it and were killed as a result,

Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, and **offered profane fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded** them. ²So fire went out from the Lord and devoured them, and they died before the Lord (Lev. 10:1-2; emphasis added).

This command from God is still in effect today because anyone who has received God's Holy Spirit can lose it through neglect, which is a very serious matter (cf. Heb. 6:4-6),

Do not quench the Spirit (1Thes. 5:19). Not everyone who says to me (Christ), 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father in heaven. ²² Many will say to me in that day (of judgment), 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name, cast out demons in your name, and done many wonders in your name?' ²³ And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; **depart from me, you who practice lawlessness!**' (Mt. 7:21-23; cf. 1Jn. 3:4; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

So he (Christ) said to him (rich young ruler), 'Why do you call me (Christ) good (in the ultimate sense of goodness and perfection)? No one is good but One, that is, God (Almighty). But **if you want to enter into life** (everlasting), **keep the commandments** (Mt. 19:17; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

...But he who endures to the end (obeying every word of God; cf. Mt. 4:4) will be saved (Mt. 10:22b; 24:13).

Next, God reviewed the sin offering which the priests could eat after it was cooked (Lev. 6:25-26). God's priesthood consuming the sin offering pre-figured the Second Covenant priesthood eating unleavened bread every Passover, which symbolized Christ's broken body given on behalf of every sinner,

And when he (Christ) had given thanks, he broke it (unleavened bread) and said, '**Take, eat; this is my body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of me**' (1Cor. 11:24; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

However, the sin offering presented on the Day of Atonement was not to be eaten by the priests (Lev. 6:30). Instead, its blood was taken into the Most Holy Place. This foreshadowed Christ's shed blood being accepted by Almighty God as the means through which every repentant sinner can be forgiven and reconciled (Ac. 2:38; cf. Heb. 9:22). This action on the Day of Atonement confirms that the goat, sometimes referred to as Azazel, did not represent Jesus Christ (Lev. 16:10). Instead, Azazel represented a spirit-being that was sent away from Almighty God due to sin (Isa. 14:12-15),

This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence (of Almighty God) **behind the veil**,²⁰ **where the forerunner has entered** (foreshadowed by the blood of the sin offering on the Day of Atonement), **even Jesus**, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek (Heb. 6:19-20; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

The Levitical priests were to maintain a high standard of cleanliness which included washing clothing and vessels that had flesh or blood on them (Lev. 6:27-28). This had practical health benefits, but also pointed to the Second Covenant priesthood that was "washed" and cleansed" of their sin through Christ's sacrifice (Ac. 22:16; 1Cor. 6:11; Rev. 1:5; 7:14). This is memorialized each year by the symbols of the New Testament Passover. One of these is the footwashing ceremony,

Peter said to him (Christ), 'You shall never wash my feet!' Jesus answered him, '**If I do not wash you, you have no part with me**' (Jn. 13:8; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

If I (Christ), then, your Lord and teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one

another's feet (Jn. 13:14; Ed. note in parenthesis).

The priests could also consume the breast and right thigh associated with the trespass, grain, and peace offering, all of which pictured different aspects of Christ's work (Lev. 7:6, 9-10; 14-15; cf. 7:31, 33-36). When Jesus Christ died on a stake outside Jerusalem, *he ceased to exist* immediately and remained dead until Almighty God resurrected him. This is why the Levitical priests were to consume the offerings, which pictured Christ's death, the same day they were offered. Sadly, some teach that Christ continued to exist in the heavenly realm during the three days his physical body was in a tomb. This is a lie, and it shows an ignorance of God's command regarding the sacrifice being consumed the same day it was offered,

The flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offering for thanksgiving **shall be eaten the same day it is offered. He** (the priest) **shall not leave any of it until morning** (Lev. 7:15; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

The spirit of the voluntary offering, or vow, pictured Jesus Christ who volunteered to give his life up as a ransom for every sinner (Mk. 10:45; Jn. 10:18; 1Tim. 2:5-6). If someone made a vow to God, or a voluntary offering, the priest could consume it until the third day (Lev. 7:16-17). On the third day it had to be completely burned up. This had health benefits as it protected the priest from any food borne illness. However, its primary purpose was to picture the only sign that Christ would give to prove that he came from Almighty God and would return to Him three days and nights after his death. In other words, Christ's body would not remain in the grave for more than three days and nights. As scripture confirms, the mortal body of Jesus Christ would not see corruption (Ps. 16:10; Ac. 2:27-35;

13:37). Instead, Christ's body would be transformed by the end of the third day,

For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth (i.e. in the grave) (Mt. 12:40; Ed. note in parenthesis).

God's people, who are flesh and blood when Christ returns, will be transformed in the same manner when a trumpet in heaven is sounded, Now this I (Paul) say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption.⁵¹ Behold, I tell you a mystery (hidden truth): We (God's people throughout the ages) shall not all sleep (remain dead forever), but we shall all be changed –⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye (just as Christ was transformed at his resurrection from the dead), at the last trumpet (announcing Christ's return). For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed (1Cor. 15:50-52; Ed. notes in parentheses).

For this we (Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy; cf. 1Thes. 1:1) say to you (brethren in Thessalonica) by the word of the Lord, that we (God's people) who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep (already dead).¹⁶ For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. The dead in Christ will rise first.¹⁷ Then **we who are alive and remain** (in a flesh and blood body) **shall be caught up** (transformed) **together with them** (who died in times past) **in the clouds** (symbol associated with other spirit-beings; see study: Christ and the Pillar of Cloud) to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord (1Thes. 4:15-17; cf. Rev. 19:7; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

As pictured by the voluntary offering, Christ volunteered to offer himself as a sacrifice for sin. He was not forced to do this by anyone, including his heavenly Father. In return, his Father promised to raise him from the dead three days and nights following his death (cf. Ac. 2:23-24, 32),

Therefore my Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it (SGD 2983 – receive it back) again.¹⁸ No one takes it from me, but **I lay it down of myself**. I have power (SGD 1849 -freedom; power of choice) to lay it down, and I have power (SGD 1849 – freedom; power of choice) to take it (SGD 2983 – receive it back) again. This command I have received from my Father (Jn. 10:17-18; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

In the Second Covenant period, if there is a question about whether or not someone is clean in the context of sin, that individual is to take whatever action is necessary to make sure any uncleanness is dealt with before approaching God in prayer, or performing acts of service to Him. This was pre-figured by the command in Leviticus 7:19-21, and confirmed in the following New Testament reference,

Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you,²⁴ leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift (Mt. 5:23-24).

The First Covenant priesthood was washed and clothed according to specific physical instructions before they could serve the nation (Lev. 8:1-13). In contrast, the Second Covenant priest's clothing and washing is spiritual. For instance, as the Levitical priests were clothed according to a specific sequence, so too were the priests of the Second Covenant, but not in

physical terms as the following scripture confirms,

Stand therefore, having **girded your waist with truth** (instead of the sash in Lev. 8:7), having **put on the breastplate of righteousness** (instead of the physical breastplate in Lev. 8:8) (Eph. 6:14; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

As stated in Ephesians 6:14, God's servants during the Second Covenant are not bound with a sash, but with God's truth. Christ described this in the following scripture,

But he (Christ) answered and said, 'It is written, **Man shall not live by bread alone, but every word that proceeds from the mouth of God**' (Mt. 4:4; cf. Ps. 119:160; Jn. 17:17; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Also, in Ephesians 6:14 there is a description of God's servants putting on the breastplate of righteousness. As the Levitical breastplate was placed over the priest's heart, the Second Covenant priests are to have righteousness close to their heart, or inner being (cf. Jer. 31:33). According to God's word, righteousness is defined by the Law of Almighty God. Therefore it is incongruous for anyone in the Christian world to teach that the Law of Almighty God is no longer applicable,

For **all Your** (Almighty God's) **commandments are righteousness** (Ps. 119:172b; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Instead of wearing a turban on their head (Lev. 8:9, 13), the Second Covenant priests are to put on the helmet of salvation. This is to picture protecting one's mind from anything that could cause harm, spiritually-speaking,

And take the helmet of *salvation* (SGD 4992 – message of hope describing how to be saved from everlasting death; Mt. 19:17; cf. Rom. 6:23) ... (Eph. 6:17a; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Therefore, if God's servants allow a false message, or gospel, of salvation into their minds, they are in serious trouble. Sadly, this began to occur during the first century of God's church, and by the third century Christianity no longer resembled the "faith once delivered" by Christ's apostles (Jude 1:3). The apostle Paul was aware of this process and expressed his concern,

I (Paul) marvel that you (God's people) are turning away so soon from Him (Almighty God) who called you in the *grace* of Christ (**unmerited** pardon for sins committed against Almighty God) to a different gospel, which is not another (not of the same kind), but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert (distort) the gospel of Christ (Gal. 1:6-7; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Much of Christianity today is immersed in this false gospel, which is described in the book of Jude as "licentious" or a license to disobey the Law of Almighty God,

For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, **ungodly men, who turn the grace** (forgiveness) **of our God into licentiousness** (a license to disobey) and deny the only Lord God (Almighty) and our Lord Jesus Christ (Jude 1:4; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Going back to the Levitical priests, once they were washed and dressed according to God's instructions, they were anointed with oil along with the tabernacle and all that was in it (Lev. 8:10). This symbolized God's Holy Spirit in His

temple and people. Today, God's temple is not a physical structure with a family of priests sacrificing animals. Instead, it is a body of people seeking to obey Him,

Or do you not know that **your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit** which is in you, which you have (received) from God, and you are not your own (cf. Rom. 1:1)(1Cor. 6:19; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added)?

Do you not know that **you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you** (1Cor. 3:16; emphasis added)?

And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For **you are the temple of the living God...** (2Cor. 6:16a; emphasis added).

As Christ is pictured at the right hand of his heavenly Father following his resurrection (Mk. 12:36; 14:62; 16:19), the Levitical priests had blood applied to the right side of their ears, thumbs, and toes (Lev. 8:23-24). This pictured Christ's blood being shed on their behalf as it was applied to these body parts. It also confirmed that the priests were not better than anyone else in the nation because they needed Christ's shed blood to cover their sins like any other citizen. Therefore, God provided no grounds for elevating the priesthood above others. Christ taught this same lesson to his disciples,

But Jesus called them (his disciples) to himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them."²⁶ Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant.²⁷ And whoever desires to be first among you let him be your slave (Mt. 20:25-27; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Finally, Aaron and his sons were to remain inside the temple for seven days prior to commencing their service in the community (Lev. 8:33-36). This foreshadowed God's priesthood today being separated from their normal abode and community as they observe God's Holy Days; two of which consist of seven consecutive days (see: God's Holy Days).

Once the First Covenant priests began officiating in the temple, they were held to the same standard as other members in the nation. Therefore, if they broke any commandment worthy of the death penalty, they were duly executed. As mentioned previously in this study, Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu died as a result of breaking God's law regarding the fire burning continually on the altar (Lev. 10:1-2; cf. Ex. 30:9; Lev. 6:9, 12-13). Sadly, priests from various denominations commit crimes and the religious organizations they represent often attempt to cover these up instead of reporting them to the appropriate authorities so that justice can be served. Today, there are many documented cases of priests sexually abusing young boys, and according to the Law of Almighty God this behavior warrants the death penalty (Lev. 18:22; cf. 18:29; "cut off from among their people" means "put to death"). This is an appropriate punishment because the lives of these young people are destroyed by the selfish and violent action of sexual predators disguised as servants of God,

And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.¹⁵ Therefore **it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness**, whose end will be according to their works (2Cor. 11:14-15; emphasis added).

God's ministers, or servants, are not to teach while intoxicated (Lev. 10:9-11). This has spiritual implications based on how God uses the

word "drunk." In other words, if someone is drunk they are usually out of control and will often speak unintelligibly. This can also occur when a minister combines emotional outbursts with inaccurate statements about God's word. In situations like this, a congregation can be "worked up" to receive falsehoods. Whether this is done on purpose or in ignorance, ministers who employ these tactics become tools of the Adversary (1Pet. 5:8). God uses symbolic language to compare this type of spiritual deception with physical drunkenness,

...Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot (false religious system; see study: A Contentious Woman and A Harlot) who sits on many waters (symbol of nations), ² with whom the kings (rulers) of the earth committed fornication (participated in sinful practices), and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication (spiritually permissive and/or erroneous teachings) (Rev. 17:1b-2; cf. 18:3; Ed. notes in parentheses).

From Religious Theory to Practice

The first order of business for the priesthood was to teach the people about foods that could, and could not be eaten (Lev. 11:2; see study: Did the Early Church Teach That the Law of Clean and Unclean Had Been Changed?). Just as there are many plants that are harmful if consumed; so there are various meats that can cause immediate or long-term health problems (see: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trichinosis). For example, Ebola has been linked to the consumption of "bush meat" which consists of various meats that God has prohibited (see: www.washingtonpost.com/.../why-west-african-keep-...). These regulations were given for the health and overall well-being of the population. Equally important, God was teaching His people to discern, on a daily basis, between clean and unclean behavior. In other words, just as they

were to keep unclean foods out of their mouths, so they were to keep unclean thoughts out of their minds,

Do not enter the path of the wicked, and do not walk in the way of evil. ¹⁵ **Avoid it**, do not travel on it; turn away from it and pass on (Prov. 4:14-15; cf. 1Cor. 6:18; emphasis added).

Only meats deemed "clean" by Almighty God were allowed into the temple for use as offerings. As His people comprise the temple of God, it is incongruous that they should allow "unclean" meats into their bodies,

Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which you have from God, and you are not your own? ²⁰ For you were bought at a price (with Christ's shed blood); **therefore glorify God in your body...** (1Cor. 6:19-20a; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Christ's death paved the way for sinners to become "clean." In other words, they were "unclean" because of their sins but Christ's shed blood provided the means for them to be "cleansed of their sins" and reconciled with Almighty God; following repentance and baptism. However, Christ's shed blood did not make animals that are "unclean" suddenly "clean" because animals were not created in the image of God, and cannot be transformed in their minds (Gen. 1:26-27),

And do not be conformed to this world (which God regards as "unclean," spiritually-speaking), but **be transformed by the renewing of your mind**, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God (Rom. 12:2; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Therefore, the only reason for making “unclean” animals “clean” would be if God intended them to become co-heirs with mankind in a resurrection from the dead. According to numerous scriptures, this is not part of God’s plan (cf. Heb. 2:5-8). Consequently, the unclean animals mentioned in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14:3-20 are not to be consumed by mankind. It is a popular misconception that God instituted the law regarding clean and unclean animal consumption only for the Jewish people. This is a convenient way of circumventing the truth and encouraging non-Jewish people to break the Law of Almighty God. In reality, the majority of mankind consumes unclean meat, fish, and shellfish because they are spiritually “unclean” due to the influence of the god of this present world (Jn. 8:44; 2Cor. 4:4; Rev. 12:9).

Another reason for not consuming certain animals is related to the health of our planet’s land and water systems. Removing shellfish negatively affects the health of our oceans which rely upon these creatures to filter water and clean up waste. Also, they are an essential food source for larger sea creatures. Other animals are deemed “unclean” because they reproduce slowly and can easily become extinct if they are consumed by humans.

As mentioned previously, the Law of Almighty God deals with disease transmission and this subject is covered again in the section regarding the handling of clean and unclean animal carcasses in Leviticus 11:24-40. It is because God loves mankind that He provides instructions to aid in healthy living. However, human nature does not respond well to being told what to do, which reflects the spiritual immaturity of both mankind and the fallen host of heaven,

Because the carnal mind (i.e. “human nature”) is enmity (hostile) against God; for it is not

subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be (Rom. 8:7; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Therefore, mankind must learn the hard way and history will continue to repeat itself until the connection is finally made between God’s love for His creation, and the many laws He established for everyone’s ultimate benefit.

For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome (1Jn. 5:3; cf. Jer. 31:33-34).

Following the instructions God gave regarding clean and unclean animals, Leviticus 12 deals with mankind’s physical and spiritual uncleanness. Specifically, ordinances associated with the birth of every human being. As exciting as the birth of a child is, they are still flesh and blood beings that can become ill, and even die. To minimize the latter, God reduced the exposure of newborns to various illnesses by limiting the mother’s activities following childbirth (Lev. 12:4-5). The following quotations illustrate the importance of protecting infants during the first months following their birth,

We know that a newborn’s immune system is not nearly as effective as an adult’s or even an older child’s, and that it takes many months before a new born can fight off infection as well as someone whose immune system is fully matured.

www.babyzone.com/baby/.../newborn-immune-system_65506

Stay away from sick people and make everyone wash their hands before holding your baby. Don’t let strangers touch your baby. Don’t take your newborn outside or let young children visit for at least a month. (www.babyzone.com/baby/.../newborn-immune-system_65506)

During 2012, 48,277 cases of pertussis (whooping cough) were reported to CDC (Centers for Disease Control), including 20 pertussis-related deaths. The majority of deaths occurred among infants younger than 3 months of age. (www.cdc.gov/pertussis/outbreaks/trends.html) Male children were to be circumcised on the eighth day following their birth (Lev. 12:3). This is when the baby's blood can clot. The act itself involved removing only a small portion of flesh when compared to what Christ gave up when all of his flesh was sacrificed for sin,

In him (Christ) you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh (symbolic of ceasing to do things our own carnal way), by the circumcision of Christ (who "put off" his entire physical body), ¹² buried with him in baptism (which follows repentance of sin; cf. Ac. 2:38), in which you also were raised (symbolically) through faith in the working of God (Almighty) who raised him (Christ) from the dead. ¹³ And you, being dead in your trespasses (sins; 1Jn. 3:4) and the un-circumcision of your flesh, He (Almighty God) has made alive together with him (Christ), having forgiven you all trespasses (Col. 2:11-13; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Therefore, the act of circumcision pre-figured Christ humbling himself to the point that he willingly "put off" his mortal body to satisfy the law regarding sin (Heb. 9:22; cf. 5:7-9). By doing this, Christ provided the means through which repentant sinners can be reconciled to Almighty God. Once Christ fulfilled this aspect of the Law of Almighty God, those who willingly obey God are pictured as having a circumcised heart. This means they "put off" their former "body", which lived in rebellion against the Law of Almighty God (Rom. 6:4-6). Therefore, circumcision in the Second Covenant occurs when God the Father leads an individual to

humble themselves and repent of sin (Rom. 2:4b; Ac. 2:39; Jn. 6:44, 65; Ps. 65:4),

But he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and **circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit**, and not in the letter (i.e. not through physical removal of flesh); whose praise is not from men but from God (who weighs our inner thoughts and attitudes) (Rom. 2:29; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Following physical circumcision, the child's mother gave a sin offering as a reminder that mankind is composed of flesh and blood, and every human being will sin sooner or later, resulting in their death (Lev. 12:6; Rom. 3:23; 5:12; 6:23). Technically speaking, the child was conceived in sin because Adam became flesh and blood as a result of his sin, and all children born since are in his form, which is subject to death (1Cor. 15:50; see study: What Change Took Place in Adam and Eve?),

Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and **in sin my mother conceived me** (Ps. 51:5; cf. Rom. 5:12, 18; emphasis added).

For **all have sinned** (Jews and Gentiles) and fall short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

For **there is not a just man on earth** who does good and does not sin (Eccl. 7:20; emphasis added).

Therefore, just as through one man (Adam) sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus **death spread to all men, because all sinned** (Rom. 5:12; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Beginning in the 13th chapter of Leviticus, God provided essential information to assist in diagnosing various diseases and skin

abnormalities. Anyone with a swelling, sore, scab, or bright spot on their skin was to present themselves to a priest for diagnosis. If the individual appeared to be free of any disease, they would be quarantined for seven days as a precaution and for further examination before being allowed to circulate in the community (Lev. 13:1-4). Following seven days, if the sore hadn't changed, the affected person would undergo another seven days of isolation (Lev. 13:5). At the end of this second seven day period of isolation, if the individual's sore had darkened and not spread on the skin his condition was considered non-contagious and he/she could join the community again (Lev. 13:6). Much of this section of scripture would fall under the specialty of Dermatology today (Lev. 13:7- 44). It is important to note that if someone had an infectious skin ailment, they were to remain isolated from others until the infection was declared "clean." In essence, the infected person had to sacrifice their normal family and work activities in order to protect others. Therefore, they were fulfilling the second great commandment (Mt. 22:37-40). In order to cover the sins of mankind and the fallen host of heaven, Christ became "sin" or "unclean", figuratively speaking, even though he committed no sin (cf. 2Cor. 5:21). In this sense, he lived a difficult life and was often isolated from others just like a leprous person (Lev. 13:45-46),

He (Christ) is despised and rejected (forsaken) by men, **a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.** And **we** (mankind) **hid, as it were, our faces from him;** he was despised and we did not esteem him (Isa. 53:3; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

For we do not have a High Priest (Jesus Christ) who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but **was in all points tempted** (SGD 3985/3987; tried and tested) **as we are,** yet

without sin (Heb. 4:15; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

The term "leprous" is also used Biblically to describe mold, fungus, or similar infestations in garments (Lev. 13:47-59). In principle, this could be inclusive of clothes affected by moths, or a carpet beetle infestation which would be managed by "pest control specialists" in today's society (see: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/carpet_beetle).

In the sense that mold, fungus, or other infestations can gradually take over a garment until it is completely destroyed, so leaven will grow in a lump of dough until it is entirely saturated. The apostle Paul used this process to describe how sins works in an individual's life,

.... Do you not know that a little leaven (symbol of sin in Paul's analogy) leavens the whole lump (of dough)? ⁷ Therefore purge out (clean out) the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened (through forgiveness of sin, following repentance – made possible by Christ's shed blood; cf. Heb. 9:22). For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us (1Cor. 5:6b-7; cf. Gal. 5:9; Ed. notes in parentheses).

As a leper during the First Covenant could not be restored to his community without a sacrifice being offered (Lev. 14:1-25), a repentant sinner during the Second Covenant cannot be restored to God's spiritual community without believing that Christ's sacrifice was necessary for the reconciliation of every sinner to Almighty God (Jn. 1:29),

Jesus said to him (Thomas), 'I am the way, the truth, and the life (everlasting). **No one comes to the Father except through** (as a result of) **me** (Christ's sacrifice) (Jn. 14:6; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Therefore, the prescribed animal sacrifice for a leper, who is declared "clean" or "cured", would symbolically represent Christ's sacrifice which cleanses, and cures, every repentant sinner,

Then the priest shall command to take for him who is to be cleansed (of leprosy) two living and clean birds, cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop (Lev. 14:4; Ed. note in parenthesis).

The first bird was killed in an earthen vessel over running water (Lev. 14:4-5). The first bird symbolized a spirit-being who would give up his position in the heavenly realm to become a flesh and blood "earthen vessel" for the purpose of being sacrificed to atone, or cover, the sins of the world (Jn. 1:29),

And (the spirit-being known previously as) the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father... (Jn. 1:14a; Ed. note in parenthesis).

As the earthen vessel was situated over running water, it associates Christ with the action of his Father's Holy Spirit,

For the Lamb (symbol of Christ) who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to **living fountains of waters**... (Rev. 7:17a; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

But whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him (as a result of Christ's sacrifice) will never thirst. But **the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life** (Jn. 4:14; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

But if the Spirit of Him (Almighty God) who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life

to your mortal bodies through His (Almighty God's) Spirit which dwells in you (Rom. 8:11; Ed. notes in parentheses).

The hyssop, used in the sacrifice of one of the living birds, is also tied to Jesus Christ's death (Lev. 14:4),

Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, **put it on hyssop**, and put it to his (Christ's) mouth (Jn. 19:29; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Also, cedar wood pointed to the wooden stake that Christ was nailed to (Lev. 14:4),

And being found in appearance as a man, he (Christ) humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the **cross** (SGD 4716; an **upright stake**, esp. a pointed one, used as such in fences and palisades) (Php. 2:8; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

God used the term "scarlet" in Leviticus 14:4 to denote "sin" as the following scripture confirms,

Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord, **though your sins are like scarlet**, they shall be as white as snow; **though they are red like crimson**, they shall be as wool (Isa. 1:18; emphasis added).

Therefore, the symbols associated with the leper's offering are all tied to the work of Jesus Christ, specifically his shed blood to cover the sins of the world (Jn. 1:29; cf. Heb. 9:22). This is why the cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop were all dipped in the blood of the slain bird. The second "clean" bird was also covered by the blood of Christ. This bird was released alive as the Azazel goat was released during the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:10, 21; see study:

Atonement – Day of Covering). As the bird that was slain represented Jesus Christ, and as Christ was a spirit-being prior to his human birth, the bird that was released would also have represented a spirit-being who was considered “clean”, at some point in the past, but later committed sin. If the bird that was released never committed sin, it would not have been dipped in the blood of the slain bird. In the following scripture we see a spirit-being that was faithful and obedient to Almighty God, but later changed and rebelled,

You (Lucifer; cf. Isa. 14:12) **were** an anointed cherub who covers; I (Almighty God) established (appointed) you; you **were** on the holy mountain (symbol of government) of God; you walked back and forth in the midst of *fiery stones* (symbol associated with God’s law and commandments; cf. Dt. 33:2). ¹⁵ **You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity** (sin; cf. 1Jn. 3:4) **was found in you** (Eze. 28:14-15ff; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Christ pointed out, in Luke 10:18, that Satan was removed from the presence of Almighty God because of his sinful conduct. When this occurred, he no longer had direct contact with his heavenly Father. In this respect, Satan’s separation is similar to that of a physical leper and as lepers can be cleansed by the blood of Christ so can Satan, if he repents of his sins, because Almighty God is not willing that anyone perish (2Pet. 3:9). Satan’s opportunity to be forgiven was foreshadowed by the bird released after being dipped in the blood of the sacrificed bird. This truth is also reflected in the parable of the “prodigal son,” which confirms Almighty God’s hope that Satan will repent. Should this occur, Christ’s shed blood would cover his sins and he would no longer be a spiritual leper (Lk. 15:11-32). In this scenario, what he used to represent would be completely removed from

God’s kingdom and this is described figuratively in the following scripture,

And the devil, who deceived them (the whole world; cf. Rev. 12:9; 20:7-8), was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet *were cast* (the verb “are” is not in the original Greek language) (Rev. 20:10a; cf. Rom. 16:20; Ed. notes in parentheses).

However, although God forgives sins, it’s often hard for sinners to forgive themselves, which the apostle Paul mentioned in 1Corinthians 15:9. Therefore, should Satan repent at some point, he will probably be pained, vexed, and deeply bothered by the heinous deeds he committed. Therefore, the following scriptural reference is not dealing with suffering harm in a physical sense,

And they will be tormented (SGD 928; pained, vexed, deeply bothered) day and night for ages to come (SGD 1519 and 165) (Rev. 20:10b; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Physical suffering is described using a different Greek word as confirmed in Hebrews 11:37 (torment; SGD 2558).

In Leviticus 14:34-48, other forms of leprosy like mildew, mold, or dry rot can severely damage buildings if they are allowed to grow over a period of time. This type of leprosy has a spiritual equivalent which can affect “God’s house” if it not dealt with expeditiously (Eph. 2:19-22). This occurred in the city of Corinth, and the apostle Paul reminded the brethren how serious it was. He admonished them to remove the spiritual leprosy which he compared to leaven, by putting an individual who was determined to live a sinful life of cohabitation with his stepmother, out of the church,

It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even among the Gentiles – that a man (in your congregation) has his father’s wife (cf. Dt. 22:30)! And **you are puffed up** (arrogant; analogous of leaven; cf. 1Cor. 5:6-8), and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you (1Cor. 5:1-2; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

It is very important to note that removing someone who is living contrary to the Law of Almighty God requires a collective effort. It is not up to one member of the church regardless of their position. In the last example, Paul spoke to the entire church in Corinth and pointed out that it was their collective responsibility to take action in this matter. The next scripture confirms this, but sadly it has been twisted by some religious organizations to justify their hierarchy which expels individuals with no input from the brethren,

Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶ But if he will not hear you, take with you one or two more, that *'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.'* ¹⁷ And **if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church.** But if (after this group discussion) he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector (Mt. 18:15-17; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Once this “due process” has been completed, the collective church has God’s authority to remove the sinful individual from their fellowship,

Assuredly, I (Christ; the delegated head of Almighty God’s church) say to you (the collective

Body of Christ), whatever you (as a congregation) bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth (by pardoning a repentant individual for the purpose of restoring them to fellowship) will be loosed in heaven (Mt. 18:18; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Therefore, the authority of God’s church on earth rests with the brethren as a collective group, and not with one or two appointed “officials” (cf. Mt. 20:25-28; see study: Should the Body of Christ be Legally Incorporated).

Eventually, even in God’s church, if sin grows to the point of permeating the entire structure, He will allow it to be dismantled. This is portrayed in severe cases of leprosy involving houses,

And he shall break down the house, its stones, its timber, and all the plaster of the house, and he shall carry them outside the city to an unclean place (Lev. 14:45).

However, in situations like this, Christ will continue working with individuals, and if another group eventually forms it will endure as long as it follows the Law of Almighty God,

Behold, I (Christ) stand at the door and knock. If **anyone** hears my voice and opens the door, **I will come in to him** and dine with him, and he with me (Rev. 3:20; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Throughout man’s history, God’s church has waxed and waned in its faith and obedience to His word. This is reflected in the phases of the moon and by observing one of God’s Holy Days, referred to as the New Moon, His people are reminded every month that He will start His work anew if/when it reaches the point of being completely extinguished, either through persecution or neglect (see study: The New Moon),

...the gates of hades (the grave) shall not prevail (be victorious) against it (the Body of Christ) (Mt. 16:18b; Ed. notes in parentheses).

The 15th chapter of Leviticus discusses various forms of defilement associated with discharges/excretions from men and women. These can cause illnesses or infections in other people who may come into contact with them. As mentioned previously, the second great commandment can be breached by a lack of concern for the wellbeing of other people. Therefore, to reduce the likelihood of spreading diseases to others, God commanded that individuals with infections remain isolated from their community for at least seven days. This seven day healing period is recognized today by medical professionals (see: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chickenpox),

And when he who has a discharge is cleansed of his discharge, then **he shall count for himself seven days for his cleansing**, wash his clothes, and bathe his body in running water; then he shall be clean (Lev. 15:13; emphasis added).

Although **not** infecting others with potentially contagious body fluids is very important, there is another serious contagion that is spiritual in nature and proceeds out of our mouths. The effects of this type of discharge can be just as damaging to people who are exposed to it,

But **no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.** ⁹ With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude (likeness) of God. ¹⁰ Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so (Jas. 3:8-10; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but **what comes out of the mouth, this** (potentially) **defiles the man** (Mt. 15:11; cf. Mk. 7:20; 1Cor. 3:17; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Some forms of physical uncleanness can be connected to the sinner's need for spiritual cleansing (Ps. 103:2-4; cf. Jas. 5:14-15). The latter cannot occur without Christ's atoning work. This is pictured through the symbolism associated with the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:1-34; see study: Atonement – Day of Covering). This is the only Holy Day during which God's people are to "fast" from evening to evening (see study: How to Determine the Beginning and End of the Day). This "fasting" involves total abstinence from food and drink (Lev. 16:29, 31; see study: Fasting For the Right Reason). Fasting on the Day of Atonement emphasizes the serious consequences of a sinful life, which leads to everlasting death (Eze. 18:4, 20; Rom. 6:23; 1Jn. 3:4).

As mentioned previously in this study, one of the two goats presented before the Lord on the Day of Atonement represented Jesus Christ. The other goat represented the spirit-being now known as Satan. The goat that was sacrificed represented Jesus Christ who shed his blood so that any repentant sinner can be forgiven including the individual represented by the goat that was released, namely Satan,

But the goat on which the lot fell to be (Heb. for Azazel) shall be presented (made to stand) alive before the Lord, to make atonement (for him), and to let it go as the (one bearing his own sin) into the wilderness (Lev. 16:10; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Some claim that the goat released into the wilderness pictured Christ taking the sins of the world upon himself. However, the wilderness is

associated with Satan and not Christ (see study: The Wilderness and Those Who Dwell There). Also, when Christ took the sins of the world upon himself, he died; while the goat released into the wilderness did not die, despite speculation to the contrary from some Bible scholars,

The goat shall bear on itself all their (the people's) iniquities (sins) to an uninhabited land; and he (the man delivering the goat to the wilderness) shall release the goat in the wilderness (Lev. 16:22; Ed. notes in parentheses).

During the Second Covenant observance of the Day of Atonement, God's people are to remember once again what Christ endured in order to cover the sins of the world. Also to be remembered, is the emotional anguish of God the Father who allowed His only begotten son to suffer tremendous torture and die on behalf of sinners, including the originator of sin (Jn. 8:44). The closest example of anyone having to go through this anguish was Abraham who was told to offer his son Isaac. Thankfully, Abraham was prevented from sacrificing his son (Gen. 22:9-12). In contrast, Almighty God did not intervene and prevent Christ from shedding his blood and dying. Therefore, offering the blood of animals to pagan deities, or drinking blood, is a perversion of what Christ did to reconcile sinners to God, as well as in insult to the suffering of both Almighty God and his son, Jesus Christ (Lev. 17:11-12),

They (God's people) **shall no more offer their sacrifices to demons** (in the form of satyrs – imaginary demons; half-goat; half-man. From Heb. root meaning to *shudder*. From this came "Pan", "fauns", and "woodland gods" of Greece and Rome, and also "the devil" of Christendom; p 157, marginal ref. The Companion Bible), after whom they have played the harlot. This shall be a statute forever for them throughout their

generations (Lev. 17:7; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

And whatever man of the house of Israel, or of a stranger who sojourns among you, who eats any blood, I will set My face against that person who eats blood, and will cut him off from among his people (Lev. 17:10).

As mentioned previously in this study, the Law of Almighty God was instituted out of love and concern for the wellbeing of everyone. This is one of the reasons that God commanded mankind not to drink blood. This practice is harmful and in some cases fatal for those who participate in it (see: www.thebody.com/Forums/AIDS/SafeSex/Q8633.html).

Although there are risks involved when someone receives a blood transfusion in order to preserve their life due to serious health issues, or trauma, it is not the same as eating blood associated with a pagan ritual or other form of perversion, which is what Leviticus 17:10 is dealing with. It is important to note that consuming blood was not a practice limited to the First Covenant period (cf. Ac. 15:29),

The Gnostic sect of Ophite Christians practiced a rite involving the consumption of menstrual blood during which they say it is Christ's blood. For when they read Revelation, 'I saw the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month' (Rev. 22:2), they interpret this as an allusion to the monthly incidence of the female period (p 640, The Woman's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets, Barbara Walker).

Transitioning from various forms of perversion related to blood, God laid out a series of sexual relationships that He forbade. Suffice it to say, just as human parents tell their children "not" to

behave in a certain manner, only to find that they do exactly what they were told not to do, mankind does the same with God's instructions. Hence, we have every imaginable sexual perversion extant today. These perverted relationships cause harm not only to the individuals involved but, by extension, to other family members and friends. God established the family unit, and from the beginning Satan has attacked its structure because this is an effective way to destroy entire societies (cf. Gen. 6:1-5; 19:1-29; Jn. 8:44; Jude 6; cf. Gen. 6:4 – *Nephilim*, Ap. 25, p 28, The Companion Bible, The Bullinger Publications Trust, 1974). God brought the nation of Israel out of Egypt because these perversions were common in that civilization and He drove out the Canaanites because they had similar practices,

According to the doings of (what is done in) the land of Egypt, where you dwelt, you shall not do; and according to the doings of the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you, you shall not do; nor shall you walk in their ordinances (statutes) (Lev. 18:6; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Therefore, having a sexual relationship with any of the following family members is regarded as sin (Lev. 18:6),

- 1) No sexual relationship with father or mother (Lev. 18:7).
- 2) No sexual relationship with step-parents (Lev. 18:8).
- 3) No sexual relationship between siblings (Lev. 18:9).
- 4) No sexual relationship with grandchildren (Lev. 18:10).
- 5) No sexual relationship between step-siblings (Lev. 18:11).
- 6) No sexual relationship with aunts or uncles (Lev. 18:12-14).
- 7) No sexual relationship with daughters-in-law, or sons-in-law (Lev. 18:15)

- 8) No sexual relationship with sisters-in-law, or brothers-in-law (Lev. 18:16).
- 9) No sexual relationship with a step-son, step-daughter, or step-grandchildren (Lev. 18:17a).
- 10) Not to marry the sister of one's wife while the wife is still living (Lev. 18:17).
- 11) Adultery with a neighbor's spouse is forbidden (Lev. 18:20).

Following the sexual relationships that were forbidden, God listed other perversions that He said would result in the nation of Israel being evicted from the land He promised to Abraham and his descendants,

For all these abominations the men of the land have done, who were before you, and thus the land is defiled, ²⁸ lest the land vomit you out also when you defile it, as it vomited out the nations that were before you (Lev. 18:27-28).

- 1) No sexual relationship while a woman is having her monthly period (Lev. 18:19)
- 2) Do not give your children over to pagan systems of worship, or allow them to participate in their practices (Lev. 18:21; cf. 20:1-5)
- 3) Do not have a homosexual, or lesbian, relationships (Lev. 18:22; cf. Rom. 1:26-27)
- 4) Do not commit bestiality (Lev. 18:23)

Because nations today follow trends that are contrary to the Law of Almighty God, they are heading quickly toward the conditions that Christ described when his disciples asked him, 'And what will be the sign of your coming, and the end of the age?' (Mt. 24:3b). Part of Christ's response included the following statement,

And because **lawlessness will abound**, the love of many will grow cold (Mt. 24:12; emphasis added).

To confirm that the above-mentioned laws were as important as the ten commandments given at Mt. Sinai, God repeated some of the commands to reinforce their validity (Lev. 19:3-4, 11-12, 30). He also explained an important health law to reduce the likelihood of poisoning from foods that are eaten three days after being cooked (Lev. 19:5-8). As this health law is associated with the sacrifice of a peace offering, it pointed to the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus Christ whose body did not remain after the third day (Mt. 12:40).

Caring for the poor is an integral part of the Law of Almighty God, and some of these commands are given in Leviticus 19:9-10 and 15.

Breaking a promise, or agreement, is unacceptable to God. Therefore, if someone agrees to pay a laborer his wages at the end of the day, it must be done. Otherwise, it is regarded as theft, which is a transgression of the 7th commandment,

You shall not defraud your neighbor, nor rob him. The wages of him who is hired shall not remain with you all night until morning (Lev. 19:13).

Taking advantage of people with physical or mental disabilities, or lower social status, is regarded as sin (Lev. 19:14).

If you show partiality (favoritism toward one person, or group, over another), **you commit sin**, and are convicted under the law as transgressors (Jas. 2:9; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Gossiping about other people is forbidden. It causes strife and division between people (Lev. 19:16a),

An ungodly man digs up evil, and it is on his lips like a burning fire (has to tell someone else, even at the expense of harming others).²⁸ A perverse man sows strife, and a whisperer separates the best of friends (Prov. 16:27-28; cf. 20:19). Whether out of greed or anger, it is a sin to bear false witness against your neighbor,

Nor shall you take a stand against the life of your neighbor... (Lev. 19:16b; cf. Dt. 27:25).

It is interesting to hear some people claim that Christ's teachings, during his earthly ministry, prove he came to change or do away with the Law of Almighty God. They will use scriptures such as Matthew 5:21, in juxtaposition with 5:22, to support this falsehood. However, Leviticus 19:17 proves that Christ did not reveal anything new. Instead, he upheld His Father's teachings,

You shall not hate your brother in your heart (Lev. 19:17a).

If someone commits any transgression, it is an expression of God's love to correct their error (Lev. 19:17b). This command was repeated by Christ,

Moreover, if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have *gained* (SHD 2770; helped; restored; cf. 1Pet. 3:1) your brother (Mt. 18:15; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Taking revenge, trying "to get even" with someone, or harboring a grudge, is contrary to God's word, and therefore considered a sin,

You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but (instead) you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord (Lev. 19:18; cf. Jude 9; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

In order to teach the ancient Israelites not to cohabit with pagan nations, and their customs, God commanded purity in everyday activities (Lev. 19:19). If the Israelites "mixed with" the false religious customs of the nations around them, they would become assimilated and forget the Law of Almighty God. This principle stands today and Christ mentioned it,

If you (Christ's disciples) were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because **you are not of the world** ("mixed in" with its customs and values), but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you (Jn. 15:19; cf. 17:6, 14-16; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Slavery, or servitude, has been common throughout man's history. Although God did not create this aspect of human society, or condone it, He provided His people with regulations to manage some of its consequences (Lev. 19:20). Sadly, slaves were regarded as someone's property and, as a consequence, rules of decency that would apply to free people did not apply to them. It is with this background that the early church made rulings for new converts, who were not free to do as they pleased, so they could continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ in a hostile environment,

For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us (the early church members), to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: ²⁹ that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood (Lev. 17:14), from things strangled (animal killed without its blood being removed),

and from sexual immorality (fornication). If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell (Ac. 15:28-29; Ed. notes in parentheses).

With new beginnings come new realities. In the case of ancient Israel entering the Promised Land, they would be like a tree planted in a new location. It would take them time to grow roots before they could produce any quality fruit, When you (ancient Israelites) come into the land, and have planted all kinds of trees for food, then you shall count their fruit as uncircumcised (unclean; not to be eaten). Three years it shall be as uncircumcised to you. It shall not be eaten (Lev. 19:23; Ed. notes in parentheses).

The following quotation confirms that newly planted trees have to be treated with care in order to develop and product fruit,

Of those newly planted trees that do not survive, most die during the root-establishment period. A tree's chance of survival can be drastically improved through practices that favor establishment of the root system. This involves regular care during **the first three years following planting** (Department of Forest Resources – Clemson University; emphasis added).

During the time of the early church, brethren were admonished to treat those who were new to the faith with care, and not cause them stress while they learn and grow in spiritual understanding. In other words, while they "put their roots down",

But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours (to eat meat that may have been offered in a pagan worship service and sold later in the open market) become a stumbling block to those who are weak. ¹⁰ For if anyone sees you who have knowledge (of God's way of living) eating in an

idol's temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols? ¹¹ And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? ¹² But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. ¹³ Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I (Paul) will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble (1Cor. 8:9-13; Ed. notes in parentheses).

However, by the fifth year a fruit tree should be producing something of value (Lev. 19:25). If it doesn't, there is usually a problem as Paul explained in the following text,

And I (Paul), brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. ² I fed you with milk and not with solid food (spiritually-speaking); for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; ³ for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? (1Cor. 3:1-3; Ed. notes in parentheses)

For though **by this time you ought to be teachers**, you (still) need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles (sayings, scriptures) of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food (Heb. 5:12ff; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Finally, if individuals or nations refuse to grow once God has been working with them for an extended period of time, whatever understanding they were given will be removed. Christ confirmed this in a parable dealing with a fig tree that was not producing any fruit,

He (Christ) also spoke this parable: A certain man had a fig tree (figuratively representing the

nation of Judah) planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. ⁷ Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, 'Look, for three years (representing the period of Christ's earthly ministry) I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up (waste) the ground?' ⁸ But he answered and said to him, 'Sir, let it alone this year (4th) also, until I dig around it and fertilize it. ⁹ And if it bears fruit (in the 5th year), well (and good). But if not, after that you can cut it down' (Lk. 13:6-9; cf. Lev. 19:25; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Now in the morning, as he (Christ) returned to the city, he was hungry. ¹⁹ And seeing a fig tree by the road, he came to it and found nothing on it but leaves (alive, but without fruit), and said to it, 'Let no fruit grow on you ever again.' And immediately the fig tree withered away (Mt. 21:18-19; Ed. notes in parentheses).

God repeated His command not to consume blood (Lev. 19:26a), nor be involved with divination (SHD 5172; practice of fortunetelling) or soothsaying (SHD 6049; sorcery, witchcraft, casting of spells) (Lev. 19:26b). These practices are associated with the fallen host of heaven and mislead God's people, who are to place all their trust in Him alone and consult Him through prayer and fasting. They also break the following commandment, which is punishable by death,

You shall have no other gods before Me (Almighty God) (Ex. 20:3; Ed. note in parenthesis).

God's people were not to copy the dress, or appearance, of the pagan worship systems that surrounded them,
You shall not shave around the sides of your head (cut around to create a tuft of hair like Canaanite priests), nor shall you disfigure the edges of your beard (corners of the beard as the

Egyptians did) (Lev. 19:27; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Part of the Canaanite worship system involved cutting themselves as a means of appeasing their gods, and/or getting them to perform certain requests,

You shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead (Lev. 19:28a; cf. Dt. 14:1a; 1Kgs. 18:28; Jer. 48:37).

Tattoos were used to imprint symbols associated with pagan deities, making these gods "up close and personal" to their adherents. Therefore it was a sin according to God's word (Lev. 19:28b). In contrast, God's people are to write the Law of Almighty God on their heart, or inner most being (Jer. 31:33; 2Cor. 3:3). It is interesting to note that the Israelites came out of Egypt which was known for the use of tattoos in their system of worship. In 1923, two female Egyptian mummies were excavated from pits located near the tomb of the priestess Amunet (2160 – 1994 BCE), who worshiped the fertility goddess Hathor. These two women were identified as 'Hathoric dancers in the court of King Mentuhotep'. The manner in which tattoos were placed over their abdomen indicated that they served fertility purposes.

When fathers allow their daughters to have multiple sexual relationships out of wedlock, it is a form of prostitution whether money is involved or not. Making light of this situation leads to serious problems over the course of time, including single-parent households with the poverty often associated in these situations, teenage violence and crime, drug abuse, suicide, etc. Without reversing this behavior, a society will eventually break down,

Do not prostitute your daughter, to cause her to be a harlot, lest the land become full of wickedness (Lev. 19:29).

Leviticus 19:30 is another reminder to keep God's Sabbaths, and show respect to His sanctuary, or dwelling place (Lev. 19:30). As God's dwelling place is now within His people, this law still applies; meaning that the Law of Almighty God is to be obeyed and His people are to serve one another. The term "Sabbaths" includes all of God's Holy Days (cf. Lev. 23:32; 25:4, 6, 8).

The next command has to do with communication involving the demonic world. One method is through a medium who conjures up a false spirit impersonating a dead friend, relative, or associate. In reality, the medium is speaking with a demonic being who is very adept at lying and misrepresenting someone else (Lev. 19:31; 20:6, 27; cf. Jn. 8:44). As mentioned previously, God's people are to communicate with Him alone, through prayer and fasting.

Showing respect toward one's elders, as well as strangers, is a hallmark of God's people (Lev. 19:32-34). In the writings of the New Testament, God pointed out that when someone shows kindness to strangers they might have been entertaining angels, unknowingly,

Let brotherly love continue. ² Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels (Heb. 13:1-2).

God regards cheating, and deceiving, as synonymous with lying. Therefore it is breaking His commandment (Ex. 20:16),

You shall do no injustice in judgment, in measurement of length, weight, or volume. ³⁶ You shall have just (accurate) weights, a just ephah, and a just hin: I am the Lord your God

who brought you out of the land of Egypt (which was an unjust system at that time) (Lev. 19:35-36; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Almighty God repeats many of His commands numerous times throughout scripture in order to emphasize their importance, as confirmed in the 20th chapter of Leviticus. Also, by repeating many of His laws, God stresses the serious nature, and consequences, of sinful conduct. This is why the death penalty is associated with transgressing many of God's commands (Lev. 20:2-3, 5-6, 9-18). Marrying close relatives such as aunts, uncles, or the spouse of an aunt or uncle, will result in a childless relationship (Lev. 20:19-21). Persistence in living a sinful life, eventually leads to being removed from the land, in one way or another. This is a foreign concept in most Western countries today, but God's word is sure and nations that increase their law-breaking will eventually find themselves being defeated, unless they repent or change,

You shall therefore keep all My statutes and all My judgments, and perform them, that the land where I am bringing you to dwell may not vomit you out (Lev. 20:22).

As the Levitical priests were to serve God's people, they were held to a high standard of conduct (Lev. 21:6, 8),

And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes (Lk. 12:47).

For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more (Lk. 12:48b).

Therefore, priests that were officiating in God's temple were not to touch or handle a dead body, unless it was a close relative (Lev. 21:1-3). If a priest did touch a dead relative, the prescribed washings and period of separation would apply, ...the person who touches it (anything regarded as unclean) **shall be unclean until evening** (Lev. 19:22b; 22:4, 6-7; emphasis added).

While officiating in God's temple, the High Priest was not even allowed to touch the body of his dead parents. Instead, he was to continue doing God's work as commanded (Lev. 21:10-12). Christ applied these regulations, in a spiritual sense, to those who wish to follow him. In other words, they must forgo all those things normally considered very important to them. Otherwise, they would be ineffective servants of God. Also, according to the following statement, Christ referred to anyone who is not interested in his Father's business as being "dead", spiritually-speaking,

Then another of his (Christ's) disciples said to him, 'Lord, let me first go and bury my father.'²² But Jesus said to him, 'Follow me, and **let the dead bury their own dead**' (Mt. 8:21-22; cf. Lk. 2-49; 9:60; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

God's priests were not to emulate the Gentile priests who would shave various forms of a tonsure, a symbol of the sun they worshiped, on their heads (see: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tonsure). This practice alone identifies a number of false religious systems, including those associated with monasticism. Also, placing a small round cap on one's head as a religious symbol is the same as shaving a circle,

They (God's priests) shall not make any bald place on their heads, nor shall they shave the

edges of their beards nor make any cuttings in their flesh (Lev. 21:5; Ed. note in parenthesis).

As the physical High Priest foreshadowed the spiritual High Priest, Jesus Christ, they were not to be united with a harlot or a divorced woman (Lev. 21:7, 13-14). This is because Christ's future wife, the collective church of God, is to be chaste with no attachment to false religious systems,

For I (Paul) am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ (2Cor. 11:2; Ed. note in parenthesis).

The children of the Levitical priesthood were to set the right example for other young people to follow (Lev. 21:9). If the children of the priests openly transgressed the Law of Almighty God, it is likely the nation would eventually follow the same bad example,

Now Eli (the High Priest) was very old; and he heard everything his sons did to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle of meeting.²³ So he said to them, 'Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all the people.'²⁴ No, my sons! For it is not a good report that I hear. **You make the Lord's people transgress'** (1Sam. 2:22-24; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Because the Levitical priests were to reflect the high standard of the Melchizedek priesthood, those who served in God's temple could not officiate if they had any physical defect (Lev. 21:17-21). The Second Covenant priests are described as being "without spot or wrinkle" because they are cleansed through Christ's shed blood, and he is the head of the Melchizedek priesthood (Heb. 5:5-6, 9-10),

That he (Christ) might present it (God's church) to himself **a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle** or any such thing, but that it should be holy **and without blemish** (Eph. 5:27; Ed. notes in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Also, the priests of the First Covenant period were not to act in any official capacity if they were unclean (Lev. 22:1-9). Instead, they had to complete the required cleansing and then commence their responsibilities. This principle applies to the priests of the Second Covenant as well, but in a spiritual sense. For instance, if they are "unclean" in their relationship with God, or their fellow man, they need to take whatever action is necessary to "cleanse themselves" before they can continue serving God,

Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you,²⁴ leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. **First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift** (Mt. 5:23-24; emphasis added).

In most circumstances, those outside the immediate family of the priests could not eat the holy offerings (Lev. 22:10-11). During the Second Covenant period, those who are not baptized are regarded as outside God's family as far as partaking of the bread and wine during the Passover is concerned. These are symbols representing the body and blood of Christ who was sacrificed to cover the sins of the world (Jn. 1:29),

For I (Paul) received from the Lord (Christ) that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the night in which he was betrayed took bread;²⁴ and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance

of me.' ²⁵ In the same manner he also took the cup (of wine) after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. This do, as often as you drink it (each year on the Passover – 14/15th of the first month of God's year), in remembrance of me.' (1Cor. 11:23-25; Ed. notes in parentheses)

The priest's daughter could not eat the offerings if she was married to someone outside the family of Levi (Lev. 22:12). This is stressing the importance for those of the Second Covenant priesthood to make sure they are not participating ("eating") with God's people while living a life of duplicity, or uncleanness,

It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you (church members in Corinth), and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles – that a man has his father's wife (step-mother; cf. Dt. 22:30)! ² And you are puffed up (arrogant), and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you (1Cor. 5:1-2ff; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Because the animals that were offered during the First Covenant period foreshadowed the sacrifice of Christ, who was without sin, they had to be without defect,

But whatever has a defect, you shall not offer, for it shall not be acceptable on your behalf (Lev. 22:20ff).

Animals were sacrificed to temporarily "cover" the sins committed by people until Christ came to fully "cover" these sins. As such, there are characteristics common to both the animals and people in this substitutionary system. For instance, as a male child was not to be circumcised until the eighth day (Lev. 12:3); so a young animal could not be offered until the

eighth day. After the eighth day, both were considered acceptable by God,

When a bull or a sheep or a goat is born, it shall be seven days with its mother; and **from the eighth day and thereafter it shall be accepted** as an offering made by fire to the Lord (Lev. 22:27; emphasis added).

God addressed animal husbandry practices that would increase the flocks of the Israelites. For instance, sacrificing both a mother and its offspring at the same time would reduce the size of a herd. If either one were allowed to live, they would be able to reproduce again,

Whether it is a cow or ewe, do not kill both her and her young on the same day (at the same time) (Lev. 22:28; cf. Dt. 22:6-7; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Almighty God ordained festivals that are celebrated in both the heavenly realm and earthly realm. Therefore, they are described as His feasts (Lev. 23:2). They are not limited to any single realm or any single nation on the earth. In fact, God confirmed this when He prophesied that any nation refusing attend the Feast of Tabernacles, following Christ's return to rule this planet, will suffer drought or plague (Zech. 14:16-19). The weekly Sabbath is included in God's festivals and cannot be separated from them. Christ emphasized that the Sabbath was made for mankind (Mk. 2:27),

Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day (corresponding to Saturday on most secular calendars) is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work on it; **it is the Sabbath of the Lord** in all your dwellings (Lev. 23:3; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Satan has done a brilliant job of deceiving the majority of mankind into believing God's Holy

Days are no longer applicable and has substituted his pagan days of worship, putting Christian sounding names on some of them (Rev. 12:9). Even the days and months of most secular calendars are named after false gods. Without understanding and observing God's appointed festivals, mankind cannot correctly understand the plan He is working out to reconcile all of fallen creation. A brief summary of the meaning behind these Holy days will follow:

The lamb that was sacrificed on the Passover pictured the first of the firstfruits harvest, Jesus Christ (Lev. 23:10-11; cf. I Cor. 15:20, 23). Once Christ came and fulfilled what this lamb pictured, mankind and the fallen host of heaven had the means through which they could be redeemed from sin and reconciled to God the Father, providing they repent of sin and begin living a new life of obedience to the Law of Almighty God (Rom. 6:4). This involves a process which takes time and is pictured symbolically by seven days of eating unleavened bread (Lev. 23:4-8). Leaven in this festival represents sin in the lives of mankind and the fallen host, and it needs to be removed with the help of God's Holy Spirit, which is His power and not a separate being or entity,

Your glorying (arrogant pride) is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven (sin) leavens the whole lump? ⁷ Therefore purge out (clean out) the old leaven (old sinful way of living), that you may be a new lump (new creation; cf. 2Cor. 5:17), since you truly are unleavened (if you have repented and been baptized). For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. ⁸ Therefore let us keep the feast (of Unleavened Bread), not with old leaven (doing things the same sinful way), nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth (1Cor. 5:6-8; Ed. notes in parentheses).

God is "harvesting" the fallen creation progressively and is not calling everyone in each generation. Those He foreordained to be called, prior to the first resurrection from the dead, are pictured by the early summer grain harvest at Pentecost; also called the Feast of Weeks, or the Feast of First-fruits (Lev. 23:15-21; cf. Rom. 8:23, 16:5; I Cor. 16:15). This is not a large harvest, which confirms that the majority of fallen creation will not understand God's truth and embrace it until a much later period of time. This later period of time is pictured by the harvest associated with the Feast of Tabernacles and The Last Great day. However, those who have been called since the time of Abel, and choose to obey God, will be in the first resurrection of the dead, and rule with Christ for a thousand years (Rev. 20:4-6),

For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble (well-born) are called (1Cor. 1:26; cf. Mt. 20:16; 22:14; Ed. note in parenthesis).

As those of the firstfruits harvest, and the latter harvest, cannot be resurrected until Christ returns, events pictured by God's festival involving the blowing of trumpets must occur first (Lev. 23:24-25),

Behold. I (Paul) tell you a mystery (hidden truth): We (God's chosen people) shall not all sleep (die), but we shall all be changed – ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, **at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible**, and we (who are alive at the time of Christ's return) shall be changed (1Cor. 15:51-52; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we (God's chosen people) who are alive and

remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep (dead). For **the Lord himself will descend from heaven** with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and **with the trumpet of God**. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord (1Thes. 4:15-17; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Once Christ has returned, his first task will be to bind the spirit-being who has wreaked havoc on the earth for thousands of years. This event is pictured by the Day of Atonement which involves the removal of a goat representing Satan, and sending him into the wilderness (Lev. 23:26-32; cf. 16:1-34),

Then I (John) saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. ² He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years (Rev. 20:1-2; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Once Satan is restrained, Christ and his saints will begin replacing and rebuilding the earth's systems, including all of its religions and governments (Isa. 2:1-4; 9:6-7). This process will take a thousand years to complete (Rev. 20:3) and is pictured by the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23:33-44). At the completion of the one thousand years, Satan will be loosed for a short period of time and then finally judged, which will include his physical death as foretold by Isaiah, Ezekiel, Malachi, and Paul (Isa. 14:12-21; Eze. 28:12-19; Mal. 4:3; Rom. 16:20).

The eighth day at the end of the Feast of Tabernacles is referred to as The Last Great Day (Lev. 23:36b, 39b; cf. Jn. 7:37) It pictures all those who were not called and chosen during mankind's history (Mt. 20:16; 22:14). This

period of judgment involves a resurrection from the dead at the end of Christ's one thousand year reign on earth. As God is not a respecter of persons, and as He is not willing that any perish (2Pet. 3:9), it follows that this second resurrection will include all the fallen angels (cf. 1Cor. 6:3; Jude 1:6).

As mentioned previously, without observing God's festivals, mankind cannot understand the important questions of life including why we were born, or what our future holds. This suits Satan's purpose and allows him to continue deceiving mankind through the pagan holidays he promotes (Rev. 12:9; see study: The Hallmark of Satan's Holidays).

In Leviticus 24:1-4, God gave specific instructions regarding the tabernacle lamps. These are important symbolically because they picture the action of God's Holy Spirit as it "writes" His law and commandments on the hearts of His people (Jer. 31:33-34). The pure oil of pressed olives, used to keep the lamps burning, represents God's Spirit. When Moses's brother Aaron was anointed as High Priest over the nation of Israel, the oil placed on his head represented the action of God's Spirit in his life enabling him to do the work he was called to do,

It is like the precious oil upon the head, running down on the beard, the beard of Aaron, running down on the edge of his garments (Ps. 133:2).

Everyone who receives God's Holy Spirit, symbolized by the olive oil used for anointing, will live forever following their resurrection at Christ's return, providing they do not quench (extinguish) it through persistent disobedience, or neglect, during their lifetime (1Thes. 5:19; cf. Mt. 10:22),

It (oil) is like the dew of Hermon, descending upon the mountains (symbol of government) of

Zion; for **there the Lord commanded the blessing – life forevermore** (Ps. 133:3; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

But **if** the Spirit of Him (Almighty God) who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, **He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit which dwells in you** (Rom. 8:11; cf. I Cor. 15:50-56; I Thes. 4:13-17; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Those with God's Holy Spirit are expected to "enlighten" others by their example of obedience to the Law of Almighty God,

For the commandment is a lamp, and the law is light; reproofs of instruction are the way of (to) life (everlasting) (Prov. 6:23; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven (Mt. 5:16; emphasis added).

The lamps that burned outside the veil of the Testimony were not to go out, which pictured God's Spirit bringing the light of His truth to a dark world continually (Lev. 24:2-3; cf. Mt. 16:18). Just as the lamps were to continue perpetually, so the bread of the tabernacle was to continue (Lev. 24:8). This pointed forward in time to Jesus Christ, the bread of life, coming to give his body as a sacrifice for sin (Heb. 10:5, 10), after which he would live forever at the right hand of his Father in heaven (Heb. 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; 1Pet. 3:22),

And Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life. He who comes to me shall never hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst (Jn. 6:35; cf. 6:48).

Leviticus 24:10-23 provides a few examples of consequences for breaking the Law of Almighty God. Showing respect toward one's Creator, and Father, is integral to the third commandment (Ex. 20:7; cf. Lev. 24:10-16, 23). We live in societies today that have little, if any, respect toward Almighty God or His word. In essence, they do not know or understand Him, and therefore don't mind using His name in vain. This includes those who purport to know God, while misleading people through erroneous teachings and doctrines about Him (Mt. 23:15; cf. I Jn. 2:3-4)). This has been one of Satan's primary forms of deception, which explains why there are so many different religions in the world. In other words, if God's truth was correctly and universally understood, there would be only one "religion". Satan's numerous systems of false religious instruction are compared figuratively to harlots in Revelation 17:1-6.

When God commands that killers be put to death for their crime, mankind devises a better solution by putting murderers into prison for years and years at tax payer's expense. The "take home message" is that a murdered person's life has little value. Therefore, respect for the life of other people is diminished, and the fear of consequences for taking another person's life is minimized considerably,

Whoever kills any man shall surely be out to death (Lev. 24:17).

The principle of compensation for the loss of property, including livestock, is repeated in Leviticus 24:18, 21a. Also, in the case of bodily injury, the victim has a right to compensation. However, Leviticus 24:19-20 is not meant to be taken literally as discussed previously in the section dealing with Exodus 21:23-27. Instead, a value has to be assigned for specific injuries, and compensation paid for any loss of income as well as the suffering caused through negligence

on the part of the offending party (Lev. 24:19-20).

In concluding this chapter of Leviticus, God gave a command that is ignored by many societies today, and it is at their peril,

You shall have the same law for the stranger and for one from your own country; for I am the Lord your God (Lev. 24:22).

In Leviticus 25:1-7, God explained the seventh year Sabbath, which would allow all citizens of Israel to have a break from their usual labors at the end of every sixth year. Also during this time, the land would have a chance to be restored and enriched. This would seem humanly impossible but, to achieve it, God promised to provide a triple blessing on the sixth year, which would carry the people through to the spring harvest of the ninth year,

Then I (God) will command My blessing on you in the sixth year, and it will bring forth produce enough for three years.²² And you shall sow in the eighth year, and eat old produce until the ninth year; until the produce comes in, you shall eat of the old harvest (Lev. 25:21-22; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Obedying this command required the people trusting God's promise, or word. Therefore, it is highly unlikely they observed it for very long during the First Covenant period (Heb. 8:8). From various prophecies regarding conditions on the earth following Christ's return, it appears society will once again be "agrarian-based" (Isa. 2:4; 7:25; 30:23; Mic. 4:3-4). This being the case, mankind will appreciate a land-rest for a year at the end of every six years. This seventh-year rest was also prophetic as it pointed forward in time to the thousand-year rest on earth following Satan's restraint, mentioned previously in this study,

For if Joshua had given them (ancient Israelites) rest, then He (God) would not afterward have spoken of another day (period of time).⁹ There remains therefore a (future) rest (SGD 4530; Sabbath-rest) for the people of God (Heb. 4:8-9; Ed. notes in parentheses).

The same principle of the seventh year land-rest was extended to the seventh of "seven year blocks" of time (Lev. 25:8). In other words, the forty-ninth year was a year of rest followed immediately by the fiftieth year which was also a year of rest,

And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a Jubilee for you; and each of you shall return to his possession, and each of you shall return to his family (Lev. 25:10).

Returning to the land that God had originally given to every individual in the nation is prophetic because God did not want mankind to be separated from Him indefinitely. However, because God gave man "freedom of choice" and man's choice was to reject God's rulership, a separation occurred as the following scriptures confirm,

(Due to Adam's sin) He (God) drove out the man (from God's presence in the spirit-realm; see study: What Change Took Place in Adam and Eve?); and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life (symbol representing the spirit-being who would make everlasting life possible) (Gen. 3:24; Ed. notes in parentheses).

But **your iniquities have separated you from your God:** and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear (Isa. 59:2; emphasis added).

Was this separation temporarily suspended in the case of the nation of Israel? The answer is "yes." God had pity on a small and insignificant family that eventually became the nation of Israel. Ezekiel 16:1-63 uses symbolic language to describe the early beginnings of this nation. Sadly, even though God had pity on this nation, they ended up rejecting Him,

But the thing displeased Samuel when they (leadership of Israel) said, 'Give us a king to judge us.' So Samuel prayed to the Lord. ⁷ And the Lord said to Samuel, 'Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but **they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them** (1Sam. 8:6-7; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Therefore, the fulfillment of what the year of Jubilee pictures cannot occur until there is a complete restoration of all sinners to Almighty God. When this finally occurs, everyone will be able to return to the place they were originally intended to live, and that is the kingdom of God, which is a spiritual realm (Lev. 25:13),

Now when all things are (finally) made subject to Him (Almighty God), then the son himself (Jesus Christ) will also be subject to Him (Almighty God) who put all things under him (Christ), that (the family of) God may be all in all (complete as originally intended) (1Cor. 15:28; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Another important aspect of the Jubilee year teaches that all land belongs to God and people have no right to speculate on its value. Instead, as the following scriptures confirm, land values are based on the number and quality of crops that can be produced on it, and land values decrease each year leading up to the Jubilee,

According to the multitude of years you shall increase its price, and according to the fewer number of years you shall diminish its price; for he sells to you according to the number of the years of the crops. ¹⁷ Therefore you shall not oppress (mistreat) one another, but you shall fear your God; for I am the Lord (Lev. 25:16-17; cf. 25:26-27; Ed. note in parenthesis).

The land shall not be sold permanently (i.e. freehold), for the land is Mine (solely God's property); for you are strangers and sojourners (temporary residents) with Me (Lev. 25:23; Ed. notes in parentheses).

In the event someone leased out their land, it would revert back to them on the Jubilee, or beginning of the fiftieth. This guaranteed that every citizen would retain their land no matter what circumstances befell them,

For it is the Jubilee, each of you shall return to his possession (Lev. 25:13).

But if he (the original owner who sold his property) is not able to have it restored to himself (not able to buy it back), then what was sold shall remain in the hand of him who bought it **until the year of Jubilee; and in the Jubilee it shall be released**, and he (the original owner) shall return to his possession (Lev. 25:28; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

If someone leased out their land due to poverty, another member of the family had a right to buy it back prior to the year of Jubilee,

If one of your brethren becomes poor, and has sold some of his possession, and if his kinsman-redeemer comes to redeem it, then he may redeem what his brother sold (Lev. 25:25).

This aspect of the Law of Almighty God is a reminder of mankind's spiritual poverty necessitating that another member of the family, the Son of Man (Mt. 24:30; 26:64), redeem mankind from the temporary ownership of Satan. Therefore, Christ is mankind's spiritual "kinsman-redeemer" who provided the means of restoration to the kingdom of God, and this was "paid" through his death and resurrection,

With a little wrath I (the one who became known as Jesus Christ; cf. Ex. 23:20-21) hid my face from you for *a moment* (cf. 2Pet. 3:8); but with everlasting kindness I will have mercy on you, says the Lord, **your Redeemer** (Isa. 54:8; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

There were different ordinances for non-productive land. For instance, a house within a walled city could be redeemed within a year of its original purchase (Lev. 25:29). If the house was not redeemed within a year, it became the property of the purchaser and was not returned to its original owner on the year of Jubilee (Lev. 25:30). Houses in villages located outside walled cities could be redeemed at any time prior to the year of Jubilee. These houses were treated as leased property because they were to be returned to their original owner on the year of Jubilee, at which time they could be leased again if the original owner decided to do so (Lev. 25:31). If a Levite built a house and leased it out, that house could be redeemed at any time (Lev. 25:32). Every Levite's house was to be returned to him automatically on the year of Jubilee (Lev. 25:33). Land regarded as open space, or common land, around the cities of Levites could not to be sold (Lev. 25:34; cf. Nu. 35:2-5). In today's world, this would provide parks and other areas for recreational activities.

Charging interest on a debt was illegal in ancient Israel. God views this as taking advantage of someone who is already in a difficult situation

(Lev. 25:35-37). If this law were observed today, the economies of the world would do much better and wealth would not accrue to a minority of those who are already well off. The main point here is that God provided the means through which everyone could be blessed. Consequently, those who do better should be willing to assist those who are genuinely in need,

I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt (i.e. slavery), to give you the land of Canaan (a prosperous land) and to be your God (Lev. 25:38; cf. Nu. 13:23-24, 27; Ed. notes in parentheses).

As God freed the entire nation of Israel from slavery, they belonged to Him (Lev. 25:55). Consequently, none of them could treat their brother or sister as a slave. If someone fell on hard times, they could find relief by offering to be another man's servant, but only until the year of Jubilee (Lev. 25:39-43).

God viewed anyone from the pagan nations living outside Israel as being the slaves of Satan. As such, if they came and served any of the people in Israel, they would be better off spiritually-speaking, even though they had to work very hard (Lev. 25:44-46). The apostle Paul described this situation when he compared Gentile nations to the branch of a wild olive tree that is grafted into spiritual Israel,

And if some of the branches (symbolizing Israel) were broken off, and you (Gentiles), being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root (Christ; cf. Isa. 11:10; 27:6; 53:2; Rom. 15:12; Rev. 5:5; 22:16) and fatness (richness) of the olive tree,¹⁸ do not boast against the branches (representing Israel). But if you boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you.¹⁹ You (Gentiles) will say then, 'Branches (of Israel) were broken off

(because of their persistent sin; cf. Jer. 3:8) that I might be grafted in (to spiritual Israel).²⁰ Well said. Because of unbelief (in God's word resulting in sinful conduct) they were broken off, and you (Gentiles) stand by faith (trusting in God's word and obeying it). (Therefore) do not be haughty (proud), but fear (show respect and gratitude).²¹ For if God did not spare the natural branches (of Israel), He may not spare you either (Rom. 11:17-21; Ed. notes in parentheses).

If a stranger/foreigner living in the land of Israel needed a servant, he could buy an Israelite who was poor and in need of basic necessities. However, if a family member of the poor Israelite wished to free his relative by paying the price owed, the stranger could not refuse. Again, this is because all Israelites belonged to God. If the poor Israelite was not redeemed by a family member, he would have to serve the stranger until the Jubilee year, at which time he would be freed according to God's command (Lev. 25: 47-54),

For the children of Israel are servants to Me; they are My servants whom I brought out of the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God (Lev. 25:55; emphasis added).

In the 26th chapter of Leviticus, God reminded the Israelites that obedience to His law was central to their happiness, safety, and prosperity (Lev. 26:1-13). Because Egypt represented a false system of worship with its many gods, and as the Pharaoh of the exodus refused to let the Israelites go, both were symbols with Egypt representing "sin" and Pharaoh representing "Satan". The latter is pictured in the book of Isaiah as a megalomaniac that holds all his subjects as prisoners of his deception,

Those who see you (Satan during his future judgment) will gaze at you, and consider you,

saying: 'Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms,¹⁷ Who made the world as a wilderness and destroyed its cities, **who did not open the house of his prisoners'** (Isa. 14:16-17; cf. Rev. 12:9; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

By God removing the nation of Israel from Egypt's grip, they could experience freedom from deception. Sadly, they felt more comfortable immersed in the false worship systems in Egypt, and constantly wished to return. In their minds, everything was better in Egypt even though they had not yet experienced life in the Promised Land,

We remember the fish which we ate freely in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic;⁶ but now our whole being is dried up; there is nothing at all except this manna before our eyes! (Nu. 11:5-6)

In short, the Israelites soon forgot the many miracles God had performed on their behalf, and they were ungrateful. To make matters worse, they were comfortable breaking the Law of Almighty God. Therefore, God warned them not to take the covenant they made with Him lightly, or consequences would follow (Lev. 26:14-17). If they did not repent, God explained that He would withdraw rain for an extended period of time, and gradual starvation would follow (Lev. 26:18-20, 26). After withdrawing rain, if they still refused to repent, God said He would increase their punishment seven times through a series of plagues affecting both man and beast (Lev. 26:21-22). Finally, national captivity would occur (Lev. 26:23-25, 31-33). During this captivity there would even be cannibalism among family members (Lev. 26:29). Although these scenarios are hard to imagine in today's world, given the right set of circumstances they can happen again, and very quickly. It is only because God is very patient, and hopeful that people will

repent and cease breaking His law and commandments, that these catastrophes have not occurred yet. At the heart of the problem is people's refusal to obey God's word. Because conditions are similar in today's world, and as God does not change (Mal. 3:6), we can expect to see some of the same things taking place in the future. Thankfully, God is merciful and will forgive sinners upon repentance (Lev. 26:40-46).

The final chapter of Leviticus deals with vows that people might make in their sincerity and zeal to serve God. These would include the dedication of individuals to serve in some capacity, other than in the temple itself where only the Levites could work. If there were more people dedicated to God, than openings for them to fill, an assessed value was placed on each individual and the money used in the maintenance of the temple (Lev. 27:1-8). Any clean animal that was vowed could not be redeemed for money because it was regarded as holy (Lev. 27:9-10, 26). An unclean animal could be redeemed for money as it was not acceptable for an offering (Lev. 27:11-12, 27). If the person dedicating the unclean animal realized he needed to have it back, perhaps for work purposes, he would have to add an extra one-fifth to the original value assessed by the priest (Lev. 27:13). If someone wanted to donate a house to God's service but changed his mind later, he could purchase it back. However, the original owner would have to add one-fifth more to the priest's assessed value (Lev. 27:14-15). This same rule applied to land (Lev. 27:16-19). During the time of the early church, a husband and wife pretended to dedicate their entire property to God's service. However, their apparent generosity was simply to gain attention or notoriety because they kept some of the proceeds for themselves. This misrepresentation of the facts led to their death. Therefore, any vow needs to be clearly understood and

honored. If this is not the intention of a promise, then the promise should never be made,

But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession. ² And he kept back part of the proceeds, his wife also being aware of it, and brought a certain part and laid it at the apostles' feet. ³ But Peter said, 'Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? ⁴ While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it (the funds from the sale) not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing (deception) in your heart? **You have not lied to men but to God.**' ⁵ Then Ananias, hearing these words fell down and breathed his last (Ac. 5:1-5a; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Honoring agreements and commitments is very important. Therefore, if an individual vowed to donate his property to God, but had leased it out previously to someone else, the property would have to remain the possession of the new owner until the year of Jubilee. At the time of the Jubilee, it would be released and given to the local priest (Lev. 27:20-21).

If someone dedicated the proceeds from a field he had leased from its original owner, the value of the proceeds up to the year of Jubilee could be set aside for God's use. However, when the year of Jubilee arrived, that field would have to be returned to its original owner (Lev. 27:22-24).

All standards and valuations were based on those at God's temple (Lev. 27:25). No one from outside had the authority to claim they had a better method of determining these. The apostle Paul applied this law spiritually to teach that only those within God's spiritual temple, the Body of Christ, could judge matters correctly when it

came to standards of conduct during God's Holy Days,

Therefore, **let no one judge you** (church members) in eating and drinking, or in part of a festival, or New Moon, or Sabbaths, ¹⁷ (which is a shadow of things to come), **but the body of Christ** (Col. 2:16-17; RNT; cf. 1 Tim. 3:15; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Any man dedicated to God, such as in a Nazarite (cf. Nu. 6:2), had to fulfill the prescribed conditions. No monetary allowance could be paid to get out of completing the vow. If a vow was made for an animal, or property, to be dedicated solely to God, there could be no monetary redemption (Lev. 27:28).

Anyone, or any nation (Nu. 21:2), guilty of the death penalty could not be redeemed with money (Lev. 27:29).

The first tenth portion of anyone's productive increase is dedicated to God, and He assigned that portion to the family of Levi who serve in the temple (Lev. 27:30, 32-33; cf. Nu. 18:21).

As no one could redeem what God regards as holy (Lev. 27:30), the tenth portion that someone could redeem would be a separate tenth, or second tithe from an individual's productive increase for use during God's three annual festivals, including travel expenses to and from these festivals (Lev. 27:31; cf. Dt. 14:22-27; see study: Gathering God's Tithes and Offerings).

The Book of Numbers

God's attention to every small detail, and His precise organization of everything in time and space, is emphasized in The Book of Numbers. Christ explained this aspect of his heavenly Father's power and omniscience,

Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And **not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will.** ³⁰ But **the very hairs of your head are all numbered** (Mt. 10:29-30; emphasis added).

As Almighty God is omnipotent and omniscient, He didn't need Moses and Aaron to take a census of the nation of Israel because He already knew the number of males twenty years old and above (Nu. 1:1-3). However, this was recorded in scripture to show that God expects His people to participate with Him in doing the work that needs to be done. God specializes in doing those things that are beyond human ability, but everything else needs to be considered the responsibility of those God has called to do His work. This dynamic is explained by the apostle Paul,

Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers (servants) through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? ⁶I (Paul) planted, Apollos watered, **but God gave the increase.** ⁷ So then **neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase** (1Cor. 3:5-7; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Having done the best he could to serve God, Paul knew that spiritual growth came only from the action of God's Holy Spirit in those who are called (cf. Mt. 16:16-17). Therefore, no human being has the power or ability to convince someone else about God's way of living, let alone "convert" them. Instead, this process begins solely by the action of God the Father (cf. Jn. 6:44, 65).

A census that God commanded involved further delegation. Although Moses and Aaron were held responsible, God told them to delegate the task to a supervisor from each of the twelve tribes, or families, of Israel (Nu. 1:4-18). This

was not a new concept as Moses's father-in-law, Jethro, had suggested a similar form of delegation soon after Israel's exodus from Egypt (Ex. 18:13-26). In order to provide adequate equipment and provisions for the task of driving the pagan nations out of the Promised Land, this census was necessary. The result was as follows:

Family of Reuben	46,500
Family of Simeon	59,300
Family of Gad	45,650
Family of Judah	74,600
Family of Issachar	54,400
Family of Zebulun	57,400
Family of Ephraim	40,500
Family of Manasseh	32,200
Family of Benjamin	35,400
Family of Dan	62,700
Family of Asher	41,500
Family of Naphtali	53,400
Total	603,550

It is important to note that many nations during the First and Second World War broke God's command regarding the age for a man to be conscripted, or drafted. For instance, countries like Great Britain, U.S.A., and Australia had eighteen year olds in their ranks even though God commanded the age of twenty or older (cf. Nu. 1:2-3).

As the Levites were not to go to war, they were excluded from this census (Nu. 1:47-53). Symbolically, this was to teach the Israelites that activities in God's temple were never to cease, even during stressful times such as warfare, because God's work is continuous. Christ pointed this out in the following statement,

And I (Christ) say to you that you are Peter (SGD 4074; small stone), and on this rock (SGD 4073; large stone referring to Christ; cf. Rom. 9:33;

1Cor. 10:4; 1Pet. 2:7-8) **I will build my church** (following Christ's resurrection from the dead), **and the gates of hades** (the grave) **shall not prevail** (be victorious) **against it** (Mt. 16:18; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

In the 2nd chapter of Numbers, the tribes of Israel were organized into quadrants, each consisting of three tribes beginning with Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun on the eastern side of God's temple (Nu. 2:3-9). Reuben, Simeon, and Gad were on the southern side of God's temple (Nu. 2:10-16). When the Israelites were ordered to move camp, the six tribes mentioned above were to move first, beginning with Judah. As soon as the tribe of Gad had moved, the Levites were to begin their journey carrying God's tabernacle,

Then the tabernacle of meeting shall move out with the camp (company) of the Levites in the midst of the camps (whole company); as they camp, so they shall move out, everyone in his place, by their standards (banners) (Nu. 2:17; Ed. notes in parentheses).

As soon as the Levites were on their way, the remaining six tribes would protect the Levites from behind beginning with the third quadrant of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin (Nu. 2:18-24). Finally, the quadrant of Dan, Asher, and Naphtali would start moving to complete the rear guard (Nu. 2:25-31). As God models the physical realm on heavenly realities, the order He established with the families of Israel reflects how God organizes His spirit-realm,

...since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law; ⁵ who serve **the copy** and shadow **of the heavenly things**.... (Heb. 8:4b-5a; cf. 9:23; emphasis added).

Four quadrants in the spirit-realm are separated, using the symbolic language of Genesis, by four rivers (Gen. 2:10-14). Many people have speculated about these rivers, not realizing they are describing spiritual realities. An example of spiritual quadrants is mentioned in the following scripture,

Each one (quadrant) had four faces: the first face was the face of a cherub, the second face the face of a man, the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle.¹⁵

And the cherubim were lifted up. This was the living creature I (Ezekiel) saw by the River Chebar (Eze.10:14-15; cf. 1:1-28; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Although these quadrants represented separate entities, they were meant to work together as pictured by their wings touching each other,

.... Their wings were stretched upward; **two wings of each one touched one another**, and two covered their bodies (Eze.1:11b; emphasis added).

Therefore, all the quadrants of Israel were to work together and fulfill the tasks God gave them. However, because ancient Israel failed to complete these tasks (cf. Rom. 11:11-32), a new spiritual nation is being trained to finish what they refused to do. This spiritual nation will have completed all of its tasks following the second resurrection from the dead (Rev. 20:6),

Also she (New Jerusalem) had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of Israel:¹³ **three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west** (Rev. 21:12-13; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

The manner in which the priests administered the Law of Almighty God during the First Covenant period has changed (Heb. 7:12). Now, the Second Covenant priesthood is under a new High Priest, Jesus Christ (Heb. 7:22-28; 8:1). Therefore, as Christ fulfilled the animal sacrificial system and the law of circumcision (Mt. 5:17), the royal priesthood mentioned by the apostle Peter (1Pet. 2:5, 9) is not actively involved with the physical aspects of the temple system,

... So Eleazar and Ithamar ministered as priests **under the oversight of Aaron their father** (who was the High Priest) (Nu. 3:4b; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Therefore, as Christ stated, the Second Covenant priesthood is to recognize him as their High Priest and only leader,

But Jesus called them (the twelve disciples) to himself and said, 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them.²⁶ Yet **it shall not be so among you**; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant (Mt. 20:25-26; cf. 1Pet. 5:1-3; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

But you (Christ's disciples), do not be called 'Rabbi'; for **one is your teacher (leader), the Christ, and you are all (equally) brethren** (Mt. 23:8; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

And **do not be called teachers**; for **one is your teacher, the Christ** (Mt. 23:10; emphasis added).

No human being is to exercise authority over Christ's flock. Sadly, this is an extremely rare occurrence among the religious organizations of this present world with their incorporated

structures (see study: Should the Body of Christ be Legally Incorporated?),

Who are you to judge another's servant (i.e. Christ's servant; cf. Rom. 1:1)? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God (Whose servant he is) is able to make him stand (Rom. 14:4; Ed. notes in parentheses).

As the Levites were set aside as "first-born" to Almighty God (Nu. 3:12), so the royal priests of the Second Covenant are considered "first-born", or the first-fruits of God's spiritual harvest,

Of His (Almighty God's) own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind (type) of firstfruits of His creatures (created beings) (Jas. 1:18; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Therefore, all ownership and authority over both the First Covenant and Second Covenant priests belongs to God,

Now behold, I Myself have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of every firstborn who opens the womb among the children of Israel. **Therefore the Levites shall be Mine. ¹³ because all the firstborn are Mine ...** (Nu. 3:12-13a; emphasis added).

...Likewise he who is called while free is Christ's slave. ²³ **You were bought at a price** (through Christ's shed blood); **do not become slaves of men** (1Cor. 7:22b-23; cf. 6:20 Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

The apostle Paul described the correct role of a leader in the Body of Christ,

Not that we (Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy) have dominion (rule) over your faith, but **are fellow workers for your joy**; for by faith you (the

brethren) stand (2Cor. 1:24; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

During the First Covenant period, some of the Levites were responsible for managing various day-to-day activities in and around God's temple,

Also they (the Levites) shall attend to all the furnishings of the tabernacle of meeting, and to the needs of the children of Israel, to do the work of the tabernacle (Nu. 3:8; Ed. note in parenthesis).

In the Second Covenant, some of God's royal priests (1Pet. 2:9) are meant to fulfill responsibilities similar to those of the Levites,

Then the twelve (Christ's disciples) summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, '**It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables** (be involved with daily church administration). ³ Therefore, brethren, **seek out from among you seven men of good reputation**, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, **whom we may appoint over this business'** (Ac. 6:2-3; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

As stated previously, the males in ancient Israel were numbered from the age of twenty and above. However, the Levitical male children were numbered from the age of one month (Nu. 3:15). This action would reinforce that male children were sanctified, or set apart, to serve in God's temple and would be exposed to these activities from an early age. In a similar way, the children of the Second Covenant royal priesthood are experience God's way of life through the teaching and personal example of their "believing" parents,

For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the (believing) wife, and the unbelieving wife is

sanctified by the (believing) husband; otherwise **your children** would be unclean, but now they **are holy** (1Cor. 7:14; cf. Mal. 2:15; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Just as the twelve families of Israel were separated into four groups, so were the Levites. One of these was located close to the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin,

The families of the Gershonites were to camp behind the tabernacles **westward** (Nu. 3:23; cf. 2:18-24; emphasis added).

Another group of Levites was located close to the tribes of Reuben, Simeon, and Gad,

The families of the children of Kohath were to camp on the **south side** of the tabernacle (Nu. 3:29; cf. 2:10-16; emphasis added).

A third group of Levites was located close to the tribes of Dan, Asher, and Naphtali,

The leader of the fathers' house of the families of Merari was Zuriel the son of Abihail. These were to camp on the **north side** of the tabernacle (Nu. 3:35; cf. 2:25-31; emphasis added).

The final group of Levites consisted of Moses, Aaron, and his sons. They were located eastward toward the tribes of Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun,

Moreover those who were to camp before the tabernacle **on the east**, before the tabernacle of meeting, were Moses, Aaron, and his sons, keeping charge of the sanctuary... (Nu. 3:38a; cf. 2:3-9; emphasis added).

Later in Israel's history, this structure changed with ten families moving to Samaria under King Jeroboam, and only the families of Judah and

Benjamin remaining in Jerusalem under King Rehoboam. These latter two families would eventually be referred to as Jews. This distinction is confirmed when Judah and Benjamin are mustered to fight against the ten families of Israel,

Now it came to pass when all Israel heard that Jeroboam had come back (from exile in Egypt), they sent for him and called him to the congregation, and made him king over all Israel. **There was none who followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah only.** ²¹ **And when (King) Rehoboam came to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah with the tribes of Benjamin,** one hundred and eighty thousand chosen men who were warriors, **to fight against the house of Israel,** that he might restore the kingdom to Rehoboam the son of Solomon (1Kgs. 12:20-21; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

According to the distribution of the Levites amongst the twelve families of Israel, the majority would have accompanied the ten families to Samaria. However, Jeroboam did not allow them to continue serving the people according to the Law of Almighty God,

He (Jeroboam) made shrines on the high places, and made priests from every class of people, **who were not of the sons of Levi** (1Kgs. 12:31; cf. 13:33-34 Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

It appears that Jeroboam learned the pagan religious practices of Egypt when he lived there. As the Egyptians worshiped many gods, it was only a matter of time before these customs began influencing the families of Judah and Benjamin in Jerusalem,

Now **Judah did evil in the sight of the Lord,** and they provoked Him to jealousy with their

sins which they committed, more than all that their fathers had done.²³ For they also built for themselves high places (of pagan worship), sacred pillars, and wooden images on every high hill and under every green tree.²⁴ And there were also perverted persons (Heb. *qedeshim*; those practicing sodomy and prostitution in religious rituals) in the land. They did according to all the abominations of the nations which the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel (1Kgs. 14:22-24; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Going back to the 4th chapter of Numbers, God gave instructions regarding the age of the Levites as they served in His temple. They were to commence serving at thirty years of age and cease at the age of fifty (Nu. 4:3, 23, 30, 35). Training and instruction on day-to-day operations could commence at the age of twenty-five (Nu. 8:24), but responsibility for actively administering animal sacrifices would not occur until the age of thirty. As this work was often very laborious, the priests were to retire from this aspect of service when they reached fifty years of age (Nu. 4:4-33). This would not preclude them from training younger men (Nu. 8:25-26). The phrase "the law of Moses" is sometimes used to describe the strenuous aspect of administering animal sacrifices. Circumcision is also associated with "the law of Moses",

But some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed (in Christ) rose up, saying, '**It is necessary to circumcise** them (new converts to Christianity), and to command them to **keep the law of Moses** (re: circumcision) (Ac. 14:5; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Because administering the Law of Moses, regarding animal sacrifices, was labor-intensive for those who served in God's temple, it was compared to a yoke by the apostle Peter,

Now therefore, why do you (Pharisees) test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? (Ac. 15:10; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Many Christians misuse scriptures like Acts 15:10 to claim that obeying the Law of Almighty God is something that Christ came to abolish. Instead, Christ came to fulfill the law of animal sacrifice by giving his life as a ransom to cover the sins of mankind and the fallen angels of heaven,

Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. **I did not come to destroy but to fulfill** (i.e. the law of animal sacrifice which was a temporary substitute until Christ came as the ultimate sacrifice for the sins of the world; cf. Jn. 1:29) (Mt. 5:17; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Because some people believe that Christ was against his Father's law and commandments, vital lessons contained within these commands must be learned the hard way. One example, and reminder of this truth, is reiterated in the next section of scripture dealing with the transfer of illnesses through various forms of contagion,

Command the children of Israel that they put out of the camp (quarantine) every leper, everyone who has a discharge, and whoever becomes defiled by (has contact with) a dead body (Nu. 5:2; Ed. notes in parentheses).

When anyone sins against his brother, it is the same as sinning against God (cf. Ps. 51:4). Therefore, whatever the trespass may be, the perpetrator must ask God for forgiveness first and then restore and/or compensate one's brother for damages,

...When a man or woman commits any sin that men commit in unfaithfulness against the Lord, and that person is (found) guilty,⁷ then he shall confess the sin which he has done. (Then) he shall make restitution for his trespass in full value plus one-fifth of it (cf. Lev. 6:4-5), and give it to the one he has wronged (Nu. 5:6b-7; Ed. notes in parentheses).

King David acknowledged his conspiracy to place Uriah in harm's way, in an attempt to have him killed in battle, was worthy of the death penalty (2Sam. 11:15; cf. 2 Sam. 12:13). Although God extended mercy to David, he would still have to obey God's law regarding compensation to one of Uriah's relatives and, if there was no relative still alive, restitution would be paid to the Levitical priesthood,

But if the man has no kinsman (relative; redeemer) to whom restitution may be made for the wrong, the restitution for the wrong must go to the Lord for the priest, in addition to the ram of the atonement (covering for sin; cf. Lev. 5:15; 6:6-7; 7:7) with which atonement is made for him (Nu. 5:8; Ed. notes in parentheses).

In Numbers 5:15, a "jealousy offering" is described. The purpose was to determine whether a wife had been unfaithful to her husband. This would only be necessary if there were no witnesses to the supposed transgression (Nu. 5:13). Neither oil nor frankincense was to be included with this offering of barley meal. The absence of oil reflected the serious nature of the petition because oil was inclusive of joy or gladness, while the absence of oil denoted sorrow or humiliation (Isa. 61:3; Joel 2:19; Rev. 6:6). The aroma of frankincense was absent for similar reasons because it would be presumptuous to have this pleasant smell circulating prior to any determination of guilt or innocence. The symbolism associated with the drink consumed by the accused woman consisted of holy water,

which pictured the action of God's spirit leading to everlasting life (Jn. 4:10, 14; Rev. 7:17), and dust, which pictured death (Gen. 3:19; Job 7:21; Ps. 22:15),

The priest shall take holy water in an earthen vessel, and take some of the dust that is on the floor of the tabernacle and put it into the water (Nu. 5:17).

It is not a coincidence that the holy water, which pictured the action of Almighty God's Holy Spirit, was contained within an earthen vessel because this foreshadowed the Son of God coming in an earthen vessel, or body, and exercising the power of his Father's Holy Spirit. It was by this power that Jesus Christ was able to discern any form of sexual misconduct,

The woman said to him (Christ), 'Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw.'¹⁶ Jesus said to her, 'Go, call your husband, and come here.'¹⁷ The woman answered and said, 'I have no husband.' Jesus said to her, 'You have well said, 'I have no husband,'¹⁸ for **you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband;** in that you spoke truly' (Jn. 4:15-18; cf. 8:4; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

In addition to the holy water and dust, the written consequences of the accusations against the woman entered her body. If she was found innocent, no harm would befall her (Nu. 5:28),

Then the priest shall write these curses in a book, and he shall scrape them off into the bitter water.²⁴ And he shall make the woman drink the bitter water that brings a curse, and the water that brings the curse shall enter her to become bitter (Nu. 5:23-24; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Prior to drinking the bitter water, a portion of the grain offering was burnt on the altar signifying the point in the ceremony where God's response was requested (Nu. 5:26). If the woman was found guilty, it confirmed that she lied to her husband and committed adultery. Consequently, death would follow (Nu. 5:21-22, 27; cf. Lev. 20:10). Although mankind has complete freedom to obey the word of God or not, everlasting death is the reward for those who choose to sin (Mt. 4:4; 19:17; cf. I Jn. 3:4; Rom. 6:23),

I (God) call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life (everlasting) and death (everlasting), blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live (Dt. 30:19; Ed. notes in parentheses).

The 6th chapter of Numbers describes a vow that either a man or woman could take in order to separate themselves from certain worldly pursuits and pleasures for a period of time (Nu. 6:2-4). The purpose was to focus on the individual's spiritual relationship with Almighty God, and participate in activities that improve one's personal development as a servant of God. Seeking to be a more teachable person was emphasized by a man growing his hair, which was a very humbling action in a nation that understood long hair was shameful for a man,

Does not even nature itself teach you that **if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him?** (1Cor. 11:14; emphasis added)

Nor shall they (males) shave their heads, **nor let their hair grow long; but they shall keep their hair well-trimmed** (Eze. 44:20; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

For any woman taking the Nazirite vow, her most humbling period of time came when the

vow ended because she had to cut off her hair, giving her the appearance of either a male, or a leper (Nu. 6:18; cf. Dt. 22:5),

...But if **it is shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaved**, let her be covered (1Cor. 11:6b; cf. 11:15; emphasis added).

To be teachable, an individual must be in a humble state of mind. Therefore, anyone with a high opinion of themselves, or their own abilities, is unlikely to receive God's instruction,

Before destruction the heart of a man is haughty (high-minded), and before honor (can be bestowed) is humility (Prov. 18:12; Ed. notes in parentheses).

By humility and the fear (deep respect) of the Lord are riches and honor and life (everlasting) (Prov. 22:4; Ed. notes in parentheses; cf. 1Pet. 5:5).

Anyone committing to the Nazirite vow was expected to be single-minded with a determination to finish, despite all obstacles and distractions that might occur during that period of time (Nu. 6:6-12). Today, those who determine to serve God must be "spiritual Nazirites", in the sense that they must forsake whatever might prevent them from fulfilling the commitment they made to God at their baptism,

But Jesus said to him (an individual wanting to follow Christ as Christ followed his heavenly Father), 'No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back (wishing they hadn't made the decision to serve God), is fit for the kingdom of God' (Lk. 9:62; Ed. notes in parentheses).

... let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with

endurance the race that is set before us (Heb. 12:1b; cf. Jas. 5:11).

...But he who endures to the end (of one's life, or the return of Christ if that comes first) will be saved (Mt. 10:22b; Ed. note in parenthesis).

A "spiritual Nazarite" will not be recognized by long hair or abstinence from the foods mentioned in Numbers 6:3-4. Instead, they will be serving God without trying to draw any attention to themselves,

Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them... (Mt. 6:1a)

But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴ that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you (Mt. 6:3-4).

It might seem strange that an individual during the First Covenant, who completed his/her Nazarite vow, had to provide offerings even though they had already denied themselves many pleasures and pursuits for a period of time (Nu. 6:14-21). However, this fits with what is expected from a Second Covenant "spiritual Nazarite",

So likewise you (God's servants today), when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do' (Lk. 17:10).

The fact that some individuals were dedicated to a Nazarite vow before they were born (Jgs. 13:5, 12-14; 1Sam. 1:11; Lk. 1:15), was meant to picture those predestined to serve in God's spiritual household prior to their birth,

For whom He (Almighty God) foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His son (Christ) that he (Christ) might be the firstborn among many brethren. ³⁰ Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called, these He also justified (following their repentance of sin), these He also glorified (will glorify in the first resurrection; cf. Rev. 20:6) (Rom. 8:29-30; cf. Eph. 1:4-5, 11; Ed. notes in parentheses).

The apostle Paul used the Nazarite vow to confirm that the physical temple of God would no longer have the authority vested in it (Jn. 4:20-21; cf. 1Cor. 3:16-17; 2Cor. 6:16), and that the animal sacrificial system was fulfilled by Christ's sacrifice because when Paul shaved his hair he did not place it on the fire under an animal sacrifice at God's temple in Jerusalem, per the specific instructions in Numbers 6:13-18,

So Paul still remained a good while (many days). Then he took leave of the brethren and sailed for Syria, and Priscilla and Aquila were with him. **He had his hair cut off at Cenchrea** (a seaport in Corinth), **for he had taken a vow** (Ac. 18:18; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Paul's ministry attested to the fact he was a "spiritual Nazarite" because he dedicated his life to doing God's work until his death, and he did not allow any obstacle to prevent him,

...I (Paul) speak as a fool – I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. ²⁴ From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; ²⁶ in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils

in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;²⁷ in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fasting often, in cold and nakedness (2Cor. 11:23b-27; Ed. note in parenthesis).

The dedication of anyone, who made a Nazarite vow, acted as an example for God's Levitical priests who were to dedicate themselves to serving the nation of Israel (Nu. 7:1-89). Sadly, they did not follow that example for very long, with the exception of the lineage of Zadok (Eze. 44:15; 48:11). The same can be said for those Second Covenant priests who depart from the work they are supposed to do,

I (Paul) marvel that **you are turning away so soon** from Him (Almighty God) who called you in the grace (forgiveness) of Christ, to a different gospel (Gal. 1:6; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

The offerings from each of the families of Israel, mentioned in Numbers 7:1-89, were all the same with no variations. Among other things, this reinforced that God views all His people as equal, even though they have different responsibilities during this lifetime,

But now indeed there are many members, yet one body.²¹ And the eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you'; nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.'²² No, much rather, those members of the body which **seem** (in our human opinion) to be weaker are necessary.²³ And those members of the body which **we think** (in our self-righteous human opinion) to be less honorable, on those we (should) bestow greater honor; and our unrepresentable parts have greater modesty,²⁴ but our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it,²⁵ that there should be no schism (division) in the body, but that the

members should have the same care for one another (1Cor. 12: 20-25; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Aaron the High Priest was a "type" of the High Priest to come, Jesus Christ (Heb. 4:14-16; 5:1-10). Aaron's priesthood was limited because human beings die (Heb. 7:15-18, 23-24). However, Christ's priesthood will last forever because it consists of those who have repented, been baptized, and are in receipt of Almighty God's Holy Spirit, which leads to everlasting life, But if the Spirit of Him (Almighty God) who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life (everlasting) to your mortal bodies through His Spirit which dwells in you (Rom. 8:11; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Therefore, as the priesthood of Aaron could not continue, neither could that of the Levitical priests (Heb. 7:11-12). Nonetheless, aspects of Aaron's service to God's people, as well as that of the Levites, need to be considered as an example to those who wish to serve under Jesus Christ as kings and priests in the soon-coming kingdom of God (1Pet. 2:5, 9-10; Rev. 5:10). The Levites were regarded as God's firstborn and belonged to Him (Nu. 8:14, 16-18). In like manner, the priests of the Second Covenant belong to Him and are considered His "spiritual firstfruits",

For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body... (1Cor. 6:20a).

You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men (1Cor. 7:23).

Of His (Almighty God's) own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that **we** (God's servants) **might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures** (Jas. 1:18; cf. Rev. 14:4; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

The Levitical priesthood was to be cleansed ceremonially by washing their clothes and bodies (Nu. 8:6-7, 21). The Second Covenant priests are washed by God's word until they are clean "spiritually-speaking",

That he (Christ) might sanctify (set apart) and **cleanse it** (God's true church) **with the washing of water by the word** (of God), ²⁷ that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle (symbolic of having sins removed by Christ's shed blood; cf. Heb. 9:22) or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish (Eph. 5:26-27; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Before commencing their service to God and the people of ancient Israel, the Levites had hands laid upon them (Nu. 8:9-10). The same ceremony is to occur prior to God's servants receiving His Holy Spirit during the Second Covenant period,

Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, ¹⁵ who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. ¹⁶ For as yet it had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ¹⁷ **Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit** (Ac. 8:14-17; emphasis added).

After the Levites had hands laid on them, they were symbolically waved before God which pictured giving themselves whole-heartedly to His service (Nu. 8:11, 13, 15).

In like manner, following repentance, baptism, and the laying on of hands, the priests of the Second Covenant are to offer themselves wholly to the service of Almighty God,

I (Paul) beseech (urge) you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you **present your bodies a living sacrifice**, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service (Rom. 12:1; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

The Levitical priests could not begin serving God until their past sins were covered, which was pictured by the substitutionary sacrifice of a bull (Nu. 8:12; cf. Heb. 9:13). In contrast, the priests of the Second Covenant could not have their past sins covered by the blood of a bull (Heb. 10:4). Instead, their only method of reconciliation to Almighty God was through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ,

Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and **to give his life a ransom for many** (Mt. 20:28; cf. Mk. 10:45; 1Tim. 2:6; emphasis added).

The Levitical priests were to serve Aaron, the High Priest (Nu. 8:19, 22), while the Second Covenant priests are to serve Christ and not a human leader,

Paul, a servant (slave) of Jesus Christ.... (Rom. 1:1a).

And a cloud came and overshadowed them; and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, 'This is My beloved Son. **Hear him!**' (Mk. 9:7; cf. Mt. 17:5; Lk. 9:35; emphasis added).

You call me (Christ) Teacher (Master) and Lord, and you say well, for so I am (Jn. 13:13; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Importance of the Passover

If Christ failed in the commission he was given by Almighty God, all sinners would be consigned to everlasting death (Rom. 6:23a). However,

because Christ completed his work, every sinner has the potential for everlasting life through the blood he shed on their behalf (Heb. 9:22). However, each sinner must first recognize they are personally responsible for Christ's death and then repent, asking God's forgiveness for all the sins they have committed. Once this occurs, an individual can be baptized by immersion in water, which pictures the complete burial of their old sinful way of living. When they come out of the water, clean of their past sins, they are ready for a new life of obedience to the Law of Almighty God (Rom. 6:4). This understanding is so important that God commands His people to observe the Passover each year with the symbols of unleavened bread, wine, and footwashing. Passover, followed immediately by the Days of Unleavened Bread, is one of God's three annual festivals and the only one that provides a second opportunity for its observance if someone cannot, for legitimate reasons, keep it on the evening of the 14th day of the first month. In cases like this, they can observe it on the evening of 14th day of the second month,

Let the children of Israel keep the Passover at its appointed time. ³ on the fourteenth day of this (first) month at twilight (between the evenings), you shall keep (observe) it at its appointed time. According to all its rites (statutes, which were modified by Christ per the instructions to his disciples; cf. 1Cor. 11:23-26) and ceremonies you shall keep it (Nu. 9:2-3; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Now there were certain men who were defiled by the dead body of a man, so that they could not keep the Passover on that day (cf. Nu. 5:2; 19:11-12; Jn. 18:28); and they came before Moses and Aaron that day. ⁷ And those men said to him, 'We became defiled by the dead body of a man. Why are we kept from presenting the offering of the Lord at its appointed time among

the children of Israel?' (Nu. 9:6-7; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ¹⁰ Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'If anyone of you or your posterity (descendants) is unclean because of a dead body, or is far away on a journey, he may still keep the Lord's Passover. ¹¹ On the fourteenth day **of the second month**, at twilight, they may keep it....' (Nu. 9:9-11a; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

According to the Passover command, anyone who did not observe it would be cut off from God's people (Nu. 9:13). This also applies to those living during the Second Covenant as confirmed by Jesus Christ just prior to his death,

Peter said to him (Christ), 'You shall never wash my feet!' Jesus answered him, 'If I do not wash you, **you have no part with me** (Jn. 13:6; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Christ taught how to observe the Second Covenant Passover with unleavened bread, wine, and footwashing. He commanded his servants to use these symbols annually when they observed the Passover in remembrance of what he did to reconcile sinners to Almighty God,

So when he (Christ) had washed their feet, taken his garments, and sat down again, he said to them, 'Do you know (understand) what I have done to you?' (Jn. 13:12; Ed. notes in parentheses).

If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you (Jn. 13:14-15).

Christ was not making a suggestion in the verses above. Instead, it was a command from

Almighty God, through His son, that anyone claiming to be a Christian is required to observe the Passover service according to the specific instructions given to the twelve disciples prior to Christ's death (Jn. 7:17; 8:26, 28, 38; 12:50; 14:10).

During the First Covenant anyone wishing to observe the Passover had to be physically circumcised (Ex. 12:48; cf. Nu. 9:14). Those wishing to observe the Second Covenant Passover must have a "circumcised heart." In other words, they must repent of the sins they committed against Almighty God, and trust that Christ's shed blood atones for those sins. Then they must be baptized by immersion in water and have hands laid on them (Ac. 8:14-17),

For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; ²⁹ but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and **circumcision is that of the heart** (i.e. a humble and repentant attitude), in the Spirit, and not in the *letter* (referring to the sacrificial system); whose praise (a play on words – Jew means *praise*) is not from men but from God (Rom. 2:28-29; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

When comparing Numbers 9:15-23 with other scriptures, it becomes apparent that the spirit-being, who became known as Jesus Christ, was leading ancient Israel during the First Covenant period and continues to lead God's church today. The following text is a starting point, and other texts will be examined as well,

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8; cf. 1:12). Christ pointed out to the Jewish religious leaders that he existed as a spirit-being before Abraham's time,

Jesus said to them, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, **before Abraham was, I AM** (Jn. 8:58; emphasis added).

When Moses was speaking to the spirit-being who led Israel out of Egypt, that same spirit-being identified himself as "I AM WHO I AM" in Exodus 3:14. A better translation of this title would be "*I ever shall be the same that I am today.*" This is very close to the statement made in Hebrews 13:8. As mentioned previously in this document, all the titles that the Angel of God, or the Angel of the Lord, carried were given to him by delegation from his heavenly Father (Ex. 23:20-22; cf. Isa. 9:6; Jn. 5:43a) and this is the same angel that is identified as becoming Jesus Christ,

Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that **all our fathers were under the cloud**, all passed through the sea, ² all were baptized (symbolically) into (by, or through) Moses **in the cloud** and in the sea, ³ all ate the same spiritual food (the manna from heaven which Christ compared himself to; cf. Jn. 6:31-58), ⁴ and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of **that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ** (1Cor. 10:1-4; cf. **Ex. 17:6**; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Nor let us (the Second Covenant church) tempt (test) Christ, as some of them (ancient Israelites) also tempted (Christ; as the Angel of God), and were destroyed by serpents (1Cor. 10:9; Ed. notes in parentheses).

So this angel is identified as I AM, and as a cloud, and the spiritual rock that accompanied Israel wherever they traveled.

And the Angel of God, who went before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and **the pillar of cloud** went from before them

and stood behind them (to protect them from the Egyptians) (Ex. 14:19; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

The spirit-being identified by a cloud could not refer to Almighty God because no one has seen or heard Him (cf. Jn. 5:37). Therefore, this cloud can only refer to a subordinate servant of Almighty God (cf. Jn. 14:28; cf. 10:29),

...They have heard that you, Lord, are among these people; that **you, Lord, are seen face to face and that your cloud stands above them; and you go before them in a pillar of cloud by day** and in a pillar of fire by night (Nu. 14:14b; cf. Isa. 58:8).

Therefore, the spirit-being that was known as the Angel of God, or the Angel of the Lord, became known later as Jesus Christ. He was identified as the cloud that directed the people of ancient Israel, and is often referred to as "the Lord" throughout the Old Testament writings,

At the command (mouth) of the Lord the children of Israel would journey, and at the command of the Lord they would camp; **as long as the cloud stayed above the tabernacle they remained encamped** (Nu. 9:18; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

This is the same spirit-being that spoke to Moses in God's tabernacle,

Now when Moses went into the tabernacle of meeting to speak with him (the Lord), he heard the voice of one speaking to him from above the mercy seat that was on the ark of the Testimony, from between the two cherubim; thus he (the Lord) spoke to him (Nu.7:89; Ed. notes in parentheses).

It is the one who is also known as the Word of God or the Word of the Lord (Almighty), that spoke to the servants of Almighty God,

After these things **the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision** (words or sounds are not "seen" in a vision), saying, 'Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward (Gen. 15:1; Ed. notes in parenthesis; emphasis added).

But it happened that night that **the word of God came to Nathan**, saying, ⁴Go and tell my servant David, Thus says the Lord: 'you shall not build me a house to dwell in' (1Chr. 17:3-4; emphasis added).

The word of God is mentioned many times as only speaking as instructed by Almighty God. Hence, the word of God does not speak from his own opinions or resources,

I (Christ) have many things to say and to judge concerning you, but He (Almighty God) who sent me is true; and **I speak to the world those things which I heard from Him.** ²⁷ They did not understand that he spoke to them of (about) the Father. ²⁸ Then Jesus said to them, 'When you lift up (crucify) the Son of man, then you will know that I am he (i.e. the one predicted to come by God's prophets and atone for the sins of mankind); and that **I do nothing of myself; but as my Father taught me, I speak these things** (Jn. 8:26-28; cf. 8:38; 12:49-50; 14:10; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

The word of God was "the beginning of Almighty God's creation", and was subordinate to his Father (Jn. 14:28), and always will be (1Cor. 15:24-28; 11:3; 3:23). The word "god" in the Hebrew language is plural (Gen. 1:26). Therefore, there are many gods but only One True God, the Almighty, who alone has always existed (Jn. 10:34; 1Cor. 8:5). Therefore, Jesus

Christ is a god, but not the One True God (Jn. 17:3),

In the beginning was the Word (who later became known as Jesus Christ), and the Word was with (Gr. toward; i.e. facing Almighty God; cf. Prov. 8:22-36) God, and the Word was (a) God.² He was in the beginning with (Almighty) God.³ All things were made (by delegation from the Father; cf. Col. 1:15-20) through him (Christ), and without him nothing was made that was made (Jn. 1:1-3; Ed. notes in parentheses).

The Word of God and the Angel of the Lord are both titles and responsibilities held by the spirit-being also known as "Commander of the Army of the Lord Almighty",

And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, 'Are You for us or for our adversaries?'¹⁴ So He said, 'No, but as Commander of the army of the Lord I have now come'... (Jos. 5:13-14a).

Then the Commander of the Lord's army said to Joshua, '**Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy** (because this "Commander" was Almighty God's representative).' And Joshua did so (Jos. 5:15; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

The following section of scripture is a second witness to this truth,

And the Angel of the Lord appeared to him (Moses) in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked and behold the bush burned with fire, but the bush was not consumed (Ex. 3:2; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Then he (the Angel of the Lord) said (to Moses), 'Do not draw near this place. **Take your**

sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground (Ex. 3:5; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Although it may appear to be a subtle reference to Christ's former position as Commander of the army of the Lord, the following scripture makes the connection,

Or do you think that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He will provide me (Christ) with more than twelve legions of angels? (Mt. 26:53; Ed. note in parenthesis)

So the spirit-being who became known as Jesus Christ carries many titles, offices, and responsibilities. As just noted, some of these are Angel of God, Angel of the Lord, the Word of God, and the Commander of the Army of the Lord. He also carries many of his heavenly Father's titles because he is Almighty God's representative (Jn. 5:43a). One of these can be directly linked to the Angel of the Lord, and it will be highlighted in the following quotation,

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder. And his name will be called **Wonderful**, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6; emphasis added).

And the Angel of the Lord said to him (Manoah), 'Why do you ask my name, seeing it is **wonderful**?' (Jgs. 13:18; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Going back to Numbers 9:15-23, when the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle of meeting, the sons of Aaron would blow two silver trumpets to signal the start for moving camp. Following this alert, the families would begin moving out according to the order established in the 2nd chapter of Numbers (Nu. 10:5-6, 14-28). In addition to moving camp, the trumpeters

would use different signals to indicate what God wanted the people to do (Nu. 10:3-4, 7, 9-10). This has spiritual significance for God's people today because they need to be very clear about God's instructions and communicate them accurately to others,

For if the trumpet makes an uncertain sound, who will prepare himself for battle? ⁹ So likewise you, **unless you utter by the tongue words easy to understand, how will it be known what is spoken?** For you will be speaking into the air (1Cor. 14:8-9; emphasis added).

Cry aloud, spare not (do not hold back); **lift up your voice like a trumpet; tell My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins** (Isa. 58:1; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Also, trumpets were blown to announce battle (Nu. 10:9) and this would be a reflection of the same activities that take place in the spirit realm,

And war broke out in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon (symbol of Satan; cf. Rev. 12:9); and the dragon and his angels fought (Rev. 12:7; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Trumpets will be blown in the heavenly realm to announce a series of "end-time" events that will occur just prior to Christ's return (Rev. 8:7-13; 9:1-21). It has been assumed by many in the Christian world that the sound of these trumpets will be heard on earth. However, as these are blown in heaven it is unlikely that anyone on earth will hear them (Rev. 8:1-2, 6).

As trumpets are blown to announce the arrival of royalty, or other dignitaries, the same will occur in the context of Almighty God taking control of every authority that opposes His law and commandments,

Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord (Almighty; cf. Rev. 11:17; 1Cor. 15:24-28) and of His Christ, and He (Almighty God) shall reign forever and ever!' (Rev. 11:15; Ed. notes in parentheses)

In the next section of scripture, we are reminded again that Almighty God gave His authority to the "Lord" who was tasked with bringing the nation of Israel out of Egypt. Almighty God stated that this "Lord", who later became known as Jesus Christ, would be "an enemy to your (Israel's) enemies and an adversary to your adversaries" (Ex. 23:22-23). As the nation of ancient Israel was to be reminded about this periodically, Moses proclaimed the following each time the camp relocated,

So it was, whenever the ark set out, that Moses said: 'Rise up, O Lord! Let Your enemies be scattered, and those who hate You flee before You' (Nu. 10:35).

On the other hand, if the people of Israel transgressed the Law of Almighty God, the "Lord" that brought them out of Egypt would act quickly to punish them, as mentioned in Exodus 23:21,

Now, when the people complained, it displeased the Lord; for the Lord heard it, and his anger was aroused. So the fire of the Lord burned among them, and consumed some in the outskirts of the camp (Nu. 11:1).

As stressful as this situation was, most of the people did not learn from it. Instead, they began complaining shortly after Moses prayed for the fire to stop (Nu. 11:4-6). They were not grateful that the Lord had freed them from Egyptian slavery. Instead, they focused on anything they felt was unfair, or unjust (Nu. 11:7-10, 18-20).

However, the root problem was their distrust of God's word, and their insistence on disobeying it (1Cor. 10:5-11).

During this period of time, some parallels between Moses' ministry and that of Jesus Christ become apparent. For instance, Moses had no idea how the Lord could fulfill the promise of feeding six hundred thousand men (Nu. 11:21-23), and a similar situation arose following Christ's preaching to the multitudes that followed him,

But he (Christ) answered and said to them (his disciples), 'You give them (five thousand men; cf. Mk. 6:44) something to eat.' And they said to him, 'Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give them something to eat?'³⁸ But he said to them, 'How many loaves do you have? Go and see.' And when they found out they said, 'Five, and two fish.'³⁹ Then he commanded them to make them all sit down in groups on the green grass (Mk. 6:37-39; Ed. notes in parentheses).

And when he had taken the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to his disciples to set before them; and the two fish he divided among them all.⁴² So they all ate and were filled (Mk. 6:41-42).

Following Christ's resurrection, Almighty God's Holy Spirit descended upon those who were observing the Day of Pentecost and they began speaking in various languages (Ac. 2:4-11). At the same time Peter quoted the prophet Joel, indicating that this activity was a partial fulfillment of an ongoing process that will continue until the second resurrection is completed (Ac. 2:17-18). Therefore, the following incident that occurred during Moses' ministry foreshadowed what would occur on the Day of Pentecost following Christ's resurrection,

Then the Lord came down in the cloud, and spoke to him (Moses), and took of the Spirit that was upon him, and placed the same upon the seventy elders; and it happened, **when the Spirit rested upon them, that they prophesied**, although they never did so again (Nu. 11:25; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Also, similar to what happened during Christ's ministry (Mk. 9:38-41), some of those closest to Moses were jealous of anyone outside their immediate fellowship who appeared to be doing God's work. Sadly, this competitive and sectarian attitude is as prevalent today as it was during the time of Moses and Jesus Christ,

But two men had remained in the camp: the name of one was Eldad, and the name of the other Medad. And the Spirit rested upon them. Now they were among those listed, but who had not gone out to the tabernacle; yet they prophesied in the camp (Nu. 11:26).

So Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, one of his choice men, answered and said, "Moses my lord, forbid them!"²⁹ Then Moses said to him (Joshua), 'Are you zealous (jealous) for my sake? Oh, that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!' (Nu. 11:28-29; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Before leaving this chapter in the book of Numbers, it should be noted that as Christ sent out seventy men to explain God's way of life to numerous people (Lk. 10:1-11, 17-20), so Moses gathered seventy men who were responsible for assisting him in teaching and administering the Law of Almighty God to the people of Israel,

So Moses went out and told the people the words of the Lord, and he gathered the seventy men of the elders of the people, and placed

them around the tabernacle (Nu. 11:24; cf. 11:16-17).

Going back to the people's complaint about having only "manna" to eat, when the Lord provided quail in abundance, some of the people were so lustful and gluttonous they began consuming the meat with the blood still in it, which is against the Law of Almighty God (Nu. 11:31-34; cf. Ex. 12:9; Lev. 3:17; 7:26; 17:10-14; 19:26).

Respect for delegated authority was an issue even for the leaders within ancient Israel. When Moses married an Ethiopian woman, Miriam and Aaron disapproved of his decision. Had they kept their opinion to themselves and not made it public, there would have been no repercussions. However, familiarity turned into open contempt and the Lord responded,

Suddenly the Lord said to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, 'Come out, you three, to the tabernacle of meeting!' So the three came out. ⁵ Then the Lord came down in the pillar of cloud and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam. And they both went forward. ⁶ Then He said, 'Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the Lord, make Myself known to him in a vision, and I speak to him in a dream. ⁷ Not so with My servant Moses; He is faithful in all My house. ⁸ I speak with him face to face, even plainly, and not in dark sayings (riddles); and he sees the form of the Lord (another proof this is the spirit-being that later became Jesus Christ; cf. Jn. 5:37). Why then were you not afraid to speak against My servant Moses?' (Nu. 12:4-8; Ed. notes in parentheses).

The actions of Aaron and Miriam were regarded as sinful because they accused God's anointed leader of wrongdoing, and felt justified in putting themselves forward as better leaders. It is important to note that this is something David

would not do, and why the Lord referred to him as "a man after God's heart" (1Sam. 24:6, 10; cf. 1Sam. 13:14; Ac. 13:22). Because sin had been committed, Aaron pleaded for Moses to intercede so that Miriam's life could be restored (Nu. 12:11),

Please do not let her (Miriam) be as one dead, whose flesh is half consumed when he comes out of his mother's womb! ¹³ So Moses cried out to the Lord saying, 'Please heal her, O God, I pray!' (Nu. 12:12-13; cf. Jas. 5:16). Because of Moses' prayer on behalf of Miriam (Jas. 5:15), she was healed but remained outside the camp for seven days according to the law pertaining to lepers (Nu. 12:10; cf. 13th chapter of Leviticus). It is in the spirit of this example, that the following injunction was made during the time of Christ's apostles,

Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine (1Tim. 5:17).

Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses (1Tim. 5:19).

In the 13th chapter of Numbers, a leader from each of the twelve families of Israel was selected for reconnaissance work in the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The main purpose for this mission was to prepare the army of Israel for invasion. However, the majority of the reports brought back after forty days were negative, which discouraged the Israelites from entering this Promised Land (Nu. 13:31-33). As mentioned previously, rather than trust and obey God's word, the majority of the nation wanted to return to Egypt and immerse themselves again in the pagan religious systems (Nu. 14:4). To maintain this position, they conveniently "forgot" that the Lord had delivered them from their enemies when they crossed the

Red Sea during their exodus from Egypt. Instead of bringing this to remembrance and trusting God, they wanted to stone those who believed that God would grant them victory over their enemies (Nu. 14:10; cf. 10:35),

And the Lord said to Moses: 'How long will these people reject (despise) Me? And **how long will they not believe Me, with (after) all the signs (miracles) which I have performed among them?** (Nu. 14:11; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Therefore, if people are determined not to trust and obey what God tells them to do, it doesn't matter how many miracles are performed. This is central to understanding why Christ said the following to the Jewish religious leaders,

Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, 'Teacher, we want to see a sign from you.' ³⁹ But he (Christ) answered and said to them, '**An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign,** and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah (Mt. 12:38-39; cf. 16:1-4; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Now when he (Christ) was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, he answered them and said, '**The kingdom of God does not come with observation**' (SGD 3907; in a visible manner) (Lk. 17:20; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Today, there are many well-meaning religious people who are looking for signs to determine when Christ will return. However, they will not be able to recognize the "signs of the times", mentioned in Matthew 16:3, because they do not seek to live by the Law of Almighty God (Mt. 4:4; cf. 7:21-23).

Not only did Moses pray for Miriam's healing, he also interceded in the hope of sparing the Israelites from certain death (Nu. 14:12),

Now if You (the Lord who later became Jesus Christ; cf. Nu. 14:14) kill these people as one man, then the nations which have heard of Your fame will speak, saying, ¹⁶ Because the Lord was not able to bring this people to the land which He swore to give them, therefore He killed them in the wilderness' (Nu. 14:15-16; Ed. note in parenthesis).

'Pardon the iniquity of this people, I pray, according to the greatness of Your mercy, just as You have forgiven this people, from Egypt until now.' ²⁰ Then the Lord said: 'I have pardoned, according to your (Moses') word' (Nu. 14:19-20; cf. Jn. 14:13-14).

Nonetheless, the Lord was going to prevent all the rebels from entering the Promised Land because they refused to obey what they were told,

Because all these men who have seen My glory and the signs which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have put Me to the test now these ten times, and **have not heeded My voice,** ²³ they certainly shall not see the land of which I swore to their fathers (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob), nor shall any of those who rejected Me see it (Nu. 14:22-23; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Christianity today is in an incongruous position because its conduct, for the most part, is no different than ancient Israel's. If the Israelite's disobedience prevented them from entering the Promised Land, how do Christians who ignore the Law of Almighty God expect to enter the kingdom of God? As mentioned earlier, God hasn't changed and the Promised Land is a "type" of the kingdom of God. The apostle Paul

compared entering the kingdom of God to entering God's rest,

Let us therefore **be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall after the same example of disobedience.** ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. ¹³ And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but **all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account** (Heb. 4:11-13; emphasis added).

After this life is over, everyone will have to give account for their behavior based on what is written in the books of the Bible. Therefore, transgressing the Law of Almighty God applies equally to those who lived prior to Christ's first coming, and those who lived from the time of Christ's resurrection onward. There will be no exceptions,

And I (the apostle John) saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books (of the Bible; cf. Jn. 12:48) were opened. And another book (different from the Bible) was opened, which is the Book of Life (everlasting). And **the dead were judged according to their works** (not a popular teaching in much of Christianity today), **by the things which were written in the books** (of the Bible) (Rev. 20:12; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Going back to the negative report of those who searched out the Promised Land, the Lord decided to punish that rebellious generation one year for each of the forty days the twelve leaders were scouting their future home,

And your sons shall be shepherds (wanderers) in the wilderness forty years, and bear the brunt of your infidelity, until your carcasses are

consumed in the wilderness. ³⁴ According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for each day you shall bear your guilt (iniquity) one year, namely forty years, and you shall know My rejection (opposition). ³⁵ I the Lord have spoken this; I will surely do so to all this evil congregation who are gathered together against Me. In this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die (Nu. 14:33-35; Ed. notes in parentheses).

After forty years in the wilderness all the adult population that left Egypt perished, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb (Nu. 14:29-30). In a similar manner, forty years after Christ's earthly ministry ended, the generation that rejected him came to an end and this coincided with the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem in 70 CE.

Following the Lord's judgment on the generation that left Egypt, they feigned repentance (Nu. 14:39-40). However, their hearts were still in a state of rebellion because they were determined to receive the blessing of the Promised Land even though their punishment was to die in the wilderness. Moses warned them not to enter the Promised Land, but they ignored what he said and suffered the consequences (Nu. 14:39-45). In a similar manner, the Pharisees and Sadducees wanted the benefits associated with God's favor without actually changing their rebellious behavior (Mt. 23:1-26),

But when he (John the baptizer) saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, 'Brood of vipers! Who has warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸ Therefore **bear fruits worthy of repentance** (Mt. 3:7-8; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

In Numbers 15:1-12, the Lord stressed the importance of including flour, oil, and wine with

the animal offerings. As mentioned previously, these were symbols associated with Jesus Christ. Flour is the main ingredient in bread, and Christ is the bread of life (Jn. 6:35, 48). The bread that Christ broke during the meal before his death represented his broken body (Mt. 26:26; 1Cor. 11:24). The wine represented Christ's shed blood (Mt. 26:28; 1Cor. 11:25). The oil symbolized God's Holy Spirit at work in Christ as well as every repentant individual (Ex. 29:7, 21; Lev. 8:12, 30; 10:7; 21:10, 12; 1Sam. 10:1; 16:13). Therefore, it is only those who have repented and been baptized that can partake of the symbols of unleavened bread and wine during the Second Covenant Passover service each year. This Second Covenant Passover service is not limited by an individual's ethnicity or gender,

One ordinance (statute) shall be for you of the congregation and for the stranger who sojourns with you, an ordinance forever throughout your generations; as you are, so shall the stranger be before the Lord. ¹⁶ **One law and one custom shall be for you and for the stranger who sojourns with you** (Nu. 15:15-16; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you (who have repented and been baptized) are all one in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:28; cf. Col. 3:11; Ed. note in parenthesis).

It was the bread of life that came down from heaven, Jesus Christ, who also brought the ancient Israelites out of Egyptian slavery (Jn. 6:50-51). Because of Christ's willing sacrifice, he made it possible for repentant sinners to come out of spiritual Egypt (i.e. sin; cf. Rev. 18:4; 1Cor. 15:14-19). Therefore, when the Israelites gave a heave offering, it pre-figured Christ's ascension to his heavenly Father following his

death and resurrection (Mt. 26:64; Mk. 12:36; 14:62),

Then it will be, when you eat of the bread of the land, that you shall offer up a heave offering to the Lord. ²⁰ You shall offer up a cake of the first of your ground meal as a heave offering; as a heave offering of the threshing floor, so shall you offer it up. ²¹ Of the first of your ground meal you shall give to the Lord a heave offering throughout your generations (Nu. 15:19-21).

Mercy was extended to the nation of Israel if they sinned unintentionally, providing they offered the proscribed sacrifices (Nu. 15:22-26). The same applied to an individual who sinned unintentionally, whether they were citizens by birth, or strangers (Nu. 15:27-28). Therefore, God's mercy and forgiveness has never been limited to any period of time, or any single group of people,

You shall have one law for him who sins unintentionally, both **for him who is native-born among the children of Israel and for the stranger** who sojourns among them (Nu. 15:29; emphasis added).

However, if someone knew better and sinned willfully, God's mercy was withdrawn and that individual would suffer the consequences of their actions (Heb. 10:26-28),

But the person who does anything presumptuously (defiantly), whether he is native-born or a stranger, that one brings reproach on (blasphemes) the Lord, and he shall be cut off (put to death) from among his people. ³¹ Because he has despised the word of the Lord, and has broken His commandment, that person shall be completely cut off; his guilt (iniquity; sin) shall be upon him (Nu. 15:30-31; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Is the above scenario unique to the First Covenant period as some believe and teach?

For if we (who know better) sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, ²⁷ but a certain fearful expectation of judgment (at the second resurrection; cf. Rev. 20:5-6), and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. ²⁸ Anyone who rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. ²⁹ Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the (second) covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace (God's mercy)? (Heb. 10:26-29; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Therefore, any Israelite who committed a capital offence during the First Covenant period would be executed and wait until the second resurrection from the dead; at which time they would have an opportunity to repent and have their sins covered by Christ's shed blood (Nu. 15:32-36). Anyone who repents of their sins, and is baptized during the Second Covenant period, should they sin defiantly afterward, will forfeit their position in the first resurrection under Jesus Christ (Jn. 5:28-29; 14:2-3; cf. Rev. 20:1-4). They will also be resurrected and judged at the second resurrection.

The animal sacrificial system was intended, among other things, to remind the people of their sins and the consequences of those sins (Heb. 10:3). From many scriptural examples, it is clear the Israelites had to be reminded because they constantly transgressed the terms of the covenant they made with God at Mt. Sinai (Ex. 19:8; Dt. 26:17). Therefore, tassels with blue thread were placed on their garments as a reminder, every time they got dressed (Nu. 15:37-41). However, the ideal situation would

be for the nation of Israel to obey God without being prompted by physical reminders. In order for this to happen, Christ had to fulfill the law of animal sacrifices and make God's Holy Spirit readily available to everyone willing to repent of their sins (Mt. 5:17; cf. Ac. 2:16-18). Once in possession of God's Spirit, the process of "writing the Law of Almighty God on the heart", could begin on a much larger scale (Jer. 31:31-34; Joel 2:28-32). This has been God's desire from the beginning, and is expressed a number of times in scripture. However, it will not see its ultimate fulfillment until the second resurrection from the dead (Eze. 37:1-14),

Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me (show respect) **and always keep all My commandments**, that it might be well with them and with their children forever! (Dt. 5:29; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Judging by the conduct of the nation of Judah (the Jews), and the ten nations known by the name Israel, the tassels with blue thread did not make much difference (cf. Jer. 3:8).

Had these tassels worked as intended, it would not have been necessary for Christ to lambaste the Jewish religious leaders during his earthly ministry (cf. Mt. 23:1-36). It is no coincidence that Christ gave the example of requesting daily bread in Matthew 6:11, which he had previously connected to the word of God in Matthew 4:4, because he wanted to stress the importance of seeking God's word on a daily basis. By doing this and acting on it, an individual would be considered "metaphorically" as having "tassels". Again, the action of Almighty God's Spirit is central to this being effective as Christ confirmed,

But when the helper (Gr. *parakletos*; comforter) comes, which I (Christ) shall send to you from

the Father, **the Spirit of truth which proceeds from the Father**, it will testify of me (Jn. 15:26; cf. 14:26; emphasis added).

In Numbers 16:1-40, the rebellion of some of the key leaders within the nation of Israel reflected the modus operandi of Satan, which resulted in his expulsion from the presence of Almighty God (Isa. 14:12-15; Eze. 28:12-19). Before his rebellion, Satan, like Korah and his followers, had an important position and responsibility within God's household. However, neither Satan, nor Korah, appreciated what they were given. Instead, their main focus was to acquire more power and authority. In Satan's case, he wanted to be worshiped in the same manner that Almighty God is to be worshiped (Mt. 4:8-10),

Is it a small thing to you that the God of Israel has separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to Himself, to do the work of the tabernacle of the Lord, and to stand before the congregation to serve them; ¹⁰ and that He has brought you near to Himself, you and all your brethren, the sons of Levi, with you? And **are you seeking the priesthood** (of Aaron the High Priest) **also?** ¹¹ Therefore **you and all your company are gathered together against the Lord**. And **what is Aaron that you murmur against him?** (Nu. 16:9-11; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

As confirmed earlier, the spirit-being that became Jesus Christ was originally created by Almighty God and given his Father's authority to act as His representative in heaven and on earth (Ex. 23:20-23; Col. 1:16-18; Heb. 1:1-2). As Christ is also the high priest of Almighty God (Heb. 5:5-11), and as Korah was influenced to remove Aaron the high priest, it can be deduced that the main target of Satan's attack was his spiritual brother, the Angel of God who became Jesus Christ. In a physical sense only, Satan was

successful in killing Christ just as Cain killed his brother Abel,

Now after the piece of bread (was eaten), Satan entered him (Judas Iscariot). Then Jesus said to him (Satan), 'what you do (betrayal, inevitably leading to death), do quickly' (Jn. 13:27; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Like Christ, Moses did nothing of his own authority and yet both were criticized on a regular basis by the very people they were serving,

Then Moses said: 'By this you shall know that **the Lord has sent me to do all these works, for I have not done them of my own will**' (Nu. 16:28; emphasis added).

I (Christ) can of myself do nothing. As I hear (from Almighty God), I judge; and my judgment is righteous, because **I do not seek my own will but the will of the Father who sent me** (Jn. 5:30; cf. 5:36; 10:25, 37-38; 14:12; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Punishment for Korah's rebellion is similar to that of Satan and the fallen angels because they all go successively to the pit, and wait for a final judgment at the second resurrection of the dead,

So they and all those with them (Korah and his followers) **went down alive into the pit;** the earth closed over them, and they perished from among the congregation (Nu. 16:33; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Yet **you** (Satan) **shall be brought down to Sheol** (the grave), to the lowest depths (recesses) of **the pit** (Isa. 14:15; cf. Mal. 4:3; Rom. 16:20a; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Even after the death of Korah and all those who followed him, many in the congregation still refused to recognize the authority God had placed in Moses (Nu. 16:41). Sadly, it was similar during the time of Christ's ministry because the authority he was given, by Almighty God, was constantly challenged,

But when the Pharisees heard it (that Christ healed a demon-possessed man) they said, 'This fellow (Christ) does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons' (Mt. 12:24; Ed. notes in parentheses).

And if I (Christ) cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out (cf. Ac. 19:13-17)? Therefore they shall be your judges.²⁸ But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you (Mt. 12:27-28; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Almighty God regards rebellion as synonymous with witchcraft, or divination, and the penalty for witchcraft is death (1Sam. 15:23; cf. Ex. 22:18; Lev. 20:27; Dt. 18:10-11). This explains why fourteen thousand seven hundred other rebels died when they began criticizing Moses, and falsely accusing him of murder (Nu. 16:41; cf. 16:49). The death of Korah and his followers, as well as fourteen thousand seven hundred other rebels, acted as a witness to God's choice for leadership responsibilities. Another witness took the form of a miracle involving twelve rods that were placed before the Testimony in the tabernacle of meeting (Dt. 19:15). As only Aaron's rod blossomed and produced fruit, it confirmed that Aaron and the Levites were chosen by God to serve as His physical representatives (Nu. 17:1-10; cf. 18:6-7).

Aaron and his sons were to serve as mediators between the Israelites and God (Nu. 18:1, 5, 7) as they administered the animal sacrifices and associated ordinances. The rest of the male

Levites were to assist with other aspects of administering the Law of Almighty God to the nation of Israel (Nu. 18:2-4). In like manner, it was the high priest Jesus Christ that was responsible for shedding blood so that repentant sinners could be forgiven and reconciled to Almighty God, once and for all,

By that will (to provide a better way to reconcile sinners) **we** (sinners) **have been sanctified** (set apart to serve God) **through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all** (Heb. 10:10; cf. 10:3-4; 9:22, 24-24-28; emphasis added).

Having been reconciled to Almighty God by Christ's shed blood (Heb. 9:22), repentant sinners can serve their high priest Jesus Christ as the Levites served their high priest Aaron. During the Second Covenant period, this service commences following repentance, baptism, laying hands (Ac. 8:14-17), and receipt of God's Holy Spirit. The process begins at this point, and is meant to continue into the future for all those who seek to obey the Law of Almighty God (1Jn. 2:17b; Rev. 20:4),

You (repentant sinners) also, as living (spiritual) stones, are being built up a spiritual house (temple), a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (1Pet. 2:5; cf. 2:9-10).

Aaron and his sons were to receive the proceeds from the grain offerings, sin offerings, trespass offerings, heave and wave offerings (Nu. 18:1-11, 19). In addition, they were to receive the best of the oil, new wine, grain, and fruit offered to God as the firstfruits of each harvest (Nu. 18:12-13). The firstborn unclean animals and the firstborn sons were redeemed for their assessed value at the age of one month, and the proceeds given to Aaron and his sons (Nu. 18:15-16). However, firstborn "clean animals"

were not to be redeemed for money. Instead, they were to be used as offerings (Nu. 18:17-18). This was meant to reflect the fact that no amount of money could ever compensate for the price Christ paid by offering his life as a ransom for the sins of mankind and the fallen angels. Simon Magus was chastised by the apostle Peter because he wanted to purchase what Christ made possible with money,

Now when **Simon** (Magus) saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he **offered them money** (Ac. 8:18; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

But Peter said to him, 'Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God (made possible through Christ's shed blood) could be purchased with money!' (Ac. 8:20; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Finally, one-tenth of the tithe that the Levites received was to be given to Aaron and his sons (Nu. 18:26, 28). The balance of nine-tenths belonged to the Levites who were not directly related to Aaron and his sons (Nu. 18:30-32). The apostle Paul referred to the example of the Levites receiving their food from tithes and offerings to confirm that he could request that his basic needs be provided. However, he decided not to exercise this right,

If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things? ¹² **If others are partakers of this right over you, are we not even more? Nevertheless we have not used this right,** but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ. ¹³ Do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat of the things of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of the offerings of the altar? ¹⁴ Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel (cf. Mt. 10:5-11). ¹⁵ But I (Paul) have

used none of these things, nor have I written these things (so) that it should be done so to me ... (1Cor. 9:11-15a; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Sadly, throughout man's history there have been far too many "ministers" who felt they were entitled to be supported by tithes and/or offerings when they were not teaching God's truth correctly (Eze. 34:1-31; Mt. 23:1-36). This situation is no different today. Therefore, it is important for anyone donating money to a religious organization, or an individual, to be cautious and examine whether God's truth is being taught accurately before giving any financial support (cf. Isa. 8:20),

And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. ¹⁵ Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works (2Cor. 11:14-15; cf. 1Thes. 5:21).

God's statute, regarding the ashes of a red heifer being used for purification, symbolized different aspects of Christ's life and sacrifice. By using a red heifer, it is much easier to spot defects when compared to a lighter colored bovine. Also red heifers are not commonplace, just as Jesus Christ was very unique in his faithfulness and obedience to Almighty God. Therefore, the red heifer without spot or blemish pictured Christ's sinless life (Nu. 19:1-2). Maimonides wrote that from Moses to the destruction of the second temple, only nine red heifers were used in the water of purification,

Knowing that you (repentant sinners) were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, as **a lamb without blemish and without spot** (1Pet. 1:18-19; cf.

Jn. 1:29; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

As sin is a "yoke" that controls people, a red heifer being selected for sacrifice could not have been under a yoke. This was to picture Christ who never allowed sinful thoughts or actions to control his decisions (Nu. 19:2b),

How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit (of Almighty God) offered himself without spot (blemish) to God, purge (cleanse) your conscience from dead works (living contrary to the Law of Almighty God) to serve the Living God? (Heb. 9:14; Ed. notes in parentheses).

The red heifer was to be slaughtered outside the camp just as Jesus Christ was (Nu. 19:3),

Therefore **Jesus also**, that he might sanctify (set apart) the people with his own blood, **suffered outside the gate** (Heb. 13:12; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Like the blood of the sin offering being sprinkled seven times (Lev. 4:6), the blood of the red heifer was sprinkled seven times in front of the tabernacle of meeting. This foreshadowed the complete covering of all sins by the blood of Christ (Nu. 19:4). The fact that the entire red heifer was to be completely burned identified it with the ordinances of the Passover lamb, which also was to be completely consumed, just as Jesus Christ was by his death (Nu. 19:5). In other words, Christ did not continue to live in the spirit-realm during the three days and nights that his body was in the grave, as some teach,

You shall let none of it (the Passover lamb) remain until morning, and what remains of it until morning you shall burn with fire (Ex. 12:10; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Other witnesses to the fact that the red heifer pictured Christ's sacrifice, on behalf of all repentant sinners, are the cedar wood, hyssop, and scarlet (Nu. 19:6). These symbols are associated with the cleansing of a leper as discussed previously in this document (Lev. 14:4, 6, 49, 51-52).

Because Christ took all the sins of mankind and the fallen angels upon himself, he was symbolically "unclean" as he hung on the stake. This is why the priest who handled the red heifer had to wash himself and remain ceremonially unclean until the evening (Nu. 19:7-8, 10),

For He (Almighty God) made **him** (Christ) **who knew no sin to be** (take upon himself) **sin for us**, that we (actual sinners) might become (through repentance of sin, and baptism) the righteousness of (Almighty) God in (through) him (Christ) (2Cor. 5:21; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

The ashes that were produced as a result of the red heifer being burned with cedar wood, hyssop, and scarlet, were to be stored in a clean place outside the camp (Nu. 19:9). When anyone sinned, they would be sprinkled with these ashes mixed with water. As mentioned previously in this document, moving waters symbolize the action of God's Holy Spirit. Therefore, water combined with the ashes of the red heifer, pictured Christ acting as a mediator between the sinner and Almighty God (1Tim. 2:5). This is essential in order for the repentant sinner to be forgiven whenever he/she sins. Without Christ's intercessory work, God's Holy Spirit would be "quenched" in the life of the sinner because it will not coexist with sin (1Thes. 5:19),

If we say that we have fellowship with Him (Almighty God), and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. ⁷ But if we walk in the

light (symbol of God's law and commands; cf. Prov.6:23) as He (Almighty God) is in the light, we have fellowship with one another (in the Body of Christ), and **the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.** ⁸ If we (individuals who repented of their past sins, and were baptized) say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us (anymore). ⁹ If we confess our sins (repent and ask forgiveness in the name of Jesus Christ, whenever we fall short and sin again), He (Almighty God) is faithful (trustworthy) and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all *unrighteousness* (law-breaking; cf. Ps. 119:172). ¹⁰ If we say that we have not sinned (following repentance and baptism), we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us (1Jn. 1:6-10; cf. 2:1-2; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added; emphasis added).

If Christ does not act as a mediator to restore the relationship between a repentant sinner and Almighty God, that sinner would be cut off just as the sinner who was not sprinkled with the ashes of the red heifer mixed with water during the First Covenant period,

Whoever touches the body of anyone who has died, and does not purify himself, defiles the tabernacle of the Lord. **That person shall be cut off from Israel.** He shall be unclean, **because the water of purification was not sprinkled on him;** (therefore) his uncleanness is still on him (Nu. 19:13; cf. 19:20; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Whatever we ask in Christ's name, providing it is not against the will of Almighty God, it will be done. This is an important truth which is also pictured by the ashes of the red heifer. These ashes were not limited to just the purification of a sinner, they also acted to deal with other problems that were encountered by God's people (Nu. 19:14-19),

And in that day (following Christ's death and resurrection) you will ask me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in my (Christ's) name He will give you (Jn. 16:23; Ed. notes in parentheses).

For instance, if someone came into contact with a dead body they could become infected and even die, depending on the type of infection (Nu. 19:16). In cases like this today, a prayer for God's intervention in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ could avail much,

Confess your trespasses (SGD 3900; offenses, mistakes; lapses, misdeeds; either intentional or not) to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed (SGD 2390; freed from error; spiritually speaking). The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much (Jas. 5:16; Ed. notes in parentheses).

As the Israelites approached the fortieth year since leaving Egypt, their complaining against Moses and Aaron had not diminished (Nu. 20:1-5). Apparently, they did not believe their suffering for forty years in the wilderness was directly connected to their ongoing rebellion against God's word. They were experiencing the consequences of their actions. Their sentence was to die in the wilderness, but their children would enter the Promised Land. Despite their ongoing complaints, the Lord provided water for them from a rock that the apostle Paul would refer to later as proof that Jesus Christ was the one who brought the Israelites out of Egypt (1Cor. 10:4; cf. Jgs. 2:1). In reality, everything had come full circle because the first complaint after leaving Egypt was over water (Ex. 15:22-27) and, in Exodus 17:5-6, Moses was instructed to strike a rock and the Lord would provide water from it. However, forty years later the instructions were slightly different. Now, Moses was to speak to the rock instead of striking it (Nu. 20:8). Having just buried his sister Miriam

(Nu. 20:1), and still feeling the responsibility for an ungrateful and rebellious people, Moses had an emotional outburst which led him to disobey the Lord's instructions (Nu. 20:10-11). Through Moses' and Aaron's words and actions, the miracle appeared to come from them and not the Lord. Therefore, even though it may have been unintentional, they were credited for this miracle in the eyes of the people,

...Must **we** (Moses and Aaron) bring water for you out of this rock? (Nu. 20:10b; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).
Moses knew better from previous instructions he had received from the Lord,

Then Moses said to Aaron, this is what the Lord spoke saying: 'By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; and **before all the people I must be glorified**' (Lev. 10:3a; emphasis added).

In other words, no matter how major or minor one's "works" may be, the credit goes to Almighty God and not any instrument through which He does "the works", and that includes "the works" that Christ performed,

Do you (Christ's disciples) not believe that I (Christ) am in the Father, and the Father in me (through the action of Almighty God's Spirit)? The words that I (Christ) speak to you **I do not speak on my own authority; but the Father who dwells in me does the works** (Jn. 14:10; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

By Moses' words and actions at Meribah, he forfeited the opportunity to enter the Promised Land (Nu. 20:12). Aaron also was prevented through death (Nu. 20:22-29). As the Israelites traveled toward the Promised Land, they were re-routed by the descendants of Esau, Jacob's brother (Nu. 20:14-21). This was an extreme

example of an unwillingness to forgive a brother's trespass. Hundreds of years had passed since Jacob tricked his brother Esau out of his birthright, so there was no excuse for this conduct (Gen. 27:1-29; cf. Mt. 6:14-15). Sadly, there are too many nations today that still hold grudges against their neighbors for offenses that happened in the distant past. This state of affairs will end following Christ's return (Isa. 2:4).

Israel's first encounter with a Canaanite ruler was not an outstanding success. However, when they entreated the Lord for assistance, the Canaanite king was defeated (Nu. 21:1-2). The nations of this present world have not learned this lesson yet. Instead, they trust in the strength of their armed forces (Ps. 20:7-9; 25:2; 37:39-40; 44:5-7; 115:11; 118:8-9; 146:3; Prov. 29:25).

As mentioned previously, most of the nation of Israel functioned without God's Holy Spirit working in them, even though it was amongst them through individuals like Moses, Aaron, and some of the elders (Nu. 11:25). Therefore, they succumbed easily to their usual patterns of complaint, disrespect toward the Lord and their appointed human leaders, ingratitude for the many things the Lord provided for them; and rebellion against the word of the Lord. This situation repeated itself time and again, even right after miracles were performed on their behalf (Nu. 21:4-5). In this latest incident, the Lord punished them with venomous snakes (Nu. 21:6-7). The prescribed antidote for their injuries was pictured by a six-winged "seraph" which pre-figured a spirit-being that would come in the future to provide "spiritual-healing" (cf. Mal. 4:2; Mt. 4:12-16; Lk. 1:78; Ac. 10:43; 2 Cor. 4:6; Eph. 5:14). This "spiritual-healing" was of paramount importance because sin was the real source of the pain, misery, and death they brought upon themselves through their rebellious attitude and conduct,

Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Make a fiery serpent (SHD 8314; saraph; majestic being with 6 wings; *Gesenius connects it with an Arabic term *shrafa*, signifying "high" or "exalted one") and **set it on a pole** (SHD 5251; standard, ensign, upright pole); and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live (Nu. 21:8; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, **who shall stand as a banner** (SHD 5251; standard, ensign, upright pole) to the people; for the Gentiles shall seek for him (Christ), and his resting place shall be glorious (Isa. 11:10; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

*In Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon commentary on Numbers 21:8, the following is stated regarding seraphim, 'The Hebrews, as Abulwalid and Kimchi, render SHD 8314 as *bright, or shining angels*' (cf. Eze. 1:13; 2Kgs. 2:11; 6:17; Mt. 28:3).

So Moses fashioned a 6-winged seraph, and placed it on an upright pole. This represented the angelic being that would be "lifted up on a stake" to atone for, or cover, the sins of the world (Jn. 1:29; cf. Jn. 3:14; 12:32). Until Christ came to fulfill what this seraph on a pole pictured, the Israelites could have their physical infirmities healed when they "looked upon it" (Nu. 21:8). This "looking upon Christ" was primarily prophetic as it pictured repentant sinners being healed from their sins and reconciled to Almighty God through the sacrifice of Christ on a Roman stake,

And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then **they will look on me** (as the Israelites looked upon the seraph that represented Jesus Christ) **whom they pierced**; they will mourn; they will mourn for him as one

mourns for his only son (referring to the grief Almighty God suffered as His only begotten son suffered at the hands of sinners), and grieve for him as one grieves for a firstborn (Zech. 12:10; cf. Ps. 84:9; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

But he (Christ) was wounded (pierced through) for our transgressions, he was bruised (crushed) for our iniquities (sins; cf. 1Jn. 3:4); the chastisement for our peace (reconciliation with Almighty God) was upon him, and **by his stripes** (blows that cut in) **we are healed** (Isa. 53:5; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

The following texts confirm there is more than one seraph, which indicates that the seraph known as the Angel of God, and later as Jesus Christ, would have communicated with other seraphim. This is confirmed by the following exchange between them,

Above it (Almighty God's throne; Isa. 6:1 cf. Rev. 4:1-11; 5:1-7) **stood seraphim; each one had six wings**: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. ³ And **one cried to another and said...** (Isa. 6:2-3a; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Then one of the seraphim flew to me (Isaiah), having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with tongs from the altar. ⁷ And he touched my mouth with it, and said: 'Behold, this has touched your lips; your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged (atoned for)' (Isa. 6:6-7; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

In Isaiah 6:2, mentioned above, these seraphim have a greater position of responsibility in Almighty God's realm because cherubim, who have four wings, are located below God's throne,

Then the cherubim lifted up their (**four**; cf. Eze. 10:20-21; cf. 1:11, 23) **wings**, with the wheels beside them, and **the glory of the God of Israel was high above them** (Eze. 11:22; cf. 1:25-26; 10:1; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Cherubim had the responsibility of guarding the way to the tree of life, which symbolized access to God's Holy Spirit (Gen. 3:24). They were also positioned either side of the ark of the Testimony (Ex. 25:20-22). However, cherubim were not the same as seraphim. As stated previously, the spirit-being that became known as Jesus Christ was a seraph. As such he had more authority and responsibility than cherubim. This is explained in the following scripture,

(Christ) **having become so much better than the (other) angels, as he has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.** ⁵For **to which of the (other) angels did He** (Almighty God) ever **say: 'You are My Son, today I** (Almighty God) **have begotten you?'** (Heb. 1:4-5; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

In the angelic realm, Christ's closest companions would have been other seraphim that worked with him. However, Almighty God regarded Christ as being above them in authority and responsibility as well,

You (Christ) have loved righteousness (Ps, 119:172) and hated lawlessness (the way of this present evil world; cf. Gal. 1:4); therefore God (Almighty), **your God** (and heavenly Father), **has anointed you** (Christ) **with the oil of gladness more than your companions** (other seraphim) (Heb. 1:9; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

By comparing Isaiah 6:2-3 with Revelation 4:8-9, it appears there are only four seraphim. As we

will see momentarily, seraphim are also referred to as "morning stars." Previously, it was shown that the term "stars" refers to "angels" (Rev.1:20b), and the morning stars are mentioned separately from all the other angels,

To what were its (foundations of the earth; cf. Job 38:4) fastened? Or who laid its cornerstone (the one who would become Christ; cf. Ps. 118:22; Isa. 28:16; Mt. 21:42; Ac. 4:11), ⁷**when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God** (other angels) **shouted for joy?** (Job 38:6-7; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Prior to his rebellion, Lucifer was a morning star,

How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer (Day Star), **son of the morning** (morning star)! (Isa. 14:12a; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added)

As a morning star, Lucifer would have been a seraph when he attempted to overthrow Almighty God because Christ is a seraph, and he too is described as a morning star,

I, Jesus, have sent my angel (possibly one of the other seraphim) to testify to you these things in the churches. **I** (Christ) **am** the root and offspring of David, **the bright and morning star** (Rev. 22:16; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

This leaves only two other angelic beings that are mentioned by name in scripture. One is Gabriel (Dan. 8:16; 9:21; Lk. 1:19, 26) and the other Michael (Dan. 12:1; Jude 9; Rev. 12:7). These may have been Christ's two companions when he visited Abraham. At that same time, they acted as witnesses against the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:1). They could also have been witnesses to Christ's resurrection (Jn. 20:12). If this were the case, they may fulfill

the future role of two witnesses against the evils of this present age (Gal. 1:4), just as the two witnesses did in Sodom and Gomorrah,

And their (two witnesses; cf. Rev. 11:3) dead bodies will lie in the street of **the great city which spiritually is called Sodom** and Egypt, **where also their Lord was crucified** (Rev. 11:8; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Zechariah saw a vision of two olive trees emptying themselves of the "oil" that sustained them (Zech. 4:11-12). As trees often symbolize spirit-beings in scripture (cf. Eze. 31:16-18), these two trees represent angels that stand either side of the Lord of the whole earth, Jesus Christ (Isa. 54:5; Ps. 97:5),

So he (the angel that spoke with Zechariah) said, 'these (two olive trees) are the two anointed ones, who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth (Zech. 4:14; Ed. notes in parentheses).

The two witnesses in the book of Revelation are described as two olive trees standing before the God of the earth, who is Jesus Christ,

These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God (Lord) of the earth (Rev. 11:4; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Just before being martyred by the Jewish religious leadership, Stephen referred to angels being involved with teaching the Law of Almighty God to the people of ancient Israel,

Which of the prophets did your (Jewish religious leaders) fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One (Christ), of whom **you** now have become the betrayers and murderers. ⁵³ **who have received the law by the direction of angels**

and have not kept it (Ac. 7:52-53; cf. 7:38; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

And the apostle Paul stated the following,

What purpose then does the law (of animal sacrifices and ordinances) serve? It was added (as a temporary substitute) because of transgression (sin), till the Seed (Christ, a descendant of David) should come to whom the promise was made; and **it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator** (Gal. 3:10; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

The primary angel involved with teaching the Law of Almighty God to mankind is the seraph that became known as Jesus Christ (Ac. 7:38; Mt. 23:10; Jn. 13:13). Therefore, it seems logical that the other angels mentioned above would include those seraphim that remained loyal to God, and acted to enforce the Law of Almighty God when the people rebelled, as the following scripture confirms,

For if **the word** (of God) **spoken through angels** proved steadfast, and **every transgression and disobedience received a just reward** (penalty/punishment) (Heb. 2:2; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

The spirit-being that became known as Jesus Christ spoke with the two angels that were with him when he visited Abraham, and he posed the following question to them,

And the Lord said (to the two angels), 'Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing, ¹⁸ since Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?' (Gen.18:17-18; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

As mentioned previously, Almighty God delegated the creation of both physical and spiritual aspects of the universe to the seraph that became Jesus Christ (Col. 1:12-20). It appears that Christ then delegated specific tasks to angels who were under his authority, as the language of the following scripture confirms,

Then God (plural Hebrew word that can include more than one spirit-being) **said**, 'Let **us** make man in **our** image, according to **our** likeness...' (Gen. 1:26; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Christ and those who were working with him were involved in the creation of Adam. As stated above, Adam was created in their image. Therefore, it follows that he would originally have been a seraph. However, following Adam's sin he became a flesh and blood human being, and eventually died. Thankfully, repentant sinners can be forgiven and, in a future resurrection of the dead, receive a position in God's kingdom that is described as being higher than other angels. This indicates that man's original position as a seraph will be restored,

For He (Almighty God) **has not put the world to come**, of which we speak, **in subjection to angels**.⁶ But one testified in a certain place, saying: 'What is man that You are mindful of him, or the son of man that You take care of him?'⁷ **You made him for a little while lower than the angels**; You crowned him with glory and honor.⁸ You have put all things in subjection under his feet.' For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that it not put under him (potentially). **But now we do not yet see all things put under him** (Heb. 2:5-8; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

If Adam had been created as a seraph, it would suggest that he was meant to replace Satan,

who sinned. As a seraph, it would not be easy to deceive Adam, which explains the scripture that follows. It also means that Adam knowingly decided to follow Satan's way of reasoning and living, contrary to God's command in Genesis 2:17,

Adam was not deceived, but the woman (who was named Eve following her sin) being deceived fell into transgression (1Tim. 2:14; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

In the last book of the Bible, Christ confirmed that mankind's journey can come full circle, depending on his conduct. Specifically, if man repents and chooses to willingly obey God's word; his original position in Almighty God's creation will be restored. That position is intrinsically connected to one of the names that identifies Jesus Christ,

And he who overcomes, and keeps my (Christ's) works (of trust in, and obedience to, God's word; cf. Mt. 4:4) until the end, to him I will give power over the nations – ²⁷ 'He shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the potter's vessels shall be broken to pieces' – as I (Christ) also have received (the position of morning star) from my Father (Almighty God); ²⁸ and **I will give him** (who overcomes) **the morning star** (Rev. 2:26-28; cf. 22:16; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

However, just as the other seraphim are under Christ's authority; so every converted and resurrected human being would be as well, even though they share the same name of morning star.

Although Christ is in a position of great authority, he is not to be worshiped. Only Almighty God is to be worshiped. This truth is confirmed in scripture many times, and was the reason that King Hezekiah had the seraph, that Moses

fashioned, destroyed (2Kgs. 18:4). Therefore, anyone who believes and teaches that Christ should be worshiped is leading people to break the first commandment, which carries the death penalty.

Going back to the 21st chapter of Numbers, it is interesting to note that the Lord gave Israel's enemies an opportunity to cooperate by allowing the Israelites to pass through their territory. Had they obliged, these Gentile people may have been spared from destruction. However, as with the king of Edom, the king of Ammon also turned down this opportunity (Nu. 21:21-23). Had these Gentile rulers acted as facilitators, rather than dictators, their nations may have been spared but they declined, and their people paid a high price (Nu. 21:24-31). As Gentile rulers are sometimes compared metaphorically to the leadership of the fallen angels, it is possible that Christ will offer fallen angels an opportunity to repent just prior to his second coming. However, based on the conduct of the Gentile rulers, it is unlikely they will stand down and subjugate themselves to Christ's leadership (Nu. 21:33-34).

Like the king of Edom and the king of Ammon, Balak, the king of Moab wanted nothing to do with the Israelites. In fact, he wanted them defeated. To accomplish his objective, he sought the intervention of Balaam, who was a diviner or medium for hire (Nu. 22:7; 23:23; 24:1; Jos. 13:22; Neh. 13:2; 2Pet. 2:15; Jude 11),

'He (Balaam) is identified by Sayce with Bela, Genesis 36:31-32, where Moses incorporates a list of Edomite kings. According to the Tel-el-Amarna tablets he was a Hittite chieftain, who established a kingdom for himself; and he died fighting against Israel by the side of his Midianite allies' (The Companion Bible, p 212; published by Samuel Bagster and Sons Ltd; Ed. note in parenthesis.).

Because someone has knowledge of God, it does not mean they are obedient to Him. According to the following example, an individual who is clearly disobedient is still able to have an audience with the Lord,

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan (the Adversary) also came among them. ⁷ And the Lord said to Satan, 'From where do you come?' So Satan answered the Lord and said, 'From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it' (Job 1:6-7; Ed. note in parenthesis).

In the case of Balaam, "the Lord" would have been the spirit-being that became Jesus Christ, as no human being has seen or heard Almighty God. So, Balaam had knowledge of God, and he presumed that the Lord might allow him to curse the Israelites due to their disobedience. However, the Lord made it plain that the nation of Israel was still in receipt of God's blessing, despite their disobedience. This blessing was given many generations ago to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and it was in the process of being fulfilled. After being fulfilled, the Lord was no longer bound to extend it (cf. Jer. 3:8),

And God said to Balaam, 'You shall not go with them (elders of Moab; cf. Nu. 22:7); you shall not curse the people, for **they are blessed**' (Nu. 22:12; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

But because the Lord loves you (12 families of Israel), and because **He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers**, the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage (slavery), from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt (Dt. 7:8; cf. 10:15; Lk. 1:70-75; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

When Balaam refused to see Balak, Balak sent another group of officials to increase the pressure (Nu. 22:15). At this time, the Lord gave Balaam the one condition under which he could travel to see Balak, as follows,

And God came to Balaam at night and said to him, **'If the men come to call you, rise and go** with them (Nu. 22:20a; emphasis added).

This is a very important lesson because many "religious people" ignore the finer points of God's word in order to serve their purpose. In other words, they don't really want to obey what God tells them to do. Therefore, it is convenient to ignore these "small details." This is exactly what Balaam did. He didn't wait for Balak's men to call him in the morning. Instead, he proceeded to saddle a donkey that would end up causing him a great deal of trouble (Nu. 22:21-30). The Angel of the Lord confirmed that Balaam's motivation was contrary to God's will (Nu. 22:32). Interestingly, Christ made a similar statement regarding Satan's objectives,

But he (Christ) turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind me, **Satan!** You are an offense to me, for **you are not mindful of the things of God**, but the things of men' (Mt. 16:23; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

It was only when Balaam's life was in jeopardy that he changed his attitude momentarily (Nu. 22:33-34). However, Balaam's real motivation was material gain and the honor of men, which Balak was more than willing to provide (Nu. 22:37). In the interim, Balaam managed to appear righteous and sacrificed animals, more as a gesture of appeasement toward God than a genuine desire to obey (Nu. 23:1-4). In reality, God cannot be fooled or mocked (Gal. 6:7). Therefore, God spoke through Balaam just as He spoke through a donkey, and uttered a prophecy declaring events that would occur in the distant

future (Nu. 23:7-10). The description of these end-time events was meant to expose Satan's frustration, combined with his futile attempts to thwart God's plan of salvation that will be accomplished through the spiritual house of Israel,

Who can count the dust of Jacob, or number one-fourth of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my end be like his! (Nu. 23:10)

Ironically, Balaam ended up dying along with many of Israel's enemies, which was poetic justice for his life of duplicity (Nu. 31:8). Before dying however, Balak made sure that Balaam had three opportunities to defeat the Israelites (Nu. 23:1; cf. 23:13; 23:27-28). This is probably not a coincidence because Satan attempted to defeat the spiritual leader of Israel, Jesus Christ, three times and failed (Mt. 4:1-10).

It should be noted that Balak regarded Israel's God no differently than the pagan gods that are open to negotiation and various forms of appeasement. Therefore, Balak continued making his case for Israel's defeat assuming that Israel's God would change His mind. The Lord's response to this tactic follows,

God is not a man that He should lie (say one thing and then do the other), nor a son of man that He should repent (change his mind under pressure). Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken and will He not make it good? (Nu. 23:19; Ed. notes in parentheses).

As with most people who hear God's truth, Balak heard only what he wanted to hear and ignored everything else. Therefore, he continued pressing Israel's God, through Balaam, a third time,

Then Balak said to Balaam, 'Please come, I will take you to another place; **perhaps it will**

please God that you may curse them (the Israelites) **for me from there** (Nu. 23:27; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

As before, Balaam ended up blessing Israel rather than cursing them. These blessings were primarily spiritual in nature and pictured a time in the future when Israel would be restored as a spiritual household under Jesus Christ (Nu. 24:3-9). The final prophecy that God gave through Balaam was against Israel's enemies, which are first and foremost Satan and the fallen angels,

For **we** (God's people) **do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against** principalities, against powers, against **the rulers of the darkness of this age** (cf. Gal 1:4), **against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places** (spirit realm) (Eph. 6:12; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Many times, in scripture God uses the names of countries, and/or their leaders, as metaphors for principalities that exist in the realm of the fallen host. This truth is one of God's many "hidden mysteries" and, because it is not correctly understood, so-called "authorities on prophecy" are usually in error when they prognosticate future events. With this principle in mind, God applied the names of ancient Israel's enemies to the leaders and principalities of the fallen angels in Numbers 24:15-25. The leader of Moab is a "type" of Satan, and the sons of tumult are a "type" of the fallen angels. These sinful spirit-beings will be dealt with when a spirit-ruler from the loyal angelic host appears and fulfills the prophecy mentioned in *Genesis 3:15b,

I see him (Christ), but not now (because he is yet to come); I behold him, but not near (Christ is still in the spirit-realm at the time of this prophecy); a Star (symbol of an angel) shall come out of Jacob (through the lineage of King David); a Scepter (symbol of rulership) shall rise

out of Israel, and batter the brow (shatter the forehead; symbolizing the defeat of Satan's plans against Almighty God; cf. *Gen. 3:15b) of Moab (representing Satan), and destroy the sons of tumult (fallen angels who work with Satan to cause havoc on the earth) (Nu. 24:17; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Edom, Seir, Amalek, the Kenites, Kain, Asshur, and Eber all represent various divisions and leaders within the realm of the fallen angels. They will all be dealt with when Christ returns to rule this planet, and establish the Law of Almighty God (Nu. 24:18-24). It appears that Amalek is compared to the first division that Satan created within his evil spirit-empire,

The he looked on Amalek, and he took up his oracle and said: '**Amalek was the first among the nations**, but shall be last until he perishes' (Nu. 24:20; emphasis added).

Following Balaam's departure, the Israelites began doing what they usually did despite every miracle, blessing, and instruction in righteous behavior that the Lord gave them,

Then Israel remained in Acacia Grove (Shittim), and the people began to commit harlotry with the women of Moab (Nu. 25:1; Ed. note in parenthesis).

The Israelites were very quick to pick up where they left off in Egypt, by worshiping Osiris, also known as Tammuz in the Babylonian system (Eze. 8:14),

And indeed, one of the children of Israel came and presented to his brethren a Midianite woman in the sight of Moses and in the sight of **all the congregation of the children of Israel, who were weeping at the door of the tabernacle of meeting** (Nu. 25:6; emphasis added).

Tammuz was known as the god of pasture and flocks, of subterranean water, and of vegetation. He was the husband-brother of Ishtar (from which the word Easter is derived) who was a fertility goddess. Tammuz supposedly died every autumn when he departed to the underworld, hence, the weeping for Tammuz which the Israelites were attempting to syncretize with the worship of Almighty God. In Christianity today, this weeping for Tammuz is loosely associated with mourning the death of Jesus Christ during the pagan holiday of Easter (Ishtar).

Because the Moabites were corrupting the worship of Almighty God, as Christianity does today, Phinehas acted swiftly to put an end to the apostasy (Nu. 25:7-11). Like Phinehas, it is only because some individuals remain faithful to the Law of Almighty God that this planet will avert utter destruction in the future,

And he (modern day Elijah; cf. Mal. 4:5) will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children (restoration of godly instruction within the family), and the hearts of the children to their fathers (respect for parental authority), lest I (God) come and strike the earth with *a curse* (SHD 2764; *utter destruction*) (Mal. 4:6; cf. Dt. 4:9-10; 6:7; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but **for the elect's sake** (chosen ones - based on obedience; cf. Rev. 12:17; 14:12; 22:14) **those days will be shortened** (Mt. 24:22; cf. Mk. 13:20; emphasis added).

It is through the maternal lineage of Amminadab, that Phinehas and his descendants can be traced (Ex. 6:23; Nu. 25:11), and Christ's lineage is traced back through the paternal side of Amminadab's family (Lk. 3:33). Therefore, God's promise to the descendants of Phinehas is

connected through this family both maternally and paternally. However, the everlasting priesthood that God promised to Phinehas' family is spiritual and not physical. Therefore, it comes through Jesus Christ in the form of the everlasting Melchizedek priesthood (Heb. 5:5-6). The following prophecy confirms this because the atonement, or covering of sins that Phinehas is credited with, was only temporary. Whereas Christ's atoning for sin is once and for all (Heb. 7:27; 9:12),

And it (God's covenant of peace; cf. Nu. 25:12) shall be to him (Phinehas) and his descendants after him **a covenant of an everlasting priesthood**, because **he was zealous for his God, and made atonement** (covering) **for the children of Israel** (Nu. 25:13; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

The 26th chapter of Numbers deals primarily with the second census of Israel for the purpose of an equitable land allotment (Nu. 26:53-56). None of those numbered in this second census were included in the original census with the exception of Joshua and Caleb (Nu. 26:64-65). The total number of Israelite males over the age of twenty, were less by 1,820.

	Original Census	Second Census
Reuben	46,500	43,730
Simeon	59,300	22,200
Gad	45,650	40,500
Judah	74,600	76,500
Isaachar	54,400	64,300
Zebulun	57,400	60,500
Manasseh	32,200	52,700
Ephraim	40,500	32,500
Benjamin	35,400	45,600
Dan	62,700	64,400
Asher	41,500	53,400
Naphtali	53,400	45,400
Total	603,550	601,730

Levite males from the age of one month and up were numbered separately during the second census at 23,000 (Nu. 26:62). This separation was twofold. They were set apart to serve the people of Israel, and they were not to inherit land and then pass it down to their children. In other words, they were to rely totally on God to provide their needs, making Him their primary focus in life. Following the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Melchizedek priesthood is also set apart to serve others, and to rely solely upon God rather than being anxious about their daily needs,

By this we (God's servants) know love, because he (Christ) laid down his life for us. And **we** (therefore) **also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren** (1Jn. 3:16; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Therefore **'Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord.** Do not touch what is unclean (anything associated with sin; cf. 1Jn. 3:4), and I will receive you.'¹⁸ I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty' (2Cor. 6:17-18; cf. Mt. 6:21; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'³² For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For **your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things** (Mt. 6:31-32; emphasis added).

Just as the Levites were not to inherit tracts of land and pass them from one generation to another, neither was a woman to inherit her father's property and pass it on to her husband if he was from a different tribe/family. However, if a father had no sons, the land would go to his daughter or daughters providing they were not married. In cases like this, should a daughter

decide to marry later to a man from outside her tribe/family, her portion of the estate would go to her remaining sister/s. If there were no remaining sisters, the land would go the deceased father's brother/s. If the deceased father had no brothers, it would go to the next male family member (Nu. 27:9-11). The reason for this was to maintain ownership within each tribe/family, which would not occur if a woman inherited her father's property and then married someone from another tribe/family. This same principle is an integral part the law mentioned in Deuteronomy 25:5-10,

And they (the daughters of Zelophehad) stood before Moses, before Eleazar the priest, and before the leaders, and the congregation (of Israel) by the doorway of the tabernacle of meeting, saying:³ 'Our father died in the wilderness....and he had no sons.⁴ Why should the name of our father be removed (withdrawn) from among his family because he had no son? Therefore give us a possession (inheritance) among the brothers of our father.'⁵ So Moses brought their case before the Lord.⁶ And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying:⁷ 'the daughters of Zelophehad speak what is right; you shall surely give them a possession of inheritance among their father's brothers, and cause the inheritance of their father to pass to them (Nu.27:2-7; cf. **36:1-12**; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

While on the subject of land, Moses was now at the point of entering the Promised Land. However, because he failed to follow God's instructions in Numbers 20:7-12, he was only allowed to see it at a distance prior to his death (Nu. 27:12-14). This is important because it is another proof that God is not a respecter of persons (Dt. 10:17; Ac. 10:34). In other words, despite all the work that Moses had done in serving God, and the nation of Israel, he was given no preferential treatment when it came to

sin. He could be forgiven, and no doubt was, but that did not mean he would avoid any consequences.

Because God does things in an orderly manner, Moses was instructed to anoint Joshua as the next leader of the nation (Nu. 27:18-23; cf. 1Cor. 14:33, 40). When dealing with a nation like Israel that functioned primarily without God's Holy Spirit, a physical leader was required to keep them from absorbing the customs of the pagan nations,

And you (Moses) shall give some of your authority to him (Joshua), **that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient** (Nu. 27:20; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

However, Christ made it clear that the Second Covenant priesthood would have his Father's Holy Spirit (Jn. 7:39; 14:26; 16:13; Ac. 1:5), and would not require physical leaders constantly directing them,

But Jesus called them (his disciples) to himself and said, 'You know that **the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them**, and those who are great exercise authority over them. ²⁶ Yet **it shall not be so among you** (a command; not a suggestion); but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant (Mt. 20:25-26; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Before leaving the 27th chapter of Numbers, it is important to mention that the "laying on of hands" is not just a Second Covenant ordinance. Instead, it was commanded as part of bestowing God's Spirit throughout the First Covenant period, and for placing individuals into positions of service (Ac. 8:18; 1Tim. 4:14; Heb. 6:2; cf. Ac. 6:3-6),

And **he** (Moses) **laid his hands on him** (Joshua) and inaugurated (commissioned) him, just **as the Lord commanded** by the hand of Moses (Nu. 27:23; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

During the First Covenant period God commanded that His Holy Days, with their associated offerings, were to be observed at the times He established. This meant the Israelites had to keep the correct calendar. If they deviated from it, they would end up observing God's Holy Days at the wrong time, which would be a transgression of God's command in this matter. Sadly today, the world follows a very different calendar from the one God gave to ancient Israel. Therefore, if everyone decided to observe God's Holy Days, the first thing they would need to do is reject the present secular calendar,

Command the children of Israel, and say to them, 'My offering, My food for My offerings made by fire as a sweet aroma to Me, **you shall be careful to offer to Me at their appointed time**' (Nu. 28:2; emphasis added).

At God's temple, an offering was made every day in the morning and evening (Nu. 28:3-4). As animal sacrifices are no longer obligatory, a morning and evening prayer of thanksgiving by a worshiper would be a minimum requirement,

Therefore by him (in Christ's name) let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God (Almighty), that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name (Heb. 13:15; Ed. notes in parentheses).

In addition to the daily offerings, two more lambs were to be sacrificed each weekly Sabbath, along with grain, oil, and wine (Nu. 28:9-10). A much larger number of sacrifices were commanded on every New Moon making

the observance of this day very important (Nu. 28:11-15; cf. 10:10). As with the weekly Sabbath, no occupational work was to be done on the New Moon (Amos 8:5). The same combination of offerings that were made on a New Moon, were also presented each day for seven days during the Days of Unleavened Bread (Nu. 28:16-25). No occupational work was to be done on the first and last day of this festival (Nu. 28:18; cf. 28:25). The Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost, had the same offerings as the New Moons and the Days of Unleavened Bread (Nu. 28:26-31). However, when comparing Leviticus 23:18 with Numbers 28:27, it appears there is only one young bull being offered because the following commentary on Numbers 28:27 indicates that "one" was in some codices,

Some codices with one early printed edition, Sam., Sept., and Syr., read "and one"

(The Companion Bible, p 224, published by Samuel Bagster and Sons Ltd)

In addition to all the offerings made at every New Moon, the New Moon of the seventh month had a double portion (Nu. 29:1-6). Consequently, the New Moon of the seventh month had more offerings than any previous High Day. This celebratory symbolism appears to be associated with Christ's return to establish the Law of Almighty God worldwide (Isa. 2:1-4). As mentioned previously, the New Moon of the seventh month involved the blowing of trumpets to announce the arrival of royalty, in the form of Jesus Christ (Rev. 19:16), the commencement of battle against the forces of evil (Jos. 6:1-21; cf. Rev. 8:1-21), and the gathering of God's elect at the time of the first resurrection (1Cor. 15:50-54; 1Thes. 4: 13-17; Rev. 14:3-5; 20:4-6).

In order to defeat the forces of evil, the Adversary must be removed from his position as the ruler of this present evil system (Jn. 12:31;

2Cor. 4:4; cf. Gal.1:4; Rev. 20:1-3). Therefore, excluding the New Moon of the seventh month, the offerings on the Day of Atonement were similar to the previous holy days with the exception of two goats that were added. It was explained previously, in the section dealing with Leviticus. 16:1-34, that one of these goats represented Christ who died for the sins of mankind and the fallen angels, while the other goat represented Satan, who was sent into the wilderness. Being sent into the wilderness has more than one meaning. As soon as Lucifer rebelled, he was removed from his position before Almighty God and became known as Satan (Isa. 14:12-15; Eze. 28:14-15). This separation from Almighty God meant being sent to a spiritual wilderness devoid of God's Holy Spirit, which is often pictured symbolically by living, or flowing, water (Jer. 2:13; 17:13; Rev. 7:17). However, there will be another separation in the future when Satan is bound and removed from influencing affairs on earth and amongst the fallen angels (Rev. 20:1-3). Therefore, the goat being sent to the wilderness symbolizes a twofold punishment for the Adversary.

The offerings during the Feast of Tabernacles reflect great abundance in numbers.

This is meant to picture the prosperity that will occur on the earth following Christ's return,

Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him who sows seed; the mountains shall drip with sweet wine, and all the hills shall flow with it (Amos 9:13).

It is important to note that the number of bulls sacrificed during the Feast of Tabernacles diminished by one each day. On the first High Day there were thirteen sacrificed and by the seventh day there were seven (Nu. 29:17-34). As a bull was the most valuable clean animal that

was sacrificed, this animal would reflect the great value of Christ's shed blood, which cleanses the sins of mankind and the fallen angels,

Knowing that **you** (sinners who had repented) **were not redeemed with corruptible things** like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers,¹⁹ **but with the precious blood of Jesus....** (1Pet. 1:18-19a; emphasis added).

As these bulls diminished in number day by day, it would suggest that the necessity to cleanse sin will diminish gradually during the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ as the Law of Almighty God is taught progressively to all nations, without any interruption from Satan,

Many people shall come and say, 'Come, and let us go up to the mountain (symbol of government) of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we will walk in His paths.' For **out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem** (Isa. 2:3; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

By the eighth and final day of this festival period, there was only one bull, one ram, and seven lambs sacrificed (Nu. 29:35-36). As this last day pictures the time of the second resurrection (Rev. 20:5-6; cf. 20:11-14), it indicates that the majority of those resurrected will quickly humble themselves and repent of the sins they carried to the grave from their former lives. Although Satan will have a short period of time to cause problems for mankind at the end of Christ's one-thousand-year reign on earth (Rev. 20:3), Satan will become ashes under the feet of God's people (Mal. 4:3; Rom. 16:20). Therefore, Satan's influence will be gone by the time of the second resurrection of the dead,

On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, 'If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.³⁸ He who believes in me (what Christ taught; cf. Mt. 7:21-23), as the scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water (symbol of God's Holy Spirit, given to those who repent of sin; cf. Ac. 5:32) (Jn. 7:37-38; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Because mankind is weak and fallible, Christ stated that no matter how well-intentioned one's promises may be toward Almighty God, these should be limited to a simple "yes" or "no" (Mt. 5:33-37). Otherwise, there is a high likelihood many would fail to fulfill whatever they promised to do. In cases like this, serious consequences could follow (Jgs. 11:30-40). To lower the risk of this happening during the First Covenant period, God created "checks and balances" that would allow the person making a vow to have it annulled (Nu. 30:1-15).

Sadly, the authority of the head of the family to annul a vow was not exercised by Adam when his helper planned to engage in an unlawful activity. The result was catastrophic,

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food (cf. Gen. 2:16-17), that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate... (Gen. 3:6a; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Instead of annulling this action, Adam was complaisant and facilitated the death of his helper, even though he knew better (1Tim. 2:14),

...She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate (Gen. 3:6b).

In contrast, the husband of God's church, Jesus Christ (2Cor. 11:2), exercised his right to annul

the foolish and sinful actions of his bride by giving his life as a ransom for her transgressions,

...**Christ** is the head of the church; and he **is the Savior of the body** (Eph. 5:23b; emphasis added).

...**Christ** also **loved the church** (symbolized as a woman, and the bride of Christ; cf. Rev. 12:14-17; 1Cor. 12:27; Eph. 4:12) **and gave himself for it** (her), ²⁶ that he might sanctify (set her apart) and cleanse it (her) with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷ that he might present it (her) to himself a glorious church (spiritual body) ... (Eph. 5:25b-27a; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law (i.e. penalty of everlasting death no longer applies to repentant sinners; cf. Rom. 6:23) through the body of Christ, that **you may be married to another** (previously sinners were in a relationship with Satan; cf. Jn. 8:44), **even to him who was raised from the dead** (Christ), that we should bear fruit to God (Eph. 5:8-9) (Rom. 7:4; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Even following repentance, baptism, and the laying on of hands, God's people can stumble and sin. When this occurs their husband, Jesus Christ, can annul these sins by interceding and asking for Almighty God's forgiveness, providing those who commit sin repent of it **quickly**,

But if **her husband truly made them void on the day he heard them**, then whatever proceeded from her lips concerning her vows or concerning the agreement binding her, it shall not stand; her husband has made them void (annulled or invalidated), and **the Lord will forgive her** (Nu. 30:12; Ed. note in parenthesis).

It is because David did not repent quickly in the matter involving Uriah that God was angry with him, and serious consequences followed (2Sam. 12:1-15).

Continuing in the book of Numbers, serious consequences befell the Midianites for actions they had taken previously against the Israelites (Nu. 31:16),

They (12,000 Israelites) killed the kings of Midian with the rest of those who were killed, namely: Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba, the five kings of Midian. **Balaam the son of Beor they also killed** with the sword (Nu. 31:8; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Following the battle against the Midianites, every remaining male was killed as well as every female that had a sexual relationship. This punishment occurred because they sacrificed their own children to the pagan god Molech (Dt. 9:4a; 12:29-31; Jer. 32:35).

The cleansing of metals with high temperatures had practical health benefits (Nu. 31:20-24). For instance, sterilizing metal is essential if it is going to come into contact with an open wound. Otherwise, infection is very likely to follow. However, putting various metals through fire also had spiritual significance because the process of cleansing God's people of sin, and impurities of character, sometimes involves "fiery trials",

My brethren, count it all joy (try to look at the positive result in the end) when you fall into various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience (endurance or perseverance). ⁴ But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect (mature) and complete, lacking nothing (Jas. 1:2-4; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Beloved, **do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you**, as though some strange thing has happened to you (1Pet. 4:12; cf. Rev. 3:18; emphasis added).

Numbers 31:25-54 provides a detailed account of how the plunder of battle was divided among the priesthood, the army, and the citizens of the nation. This scenario will occur again in the future when Jesus Christ defeats his spiritual enemies (Eph. 6:10-12; cf. Rev. 12:3-4, 7-9; 20:7-10) and all repentant captives will be rehabilitated by God's loyal servants (Isa. 30:20-21; cf. 2Pet. 3:9),

Therefore **I** (Almighty God) **will divide him** (Christ) **a portion with the great** (loyal angelic servants of Almighty God), and **he** (Christ) **shall divide the spoil** (plunder) **with the strong** (faithful servants of God), because he (Christ) poured out his soul unto death, and he was numbered with the transgressors (Mt. 27:38; Mk. 15:28; Lk. 22:37; 2Cor. 5:21), and he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25) (Isa. 53:12; Ed. notes in parentheses).

In the 32nd chapter of Numbers, the families of Gad and Reuben sought to remain on the other side of the Jordan River rather than crossing over to fight against God's enemies as they were instructed to do (Nu. 32:2-5). As witnessed previously, God does not appreciate a passive approach toward His commands (Nu. 25:1-9; cf. Rev. 3:15-16), therefore the families of Gad and Reuben were in serious trouble for their selfish and rebellious attitude, no matter how humble their request might have sounded,

And Moses said to the children of Gad and to the children of Reuben: 'Shall your brethren go to war while you sit here?' (Nu. 32:6)

As Moses had done many times before, he had to remind the people about the commands of God and their prior agreement to obey these commands (Ex. 19:8; cf. Nu. 32:7-15). Even after Moses' discourse, the families of Gad and Reuben preferred to negotiate rather than comply (Nu. 32:16-23). Whether they were aware or not, this is a tactic used by the Adversary, and it was reflected by the Pharaoh of the Exodus (cf. Ex. 10:8-11, 24-28).

Most of the 33rd chapter of Numbers is a review of Israel's journey from Egypt to the Promised Land, and it is a "type" of the journey that will occur following Christ's return when he leads mankind out of spiritual Egypt. As there are one thousand years allotted to Christ for this period of rehabilitation (Rev. 20:3, 5-6), it appears that rebuilding the systems of this planet, and re-educating mankind will be a process that requires a millennium (Isa. 2:1-4; Mic. 4:1-4). Therefore, no "magic wand" will be used by Christ to change the wrong direction that mankind has been going for thousands of years. Instead, it will be a slow process of "unlearning" the evils of Satan's way of living, and apparently not everyone is going to comply right away,

If the family of Egypt will not come up and enter in (to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles), they shall have no rain; (instead) they shall receive the plague with which the Lord strikes the nations (all peoples) who do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles (Zech. 14:18; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Numbers 33:50-53, 55-56, provides more detail regarding the removal of Israel's enemies and the consequences if these commands are ignored. By dividing the land amongst the families, and then creating laws to protect each family's perpetual ownership, land wars would not occur (Nu. 33:54; 34:1-29; 35:2-8). Had

Israel obeyed and enforced these laws, eventually all the nations of this planet would have complied. When examining the majority of wars fought in man's history, most are based on seizing someone else's property. This will not occur after Christ's return because all the land legislation will be enforced (Isa. 2:4; Mic. 4:4).

Numbers 33:52 is a command to remove all forms of pagan worship. The Israelites failed miserably at this and today all religions have varying degrees of paganism/falsehood in their practices (Rev. 12:9). Consequently, there will be no true religion until Jesus Christ begins teaching the Law of Almighty God to all nations (Isa. 2:2-22).

Because God is merciful, He created cities of refuge for those who were guilty of causing accidental death (Nu. 35:6, 9-15, 22-25). This was to protect the manslayer from being killed before he/she had a judicial hearing (Nu. 35:12; cf. Dt. 4:41-42). Pre-meditated murder carried the death penalty, but a minimum of two witnesses would be required before the "avenger of blood" could execute the murderer (Dt. 17:6; 19:15; cf. Nu. 35:21). Even if forensic evidence were available during the First Covenant period and considered admissible, a second witness would still need to come forward with credible testimony (Nu. 35:30). Although causing accidental death did not carry the death penalty, there was still a price to be paid because the perpetrator had to remain within the confines of a "city of refuge" for the lifetime of the high priest (Nu. 35:25). To make sure the sentence was completed, a family member of the deceased could kill the individual who committed the crime if they escaped (Nu. 35:26-28). The point here is that whether a person is killed accidentally or on purpose, it is still a great loss emotionally and often financially for family members of the deceased. However, no one who

committed a pre-meditated murder could be excused (Nu. 35:31-32).

God will not dwell in the midst of a country that ignores His law regarding those found guilty of pre-meditated murder (Isa. 59:2). Based on this truth, Almighty God will not hear the collective prayers of any nation that introduces legislation that breaks this command (Isa. 1:15; 59:2; Jer. 7:16; 11:14),

So you shall not pollute the land where you are; for blood (shed in pre-meditated murder) defiles the land and no atonement (covering) can be made for the land, for the blood that is shed on it, except by the blood of him who shed it. ³⁴ Therefore **do not defile the land which you inhabit, in the midst of which I dwell**; for I the Lord dwell among the children of Israel (Nu. 35:33-34; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

The Book of Deuteronomy - Introduction to the Promised Land

The first four chapters of the book of Deuteronomy are a summary review of Israel's history, focusing on the period from leaving Egypt to the point of entering the Promised Land. This also included repeating the Law of Almighty God for the next generation because those who were originally in Egypt were dead at this point, with the exception of Moses, Joshua, and Caleb (Dt. 1:35-38; 2:14-18). Moses made a specific request, which took the form of a prophetic blessing,

May the Lord God of your fathers **make you a thousand times more numerous than you are**, and bless you as He has promised you! (Dt. 1:11)

If, or when, this came to fruition, the descendants of Jacob would number

601,730,000, based on the census conducted just prior to entering the Promised Land (Nu. 26:51).

To get an idea of how large this group would be there is a total of approximately 601,707,621 people when the populations of the following countries are added together, excluding their protectorates. These numbers are based on population figures from 2012 to 2014:

United States	319,395,000
Great Britain	63,742,977
Canada	34,834,841
Australia	22,507,617
France	66,259,012
Norway	5,051,275
Denmark	5,569,077
Sweden	9,723,809
Ireland	4,832,765
Switzerland	8,020,000
Israel	7,821,850
Belgium	10,449,361
New Zealand	4,401,916
Netherlands	16,805,037
Finland	5,268,799
South Africa	48,375,645
Total	601,707,621

Although the descendants of Jacob were to increase in numbers as time went by, their trust in Almighty God, and His faithful servant Jesus Christ, only got worse (1 Cor. 10:1-6). It is no different today. Even those who claim to be Christian, lack the faith to obey the Law of Almighty God, and this will continue until the return of Jesus Christ (Mt. 7:21-23; cf. Jas. 2:18-24),

Yet, for all that (the great works performed by God to free the Israelites from spiritual, and physical bondage), you (the nation of Israel) did not believe (the Word of God and obey the

commands of) the Lord your God (Dt. 1:32; Ed. notes in parentheses).

It is because the majority of mankind will not listen to, or obey, the Law of Almighty God that this world suffers so many serious problems. In this sad, many question where God is. The answer is seen in the following text dealing with those who rebel against God's Word,

Then you (the Israelites who refused to obey God's command regarding the Amorites) returned (from a failed military campaign) and wept before the Lord, but **the Lord would not listen to your voice nor give ear to you** (Dt. 1:45; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

On the other hand, those who trust and obey God's Word can expect their enemies to be defeated. This is an important truth because mankind's real enemies are not composed of flesh and blood (Eph. 6:12),

...But the Lord destroyed them (one of Israel's enemies – the Zamzummim) before them (the Israelites), and they dispossessed them and dwelt in their place (land),²² just as he had done for the descendants of Esau, who dwelt in Seir, when He destroyed the Horites from before them. They dispossessed them and dwelt in their place, even to this day (Dt. 2:21b-22; cf. 2:31-36; 3:1-10; Ed. notes in parentheses).

You must not fear them (physical or spiritual enemies), for the Lord your God Himself fights for you (Dt. 3:22; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Instead of trusting and obeying every word of God today (Mt. 4:4), the religions of this world ignore it, add to it, or remove parts of it. Any of these acts are a violation of God's command,

You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take anything from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you (Dt. 4:2; cf. 4:6-8; emphasis added).

In addition to the command not to delete, alter, or add to the Law of Almighty God, everything that Moses taught the ancient Israelites was to be passed down to future generations (Dt. 4:9-10). Sadly today, the Law of Almighty God holds little importance even in Christianity, which is contrary to the teachings of Jesus Christ and the New Testament writers,

For assuredly, I (Christ) say to you (his servants and followers), till heaven and earth pass away, one *jot* (Gr. *iota*, smallest letter) or one tittle (smallest stroke in a Hebrew letter) will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.¹⁹ Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven (Mt. 5:18-19; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

All Scripture (as originally proclaimed) is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for *reproof* (SGD 1659, *evidence*; cf. Heb. 11:1), for correction, for instruction (training, discipline) in righteousness (Ps. 119:172) (2Tim. 3:16; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Almighty God does not regard one aspect of His word as being more important than another. Instead, every word is part of a complete package. This is confirmed many times in scripture and is seen in the original Hebrew language which has no punctuation or separation by sentences, paragraphs, or chapters. Instead, it is one continuous work. Therefore, it is foolish to claim that the Ten

Commandments are of greater importance within the Law of Almighty God, while minimizing the significance of the rest,

He announced to you his covenant which he commanded you to observe, the Ten Words, and he wrote them down on two tablets of stone.¹⁴ And **YHWH commanded me** (Moses) **at that** (same) **time to teach you laws and regulations for you to observe** them in the land that you are crossing into to possess (Dt. 4:13-14; cf. 4:40, 45; 5:1; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added; The Schocken Bible: Vol. 1).

The very thing that God commanded, and repeated twice to stress its importance, is ignored by many religions that create icons of their gods, including Christianity with their images of Christ, Mary, angels, crucifixes, fish symbols, etc.,

Take careful heed to yourselves, for you saw no form when the Lord spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire,¹⁶ lest you act corruptly and make for yourselves a carved image in the form (similitude) of any figure: the likeness of male or female,¹⁷ the likeness of any beast that is on earth or the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the air,¹⁸ the likeness of anything that creeps on the ground or the likeness of any fish (another one of Christianity's symbols) that is in the water beneath the earth.¹⁹ And take heed, lest you lift your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun, the moon, and the stars, all the host of heaven, you feel driven to worship them and serve them, which the Lord your God has given (divided) to all the peoples under the whole heaven as a heritage (Dt. 4:15-19; cf. 4:12; Ed. notes in parentheses).

God's true servants have always been, and always will be, identified by their adherence to the Law of Almighty God,

But the Lord has taken you and brought you out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt (symbolic of Satan's present *lawless* age; cf. Gal. 1:4; cf. Eze. 23:19; Rev. 11:8), to be His people, His inheritance, as you are this day (Dt. 4:20; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Sadly, mankind never learns from history. Instead, they repeat it over and over again. God prophesied that His people will awaken to their sins once again, just prior to Christ's return. At that time, they will be living in spiritual darkness having rejected His law and commandments,

But from there (spiritual darkness) you will seek the Lord your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul.³⁰ When you are in distress (tribulation; cf. Mt. 24:21, 29; Mk. 13:24; Rev. 7:14), and all these things come upon you **in the latter days, when you turn to the Lord your God** (repent for transgressing the Law of Almighty God) **and obey His voice** (Dt. 4:29-30; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

It is through, and by, the Angel of Almighty God that sinners can be led out of spiritual Egypt. As discussed earlier in this study, this Angel is the one who later became Jesus Christ and gave his life as a ransom to provide freedom from everlasting death for those who repent of sin (Rom. 6:23; cf. Heb. 9:22),

And because He loved your fathers (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob), therefore He chose their descendants after them; and **He brought you out of Egypt with His Presence** (Jesus Christ; SHD 6440; person, face of seraphim; before and behind; in front of; Nu. 20:16; Ex. 14:19; Nu. 14:14; Isa. 58:8; cf. 1Cor. 10:4), with His mighty power (Dt. 4:37; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Because the Israelites broke their agreement with God by continuing to sin, they were prevented from entering the Promised Land. However, their children were allowed to enter, but the same conditions applied to this next generation, which is why the Law of Almighty God was repeated prior to their entrance (Dt. 5:1-22; 31-33; 6:1-3; 17, 24-25; 7:11). Somehow, Christianity seems to believe it is unnecessary to observe the Law of Almighty God. They teach that mercy and forgiveness is provided by Christ's death without any conditions attached. This is contrary to God's word,

But **showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep** (observe) **My commandments** (Dt. 5:10; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Certainly, forgiveness for sin is provided by Christ's shed blood, but Christ's death is not a license to continue transgressing the Law of Almighty God. Prior to Israel's exodus from Egypt, the blood of a lamb was placed on the doorposts of each Israelite home to protect them from death (Ex. 12:22-23), which is the reward they otherwise would have received (Rom. 6:43). This foreshadowed Christ's blood that would be shed to protect repentant sinners from everlasting death. However, just as the Israelites were to leave Egypt because it pictured a sinful way of living, so repentant sinners are to depart from the values of this present evil age (Gal. 1:4; cf. Rev. 18:4) and begin living a new life in accordance with the Law of Almighty God (Rom. 6:4). Failure to do this is a serious matter as the next section of scripture confirms,

For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning.²¹ For it

would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness (Ps. 119:172), than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them.²² But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: 'A dog returns to his own vomit,' and, 'a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire' (2Pet. 2:20-22; Ed. note in parenthesis).

The sow is an unclean animal, picturing a sinner before their repentance and baptism. Following baptism by immersion in water, all previous sins are washed away. Once this occurs, the new convert is no longer considered unclean. However, if they go back to living the way they did prior to their repentance and baptism, they are unclean once again. At this point, if they refuse to repent they will not be in the first resurrection of the dead (Rev. 20:5-6). Based on the teachings of Christianity today, very few will be in the first resurrection because they have believed a false gospel message (Mt. 7:21-. This false gospel was already creeping into the early church during the time of Christ's apostles (Gal. 1:6). Central to this falsehood was that obedience to the Law of Almighty God was no longer necessary for salvation. The term licentiousness, which refers to lawless behavior, describes this movement (Mt. 7:21-23),

.... thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, **licentiousness** (Mk. 7:22a; emphasis added).

Who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to licentiousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness (Eph. 4:19; emphasis added).

For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles (considered unclean) – **when we walked in licentiousness**, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries

(1Pet. 4:3; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Sadly, mankind has failed to make the connection between obeying the Law of Almighty God and living a happy and peaceful life, which God expressed in this next scripture,

Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear (have deep respect for) Me and **always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!** (Dt. 5:29; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Internalizing the Law of Almighty God is the only way an individual can love God and his neighbor (Dt. 6:5-6; cf. I Jn. 5:3). God's law and commandments must be central to everything a person thinks, says, and does (Dt. 6:8-9). Therefore, anyone claiming to love God and their fellowman, while rejecting the Law of Almighty God, is described in scripture as a liar,

Now by this we know that we know Him (Almighty God), if we keep His commandments. ⁴ **He who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar**, and the truth is not in him. ⁵ But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him (1Jn. 2:3-5; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

If the ancient nation of Israel had obeyed the Law of Almighty God, they would have been blessed beyond measure. This alone would have garnered the attention of all the nations around them. Eventually, the entire planet could have benefited from the example set by the descendants of Jacob. Sadly, they failed miserably despite every opportunity given to them (Dt. 7:13-15). However, they are not excused from the responsibility God gave to them. In the future, they will fulfill what God

intended them to do (Isa. 2:3, 5; 66:20-23; cf. Heb. 11:23-28),

For you are a holy people (set apart) to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all peoples on the face of the earth. ⁷ The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples (Dt. 7:6-7; Ed. note in parenthesis).

The message of both the First and Second Covenant is the same regarding mankind's responsibility to live according to every word of Almighty God,
...but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord (Dt. 8:3b).

But he (Christ) answered and said, "It is written, '*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God*'" (Mt. 4:4; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Those who fail to follow this instruction cannot come to a correct understanding of who Almighty God is or His plan to reconcile mankind to Himself,

Beware that you **do not forget the Lord your God by not keeping His commandments, His judgments, and His statutes** which I command you today (Dt. 8:11; emphasis added).

When Almighty God is ignored, nations will give credit to themselves for all their achievements,

Then you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth' (Dt. 8:17).

Per ancient Israel's example, the nations that persist in ignoring the Law of Almighty God will eventually fail,

...so, you shall perish, because you would not be obedient to the voice of the Lord your God (Dt. 8:20b).

When a nation is defeated in battle, it should never be assumed that the conquering nation or alliance is more righteous. Instead, the conquerors can be an instrument used by God to punish a rebellious nation, if he chooses to do so,

Do not think in your heart, after the Lord your God has cast them (descendants of Anak; cf. Dt. 9:1-3) out before you saying, 'Because of my righteousness the Lord has brought me in to possess this land'; but **it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the Lord is driving them** out from before you. ⁵ (Therefore) it is not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart... (Dt. 9:4-5a; cf. 9:6-29; Ed. notes in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Because Moses fasted and prayed a number of times, on behalf of the Israelites, the Lord did not destroy them for their rebellion against the Law of Almighty God (Dt. 9:8-9; 12-20; 23-29). After Moses had recounted the history of the Israelites since their departure from Egypt, he summarized the responsibility of every citizen. As God does not change (Mal. 3:6; Jas. 1:17), this is still the responsibility of everyone today whether they recognize it or not,

. what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, ¹³ and to keep the commandments of the Lord and

His statutes which I command you today **for your good** (Dt.10: 12b-13; emphasis added).

A change of attitude is central to fulfilling this instruction. However, instead of submitting to the Law of Almighty God willingly, most people today dismiss it. Sadly, it usually takes some disaster before there is a change in this "stiff-necked" attitude. Ironically, it is often because the Law of Almighty God is transgressed, in some manner, that serious consequences occur,

Therefore, circumcise the foreskin of your heart (metaphor describing the removal of a stubborn and rebellious attitude), and be stiff-necked no longer (Dt. 10:16; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Just like ancient Israel, most people today allow their carnal human nature to make decisions for them, rather than disciplining themselves in order to obey the Law of Almighty God (I Cor. 9:27; Phil. 4:12-13; Heb. 5:8),

For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit, ⁶ For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. ⁷ Because **the carnal mind is enmity (hostile) against God; for it is not subject to the law of God**, nor indeed can be (Rom. 8:5-7; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Although the 11th chapter of Deuteronomy covers God's acts on behalf of Israel, including His many blessings (Dt. 11:14-15), it also points forward to a time when Almighty God will send His son, Jesus Christ, to restore the Law of Almighty God.

The end result will be true happiness and fulfillment as opposed to the hardship and grief associated with living under Satan's value system (Isa. 25:8; Rev. 7:17; 21:4). The

ultimate spiritual blessing for any human being will be inheriting God's kingdom, of which the Promised Land was a "type." However, the conditions for entering God's "Spiritual Promised Land" are the same as they were for the physical Promised Land (Dt. 11:31-32). In other words, no one who persists in living contrary to the Law of Almighty God will enter the kingdom of God,

Blessed are those who do His commandments that they may have the right to the tree of life (everlasting), and may enter through the gates into the city (New Jerusalem, or the spiritual City of God). ¹⁵ But outside are dogs (symbol representing those who are "spiritually unclean" because of sin) and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie (Rev. 22:14-15; Ed. notes in parentheses).

God compared entering the Promised Land to entering a rest from every burden that ancient Israel was living under in Egypt, as well as a rest from their enemies (Dt. 12:9-10; cf. Eph. 6:12). Sadly, they did not understand their main burdens were spiritual in nature because their attitudes were still being influenced by Satan and the fallen angelic host (Rev. 12:9). This is one of the reasons Paul compared the "rest" that ancient Israel experienced when they entered the Promised Land to the future spiritual-rest that will occur following Christ's return and the removal of Satan (Rev. 20:1-3),

For if Joshua had given them (the ancient Israelites) rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another rest. ⁹ There remains therefore a rest for the people of God (referring to entering the kingdom of God) (Heb. 4:8-9).

Let us therefore **be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall after the same example of disobedience** (Heb. 4:11; emphasis added).

Just as ancient Israel was to worship Almighty God in the manner He prescribed, the same principle applies today and into the future. Christ confirmed that God's Holy Days are an integral part of activities in the spirit-realm,

Then he (Christ) said to them (his twelve disciples), 'With fervent desire I have desired to eat this (coming) Passover (commencing on the evening of the 14th/15th of the first month) with you before I suffer; ¹⁶ for I say to you, **I will no longer eat of it** (because Christ would be dead before the Passover meal was eaten at the end of the 14th day of Abib/Nisan) **until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God** (Lk. 22:15-16; cf. Zech. 14:16-19; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Another opportunity, for those who are in the first resurrection, to celebrate with Jesus Christ is described in the following scripture,

Then he (an angel) said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'" And he said to me, 'These are the true sayings of God' (Rev. 19:9; Ed. note in parenthesis).

As ancient Israel was commanded to observe God's Holy Days, so they are to be kept today but without animal sacrifices because Christ's death fulfilled that aspect of the Law of Almighty God (Mt. 5:17; cf. Heb. 9:11-14; 10:1-4). As discussed in the opening pages of this study, God's Holy days were sanctified in the spirit-realm from the foundation of the world. Once the Body of Christ decides where to observe each of God's Holy Days, they are to travel to that site and celebrate together,

And there you shall eat before the Lord your God, and you shall rejoice in all to which you have put your hand, you and your households,

in which the Lord your God has blessed you (Dt. 12:7, 12, 17-18).

At the conclusion of the 12th chapter of Deuteronomy, God explained one of the reasons He wanted the pagan nations removed from Israel's presence,

You shall not worship the Lord your God in that way; for every abomination (detestable action) to the Lord which He hates they (the pagan nations) have done to their gods; for **they even burn their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods** (Dt. 12:31; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Because religion is big business in countries like the United States, it attracts all sorts of people into leadership roles. In the mix are genuine people who want to help and serve others, but conversely many are in it for fame and financial gain. One of the tactics used to grow congregations is the performance of miracles such as healing the sick. Another method is convincing adherents that their leader can predict events in advance, including when Christ is going to return. Many also preach a "health and wealth message". In other words, if you send money to the religious organization, God will bless you through better health and/or wealth. To avoid being a gullible follower, it is important to note God's instructions in this matter. For example, when someone claims they can predict events, it is critical that their doctrinal position be closely scrutinized to confirm whether they believe the Law of Almighty God is to be obeyed, with nothing added to it, removed, or modified (Dt. 12:32),

To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light (symbol of God's truth as expressed by His every word (Ps. 119:105; cf. Mt. 4:4) in

them (Isa. 8:20; cf. 2 Cor. 11:13-15; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Putting this scenario into a modern setting, if someone said they could predict that Christ would return in 2028, but that person believes it is acceptable to observe the pagan holiday of December 25th, with Christ's name applied to it, that individual should not be taken seriously. Or, if a religious leader places himself between Jesus Christ and the brethren, which is a form of idolatry, that human leader has made himself into a god in the eyes of the people, which contravenes the first commandment,

If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives you a sign or a wonder, ² and the sign or the wonder comes to pass, of which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods which you have not known, and let us serve them,' ³ you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams... (Dt. 13:1-3a; cf. 18:20-22).

Misleading God's people through various forms of deception is so serious, that God placed the death penalty on those who practice these things,

But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has spoken in order to turn you away from the Lord your God... (Dt. 13:5a).

So many people are sidetracked from God's truth because they are focused on lying wonders performed by deceivers who are after fame and financial gain. This includes listening to a false gospel, or believing that some leader has the ability to predict events including Christ's return,

And Jesus answered and said to them (his disciples): 'Take heed that no one deceives you.

⁵ For **many will come in my name** (appear to be Christ's representatives on earth), saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many (Mt. 24:4-5; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many (Mt. 24:11).

For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. ¹⁴ And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. ¹⁵ Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works (2Cor. 11:13-15).

The punishment for deceiving and misleading people in matters pertaining to God's truth carries the death penalty according to Deuteronomy 13:6-17. This will be the rule when Christ returns because he will begin enforcing the Law of Almighty God immediately,

You (Christ; cf. Ps. 2:6-8) shall break them (rebellious nations in the physical and spirit realm) with a rod of iron; you shall dash them in pieces (if they resist God's instruction) like a potter's vessel (Ps. 2:9; Ed. notes in parentheses).

It will probably take very little time before mankind is humbled to the point of being teachable. When this occurs, they will begin unlearning the many lies they believed prior to Christ's return (Jn. 8:44).

In Deuteronomy 14:1-2, God reminded the next generation not to observe the customs of the pagan nations. Their parents were told the same things after leaving Egypt (Lev. 19:28; 21:5). Today, many would regard the command in Dt. 14:1 as absurd and no longer applicable. However, it is clear these practices still occur

because women from the Dani tribe in Papua New Guinea cut off one or two finger joints when a relative dies, and then burn these digits with the body of the deceased.

Because there are so many animals, fish, and birds on the earth, God gave important characteristics that would identify those creatures that could, and could not, be eaten for food (Dt. 14:6-7; 9-10; 12-18). Also, it is important to note that many of the predatory birds mentioned in Deuteronomy 14:12-18 reproduce in small numbers. Therefore, if they were hunted for food, they would become extinct very quickly leading to an increase in rodents, with their associated diseases, and other undesirable animals.

It appears that the Promised Land may have had some indigenous creatures not found in the surrounding areas because eleven of the animals named in Deuteronomy are not mentioned in Leviticus 11:2-45.

The instruction not to eat a clean animal that died of natural causes had spiritual implications (Dt. 14:21). It pointed to a future 'clean' sacrifice that died from "unnatural causes", and therefore could be eaten. In other words, Jesus Christ died from "unnatural causes" because he was murdered. Therefore, Christ could be eaten symbolically each year on the Passover through the unleavened bread and wine that pictured his broken body and shed blood given for the sins of mankind and the fallen host (1Cor. 11:23-26).

The 14th chapter of Deuteronomy ends by summarizing important aspects of the nation's financial responsibilities. One of the tithes, or tenth parts, of each citizen's productive increase was to be used during God's three annual festivals to cover expenses, and allow everyone to have an enjoyable time together (Dt. 14:22-23).

If a farmer had to travel a great distance with the livestock he put aside for one of God's festivals, he could sell it and bring money instead,

But if the journey is too long for you, so that you are not able to carry the tithe, or if the place where the Lord your God chooses to put His name is too far from you, when the Lord your God has blessed you, ²⁵ then you shall exchange it for money, take the money in your hand, and go to the place which the Lord your God chooses. ²⁶ And you shall spend that money for whatever your heart desires: for oxen or sheep, for wine or similar drink, for whatever your heart desires; you shall eat there before the Lord your God, and you shall rejoice, you and your household (Dt. 14:24-26; emphasis added).

The tithe mentioned in the previous scripture was not the same tithe given to the Levites (Nu. 18:26; cf. Dt. 18:1-8). Therefore, one tenth of productive increase covered expenses related to the three festivals commanded by Almighty God, while a separate tithe belonged to the Levites (Nu. 18:24),

Speak thus to the Levites, and say to them: 'When you take from the children of Israel **the tithes which I have given you from them as your inheritance**, then you shall offer up a heave offering of it to the Lord, a tenth of the tithe (Nu. 18:26; emphasis added).

At the *end* of every third year during God's seven-year Sabbatical cycle, a tithe, or tenth, was to be stored up as a reserve fund to make sure the Levites, strangers, fatherless, and widows would have enough to enjoy God's festivals in the years that followed (Dt. 14:27-29). This is confirmed again in other scriptures,

So you shall rejoice in every good thing which the Lord your God has given to you and your

house, you and the Levite and the stranger who is among you. ¹² When you have finished laying aside all the tithe of your increase in the third year, which is the year of tithing, and have given it to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, so that they may eat within your gates and be filled. ¹³ then you shall say before the Lord your God: **'I have removed the holy tithe from my house, and also have given them to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, according to all Your commandments which You have commanded me; I have not transgressed Your commandments, nor have I forgotten them, ¹⁴ I have not eaten any of it** when in mourning (during trying times), nor have I removed any of it for any unclean use, nor given any of it for the dead (because of defilement for touching a dead body)... (Dt. 26:11-14a; cf. Amos 4:4b; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

It would make sense if Christ's earthly ministry concluded at the end of a third year during God's Sabbatical system because his death provided the means through which repentant sinners could rejoice and find relief from Satan's burdensome system (Mt. 11:28-30).

The entire planet will function on God's tithing commands following Christ's return. The rich will pay the same percentages as those who earn much less. Some will argue this is not fair. However, the question needs to be asked, "Is it fair that the rich pay less taxes because of various loopholes in this world's taxation systems today?" Continuing with God's commands aimed at lightening the burden of the poor, any debts incurred during God's seven-year cycle were to be forgiven at the end of every seventh year,

At the end of every seven years you shall grant a release (remission/forgiveness) of debts (Dt. 15:1; Ed. note in parenthesis).

If any nation today followed God's financial laws and commands, it would be greatly blessed as confirmed by the next scriptural reference,

Only if you carefully obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe with care all these commandments which I command you today. ⁶ For the Lord your God will bless you just as He promised you; **you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow; you shall reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over you** (Dt. 15:5-6; emphasis added).

Eventually any nation that is "up to its eyes in debt" will find itself dominated by those countries it borrows from. Debtor nations will no longer be able to enact their own laws. Instead, their internal policies will be determined by the nation, or nations, loaning them money. Freedoms that are taken for granted right now, will disappear suddenly. Sadly, many western governments allow avarice to flourish even at the risk of complete economic collapse. This was witnessed in the global economic crash that began in 2008 and it will happen again because "greed knows no bounds",

He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver; nor he who loves abundance, with increase. This also is vanity (Eccl. 5:10).

They will throw their silver into the streets, and their gold will be like refuse; (because) their silver and their gold will not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the Lord; they will not satisfy their souls, nor fill their stomachs, because it (their greed) became their stumbling block of iniquity (Eze. 7:19; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Instead of caring for the poor, the rich and powerful of this world create financial rules and regulations that make it hard for the poor to get ahead. This is regarded as a sin by Almighty God, and He will eventually deal with it,

Beware lest there be a wicked thought in your heart, saying, 'The seventh year, the year of release (from debt), is at hand,' and your eye be evil against your poor brother and you give him nothing, and he cry out to the Lord against you, and **it become sin among you** (Dt. 15:9; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

God reminded the Israelites that following their release from Egyptian slavery they received compensation for the many years they worked for a subsistent wage. Therefore, if they had a servant of their own, that individual was to be given fair compensation upon the seventh year of release (Dt. 15:12-15).

The firstborn among man and beast were to be set aside for Almighty God (Dt. 15:19-22). This pictured both the nation of Israel being set aside as God's firstborn (Ex. 4:22) but also Jesus Christ as the Father's begotten son,

For God (Almighty) so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him (according to every word of God that Christ taught; cf. Mt. 4:4) should not perish but have everlasting life (Jn. 3:16; Ed. notes in parentheses).

God's New Year is in the spring, and is tied intrinsically to the time that Israel departed from Egypt. This exodus meant freedom from slavery, both physically and spiritually. As it was during the spring when new growth/life is begins, it represented a newness of life for the nation (Rom. 6:4). In other words, it was an opportunity to begin living a new life in accordance with God's word, as opposed to

worshiping the multiple gods of Egypt. Therefore, celebrating a new year in January is contrary to God's command (Dt. 16:1; cf. Ex. 12:2).

Because it was the Angel of God, who later became known as Jesus Christ, that brought the Israelites out of sin and oppression, they were to offer a sacrifice annually at Passover to remind them that their physical lives were preserved because of the miracles performed by this Angel. The blood of a lamb being placed on the doorposts and lintel foreshadowed the blood of Jesus Christ that would be shed on the Passover of 30CE. Christ's shed blood provided the means through which everlasting death would "pass over" every repentant sinner (Heb. 9:22). Following Christ's death, the sacrifice of a lamb at Passover was replaced by unleavened bread picturing Christ's sinless body/life being given up, wine picturing his shed blood, and foot-washing picturing Christ's willingness to humble himself unto death in order to serve others. These are the symbols of the New Testament Passover (Mt. 26:26-30; Jn. 13:1-16). The consumption of unleavened bread is to continue from the evening at the close of the 14th day, until the evening at the close of the 21st day of this first month of God's year. At this time of year leaven symbolizes "sin" which is to be "put out" of everyone's life with God's help, and His ongoing forgiveness (Dt. 16:3-8).

Almighty God's second annual festival is referred to as the Feast of Weeks (Dt. 16:9-10), or the Feast of First-fruits (Lev. 23:10), or Pentecost (Ac. 2:1). The nation of ancient Israel was meant to fulfill what this Holy Day pictured because they represented the first-fruits of God's mighty works of redemption. However, they refused to obey the Law of Almighty God and were eventually divorced because of spiritual adultery (Jer. 3:8). Therefore, the true first-fruits of God are now those who have repented of sin, been

baptized, and received Almighty God's Holy Spirit. These are the first-fruits that Almighty God has given to His son, Jesus Christ,

And he (Christ) said, 'Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to me **unless it has been granted to him by my Father**' (Jn. 6:65; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Of His (Almighty God's) own will He brought us (repentant sinners) forth by the word of truth, that **we might be a kind of firstfruits** of His creatures (Jsa. 1:18; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Every other sinner that has not repented during their lifetime is represented by the symbolism of the third festival in God's calendar, which is the Feast of Tabernacles and Last Great Day (Dt. 16:13-15; cf. Jn. 7:37). This festival period occurs at the end of the summer, when the harvests of fruit, vegetables, and grains are larger than the previous harvests during the spring and early summer. Therefore, this last festival pictures the great number of those who have lived contrary to the Law of Almighty God, including the fallen angels. This vast multitude will have an opportunity to repent and be reconciled to Almighty God through Christ's sacrifice,

The Lord (Almighty) **is** not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering (patient) toward us, **not willing that any should perish but that all** (every sinner) **should come to repentance** (2Pet. 3:9; cf. Eze. 33:11; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

There are other Holy Days in God's calendar such as the Day of Blowing Trumpets, which occurs on the first day of the seventh month (Lev. 23:23-25), and the Day of Atonement on the tenth day of the seventh month (Lev. 23:26-

32), but these are not pilgrimages requiring travel away from one's normal domicile (Dt. 16:16-17).

The 16th chapter of Deuteronomy concludes with a call to justice. If an individual can't afford "the best lawyer in town", they should still be able to obtain as fair a trial as someone who is wealthy. Otherwise, the proceedings are biased toward those with greater resources. In situations like this, partiality is being shown and God condemns it,

You shall not pervert justice; you shall not show partiality, nor take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists (perverts) the words of the righteous (Dt. 16:19; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Setting up pagan symbols such as obelisks is prohibited by Almighty God because they are an integral part of many false worship systems (Dt. 16:21-22). These objects are found in one form or another throughout the world today even at a time when mankind prides itself in being technologically advanced and scientifically enlightened,

All over the world, amid all its peoples, in all known ages, obelisk, column, tower, steeple, and minaret (minarets of the Muslim world) have been understood to be phallic symbols, not just of the erect male member, but as the nineteenth-century English Freemason Hargrave Jennings expresses it, of a "super-sensual, super-essential, divinely operative celestial 'fire' – a force which makes things grow, harden, and rise against gravity, fecundating the universe, producing all beings and all life" ('Needling Mother Earth', p 367, *The Magic of Obelisks* by Peter Tompkins).

Therefore, physical objects become responsible for generating life rather than Almighty God, the

Creator of all things. This includes the principle generator of life in pagan systems of worship, the sun. It is worship of the sun that inspired a change from the seventh day Sabbath, or Saturday in most secular calendars, to Sunday in honor of the Sun-god,

The round towers of Ireland, says O'Brien, author of a book by that title, were all phalli, raised in adherence to the ancient fire-worship of Persia, **for the purpose of worshipping the sun, or male principle in the universe...** ('Needling Mother Earth', p 370, The Magic of Obelisks by Peter Tompkins; emphasis added).

This is such a serious matter that God commanded the death penalty for those who involved themselves with any sun-worship practices (Dt. 17:5),

If there is found among you, within any of your gates (towns) which the Lord your God gives you, a man or a woman who has been wicked in the sight of the Lord your God, in transgressing His covenant, **who has gone and served other gods and worshiped them, either the sun or moon or any of the host of heaven,** which I have not commanded (Dt. 17:2-3; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

In matters pertaining to capital punishment, no one was to be executed on the testimony of only one witness. Instead, there had to be two or three witnesses and they would be responsible for executing the guilty party (Dt. 17:6-7). If there were discrepancies between the witnesses' accounts making a final judgment difficult, the matter was taken to a higher court supervised by the Levites (Dt. 17:8-11). Failure to comply with the ruling of this higher court resulted in death for the offender. This was to ensure that all citizens had a proper fear and respect of authority, which in turn would reduce the amount of crimes committed within the nation (Dt. 17:12-13).

Because Almighty God knows the heart of His people, he prophesied that they would eventually reject Him and His representative, the Angel of God, in favor of a human ruler (Dt. 17:14). This prophecy was not fulfilled until the time of Samuel,

Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, ⁵ and said to him, 'Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now make for us a king to judge us like all the nations.' ⁶ But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, 'Give us a king to judge us.' So Samuel prayed to the Lord. ⁷ And the Lord said to Samuel, 'Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for **they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them** (1Sam. 8:4-7; cf. Hos. 13:9-11; emphasis added).

Jesus Christ was delegated with the responsibility to lead the nation of Israel, but time and again they refused to obey his instructions (Ex. 23:20-23; cf. I Cor. 10:1-4). This situation would be very frustrating for any leader, and Christ expressed how this felt during his earthly ministry,

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! **How often** (in Christ's previous existence as the Angel of God) **I wanted to gather your children together,** as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, **but you were not willing!** (Mt. 23:37; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

It would be no different if Christ were ruling this planet today because most people would refuse to follow his commands, including those Christians who are antinomian (Mt. 7:21-23). The primary reason the Israelites wanted a human leader was to manipulate the new ruler into gradually replacing the Law of Almighty God

with regulations they regarded as being less burdensome (Isa. 30:9-11; cf. 1Jn. 3:5). In fact, they wanted to duplicate the rules and regulations they were familiar with in Egypt (Dt. 17:16). One way to achieve this would be to elect a leader from a foreign country which is one of the reasons that God forbade this,

... **you may not set a foreigner over you**, who is not your brother (Dt. 17:15b; emphasis added).

Instead of trusting in a large military establishment, any ruler of Israel was to place their trust in God to protect them from enemies. Hence the command not to multiply horses with the goal of having a huge military force (Dt. 17:16a; cf. 1Kgs. 4:26; 10:26, 28).

God's appointed human ruler was to avoid having multiple wives as this was a status symbol associated with Gentile rulers. In other words, the more wives a Gentile ruler had, the more wealthy and powerful he appeared to be (Dt. 17:17a). Also, per Solomon's bad example, the more wives a ruler had the more likely he was to assimilate, and begin practicing, their religious customs because these wives would come from many different cultures as part of political alliances between Israel and other countries (1Kgs. 3:1-3; 11:1-7, 9-11). Having foreign wives would set a wrong example for the citizens of Israel. It would send a message that following pagan practices is now acceptable because the king's wives are doing it.

Whoever God chose to rule over the nation of Israel, that individual was not to acquire wealth and power for himself like the Gentile rulers. Instead, the ruler's focus was to be centered on serving the people (Dt. 17:17b; cf. Mt. 20:25-27). In many third world countries today, the rulers "funnel" money that is donated for various aid projects into their own bank accounts. This

is abusive and their countrymen suffer as a result.

No appointed ruler of Israel was to be above the Law of Almighty God. Everything contained within the Word of God applied equally to the king as it did to every citizen. In fact, the king was to be more conversant than anyone else in properly administering God's law and commandments. If every ruler were to abide by the following command today, the world would be a much better place to live in,

Also it shall be, when he (the king) sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from the one before the priests, the Levites.¹⁹ And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, **that he may be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes**,²⁰ (so) that his heart may not be lifted above (think too highly of himself when compared to) his brethren, (also) that he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right hand of to the left, and **that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children** in the midst of Israel (Dt. 17:18-20; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

It is sad to review the history of the kings of Israel and Judah because in many cases they did not "prolong their days" and their children rarely did what was right in accordance with the Law of Almighty God. To a great extent, these kings and their progeny contributed to the sins of the nation through their stubborn and rebellious actions.

As mentioned previously in this document, Hebrew scripture was originally written without any separation by chapters, verses, or descriptive paragraph titles. Instead, it was one continual "word of God." When translators inserted chapters, verses, and descriptive

paragraph titles, some themes were separated when they were not meant to be. Deuteronomy 18:9-14 is a case in point because verses 15-19 were separated by a "descriptive paragraph title" in the New King James Version of the Bible. This is very misleading because it is dealing with one continual subject from verse 9 through 19, and there should be no separation at all. The main point in this section of scripture is that God's people are not to learn the ways of the heathen nations, which include listening to witches, soothsayers, interpreters of omens, sorcerers, those who conjure spells (voodoo), mediums, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead (i.e. communicates with fallen angels in order to deceive the living) (Dt. 18:9-11). Instead of learning from, or listening to false teachers, God's people are to learn from, and listen to, Jesus Christ as this next section of scripture shows providing it is not separated by a descriptive paragraph title,

For these nations which you will dispossess listened to soothsayers and diviners; but as for you, the Lord your God has not appointed such for you. ¹⁵ (Instead), the Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me (Moses) from your midst, from your brethren (specifically from the tribe of Judah). **Him** (the one who would become known as Jesus Christ) **you shall hear** (listen to), ¹⁶ **according to all you desired of the Lord your God in Horeb in the day of assembly** (when Israel heard the Law of Almighty God) ... (Dt. 18:14-16a; cf. Mt. 17:5; Mk. 9:7; Lk. 9:35 Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

As this section of scripture continues to point out, the people were afraid of the fire and noise associated with the Law of Almighty God being delivered at Mt. Sinai, and they made their feelings known to Moses,

...saying, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, nor let me see this great fire (symbol associated with the Law of Almighty God; cf. Dt. 33:2b; Ac. 2:3) anymore, lest I die.'¹⁷ And the Lord said to me (Moses): 'What they have spoken is good. ¹⁸ **I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I (Almighty God) command him.** ¹⁹ And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which he speaks in My name, I will require it of him (that person) (Dt. 18:16b-19; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

It is clear from many New Testament writings that the Prophet being "raised up" in the future was a reference to Jesus Christ who spoke only as directed by his heavenly Father (Jn. 8:26, 28, 38; 12:49-50; 14:10),

Then fear came upon all (seized them all), and they glorified God, saying, 'A great prophet (referring to Christ) **has risen up** among us'; and, 'God has visited His people' (Lk. 7:16; cf. 24:19; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, '**This is truly the Prophet who is to come** into the world' (Jn. 6:14; cf. 7:40; 9:17; Ac. 3:22-26; emphasis added).

By the testimony of *three witnesses, Almighty God made is abundantly clear that mankind is to listen to Jesus Christ and obey his commands, which are identical to those of his heavenly Father,

While he (Peter) was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. **Hear**

him! (*Mt. 17:5; cf. *Mk. 9:7; *Lk. 9:35; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Mankind is to communicate with Almighty God, in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ (Jn. 15:16; 16:23-24), and not look to astrologers, diviners, soothsayers, mediums, etc. for answers to questions or concerns. None of these have the truth on any spiritual matter because they are not connected to the source of truth, which is Jesus Christ,

Jesus said to him (Thomas), **'I am the way, the truth, and the life** (everlasting)... (Jn. 14:6a; cf. Jn. 6:44, 65; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

When anyone has questions or concerns about any matter, they are to go to God the Father in prayer and ask for His assistance and/or intervention in their life. This involves trusting Him with the outcome even if His answer is "no", or "not at this time", because He has our ultimate good as His primary concern,

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and **lean not on your own understanding;**

In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths (Prov. 3:5-6; emphasis added).

Commit your way to the Lord, **trust also in Him,** and He shall bring it to pass (Ps. 37:5; cf. Prov. 16:3; Lk. 11:9-13; emphasis added).

False prophets and prognosticators are in the same category as soothsayers and diviners. They are impostors and worthy of the death penalty because their deceptions lead people away from trusting God (Dt. 18:20).

Because God is merciful, if anyone in ancient Israel caused an accidental death, that person was not to be executed. Instead, they were to be protected, providing they followed God's

instructions in the matter (Dt. 19:1-10). However, premeditated murder was punishable by death, providing there were at least two witnesses to the crime (Dt. 19:11-13, 15-21). In today's world, because some innocent people have been wrongfully accused, judged, and sentenced to death, large segments of society want to "throw the baby out with the bathwater" by doing away with the death penalty for murder. This is contrary to the Law of Almighty God and many consequences have followed, including repeat crimes when murderers are released; not to mention that the victim's life is not considered of much value. When little value is placed on someone's life, it emboldens criminals because the consequences are not that serious if they get caught. Also, if a murderer is left in prison for a decade or more, it is tax payers who "foot the bill". Abolition of the death penalty is mankind's attempt to appear more righteous than God,

But we (mankind) are all like an unclean thing, and all **our righteousness is like filthy rags** (to Almighty God) (Isa. 64:6a; cf. Job 35:2; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Another serious offense is purposely moving property markers from the boundaries of someone's land (Dt. 19:14; cf. 27:17; cf. Ex. 20:15).

Ancient Israel was God's instrument to remove the pagan nations that inhabited Canaan. As the Angel of the Lord was their real leader, they were to heed the following commands,

- 1) Do not be afraid of enemies, because the Lord will grant victory over them (Dt. 20:1-4).
- 2) Any soldier that had just built a new house, but not lived in it yet, was to return home (Dt. 20:5).

- 3) Any soldier that had planted a vineyard, but not eaten any of the produce yet, was to return home (Dt. 20:6).
- 4) Any soldier who was engaged to a woman, but not married yet, was to return home and get married (Dt. 20:7).
- 5) Any soldier who was fearful of battle was to return home rather than dishearten others. Also, it would eliminate any possible desertion during battle (Dt. 20:8).
- 6) God's army was not to cut down any trees that bore food when they besieged a city (Dt. 20:19-20).

Mercy was extended to some of Israel's enemies who surrendered, and submitted (Dt. 20:10-11). Those who refused to submit were destroyed, and every man killed (Dt. 20:12-14). However, the nations that were close at hand, such as the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizites, Hivites, and Jebusites, were to be completely destroyed because their perverse religious practices would be a snare to the Israelites (Dt. 20:16-18). These nations were also heavily influenced by descendants of the fallen angels (Gen. 6:4; *Nephilim*) who were absolutely unrepentant for their sinful actions. Commenting on the text in Genesis 6:4, Bullinger states the following:

So that "after that", i.e. after the Flood, there was a second irruption of these fallen angels, evidently smaller in number and more limited in area, for they were for the most part confined to Canaan, and were in fact known as "the nations of Canaan". It was for the destruction of these, that the sword of Israel was necessary, as the Flood had been before (The Nephilim, Ap. 25, p 28, The Companion Bible).

As mentioned previously, there had to be two or three witnesses to a capital offense before the perpetrator could be executed. In the absence of these witnesses, the blood of the slain

individual remained unatoned, or uncovered, in the community closest to the crime location. In order to transfer the responsibility, for this unsolved capital offense, from the community to a higher authority, namely God, the Levites had to perform a sacrifice picturing this request for atonement (Dt. 21:1-5). Once completed, the responsibility for solving the crime became God's, and He would see that justice was done. The elders of the city closest to the crime scene were to wash their hands over a heifer that was sacrificed to provide atonement and then state, '*Our hands have not shed this blood, nor have our eyes seen it. Provide atonement, O Lord, for Your people Israel, whom You have redeemed, and do not lay innocent blood to the charge of Your people Israel.*' This symbolism is very important because the heifer that was sacrificed pictured Jesus Christ who died to provide atonement for sin. In the case of Christ's death, the real murderer was Satan (Jn. 13:27), and he will be dealt with by a higher court (Jn. 16:11). Those human beings involved with convicting Christ did so in ignorance and Christ's shed blood will act as an atonement for them upon their repentance of sin,

Yet now, brethren, I know that **you did it** (were compliant in Christ's death) **in ignorance**, as did also your rulers (Ac. 3:17; cf. Jn. 8:44; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

As mentioned previously, there were some nations that Israel would conquer without destroying everyone. Consequently, some prisoners would be taken. In the case of female captives, they could marry an Israelite man. If the marriage did not continue for whatever reason, the non-Israelite woman was to be set free without any harm coming to her (Dt. 21:10-14).

It was never God's intention for a man to have more than one wife (Mk. 10:6-8; 1Tim. 3:2;

Titus 1:6). However, because mankind rarely obeys God's commands, rules were put in place to govern situations that might occur "after the fact." One of these pertained to a man who had two wives; one wife that he loved and the other unloved. If the unloved wife produced a firstborn son before the loved wife did, a double portion of the father's inheritance was **not** to go to the firstborn son of the loved wife. To contravene this command would be even more divisive to a family in this situation. By obeying this command, it would improve the likelihood of maintaining peace within a family structure already predisposed to create stress and conflict (Dt. 21:15-17).

Children under the age of twenty, who persisted in rebellion against their parents, were to be judged by elders within their community. If these young people were found guilty of repeat offenses, without any remorse or willingness to change, they were put to death. The main purpose was to send a strong message to the local community that rebellion against authority will not be tolerated. As with abolition of the death penalty for murder, mankind wants to appear more righteous than God when it comes to judging matters pertaining to juvenile crime and rebellion. Therefore, juveniles today are spared from capital punishment, even if they murder someone, which is against the Law of Almighty God (Dt. 21:18-21).

The body of anyone executed for a capital offense was not to remain hanging on a tree or similar structure overnight. Burial of the body was to take place as quickly as possible following death (Dt. 21:22-23). This foreshadowed Christ who died on a wooden stake and was buried before dark the same day he was executed. He took the "curse of God" which is death (Dt. 21:23b), upon himself so that sinners could be forgiven through his shed blood. This forgiveness is conditional and based on

repentance, followed by living a new life of obedience to the Law of Almighty God (Heb. 9:22; cf. Ac. 2:38; Rom. 6:4),

For He (Almighty God) made him (Jesus Christ) who knew no sin to be sin (accursed of God to everlasting death; cf. Dt. 21:23b) for us (sinners), that we might become the righteousness of God in him (through Christ's sacrifice) (2Cor. 5:21; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Because Christ did not commit any sin, and had complete faith in his heavenly Father to resurrect him, he was only "accursed of God" for three days and three nights (Mt. 12:40).

Christ cared enough for his enemies to die for them. Therefore, the least anyone can do is extend kindness to a neighbor whose livestock has wandered off or become injured, even if that neighbor is regarded as an enemy (Dt. 22:1-4; cf. Ex. 23:4). This principle would extend to any property belonging to a neighbor.

God created order and structure within the human family and anyone attempting to change this is guilty of mocking God (Gal. 6:7). This includes the God-given role of a man and woman. Therefore anyone who attempts to alter these roles by the way they dress, or in other aspects of their appearance, is committing an abomination (1Cor. 11:14; cf. Eze. 44:20),

A woman shall not wear anything that pertains to a man, nor shall a man put on a woman's garment (clothing), for all who do so are an abomination (detestable) to the Lord your God (Dt. 22:5; Ed. notes in parentheses).

God instituted some basic principles related to earth's ecosystems that would preserve wildlife for the benefit of future generations (Dt. 22:6-7). He also provided fundamental ordinances to protect people from injury, or pre-mature death

(Dt. 22:8). In order to preserve essential food crops with a high nutrient value, God gave mankind some basic farming regulations. One of these forbade hybridization of seeds. Hybridized seeds require more fertilizer than natural varieties, and are not as disease resistant. Also, hybrid plants do not adapt to environmental changes because the seeds can be sterile or genetically unstable, decreasing biodiversity,

You shall not sow your vineyard with different kinds of seed (hybridization), lest the yield of the seed which you have sown and the fruit of your vineyard be (come) defiled (Dt. 22:9; Ed. notes in parentheses).

There is a spiritual application of Deuteronomy 22:9 as it pertains to God's people having close relationships with unbelievers, or participating in Satan's value system (2Cor. 6:14). This same principle applies to the combination of an unclean animal with a clean animal; especially when it comes to effectively doing God's work,

You shall not plow (symbolic of doing God's work) with an ox (clean animal) and a donkey (unclean animal) (Dt. 22:10; cf. 2Cor. 6:14-16; Ed. notes in parentheses).

This close mixing of God's people with those who live according to Satan's values is compared to garments that are interwoven with different materials. Clothing made from mixed fabric is not as pure, strong, or long-lasting as clothes made from a single material (Dt. 22:11). Purity in one's garments is compared to the law-abiding behavior of Christ's church,

And to her (Body of Christ, the church) it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous (law-abiding; cf. Ps. 119:172b) acts of the saints (Rev. 19:8; Ed. notes in parentheses).

The law-abiding behavior of God's people is also compared to clothing with tassels because tassels were meant to remind the ancient Israelites to obey every word of God. In the Second Covenant period, the Law of Almighty God is written into the heart, or inner attitude, of God's people through the power of His Holy Spirit which is given to every repentant individual following their baptism (Jer. 31:31-33),

You shall make tassels on the four corners of the clothing with which you cover yourself (Dt. 22:12; cf. Nu. 15:38).

God prohibits sexual promiscuity, and therefore anyone charged with contravening this aspect of the Law of Almighty God would be in serious trouble. To protect the integrity of the innocent, and the reputation of their family, any charge of promiscuity had to be verified. If a false charge was levelled at a woman following her marriage, her husband would be given a hefty fine, and could not divorce his wife. The money would then be awarded to the woman's father as he was responsible for her until she was married, and the charge against her was synonymous with defaming him (Dt. 22:13-19).

On the other hand, if the woman had indeed "played the harlot" while living under her father's roof, she was put to death (Dt. 22:20-21).

Adultery resulted in the death of both the man and woman involved (Dt. 22:22). Although capital punishment for adultery is a foreign concept today, it is important to understand that God's laws regarding sexual conduct are designed to preserve families and, by extension, communities and nations. Left unchecked over an extended period of time, any civilization will break apart if it persists in transgressing these commands. It was because ancient Israel and Judah committed "spiritual adultery", by having

intimate relationships with multiple pagan gods, that God divorced both nations and they went into Assyrian and Babylonian captivity respectively,

Then I (God) saw that for all the causes for which backsliding Israel had committed adultery, I had put her away and given her a certificate of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear (learn from Israel's defeat and captivity under the Assyrians), but went and played the harlot also (Jer. 3:8ff; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Because betrothal was regarded as a covenant agreement (Mt. 5:37), a man that seduced a woman, who was engaged to be married, would die along with her if she did not cry out for help in the city where she lived (Dt. 22:23-24). If the same situation occurred in a rural environment, and the woman cried for help, only the man would be executed because fewer people could come to her rescue in the country (Dt. 22:25-27). If a woman was not betrothed to be married, and a man seduced her, he would have to compensate her father and then marry her (Dt. 22:28-29). In many of today's societies, a man can have sexual intercourse with an unmarried woman, resulting in pregnancy, and leave the responsibility for child welfare up to the woman, her family, and taxpayers. This selfish act creates a financial and emotional burden with consequences that can last a lifetime. If a man had sexual intercourse with his step-mother, he would be executed (Dt. 22:30; cf. Lev. 18:29).

Those who have repented of sin and had their sins washed away at baptism, can come before Almighty God in prayer. This is because every fault and imperfection is removed. However, anyone who is still "in their sins" is regarded as having imperfections and therefore considered separated from Almighty God (Isa. 59:2). This is

the intent of the regulations regarding those who can present themselves in the congregation of the Lord (Dt. 23:1-8). God is not discriminating against those with physical handicaps. Instead, they are examples that symbolize spiritual imperfections and, therefore, act as a teaching tool pointing to the necessity for Christ's atoning work (Gal. 3:24-25).

Sanitation is critical to the health and well-being of any society. In the absence of running water, combined with sewage and garbage disposal, disease can run rampant. This is still a problem in many developing countries today. God covered some basic sanitation principles in Deuteronomy 23:9-13. These were meant as a guide, and were given out of love and concern for the benefit of His people.

When servants were treated well by their masters, they would often prefer to remain with them in perpetuity (Ex. 21:5-6). However, in cases of abuse some slaves would seek to escape and they were not to be returned to their original masters (Dt. 23:15-16; cf. 1Sam. 30:15).

There are different forms of harlotry, and God addresses one that was common to the Israelites. It is associated with pagan worship systems and it does not involve receiving payment for services rendered (Eze. 16:33-36). Instead, the male and female practitioners freely engage in sexual acts as part of a religious service (Dt. 23:17-18). Activities similar to this continue today in some secret societies,

Temples of Aphrodite at Eryx, Corinth, Cyprus, and other sites were served by a thousand sacred harlots apiece (Knight, D.W.P., 105). When Hellenic Greeks reduced wives to the status of servants, the *heterae* or courtesans remained legally and politically equal to men. Roman matrons of the highest aristocracy

prostituted themselves in the temple of Juno Sospita when a revelation was needed (Dumezil, 431). Every Babylonian woman prostituted herself in the temple before marriage (Gifford, 182). By Amorite sacred law, 'she who was about to marry should sit in fornication seven days by the gate (of the temple)' (Briffault 3, 220). Such laws were supposed to appease the Goddess, who disapproved of monogamy (Larousse, 83). In Greek myth, the Great Mother forbade the Heavenly father Zeus to make a monogamous marriage, holding that only her own ancient system of group marriage was honorable (Graves, W.G. 1, 54) (The Woman's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets, p 820-821, Barbara G. Walker).

Within ancient Israel, interest or usury was not to be charged on anything that was loaned. However, interest could be charged on any products or services loaned to foreigners (Dt. 23:19-20). This command was a blessing to the Israelites as they could become richer at the expense of foreign nations who did not follow the Law of Almighty God (Prov. 22:7). If any foreign nation realized the benefits of obeying the Law of Almighty God and submitted to it, they would not be charged interest because they would be considered part of Israel (Ex. 12:48). Anyone loaning to the poor and charging interest would be in breach of the second great commandment (Mt. 22:39),

If you lend money to any of My people who are poor among you, you shall not be like a moneylender to him; you shall not charge him interest (Ex. 22:25).

Do not rob the poor because he is poor, nor oppress the afflicted at the gate (Prov. 22:22).

Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the alien or the poor ... (Zech. 7:10a).

As discussed previously in this document, making promises is a very unwise practice; especially if it concerns a vow made to Almighty God. It can become a sin to promise something to God and then fail to fulfill it (Dt. 23:21-23; cf. Mt. 5:37).

Any attempt to harvest a neighbor's field or vineyard, regardless of how small the amount may be, is breaking one of God's commands. However, when traveling through a field or vineyard it is acceptable to pluck what is needed for sustenance at that moment in time. Of note, God placed no restrictions on whether "plucking" could, or could not, be done on a Sabbath. Therefore, neither Christ nor his disciples broke the Sabbath command by plucking some heads of grain as they passed through a field on the weekly Sabbath (Lk. 6:1-2).

Although Almighty God does not condone divorce, He made allowances for mankind's many weaknesses (Ps. 103:14; Mt. 26:41; Mk. 14:38). Nonetheless, God still had conditions that needed to be followed. In one of these situations, if a man divorced his wife he could not re-marry her in the future (Dt. 24:1-4). This aspect of God's law is reflected in Christ's actions involving his wife. Christ will not re-marry the wife he had during the First Covenant period. She was divorced because of her sinful conduct (Jer, 3:6-9). Instead Christ will marry a new woman, who is chaste through repentance and baptism,

For I (Paul) am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ (2Cor. 11:2; Ed. notes in parenthesis).

Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him (Almighty God) glory, for the marriage of the Lamb (Jn. 1:29) has come, and his wife has

made herself ready. ⁸ And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for **the fine linen is** (symbolic of) **the righteous acts of the saints** (Ps. 119:172b) (Rev. 19:7-8; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

In addition to God's command in Deuteronomy 20:7, a newly married soldier could stay home for a year following his marriage (Dt. 24:5).

Taking surety for something that is borrowed is acceptable, providing it does not prevent the borrower from earning his living (Dt. 24:6), or leaves him/her exposed to harm,

If you ever take your neighbor's garment as a pledge, you shall return it to him before the sun goes down. ²⁷ For that is his only covering, it is his garment for his skin. What will he sleep in? (Ex. 22:26-27a; cf. Dt. 24:10-13; 17b).

The command originally given in Exodus 21:16 is repeated emphasizing the seriousness of kidnapping. Taking a hostage against their will would be considered a capital offense punishable by death. If this law were enforced today, there would be very few hostages taken,

If a man is found kidnapping any of his brethren of the children of Israel, and mistreats him or sells him, then that kidnapper shall die; and you shall put away the evil person from among you (Dt. 24:7).

Taking action quickly, and following God's instructions related to outbreaks of disease, is repeated for emphasis in Deuteronomy 24:8-9. This is an expression of love and concern by God for everyone's well-being. Sadly today, many nations don't understand God's laws related to disease control, or basic hygiene. Even those nations that understand these principles sometimes delay in implementing them, with dire consequences (Ebola: government cuts to

the WHO aided delays in dealing with outbreak – www.theguardian.com/World/Ebola).

Many of God's laws protect the poor, and whoever transgresses these will answer for it either in this life, or in a future resurrection (Dt. 24:14-15; cf. Rev. 20:11-15). First and foremost, Satan will give account because he has single-handedly impoverished mankind by robbing them of God's truth through his lies and deception,

It shall come to pass in the day the Lord gives you rest from your sorrow, and from your fear and the hard bondage in which you were made to serve (since the time of Adam's rebellion), ⁴ that you will take up this proverb against the king of Babylon (symbolic language describing Satan with his system of governance; cf. Rev. 17:4-6; 18:1-8), and say: 'How the oppressor (Satan) has ceased, the golden (insolent) city is ceased! ⁵ The Lord has broken the staff of the wicked, the scepter of the rulers (fallen angels); ⁶ He (Satan) who struck the people in wrath with a continual stroke (Rev. 12:12), He who ruled the nations in anger (Eph. 6:12), is (will be) persecuted (for his crimes against humanity) and no one hinders (Isa. 14:3-6; Ed. notes in parentheses).

No one is to be punished for someone else's crime (Dt. 24:16). The only intended exception to this command is Jesus Christ, who died in order to reconcile repentant sinners to Almighty God,

For you know the grace (willingness to forgive sin) of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich (figurative language depicting his position in the heavenly realm **prior to becoming lower than the angels**; cf. Heb. 2:9), yet for your sakes he became poor (flesh and blood for the purpose of sacrifice), that you through his poverty might become rich (in a future

resurrection from the dead; cf. 1Cor. 15:50-58) (2Cor. 8:9; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Some Christian groups believe the offspring of the fallen angels, known as *Nephilim*, will not be granted a resurrection because the sins of their parents were so horrendous (Gen. 6:4). This is based on a misunderstanding of the scripture that follows, combined with an ignorance of the Law of Almighty God as stated in Deuteronomy 24:16. One branch of the Nephilim, mentioned below, was called "Rephaim",

O Lord our God, other masters besides You had dominion (for a while) over us; but by You only we (now) make mention of Your name (i.e. no longer worship according the religious systems established by the Nephilim). ¹⁴ They are (now) dead, they will not (continue to) live (on the earth); they are *deceased* (SHD 7496; *Rapha*; Rephaim; cf. 1Chr. 4:12; 8:2; 20:4), they will not rise (in the first resurrection). Therefore You have (already) punished and destroyed them (through their death), and made all their memory to perish (cf. Eccl. 2:16; 8:10; 20:4) (Isa. 26:13-14; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Everything physical is temporary and will not exist forever (Ps. 102:11; 103:15-16). Therefore, mankind is to remember they are strangers and sojourners on this earth. Thankfully, just as God redeemed ancient Israel from injustice and slavery, so He will redeem sinners from Satan's corrupt system, which leads to death, and provide the means through which every sinner can have everlasting life. With this in mind, God expects everyone during their short lifetime to extend mercy, kindness, and impartiality, to those who are worse off in this life (Dt. 24:19-22),

You shall not pervert justice due the stranger or the fatherless, not take a widow's garment as a

pledge. ¹⁸ But you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and the Lord your God redeemed you from there; therefore I command you to do this thing (Dt. 24:17-18).

"Punishment must fit the crime" with the goal of rehabilitating the guilty party, and not humiliating them. Therefore, excessive punishment defeats the purpose of this exercise (Dt. 25:1-3; cf. 2Cor. 11:24). Tied to the above command, is the serious charge of hindering the growth and development of God's work. The metaphor of "muzzling an ox treading while its treading grain" is used to illustrate this point (Dt. 25:4). The apostle Paul compared those who were trying to undermine the work he was doing to someone muzzling an ox,

If I (Paul) am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you (brethren in Corinth). For you are the seal (certification; proof) of my apostleship in the Lord. ³ My defense to those who examine me is this: ⁴ Do we (Paul and Barnabas; cf. 1Cor. 9:6) have no right to eat and drink? ⁵ Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as do also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord (James, Joses, Simon and Judas; cf. Mt. 13:55), and Cephas (Peter) (1Cor. 9:2-5; Ed. notes in parentheses)?

Do I (Paul) say these things as a mere man? Or does not the law say the same also? ⁹ For it is written in the law of Moses, 'You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain.' Is it oxen God is concerned about? ¹⁰ Or does He say it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written, that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope. ¹¹ If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we (Paul and Barnabas) reap your material things (1Cor. 9:8-11; Ed. notes in parentheses)?

The scribes and Pharisees were guilty of breaking the law regarding muzzling an ox while it is trying to do its work because they were constantly trying to obstruct the work that Christ was doing, even to the point of killing him (Jn. 8:37, 40).

As God allocated land to each of the twelve families of Israel, it was to remain within each family in perpetuity. Therefore, God instituted certain laws to protect every family's property rights. One of these pertained to the death of a married man. If the dead man had an unmarried brother, that brother was to marry the dead man's wife if she was originally from another tribe. This would mean the family property would not pass to the wife's tribe (Dt. 25:5-10; cf. Ruth 3:12-13; 4:5-8, 11).

Passing property from one generation to the next within each family required male progeny. Therefore any attempt to interfere, or prevent this from happening, was considered a very serious matter, regardless of other consequences (Dt. 25:11-12).

Theft, false witness, avarice, and coveting are all addressed in the commands regarding the use of false weights and measures (Dt. 25:13-16; cf. Ex. 20:15-17).

Although it may appear that God delays, when it comes to administering justice, this is man's perception. In reality, God decides when, how, and what is to be done because His ways are higher than man's (Dt. 25:17-19; cf. Isa. 55:8-9).

Almighty God repeated some of the commands regarding the giving of firstfruits and tithes (Dt. 26:1-14a). In this example, He made a clear connection between a nation that obeys these and their ultimate well-being. As all nations will

eventually become part of spiritual Israel, obedience to these commands is essential,

I have obeyed the voice of the Lord my God, and have done according to all that You have commanded me. ¹⁵ Look down from Your holy habitation, from heaven, and bless Your people Israel and the land which You have given us, just as You swore to our fathers, 'a land flowing with milk and honey' (Dt. 26:14b-15).

Any nation, or individual, that ignores God's commands cannot claim they know Him,

Today you have proclaimed the Lord to be your God, and that you will walk in His ways and keep His statutes, His commandments, and His judgments, and that you will obey His voice (Dt. 26:17).

Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. ⁴ He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. ⁵ But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By (doing) this we know that we are in Him (1Jn. 2:3-5; cf. 5:2-3).

It has been assumed by most people who have an understanding of God's word that only the Ten Commandments were written on the tablets of stone that Moses brought down from Mt. Sinai. However, if this were the case, why did Moses tell the next generation of Israelites to write "all the words of this law" on whitewashed stones following their entrance into the Promised Land (Dt. 27:2-3, 8, 10)? Obviously, for people to write every Law of Almighty God on stones, it would require a large area. However, as the Law of Almighty God was originally written by "the finger of God" (Ex. 31:18; Dt. 9:10), it could have been done on a much smaller scale, similar to microfiche in today's world. Also, it would not have taken 40

days to discuss and write down Ten Commandments. However, it would take a much longer period of time to explain and write the entirety of the Law of Almighty God, And it came to pass at the end of forty days and forty nights, that the Lord gave me (Moses) the two tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant (Dt. 9:11; Ed. note in parenthesis).

The inaugural ceremony that took place upon Israel's entrance into the Promised Land confirmed that the entire Law of Almighty God was to be observed (Dt. 27:11-26; cf. Jos. 8:30-35). However, only four of the Ten Commandments were specifically mentioned during this ceremony. Does that mean it's acceptable to break the other six commandments? Of course not! Instead, other laws were mentioned to emphasize in the mind of every Israelite that more than the Ten Commandments were to be obeyed. For instance, the law regarding "Cursed is the one who moves his neighbor's landmark" is mentioned in Deuteronomy 27:17, but it is not one of the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:1-17). Sadly, this truth is lost on most of Christianity today.

Obedience to the Law of Almighty God results in many blessings. Some are listed in Deuteronomy 28:1-13 as follows:

- 1) Blessed more than the nations who ignore the Law of Almighty God (Dt. 28:1).
- 2) Both rural and urban centers will prosper (Dt. 28:3; cf. Gen. 39:5).
- 3) The health and numbers of both people and animals will improve exponentially (Dt. 28:4).
- 4) The size and quality of food crops will improve (Dt. 28:5).

- 5) People will be safe whether they are in their homes or traveling abroad (Dt. 28:6).
- 6) Peace and safety from enemies is guaranteed (Dt. 28:7).
- 7) The abundance of produce will be so great that storehouses will always be full (Dt. 28:8)
- 8) The blessings will be so overwhelming that other nations cannot ignore the fact that Almighty God has rewarded those who obey Him (Dt. 28:9-11).
- 9) While many nations experience varying degrees of drought, those who obey the Law of Almighty God will enjoy rain in due season (Dt. 28:12a).
- 10) Nations that do not obey the Law of Almighty God will have to come and borrow from those who do (Dt. 28:12b).
- 11) Those who obey the Law of Almighty God will become the strongest and most dominant on earth (Dt. 28:13-14).

Disobedience to the Law of Almighty has consequences, and eventually a society will break down completely:

- 1) Civil unrest and crime will replace peace and safety in both rural and urban centers (Dt. 28:16).
- 2) The size and quality of food crops will diminish. People's health will be negatively affected (Dt. 28:17).
- 3) Population growth will diminish as well as the numbers of livestock. Therefore, foreign workers will have to be brought into the country and more food products imported (Dt. 28:18).
- 4) Safety when traveling within the country as well as abroad will be compromised (Dt. 28:19). Hostage taking will become normal.
- 5) Other nations will criticize and curse every action and government policy. These

nations will work diligently to undermine and eventually destroy the privileged position that was once enjoyed (Dt. 28:20).

- 6) Despite the best healthcare and technology, diseases in both the human and agricultural sectors will eventually prevail (Dt. 28:21-22).
- 7) The blessing of rain in due season will be removed and agriculture will suffer. The price of food will increase accordingly (Dt. 28:23-24).
- 8) Instead of peace and safety from enemies, those enemies will dominate to the point where they eventually control all national government policies (Dt. 28:25).
- 9) Mental and physical illnesses will increase due to multiple stressors/factors. The death rate will climb accordingly (Dt. 28:26-29).
- 10) The ability to borrow money from other nations will be removed, and they will require immediate repayment (Dt. 28:30-31).
- 11) Families will break up even further as they try to find work abroad (Dt. 28:32).
- 12) As families break up and leave, other nations will begin to occupy the land (Dt. 28:33).
- 13) Finally, in complete poverty and ruin, the remainder of the population will be owned by foreigners (Dt. 28:34-36).
- 14) At this point, the best that can be expected is tenant farming, but very little will be produced due to extenuating circumstances (Dt. 28:38-40, 42).
- 15) Any offspring born at this point will become slaves or servants (Dt. 28:41).
- 16) All the privileges that were enjoyed previously will be just a memory (Dt. 28:43-44).
- 17) In this dire situation, the connection will be made between obeying the Law of Almighty God and receiving the many

blessings that were taken for granted previously (Dt. 28:45-48).

- 18) Sadly, it will be "too little too late" at this point because another foreign power will invade and completely conquer (Dt. 28:49-57).

In order to understand that the consequences for disobedience are not limited to just one period of time, or generation, God explained that these conditions will repeat themselves in the future, no matter how sophisticated or technologically advanced a society may be,

If you do not carefully observe all the words of this law that are written in this book, that you may fear (have deep respect for, and show honor toward) this glorious and awesome name, THE LORD YOUR GOD, ⁵⁹ then **the Lord will bring upon you and your descendants extraordinary plagues – great and prolonged plagues – and serious and prolonged sicknesses** (Dt. 28:58-59ff; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Having issued these warnings, God reviewed the covenant He made with Israel following their exodus from Egypt,

These are the words of the covenant which the Lord commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab (just before entering the Promised Land), besides the covenant which He made with them in Horeb (Mt. Sinai) (Dt. 29:1; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Through Moses, God explained that Israel had been given every opportunity to change their rebellious attitude, but they stubbornly refused. No matter how many miracles were performed on their behalf, they continued to disobey the Law of Almighty God (Dt. 29:2-8). They failed to make the connection that God's love for them was expressed in His laws, commandments, and

ordinances which were given entirely for their benefit (1Jn. 5:3). If they had trusted God's word, they would have obeyed it happily and willingly,
Therefore keep the words of this covenant, and do them, **that you may prosper in all that you do** (Dt. 29:9; emphasis added).

God's willingness to extend His covenant, well into the future, is confirmed by the following text,

I make this covenant and this oath, **not with you alone**,¹⁵ but also with him who stands here with us today before the Lord our God, as well as **with him who is not here today** (Dt. 29:14-15; cf. Jn. 20:29b; emphasis added).

God will continue to reveal His truth to those who seek to obey Him willingly, whether they are Jewish or Greek, slave or free, male or female (Gal. 3:28),

The secret things (truths) belong to the Lord our God, those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, **that we may do all the words of this law** (Dt. 29:29; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

The secret of the Lord is with those who fear Him, and He will show them (the truths of) His covenant (Ps. 25:14; Ed. notes in parenthesis).

Because Israel rejected the Law of Almighty God, the way to understanding and obeying it was extended to the Gentile nations (Jn. 14:6),

...**I** (Almighty God) **will also give you** (Jesus Christ) **as a light to the Gentiles**, that you should be My (means of) salvation to the ends of the earth (Isa. 49:6b; cf. Isa. 49:22; 60:3, 19; Jer. 16:19; Mt. 12:21; Lk.18:32; c. 9:15; 10:45; 11:1; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Therefore let it be known to you that **the salvation of God** (through Christ's death) **has been sent to the Gentiles**, and they will hear it (Ac. 28:28; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added)!

Although the separation of Almighty God from His people can be viewed in physical terms, it is important to consider that this separation is first and foremost spiritual in nature. In other words, God's people cannot fellowship with Him while they live according to Satan's value system (Jn. 8:44). Consequently, they must distance themselves from the values of this world which hold them captive (Gal. 1:4; cf. Rev. 18:4). So the real captivity that separates mankind from their Creator is spiritual more than it is physical (Isa. 59:2). The same conditions that applied to ancient Israel now apply to all people regardless of race or gender (Gal. 3:28). Therefore, the restoration extended to ancient Israel is inclusive of all nations,

If any of you are driven out to the farthest parts under heaven, from there the Lord your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you.⁵ Then the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your heart (inner attitude) and with all your soul (inner motives), that you may live.⁷ Also the Lord your God will put all these curses on your enemies, on those who hate you (Satan and the fallen host; cf. Eph. 6:12), who persecuted you (Dt. 30:4-7; Ed. notes in parentheses).

How do God's people express their love for Him?

If you obey the voice of the Lord your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this Book of the Law, and if you turn to the Lord your God (through repentance of sin) with all your heart and with all your soul

(Dt. 30:10; cf. **1Jn. 5:2-3**; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Everyone who is resurrected at the end of Christ's millennial rule on earth (Rev. 20:3) will be judged, by their previous conduct, in accordance with the Law of Almighty God,

And I (John) saw the dead (in vision), small and great, standing before God and the books (of the Bible) were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life (everlasting). And **the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books** (of the Bible) (Rev. 20:12; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Most of Christianity today does not understand this truth, primarily because they are taught by their religious leaders that Christ came to do away with the Law of Almighty God (Mt. 7:21-23). Some claim it's too difficult to keep the Law of Almighty God; so Christ kept it for them. However, these false teachings are not supported by scripture,

For this commandment which I command you today, it is not too mysterious for you, nor is it far off. ¹² It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' ¹³ Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' ¹⁴ But **the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it.** ¹⁵ See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, ¹⁶ in that I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the Lord your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess (these conditions apply

equally to inheriting the kingdom of God; cf. Mt. 19:16-22) (Dt. 30:11-16; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Following this discourse, Moses explained that he would not enter the Promised Land. However, the Lord who brought them out of Egypt would go before them and defeat their enemies (Dt. 31:1-8). The language Moses used to encourage the people before his death was very similar to what Christ said to his disciples before he died (Dt. 31:6b, 8b),

I (Christ) will not leave you orphans; I will come to you (Jn. 14:28; cf. Mt. 18:20; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Moses then instructed the Levites to read the entirety of the Law of Almighty God to the nation of Israel every seven years at the Feast of Tabernacles (Dt. 31:9-13; cf. 31:24-26). It must be remembered that there was no printing press at this time in history, and God's written word was not available to citizens who wanted a copy of it. Consequently, this reading was a very important "refresher" for the nation. It would provide an opportunity for discussion and clarification on any points that were misunderstood as well as being an important teaching tool for the younger generation, enabling them to learn about the Law of Almighty God. If this were done today in every country of the world, people would be asking a lot more questions of their respective governments and religious leaders. Specifically, why have so many laws that are contrary to God's clear instructions been enacted? After all, it is the leaders of nations that are responsible for setting the right example for their citizens to follow. This is why Moses told the elders of ancient Israel to gather together, and then warned them against dismantling the Law of Almighty God,

Gather to me all the elders of your tribes, **and your officers, that I** (Moses) **may speak these words in their hearing and call heaven and earth to witness against them.**

²⁹ For I know that after my death **you will become utterly corrupt, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you; and evil will befall you in the latter days**, because you will do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke Him to anger through the work of your hands (Dt. 31:28-29; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Following Christ's return all nations will be commanded to attend the Feast of Tabernacles each year, including the seventh when the Law of Almighty God will be read and discussed in more detail (Zech. 14:16-19).

As mentioned previously, punishment befalling nations is never limited to just one time in history. Consequences happen to every nation that persists in dismantling the Law of Almighty God. Because Almighty God is very patient, He puts up with mankind's rebellious actions for a longtime. However, He will not be mocked forever. Eventually He will act, and when He does there will be little room for misunderstanding why things are going horribly wrong very quickly. Moses gave the ancient Israelites a new song to sing as a reminder of everything that had happened to them as well as a warning of things that would happen if they continued in their rebellious conduct. This should act as a warning for the nations of this world today,

- 1) God's word is compared to rain that gives growth to grass, plants, and crops (Dt. 32:1-2). Therefore, spiritual growth can only occur when someone has God's Holy Spirit actively working in their lives. However, no one can receive God's Spirit

unless they repent of sin (Ac. 2:38; 5:32b).

- 2) In order to attain greatness, perfection, and true justice every nation needs to seek after the ways of Almighty God and then obey them. No other way of living will produce a good outcome (Dt. 32:3-4).
- 3) Almighty God is the Creator, and sustainer, of everyone and it is utter foolishness to think otherwise (Dt. 32:5-6).
- 4) Everyone needs to learn from history so they do not repeat the same mistakes that led to numerous trials, wars, and divisions in both the spirit and physical realms (Dt. 32:7-8).
- 5) Despite every trial that has occurred, the Angel of God who became known as Jesus Christ has always been faithful toward the twelve families of Jacob and continues to watch over their descendants, even though they persist in rebelling against the Law of Almighty God (Dt. 32:9).
- 6) Another reminder that it was the Angel of God who brought Jacob's children out of Egyptian slavery, and taught the Law of Almighty God to them (Dt. 32:10).
- 7) The Angel of God protected and sustained the ancient nation of Israel for forty years in the wilderness before bringing them into the Promised Land (Dt. 32:11-12).
- 8) The Angel of God provided numerous blessings once Israel entered the Promised Land (Dt. 32:13-14).
- 9) Instead of being truly grateful toward Almighty God by willingly obeying Him, the children of Jacob soon forgot everything their appointed leader had taught them, and that leader was Jesus Christ (Dt. 32:15; cf. Ex. 23:20-23; **1Cor. 10:1-4**).

- 10) They provoked the Angel of God to anger through their rebellious conduct and returned to the ways of the "spiritual father" they were supposed to leave behind in Egypt. That father was Satan (Dt. 32:16-18; cf. Jn. 8:44).
- 11) Because of their spiritual adultery with foreign religious systems, the Angel of God divorced them and let them experience the consequences of their sinful actions (Dt. 32:19-20; cf. Jer. 3:8).
- 12) The Gentile nations would now be able to participate fully in the many blessings that Israel had spurned through their sinful conduct. Now Israel would be "provoked to jealousy" because the Gentiles would begin to prosper physically, but more importantly in their spiritual relationship with God (Dt. 32:21).
- 13) During this time of favor toward the Gentiles, the descendants of Israel would continue to fall lower and lower, in both physical blessings and power (Dt. 32:22-27).
- 14) Eventually there will be a "latter day" demise of Israel's descendants that even their enemies will recognize as punishment from God. Sadly, these rebellious people will not "connect the dots" between breaking the Law of Almighty God and the terrible consequences that are befalling them (Dt. 32:28-31).
- 15) Sadly, they will become as corrupt as Sodom and Gomorrah (Dt. 32:32-33).
- 16) As with ancient Sodom and Gomorrah, the end will come upon them when they least expect it (Dt. 32:34-35).
- 17) Just as there was only one faithful servant in ancient Sodom and Gomorrah (2Pet. 2:7), so God's servants will be few and far between in this perverse end-time generation (Dt. 32:36).
- 18) This corrupt generation will rely on its gods of science and technology to save it from impending doom, but they will be incapable of helping because the root of the problem is spiritual in nature (Dt. 32:37-38).
- 19) God's judgment will include all those in the physical and spiritual realms who have rejected His law and commandments (Dt. 32:39-41).
- 20) Jesus Christ will be the one who executes judgment for his servants who have lived under the oppressive rulership of Satan and the fallen angels (Rev. 1:16; 2:12, 16; 19:15). It will be a time of severe tribulation combined with hope due to Christ's atoning work that provides a way of escape for everyone who repents of sin (Dt. 32:42-43; cf. Mt. 24:21-22; Rev. 7:14).

Ancient Israel was to teach the Law of Almighty God to their children from generation to generation. Failure to do this would result in God removing His blessings slowly but surely,

And he (Moses) said to them: 'Set your hearts on all the words which I testify among you today, which **you shall command your children to be careful to observe – all the words of this law** (Dt. 32:46; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Just prior to his death, Moses pronounced a blessing upon the descendants of Jacob. He emphasized that God's love for His people was expressed by the law and commandments that were given to them at Mt. Sinai. These were described symbolically by the phrase 'fiery law,'

...From his right hand came a **fiery law** for them. ³Yes, He loves the people ... (Dt. 33:2b – 3a; cf. Ac. 2:3; emphasis added).

This fiery law was the most important inheritance that any people could have. As with any family inheritance, it was meant to be passed down from generation to generation,

Moses commanded (charged us with) a law for us, **a heritage of the congregation of Jacob** (Dt. 33:4; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Because **Reuben** could be as "unstable as water," (Gen. 49:3-4) Moses asked God to protect and preserve his descendants (Dt. 33:6).

As Jesus Christ would be born to the tribe of **Judah**, Moses asked Almighty God to bless this descendant by assisting him to overcome his enemies, which are first and foremost Satan and the fallen angels. Christ himself was assisted by Almighty God, who enabled him to triumph over his enemies (Dt. 33:7; cf. Gen. 49:8).

The blessing to **Levi** was more prophetic showing a future transference of the High Priest's office and responsibilities to the priesthood of Melchizedek (Heb. 5:1-10; 7:1-28; 8:1-6). Righteous judgment, regarding who is guilty or innocent, was temporarily given to the Levitical High Priest who used the Thummim and Urim stones to determine such matters (Ex. 28:30). However, righteous judgment is now the responsibility of Jesus Christ (Ps. 9:8; Ac. 17:31; Rev. 19:11). Besides, God stated in Genesis 49:6 that He never intended the honor He inferred upon Levi to continue forever. In reality, Jesus Christ was the holy one that Levi tested at Massah and contended with at Meribah (Dt. 33:8). Also, Christ was originally created without a physical father or mother when Almighty God brought him into existence "at the beginning of His way" (Prov. 8:22; cf. Dt. 33:9a),

Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days (Melchizedek was not born as a flesh and blood

human being) nor end of life (therefore Melchizedek could not die like other human beings), but made like the Son of God (eventually became Jesus Christ), (and now) remains a priest continually (Heb. 7:3; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Also, Jesus Christ identified more with those he regarded as his spiritual brothers than with his biological family members (Dt. 33:9b),

Then one said to him (Christ), 'Look, your mother and your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak with you.'⁴⁸ But he answered and said to the one who told him, 'Who is my mother and who are my brothers?'⁴⁹ And he stretched out his hand toward his disciples and said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers!'⁵⁰ For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother' (Mt. 12:47-50; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Finally, Christ was not known by his own children, or countrymen. Although they did not argue against what Christ was teaching, they still rejected him personally (Dt. 33:9c), So they were offended at him (Christ). But Jesus said to them, 'A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house' (Mt. 13:57; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Nonetheless, some of the Levites were faithful in their service to God, and in the future, some will serve under Jesus Christ following his return to rule this planet (Dt. 33:10-11),

Then they shall bring all your brethren for an offering to the Lord out of all nations, on horses and in chariots and in litters on mules and on camels, to My holy mountain Jerusalem,' says the Lord, 'as children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord.'²¹ And **I will also take some of them for priests and Levites,' says the Lord** (Isa.

66:20-21; cf. Eze. 44:15; 48:11; emphasis added).

Benjamin stayed in Jerusalem with the tribe of Judah when the remaining ten tribes of Israel moved north to Samaria under Jeroboam's leadership. Once in Samaria, they soon became an apostate people (1Kgs. 12:23-24; 2Chr. 11:1; 15:2, 8; 25:5). It is because the tribe of Benjamin remained in Jerusalem, where the Law of Almighty God was still being observed, that Benjamin is described as "dwelling between God's shoulders" (Dt. 33:12). It is due to the closeness of Judah, or the Jews, with the tribe of Benjamin, that the apostle Paul could refer to himself as both a descendant of Benjamin (Rom. 11:1; Php. 3:5) as well as a Jew (Ac. 21:39; 22:3). However, none of remaining ten tribes of Israel are referred to in scripture as being Jewish. In fact, Jesus Christ called the remaining ten tribes of Israel "lost" mainly because they no longer identified with the Law of Almighty God, or had any inclination to follow it (Mt. 10:6; 15:24). Nonetheless, Christ tasked his twelve disciples with traveling to these lost families of Jacob and preaching to them wherever they were scattered. This work of Christ's apostles would have gained momentum following his death and resurrection.

The blessing that was given to **Joseph** would be shared between his sons Ephraim and Manasseh (Gen. 48:8-20). Based on the description of "the precious things of the heaven, with the dew" some of Joseph's descendants would receive rain in abundance while others would be located in a drier, sunnier climate that would produce "precious fruits of the sun" throughout most of the year (Dt. 33:13-14). Minerals, metals, and precious gems would be in abundance (Dt. 33:15). Also, crops from the ground would grow abundantly (Dt. 33:16a). Most importantly, Joseph's descendants would have the favor of the Angel of God, also known as Jesus Christ (Dt.

33:16b). However, as discussed previously, any blessings from God carry conditions, and if these conditions are not met there is no obligation on God's part to extend them (Dt. 28:15-68; cf. Jer. 31:18-20). It is only because of Christ's actions on behalf of Joseph's descendants that they can push their enemies back (Dt. 33:17).

Zebulun would prosper in trading, especially utilizing the sea (Dt. 33:18a),

Zebulun shall dwell by the haven of the sea; he shall become a haven for ships... (Gen. 49:13a).

Instead of merchandizing at sea, the descendants of **Issachar** would profit from working the land (Dt. 33:18b),

He (Issachar) saw that rest was good, and that the land was pleasant; (so) he bowed his shoulder to bear a burden... (Gen. 49:15a; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Both Zebulun and Issachar would share in produce from the sea as well as treasures hidden in the sand, which could refer to amber, agate, pearls, glass, etc. (Dt. 33:19).

Apparently **Gad's** borders would be enlarged through success in battle (1Chr. 5:19-22). However, when left alone the descendants of Gad would dwell securely as fearless as a lion. If provoked, Gad would pull in pieces anything that stood in his way. Gad would overcome the arm (symbol of strength) and the crown (symbol of government authority) of his head (symbol of an enemy) (Dt. 33:20). Gad along with Reuben were the first tribes to settle, but they still had to assist their brethren in subduing the Canaanites (Dt. 33:21).

Jacob compared **Dan** to a serpent (Gen. 49:17), perhaps for subtlety, while Moses compared him to a young lion for courage and determination.

Dan is compared to the lions that leaped from Bashan, which is a mountainous area noted for fierce lions. Some Danites made their descent from this area in a surprise attack on the Canaanite city of Laish. Once conquered, they renamed it "Dan" (Jgs. 18:14-29). Part of Dan's territory was located along a coastal area and, in the war of Sisera and Barak, Dan remained in ships (Jgs. 5:17). Therefore, it would be reasonable to conclude that the tribe of Dan was a seafaring people, and the modern nation of Denmark has had a history of sea exploration and conquest.

According to Jewish sources, although the tribe of **Naphtali** was located to the north, their allotment was so fruitful, and the produce so early, that members of this tribe were often the first to arrive at the temple with their fruit-fruits, which are "the blessings of the Lord" (Dt. 34:23). Jacob described Naphtali as being a courteous obliging people, giving goodly words (Gen. 49:21).

Moses' description of **Asher** appears to place him in a unique position of favor amongst all his brothers. He benefits from an abundance of oil as well as metals including iron and bronze. One of Asher's notable descendants was Anna the prophetess, daughter of Phanuel, who recognized the infant Jesus as the Messiah (Lk. 2:36-38) (Dt. 33:24-25).

The *god* (from the Hebrew word *elohim*, which is plural and can include a number of spirit-beings; cf. Gen. 1:26) of Israel is Jesus Christ, by delegation from Almighty God (Ex. 23:20-22; cf. Ex. 6:3; Isa. 9:6; Jgs. 13:18; Isa. 22:21-23; Rev. 3:7). Christ is described as being the god of *Jeshurun*, which is a symbolic name for the nation of Israel in her ideal character (Dt. 32:15; 33:5; Isa. 44:2). As described in Deuteronomy 33:26-29, Jesus Christ is the one tasked to help the descendants of Jacob who are now scattered

amongst many nations, with a small portion consisting of the Jewish people. As mentioned previously, Christ carries all the titles of his heavenly Father because he has the authority from Almighty God to act as His representative (Isa. 9:6).

Christ saved ancient Israel from their physical enemies (Dt. 33:29) but they chose to serve their spiritual enemies, Satan and the fallen angels, through the pagan religious systems of the nations they were supposed to dispossess. Today, the descendants of Jacob continue to live according to the pagan customs that have been absorbed into all this world's religious systems. All the religious systems on earth today are described by God using the collective metaphor of "Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots" (Rev. 17:1-6; 18:2-3). This negative portrayal of the religious structures on this planet is due to the fact that every one of them has adopted pagan customs in one form or another. Therefore, they are all antinomian, or "anti-the Law of Almighty God".

In the concluding chapter of Deuteronomy, Moses died and was buried in a secret location under the Lord's direction. Therefore, no citizen of ancient Israel was involved with this burial (Dt. 34:5-6). Of note, Moses did not die due to poor health or old age (Dt. 34:7). There was an attempt to steal Moses' body in order to use it as part of the pagan worship systems established by Satan. These practices are still occur throughout the world in the form of ancestor worship as well as the veneration of relics, which is part of the Roman Catholic religious system,

Yet Michael the archangel, in contending (arguing) with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, 'The Lord rebuke you!' (Jude 9; Ed. note in parenthesis)

Because Moses spent so much time “face to face” with the Angel of God, he is described in the following manner,

But since then (the death of Moses) there has not arisen in Israel a prophet like **Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face** (Dt. 34:10; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Therefore, it should be no surprise that Moses was seen in vision with Christ when Peter, James, and John were given a glimpse of God’s coming kingdom during the Feast of Booths, or Tabernacles. The Feast of Tabernacles pictures the time when Christ will be ruling this planet for a thousand years and all nations will observe God’s Holy Days (Zech. 14:16-19). From the following section of scripture, it is evident that Moses and Elijah will play a prominent role under Jesus Christ following his return,

Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, brought them up on a high mountain by themselves, ² and was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. ³ And behold Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with him (Christ). ⁴ Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, ‘Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, **let us make here three tabernacles:** one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah (Mt. 17:1-4; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

In conclusion, Almighty God’s Holy Days continue to be in effect now, they will be observed during the millennial reign of Jesus Christ, and will continue to be kept in the spirit realm following the second resurrection because they are first and foremost spiritual (Rom.7:14). They were not done away with following Christ’s death and resurrection, and they were never created just for the Jewish people.

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