LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE ONE

AN INTRODUCTORY WORD

Scripture Reading: Lev. 1:1; 27:34

In this message we shall give an introductory word to the Life-study of Leviticus.

I. AN ADVANCEMENT OF THE DIVINE REVELATION

As we come to the book of Leviticus, we first need to have a general idea about the advancement of the divine revelation. All students of the Bible know that God's revelation in the Bible is progressive. God does not reveal anything fully in just one book of the Bible. Thus, we cannot see a complete view of God's revelation in one book. The divine revelation advances from one stage to another stage, from one level to another level, from one point to another point. Only when we reach the last chapter of the Bible do we have a complete view of God's revelation.

The divine revelation in the Bible advances continually. The Bible was written over a period of more than fifteen hundred years, beginning at the time of Moses and ending at the time of the Apostle John. Within this long period of time, the divine revelation was completed, and the books of the Bible were eventually arranged in a meaningful sequence. In tracing the advancement of the divine revelation, we need to follow the sequence of the Bible. Let us now consider how the divine revelation advances in the first three books of the Bible—in Genesis, Exodus, and Leviticus.

A. In Genesis—God's Creation and Man's Fall

The book of Genesis reveals God's creation and man's fall. According to Genesis, man fell step by step: from God to the conscience, from the conscience to human government, and from human government to rebellion. In this rebellion man

forsook God and turned to the worship of idols. After man rebelled against God at Babel, God gave up the created race; however, He could not and did not forsake His purpose. Therefore, after giving up the created race, God called out a new race, a selected race, beginning with Abraham. To Abraham God promised that in him all the families of the earth would be blessed (Gen. 12:3). Eventually the race selected and called by God fell from God's selection and calling into Egypt, that is, into the world.

In Genesis we see that man fell from God to the conscience, from the conscience to human government, from human government to rebellion, and from rebellion to the world. Today's world is the expression of man's fall to the uttermost, for the world is the ultimate expression of the steps of man's fall.

The first verse of Genesis says, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," and the last verse tells us that Joseph "was put in a coffin in Egypt" (50:26). In the first verse we have God's creation, and in the last verse we have the issue of all the steps of man's fall—a man put in a coffin in Egypt. This is the clear revelation in Genesis.

B. In Exodus—God's Salvation and the Building of His Habitation

The book of Exodus reveals God's salvation and the building of His habitation. Yes, the man created by God fell, and the man selected and called by God also fell. But God is God, and He was not disappointed. Nothing can stop Him or annul His purpose. After man had fallen to the uttermost, God came in to rescue fallen man. After redeeming His fallen people, God brought them to a point where He built them together to be His dwelling place on earth. Thus in Exodus we see two main things—God's redemption and God's habitation.

The word *exodus* means "the way out." What we see in the book of Exodus is the way to get out of man's fall. Genesis ends with man in a coffin in Egypt, but in Exodus there is the way out of this coffin, the way out of this box of

death. This way out involves God's redemption. God's redemption is to bring us out of the coffin and back to Himself.

In Exodus those who had been brought back to God were charged to build a tabernacle, a dwelling place, for God. This indicates that God is able not only to bring fallen man out of death but also able to use this man to build a dwelling place for Him on earth. Whereas at the end of Genesis there is a coffin containing a dead body, at the end of Exodus there is a tabernacle containing the living God. What a great advancement this is!

In Genesis we have God's creation and man's fall, and in Exodus we have God's redemption and God's habitation. We praise the Lord that because of God's redemption we are no longer in the fall. Through redemption we have been brought into God's habitation, which for us today is the church. The tabernacle as God's habitation in Exodus typifies the church. God's habitation today is the church, and we are in it.

Exodus 40 speaks of the tabernacle, but Leviticus 1:1, which is the continuation of Exodus, speaks of the tent of meeting. These two terms refer to the same thing. The tabernacle is a dwelling place, and the tent of meeting is a meeting place. The tabernacle is for God's habitation, for. His dwelling, and the tent of meeting is for the meeting of His people. The tabernacle is God's habitation, yet this habitation is also the center where God's people meet. Hence, it is called the tent of meeting. The tent of meeting is a place for the meeting of God and His redeemed people. Today the church is the tabernacle and the tent of meeting. God has a dwelling place on earth, and this dwelling place is also a meeting place for us to meet with one another and to meet together with God. What is the church? The church is the meeting of the saved ones with the saving God.

As soon as the tabernacle was built and set up, God came to dwell in it (Exo. 40:2, 33-35). The God who indwells the tabernacle has become the God dwelling among men. God is no longer merely in the heavens. It is impossible for us to go to the heavens to meet with God. But God came to tabernacle

among us (John 1:14). This means that God became incarnated to be a man, and this man became God's tabernacle on earth. God came down from the heavens and took on the form of man, and now God can be touched.

The four Gospels reveal that the God who was in the heavens and who was untouchable one day became a tabernacle, a man on earth. Having come down to earth, He presents Himself to us not in the form of God but in the form of man. Who is this One? Is He man or is He God? He is the God-man. Our God today is not only in the heavens as God, for He, the God-man, came to earth in the form of man to be a tabernacle.

The tabernacle in Exodus was enterable. By being incarnated our God not only became a man; He also became an enterable tabernacle. God destined all the children of Israel to be priests (Exo. 19:6) that all might have the right and the privilege to enter the tabernacle, that is, to enter into God and dwell in God. In the Old Testament the priests could enter the tabernacle, and today we, the believers in Christ, can enter into God and dwell in Him. The New Testament speaks of abiding in God (1 John 4:15, 13; 3:24; 2:6). To abide in God is to dwell in God. The incarnated God has become our dwelling place, our home, as a place of enjoyment.

C. In Leviticus—the Redeemed's Worship and Living

In Leviticus we have the redeemed's worship and living. We should not follow the common understanding of worship. According to the common understanding, to worship is to bow down or to hold a service with rituals. This, however, is not the denotation of worship in the Bible. In the Bible, worship denotes our contact with God to enjoy a common portion with God for our fellowship with Him. In Leviticus worship is a matter of contacting God by enjoying a common portion with Him. The issue of this is fellowship with Him and with one another in His presence. To do this is to worship God.

For many years we have been trying to practice this kind of worship. However, I must honestly say that we have not been very successful. It seems that by birth we have the concept of religious worship. Furthermore, many of us were raised in an environment of religious worship and learned to practice such worship. Eventually religious worship became a part of our being. This has hindered us from having the kind of worship revealed in the Bible.

Concerning worship, we need to have a change of concept. Whenever we come together we should have a kind of worship that is a matter of contacting God by enjoying Christ as our common portion with God and with one another. If we have this understanding of worship, when we come to a meeting we shall surely share the experience and enjoyment of Christ we have had in our daily life. We may do this by praising, by praying, or by giving our testimony.

We need to drop the religious and traditional way to worship and practice the biblical way, which is portrayed in the feasts. At the feasts there was no religious worship. Instead, there was the enjoyment of the things which the people offered to God. They enjoyed these offerings with God and with one another.

We need to have a worship that is living, real, and rich in Christ. This kind of worship requires that we experience and enjoy Christ every day. It also requires that we exercise our spirit to release whatever there is of Christ in our spirit so that we may share Him with the other saints. In such worship God enjoys Christ, and we also enjoy Him. This is an aspect of the divine revelation in the book of Leviticus.

Suppose in a meeting we contact God by enjoying Christ as our common portion with God and with one another. After such a meeting we shall be holy, for the issue of this kind of meeting is a holy daily life. Then we shall not only be holy worshippers; we shall also be a holy people living a holy daily life. This also is part of the advancement of God's revelation in Leviticus.

According to the advancement of the divine revelation in Genesis, Exodus, and Leviticus, we go from creation

through the fall to redemption, and from redemption to God's habitation, where we worship God by contacting Him with Christ as our portion and enjoying this portion with Him and with one another. Out from this worship will issue a holy living in our daily life. Hence, in Leviticus God does not have only a habitation on earth; He also has a people worshipping Him, a people contacting Him and enjoying His Christ as a common portion with Him and with one another, with the issue of living a holy life to express God. This surely is an advancement of the divine revelation.

II. A COMPARISON

Let us now go on to make a comparison between certain aspects of Exodus and Leviticus.

A. God Speaking on Mount Sinai and God Speaking in the Tabernacle

There are some significant differences between Exodus and Leviticus. The first difference we would point out concerns the place of God's speaking. In Exodus God spoke on Mount Sinai, which is a bare mountain; in Leviticus God speaks in the tabernacle, which is a building.

At this point we need to ask a question: Where is God in the book of Leviticus? In Genesis God, generally speaking, was in the heavens. At times He came to earth for a visit, but then He returned to the heavens. In Exodus God was on Mount Sinai. In Leviticus God is in the tabernacle, in the tent of meeting. In Genesis God was in the heavens. In Exodus God came down to stay on Mount Sinai to do a work to build up His habitation on earth. In the last chapter of Exodus, the tabernacle was erected, and the furniture was arranged within it. Then God came into the tabernacle to dwell in it. Now in Leviticus God is in the tabernacle, which is the tent of meeting, and speaks in the tent of meeting.

The first and last verses of Leviticus indicate that the entire book is a record of God's speaking. The speaking that

began in 1:1 took place not in the heavens nor on Mount Sinai but in the tabernacle. God's speaking today is also in His tabernacle, and this tabernacle is the church. According to the principle of the typology here, God speaks in the church as His tabernacle, the tent of meeting. This tent of meeting is the oracle, the place of God's speaking.

In the church God is always speaking. The extent to which a congregation is the church actually and practically depends on how much of God's speaking is there. If a certain group does not have God's speaking, it is hard to regard such a group as a church.

According to typology, where the tent of meeting was, there was God's speaking. The children of Israel camped in thousands of tents, but God's speaking was only in one tent, a unique tent—the tent of meeting.

The one sign of the tent of meeting was God's speaking. The tent itself and all its furnishings could be copied or imitated, but this is not true of God's speaking. God's speaking cannot be imitated, copied, or duplicated. The principle is the same today. Many things in the church can be imitated, copied, or duplicated by others. But one thing cannot be imitated, and that is God's speaking. God's speaking is unique. It depends solely on God and not on man.

Suppose that one day Aaron became unhappy with Moses, who was taking the lead in the tent of meeting, and gathered a group of Israelites and made another tabernacle. In every respect Aaron's tabernacle was a duplicate of the original. In color, material, design, and workmanship the two tabernacles were identical. If you had been there, to which tabernacle would you have gone—to the one set up by Moses or to the one set up by Aaron? You might say, "I would never go to Aaron's tabernacle; I would only go to Moses' tabernacle." This answer is wrong. The correct way to answer this question is to say, "I would never go to a tabernacle where there is not God's speaking. I would go only to the tabernacle where God speaks. Actually, I would not go to a tabernacle—I would go to God's speaking. Without God's speaking, the tabernacle means nothing."

The preciousness of the tabernacle was not the gold in it. There was more gold in Egypt than in the tabernacle. The preciousness of the tabernacle was God's speaking. The same is true of the church today. The preciousness of the church is God's speaking or, as it may be better to say, the speaking God. Praise the Lord that in the church we have God's speaking! This speaking is a treasure to us.

B. The Flaming Fire in Exodus and the Infinite Grace in Leviticus

In Exodus there was the flaming fire, based on the law expressing God's righteousness. In Leviticus there is the infinite grace, based upon Christ's redemption expressing God's righteousness. In Exodus the fire was flaming, the law was decreed, and the righteousness of God was manifested. What is revealed in Leviticus is not the law of God but the redemption of Christ, as signified by the offerings. In Exodus we had the condemning law, but in Leviticus we have the redeeming Christ. Therefore, in Leviticus God's righteousness is expressed not by the flaming fire but by the infinite grace.

In Exodus God spoke from the fire, but in Leviticus He speaks in His grace. What we have in Leviticus is not the flaming fire but God's presence as the unique grace given to His redeemed people.

C. The Flaming Fire Making God Fearful and Christ's Redemption Making God Approachable

In Exodus the flaming fire made God fearful to people. In Leviticus Christ's redemption makes God approachable to people. In Exodus God was the fearful One, and no one dared to come nigh to Him or to approach Him. In Leviticus Christ's redemption has made it possible for people not only to approach God and come near to God but also to eat together with Him, that is, to commune with Him and have fellowship with Him. In the church today God is approachable. We can contact Him, commune with Him, and fellowship with Him, enjoying Christ with Him. This is the revelation in the book of Leviticus.

III. THE GENERAL SKETCH

Now we need to see the general sketch of the book of Leviticus. The general sketch is this: Through the tabernacle, with the offerings, and by the priests. God's redeemed are enabled to fellowship with God, serve God, and be God's holy people living a holy life, which expresses God. To fellowship with God means to feast with God, to enjoy Christ with God. This is possible through the tabernacle, with the offerings, and by the priests, which for us today are all a matter of Christ. The issue of enjoying Christ with God is that we become God's holy people living a holy life. This holy living is the issue of the enjoyment of Christ. When we enjoy Christ with God, there is a result, and the result is a holy living, a living in which everything in our daily life is holy. As God's redeemed people, through the tabernacle, with the offerings, and by the priests, we can be enabled to contact God, to fellowship with God by enjoying Christ, to serve God in Christ, and to be a holy people in Christ living a holy life.

IV. THE CENTRAL THOUGHT

The central thought of Leviticus is that Christ is everything in the fellowship, service, and life of God's redeemed. Dr. C. I. Scofield once pointed out that Christ can be seen in every page of this book. In Leviticus Christ is everything. He is the offerings, He is the high priest, and He is everything in the living of God's redeemed people. Leviticus, therefore, is a book on Christ and full of Christ.

V. THE SECTIONS

The book of Leviticus can be divided into five sections: ordinances concerning offerings (chs. 1—7), ordinances concerning service (chs. 8—10), ordinances concerning living (chs. 11—22), ordinances concerning feasts (ch. 23), and other ordinances and warnings (chs. 24—27).

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE TWO

A GENERAL DEFINITION OF THE OFFERINGS

Scripture Reading: Lev. 1—7

In this message we shall give a general definition of the offerings.

I. THE OFFERINGS IN RELATION TO THE TABERNACLE

The books of Exodus and Leviticus are closely related. Exodus ends with the setting up of the tabernacle, and Leviticus begins with the offerings. Both the tabernacle and the offerings are types of Christ. The fact that Exodus ends with the tabernacle and Leviticus begins with the offerings indicates a direct continuation. Although Exodus and Leviticus are different in nature and in their points, there is nevertheless a direct relation between them.

A. The Tabernacle Built and Set Up, and the Offerings with the Priesthood Ordained

In Exodus the tabernacle was built and set up. The tabernacle was set up not only for God to dwell in but also for us to dwell in. In Leviticus the offerings (chs. 1—7) with the priesthood (chs. 8—10) are ordained.

B. Christ as the Tabernacle Bringing God to Man, and Christ as the Offerings Bringing Man to God

Because our Christ is wonderful and all-inclusive, plain words are not adequate to reveal Him and describe Him. Types, which are actually pictures, are also necessary. Both the tabernacle and the offerings are types of Christ. Christ as the tabernacle brings God to man, and Christ as the offerings brings man to God. This indicates that there is a two-way traffic, a traffic coming and going. Christ comes to us as the tabernacle and He goes to God as the offerings.

The tabernacle is a sign, a figure, a type, of Christ. It was through incarnation that Christ came as the tabernacle. The Word, which was God, became flesh and tabernacled among us (John 1:1, 14). Christ is the very God incarnated to be a man; hence, He is the God-man, and this God-man is the tabernacle. As the tabernacle, Christ brought God to man. Christ's being on earth was a matter of God embodied in a tabernacle. Here we have one aspect of the two-way traffic—God coming to us in Christ through incarnation.

John 1:29 tells us that the Christ who is the tabernacle is also the Lamb of God: "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" Christ as the Lamb of God is the totality, the aggregate, of all the offerings.

On the one hand, Christ is the tabernacle; on the other hand, He is the offerings. As the tabernacle, He has brought God to us. As the offerings, He is now bringing us all to God. Christ's being the tabernacle is a matter of incarnation. Christ's being the offerings is a matter of crucifixion and resurrection. Christ came in incarnation and He went through crucifixion and resurrection. This is the two-way traffic that brings God to us and brings us to God, making God one with us and us one with God.

C. The Tabernacle Being Good for Us to Experience, to Join to, God, and the Offerings Being Good for Us to Enjoy and Mingle with God

The tabernacle is good for us to experience, to join to, God, and the offerings are good for us to enjoy and mingle with God. To experience, to join to, God is to enter into the tabernacle. When the Lord Jesus was on earth, people contacted Him. Eventually, the disciples were brought into Him, into the incarnated God. Thus, the tabernacle brings God to us that we may experience, enter into, join to, God.

Both the tabernacle and the offerings signify Christ. The tabernacle signifies that God is in Christ for us to contact, to touch, to experience, to enter into, to join to, God. The offerings are God in Christ for our enjoyment. By enjoying Christ as the offerings we are mingled with God. God in Christ is the

tabernacle, the dwelling place, for us to approach, contact, enter, possess, and experience. God in Christ is also all the offerings for us to enjoy Him, to take Him in, and even to eat, digest, and assimilate Him that He may become our constituent. After enjoying the offerings and eating them, we enter into the tabernacle, and there we enjoy all the contents of what God is in Christ. It is a wonderful revelation that the Lord is the tabernacle and the offerings. We can enter into Him, and we can enjoy Him and be mingled with Him.

Christ as the offerings is for our enjoyment because these offerings are edible. They can be eaten not only by God but also by us. We can enjoy and eat Christ with God. This mutual enjoyment can be compared to the mutual enjoyment we have in a feast where we encourage one another to enjoy all the different dishes. This co-enjoyment in a feast is a picture of our enjoying Christ together with God. As we are enjoying Christ in a certain way, we may say, "Father, I would like You also to enjoy this portion of Christ." Then the Father may reply, "Child, I would like you to enjoy what I am enjoying." This is the fellowship of mutual enjoyment, the fellowship of co-enjoyment.

Whatever we eat becomes us. If we realize this, we shall see that it is not wise to oppose the divine revelation concerning the mingling of divinity with humanity. Through Christ's redemption and by His Spirit, Christ's divine element becomes our food. After we eat this food, it is digested and assimilated to become our fibers and cells. Surely this is a matter of mingling.

The Bible reveals that the creating God became a man, the God-man, and that this man has become the offerings— the burnt offering, the meal offering, the peace offering, the sin offering, the trespass offering, the wave offering, and the heave offering. These offerings have become food to us. This means that God in Christ is edible. God became edible by becoming the offerings. Through our eating of these offerings, the divine element is mingled with humanity. Thus, Christ is not only our dwelling place; He is also our food to enjoy God and be mingled with Him.

Daily we may enjoy not only God's presence but also His element, His essence, even His edible substance. Paul's Epistles indicate that Christ is edible, but they do not give us the details concerning the eating of Christ. For the details, we need to come to the book of Leviticus. The Christ revealed in Leviticus is a Christ who is good for eating. Leviticus gives us not only the "groceries" but also the "recipe" for "cooking" Christ.

All the offerings are not only for us to enjoy God but also to have God assimilated into our being. This assimilation results in mingling. We need to realize that we are being mingled with God and that God is mingling Himself with us. The Lord Jesus as the Spirit is in our spirit, and daily He is mingling Himself with us. But this mingling depends on our eating Christ, digesting Christ, and assimilating Christ. Good food may be set before us, but we may eat the food wrongly and thus get indigestion. Likewise, if we eat Christ wrongly, we shall get spiritual indigestion. In such a case, we shall not assimilate Christ. We need to learn how to eat Christ, digest Christ, and assimilate Christ. Then we shall be nourished, strengthened, and mingled with God.

D. The Tabernacle Being for God to Dwell In, and the Offerings Being for God to Enjoy through Our Appreciation and Presentation

The tabernacle is for God to dwell in; the offerings are for God to enjoy through our appreciation and presentation. This is wonderful, marvelous, and mysterious.

The tabernacle is not only for us to enter into but also for God to dwell in. The tabernacle is God coming to us in Christ and through Christ. This tabernacle is God's dwelling place for God to dwell in Christ. This means that God's embodiment is God's dwelling. God dwells in Christ as His embodiment.

Christ as the offerings is not only for our enjoyment but also for God's enjoyment. The burnt offering is altogether for God's food, for God's enjoyment. The offerings are not only for us to enjoy God and to be mingled with God; they are also

for God's enjoyment. Therefore, God not only dwells in Christ—He also enjoys Christ.

The tabernacle is for God's dwelling, and the offerings are for God's enjoyment. Does this mean that God dwells in Himself and enjoys Himself? The answer to such a question involves the mystery of the Trinity. The Lord Jesus says, "I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me" (John 14:10). The book of Hebrews reveals that Christ has presented Himself to God for God's satisfaction. Here we see the mystery of God becoming a man to die on the cross and then rising up in resurrection for God and for us.

The offerings are for God to enjoy through our appreciation and presentation. Without our appreciation and presentation of Christ as the offerings, God cannot have any enjoyment of the offerings. God has come to us in Christ, becoming the tabernacle, the dwelling place, for Himself. He has also become all the offerings for us and for Himself. If we do not appreciate these offerings and present them to God, God will not have any enjoyment of the offerings.

Just as the Israelites were to labor on the good land to have the produce to offer to God, so we need to labor on Christ that we may be able to present Him to God. To labor on Christ is to endeavor to enjoy Him and to experience Him. The more we enjoy and experience Christ, the more we shall appreciate Him. Then we should present Christ to God for His enjoyment.

E. The Offerings Being Not Sacrifices but Presents to God by the Appreciators of Christ

The offerings are not sacrifices but presents to God by the appreciators of Christ. Leviticus 1:2 says, "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, When anyone of you brings an offering to Jehovah, you shall bring your offering from the cattle, of the herd or of the flock." The verb "brings" may also be translated "presents" or "offers." The Hebrew word translated "offering" is *corban* and means a present, a gift. The Hebrew words for "presents" and "present" here are both from the same root. The offerings, therefore, are presents to

God. The children of Israel were to labor on the good land and then offer to God as presents the produce of the good land which they enjoyed and appreciated.

The five main offerings are for us to fellowship with God. Chapters one through seven of Leviticus speak about the fellowship God's children have with God. For this fellowship there is the need of presents.

When we come to the church meetings, we should come not with sacrifices but with presents to offer to God. Sacrifices are for redemption, for propitiation, whereas presents are gifts for intimate fellowship between us and God. The presents we bring for this fellowship should be the very Christ we have experienced. With much appreciation of this Christ, we should offer Him as a present to God. Even the sin offering and the trespass offering may be presents that we bring to God.

To bring a sacrifice for sin is a matter of seriousness. To bring a present to an intimate friend is a matter not of seriousness but of sweetness. Every time we come to a meeting we should sense the sweetness of coming to present dear and precious presents to God for us to enjoy with Him. We should offer Christ to God not merely as the sacrifices for our problems but also as presents to God for His enjoyment and for our enjoyment with Him.

F. The Ordinances of the Offerings Being a Recipe of the Divine Cooking

The ordinances of the offerings are a recipe of the divine cooking. Christ is the groceries, we are the cooks, and God and we are the co-eaters enjoying Christ as the satisfaction. This is the highlight of the book of Leviticus. Spiritually speaking, nothing can be higher than our enjoyment of the Triune God in Christ.

Have you ever realized that the church meeting is a cooking meeting, an eating meeting? We have spoken about coming to the meetings to eat, and in the meetings we have sung the short song "Come and Dine" *(Hymns,* #1148). However, we may never have had the thought that we need the cooking. The groceries are here, and the eaters are also here,

but who are the cooks? I have the assurance to say that God and the Spirit are not the cooks but that we are the cooks. Therefore, we all must learn to cook.

From the types in Leviticus, we can see that God surely desires to enjoy Christ. He wants to enjoy Christ through our appreciation of Christ and through our presentation of Christ. However, even up to now, we are still too, old, traditional, superficial, and religious. May we all see that our God desires to enjoy Christ. Christ should not only be our food but also God's food through appreciation and presentation, that is, through our cooking. We all need to cook Christ that we may feed God with Christ.

II. THE CATEGORIES OF THE OFFERINGS

Now we come to the categories of the offerings. According to Leviticus, there are five main kinds of offerings, five main kinds of gifts: the burnt offering, the meal offering, the peace offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering. We need the pictures of the offerings in Leviticus to revolutionize our concept concerning service, worship, and the experience of Christ.

A. The Burnt Offering

The burnt offering is Christ for God's satisfaction (1:1-17; 6:8-13). The burnt offering is for God's food that God may enjoy it and be satisfied. This offering was to be offered daily, in the morning and in the evening.

B. The Meal Offering

The meal offering is Christ for the satisfaction of God's people enjoyed together with God (2:1-16; 6:14-23). The burnt offering is for God's eating, and the meal offering is for our eating. Our eating of the meal offering, however, is together with God. Christ should first be absolutely for God's enjoyment, and then He should be for our enjoyment that we may enjoy Him together with God. As Leviticus 2 shows us, part of the meal offering is for God, but the main part of this offering is for us. This indicates that Christ is for our enjoyment that we may enjoy Him together with God.

C. The Peace Offering

The peace offering is Christ as the peace between God and God's people for their co-enjoyment in fellowship (3:1-17; 7:11-38). The burnt offering is Christ for God's enjoyment, the meal offering is Christ for our enjoyment together with God, and the peace offering is Christ as the peace between God and God's people. As such an offering, Christ becomes the co-enjoyment of God and God's people. In this enjoyment there is fellowship.

D. The Sin Offering

The sin offering is Christ for the sin of God's people (4:1-35; 6:24-30). God's intention is that there be co-enjoyment, enjoyment for Him and for us. His intention is that we may have peace with Him to enjoy Christ with Him in fellowship. However, we need to remember that we still have sin in our nature and trespasses in our conduct. Both our sin and our trespasses are condemned by God. Therefore, we need the sin offering, which is Christ for the sin in our nature. Concerning this, Christ has made propitiation.

E. The Trespass Offering

The trespass offering is Christ for the sins of God's people (5:1—6:7; 7:1-10). Christ has made propitiation for our sins, our trespasses, as well as for our sin. With Christ as the sin offering and as the trespass offering, we no longer have any problems with God. We may now be at peace and in peace enjoy Christ with God.

The types in chapters one through seven of Leviticus show us how much Christ is to us. These chapters show us many fine points concerning Christ. We need to learn to be fine in experiencing Christ in all these fine points.

F. The Burnt Offering Being the Qualification for the Sin Offering

The burnt offering is the qualification for the sin offering. As the burnt offering, Christ is absolute for God. If Christ had not been absolute for God, He would not have been

qualified to be our sin offering. Adam fell because he was not absolute for God. If he had been absolute for God, he would not have been deceived. Adam was deceived because he was not absolute for God. Eventually Christ came, and He was absolute for God and He was never deceived. This absolute One was perfect and was qualified to be our sin offering to deal with the sin in our nature. Christ's absoluteness for God qualified Him to be the sin offering.

G. The Meal Offering Being the Qualification for the Trespass Offering

The meal offering is the qualification for the trespass offering. If Christ had not been perfect in His humanity but had had many defects, shortcomings, and wrongdoings, He Himself would have needed a trespass offering and thus would not have been qualified to be our trespass offering. However, in His humanity Christ was perfect, fine, and balanced; He was altogether without defects, mistakes, shortcomings, and wrongdoings. His perfection qualified Him to be our trespass offering.

The burnt offering is for the sin offering. Thus, these two offerings are linked. Likewise, the meal offering is for the trespass offering. Thus, these two offerings are linked. If Christ had not been absolute for God, He could not have been our sin offering to deal with the sin in our nature. If He had not been perfect in His humanity, He could not have been our trespass offering to take away our trespasses. Christ was absolute toward God, and He was perfect in His humanity. Therefore, He was qualified to deal with our sin and to take away our trespasses.

H. The Peace Offering Being the Issue of All the Other Four Offerings

The peace offering is the issue of all the other four offerings. This means that the peace offering is the totality of the other four offerings. Christ's being these four offerings consummates in peace between God and God's people, and this peace is simply Christ Himself. As the peace offering, Christ

is the food we enjoy with God and the food God enjoys with us. In Christ as our peace offering we have co-enjoyment in fellowship.

We need to bring all these points concerning Christ as the offerings into our church life, and practice cooking Christ and presenting Christ to God in the church meetings. We all need to learn to cook Christ finely, to eat Him finely, and to present Him finely. This is the way we should study the book of Leviticus. We should not only have a doctrinal knowledge of the fine points concerning Christ; we should also learn to cook Christ, to present Christ to God, and to enjoy Christ with God as the burnt offering, the meal offering, the peace offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering. By doing this we shall be fully constituted into those who desire to enter into the tabernacle and dwell there to enjoy the contents of the Triune God.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE THREE

THE BURNT OFFERING
CHRIST FOR GOD'S SATISFACTION

(1)

Scripture Reading: Lev. 1:2-6; Heb. 10:5-10; 9:14

In this message we shall begin to consider the burnt offering, which is Christ for God's satisfaction.

It is difficult for us to enter into the real significance of the burnt offering, and we admit that our experience of this offering is limited. Actually, very few Christians have the real experience of the burnt offering. We may have had much experience of the trespass offering and the sin offering and also some experience of the meal offering and the peace offering but only a little experience of the burnt offering.

The most fine and detailed types of Christ are in the book of Leviticus. Without chapter one of Leviticus, we do not have a way to explain or define Christ as the burnt offering. It is correct to say that the burnt offering is Christ for God's satisfaction. But how could Christ be such an offering? This is not easy to explain. If we would know Christ as the burnt offering, we need to study Leviticus 1.

Before we come to this chapter, however, I would first like to consider Hebrews 10:5-10. Verse 5 says, "Wherefore, coming into the world, He says, Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me." Here "sacrifice and offering" refer to the totality of all the different sacrifices and offerings.

There is a distinction between sacrifices and offerings. Sacrifices are for sins, and offerings are for gifts. If we feel that we are sinful and need to offer something to God, this offering for sin, strictly speaking, is a sacrifice. However, if

we bring something to God not for sin but for fellowship, what we bring is not a sacrifice but an offering.

Hebrews 10:5 tells us that God did not desire sacrifices and offerings but instead prepared a body for Christ. This indicates that God intended that Christ would be the replacement of all the Old Testament sacrifices and offerings.

Verse 6 goes on to say, "In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You did not take pleasure." This seems to be a repetition of verse 5. Actually it is an itemizing and definition of "sacrifice and offering" in the foregoing verse.

Verses 7 through 10 continue, "Then I said, Behold, I come (in the roll of the book it is written concerning Me) to do Your will, O God. Saying above, Sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You did not desire nor take pleasure in (which are offered according to the law); then He said, Behold, I come to do Your will. He takes away the first that He may establish the second; by which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." The "roll of the book" in verse 7 refers to the Old Testament. What is the will mentioned in verses 7, 9, and 10, and what is the meaning of the words "I come to do Your will"? Some Bible teachers say that this means that everything the Lord Jesus did and said was according to God's will. This interpretation, however, is not according to the context. "Which will" in verse 10 refers back to "will" in verses 7 and 9. The will of God in these verses is to take away the first, the animal sacrifices of the old covenant, that the second, the sacrifice of Christ of the new testament, may be established. Therefore, God's will here is for Christ to come to replace the Old Testament sacrifices and offerings. At the time Christ came. God wanted Him to take away the Old Testament sacrifices—the sacrifices of sheep, goats, and oxen—and to establish the New Testament sacrifices, which are Christ Himself.

Hebrews 10:5-10 clearly indicates that the sacrifices and offerings in the Old Testament are types, shadows, of Christ. Christ is the reality, the body, of all those sacrifices and offerings.

Hebrews 10:5-10 further reveals that the foremost offering is the burnt offering. This is also indicated in Leviticus, where the burnt offering is mentioned first. If we are to understand what the burnt offering is, we need to consider Hebrews 10, which tells us that as the burnt offering Christ did the will of *God*. We should not interpret the word "will" in this chapter in a way that is common, natural, or human. God wanted Christ to replace all the Old Testament offerings and sacrifices. This is God's will here, and Christ came to do it.

It was not a simple matter for Christ to replace the offerings and sacrifices with Himself. How could a man replace all the offerings and sacrifices? Consider the qualifications that were required and the kind of person one had to be. The person who replaced the offerings and sacrifices had to be one who was absolutely for God, even in every small thing. Anyone who is not absolutely for God in all of the small things is not qualified to do the will of God to replace the old sacrifices and offerings with the new, that is, to take away the first and establish the second. To take away the first and establish the second is to take away the old covenant and establish the new covenant. The will of God in Hebrews 10 is to replace all the sacrifices and offerings of the Old Testament with the sacrifices and offerings of the new covenant, and to do this one had to be absolutely for God.

We have spoken often about walking in the spirit and about practicing being one spirit with the Lord. In big things it may be easy for us to be one spirit with the Lord, but this is not easy in small things. How easy it is for a small thing to break our oneness in spirit with the Lord! But such a thing never happened with the Lord Jesus. When He was on earth, there never was a time when a small thing caused Him to lose His oneness with the Father. If this oneness had been broken, then He Himself would have been in need of a Christ. Furthermore, He would have been disqualified from being the burnt offering, needing someone to be His savior. However, the Lord Jesus was absolutely for God, and therefore He was qualified to be the burnt offering. It was a great

thing for the Lord Jesus to do God's will—to be the burnt offering to replace the Old Testament offerings and sacrifices.

None of us is qualified to be the burnt offering. If we had been regenerated without having become fallen, it would have been hard for us to break the oneness with the Lord in our living. Although we have been regenerated, we are still living in the old, fallen nature. We may exercise our spirit to have a life that is one with the Lord, but often a small thing will cause this oneness to be broken. What, then, should we do? Instead of being disappointed, we should recognize that we need Christ. We need Him to be our burnt offering.

I. SIGNIFYING CHRIST NOT MAINLY FOR REDEEMING MAN'S SIN BUT FOR LIVING FOR GOD'S SATISFACTION

The burnt offering signifies Christ not mainly for redeeming man's sin but for living for God and for God's satisfaction. As the sin offering Christ is for redeeming man's sin, but as the burnt offering He is absolutely for living a life which can satisfy God in full. Throughout His life on earth, the Lord Jesus always lived a life that satisfied God to the uttermost. In the four Gospels He is presented as the One who is absolutely one with God. His divine attributes were expressed in His human virtues, and sometimes His human virtues were expressed in and with His divine attributes. When He was confronted, examined, and questioned by the evil, subtle opposers—the scribes, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Herodians—during His last days on earth, at certain times His human virtues were expressed through His divine attributes, and at other times His divine attributes were expressed in His human virtues.

In the life of the Lord Jesus there was no blemish, defect, or imperfection. He was perfect, and He lived a life which was perfect and absolutely for God. He was fully qualified to be the burnt offering. Having, through His incarnation, a body prepared for Him by God to be the real burnt offering

(Heb. 10:5-6), He did God's will (vv. 7-9) and was obedient unto death (Phil. 2:8). On the cross, He offered His body to God once for all (Heb. 10:10).

II. WITH A YOUNG BULL OF THE HERD, A SHEEP OR A GOAT OF THE FLOCK, OR A TURTLEDOVE OR A YOUNG PIGEON OF THE BIRDS

Leviticus 1 speaks of different categories of burnt offerings: a young bull of the herd (v. 3), a sheep or a goat of the flock (v. 10), or a turtledove or young pigeon of the birds (v. 14). The offerings in these three categories are of different sizes, with the young bulls being the largest and turtledoves and young pigeons being the smallest.

A. According to the Offerer's Appreciation and Ability to Offer

The size of the burnt offering depends on and is according to the offerer's appreciation and ability to offer. We may have a great deal of appreciation, but we may not have the ability to prepare a large offering, a bull, but only a small one, a turtledove or a young pigeon. This, of course, does not mean that as the burnt offering Christ Himself is of different sizes. In Himself, Christ is always the same. There is not a large Christ, a small Christ, and a medium-sized Christ. Nevertheless, in our experiences Christ may differ. In our experiences Christ may be a small or a medium-sized burnt offering, but in Paul's experience Christ was a large burnt offering, a bull of the herd, because his experience of Christ was far greater than ours, and his appreciation and ability to offer Christ to God were great. Therefore, in Himself Christ is the same, but according to our experiences He is different.

B. Lives Able to Move and Act in Their Will

All the burnt offerings in Leviticus 1 were of lives that are able to move and act in their will. This indicates that a burnt offering must be something living. A dead person cannot be obedient to God; only a living person can do this. However, in order to obey God, a living person needs to subdue His will

to God's will. If Christ was to be a burnt offering for God, He had to be such a living one, one with a strong will but with His will subdued to God's will.

The best way to be protected is to have our will subdued to the will of another. This is especially true of young people. The best way for a young person to be protected is for him to have his will subdued. Because the Lord's will was subdued to God's will, the Lord was preserved and protected in His perfection, in His being without blemish. A life that is able to move and act in its will is a life that can become blemished. As the Lord Jesus lived and moved on earth, He never became blemished because His will was subdued to God's will.

C. Lives Good for Shedding of Blood

Although the burnt offering is not for redemption, it nevertheless makes propitiation for us (Lev. 1:4). For this reason, the burnt offering must be a life that is good for the shedding of blood. Anything of the herd, of the flock, or of the birds has blood for shedding. The blood is necessary for forgiveness. "Without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Heb. 9:22).

D. Strong and Young

The burnt offering was to be strong and young. This means that it was to be full of strength and freshness, with no weakness and no oldness. In Leviticus 1 a male signifies strength, and a young one signifies freshness. Spiritually speaking, Christ was a male, full of strength, and He was young, full of freshness. He was strong, and He was fresh. Although Christ is ancient, He is never old. He is always fresh and strong. With Him there is no weakness or oldness.

E. Without Blemish

The burnt offering had to be without blemish. This means that it had to be without defects and faults. As the burnt offering, Christ is without defects and faults (1 Pet. 1:19; Heb. 9:14).

III. OFFERED AT THE ENTRANCE OF THE TENT OF MEETING

A. In the Outer Court of the Tabernacle

The burnt offering was offered at the entrance of the tent of meeting (Lev. 1:3), that is, in the outer court of the tabernacle. The outer court signifies the earth.

B. Accepted before Jehovah

The burnt offering, which was offered on the altar in the outer court, was accepted before Jehovah (v. 3). The altar signifies the cross. The cross on which Christ offered Himself was on earth, but His offering of Himself was before God. He offered Himself on earth, and He was accepted by God and before God.

IV. THE OFFERER

Leviticus 1:4-6 speaks of the offerer.

A. Laying His Hand on the Offering

Leviticus 1:4 says of the offerer, "He shall lay his hand upon the head of the burnt offering, and it shall be accepted for him to make propitiation for him." The offerer was not only to bring the offering but also to lay his hand on the offering.

1. Signifying Identification, Not Substitution

In the Scripture, the laying on of hands always signifies identification, union; it does not signify substitution. To lay our hand on the offering means that we are one with the offering and take the offering as being one with us. Hence, the laying on of hands makes the two parties one.

By laying our hands on Christ as our burnt offering we are joined to Him. We and He, He and we, become one. Such a union, such an identification, indicates that all our weaknesses, defects, shortcomings, and faults become His and that all His virtues become ours. This is not exchange—it is union.

We may realize that we are altogether unqualified and

hopeless. This is our actual situation. But when we lay our hands on Christ, our weak points become His, and His strong points, His virtues, become ours. Furthermore, spiritually speaking, by such a union He becomes one with us and lives in us. As He lives in us, He will repeat in us the life He lived on earth, the life of the burnt offering. In ourselves we cannot live this kind of life, but He can live it in us. By laying our hands on Him we make Him one with us, and we make ourselves one with Him. Then He will repeat His living in us. This is to offer the burnt offering.

2. For a Propitiation

Laying our hands on Christ as the burnt offering is not just a matter of identification; it is also a matter of propitiation. Propitiation means that our problems with God and God's problems with us are taken care of. Laying our hands on Christ not only makes us one with Him but also takes care of our problems, propitiating our situation with God and enabling us to have peace with God.

Once we had problems with God, and God had problems with us. Christ propitiated our situation with God and took care of the problems. Now we simply need to lay our hands on Him. When we lay our hands on Christ, the problems between us and God and between God and us will be solved. Therefore, the laying of our hands on the burnt offering is for propitiation.

B. Slaughtering the Offering before Jehovah

"And he shall slaughter the young bull before Jehovah; and Aaron's sons, the priests, shall bring the blood and dash the blood all around on the altar which is at the entrance of the tent of meeting" (v. 5). The slaughtering of the offering was for the shedding of blood for forgiveness. The sprinkling of the blood around the altar was for the acceptance by God of the offering burned on the altar.

C. Skinning the Offering and Cutting It into Pieces

Verse 6 tells us that the offering was to be skinned and cut into pieces. As our burnt offering, Christ passed through

this kind of mistreatment. He was skinned and He was cut into pieces.

1. Skinning the Offering

The skin of the burnt offering is its outward expression of its beauty. Hence, to skin the offering is to strip it of its outward expression. This skinning of the burnt offering signifies Christ's being willing to let the outward expression of His virtues be stripped. When Christ was crucified, His clothing was removed. This indicates that He was "skinned."

2. Cutting the Offering into Pieces

The cutting of the offering into pieces signifies Christ's being willing to let His entire being be broken without any reservation. As our burnt offering, Christ, with His entire life and history, was cut into pieces.

If we did not have Christ as our burnt offering, we would have to suffer being slaughtered, skinned, and cut into pieces. We need to realize this whenever we offer Christ to God as the burnt offering. We also need to realize that He was slaughtered, stripped of His outward expression, and cut into pieces. All these sufferings were for Christ to do God's will. Christ's going to the cross to be slaughtered, stripped, and cut into pieces was His doing the will of God.

If we realize that we need Christ as our burnt offering, we then need to have a proper prayer. Proper prayer is simply to lay our hands on the Lord. We should not pray, "Lord, have mercy on me and do something for me." This kind of prayer is objective. We need to lay our hands on the Lord in order to have a subjective prayer. In such a prayer we may say, "Lord, I lay my hands on You, causing myself to be identified with You and You to be identified with Me." When we lay our hands on Christ through subjective prayer, the life-giving Spirit, who is the very Christ on whom we lay our hands, will immediately move and work within us to live a life that is qualified for the burnt offering.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE FOUR

THE BURNT OFFERING
CHRIST FOR GOD'S SATISFACTION

(2)

Scripture Reading: Lev. 1:2-6

The burnt offering is the Christ who is absolutely for God's satisfaction. In this message we shall see from the text of Leviticus 1 how to offer Christ as the burnt offering.

Chapters one through seven of Leviticus do not give us the details concerning what Christ is as the offerings; instead, these chapters show us the way to offer Christ. Although Leviticus 1—7 tells us that Christ is the burnt offering, the meal offering, the peace offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering, actually these chapters do not tell us how Christ is these offerings but tell us how to offer Christ as these offerings. Leviticus 1—7 does not speak of what Christ Himself is totally as the offerings. For example, Leviticus 1 speaks not of what Christ is totally as the burnt offering but rather speaks of the way to offer Christ as the burnt offering. If these chapters only told us what Christ is totally as the offerings, then these chapters would be merely objective teachings of doctrines. However, these chapters are not merely objective teachings, but they reveal to us the subjective experiences we may have of Christ. Chapter one does not teach us how much Christ is as the burnt offering but teaches us how to experience Christ and then how to bring our experience of Christ to God. It is altogether a matter not of doctrine but of experience.

If we do not realize this point, we shall be bothered by certain things in Leviticus 1, for instance, the washing of the burnt offering. What does it mean for Christ as the burnt

offering to be washed? A matter such as this becomes clear when we realize that this chapter does not tell us about Christ in His entirety as the burnt offering but shows us the way to offer Christ. What we offer is not Christ Himself in His entirety but the Christ we have experienced.

In Leviticus 1 Christ as the burnt offering is seen first as a bull (v. 5), second, as a sheep or a goat (v. 10), and finally, as a turtledove or a pigeon (v. 14). This bothered me when I was young, for I wondered how we could have a Christ in different sizes. Of course, in Himself and in His totality Christ is of one size. Christ's size is universal; His dimensions are the breadth, the length, the height, and the depth (Eph. 3:18). Not even a bull can represent Christ in His universal greatness, in His dimensions.

Although in Himself Christ is of one size, in our experiences Christ is of different sizes. For example, a new believer who has been helped to know Christ to a certain degree may offer Christ to God at the Lord's table. In God's eyes what he offers of Christ might be a small pigeon. But suppose the Apostle Paul could be present in the meeting and also offer Christ to God as the burnt offering. In God's eyes Paul's offering might be a large bull. In the same meeting another believer, who has been in the Lord fifteen years and who has had considerable experience of the Lord, may also offer Christ as his burnt offering. In the eyes of God his offering might be a lamb. In this meeting Christ as the burnt offering is of three sizes. This does not mean, however, that Christ is actually of more than one size. In Himself Christ is of one size. The difference, then, is not in what He is but in what we experience.

As we read Leviticus 1, we need to keep in mind that this chapter does not teach us concerning the actual size of Christ in His totality. On the contrary, this chapter teaches us concerning the Christ whom we experience. Christ is eternally great, but in my experience He may be like a pigeon in size. After some years, I may be able to offer Christ as a lamb. If I continue to grow, eventually the Christ I offer as a burnt offering will be the same as that offered by Paul, a large bull.

This is a matter of experience, not of doctrine. The fact that in Leviticus 1 the burnt offering is of different sizes indicates that what is taught in this chapter is not doctrinal but experiential.

Let us now turn to the text of Leviticus 1 and consider a number of important matters related to experience.

LABORING ON CHRIST THAT WE MAY HAVE SOMETHING OF CHRIST TO BRING TO GOD

In coming to the tent of meeting, we should not come empty-handed, but we should come with something of Christ. Leviticus 1:2 says, "When anyone of you brings an offering to Jehovah, you shall bring your offering from the cattle, of the herd or of the flock." Notice the words "brings" and "shall bring." The Hebrew word for *bring* here means to bring near, to bring something to someone's presence. Further, the word implies presenting, offering.

Suppose an Israelite who had inherited a portion of the good land was a loose and lazy person, not tilling the ground or sowing seed and watering. At the time of harvest, such a person would not have anything to reap. As a result, he would not have anything to bring to the feast; he would come empty-handed. Like the foolish virgins in Matthew 25, who wanted to borrow oil from the wise virgins, a lazy Israelite might have tried to borrow or to buy from others something to offer to God.

Today many of the saints are like this. They are loose and lazy and do not labor on Christ, in Christ, with Christ, and for Christ. Paul, however, was different. He said that he strived, struggled (Col. 1:28-29), labored (1 Cor. 15:10), and even fought for Christ. Paul was a busy person; he labored more than all the other apostles, yet it was not he but the grace of God that was with him. Like Paul, we need to labor on Christ that we may have something of Christ to present to God.

Of course, in ourselves and by ourselves we are nothing and we can do nothing. We surely must depend on the rain from the heavens. Suppose the heavens send rain, yet we do not labor. What would happen then? We would reap nothing

of Christ, and thus we would have nothing of Christ to bring to God. We need to labor on Christ that we may be able to bring something of Christ to God. This is not a matter of doctrine concerning Christ as the burnt offering but a matter of experience related to offering Christ to God.

The Hebrew word that is translated as "offering" in Leviticus 1:2, the word *corban,* means a gift or a present. What we bring to the presence of God becomes a gift, a present. If we would have a present for God, we need to labor on Christ and struggle, strive, and fight for Christ. To labor on Christ as the good land is to till the ground, to sow the seed, to water the seed, and to take care of the crop. This is to work, to toil, diligently as a farmer. Second Timothy 2:6 indicates that we are farmers, the most diligent and industrious of people. As farmers, we need to labor on Christ. If we labor on Christ, we shall have something of Christ as the burnt offering to be a present for God.

SLAUGHTERING THE BURNT OFFERING

The way of offering the burnt offering is a demonstration of our experience of Christ; it is a demonstration of how we have experienced Christ's experience. The way of offering is thus both a demonstration of our experience of Christ's experience and of how we have experienced Christ's experience.

"He shall slaughter the young bull before Jehovah" (Lev. 1:5a). This indicates that as the burnt offering Christ was slaughtered. Being slaughtered was Christ's personal experience when He was on earth. As lovers of Christ who would take Christ as our burnt offering, we need to experience His being slaughtered. Have you ever been slaughtered? Have you ever experienced Christ's being slaughtered? Have you ever made Christ's experience of being slaughtered your experience? We need to make Christ's experience of being slaughtered our experience.

We should have this experience in our married life. Suppose a brother's wife is very strong and insistent with him. What should he do? Instead of arguing with her, he should experience Christ's experience of being slaughtered.

Consider the picture presented in the Gospels of the Lord Jesus standing before Pilate, who was about to make the final judgment concerning His crucifixion. The Lord was handed over to evil men who then brought Him to the place of slaughter. In this situation the Lord Jesus did not resist. If we have the real experience of Christ's being slaughtered, we shall not resist being led to the slaughter by our husband or wife. Instead of resisting, we shall allow our husband or wife to put us on the cross.

If we experience Christ's being slaughtered, we shall come to the Lord's table and praise the Lord, perhaps with tears, saying, "Lord, thank You for giving me the opportunity to experience Your being slaughtered. How sweet it was to be one with You in being led to the slaughter!" This is to offer Christ to God as our burnt offering. This is also a demonstration of how we have experienced Christ in His experience of being slaughtered.

If we in the churches have this experience, there will be no quarreling or fighting but only the experience of being brought to the slaughter. At the Lord's table there will be many praises, perhaps offered with tears, to the Lord for giving us opportunities to experience Christ's being slaughtered.

Sometimes we reason with the brothers or with our spouse. Whenever we do this we turn away from the cross. Reasoning is nothing but a turning away from being slaughtered. If this is our situation, then at the Lord's table there will be no praises to the Lord. Whatever we say in our prayer or praise will mean nothing because we have not had the real experience of Christ in His sufferings and, hence, we have no burnt offering. In such a case we are not absolutely for God; neither do we take Christ as our burnt offering, experiencing what He experienced in His being slaughtered. This is the reason that at the Lord's table we have repeated, common, and customary songs, prayers, and praises, without the real experience of appreciation and presentation of the Christ whom we have experienced.

If we experience what Christ experienced in being slaughtered, there will be much praise offered to the Lord at the

Lord's table, but there will not be any quarreling in the church life or in our married life. Certain ones may oppose us or criticize us, but we shall not fight with them. Without saying anything, we shall simply allow others to lead us to the cross and slaughter us. If this is our experience, we shall have a large burnt offering to bring to God, and we shall have much praise in the tent of meeting. What we present to God will be a demonstration of how we have experienced Christ's experience of being slaughtered.

THE SKINNING OF THE BURNT OFFERING

The first part of 1:6 says, "He shall skin the burnt offering." The skinning of the burnt offering signifies Christ's willingness to let the outward expression of His virtues be stripped. In the four Gospels we see that Christ was defamed, stripped of the beauty of His virtues. For example, some said, "Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?" (John 8:48). Others said of Him, "He has a demon and is insane; why do you listen to him?" (John 10:20). This indicates that as the burnt offering the Lord Jesus was "skinned."

Paul also experienced this skinning. He was skinned by the Corinthians who accused him of sending Titus to them for the purpose of taking money from them. Paul addressed this accusation in 2 Corinthians 12:16-18. "But let it be so, I did not burden you, but being crafty I took you with guile. Did I take advantage of you through anyone whom I have sent to you? I entreated Titus and sent with him the brother. Did Titus take advantage of you? Did we not walk in the same spirit? Not in the same steps?" Some of the Corinthians had charged Paul of being crafty in making gain, indemnifying himself by sending Titus to receive the collection for the poor saints. Paul's real attitude is expressed in verse 15. "I will most gladly spend and be utterly spent on behalf of your souls, even if loving you more abundantly, I am loved less." He was willing to be wholly exhausted for their sake. Nevertheless, he was accused of beguiling them and of using Titus to steal money from them. Was this not a matter of skinning?

In 2 Corinthians 6:3-13 Paul lists many of the evidences that he is a servant, a minister, of God. Verse 8 says, "Through glory and dishonor, through evil report and good report." We may find it hard to believe that the spreading of evil reports concerning Paul was an evidence that he was an apostle. These evil reports were an evidence that Paul was God's servant. An evil report is a matter of skinning, of having our outward beauty stripped away.

No one likes to be skinned. During my years in the church life, many have come to me asking me to put back the skin that had been peeled off. If you are skinned by your husband or wife, will you not do everything possible to reattach the skin? Will you not try to restore the good report concerning you, to recover the outward expression of your virtues?

Suppose you are one trying to reattach the peeled-off skin. When you come to the Lord's table, will you be able to praise the Lord for helping to put the skin back on? I do not think that anyone could offer such a praise to the Lord.

However, suppose in the family life and in the church life you experience a lot of skinning. Then you will be able to say, "Lord, I have experienced the very skinning You experienced. I follow You and accept the skinning, the stripping, the defaming, the evil reports, just as You did. Lord, what I have experienced is actually Your experience of being skinned." If you are a person with this kind of experience, the praise you offer, even if it is short, at the Lord's table will deeply touch the meeting. This is the real, sincere, and honest offering of Christ as the burnt offering.

This is not an offering of the total Christ as the burnt offering. No one, not even Paul, can offer Christ totally as He is. Rather, we can offer only that part of Christ which we have experienced.

CUTTING THE BURNT OFFERING INTO PIECES

Leviticus 1:6 also tells us that the one who presented the burnt offering was to "cut it into its pieces." No one likes to be cut into pieces; we all like to remain whole, complete, perfect. We keep ourselves from being cut by insisting that we are

right and that others are wrong. To be accused of doing something wrong is to be cut into pieces. Most of the quarrels between husband and wife involve the first party saying that the second party is wrong and the second party arguing that the first party is wrong.

The situation is the same in the church life. A sister may complain that others in the church life are not fair. When she comes to the meeting, she may look at a certain saint, thinking that this saint has not been fair with her. This saint may have the same thought toward this sister. The result is an inner fighting. Who, then, is fair, and who is not fair? The only fair one is the one who is willing to be put on the cross and crucified.

Problems between husband and wife and between the saints can be solved only through forgiveness. Do you know what it means to forgive? To forgive is to forget. If you touch some saints in the church life wrongly, they may not forgive you during their lifetime. This unwillingness to forgive affects the praises at the Lord's table. If the saints have complaints against one another, it will be difficult to have a living, uplifted Lord's table meeting.

Instead of being willing to be cut into pieces, we like to protect ourselves. During His life on earth, Christ was cut into pieces continually, and we need to experience His being cut. In our married life and in our church life, we need to follow the Lord's steps by His life within us. His life is not a quarreling life. His life is a life that is willing to suffer the cutting. If we experience this, we shall be able to bring to God the Christ whom we have experienced.

We have often spoken about laboring on Christ in order to have something of Christ to exhibit in the meetings. Laboring on Christ includes our being willing to be cut into pieces as He was. If we labor on Christ in this way, then as the produce to be offered to God we shall have the Christ who was cut into pieces.

WASHING THE BURNT OFFERING

The burnt offering was to be washed with water by the

offerer. "Its inwards and its legs shall be washed with water" (v. 9; cf. 13a). This surely does not mean that Christ, our burnt offering, was dirty. When the Lord Jesus was living and walking on earth, the Spirit within Him continually kept Him, preserved Him, protected Him, from becoming dirty. In our daily walk we need to have the same kind of experience. We need to experience Christ's being cleansed, His being washed by the Holy Spirit. We are able to experience this because His cleansing Spirit is within us to cleanse us day by day, to keep us from being touched by the earthly dirt.

A SATISFYING FRAGRANCE TO JEHOVAH

After the burnt offering was slaughtered, skinned, cut into pieces, and washed, it was burned on the altar. "The priest shall offer up in smoke all of it on the altar as a burnt offering, an offering by fire of a satisfying fragrance to Jehovah" (v. 9). The Hebrew words translated "satisfying fragrance" literally mean savor of rest or satisfaction, that is, a savor giving satisfaction to the Deity, to whom it is offered, and, therefore, received with favor by Him. The phrase is a technical term for the fragrant steam arising from a burning sacrifice (S. R. Driver). The word "smoke" in this verse indicates that the offering was not burned quickly but slowly. As a result of this slow burning there was a satisfying fragrance, a savor that brought satisfaction, peace, and rest. Such a satisfying fragrance is an enjoyment to God.

When we offer a burnt offering in smoke to God, a fragrance well-pleasing to God will ascend to Him for His satisfaction and rest. Since God is satisfied, He will render His sweet acceptance to us. This is the significance of the burnt offering.

The burnt offering denotes Christ's being absolute for God's satisfaction. The way to satisfy God with sweetness, peace, and rest is to live a life that is absolutely for God. Since we cannot live such a life, we must take Christ as our burnt offering. We need to lay our hands on Him to indicate that we desire to be identified with Him, one with Him, and to live the kind of life He lived on earth. Such a life includes being

slaughtered, skinned, cut into pieces, and washed. By passing through all these processes, we shall have something to offer to God as our burnt offering—the very Christ whom we have experienced.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE FIVE

THE BURNT OFFERING
CHRIST FOR GOD'S SATISFACTION

(3)

Scripture Reading: Lev. 1:5-17

In this message we shall consider the way to offer the burnt offering. We shall view this matter from the standpoint of experience.

V. THE WAY TO OFFER

Regarding the way to offer the burnt offering as revealed in Leviticus 1, there are a number of puzzling points. One of these points concerns the priests, who are serving ones.

A. By the Priest

In Leviticus 1 we often read of "Aaron's sons, the priests" (vv. 5, 7, 8, 11). A number of verses simply speak of "the priest" (vv. 9, 12, 13, 15, 17). The priests here are of three classes: Aaron, the sons of Aaron, and an individual priest, a priest who is singled out for service. As the book of Hebrews indicates, Aaron is a type of Christ. Aaron's sons are types of the believers. In this chapter we do not see any actions performed by Aaron. Rather, here in relation to the offering of the burnt offering, we have the service of Aaron's sons or the service of a particular priest. Whenever someone presented a burnt offering to God, the serving priests rendered some help to the offerer.

B. The Offerings Differing Not Only in Size but Also in the Way They Are Offered

The various kinds of burnt offerings differ not only in

size but also in the way they are offered. According to Leviticus 1, the burnt offering could be a bull, a sheep or a goat, or turtledoves or young pigeons. As we have pointed out, the differences in the size of the burnt offering indicate not that Christ Himself varies in size but that our apprehension, realization, and appreciation of Christ differ in degree. Surely a bull would not be large enough to represent Paul's apprehension, realization, and appreciation of Christ, whereas even a pigeon may be too large to signify a new believer's apprehension, realization, and appreciation. A new believer may be very zealous, but his appreciation of Christ is nevertheless very limited,

Having seen the significance of the differences in the size of the burnt offering, we now need to consider the significance of the different ways in which the burnt offerings were offered. The first two categories of offerings—a bull and a sheep or a goat—were offered in the same way. First, the offering was slain, not by the priests but by the offerer. Following this, the offering was skinned and cut into pieces. (The offering was not to be offered to God as a whole.) After the offering was cut into pieces, its inwards and its legs were washed with water. The offering was then ready to be burned, and it was burned completely. No part of it was rejected by God. This was the way to offer the first two categories of burnt offerings.

The way to offer the third category of burnt offerings—the turtledoves and young pigeons—was very different. With the offerings in the first two categories, the priest did nothing to the offering except dash its blood on the altar and lay the pieces of the offering on the fire. The slaughtering, skinning, cutting, and washing of the offering were done by the offerer. We may say that the offerer was the "cook" and that the priests were merely "waiters." However, with the offerings in the third category, the offerer simply brought the offering to the tent of meeting, and the priests did everything else. The priest brought the offering to the altar, nipped its head, took away its crop, tore it by the wings, and offered it up in smoke on the altar (vv. 14-17). This surely is different

from the offerings in the first two categories, where nearly everything was done not by the priest but by the offerer.

We need to see that in Leviticus 1 the way to offer the burnt offering is very particular and peculiar. The way of offering differs according to one's spiritual age and spiritual ability. Therefore, my burden in this message is to point out that the way we offer Christ to God as the burnt offering depends entirely on our apprehension, realization, and appreciation of Christ.

Spiritually speaking, the one who offers Christ as typified by turtledoves or pigeons has a limited apprehension, realization, and appreciation of Christ. Such a one is young in the spiritual life and therefore lacks maturity. He does not have much ability to appreciate Christ. In contrast to worldly people, who have no appreciation or realization of Christ, a new believer has begun to have some appreciation of Christ. However, he does not yet have the ability to slaughter, skin, cut, and wash his burnt offering. He can only bring Christ as a very small burnt offering.

A believer's appreciation of Christ and his offering of Christ may be quite natural. For example, some believers may appreciate Christ as He is presented in the four Gospels, but this appreciation may be natural. Furthermore, their love of the Lord Jesus may be according to their natural understanding. This was my situation after I was saved and began to love the Lord. For the most part, my way of offering Christ to God was also natural. However, through the years my apprehension, realization, appreciation, and offering of Christ have changed.

Those who offer Christ as a bull appreciate Christ in a deep and detailed way. Those who offer Christ as a turtledove do not have such a deep and detailed appreciation of Christ. Moreover, their way of offering Christ as the burnt offering is natural.

The Old Testament priests knew that in order for a turtledove to be accepted as a burnt offering, the turtledove had to pass through a process. It was necessary for the priest to kill the bird, take away its crop with its feathers, and tear its

wings. The taking away of the crop and the feathers indicates the removal of what is unclean. The priest did all that was required to process the offering. This signifies that to offer Christ as a turtledove is to offer a Christ who has not been processed by the offerer; it is to offer Christ in a natural way. Therefore, when someone offers Christ as a turtledove, this offering needs to be processed by someone other than the offerer. However, the one who offers Christ as a bull or as a lamb offers Christ in a processed way, not in a natural way.

All the offerings were offered at the tent of meeting. Since the tent of meeting typifies the church, offering the burnt offering at the tent of meeting typifies offering Christ to God in the church meetings.

As we have indicated, the size of a believer's offering and the way he offers it depend on his spiritual maturity, capacity, and ability. Some saints may offer Christ as the burnt offering in a way that is not natural and with an offering that is not whole but processed. Such saints, who are matured and rich in the ability to apprehend, realize, and appreciate Christ, have had very deep experiences of Christ. They have experienced what is signified by the different parts of the burnt offering: the head, the fat, the inwards, and the legs. To experience Christ's head is to experience His understanding, wisdom, and prudence. To experience Christ's inwards is to experience His sensibility, affections, feelings, thoughts, will, intentions, and purposes. The burnt offering presented by these saints is an offering that has been cut into pieces. This indicates that their experience of Christ is detailed and also that their way of offering Christ to God as the burnt offering is not at all natural.

Little by little, the matured saints experience Christ in detail according to the pieces of Christ. They have come to realize that the Lord Jesus lived a life of having His inwards purified by the Spirit. This is typified in Leviticus 1 by the water. These saints have also experienced Christ's walk on earth, a walk in which the Spirit constantly kept Him clean and pure in His outward contacts. In their daily experience,

they appreciate Christ as the One who was always being washed inwardly and outwardly, not because He was unclean but for the purpose of preserving Him in His cleanness and purity. This is the Christ they apprehend, realize, and appreciate, and this is the Christ they offer to God.

A believer who offers Christ as turtledoves or pigeons certainly does not have the kind of appreciation of Christ that a mature believer has. Furthermore, his way of offering Christ in the church meetings is natural. As you listen to the prayers and testimonies of the new or young believers, especially in the Lord's table meeting, you can realize that in a natural way they offer Christ as two young pigeons. A dear saint who has recently been saved may stand up and say, "Praise the Lord! I love the Lord Jesus!" He may offer Christ or give a testimony, but he does so in a natural way. However, when certain other saints pray or testify, you can realize that, according to their spiritual maturity, capacity, and ability, they offer a detailed, processed Christ.

In Leviticus 1, the one who offered turtledoves or pigeons was not rejected. His offering, even though raw and unprocessed, was accepted, but it was accepted through the work of the priest who processed the offering. After the priest worked on the offering, wringing off its head, tearing its wings, and removing its crop and feathers, the offering was no longer natural but processed.

As we apply this matter of the processing of the offering by the priests, we need to ask a question: Who are the serving priests today? In order to answer this question, we need to realize that the burnt offering was presented not in the offerer's home but at the tent of meeting, where the altar and the priests were. This is a type of our offering Christ as the burnt offering not in our homes but in the church meetings. In the church meetings we have the altar, and we also have the saints as the serving priests.

In a meeting a young believer may in a natural way offer Christ as two birds. His offering of Christ may then be processed by the prayers and testimonies of other saints. As the young believer listens to these prayers and testimonies, he

may realize that his way of offering Christ was natural and unprocessed. However, some of the priests processed his offering for him. Therefore, the priests are those saints who, in the church meetings, process a burnt offering that is offered in a natural way.

When you first came into the church life, your way of offering Christ, either by a prayer or by a testimony, may have been quite natural. You did offer something of Christ, but you offered Christ in a natural way. Throughout your years in the church life, your way of offering Christ has become less and less natural. Now what you offer of Christ is mainly something that has been processed. However, your way of offering Christ may still be somewhat natural. For instance, you may praise the Lord for His kindness, but your understanding of the Lord's kindness may be natural.

We may say that in Leviticus 1 the offering of the turtledoves or pigeons was in two stages—the stage before it was processed and the stage after it has been processed. In the first stage the offering was still whole and in a natural condition. When the offering was still in this stage, it could not be accepted by God. After the offering had been processed, it was in the second stage, and it was ready to be accepted by God.

We all need to see that the difference in the burnt offerings is not only in their size but also in the way they are offered. The young ones in the church life offer a Christ who is very small in size, and they offer Him in a way that is natural, in a way that is without process. The mature, experienced ones not only offer a larger Christ, but they offer Christ absolutely in a processed way. For instance, the inwards and legs of their burnt offering will be washed in water, indicating that they have experienced Christ in His being kept clean by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The mature saints experience Christ in a detailed way. They understand His thoughts, feelings, and decisions. Those who experience Christ in this way will appreciate the details concerning the Lord's life recorded in the four Gospels. In their experience, Christ has been cut into pieces,

and they appreciate Him in a fine, detailed way. They do not merely experience Christ as a whole in an outward way; they enter, through their cutting Christ into pieces, into the depths of His being. I can testify that many years ago I did not experience Christ in such detail as I experience Him today. Now when I offer Christ to God as a burnt offering, I offer a Christ who has been cut into pieces.

Those who offer Christ in a natural way as birds need the older saints to be the priests to help them to process their offering. However, if the older saints process the offering presented by a young saint, he may be offended. He may be troubled by their wringing off the head of his offering and removing its crop and feathers. In a meeting a young brother may testify of the Lord's gentleness, saying that He is always gentle. Later, an experienced brother may cite the cases of the Lord's cleansing the temple and His rebuking the Pharisees and point out that sometimes the Lord Jesus is not gentle. When the young brother hears this, he may feel that the experienced brother has wrung off the head of his offering, an offering which he had presented whole and unprocessed.

I would ask those who have been in the church life for many years to recall their experience of offering Christ in the church meetings. Has not much of what you have offered in prayer and testimony been processed by the priests? Perhaps the greater part of your offerings have been "torn." At times you might have said, "I will never offer something in that way again." Eventually, you became not only an offerer but also a priest helping to process the offerings of other saints.

The burnt offerings in Leviticus 1 do not signify Christ's size in Himself. Not even a bull is an adequate type of the actual size of Christ. No one, including Paul, is able to realize Christ in His full size. Therefore, what we offer of Christ as the burnt offering is only what we have apprehended, realized, and appreciated of Christ.

In our preaching and teaching we may present Christ in a natural way. For instance, someone in a Christian meeting may preach Christ, but this preaching may be almost entirely

natural, for the one preaching presents Christ according to his natural understanding. The Christ thus presented is not Christ as He actually is but Christ as understood by the one presenting Him.

In the early years of my ministry, my presentation of Christ was natural to a great degree. At that time I did not know Christ as I know Him today. Now, by the Lord's mercy, the presentation of Christ in my teaching and preaching is no longer very much in a natural way.

My point here is that the way we offer Christ as the burnt offering is according to our realization, apprehension, appreciation, and experience of Christ. As our realization, apprehension, appreciation, and experience of Christ improve, our way of offering Christ will also improve. Eventually, anything natural, especially any natural concepts, in our way of offering Christ will be dealt with. If we are still offering Christ as two birds, we will need the experienced saints to process our offering. But after we become experienced and matured, we will no longer need this kind of help from the serving priests. May we all enter into the depths of Christ's being and experience Him in a deep, fine, and detailed way!

If we offer Christ as a bull or a lamb and if we slaughter this burnt offering, skin it, cut it into pieces, and wash its inwards and its legs, this will indicate that we appreciate Christ and experience Him not merely as a whole but in a detailed way. Then what is burned on the altar will be accepted by God as a sweet incense. This is the kind of burnt offering that satisfies God.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE SIX

THE BURNT OFFERING
CHRIST FOR GOD'S SATISFACTION

(4)

Scripture Reading: Lev. 1:5-17; 6:10-11; 7:8

The most crucial point for us to interpret and understand concerning the burnt offering is the difference in the way the burnt offering is offered. For years, Bible teachers have stressed the difference in the size of the offering:

the bull—the largest size; the lamb or goat—the second largest size; and a pair of birds—the smallest size. It is easy for us to see the difference in size, but it is not easy for us to see the difference in the way to offer, although this matter is clearly recorded in Leviticus 1. Even if we see the difference in the way to offer the burnt offering, it may still be difficult for us to realize the significance of this difference.

In order to understand the burnt offering, we need to realize that whenever we present a burnt offering we review our experience in our daily life. Because the burnt offering, subjectively speaking, is altogether related to our daily life, to our daily walk, the presentation of the burnt offering is a demonstration, a display, of our daily experience. If we daily and hourly live a life of experiencing Christ, we shall have Christ as a burnt offering to offer to God. However, if we do not experience Christ in our daily walk, we shall not have Him as a burnt offering. Then we shall be able to offer Christ mainly as the trespass offering. The point here is that we cannot offer Christ as a burnt offering if we do not live Christ and experience Christ in our daily walk.

Let us consider the experience of three brothers. The

first experiences Christ as a bull, the second experiences Christ as a lamb or a goat, and the third experiences Christ as a pair of birds.

The brother who experiences Christ as a bull lives Christ at every time, in everything, and with everyone. In his living of Christ, he first experiences Christ's crucifixion; he experiences Christ's being slaughtered on the cross. This is the real experience of Christ's death, the real experience of being conformed to Christ's death (Phil. 3:10). This brother experiences Christ's death in his relationship to his parents, wife, and children. In his daily life there truly is the conformity to the death of Christ.

As this brother experiences Christ's death in such a way, he will also experience Christ's being stripped of His outward beauty. In the four Gospels we see that while our Lord was living on earth, He had the experience of being stripped of His outward beauty. This means that He was stripped of the outward expression of His human virtues, a matter that is closely related to His death. Therefore, as the brother experiences being conformed to Christ's death, he spontaneously experiences Christ's being stripped of His outward beauty. This experience is actually equal to being the object of an evil report (2 Cor. 6:8). The Lord Jesus had many evil reports spread about Him, and these evil reports stripped Him of the outward appearance of His human virtues.

Moreover, as the brother is conformed to the death of Christ, he will also be cut into pieces. This means that he will have the experiences of Christ's being cut into pieces. Such an experience may be contrary to our expectations. We may think that the more we love the Lord and fear God, the more blessings we will have. Consider the situation with John the Baptist, the forerunner of the Lord Jesus. Instead of receiving blessings, John was imprisoned and beheaded. Consider further the situation with the Lord Jesus Himself. How much blessing did He receive? Was He not cut into pieces? The Gospels reveal that, as far as His humanity was concerned, the Lord Jesus was cut into pieces in every way. Not one aspect of His human life was left whole; on the

contrary, every part of His human life was cut into pieces. Therefore, the Lord Jesus is the unique example of one who was cut into pieces in every way.

Being cut into pieces will also be the experience of those who follow the Lord Jesus today. This is why Paul says, "To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death" (Phil. 3:10). Living a life of being conformed to the death of Christ requires the power of His resurrection, because as we experience being conformed to His death, we shall be cut into pieces. Our whole being and our entire life will be cut into pieces. The brother who experiences Christ as a bull experiences this cutting.

While the brother is living a life of being conformed to the death of Christ and of being cut into pieces, he will realize that he surely needs wisdom. A foolish person cannot live a life which is the experience of the life of Christ. Living such a life requires the highest wisdom. Human wisdom is not adequate; it does not avail. This kind of living requires the very wisdom with which Christ lived when He was on earth. The four Gospels reveal that the Lord Jesus is the wisest person who ever lived. Everything He did was right and was done at exactly the right time. He never spoke a wasted word, and He never did anything in a vain, unwise, or meaningless way. He was One who lived a life altogether in wisdom.

This wisdom is typified by the head of the bull used for the burnt offering. The brother whose living is an experience of Christ's life will experience Christ's head; that is, he will experience Christ's wisdom. Under God's sovereignty, this brother's family, including his parents, wife, and children, may be difficult to deal with. Since he lives in such an environment, he realizes that he needs Christ's wisdom. In his relationship with the members of his family, he spontaneously experiences the head, the wisdom, of Christ. The wisdom by which Christ lived in relation to His family thus becomes this brother's experience in his daily life.

The brother who offers Christ as a bull will also experience

the washing of the legs and the inward parts of the burnt offering. This means that the continual washing of the Holy Spirit as the water will keep him from defilement both outwardly and inwardly. As he is living a life of being conformed to the death of Christ, he will experience the Holy Spirit's keeping, preserving, and protecting him from defilement. The washing of the Holy Spirit will keep him from defilement outwardly, and this washing will also annul the defiling factor of anything that may get into him from the outside.

When this brother comes to the church meeting to offer Christ, he will offer Christ not merely as the trespass offering but also as the burnt offering. As the brother presents his burnt offering, he will slaughter it, skin it, cut it into pieces, and wash its legs and its inwards. His slaughtering of the burnt offering will be a review of his experience of Christ's death. His skinning of the offering and cutting it into pieces will be a demonstration, a display, of his experience in his own daily life of Christ's sufferings. His washing of the offering will likewise be a review of his experience of the washing of the Holy Spirit outwardly and inwardly, that is, his experience of the washing that Christ experienced when He was on earth. Therefore, the way the brother presents the burnt offering will be a display of his experience; it will be a review of his daily experience. Without the daily experience there could not be such a review, for there would be nothing to display or demonstrate. Everything that this brother does in offering the burnt offering is a review, a display, and a demonstration of his daily experiences of Christ. However, he does not offer his experiences to God; he offers the Christ whom he has experienced.

Leviticus 1:4 says that the offering from the herd would be accepted for the offerer "to make propitiation for him." Verse 5 goes on to say that after the offerer had slaughtered the offering, the priests were to "bring the blood and dash the blood all around on the altar which is at the entrance of the tent of meeting." This sprinkling of the blood was for propitiation, which is needed by every offerer. Because we are still lacking in the sight of God, we all need

propitiation. Hence, the first thing the burnt offering does for the offerer is to make propitiation for him so that God may be pleased and happy with the offerer.

A brother who offers Christ as a lamb or a goat is not as experienced as the brother who offers Christ as a bull, but his offering is still very good. His slaughtering of the offering indicates that he also has experienced Christ's crucifixion. However, with his offering there is no skinning. Since skinning signifies stripping off the outward expression of the human virtues, the lack of the skinning of the offering indicates that this brother has not experienced Christ's being stripped of His outward beauty, stripped of the outward expression of His human virtues. Regarding this matter, the brother does not have anything to review or to demonstrate when he offers his burnt offering. Nevertheless, this brother's offering is cut into pieces, signifying that to some extent he has had the experience of being cut into pieces. Furthermore, he has had some experience of Christ's head, of Christ's wisdom. His offering of Christ, therefore, is a review, a display, and a demonstration of his daily experiences of Christ.

Let us now consider the situation with a brother whose offering of Christ as the burnt offering is typified by turtledoves or young pigeons. Such a brother may have been saved only recently. He is very zealous, and he comes to all the church meetings. However, in his daily life there is no appreciation of the fact that on his behalf Christ lived a life which was absolutely for God. Eventually he learns something of Christ as the One who lived such a life, and he begins to appreciate Christ in this respect. Since he now has some appreciation of Christ as the One who lived a life which was absolutely for God, he brings an offering to the meetings, but his offering is a pair of birds. The serving priests then wring off the head, remove the crop and the feathers, and tear the offering by its wings. This indicates that when this brother comes to offer Christ as his burnt offering, he has nothing to review or to demonstrate.

At the Lord's table meeting, we rarely hear one pray in

such a way as to offer Christ as the burnt offering with a rich review, display, and demonstration of his daily experiences of Christ. The reason for this shortage is that not many among us have a rich experience of Christ in His crucifixion, in His being stripped, and in His being cut into pieces. Since our experience of Christ is not adequate, we do not have much to review, display, and demonstrate. Rather, often much of the praise at the Lord's table consists of the prayers of zealous young ones offering Christ as a pair of birds without any review of the slaughtering, skinning, and being cut into pieces.

Those who offer the burnt offering in the church meetings do not offer themselves or their experience. Paul, for example, offered neither himself nor his experiences of the burnt offering; he offered the Christ whom he had experienced. When we offer the burnt offering, we should not offer to God ourselves or our experiences. Instead, we should offer Christ to God as our burnt offering, yet this offering should not merely be Christ but should be the Christ whom we have experienced. We cannot offer to God for a burnt offering a Christ whom we have not experienced. On the one hand, we should not offer ourselves and our experiences; on the other hand, we should not merely offer Christ. We need to offer to God as a burnt offering the Christ whom we have experienced in our daily life.

We have pointed out that the slaughtering, the skinning, the cutting into pieces, and the washing all denote the offerer's experience of what Christ suffered and passed through in His life on earth and in His death on the cross. When the offerer presents Christ as his burnt offering, he reviews his experience. What he reviews will match what he has experienced of Christ. He has experienced Christ to a certain degree, and his review will equal that degree. The review, however, is not itself the offering. Rather, the offerer's review of his experience will determine the size of his offering, and it will also determine the way he offers it.

The offering of the burnt offering requires that a certain step be taken by each of two parties. The first step is taken

by the offerer, and the second step is taken by the priest. The offerer always takes the first step to bring the offering to the tent of meeting and, in the case of the offerings from the herd and from the flock, to do what is required to prepare the offering to be offered. However, just as the offerer does not have the right to sprinkle the blood, so he does not have the right to actually offer the offering. This is the service of the offering priest, who places the offering on the fire to be burned.

Now that we have covered the crucial matter of the different ways of offering the burnt offering, we may proceed to consider some other aspects of the burnt offering.

VI. THE WATER, THE FIRE, THE BURNING, AND THE ASHES

A. The Water

The water (Lev. 1:9, 13) signifies the Spirit of life (John 7:38-39). While the Lord Jesus was living His human life on earth, this Spirit of life, the Holy Spirit, continually kept away from Him all defiling factors. This is the reason the Lord Jesus was never defiled or contaminated by anything He contacted. The Holy Spirit as the living water within Him kept Him clean.

According to Leviticus 1:9 and 13, the offerer was to wash the inwards and the legs of his offering with water. This certainly does not signify that Christ needs to be washed by those who offer Him as the burnt offering. The slaughtering of the offering by the offerer is a review of the offerer's experience in his daily life of Christ's crucifixion. The principle is the same with the washing of the burnt offering. The washing is a review of the offerer's experience of Christ's life, a life in which He was continually washed by the indwelling Holy Spirit from any contaminating factor. The Holy Spirit, here signified by the water, preserved Christ from being contaminated by outward matters He contacted while He was on earth. The offerer has experienced this in his daily life, and he therefore reviews and demonstrates this as he offers Christ as his burnt offering.

B. The Fire

1. Signifying the Holy God

A number of verses in Leviticus 1 speak of the fire (vv. 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 17). The fire here signifies the holy God. This is proved by Hebrews 12:29, which says, "Our God is also a consuming fire."

2. With the Burnt Offering, the Fire Being the Accepting Fire for God's Satisfaction

With the burnt offering the fire is the accepting fire for God's satisfaction (vv. 9, 13, 17). The fire in Leviticus 1 may be considered God's mouth with which He receives and accepts what we offer to Him.

3. With the Sin Offering, the Fire Being the Judging Fire for Man's Redemption

With the sin offering the fire is the judging fire for man's redemption. The burning of the sin offering is a sign of God's judgment. This is mentioned in 4:12.

Apparently the burnt offering fire and the sin offering fire are two different fires. Actually there is just one fire with two different functions—the function of accepting and the function of judging.

4. The Burnt Offering Fire Shall Never Go Out

According to 6:12 and 13, the burnt offering fire was never to go out. This is in contrast to the sin offering fire, which did not burn continually.

C. The Burning

In Leviticus 1, verses 9, 13, 15, and 17 speak of the burning, that is, of the offering up of the burnt offering in smoke.

1. As the Burning of the Sweet Incense

The burning of the burnt offering is as the burning of sweet incense (Exo. 30:7-8; Lev. 16:12-13). The Hebrew for "offer up in smoke," a special term used for the burning on the altar of burnt offering, implies the matter of incense.

Thus, the burning on the altar of burnt offering is as the burning of sweet incense. This burning produced a sweet savor ascending to God for His pleasure and satisfaction.

2. Different from the Burning of the Sin Offering and the Trespass Offering

The burning of the burnt offering is different from the burning of the sin offering and the trespass offering (4:12).

3. The Burning of the Burnt Offering Shall Not Cease All Night until the Morning

Leviticus 6:9 says, "Command Aaron and his sons and say, This is the law of the burnt offering: the burnt offering itself shall be upon the hearth on the altar all night until the morning, and the fire of the altar shall be kept burning on it." Here we see that the burning of the burnt offering was never to cease. To insure that this fire burned continually, the priests were required to keep adding wood to the fire.

D. The Ashes

1. A Sign of God's Acceptance of the Offering—Turning to Ashes

The ashes are a sign of God's acceptance of the burnt offering. For God to accept the burnt offering is for Him to turn it to ashes. Concerning this, Psalm 20:3 says, "Remember all thy offerings, and accept thy burnt sacrifice." The Hebrew word translated "accept" here actually means "turn to ashes." When our offering has been turned to ashes, this is a strong sign that it has been accepted by God.

Ordinarily people do not regard ashes as something pleasant. However, to us who offer the burnt offering, ashes are indeed pleasant, even precious, because they are a sign which gives us the assurance that our burnt offering has been accepted by God.

The Hebrew word rendered "accept" can be translated not only as "turn to ashes" but also as "accept as fat," "make fat," and "be as fat." For God to accept our burnt offering

means not only that He turns it to ashes but also that He accepts it as fat, something that is sweet and pleasing to Him. In our eyes the offering has been turned to ashes, but in God's eyes it is fat; it pleases and satisfies Him as fat.

For the burnt offering to be turned to ashes means that God is satisfied and that we therefore may be at peace. If we understand this, we shall realize that in our Christian life there should be a lot of ashes.

2. Put to the East Side of the Altar

The ashes were not thrown away. Instead, they were put to the east side of the altar (1:16; 6:10), the place of the ashes. The east side is the side of the sunrise. Putting the ashes to the east side of the altar is actually an allusion to resurrection.

3. Carried Forth to a Clean Place outside the Camp

Leviticus 6:11, speaking of the priest says, "Then he shall take off his garments and put on other garments, and carry the ashes outside the camp to a clean place." Once again we see that the ashes were not thrown away. This indicates that we should treasure the result of our offering of the burnt offering to God. We should never throw it away.

VII. THE SKIN

The entire burnt offering was burned with the exception of the skin.

A. A Portion to the Offering Priest

The skin of the burnt offering was kept as a portion to the offering priest. "The priest who offers any man's burnt offering, that priest shall have for himself the hide of the burnt offering which he has offered" (7:8).

B. Signifying Christ's Outward Expression of Beauty Ascribed to the Serving One

The skin of the burnt offering signifies Christ's outward

expression of beauty ascribed to the serving one. The more we offer Christ as a bull, the more will Christ's outward expression of beauty be ours. Then we shall be clothed with the outward expression of Christ's human virtues.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE SEVEN

THE BURNT OFFERING
CHRIST FOR GOD'S SATISFACTION

(5)

EXPERIENCING CHRIST IN HIS EXPERIENCES AND OFFERING THE CHRIST WE HAVE EXPERIENCED, AND OFFERING HIM TO GOD AS OUR BURNT OFFERING ACCORDING TO OUR EXPERIENCES OF HIM

(1)

Much of what we have covered in the foregoing messages on the burnt offering has been doctrinal. Therefore, I have the burden that we would see this offering in an experiential way. In this message we shall consider Christ in His experiences as the burnt offering to God. In the following message we shall consider our experiences of Christ in His experiences.

The second part of the title of this message is unusual, even peculiar: "Experiencing Christ in His Experiences and Offering the Christ We Have Experienced, and Offering Him to God as Our Burnt Offering according to Our Experiences of Him." This part of the title has three points. The first point is experiencing Christ in His experiences; the second is offering the Christ we have experienced; and the third is offering Christ to God as our burnt offering according to our experiences of Him. Here we would emphasize the fact that we cannot offer to God a Christ whom we have not experienced. If you try to offer as a burnt offering to God a Christ whom you have not experienced, you will discover that this is impossible. What we offer of Christ as the burnt offering must be according to our experience. If we have experienced Christ as a bull, then we can offer Him as a bull. But if we have experienced

Christ only as two pigeons, we cannot offer Him as a bull, for we have not experienced Him as a bull. We cannot offer as a burnt offering to God a Christ who is greater than the Christ we have experienced. We have to offer Christ to God, but we must offer Christ according to our experiences of Him.

I. CHRIST IN HIS EXPERIENCES AS THE BURNT OFFERING TO GOD

Let us now consider Christ in His experiences as the burnt offering to God, covering a number of verses that reveal different aspects of Christ's experiences. Christ experienced many things in order to be a burnt offering for God.

A. Being Brought to the Slaughter

Isaiah 53:7 prophesied that Christ would be brought to the slaughter. "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter." The fulfillment of this prophecy can be seen in Matthew 27:31, where we are told that the soldiers "led Him away to crucify Him."

Another New Testament verse which refers to Christ's being brought to the slaughter is Philippians 2:8, a verse which tells us that Christ became obedient "even unto death, and that the death of a cross." Christ was obedient as He was brought outside the city to the place of the slaughter—Golgotha.

B. Being Slaughtered

After Pilate had judged the Lord Jesus and had found Him innocent, he wanted to release Him. But the people were shouting, "Crucify, crucify him!" (Luke 23:21), and their voices prevailed. Pilate, being fearful and wanting to please the crowd, sentenced the Lord Jesus to death. The Lord was then brought to the place of slaughter and was slaughtered on the cross. In Acts 2:23 Peter refers to this. "This man…you, through the hand of lawless men, nailed to the cross and killed." For them to kill the Lord Jesus means that they slaughtered Him.

Many years ago I read an article about how the Jews slew the lamb on the day of Passover. According to this article, a lamb was put on two wooden stakes that were arranged in the shape of a cross, with two feet attached to one stake and two feet attached to the cross bar. The lamb was then killed. This indicates that the Lord's crucifixion may have been a fulfillment of the way, in type, the Passover lamb was slaughtered.

C. Being Skinned (Stripped)

Christ was also skinned, stripped of the outward appearance of His human virtues. One example of this skinning is in Matthew 11:19. "The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold, a gluttonous man and a wine drinker." Such a word spoken about the Lord Jesus stripped Him of the appearance of His virtues. He was not a gluttonous man or a wine drinker; on the contrary, He was a proper man with proper conduct.

Other examples of skinning, of stripping, are found in Mark 3:22 and John 8:48. In Mark 3:22 the scribes said of the Lord Jesus, "He has Beelzebub, and by the ruler of the demons He casts out the demons." Beelzebub means "the lord of the flies" and refers to Satan, the Devil. Flies are living, but they are unclean. The scribes were saying that the Lord Jesus was unclean and that He cast out demons by the lord, the king, of the flies. What slander! In John 8:48 the Jews said to Him, "Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?" A Samaritan is a person of mixed blood. Thus, the Lord Jesus was accused of being a person of mixture and of having a demon. This also was a kind of stripping.

In Matthew 26:65 the high priest said of the Lord Jesus, "He has blasphemed!... Behold, now you have heard the blasphemy." This too was a stripping of the outward expression of the Lord's human virtues.

Finally, when the Lord Jesus was about to be slaughtered, He was stripped of His clothing (Matt. 27:28). How shameful this was! Furthermore, when the soldiers had crucified Him, "they divided His garments among them, casting

lots" (v. 35). This had been prophesied in Psalm 22:18, and it was fulfilled in the Lord's presence while He was on the cross. What a stripping the Lord Jesus experienced!

D. Being Cut into Pieces

When and where was the Lord Jesus cut into pieces? I believe that this took place when people spoke cruel things to Him as He hung on the cross. Consider Mark 15:29-32. "Those passing by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying, Aha! You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross! Likewise also the chief priests with the scribes, mocking with one another, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save! Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe! And those who were crucified with Him reproached Him." Those passing by twisted the Lord's words concerning the temple and told Him to save Himself. Was this not a cutting? Surely it was. The Lord Jesus also experienced the cutting when the chief priests and the scribes mocked Him, telling Him to come down from the cross that they might see and believe. Even those who were crucified with Him reproached Him and thereby participated in the cutting.

This cutting was prophesied in Psalm 22:16 and 17. "For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me.…they look and stare upon me." This prophecy was fulfilled during the first three of the six hours the Lord Jesus was on the cross. Before He was judged by God on our behalf during the second three hours, He was cut into pieces by men during the first three hours. Therefore, Christ was slaughtered, skinned, and cut into pieces.

E. His Experience in Wisdom (Head)

Christ's experience in wisdom is signified by the head of the burnt offering. As a child the Lord Jesus grew and was filled with wisdom (Luke 2:40), and He kept advancing in wisdom (v. 52).

In the course of His ministry, the Lord Jesus spoke many maxims and words of wisdom. For example, in Mark 9:40 He said, "He who is not against us is for us," and in Matthew 12:30 He said, "He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who is not gathering with Me is scattering." These words are not contradictory. The maxim in Mark 9:40 speaks of outward conformity in practice and is in regard to people who are not against Him; that in Matthew 12:30 speaks of the inward unity of purpose and is in regard to people who are against Him. To maintain the inward unity we need to practice the word in Matthew, and for the outward conformity we should practice the word in Mark, tolerating believers who differ from us.

The occasion for the maxim in Mark 9:40 was the case of someone not following the Lord and the disciples, yet casting out demons in His name. The disciples forbade him because he was not following them (v. 38). When the Lord Jesus heard of this, He said, "Do not forbid him, for there is no one who shall do a work of power in My name and be able soon to speak evil of Me. For he who is not against us is for us" (vv. 39-40). There was no need for the disciples to forbid that person from casting out demons in the Lord's name. Regarding outward conformity in practice, he who is not against the Lord and His disciples is for them.

The occasion for the maxim in Matthew 12:30 was different. The Pharisees, who were opposing the Lord Jesus, had accused Him of casting out demons "by Beelzebub, ruler of the demons" (v. 24). Therefore, regarding the Pharisees, the ones against Him, He said, "He who is not with Me is against Me." They were not with Him but were with Satan. Therefore, the Lord's word here concerns the inward unity of purpose.

How wise were the Lord's words! In all of human history no philosopher has spoken such words of wisdom. The Lord's words are simple, but His thoughts are marvelous. Only He has the wisdom to speak such words.

The Lord Jesus spoke another wise word when He was questioned by the chief priests and elders of the people about His authority (Matt. 21:23). He answered their question with

a question of His own. "I also will question you about one thing, which if you tell Me, I also will tell you by what authority I do these things: The baptism of John, whence was it? From heaven or from men?" (vv. 24-25a). The opposers reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, From heaven, he will say to us, Why then did you not believe him? But if we say, From men, we fear the crowd, for all hold John as a prophet" (vv. 25b-26). Therefore, they decided to lie and say, "We do not know" (v. 27a). To this the Lord Jesus replied, "Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things" (v. 27b). The Lord's use of the word "neither" indicates that He knew that they were lying. The Lord seemed to be saying, "It is not true that you do not know. You know, but you are not willing to tell Me. Now neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things. You speak a lie, but I speak the truth." What wisdom the Lord Jesus has!

The Lord displayed His wisdom once again in Matthew 22:15-22. The Pharisees sent to Him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that you are true, and that you teach the way of God in truth and do not care for anyone, for you do not regard the person of men. Tell us therefore, What do you think? Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not?" (vv. 16-17). This ensnaring question put the Lord Jesus into a dilemma. Giving tribute to Caesar was opposed by all the Jews. If He had said that it was lawful to do this, He would have offended the Jews, whose leaders were the Pharisees. If He had said that it was not lawful, this would have given the Herodians, who stood with the Roman government, strong ground to accuse Him. In His wisdom, He said to them, "Show Me the tribute money" (v. 19a), and they showed Him a denarius. The Lord Jesus did not show the Roman coin but asked them to show one to Him. Since they possessed one of the Roman coins, they were caught. Then He went on to ask, "Whose is this image and inscription?" (v. 20). When they answered, "Caesar's," He said to them, "Pay then what is Caesar's to Caesar, and what is God's to God" (v. 21). When they heard this wise word, they marveled and went away.

We find yet another example of Christ's wisdom in Matthew 22:34-40. A lawyer, tempting Him, asked, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" (v. 36). The Lord Jesus answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (vv. 37-40). The Lord was wise, and His answer was brief, simple, to the point, and full of wisdom.

F. His Experience in God's Delight (Fat)

The Lord Jesus also had much experience in God's delight, as signified by the fat. He was a delight to God. When the Lord Jesus went up from the water of baptism, a voice out of the heavens said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I delight" (Matt. 3:17). The same words were spoken when He was with three of His disciples on a high mountain (17:5). Furthermore, Isaiah 42:1 says, "Behold my servant... mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth." This prophecy is fulfilled in Matthew 12. "Behold, My Servant whom I have chosen, My Beloved in whom My soul delights" (v. 18). Christ is God's choice and His delight.

In John 6:38 the Lord Jesus said, "I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me." How much the Sender, that is, the Father, was pleased by such a One, the One who came to do not His own will but the will of Him who sent Him.

"My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me.…He who seeks the glory of Him who sent Him, this One is true, and unrighteousness is not in Him" (John 7:16, 18). This indicates that when the Lord Jesus was on earth, He was absolutely for God. Because there was nothing in Him that was not for God, there was no unrighteousness with Him. It is unrighteous not to be for God, because God created us for Himself. Righteously speaking, we should be for Him. If we are not for God, we are not righteous. In the Lord Jesus

there was no unrighteousness, for He was absolutely for God. This was His experience of being a delight to God.

G. His Experience in His Inwards

We come now to Christ's experience in His inwards. As a man, Christ had the human inwards with their various functions. Christ's experience in His inwards is His experience in His mind, emotion, will, soul, heart, and spirit, including His love, desire, feeling, thought, decision, motive, and intention.

A number of verses reveal Christ's experience in His inwards. According to Luke 2:49, when the Lord Jesus was twelve He said, "Did you not know that I must be in the things of My Father?" This can also be translated, "I must mind My Father's business." The Lord's mind was on His Father's business. His mind was occupied with the Father's business. Here we have the function of the Lord's mind, and we see how much He was inwardly for the Father.

John 2:17 speaks of the Lord's zeal. "The zeal of Your house shall devour Me." Zeal is a matter of the emotion. The zeal within the Lord Jesus was on fire, was burning, for God's temple. Here we see the exercise of the Lord's emotion.

In Matthew 26:39 the Lord Jesus prayed, "Yet not as I will, but as You will." This was His prayer in Gethsemane when He was about to be arrested and brought to the slaughter. He took the Father's will, for His own will was subdued to the Father's will. This was a matter of the function of the Lord's will.

Isaiah 53:12 prophesied concerning the Lord Jesus in His death on the cross: "He hath poured out his soul unto death." The Lord Jesus lost His soul, voluntarily pouring out His soul unto death. This, of course, was a function of His soul.

Concerning Christ, Isaiah 42:4 says, "He shall not fail [be disheartened] nor be discouraged." This speaks about the condition of the Lord's heart. He was never disheartened; He was never discouraged in heart.

Mark 2:8 says, "Jesus, knowing in His spirit." The Lord Jesus used His spirit, and He knew things in His spirit. In whatever situation He was, He knew that situation by exercising His spirit. He used His spirit for God and for making Himself a burnt offering.

H. His Experience in His Walk (Legs)

The New Testament also speaks of the Lord's walk, signified by the legs of the burnt offering. Luke 24:19 says, "Jesus…powerful in work and word before God and all the people." This means that in action and in speaking He was perfect before God and all the people.

In John 8:46 the Lord Jesus asked, "Which one of you convicts Me of sin?" As He stood in the presence of the opposers, He was perfect. There was no fault in Him.

I. Kept by the Holy Spirit from Defilement

We have pointed out that in Leviticus 1 the legs and the inwards of the burnt offering were to be washed. This washing signifies Christ's experience of being kept by the Holy Spirit from defilement. For instance, the Holy Spirit kept Him from defilement when He was tempted by the Devil. "Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan, and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by the Devil" (Luke 4:1). The Holy Spirit within the Lord Jesus kept Him from being defiled by that temptation.

In speaking of Christ as the High Priest, Hebrews 7:26 uses the word "undefiled." Although the Lord Jesus had to contact many unclean things while He was on earth, He was never defiled. The Holy Spirit within Him kept Him from being defiled in any way.

If we put together all the aspects of Christ's experience covered in this message—all the experiences from being brought to the slaughter to being washed—we shall see that He is the perfect and complete burnt offering. What we have here is not a doctrine but a portrait of Christ in His experiences.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE EIGHT

THE BURNT OFFERING
CHRIST FOR GOD'S SATISFACTION

(6)

EXPERIENCING CHRIST IN HIS EXPERIENCES AND OFFERING THE CHRIST WE HAVE EXPERIENCED, AND OFFERING HIM TO GOD AS OUR BURNT OFFERING ACCORDING TO OUR EXPERIENCES OF HIM

(2)

In the previous message we considered the different aspects of Christ in His experiences as the burnt offering to God. In this message and in the next, we shall consider our experiences of Christ in His experiences.

II. OUR EXPERIENCES OF CHRIST IN HIS EXPERIENCES

The burnt offering is not a light matter but a very weighty matter. The Hebrew word translated "burnt offering" literally means "that which goes up" and thus denotes something that ascends to God. What is there on this earth that can ascend to God? The only thing that can ascend to God from earth is the life lived by Christ, for He is the unique person to live a life absolutely for God.

In ourselves we cannot live a life that is absolutely for God. Recently, I have had the deep sensation that even our holiness and our confession of sins are not pure but are dirty. We human beings are nothing but dirt. Whatever comes out of our being is dirty, and anything we touch becomes dirty. For this reason, according to the typology in the Bible, even when we come to God to do the most holy thing we still need the sin offering and the trespass offering. Whenever I speak

the holy word, I am deeply conscious of my need of the sin offering and the trespass offering, and I trust in the Lord's washing and cleansing.

The burnt offering indicates a life absolutely for God. Such a life is absolutely out of a pure source, with no element of the fall, no defect, and no sin. This kind of life is pure and holy. In ourselves we cannot live this kind of life. We have fallen to such an extent that we have become the world, which is altogether dirty. Actually, the world is we ourselves, and we are the world. Every part of our substance, our essence, our fiber, our element, is dirty. We could never be a burnt offering to God. Therefore, we must take Christ as our burnt offering.

As far as our situation is concerned, the burnt offering is for propitiation (Lev. 1:4). We need propitiation through the blood of Christ as the burnt offering.

To take Christ as our sin offering and trespass offering, there is no need for us to experience what Christ experienced. However, to take Christ as our burnt offering, we need to experience what Christ experienced. Offering Christ as our burnt offering is not effective unless we have had some experience of His experience as the burnt offering. We can offer Christ as the burnt offering only to the extent to which we have experienced Him as this offering.

A person does not need any experience of Christ in order to offer Him to God as the sin offering and as the trespass offering. A sinner may hear the gospel, repent, and say, "O God, have mercy on me! I take the Lord Jesus as my Savior." A sinner who prays like this will be forgiven immediately, for he is not required to experience Christ. The repentant sinner simply takes Christ as his sin offering and trespass offering. The situation is absolutely different with the burnt offering. We can take Christ as the burnt offering only to the extent to which we have experienced Him in His experience.

It took me many years to realize that our offering of Christ as the burnt offering cannot exceed our experience of Him as this offering. Concerning this matter, the book of Leviticus had not yet been opened to me, although it had been opened in

the sense that I had learned the Brethren teachings about the offerings. Eventually I was enlightened to see that the chapters in Leviticus dealing with the offerings do not reveal to us what Christ is in totality as the burnt offering but instead reveal how to offer Christ as the burnt offering. Our offering of Him is according to our experience of Him. If we have not experienced anything of Christ in His experience as the burnt offering, we cannot offer Him to God as the burnt offering.

Christ's being the burnt offering altogether refers to His being absolute toward God. In all His experiences as the burnt offering to God, Christ was a real man who was absolutely for God. This was the reason He could be the replacement of all the offerings. His being the burnt offering qualified Him to be the sin offering. If Christ had not been the burnt offering, He would not have had the qualification to be the sin offering.

As the burnt offering, Christ was slaughtered, stripped, and cut into pieces. Why was He willing to be slaughtered? Because He was absolute toward God. Why was He willing to be stripped and cut into pieces? Because He was absolute toward God. The reason we are not willing to be slaughtered, stripped, and cut into pieces is that we are not absolute toward God.

Why do Christians still have problems in their family life? Why are there problems among the brothers and sisters in the church and among the elders and the co-workers? Since we all have been saved and love the Lord Jesus, there should not be any problems. It is natural for there to be problems among the unsaved people in society, but why are there problems among the saints in the church? The reason we have problems in our married life and in the church life is that we are not absolutely for God.

Even in doing things for God, a married couple may argue and fight. A brother and his wife both love the Lord, but they may still quarrel, even about loving the Lord. They may also argue about offering money to God. One party may want to give an amount of money for a certain purpose, but the other party may want that money to be given for another

purpose. Sometimes a brother and his wife may disagree over what hymn to use in praising the Lord in a home meeting. Because of this disagreement, the meeting is damaged. This quarreling is caused by the lack of being absolutely for God.

In Acts 15 we see that there was a problem between Barnabas and Paul (vv. 35-39). It was Barnabas who had brought Saul of Tarsus into the fellowship of the Body (Acts 9:26-28). It was also Barnabas who sought for Saul in Tarsus and brought him into the New Testament ministry (Acts 11:25-26). However, in Acts 15, after gaining the victory over the problem of circumcision, they separated from each other. We may give different reasons for this separation, but in the eyes of God the problem was due to one thing—not being absolute toward God.

Because Christ is altogether absolute for God and we are absolute for God only to a limited extent, we cannot experience Christ as our burnt offering to the uttermost. We may be absolute for God, but we are not utterly absolute for Him. Therefore, we can offer Christ to God as the burnt offering only in a limited way.

If we would offer Christ to God as the burnt offering, we need to experience Christ in His experiences, and then, according to our experiences of Christ, offer to God the Christ whom we have experienced. Suppose in our married life and in our church life we experience Christ in His being brought to the slaughter. If this is the situation, there will not be quarrels in our married life or problems in the church life. As long as we still quarrel with our spouse, we cannot offer Christ to God as the burnt offering in the church meetings because we have not experienced Christ in His experience of being slaughtered. If we do not experience Christ in His experiences as the burnt offering to God, all our talk about Christ as the burnt offering will be in vain. We will have no burnt offering to offer to God unless we experience Christ in His experience.

Let us now consider in detail our experience of Christ in His experiences as the burnt offering for God's satisfaction.

A. In His Being Brought to the Slaughter

If we experience Christ in His experiences as the burnt offering to God, we shall realize that we, like Christ, should be brought to the slaughter. We may apply this to the matter of married life. In a quarrel between husband and wife, if both, or even one of the two, would experience Christ in His experience of being brought to the slaughter, the quarrel would be swallowed up. The result will be the same concerning problems in the church if in the church life we experience Christ in His experience of being brought to the slaughter.

If we do not resist but allow others to bring us to the slaughter, we shall experience Christ in His death. In Philippians 3:10 Paul says, "To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death." To be brought to the slaughter is to take a step to be conformed to Christ's death. This is to have a life shaped in the pattern given to us by Christ when He did not resist but quietly went along as others brought Him to the slaughter. Christ was brought to the slaughter at Golgotha, but that was not the only time He was brought to the slaughter. Christ's entire life, especially the years of His ministry, was a life of being brought to the slaughter.

The Christian life should be a life of the burnt offering. This burnt offering, of course, refers not to ourselves but to Christ. The Christian life, therefore, is actually a life of Christ as the burnt offering. Paul lived such a life. This is why he could say, "Be imitators of me, as I also am of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1). Paul lived a life that was a repetition of the life of the burnt offering which Christ lived when He was on earth. This is a matter of experiencing Christ in His experiences as the burnt offering.

In Acts 21 we see that Paul experienced Christ in His experience of being brought to the slaughter. Paul had gone to Jerusalem to visit the church there. He met with James and all the elders, relating to them the things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. Then they said to Paul, "You observe, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews who have believed, and all are

zealous for the law; and they have been instructed concerning you that you are teaching all the Jews throughout the nations apostasy from Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children, nor to walk according to the customs" (vv. 20-21). The elders went on to propose that Paul go to the temple with four men who had made a vow, be purified with them, and pay their expenses so that all would know that Paul walked orderly, keeping the law (vv. 23-24). Paul took their word and went with the four men to the temple. However, the Lord would not tolerate the situation but, in His sovereignty, allowed a disturbance to take place which led to Paul's being arrested by the Romans. The Jews from Asia saw Paul in the temple and "threw all the crowd into confusion; and they laid their hands on him" (v. 27). The whole city was stirred up, and the people laid hold of Paul and "dragged him outside the temple" (v. 30). Those who seized Paul in this way "were seeking to kill him" (v. 31). Eventually, the commander drew near and "laid hold of him and ordered him to be bound with two chains" (v. 33) and, because of the uproar, "ordered that he be brought into the barracks" (v. 34). A multitude of people followed and cried out, "Away with him!" (v. 36). Here we see that Paul surely had the experience of being brought to the slaughter; he experienced what the Lord Jesus experienced.

Perhaps you are wondering how you can experience being brought to the slaughter. If you are willing to live a burnt-offering life, you may sometimes experience being brought to the slaughter by the brothers in the church. Also, a brother may be brought to the slaughter by his wife, and a sister, by her husband. Such things often happen in the Christian life. If you have never been brought to the slaughter, then you are not an imitator of Christ. If you live the kind of life that Christ lived, you cannot avoid being brought to the slaughter. You will be brought to the slaughter again and again.

If you do not experience Christ's experience of being brought to the slaughter, your burnt offering will only be two pigeons. However, the more you live Christ, the more

you will live a life of being brought to the slaughter. Christ lived such a life, and now He lives in you to repeat His life. The repetition of His life in you becomes your experience of Christ in His experience.

B. In His Being Slaughtered

Eventually, Christ was slaughtered; He was put to death. Today we may experience Christ in His experience of being slaughtered. Paul refers to this experience in 2 Corinthians 4:11, where he says, "We... are always being delivered unto death for Jesus' sake." To be delivered unto death is to be slaughtered. If we experience Christ in His being slaughtered, we shall have something of Christ to offer to God as a burnt offering.

In Philippians 3:10 Paul speaks of being conformed to Christ's death. Christ was crucified, and we today are being crucified. Our being crucified is a matter of being conformed, of conformity, to Christ's death. Day by day we are being killed. Thus, in a sense, a Christian is not living but dying. I once read a book entitled *Dying to Live.* Every day we are dying to live; we are being put to death so that we may live.

We need to apply to our daily situations Christ's experiences of being brought to the slaughter and of being slaughtered. If we receive mercy from God to experience Christ in His being brought to the slaughter and in His being slaughtered, we will not have problems in our family life or in our church life. The reason we still have problems with others is that we are not willing to experience Christ in His experiences.

C. In His Being Skinned

We may also experience Christ in His being skinned, that is, in His being stripped of the outward appearance of His human virtues. To skin an offering is to take away its covering. In the spiritual interpretation of the type, being skinned equals being defamed.

Examples of this skinning, this defaming, are found in John 8:48 and Mark 3:22. In John 8:48 the Jews said of the

Lord Jesus, "Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?" According to Mark 3:22, the scribes said of Him, "He has Beelzebub, and by the ruler of the demons He casts out the demons." On both occasions the Lord Jesus was defamed, stripped of the outward appearance of His human virtues.

A number of verses indicate that we may experience Christ in His being stripped. Acts 24:5 and 6 say, "We have found this man a pest and an agitator of insurrections...who also tried to profane the temple." Here we see that Paul was accused of being a pest, of being full of contagious germs. In fact, Paul was a good man who would not harm anyone. Paul was also accused of being an agitator of insurrections, of causing divisions wherever he went. Furthermore, he was accused of trying to profane the temple. What defamation he experienced!

In 2 Corinthians Paul indicates that evil reports were spread about him. Evil reports are a matter of defaming, of stripping one of the outward expression of his virtues.

In 2 Corinthians 12, the Corinthians, Paul's spiritual children begotten by him through the gospel, accused Paul of being crafty in money matters. They claimed that, with guile, he took advantage of them, using Titus as an agent to get money from them (vv. 16-18). Here we see that Paul was defamed even by his spiritual children.

"They reproach and persecute you, and say every evil thing against you, lying, for My sake" (Matt. 5:11). With these words the Lord Jesus predicted that His followers would be defamed and slandered and have lies told about them. This surely is a real skinning, a stripping away of our good reputation which causes us to be naked, to have nothing to cover us. If we live a burnt-offering life, we will not be able to avoid this. According to the New Testament, our destiny as followers of Christ is to suffer such a skinning, experiencing Christ in His being skinned.

Whenever others talk about you in a negative way, you are skinned. What will you say when you are skinned, when you are defamed? You should not say anything. If you say

something on your own behalf, this is a sign that you are not willing to experience Christ in His experience of being skinned.

D. In His Being Cut into Pieces

Today we may even experience Christ in His being cut into pieces. First Corinthians 4:13 reveals that Paul experienced this. "Being defamed…we have become as the offscouring of the world, as the scum of all things until now." "Offscouring" and "scum" are synonyms. Offscouring denotes what is thrown away in cleansing; hence, refuse, filth. Scum denotes that which is wiped off; hence, rubbish, refuse. To become the offscouring of the world and the scum of all things is to be cut into pieces.

Do you think that the more you follow the Lord Jesus, the more you will be respected and highly regarded by others? In a sense you may be respected, but in another sense you will be treated as offscouring and scum. This was Christ's experience. His disciples respected Him and held Him in high regard, but to the opposers, who cut Him into pieces, He was offscouring and scum. To experience Christ in His experiences as the burnt offering to God is to experience Him in His experience of being cut into pieces.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE NINE

THE BURNT OFFERING
CHRIST FOR GOD'S SATISFACTION

(7)

EXPERIENCING CHRIST IN HIS EXPERIENCES AND OFFERING THE CHRIST WE HAVE EXPERIENCED, AND OFFERING HIM TO GOD AS OUR BURNT OFFERING ACCORDING TO OUR EXPERIENCES OF HIM

(3)

In the foregoing message we saw that we may experience Christ in His experiences of being brought to the slaughter, of being slaughtered, of being skinned, and of being cut into pieces. In this message we shall consider further aspects of our experiences of Christ in His experiences as the burnt offering to God.

E. In His Wisdom

First Corinthians 1:30 tells us that Christ has become wisdom to us from God. In Leviticus 1 Christ's wisdom is typified by the head of the burnt offering. We need Christ's head; that is, we need His wisdom.

If we would take Christ as our wisdom, we must live Christ. The proper Christian life, a life of abiding in the Lord that we may enjoy His life, is a life of doing things not by ourselves but by Him. As long as we do things by ourselves, we cannot have the wisdom of Christ and He cannot be wisdom to us. For example, if you speak to your husband or wife and to your children in your self and by your self, Christ will not be wisdom to you in your speaking. If we would speak and do all

things by Christ, we need to pray, "Lord, live in me. I have been crucified, and it is no longer I who live. Lord, I don't want to do anything by myself—I want to do everything by You. Actually, Lord, I would let You live in me and do everything for me." When we let Christ live in us and do everything for us, He becomes our wisdom.

Our problem today is that we want to live a victorious and perfect life, yet we do not live and act by Christ. We have the heart to live by Christ, even to live Christ, but we are not accustomed to doing this. On the contrary, we are accustomed to living ourselves. We spontaneously live ourselves without trying to do so and without deliberately exercising any part of our being. However, in order to live Christ, we need to exercise our entire being.

Concerning the matter of living Christ, the question is not whether or not something is sinful but whether or not we are the ones who are living. We usually consider whether or not a certain thing is sinful, but God considers whether we are living by ourselves or by Christ. When we lose our temper, we do something sinful. However, even if our behavior does not seem to be sinful, if we live by ourselves and not by Christ, sin will issue forth. When we live ourselves, we eventually do something sinful, simply because we are the ones living. But if Christ lives in us, we shall be victorious, and He will become our wisdom.

If we live Christ in our married life, Christ will be not only our life but also our wisdom. Whenever we find it difficult to deal with our husband or wife, we are short of Christ as wisdom. If we do not live Christ, we shall have trouble in our married life. The way to avoid trouble with our husband or wife is to live Christ and thereby have Him as our wisdom.

Christ is very wise. As He lives in us, He repeats in us His life of wisdom. In this way we experience Christ in His wisdom and live a life with Christ as our wisdom.

Concerning our experiencing Christ in His wisdom, Paul says, "We speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the wisdom which has been hidden, which God predestined before the ages for our glory" (1 Cor. 2:7). God's wisdom is Christ

(1 Cor. 1:24), who is the hidden mystery (Col. 1:26-27), predestined, predesignated, and foreordained before the ages for our glory. Christ is the wisdom of God, and He is the wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom, and the One predestined by God before the ages for our glory. We may think that this glory is something only for the future. However, if we live Christ and He becomes our wisdom in our living, we shall experience a little of this glory even today.

F. In His Being a Delight to God

We may experience Christ also in His being a delight to God. The Lord Jesus was always a delight to God. On two occasions a voice from the heavens said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I delight" (Matt. 3:17; 17:5). If we today live a life of Christ as our burnt offering, we too shall be a delight to God.

Paul experienced Christ in this way. In Galatians 1:10 he says, "For am I now persuading men or God? Or do I seek to please men? If I were still pleasing men, I would not be a slave of Christ." Paul lived a life which was a repetition of Christ's life, pleasing God all the time. His life, therefore, was a delight to God.

We may think that Paul was extraordinary, that his living was incomparable, and that his standard is too high for us. Yet Paul told us to be imitators of him (1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1). Paul was the same as we are. He was a human being, he was part of the old creation, and he lived in the flesh. Whether we imitate Paul in being a delight to God depends on whether we live or Christ lives in us. If we are the ones living, we cannot be a delight to God. But if we let Christ live for us and if we live by Christ and even live Christ, our life will surely be a delight to God. Whenever our life is a delight to God, we shall have within us a deep sense regarding this. We shall know that we are living a life which is a repetition of the life of Christ and which is a delight to God.

I believe that all of us have had at least a limited experience of this and have had the deep sense that we are pleasing to God and pleasing also to ourselves. Quite often,

however, we are not pleasing to God and thus are not pleasing even to ourselves.

What kind of life is pleasing to God? The only life that is pleasing to God is the life that is a repetition of the life Christ lived on earth. A life that experiences Christ in His experiences as the burnt offering is a God-pleasing life. Such a life is a delight to God.

In Romans 14:18 Paul says, "He who in this serves Christ as a slave is well-pleasing to God." The "this" here refers to verse 17, which tells us that the kingdom of God is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. He who serves as a slave in this—in the kingdom of God—is well-pleasing to God. When we live a kingdom life, we live a life that is righteous and full of peace and joy. Such a living is a repetition of Christ's life as the burnt offering, which is always a delight to God.

G. In His Inwards

Christ's inwards denotes all the inward parts of His being, including His mind, emotion, will, and heart with all their functions.

The leading part of our inwards, of our inner being, is the mind. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5). The mind which was in Christ should be in us today. This means that we should take His mind as our mind. We should be those not with our own, natural mind but with the mind of Christ.

In 1 Corinthians 2:16b Paul says, "We have the mind of Christ." Because we are organically one with Christ, we have all the faculties He has. The mind is the intelligence faculty, the understanding organ. We have such an organ of Christ so we can know what He knows. Therefore, we may have not only the life but also the mind of Christ. Christ must saturate our mind from our spirit, making our mind one with His.

In Romans 8:6 Paul speaks of setting the mind on the spirit. This word is not as strong as his word concerning the mind of Christ. We should not merely set our mind on the spirit but have the very mind of Christ.

"I long after you all in the inward parts of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 1:8). The Greek word translated "inward parts" literally means bowels, signifying inward affection, then tender mercy and sympathy. Paul was one with Christ even in the bowels, the tender inward parts of Christ, in longing after the saints. This indicates that Paul did not keep his own inwards but took Christ's inwards as his. He took not only Christ's mind but also His entire inward being. Paul's inner being, therefore, was changed, rearranged, remodeled, reconstituted. His inner being was reconstituted with the inwards of Christ. Paul did not live a life in his natural inner being; he lived a life in the inwards of Christ.

"The truth of Christ is in me" (2 Cor. 11:10). "Truth" here means honesty, faithfulness, trustworthiness. What was in Christ as truth, that is, as honesty, faithfulness, trustworthiness, was also in the Apostle Paul.

"My love be with you all in Christ Jesus" (1 Cor. 16:24). Paul's love for the Corinthians was not his love but the love in Christ, which is Christ's love. Paul loved the saints not by his natural love but by the love of Christ.

If we put these verses together, we shall see that Paul was a man who continually experienced Christ's inwards. Because he experienced Christ in this way, he surely was able to offer Christ according to his experience of Him.

H. In His Walk

In Leviticus 1, the legs of the burnt offering signify Christ's walk, just as the head signifies His wisdom. We need to experience Christ in His walk.

In Matthew 11:29 the Lord Jesus says, "Take My yoke on you and learn from Me." This is to take the Lord's legs, His walk, and to experience Him in His walk.

"You did…so learn Christ" (Eph. 4:20). To learn Christ is to have His legs and feet in order to live, walk, and move exactly as He did.

"Be imitators of me, as I also am of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1). This verse indicates that Paul did not walk by his own legs and feet but walked by the legs and feet of Christ.

Peter also experienced Christ in His walk. This is indicated by his word about following in Christ's steps: "Leaving you a model that you should follow in His steps" (1 Pet. 2:21). Both Paul and Peter walked by the legs and feet of Christ as a burnt offering to God.

I. In His Being Kept by the Holy Spirit from Defilement

Finally, we may experience Christ in His experiences as the burnt offering in His being kept by the Holy Spirit from defilement. This is indicated in Leviticus by the washing of the legs and inwards of the burnt offering.

Paul refers to our experience of this washing in 1 Corinthians 6:11 and in Titus 3:5. First Corinthians 6:11 says, "You were washed…in the Spirit of our God." If we daily experience such a washing and then come to offer Christ as our burnt offering, we shall be able to offer Him according to our experience. If we do not have the experience of being washed by the Holy Spirit, we shall not have the capacity to offer a burnt offering that has been washed. We need to experience Christ in His being washed by the Holy Spirit.

In Titus 3:5 Paul speaks of the "renewing of the Holy Spirit." This renewing is also related to our experience in our daily life of being kept from defilement by the washing of the Holy Spirit.

III. OFFERING THE CHRIST WE HAVE EXPERIENCED

We need to offer to God as a burnt offering the Christ whom we have experienced. In Romans 8:11 Paul says, "He who raised Christ Jesus from among the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you." Then in Romans 12:1 he goes on to say, "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, well-pleasing to God, which is your most reasonable service." In Colossians 1:28 Paul speaks of presenting "every man full-grown in Christ." This is to offer to God as the burnt offering the Christ we have experienced.

The situation among Christians today is that very few have Christ to offer as the burnt offering. Where can you find a group of Christians who daily offer to God as a burnt offering the Christ they have experienced? Regarding this, what is the situation among us? I am concerned about the fact that we also are short of experiences. This is the reason many saints have nothing to utter in the Lord's table meeting or in the prayer meeting. We may want to offer praise to God, but if we are lacking in the experience of Christ's experiences, we shall not have anything to utter. However, if we are full of the experience of Christ's experiences as the burnt offering, we shall have rich utterance in praise not only in the meetings but also in our private time with the Lord. Therefore, we should endeavor to experience Christ daily in all His aspects as the burnt offering. Then, having much experience of Him, we shall be able to offer to God the Christ we have experienced. Our prayers and praises will be the release of our experiences of Christ.

IV. OFFERING CHRIST TO GOD AS OUR BURNT OFFERING ACCORDING TO OUR EXPERIENCES OF HIM

We need to offer Christ to God as our burnt offering according to our experiences of Him. Two verses which indicate this are 1 Peter 2:5 and Hebrews 13:15. First Peter 2:5 speaks of offering up "spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." These spiritual sacrifices are Christ in all the varied aspects of His riches as the reality of all the sacrifices of the Old Testament types. In particular, the spiritual sacrifices include Christ as the reality of the burnt offering. Hebrews 13:15 says, "Through Him then let us offer up a sacrifice of praise continually to God." Both of these verses indicate that we can offer Christ to God as our burnt offering only to the extent to which we have experienced Christ in His experiences.

If we experience Christ in His experiences, not only shall we have something of Christ to offer to God, but we shall also be able to offer Him with a procedure that is according to our experiences. Suppose you offer Christ as a bull. First, you

will bring this offering to the altar, the place of slaughter. Then you will kill it, skin it, and wash its legs and inwards. This procedure will be a review of your experience of Christ in His experiences of being brought to the slaughter, of being slaughtered, and of being skinned and washed. In your daily life you have experienced Christ in this way, and now as you offer Christ to God as your burnt offering, you review your experiences. Your way of offering, therefore, is a demonstration of your experience of Christ.

Those who witness such a review and demonstration will surely be impressed by it. Of course, because we are short of experience, we do not often witness this. Nevertheless, sometimes in a meeting we hear a praise or a testimony which is a review and a demonstration of one's experience of Christ, and we admire that praise or testimony.

For the most part, the burnt offering we offer to God in our meetings is an offering of two pigeons. Both the sacrifice itself and the way of offering it are poor. The reason for this is the lack of the experiences of Christ as the burnt offering. If we are short of the experiences of Christ, we shall not have anything to review or to demonstrate. But if we have the rich experience of Christ in His experiences, we shall be able to go through a procedure to review and demonstrate our experiences of Christ. Such a review and demonstration are a treasure in the eyes of God.

We need to experience Christ and then offer Him to God. To experience Christ in His experiences is to follow in His steps. It is to live Christ, repeating the life He lived on earth. If we live Christ, we shall certainly have many experiences of Christ. When we come to offer this experienced Christ to God, we shall offer Him according to a procedure of review and demonstration that is impressive not only to human beings but also to the demons and the angels and especially to God. God is happy to see His children offering His Son to Him by a procedure which reviews and demonstrates their experiences of Christ in their daily life. How wonderful the church meetings would be if they were full of this kind of offering!

Concerning worship, the New Testament gives us clear words and principles, but it does not provide the details that we see in the Old Testament types, especially the types in Leviticus. For example, in John 4:23 and 24 the Lord Jesus tells us that genuine worship is to worship God in spirit and in truth, and in 1 Corinthians 14 Paul gives us certain principles related to how we should meet. But neither in John 4 nor in 1 Corinthians 14 do we find the details about worship or about how to meet. For the details we need to consider the types in Leviticus.

The book of Leviticus has much to say about the worship of God. To offer the burnt offering and the other offerings is to worship God. God wants us to worship Him with Christ as the reality of the offerings. God does not want a people who worship Him by bowing down, kneeling, or even merely by singing and praising. Genuine worship, the worship which satisfies God's heart, is a matter of our coming to worship God by offering to Him the Christ whom we have experienced and offering Him according to our experiences, reviewing the experiences we have had in our daily life. This is the worship the Father is seeking, the worship He desires.

The Father wants us to worship Him by offering His Son to Him according to a procedure in which we review our experiences. This requires much experience. We thank the Lord for showing us from Leviticus that we need to experience Christ in His experiences not only to have Him as the burnt offering but also to be able to go through a procedure in which we offer Christ to God by reviewing our experiences of Him.

You may feel that it is impossible for you to experience Christ in His experiences as the burnt offering. However, in Philippians 3:10 Paul tells us that we can be conformed to Christ's death if we experience the sustaining and strengthening power of Christ's resurrection. In one of his hymns, A. B. Simpson says, " 'Tis not hard to die with Christ when His risen life we know" *(Hymns,* #481). If we see the vision concerning the experience of Christ in His experiences and are attracted to live such a life, we must have the faith that

the very Christ who presents His experiences as an example is now in us as our life supply. We have an all-sufficient supply within us, and this supply is the Spirit of Christ in His resurrection. This was the reason Paul could say, "I can do all things in Him who empowers me" (Phil. 4:13). Therefore, since Christ is in us and for us, we should not be disappointed.

Concerning the burnt offering, we need to experience Christ in His experiences. Then what we offer to God as a burnt offering will be accepted by Him. But how can we experience Christ in this way? We cannot do this in ourselves, but we can do it by the indwelling, resurrected Christ, who Himself is resurrection. In Him and by Him we can do all the things related to experiencing Christ as the burnt offering. In Him and by Him we can live an overcoming life in our married life and a victorious life in the church life, overcoming all difficulties in our family life and all problems in the church life. We can do all things in Him who strengthens us. Therefore, we can experience Christ in His experiences and have Him to offer to God as the burnt offering.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE TEN

THE BURNT OFFERING
CHRIST FOR GOD'S SATISFACTION

(8)

EXPERIENCING CHRIST IN HIS EXPERIENCES AND OFFERING THE CHRIST WE HAVE EXPERIENCED, AND OFFERING HIM TO GOD AS OUR BURNT OFFERING ACCORDING TO OUR EXPERIENCES OF HIM

(4)

In the two previous messages we considered in detail the matter of experiencing Christ in His experiences and of offering to God the Christ whom we have experienced. In this message I would like to give a brief further word concerning our experiencing Christ in His experiences as the burnt offering.

I am concerned that some may misunderstand what I mean by experiencing Christ in His experiences. When many Christians hear that we need to experience Christ in His experiences in order to have Him as our burnt offering, they may think that this is a matter of imitating Christ in an outward way, of taking Christ as an outward example and pattern and then following Him and learning of Him. This understanding is wrong.

TWO SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT CONCERNING THE EXPERIENCE OF CHRIST

In order to help you have the right understanding of experiencing Christ in His experiences, I would point out that regarding this matter there are in so-called theology two main schools of thought.

Imitating Christ Merely in an Outward Way

The first school, which is much more popular than the second and which is held by both Catholics and Protestants, teaches the believers to follow Christ and imitate Him altogether in an outward way. This teaching is illustrated in a famous Catholic book written hundreds of years ago entitled *The Imitation of Christ.* According to this book, a Christian should try to imitate the outward living of Christ. Much of today's Protestant theology also speaks of following Christ, imitating Him, and learning of Him.

Certain verses in the New Testament seem to provide a basis for this school of thought. In the Gospels the Lord Jesus often charges others to follow Him. In Matthew 11:29 He said, "Take My yoke on you and learn from Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart." Furthermore, Paul exhorted the believers, saying, "Be imitators of me, as I also am of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1). Such verses apparently support the teaching that to experience Christ is to imitate Him outwardly.

Living Christ

The second school of thought, which is held by only a few Bible teachers, says that experiencing Christ in His experiences is not a matter of imitating Christ outwardly but is instead a matter of living Christ. To experience Christ in His experiences is not to take Him as a pattern outwardly—it is to live Christ. Regarding this, Paul says, "I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20). Paul does not say, "I take Christ as my pattern and follow Him"; he says, "I have been crucified with Christ" and "Christ lives in me." In Philippians 1:21 Paul goes on to say, "To me to live is Christ." Paul did not merely take Christ as his pattern and imitate Him outwardly. Paul lived Christ.

LIVING CHRIST IN OUR DAILY LIFE

In our married life we may try to imitate Christ, or we may exercise ourselves to live Christ. Many Christians have been taught to follow Christ's steps in their married life. For

example, a pastor may advise a married couple, saying, "Christ never quarreled with others. Now you should follow His example and not quarrel with each other. If you are tempted to quarrel, you must remember to follow Christ and live as He lived."

Suppose a brother takes this advice and determines to follow Christ in his married life and never quarrel with his wife. However, one day his wife begins to bother him, and the Devil tempts him to argue with her. He resists for a while, but eventually he loses his temper. This, of course, is a failure in following Christ. This kind of failure is very common among Christians.

A few strong-willed persons, however, are able to gain the victory over the temptation to quarrel. No matter how much they are provoked, they do not lose their temper. They have determined to imitate Christ, following Him not to quarrel, and by their strong will they succeed. Is this the genuine experience of Christ in His experiences? Certainly not! It is merely the practice of a religious teaching.

I was born into Christianity, and from my youth I was taught from the Bible to take Christ as my pattern and follow Him. Later I learned the classical teachings of Confucius, which are very similar to the Christian teachings I had learned. I was bothered and began to wonder why we in China needed the foreign religion of Christianity to teach us the same things we had learned from Confucius. Because I was troubled about this, for a period of time I set Christianity aside. At the age of nineteen, I was saved. However, I still had a problem concerning the similarity of the ethical teachings of Confucius and Christianity. Confucius gave us certain good patterns to follow, and Christianity taught us to follow Christ as our pattern. What is the difference? I could not answer this question until I received help through the so-called inner life teachings. Then I saw that there is a great difference between following ethical teachings and living Christ, and I began to see the vision of Christ living in me.

Yes, in the four Gospels the Lord Jesus did say, "Follow Me." This word, however, cannot be found in the Acts and in

the Epistles. Instead of exhorting us to follow Christ in an outward way, the Epistles speak about being in Christ. Paul says, "I know a man in Christ" (2 Cor. 12:2) and expresses the desire to be found in Christ (Phil. 3:9). In Galatians 2:20 Paul says that he has been crucified with Christ and that it is no longer he who lives but now Christ lives in him. In Philippians 1:21 he tells us that for him to live is Christ. What a great difference there is between trying to imitate Christ outwardly and being in Christ, living Christ, and having Christ live in us!

In our married life, we need to live Christ. Suppose a brother is tempted to quarrel with his wife. If at such a time he considers how to follow Christ, he will be defeated. Before the temptation to quarrel comes, the brother should already be living Christ. He should be a person living Christ in his married life. If while living Christ he is tempted to quarrel with his wife, he will not quarrel with her. Because he is living Christ, he is living a life that never quarrels. This is altogether different from a strong-willed person making up his mind not to lose his temper. Instead of making up our mind not to quarrel with our spouse, we should live Christ, a life that is not ourselves, a life that never quarrels.

I am concerned that when some saints, especially the new ones, hear about experiencing Christ in His experiences, they may try to follow Christ merely in an outward way. If we try to imitate Christ, we shall be like monkeys trying to imitate human beings. We should not try to follow Christ. Rather, we need to be enlightened to see that in ourselves we are a hopeless case. We are "monkeys." How can we imitate a man? We should forget about imitating Christ and see that we have One within us who is our life. This One is our Savior, the very Triune God, living in us. He is not only our life—He is even our person.

Our testimony should be that we do not know what it is to do good or evil; we only know to live Christ. We love Him and we fellowship with Him. Early in the morning, the first thing we do is call on Him dearly and lovingly, saying, "Lord Jesus, I love You." Then we begin to talk to Him, to fellowship with

Him, and to take Him in. To take Christ in is to eat Him. Then we shall enjoy Him, live Him, and be what He is.

If we are such persons, we will not yield to the temptation to quarrel with our husband or wife no matter how much we are tempted. We are now living another life, a life that can defeat the Devil and all the demons. This life is simply Christ Himself. Living this kind of life, a life that lives Christ, has nothing to do with religion, and it is absolutely different from the teachings of Confucius.

My burden in these messages is not to teach doctrines. On the contrary, my burden is to minister Christ to you, to share with you my enjoyment, which is one unique person, Jesus Christ, the embodiment of the Triune God. It is a wonderful fact that we have such a person living within us, and we can live Him and take Him as our person.

As a help to the new ones and the young ones, I would like to share an experience I had when I was a young Christian. Shortly after I was saved, my sister, who was a student at a theological school, tried to help me in my living as a Christian. One day she told me about a certain Bible teacher who was very patient and who always walked slowly with Bible in hand, stopping on occasion to gaze into the heavens or to look at the Bible. When I heard about him, I decided that I too would be patient and walk slowly. However, I was a "monkey" trying to be a man. I am a quick person and in myself I cannot live a slow, patient life. Eventually, I learned some of the inner life teachings, and I was enlightened to see that I had been crucified and buried with Christ. I saw that it is no longer I who live but Christ lives in me.

Instead of imitating Christ, we should live Him. In order to live Christ, we need to call on Him and enjoy Him. This is the way to live a victorious life, which is actually the overcoming Christ as our life.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE ELEVEN

THE MEAL OFFERING
CHRIST FOR THE SATISFACTION OF GOD'S PEOPLE ENJOYED TOGETHER WITH GOD

(1)

Scripture Reading: Lev. 2:1

In this message we shall begin to consider chapter two of Leviticus, which is concerned with the meal offering.

I. THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE MEAL OFFERING TO THE BURNT OFFERING

It is important for us to understand the relationship of the meal offering to the burnt offering.

A. The Burnt Offering Emphasizing Christ's Living for God and the Meal Offering Emphasizing Christ's Human Living and Daily Walk

The emphasis of the burnt offering is on Christ's living for God, even unto death, implying His living but emphasizing His death. The emphasis of the meal offering is on Christ's human living and daily walk, implying His death but emphasizing His living.

B. The Burnt Offering Emphasizing That Christ Is the Righteousness of God and the Meal Offering Emphasizing That Christ Is Righteous before God

The burnt offering emphasizes that Christ is the righteousness—the righteousness of God. The meal offering emphasizes that Christ is righteous—righteous before God. In the burnt offering we can see Christ as righteousness, for

the burnt offering indicates that Christ is God's righteousness. The meal offering indicates that Christ is righteous.

We need to differentiate *righteousness* (a noun) from *righteous* (an adjective). We may say that Christ is righteousness itself, and we may also say that He is righteous. The principle is the same with the words *sin* (a noun) and *sinful* (an adjective). On the one hand, we may say that we are sin, that we are the totality of sin itself. On the other hand, we may say that we are sinful.

When Christ died on the cross, He was made sin (2 Cor. 5:21). The One who died on the cross was not just a person, Jesus Christ, but a person made sin in its totality. Because Christ was made sin, He took away sin from mankind (John 1:29), and sin as a personification was condemned (Rom. 8:3). This refers to Christ as the sin offering.

Christ is also the trespass offering. The trespass offering is a matter not of Christ being made sin for us but of Christ bearing our sins (1 Pet. 2:24; Heb. 9:28). On the one hand, as the sin offering Christ was made sin; on the other hand, as the trespass offering Christ bore our sins.

We need to realize that as fallen persons we are not merely sinful; we are sin. Often as I have knelt before the Lord and prayed, I have said to Him, "Lord, I am not just sinful—I am sin itself. I am nothing but sin."

In the burnt offering we can see Christ as the righteousness of God, and in the meal offering we can see the righteous Christ, the One who is right in every way. Because Christ is God's righteousness, He can be God's satisfaction and give Him a satisfying fragrance. Only Christ can satisfy God to the uttermost.

We also should be God's righteousness, satisfying God to such an extent that we become to God a satisfying fragrance. But how can we be this kind of person? In the sight of God we are not righteousness—we are sin. How can we be a burnt offering to God? How can we who are sin be righteousness? In ourselves it is impossible, but it is possible by experiencing Christ in His experiences.

In the early years of my ministry, young married brothers

and sisters who had a problem with their temper often asked me how they could be a good husband or wife. They did not want to lose their temper, but no matter how hard they tried, they were defeated. They wanted me to tell them how they could overcome their temper. Being young in the ministry, I had not yet seen the vision of living Christ. Because of my lack of vision and because I was still under the influence of certain books I had read on living the Christian life, I would tell them that they needed to love the Lord, pray a great deal, and memorize Bible verses. They took my advice and tried to follow it, but it did not work, and the result invariably was failure. They made up their mind not to lose their temper, but eventually they failed and lost their temper. Their experience, and mine as well, was like that of Paul in Romans 7: "To will is present with me, but to do the good is not. For the good which I will, I do not; but the evil I do not will, this I practice" (vv. 18b-19). If today I were asked to help the saints in dealing with their temper, I would say, "You need to realize that you are temper itself. How, then, can you avoid losing your temper? The only way to overcome your temper is to live another person, the One who is not temper but the righteousness of God."

Apart from Christ there is no righteousness. He is *the* righteousness in this universe. If we do not have Him, we cannot have righteousness. Paul, speaking of the Jews, says, "They, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, did not submit to the righteousness of God" (Rom. 10:3). Those who seek righteousness apart from Christ will never find it. As the burnt offering He is the very righteousness of God, and as the meal offering He is the most righteous One. He is fine, perfect, complete, and righteous in every way.

II. FINE FLOUR

A. The Main Element of the Meal Offering

The meal offering is made of fine flour. Fine flour, therefore, is the main element of the meal offering. This fine flour signifies Christ's humanity.

Christ's humanity is fine, but our humanity is rough and coarse. We may appear outwardly to be gentle and nice, but actually we are rough. Among the human race Christ is the only one who is gentle; only He is the fine flour. With Him there is no roughness. His humanity is fine, perfect, balanced, and right in every way. From every angle—front and back, top and bottom, right and left—He is right.

B. Produced out of Wheat Which Has Passed through Many Processes

The fine flour of the meal offering is produced out of wheat which has passed through many processes, including being sown, buried to die, growing up, being beaten by the wind, frost, rain, and sun, and then being reaped, threshed, sifted, and ground. These processes signify the varied sufferings of Christ which made Him "a man of sorrows" (Isa. 53:3). In His human living the Lord Jesus had sorrow upon sorrow.

C. Being Perfect in Fineness, Evenness, Tenderness, and Gentleness and Fully Balanced, with No Excess and No Deficiency

The fine flour is perfect in fineness, evenness, tenderness, and gentleness and is fully balanced, with no excess and no deficiency. This signifies the beauty and excellence of Christ's human living and daily walk. Christ's humanity is perfect. There is no comparison between His humanity and our natural, fallen humanity.

III. OIL

A. Signifying the Spirit of God

The oil of the meal offering signifies the Spirit of God (Luke 4:18; Heb. 1:9). Christ is a man, and as a man He has an excellent humanity. He also has the divine element, which is the Spirit of God. The divine element is in the Spirit of God and is the Spirit of God.

As the meal offering, Christ is full of oil. We may even say that He has been "oiled." He has been mingled with oil.

This means that His humanity has been mingled with His divinity.

B. Poured upon the Fine Flour

In the meal offering the oil is poured upon the fine flour. This signifies that the Spirit of God was poured upon Christ (Matt. 3:16; John 1:32).

IV. FRANKINCENSE

A. Signifying the Fragrance of Christ in His Resurrection

Frankincense is sweet smelling and causes people to have a very pleasant feeling. In typology, the frankincense in the meal offering signifies the fragrance of Christ in His resurrection.

B. Put upon the Fine Flour

The frankincense was put upon the fine flour. This signifies that Christ's humanity bears the aroma of His resurrection manifested out from His sufferings (cf. Matt. 11:20-30; Luke 10:21). During the course of His human life, Christ suffered a great deal, but the aroma of His resurrection was manifested out from His sufferings. Although He suffered very much, He exuded a sweet fragrance, the aroma of His resurrection.

In the meal offering there are three elements: the fine flour, the oil, and the frankincense. If we study the four Gospels, we will see that Christ's life consisted mainly of these three elements. The Lord Jesus continually lived and walked in these three things—in His humanity mingled with His divinity and expressing His resurrection.

Even before Christ was actually crucified He continually expressed His resurrection. Concerning this, we need to realize that the Lord Jesus was crucified not only at the very end of His life but that He was crucified daily. His entire life was a life under the cross. He was always being slaughtered, skinned, and cut into pieces. His crucifixion, which lasted six hours, was the totality of His being slaughtered, skinned, and

cut into pieces. Because the Lord Jesus lived daily under the cross, He always expressed resurrection from His humanity mingled with His divinity.

If we keep this in mind as we read the Gospels, we will see what kind of person Christ was while He lived on earth. He was a person with the highest and best humanity. This humanity was "oiled," for it was mingled with His divinity. In His human living He expressed not His sufferings but resurrection. This resurrection is the frankincense, the fragrant aroma, the sweet savor, in the universe. Nothing is as sweet, as fragrant, as this aroma of resurrection. This was Christ's human living on earth.

Even when the Lord Jesus was arrested and crucified, He lived a life of humanity mingled with divinity and expressing resurrection. A band of soldiers and deputies from the chief priests and Pharisees came to the garden seeking Jesus. Twice He asked them, "Whom are you seeking?" (John 18:4, 7), and each time they answered, "Jesus the Nazarene" (vv. 5, 7). The Lord Jesus then said to them, "If therefore you are seeking Me, let these go away" (v. 8). "These" refers to His disciples. Under the suffering of the betrayal of His false disciple and the arrest of the soldiers. He still took good care of His disciples. Here we can sense the fragrance of resurrection.

When the Lord Jesus was on the cross, He took care of His mother. "Jesus, seeing His mother and the disciple whom He loved standing by, said to His mother, Woman, behold, your son. Then He said to the disciple, Behold, your mother" (John 19:26-27a). Here we again see resurrection expressed out from the Lord's sufferings.

No matter what the circumstances were, the Lord Jesus lived a life of suffering but expressing the fragrance of His resurrection. In every place and at every time, Christ lived a life in His humanity mingled with His divinity and expressing His resurrection. This is the meal offering.

The burnt offering is for God's satisfaction to fulfill His desire. The burnt offering is God's food, and only He is allowed to eat it. The fact that the entire offering is burned on the altar indicates that it is received by God. We may say that the fire

which consumes the burnt offering is God's "mouth." Whereas the burnt offering is God's food, the meal offering is our food for our satisfaction, with a little portion shared with God.

Proper worship involves the burnt offering and the meal offering. To offer the burnt offering for God's satisfaction and to offer the meal offering for our satisfaction and for sharing our satisfaction with God—this is real worship. Proper worship is a matter of satisfying God with Christ as the burnt offering, and of being satisfied with Christ as the meal offering and sharing this satisfaction with God. In real worship Christ as the burnt offering ascends to God, and Christ as the meal offering enters our being. In such worship we satisfy God with Christ, and we share with Him our enjoyment of Christ.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE TWELVE

THE MEAL OFFERING
CHRIST FOR THE SATISFACTION OF GOD'S PEOPLE ENJOYED TOGETHER WITH GOD

(2)

Scripture Reading: Lev. 2:2-13

Before we consider further aspects of the meal offering, I would like to compare the burnt offering and the meal offering.

In the burnt offering, the main item is the blood (1:3, 11). In the meal offering, the main items are the oil and the frankincense (2:1). The oil is for mingling and anointing, and the frankincense is to be put on the meal offering.

The burnt offering is for propitiation. We need propitiation because we are short in being absolute for God. Even if we have not made any mistakes or sinned and are perfect and complete, we still are not utterly, ultimately, fully, and wholly absolute for God. If we are not wholly absolute for God, we are short of God's glory (Rom. 3:23). This means that we are sinful; we are sinful in not being absolute for God.

God is our source. We were made by God for the purpose of expressing Him and representing Him. But to express and represent God requires our absoluteness. However, among the fallen human race no one is absolute for God. Perhaps some of us are absolute for God to a great degree, but we are not fully and utterly absolute for Him. We are not absolute for God like the man Jesus was when He was on earth. In the four Gospels He is portrayed as the One who is altogether absolute for God. None of us can compare with Him. Thus, we are short of God's glory and need propitiation.

Propitiation is not only for redemption. Propitiation is also for propitiating the situation between us and God, a situation that is not peaceful. Propitiation appeases the situation between us and God and settles certain problems.

For propitiation we need to offer Christ as the burnt offering. However, we can offer Christ as the burnt offering only to the extent to which we have experienced Him. In order to offer Christ as the burnt offering to God, we need to experience Christ in His experiences.

Blood is needed for propitiation. Only animals are qualified to be the burnt offering because only they have blood to shed for propitiation. Therefore, in Leviticus 1 the burnt offering must be a bull from the herd, a goat or a sheep from the flock, or turtledoves or pigeons.

In the meal offering nothing of the animal life is seen. What is seen is of the vegetable life: wheat, grain, and ears of grain. As a type of Christ, the vegetable life indicates the produce, the propagation, and the increase to supply life for people to live by. In the meal offering we do not see blood, but we see oil and frankincense. The oil anoints the meal offering and is mingled with it; the frankincense is sprinkled upon the meal offering. Concerning the blood, the oil, and the frankincense, we have a very significant difference between the burnt offering and the meal offering.

The offerings are food for both God and us that we and God may have mutual enjoyment. The burnt offering was entirely consumed by God; it was eaten by Him alone. God's "mouth" is the fire that consumed the burnt offering, the fire, that burned continually day and night. The divine eating of the burnt offering was very orderly. This is indicated by the orderly way in which the pieces were arranged for burning (Lev. 1:7-8). God does everything, including the eating of the burnt offering, in an orderly way.

Because the burnt offering is for propitiation, it can be eaten only by God. Only God is qualified to enjoy something that is for our propitiation. Therefore, we cannot eat the burnt offering.

Although we may not eat the burnt offering, we may eat a part of the meal offering. When a person offered the meal offering, "a full handful of its fine flour and of its oil, with all its frankincense," were to be offered "in smoke as its memorial portion on the altar, an offering by fire of a satisfying fragrance to Jehovah" (2:2). Here we see that part of the flour and oil and all of the frankincense are God's food. God must be the first to taste and to enjoy the meal offering. The remainder of the meal offering, consisting of fine flour and oil but no frankincense, was to be food for the priests.

The priests serve God. Their service is holy, and their food also is holy. If we would serve God as priests, we need to eat the priestly food, the holy food that befits our holy service. This food nourishes us that we may have the strength to serve God.

The meal offering is a matter of Christ as the satisfaction of God's people enjoyed together with God. First, God enjoys His portion of the meal offering, and then we have our enjoyment. Our enjoyment is thus a co-enjoyment, an enjoyment that is with God's enjoyment.

V. ALL THE FRANKINCENSE WITH PART OF THE FINE FLOUR AND PART OF THE OIL BURNED ON THE ALTAR

All the frankincense with part of the fine flour and part of the oil was burned on the altar (2:2). This signifies that a considerable portion of Christ's excellent, perfect, Spirit-filled, and resurrection-saturated living is offered to God as food for His enjoyment.

Christ's human living on earth was excellent, but it is difficult for us to say what this excellence refers to. We may say that it refers to the high standard of His attributes and virtues. How high is this standard? We cannot say. There has never before been such a standard among the human race.

Christ is both God and man. He is a God-man anointed, mingled, and filled with the Spirit of God. Moreover, even before He was crucified, He expressed resurrection. He expressed resurrection in everything, even in rebuking the

Pharisees (Matt. 23:1-36) and in cleansing the temple (John 2:12-17). The excellency of Christ's human living on earth was in His manhood and in His Godhood; it was in His humanity and divinity in the Spirit and with resurrection. This is how the four Gospels reveal Him in His excellence.

Christ's humanity is perfect. He is fine, even, and fully balanced, lacking nothing and not having anything in excess. Furthermore, He is filled with the Spirit and saturated with resurrection. When He walked on earth, He was always filled with the Spirit and saturated with resurrection.

A. As a Memorial

The frankincense with part of the fine flour and the oil was burned as a memorial because of its satisfying effect. A memorial is greater than satisfaction. We may be satisfied with many things but not make those things a memorial. But when we have the highest satisfaction, we will make that satisfaction a memorial. God enjoys Christ to such an extent that this enjoyment becomes a memorial.

B. As a Satisfying Fragrance

A satisfying fragrance is a sweet savor; it is a fragrance that gives rest, peace, joy, enjoyment, and full satisfaction. The rich elements of the meal offering—Christ's humanity, divinity, and His excellent, perfect, Spirit-filled, and resurrection-saturated living—are a fragrance that gives God rest, peace, joy, enjoyment, and full satisfaction.

VI. THE REMAINDER OF THE MEAL OFFERING BEING FOR AARON AND HIS SONS

"The remainder of the meal offering is for Aaron and his sons; it is a most holy portion of the offerings of Jehovah by fire" (Lev. 2:3). This signifies that we also can enjoy Christ's human living as our food after God's enjoyment. First, God must be given His portion that He may be satisfied. The remainder is our portion for our satisfaction.

It is easy to say that we can enjoy Christ's human living as our food, but how can we actually do this? Considering

the type in Leviticus 2 will help in answering this question. The type here is a picture signifying Christ's human living. The fine flour signifies Christ's humanity, and the oil signifies the Spirit of God. The oil and the flour are mingled to produce an oiled fine flour, a fine flour mingled with oil. Therefore, to eat the fine flour is to eat the oil; it is also to eat the mingling, for the oil and the flour cannot be separated.

The picture in Leviticus 2 indicates strongly that the way for us to enjoy Christ's human living is by the Spirit. John 6 proves this. In this chapter the Lord Jesus reveals that He is edible. "I am the living bread which came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread which I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (v. 51). Unable to understand this, the Jews "contended with one another, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" (v. 52). In verse 63 the Lord Jesus says, "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words which I have spoken unto you are spirit and are life." This indicates that the way to eat Jesus is by the Spirit.

If we would eat Jesus by the Spirit, we need to realize that the Spirit today is consolidated in the word. When we touch the word, we touch what is consolidated, or embodied, in the word. To eat Jesus, to take Jesus, to enjoy Jesus, we must touch His word, and when we touch His word, the Spirit is there.

According to the New Testament, the divine Spirit is related to our human spirit. We need to touch the word of the Lord by our spirit. The way to touch the Lord's word by our spirit is to pray-read the word. When we come to the word, we should not merely exercise our eyes and our mind, reading the word as if it were a newspaper. We need to pray and exercise our spirit as well as our eyes and our mind. If we do this, we are apparently touching the word; actually we are touching the Spirit. The Spirit is mingled with the humanity of Christ. Hence, by exercising our spirit to touch the Spirit consolidated in the word, we eat the human life and living of Christ.

How can we enjoy Christ? We can enjoy Christ by exercising our spirit to pray-read the word. When we pray-read the Lord's word, we touch His Spirit, and this Spirit is mingled with His humanity. Then we are nourished with the highest humanity—the humanity of Christ.

In ourselves we cannot live a human life like that of the Lord Jesus. Only He can live such a life. But we can take Jesus at any time by coming to His word and exercising our spirit to pray-read the word. When we do this, we touch the Spirit, and the Spirit supplies us with Jesus as our nourishment. Since we are what we eat, the more we eat Jesus, the more we are constituted with Jesus. By our eating of Jesus' human living, His living becomes ours. Spontaneously, without any self-effort, we will be as humble and holy as Jesus is. This is to enjoy Jesus as our food for us to live a life which is qualified to serve God.

Over a period of fifteen hundred years, God has prepared a book for us, the Bible, and has put it in our hands. He has also given His Spirit to us. The Spirit is within and the book is without. These two things added together are just Christ in His human life. When we exercise our spirit and pray-read the word, we touch the Spirit and enjoy Christ's human living. This is the meal offering.

VII. THROUGH FIRE

A. All Meal Offerings Being through Fire on the Altar

All meal offerings, whether baked in an oven, roasted on a griddle, or fried in a pan, are through fire on the altar (Lev. 2:4-9). This signifies that Christ in His humanity offered to God as food has gone through fire. When we touch the meal offering, we touch the testing fire.

B. The Burning Fire Signifying the Consuming God, Not for Judgment but for Acceptance

The burning fire in Leviticus 2 signifies the consuming God, not for judgment but for acceptance. The portion of the meal offering that was offered to God as God's food for His

satisfaction was burned, that is, consumed by fire. This was God's acceptance, not His judgment. This signifies that God has accepted Christ as His satisfying food. God accepts the meal offering by consuming it through fire.

VIII. MINGLED WITH OIL

"When you bring a meal offering baked in an oven as an offering, it shall be unleavened cakes of fine flour mingled with oil, or unleavened wafers anointed with oil. And if your offering is a meal offering on the griddle, it shall be of fine flour mingled with oil, unleavened" (Lev. 2:4 and 5). This mingling with oil signifies that Christ's humanity is mingled with the Holy Spirit (Matt. 1:18b). This mingling also signifies that Christ's human nature is mingled with God's divine nature; hence, He is a God-man. Christ is a person who is absolutely mingled with God. His humanity is mingled with God, mingled with the Spirit, for the Spirit is in His very being. Therefore, when we touch Christ, we touch the Spirit.

In relation to the mingling in Leviticus 2, let us consider Psalm 92:10b. "I shall be anointed with fresh oil." In Darby's *New Translation* a note on the word *anointed* says "strictly, 'mingled.'" Furthermore, Darby's note on the word *mingled* in Leviticus 2:4 says: "'Mixed,' 'mingled,' is the sense of the word. In Ps. 92:10 it is not merely anointed as consecration, but his whole system is invigorated and strengthened by it: it formed his strength; hence it is 'fresh oil' there." This mingling, therefore, causes one's inward parts and elements to be vigorous and strong.

In the early part of the Christian era, there was much debate about the matter of the mingling of divinity with humanity. Some theologians thought that to speak of being mingled with God implied the belief that a person could become God, the belief that a human being could be uplifted to such an extent that he was deified. Those who had this kind of understanding of the teaching concerning mingling condemned this teaching. Eventually, theologians did not dare to use the word mingle or to teach concerning the mingling of humanity and divinity.

Why, then, are we so bold as to use this term today? We speak of mingling because there is such a revelation in the Bible. Our teaching concerning the divine mingling with humanity is based on the New Testament revelation and is also confirmed by the Old Testament types.

According to the type, the picture, in Leviticus 2, the meal offering is made basically of fine flour and oil. Verse 4 speaks of "fine flour mingled with oil." Oil denotes divinity, and fine flour denotes Christ's humanity. The mingling of the fine flour with the oil indicates that through the divine mingling Christ's humanity has been uplifted to the highest standard.

In Galatians 2:20 Paul says, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me." In Philippians 1:21 he says, "For to me to live is Christ." Paul was not only mingled with Christ—Paul *was* Christ. When some hear this, they may argue and accuse me of twisting Paul's word. They may say, "Paul did not tell us that he was Christ. He merely said that Christ lived in him and that for him to live was Christ. To live Christ is one thing, and to be Christ is another." To this I would reply, "How can one live another person without being that person? How could Paul live Christ if he were not Christ?"

While Paul was on the road to Damascus, the Lord Jesus asked him, "Why are you persecuting Me?" and He went on to say, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting" (Acts 9:4-5). Paul thought that he was persecuting only Stephen and other disciples; he had no realization that he was actually persecuting Christ. The Lord, however, regards His disciples as part of Him. The "Me" in Acts 9:4 is thus a corporate person including the Lord Jesus and all the believers. All the believers are one with Christ, not one merely in combination or in union but one in mingling.

Because the Lord Jesus is God incarnated to be a man, He is a God-man. Do you think that His divinity can be separated from His humanity, or that, apart from any mingling, His divinity and humanity are merely united to make Him a God-man? If there were no mingling, how could He live as a God-man? Christ's divinity is mingled with His humanity.

However, this mingling of divinity and humanity surely has not produced a third element, something that is neither divine nor human. To say that with respect to the Lord Jesus the mingling of the divine nature with the human nature produced a third nature, a nature that is neither fully divine nor fully human, is heretical. This certainly is not our understanding of the word mingle. We agree with the definition in *Webster's Third New International Dictionary:* mingle—"to bring or combine together or with something else so that the components remain distinguishable in the combination." In such a mingling of two elements, the elements remain distinct, and there is not the producing of a third element.

Christ is both the complete God and the perfect man, possessing the divine nature and the human nature distinctly, without a third nature being produced. This is revealed in the New Testament, and it is portrayed by the type in Leviticus 2. In this type, mingling is clearly depicted: the oil is mingled with the fine flour, and the fine flour is mingled with the oil. Although these two elements are mingled, the essence of each element remains distinct, and a third element is not produced. This is the correct understanding of mingling.

The excellency of Christ, who is our meal offering, is in both His divinity and His humanity. With respect to His divinity, Christ has the divine attributes, and these divine attributes are expressed through, with, and in His human virtues. For this reason He is ethical and moral in a higher standard than all human beings. What He is as God with the divine attributes is added to what He is as man with the human virtues. This is the excellence of Jesus Christ, an excellence which is the produce of the mingling of divinity and humanity.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE THIRTEEN

THE MEAL OFFERING
CHRIST FOR THE SATISFACTION OF GOD'S PEOPLE ENJOYED TOGETHER WITH GOD

(3)

Scripture Reading: Lev. 2:4-7, 13-16

In this message we will cover further aspects of the meal offering.

IX. NO LEAVEN

There is no leaven in the meal offering (vv. 4-5). "No meal offering which you shall bring to Jehovah shall be made with leaven" (v. 11a). No leaven signifies that there is no sin or any negative thing in Christ (1 Cor. 5:6-8).

X. NO HONEY, WHICH WILL FERMENT

In the meal offering there is no honey, which will ferment (Lev. 2:11). This signifies that there is no natural affection or natural good in Christ.

Two things in the Lord's recovery bother me. One is ambition, which I regard as leaven. The other is natural affection, which I regard as honey. Certain saints may claim that their love for one another is according to the Lord's commandment (John 13:34). Actually, their love is a matter of natural affection and has nothing to do with the Lord's commandment.

Nothing damages the church life, the Lord's ministry, and the Lord's work more than ambition and natural affection. Ambition for leadership is leaven, and leaven brings in corruption. Natural affection is honey, and honey brings in rottenness.

Ambition and affection are closely related. Suppose a brother has a particular ambition. If his ambition is fulfilled, he will be happy. If it is not fulfilled, he will be unhappy. He will love anyone who helps him to gain what he desires. But anyone who hinders him in fulfilling his ambition will be regarded as an enemy.

If we want to serve the Lord for a long period of time, we must look to the Lord to purify us from ambition and natural affection. No matter how well certain saints may treat us, and no matter how close we are or how long we have been together, we should not make friends in the church life. Rather, we should regard all the saints in the same way—as brothers and sisters in the Lord. We should not be ambitious, and we should not have natural affection, for such affection will bring in rottenness.

The meal offering must have neither leaven nor honey. We should take Christ as fine flour without adding leaven or honey. We need to ask the Lord to purify us so that in our living there will be no leaven and no honey.

XI. WITH SALT

"Every offering of your meal offering you shall season with salt; you shall not let the salt of the covenant of your God be lacking from your meal offering; with all your offerings you shall offer salt" (v. 13). The salt here is not common; it is the salt of the covenant of God, the covenant which is incorruptible and unchangeable. This salt seasons, kills germs, and preserves.

What is the spiritual significance of the salt in the meal offering? Thus far, in the meal offering we have seen the Spirit (the oil), Christ's resurrection (the frankincense), and Christ's humanity (the fine flour), but we have not yet seen the death of Christ. The death of Christ, the cross, is signified by the salt. The salt in the meal offering therefore refers to the death of Christ, to the cross.

The reason there is so much ambition and natural affection in the church is that there is too little salt. We are short of the cross of Christ, short of the application of Christ's death. If we

have adequate salt in the church, ambition and natural affection will be crossed out. As long as the cross is here, salt is here; and as long as salt is here, the germs will die. As long as the cross is here, ambition and natural affection will be crossed out. I hope that this will be the experience of us all. We should not have ambition, and we should not have natural affection. We should have only the crossing out of the Lord's death. Then we will have pure humility and pure love. We will be pure, and we will live a life like that of the Lord Jesus when He was on earth, a life without leaven and honey but full of salt.

XII. CAKES OF FINE FLOUR

"When you bring a meal offering baked in an oven as an offering, it shall be unleavened cakes of fine flour mingled with oil, or unleavened wafers anointed with oil" (v. 4). The cakes of fine flour signify Christ's humanity to be food for God and His serving ones.

Whereas fine flour has no form, the cakes of fine flour are solid and have a definite form. These cakes indicate a stronger experience of Christ. We may experience Christ as fine flour, as meal without a form. We may also experience Christ as the cakes, as something solid and with a definite form.

A. The Biggest Item of the Meal Offering

The cakes of fine flour are the biggest item of the meal offering. Thus, the cakes signify the biggest portion of Christ in our experience of Him. From this we see that the experience of the meal offering differs in degree. You may have a portion of a certain size, and another saint may have a portion of a different size.

B. Perforated, or Pierced

The cakes of fine flour are perforated, or pierced. This perforating, this piercing, signifies a kind of Christ's suffering in His humanity. In the Lord's human life there were many different kinds of sufferings, and the cakes' being perforated, or pierced, signifies one kind of Christ's sufferings.

C. Unleavened

The cakes of fine flour are unleavened. Being unleavened signifies being without sin or any negative thing.

D. Mingled with Oil

The cakes of fine flour are mingled with oil. Being mingled with oil signifies being mingled with the Holy Spirit. Christ's humanity was always mingled with His divinity. In our experience and enjoyment today, the meal offering cannot be separated from God the Spirit.

XIII. WAFERS

A meal offering may also be of "unleavened wafers anointed with oil" (v. 4b).

A. Hollow, Easy to Eat

Wafers are hollow and easy to eat. This signifies Christ in His humanity enjoyed and experienced by the younger believers. Christ as cakes is good for the strong ones, and Christ as wafers is good for the young ones. He is available to all ages. Praise the Lord that He is so edible!

B. Unleavened

Again, being unleavened signifies that Christ as the meal offering is without sin or any negative thing.

C. Anointed with Oil

The wafers are anointed with oil. This signifies that Christ is anointed with the Holy Spirit, having the Holy Spirit poured upon Him.

XIV. FINE FLOUR ON THE GRIDDLE

"And if your offering is a meal offering on the griddle, it shall be of fine flour mingled with oil, unleavened. You shall break it into pieces and pour oil on it; it is a meal offering" (vv. 5-6). In this kind of meal offering, the fine flour is without form. It is not even dough but simply flour on the griddle.

A. Unleavened

Once again, being unleavened signifies being without sin or negative things.

B. Mingled with Oil

The fine flour was mingled not with water but with oil. Although this mingling did not produce dough, it did cause the meal offering to be of a single piece. Here again, being mingled with oil signifies being mingled with the Holy Spirit.

C. Broken into Pieces

This meal offering was broken into pieces. This signifies that Christ's humanity is perfect but is never kept whole. It is always broken. This breaking refers to another kind of suffering which Christ passed through in His humanity.

D. The Pieces with Oil Poured upon Them

The pieces with oil poured upon them signify Christ's being anointed with the Holy Spirit.

Here we have a picture of Christ's experience of the Spirit of God. First, He was born of the Spirit of God (Matt. 1:18, 20). This was a matter of His being mingled with the Spirit. Then, at the age of thirty, He was anointed with the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit was poured upon Him after His water baptism (Matt. 3:16). Therefore, even in this small meal offering we can see the two aspects of Christ's experience of the Holy Spirit.

XV. FINE FLOUR IN A PAN

"And if your offering is a meal offering in a pan, it shall be made of fine flour with oil" (Lev. 2:7). The fine flour in a pan signifies Christ's humanity in another kind of suffering. All the other items in this offering are the same in significance as those in the offering of fine flour on the griddle.

XVI. GREEN EARS

In verses 14 through 16 we read of another category of meal offering—green ears.

A. Produced of the Harvest of the Labor on the Field

The green ears are produced of the harvest of the labor on the field. This signifies that our labor on Christ produces the harvest with green ears. Green ears are very tender, very fresh, and very tasty.

B. As the Firstfruit of Green Ears

The firstfruit of the green ears signifies the fresh enjoyment of Christ in His resurrection. Christ was the grain sown into the earth; He died and grew up in resurrection to produce green ears (John 12:24). These green ears are the firstfruit of His resurrection.

C. Crushed

Leviticus 2:14 speaks of "crushed grain from fresh ears." The word *crushed* signifies being dealt with by the cross of Christ. The green ears had to be crushed; that is, they had to pass through the crossing out of Christ's death. This indicates that if we would live a life by Christ as the meal offering, we cannot avoid the cross. We need to experience the crushing; this is the experience of being crossed out by Christ's death.

D. With Oil on the Meal Offering

"And you shall put oil on it and place frankincense upon it; it is a meal offering" (v. 15). The oil upon the meal offering signifies the Holy Spirit poured upon Christ's humanity.

E. With Frankincense upon the Meal Offering

Frankincense was to be placed upon the meal offering. As we have pointed out, this signifies the fragrance of Christ's resurrection upon His humanity.

F. Some Ears, Some Oil, and All the Frankincense Burned on the Altar

"And the priest shall offer up in smoke as its memorial portion some of its crushed grain and its oil, with all its frankincense, as an offering by fire to Jehovah" (v. 16). The

burning on the altar of some ears, some oil, and all the frankincense signifies that Christ's humanity in its freshness, with the Holy Spirit and the fragrance of Christ's resurrection, is offered to God as food for His satisfaction. Again we see that a portion of the meal offering—the best portion—is for God's food.

G. As a Memorial

God's portion of the meal offering is offered up as a memorial. It is a memorial because of its satisfying effect. This portion is so satisfying to God's taste that it becomes a memorial.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE FOURTEEN

THE PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE AND ENJOYMENT OF CHRIST AS THE OFFERINGS

My burden in this message is to fellowship with you concerning the practical experience and enjoyment of Christ as the offerings.

CHRIST—THE UNIQUE OFFERING

Christ today is the reality of the offerings. According to Hebrews 10:7-9, Christ came in the flesh to do the will of God, which was to replace the Old Testament offerings with Himself. Verse 9b says, "He takes away the first that He may establish the second." The "first" denotes the animal sacrifices of the Old Testament, and the "second" denotes Christ as the unique sacrifice, the unique offering. In the Old Testament there were many offerings, but in the New Testament there is one, unique offering—the wonderful person of Christ.

The book of Hebrews reveals to us what a wonderful person Christ is. In chapter after chapter, Paul opens the veil to show us the marvelous, mysterious, all-inclusive person of Christ. In particular, Hebrews speaks of the priesthood of Christ. Christ is not only our Savior—He is also our High Priest. In chapter ten we see that this One has become the replacement of all the Old Testament offerings. He came to do God's will (Heb. 10:7, 9). In the New Testament economy, God's will is to replace the Old Testament offerings with Christ.

If we would know Christ's person, we need to study the book of Hebrews. This wonderful person is not only the Son of God and not only the Triune God—He is the processed Triune God. Christ is also a man, for He is the processed Triune God

mingled with humanity. Eventually, Christ passed through death and entered into resurrection. Furthermore, as a man He ascended to the third heaven where, as a processed God-man, He is sitting on the throne. In His incarnation He brought God to earth, and in His ascension He brought man to the heavens.

According to the book of Hebrews, Christ, the ascended God-man, is our High Priest. In the Old Testament, the duty of the high priest was to offer something to God, either a sacrifice or a gift, not only to make propitiation but also to please God. As sinners with a sinful nature and sinful deeds, we had a problem with God, and God had a problem with us. There was no peace between us and God. Something had to be done to appease the situation between us and God. Christ has appeased this situation by making propitiation for us. Moreover, Christ has done something to make God happy. God wanted to be happy with us, but our sins made Him unhappy with us. Before we were saved, God loved us, but He was not happy with us. Therefore, Christ offered Himself not only as a sacrifice for sin but also as a gift to please God and thereby make Him happy. As the unique offering, Christ has made propitiation for us, and He has made God happy.

CHRIST AS FOOD TO SATISFY GOD AND HIS SERVING ONES

One of the most difficult books in the Bible for us to understand is Leviticus. Paul was the first one to open up, to expound, this book. Throughout the centuries, Bible teachers, especially among the Brethren, have expounded Leviticus. The Brethren opened up the types. We today have received much help from the Bible teachers who preceded us, and we are standing on their shoulders.

All those who have the proper understanding of Leviticus see the connection between this book and the book of Hebrews. For over sixty years we have been studying Hebrews and how it is linked to Leviticus.

In his Bible Correspondence Course, C. I. Scofield said

that in every chapter of Leviticus we can see Christ. When I first heard this, I did not understand it. I could see the offerings in Leviticus, but I could not see Christ. Eventually, I was helped by the Brethren to see that in Leviticus Christ is portrayed in the types. All the offerings are types, pictures, of Christ.

Although I was helped by the Brethren to see Christ in the types, I did not realize until some time later that the offerings are God's food (Lev. 3:11, 16; 21:6, 8; Num. 28:2). Do you realize that God is hungry, that He needs food, that He needs to eat? To say that God is hungry and needs food is not according to our natural, human concept. When we speak of the offerings as sacrifices, our only thought may be that we have a problem with God and need the offerings for propitiation that our situation with God may be appeased. We may never have realized that, in reality, one of the main purposes of the offerings is that they are food for God and also for His serving ones.

In the books of Exodus and Leviticus we see that the priests, who served in and around the tabernacle, ate the priestly food. What was this priestly food? It was the different kinds of offerings, both of the animal life and of the vegetable life. The offerings are not only for propitiating our situation and not only for pleasing God and making Him happy. The offerings are also for satisfying God and for satisfying, strengthening, and energizing God's serving ones.

We may talk much about serving God, but with what should we serve Him? We need to serve God with Christ as food. This food should not be merely of one form or course; rather, like a Chinese feast, it should be of many courses. Each of the offerings is a different course. The burnt offering, the meal offering, the peace offering, the trespass offering, the sin offering, the wave offering, the heave offering, the free will offering, the drink offering—all these offerings are Christ as different courses with which we may serve God.

Christ is God's food, and He is also our food. Since Christ is our food, we need to eat Him. Some Christians, however, may

be bothered when they hear us speak about eating Jesus. We would remind them of the Lord's word in John 6:57. "As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me shall also live because of Me." As our food, Christ strengthens us and energizes us.

We serve God with Christ as our food. Apart from Christ we have nothing to offer to God, nothing with which to please and satisfy Him. Therefore, we should not come to God empty-handed but with hands full of Christ to present to God. The top portion of Christ as the offerings is God's food for His enjoyment, and the remainder is our food for our enjoyment. From this we see that both God and His serving ones are satisfied with Christ and by Christ as food.

EXPERIENCING AND ENJOYING CHRIST AS HE IS REVEALED IN LEVITICUS

Each of the four Gospels reveals something concerning Christ. In a sense, Leviticus is also a gospel revealing Christ. Christ is surely revealed in Leviticus, but He is revealed here in a "language" different from that used in the Gospels. We may say that this is a "Leviticus language." One example of this language is the Hebrew word translated "burnt offering" in chapter one. Literally, this word denotes something that is ascending. If we know the language of Leviticus, we will realize that this ascending refers to Christ.

In the book of Leviticus we can see many of the details related to the enjoyment of Christ. In the Gospel of John the Lord Jesus revealed that He is the bread of life, that He is the bread which came down from heaven and is good for our eating (6:48, 50-51). But although the Lord said this clearly in John, the details concerning this cannot be found in John. For the details concerning eating Christ, we need to come to Leviticus.

It is crucial that we find a way to experience and enjoy Christ as He is revealed in Leviticus. We need to experience and enjoy Him daily and practically. If we would do this, we need to know the reality of all the offerings.

The Spirit of Reality—Christ Being the Reality of the Offerings to Us

Some may say that the reality of the offerings is Christ. This, of course, is correct. In John 14 the Lord Jesus even tells us that He is the reality. "I am the way, and the reality, and the life" (v. 6). Elsewhere in the same chapter He speaks of the Spirit of reality (v. 17). Christ cannot be the reality to us if He is simply the reality itself. In Himself He is the reality, but He is not yet the reality to us. In order for Christ to be the reality to us, there is the need of the Spirit of reality.

John 1:17 says, "The law was given through Moses; grace and reality came through Jesus Christ." This indicates that when the Lord Jesus came, reality also came. Christ Himself is the reality. On the one hand, the Lord Jesus tells us that He is the reality; on the other hand, He speaks of the Spirit of reality. "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, that He may be with you forever; even the Spirit of reality" (14:16-17a).

According to the revelation in the New Testament, the Spirit of reality is the transfiguration of Christ. When Christ walked on earth as a man in the flesh, He was not yet the Spirit of reality. But after He had been crucified to accomplish an all-inclusive redemption and had entered into resurrection, He became a life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b). The Christ who was once in the flesh has become the Spirit who gives life. This Spirit is *the* Spirit, the consummation of the processed Triune God. The life-giving Spirit today is the consummation of the processed Triune God. What the Father is, what the Son is, and what the Spirit is have all been consummated into this all-inclusive Spirit. This is the reason Revelation 22:17 speaks of "the Spirit." "The Spirit and the bride say, Come!"

The Spirit is not only power, strength, and energy—He is a person. However, we may not realize that we have such a person living in us and walking with us. We are not alone; we have another person—Christ as the Spirit of reality—in us and with us. This means that when we take Christ in and

enjoy Him, we are taking in and enjoying a person. We all need to realize that we have Christ as a person within us.

In Matthew 28:20 the Lord Jesus said, "Behold, I am with you all the days." This means that He is with us every day. Do you have the sense that the Lord Jesus is with you as a person? Even though this person still has the human nature as well as the divine nature, He is no longer in the flesh, for He has been transfigured to be the Spirit. He is now the consummated Spirit, the Spirit who is the consummation of the processed Triune God.

Do you realize that we have a processed God and that this processed God has become the consummated Spirit? I can testify that I have the deep sense that such a person is in me and with me, helping me, strengthening me, energizing me, and watching over me. Because Paul had this kind of realization, he could say, "I can do all things in Him who empowers me" (Phil. 4:13).

The Bible reveals that Christ is a wonderful person and that this wonderful person is today the life-giving Spirit. He is the consummated Triune God as the compound Spirit who is with us all the time for our enjoyment. How may we enjoy Him? We may enjoy Him as all the offerings.

The thought that we may enjoy Christ as the offerings is hidden in the book of Leviticus. For example, we may enjoy Christ as the burnt offering. We cannot be absolute for God, but Christ as the burnt offering is absolute for Him. Therefore, we should take Christ as the burnt offering and enjoy Him as the burnt offering. To have this experience and enjoyment of Christ we need to pray, saying, "Lord Jesus, You are a wonderful person. You are the consummated Spirit with me all the time, and You are with me to be my burnt offering. Lord, I cannot satisfy God, but You can satisfy Him. I cannot be absolute for God, but You have always been and still are absolute for Him. Now, Lord Jesus, I take You as my burnt offering." By praying like this we will enjoy Christ as our burnt offering.

We may also enjoy Christ as our meal offering. As the meal offering, Christ is food for God and also for us. With

this food we have frankincense and salt but no leaven or honey. The salt refers to Christ's death and the frankincense to Christ's resurrection. The meal offering, therefore, is full of the death and resurrection of Christ.

The more we pray concerning Christ as the offerings with the realization that He is the life-giving Spirit, the more we will enjoy Him as the offerings. The way to enjoy Christ is to contact Him and take Him in as the Spirit of reality.

Releasing Our Spirit through the Word

If we would experience and enjoy Christ as He is revealed in Leviticus, we should pray not in a mental way but by releasing our spirit through the word in the Bible. This will cause the constant word in the Bible to become the instant word to us. This is the way to enjoy Christ.

Among Christians today, including us, there is a lack of enjoying Christ by releasing our spirit through the word in the Bible. We may learn many things and we may pick up different practices, but we still do not have the adequate exercise of our spirit in prayer with the constant word in the Bible to make it the instant word in our experience that we may enjoy Christ in a practical way. If for a period of time we pray by releasing our spirit through the word, we will have the deep sense that the Lord Jesus is with us to supply us with whatever we need.

Ministering Christ to Others

If we daily enjoy Christ by releasing our spirit through the word and touching the Spirit, we will be full of Christ. Then we will minister Christ to whomever we contact. Even if we do not actually mention Christ, we will minister Christ to others through our fellowship with them.

Enjoying Christ as the offerings is a matter of eating Christ that we may serve God. The more we eat Christ, the more we will be filled with Him and be satisfied with Him. This will enable us to serve God and to worship Him.

Worshipping God does not require that we kneel or bow down. We may worship God even as we minister Christ to

others. Such a ministering of Christ to others is a real worshipping of God with Christ.

First, we ourselves need to be satisfied with Christ as the offerings. Then, enjoying Christ as the capacity to love others, we will minister Christ to them. For instance, on the one hand, we need to take Christ as our sin offering, enjoying His propitiation. On the other hand, we need to minister the Christ we have enjoyed to others, especially to weaker ones who are still living in sin. Through such a ministering of Christ, they will be supplied and enlightened to confess their sins. Eventually, they will go on to be victorious over their sin and to overcome it.

My burden in this message is that the saints in the Lord's recovery would know how to enjoy Christ actually and practically, realizing that He, a wonderful, living person, is our offerings. As the consummated Spirit of the processed Triune God, Christ is everything. He is the Father, the Son, and the Spirit; He is the processed One; He is a man mingled with God. He is also our holy food. This means that He is the offerings becoming our food. He is even our worship to God and the One within us who pleases God. Our need today is to enjoy such a Christ that we may preach Him and minister Him to others.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE FIFTEEN

THE ELEMENTS OF THE MEAL OFFERING FOR THE CHRISTIAN LIFE AND THE CHURCH LIFE

Scripture Reading: Lev. 2:1-2, 4, 11, 13; Luke 1:35; Matt. 1:18, 20; Luke 3:21-22; 4:1; 23:14; Matt. 12:46-50; Mark 10:38; John 12:24; 7:6, 16-18; Rom. 8:2, 3, 6, 9-11, 13; 1 Cor. 10:17

In this message I am burdened to give a further word on the meal offering. However, I am not burdened to speak on the meal offering merely in itself. Rather, my burden is to fellowship with you concerning the elements, the components, of the meal offering in relation to the Christian life and the church life.

THE SPIRIT OF REALITY BEING THE REALITY OF THE OFFERINGS TO US IN OUR EXPERIENCE

In the foregoing message we saw that the reality of all the offerings is Christ realized as the Spirit. This means that in our experience the Spirit is the reality of the offerings. If we do not have the Spirit in a subjective way, we will not have the reality of the offerings but only the doctrine regarding Christ as the offerings. In Himself, Christ is the reality of the offerings, but He cannot be this reality to us apart from His being the life-giving Spirit.

THE FIVE BASIC OFFERINGS

In Leviticus there are five basic offerings: the burnt offering, the meal offering, the peace offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering. It is difficult for us to say which of these five offerings is the main offering. Some may say that the peace offering is the main offering because, according to chapters one through five of Leviticus, it stands in the center. Others may say that the main offering is the burnt

offering, which signifies Christ as the One who is absolute for God. Still others may say that, since we have the problems of sin and sins in our daily life, either the sin offering or the trespass offering is the main offering. Although we need all the basic offerings, the main offering with respect to the experience of Christ in its many aspects and details is the meal offering.

In understanding the book of Leviticus, we today are standing on the shoulders of many Bible teachers, especially those among the Brethren, who have gone before us. We surely must give credit to them. Nevertheless, because we are on their shoulders, we can see things which they have not seen. One of these things is the matter of enjoying the offerings in order to be constituted to become a certain kind of person. We become what we eat. If we eat Christ as the meal offering, we will be constituted with Christ.

We need to know the elements that compose the meal offering. We need to realize that the meal offering includes four elements but specifically excludes two other elements. To know all these elements is to know Christ in a practical and detailed way.

FINE FLOUR

The first element in the meal offering is the fine flour. This fine flour signifies Christ's humanity, which is balanced and fine.

THE OIL

Whereas the fine flour in the meal offering signifies humanity, the oil signifies divinity. The oil signifies God. The fine flour is the base, and the oil is added to it.

If we read Leviticus 2 carefully, we will see that the oil is added to the flour in three ways. The oil may be mingled with the flour, or it may be poured on the flour. The flour may also be anointed with the oil. The most important way of adding the oil to the flour is mingling the flour with the oil. The fine flour does not remain dry but is "oiled" both inwardly and outwardly.

FRANKINCENSE

The third element is frankincense. In typology frankincense signifies resurrection. The sweet savor of frankincense signifies the fragrance of Christ's resurrection. How sweet Christ is in His resurrection!

SALT

The fourth element of the meal offering is salt. In typology salt signifies the death, or the cross, of Christ. Salt seasons, kills germs, and preserves. This is the effect of the cross of Christ.

NO LEAVEN OR HONEY IN THE MEAL OFFERING

The meal offering is to have neither leaven nor honey. Leaven signifies sin and other negative things. In the Gospels the Lord Jesus speaks of the leaven of the Pharisees, the leaven of the Sadducees, and the leaven of Herod (Matt. 16:6, 11-12; Luke 12:1; Mark 8:15).

Honey signifies the natural human life. It signifies our natural life not in its bad aspect but in its good aspect. We should not think that people are always bad, for sometimes they are very good. But this natural goodness is honey. Hatred is leaven, but natural love is honey. Likewise, pride is leaven, but natural humility is honey.

Honey seems to be different from leaven. However, after a period of time honey can ferment, and this fermentation will issue in leaven. This indicates that whether we are good or bad, the result will eventually be the same. This is the reason Genesis 2 speaks of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. We may be either good or bad, but in either case the result will be leaven.

We may use divorce as an illustration of the fermentation of honey. With a marriage that ends in divorce, a certain kind of honey—natural love—has fermented and issued in leaven. From this illustration we see that the issue of both hatred, which is leaven, and natural love, which is honey, is the same. The negative things are leaven, and the good

aspects of the natural life signified by honey eventually ferment and become leaven.

The life Christ lived on earth was a life without leaven and without honey, and we should live the same kind of life today. We need to have the four positive elements—fine flour, oil, frankincense, and salt—but not the two negative elements—leaven and honey. If this is our situation, we will be a proper meal offering, an offering composed of humanity oiled with divinity in resurrection through Christ's death and without leaven and honey. This kind of life is food to satisfy God and also to nourish us as God's serving ones.

THE PORTRAIT IN THE FOUR GOSPELS OF CHRIST'S HUMAN LIVING ON EARTH

In the four Gospels we have a portrait of Christ's human living on earth. He was God in eternity, but through incarnation He became a real man, and He lived on earth as a man.

The Spirit in Christ's Human Living

Christ's humanity has much to do with the Spirit of God. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35; Matt. 1:18, 20). From the time of conception, that is, from the very beginning of His manhood, His humanity was wrapped up with the Holy Spirit. Apart from the Holy Spirit, Jesus could not have been conceived and born. The Lord's conception and birth were altogether of the Holy Spirit. His humanity was mingled with the Holy Spirit. Christ's human living was based on this mingling.

When the Lord Jesus came forth to minister for God, He was baptized. "As Jesus was baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form as a dove upon Him" (Luke 3:21b-22a). The fact that the Holy Spirit descended in the form of a dove, which is known for its gentleness, indicates that the Spirit of God is a person and not merely a power, channel, or instrument. The Holy Spirit as a person came upon the Lord Jesus. This means that just as oil was poured upon the fine flour, the Holy

Spirit was poured upon the Lord Jesus. On the one hand, in His humanity He was mingled with the Holy Spirit; on the other hand, the Holy Spirit was poured upon Him and anointed Him.

The first part of Luke 4:1 speaks of "Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit." He was full of the Spirit, thoroughly oiled with the Spirit, because He was mingled with the Spirit and because the Spirit had been poured upon Him. He thus behaved and worked in the Spirit. Everything He did in His ministry was done in the Spirit—in the essential Spirit and also in the economical Spirit. He is a man mingled with the Spirit and with the Spirit poured upon Him.

A Faultless Humanity—a Human Life with No Leaven

The humanity and human living of the Lord Jesus were without fault. He was brought to Pilate to be judged by the Roman authority, but Pilate declared that he could not find any fault in Him (Luke 23:14). The Lord Jesus had no sin. In Him there was no leaven.

Denying the Natural Life—a Human Life with No Honey

With the Lord Jesus there is no honey. One day, while He was speaking to the crowds, "His mother and His brothers stood outside seeking to speak to Him. And someone said to Him, Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You" (Matt. 12:46-47). When He heard this, He said to the one who spoke to Him, "Who is My mother, and who are My brothers? And stretching out His hand over His disciples, He said, Behold, My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father who is in the heavens, he is My brother and sister and mother" (vv. 48-50). This indicates that with Him there is no honey, that He denied the natural life,

In Acts 15:36-39 there was a problem between Paul and Barnabas. This problem was caused by the honey of the natural life. Barnabas wanted to take John Mark with them

on their travels, but "Paul did not consider it suitable to take with them this one who withdrew from them in Pamphylia and did not go with them to the work" (v. 38). As a result, "there arose a sharp contention, so that they separated from each other" (v. 39a). Mark was Barnabas's cousin (Col. 4:10), and it is likely that the problem between Paul and Barnabas was caused by the natural relationship between Barnabas and Mark. Paul, who was vindicated by the divine record (Acts 15:39b-40), did not agree with this honey.

In our Christian life, we need to learn of the Lord Jesus to avoid the natural life as much as possible. As believers, we surely need to love others, but we should be careful not to love in a natural way. How easy it is for us to love others in a natural, human way! Even in the church life we may love those who are naturally the same as we are. We may love a certain brother because his disposition is similar to ours. This kind of love is honey; it is a natural love.

In Philippians 2:2 Paul speaks of "having the same love." To have the same love is to have a love for all the saints that is on the same level. In ourselves we cannot have this kind of love, for our natural tendency is to have a love that is on different levels. Our love for certain saints may be on a higher level than our love for other saints. This is honey. The love of the Lord Jesus is not like this.

A Life That Is Always Salted

Mark 10:38 and John 12:24 indicate that the Lord Jesus was always salted, that He always lived a life under the shadow of the cross. Before He was actually crucified, He daily lived a crucified life.

In Mark 10:38 the Lord Jesus asked James and John, "Are you able to drink the cup which I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" When they said that they were able, He went on to say, "The cup which I drink you shall drink; and the baptism with which I am baptized, you shall be baptized" (v. 39). Both the cup and the baptism refer to Christ's death (John 18:11; Luke 12:50). To drink the Lord's cup and to be baptized with the

baptism with which He has been baptized are to experience His death, to have His death applied to us in our experience.

A hymn that speaks of being salted is *Hymns,* #631. The second stanza and the chorus say:

If I'd have Christ formed within me,
I must breathe my final breath,
Live within the Cross's shadow,
Put my soul-life e'er to death.

If no death, no life,
If no death, no life;
Life from death alone arises;
If no death, no life.

The life Christ lived was a life of being salted. For us to experience the cross today is to be salted. We need to receive the salt in our daily life. If we do this, we will be the fine flour for the meal offering.

In John 12, when the Lord Jesus entered Jerusalem, He was welcomed by the crowd. Humanly speaking, that was His golden time. However, when He heard that the people were seeking Him, He said, "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (v. 24). This word indicates that instead of allowing Himself to be exalted, the Lord Jesus was salted. He seemed to be saying, "I am a grain of wheat. I do not need to be welcomed, glorified, and exalted by people. I need to fall into the earth and die."

We need to learn of the Lord Jesus to be salted. When others welcome us, exalt us, and glorify us, it is very easy for us to have honey instead of salt. Whenever we are welcomed or exalted by others, we should apply salt to ourselves and be persons who want not to be exalted but to die. This means that we should learn to apply the cross of Christ.

A Life in Resurrection

Since the Lord Jesus always lived a life of being salted, a life under the cross, He was always in resurrection. The life He lived was a life in resurrection.

For the Lord Jesus to live in resurrection meant that He denied Himself and His natural life and that He lived not Himself but the Father. We see this clearly in John 7. In verse 6 He said, "My time has not yet come, but your time is always ready." Whereas others had the liberty to go anywhere at any time, He was limited, not living in the natural life.

In verses 16 through 18 He went on to say, "My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me. If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from Myself. He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory, but He who seeks the glory of Him who sent Him, this One is true, and unrighteousness is not in Him." Here we see that the Lord Jesus did not speak His own word but the Father's word. The source of His speaking was not Himself—it was the Father. This indicates that He rejected His natural life and lived by the life of the Father. This is resurrection. Therefore, even before He was crucified, the Lord Jesus lived a life in resurrection, denying the natural life and living the Father's life.

We need to live in resurrection in our married life and family life. Suppose something happens in your married life to make you unhappy. If at such a time you live yourself and your own life, surely you will lose your temper. But instead of living your own life, you may live the kind of life revealed in Galatians 2:20. In this verse Paul first says, "I have been crucified with Christ." This is a matter of experiencing the salt, of being put to death, of being crossed out. Then Paul continues, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me." This is resurrection.

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE— A DUPLICATION OF CHRIST'S LIFE

When the Lord Jesus was on earth, He was fine flour, He was oiled with the Holy Spirit, He was always being salted, and He lived in resurrection, having the flavor of frankincense. But with Him there was neither leaven nor honey. Therefore, He could be a meal offering.

The situation with us today should be the same. This means that our Christian life should be a duplication, a xerox copy, of Christ's life. This is clearly revealed in Romans 8.

Romans 8 puts Christ and us together. Here we have Christ's humanity (v. 3), the Spirit of life (v. 2), the cross (v. 13), and resurrection (v. 11) wrapped up together as one. This shows us the kind of living we should have today. We should live the same kind of life Christ lived. He was a man, and we also are human. He was oiled with the Spirit, and we also have been at least somewhat oiled with the Spirit. We have been mingled with the Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from among the dead. Christ was salted, crucified, and we also should put our natural being to death. Furthermore, Christ lived in resurrection, and we also may live in resurrection.

Romans 8 definitely reveals that we should be a duplication of Christ as the meal offering. We should be a copy, a reproduction, of Him and thus be the same as He is. Christ became a person in the flesh, and we today are persons in the flesh. As a man in the flesh, Christ was oiled with the Spirit. Today we are being oiled by the indwelling Spirit. The Spirit dwells within us to do the work of oiling us. Since the indwelling Spirit is oiling us, we should set our mind on the spirit, not on the flesh (v. 6). Then by the Spirit we should put to death the practices of the body (v. 13). If we do this, we will live, and this life will be a life in resurrection. As a result, we will be suitable to be a meal offering for God's satisfaction.

The purpose of the meal offering is to satisfy God. The top portion of the meal offering, the portion containing the frankincense, was burned in fire for God's satisfaction. Christ today is the reality of the meal offering. He alone has the fragrance that ascends to God for His satisfaction. In the entire universe, Christ is the only person who can be offered to God in fire to produce the fragrance that satisfies God and makes Him happy and joyful.

As the members of Christ, we should be His duplication and live the same kind of life He lived. This is a life of

humanity oiled with the Holy Spirit. Day by day we need to be oiled with the Holy Spirit. We should also continually receive the salt; that is, we should receive Christ's cross and put our natural deeds to death. Then we will live in resurrection and have the frankincense for God's satisfaction.

All the frankincense in the meal offering was burned in fire. This indicates that all the frankincense was for God; none of the frankincense was for the priests. From this we see that all the frankincense in Christ as the meal offering is burned to produce a fragrance for God's satisfaction. This was Christ's experience. Since we are the members of Christ, His duplication, this should also be our experience today.

TWO FORMS OF THE MEAL OFFERING

In Leviticus 2 we see that the meal offering can be in different forms. Our concern here is with two particular forms of the meal offering. The meal offering may be in the form of flour mingled with oil, or it may be in the form of a cake. The flour meal offering signifies the individual Christ; it also signifies the individual Christian. The cake meal offering signifies the corporate Christ, Christ with His Body, the church. The New Testament reveals that the individual Christ has become the corporate Christ (1 Cor. 12:12) signified by the cake. Paul says, "We who are many are one bread, one Body; for we all partake of the one bread" (1 Cor. 10:17). This one bread is a "cake."

With the meal offering there is the individual aspect, and there is also the corporate aspect. Today Christ does not live merely in an individual way; He also lives with His Body, the church. Christ lives before God in a corporate way. He is the Head, and He has His Body with its members. Therefore, with the meal offering in the form of a cake we have the church life.

In order to have a cake meal offering, we need fine flour mingled with oil. The mingling of flour and oil will produce dough. The dough is then baked in an oven and becomes a cake. This cake is a symbol of the church life. This symbol indicates that eventually Christ's life and our individual

Christian life become a totality, and this totality is the church life.

The church life is not an angelic life but a life full of humanity. However, some Christians have been told that they should try to be like angels and no longer live like human beings. This concept is altogether wrong. If we would have more church life, we need more humanity. For the church life we need to be very human. But this humanity should not be separate from the Holy Spirit;

rather, it should be a humanity which is mingled with the Holy Spirit and which has the Holy Spirit poured upon it. In other words, for the church life we need to be oiled persons, those who are oiled by the Spirit and with the Spirit. Furthermore, we should not have leaven or honey, but we should have salt and frankincense. In our life much salt, the death of the cross, should be applied, and we should be full of resurrection. This is the proper church life.

If we would have this kind of church life, we must be full of humanity and live like men, not like angels. However, certain sisters, and even some brothers, are trying to live as if they were angels. These saints are peculiar and lacking in humanity. The more you try to be an angel, the more peculiar you will be. Instead of being human, you will be a "ghost." Therefore, I say again that in the church life we need to be full of humanity, but not with a humanity that is independent of the Holy Spirit.

We should be fully dependent on the Holy Spirit, being oiled with Him inwardly and having Him poured upon us outwardly. If we are such persons, we will be full of the Spirit. We will be centered on the Spirit and possessed by the Spirit. We will also live a life that is through salt and in frankincense, that is, a life that is through the death of Christ and in His resurrection. The salt will deal with the leaven, with the germs of sin; the salt will also deal with the honey, putting the natural life to death. This is the way to have a meal offering church life.

The meal offering church life can be burned to produce a satisfying fragrance for God, and the remainder of this

offering will be our food. This means that we will eat our church life, for the church life will be our daily supply. Thus, the meal offering which is our daily supply is not merely Christ but Christ with the church life. Now we are feeding on Christ, and we are also feeding on the church life. We eat the meal offering not only in the first form as flour—the individual Christ; we also eat the meal offering in the second form as a cake—the corporate Christ, the church. I believe that in the coming days in all the churches we will see a meal offering church life, a life that first satisfies God and then feeds us.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE SIXTEEN

THE MEAL OFFERING CHURCH LIFE

Scripture Reading: 1 Cor. 1:2, 9, 18, 22-24, 30; 2:2-4,12; 3:16; 5:6-8; 6:5, 17, 19; 7:20, 24, 40; 9:22, 26-27; 10:16-17, 23-24, 31; 11:27-29; 12:3, 4, 11, 18, 24, 27; 13:4-7; 14:26,40; 15:9-10; 16:13

The book of 1 Corinthians shows us a particular kind of church life. Since the church life revealed here has so many aspects, it is difficult for us to summarize this church life in a phrase or a clause or even a sentence. If we are enlightened concerning the meal offering, which describes the life of the Lord Jesus on earth, we will be able to see that the church life described in 1 Corinthians corresponds to the life of the Lord Jesus. This life was the formation of the meal offering, and the church life presented in 1 Corinthians may be called the meal offering church life.

We have seen that the meal offering contains four elements: fine flour, oil, frankincense, and salt. The fine flour signifies Christ's fine humanity, the oil signifies the Spirit of God, the frankincense signifies the fragrance of Christ's resurrection, and the salt signifies the cross of Christ, which, in a subjective way, deals with all the negative things in our life.

We have also seen that the meal offering does not have either leaven or honey. Leaven signifies sin and all the negative things. Honey signifies the natural life in its good aspects, including natural affection.

If we read the four Gospels, we will see that the four elements of the meal offering were the components of Christ's life on earth and caused Him to be the real meal offering. As Christians, we should live the same kind of life the Lord Jesus lived. This means that, strictly speaking, the Christian life should be a meal offering.

A LIFE WITH THE HIGHEST HUMANITY

In order for our Christian life to be a meal offering, it must be a life with the highest humanity. This is the reason Paul charged the Corinthians, saying, "Be a man" (1 Cor. 16:13). According to the context of 1 Corinthians, to be a man means that we should have a high, uplifted humanity.

If we have such a humanity, we will exercise self-control. This is indicated by Paul's word in 9:26 and 27. "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so I box, not as beating the air; but I buffet my body and lead it as a slave." These verses reveal that Paul had a high humanity and that he had a strong, excellent character. He did not run uncertainly or beat the air but exercised control over himself. He was a real man with a high standard of morality in his human living.

First Corinthians 13:4-7 is a description of love. This description actually shows us a fine humanity. Verse 4 says, "Love suffers long, and is kind; love is not jealous; love does not brag, is not puffed up." In our weak humanity, we have only limited patience, but love suffers long. Also, it is easy for us to be jealous and covetous, but love is not jealous. Furthermore, love does not behave unbecomingly, does not seek its own things, is not provoked, does not take account of evil, and does not rejoice over unrighteousness (vv. 5-6a). On the contrary, love rejoices with the truth, covers all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things (vv. 6b-7). Here we have a description of a fine humanity and of a high human character. This indicates that 1 Corinthians is a book concerned with the uplifting of humanity.

In 16:13 Paul does not say, "Be a hero"; he says, "Be a man." From every angle and from every side, we should be a man. From the angle of ethics, we should be a man. From the angle of self-control, we should be a man. From the angles of wisdom and love, we should be a man. This is to have an uplifted humanity. In the book of 1 Corinthians, we can see the genuine fine flour. This book surely presents the meal offering church life.

In the meal offering church life, the first item is a fine,

uplifted humanity. If we would have the proper church life, we all need to have a strong character. This strong character, however, should be balanced, for an unbalanced humanity is a biased humanity. Therefore, we should be strong and also soft. If in the church life we are strong without also being soft, we will offend others. Although we need to be soft as well as strong, we should not be too soft. Those who are too soft are like noodles. There is a proverb which says that we can lift up bamboo but we cannot lift up a noodle. We cannot have a proper church life if the saints are either too strong or too soft. We need to be balanced. For the church life, we need to be a man with a fine, balanced, uplifted humanity.

CHRIST—THE MAN GIVEN TO US BY GOD

Chapter one of 1 Corinthians reveals that Christ is the man given to us by God. Verse 2 says that the Lord Jesus Christ is "theirs and ours." Christ is yours and mine. As John 3:16 tells us, God loved the world—fallen mankind—and gave His only begotten Son to us. Now Christ is ours, and we have been called into the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord (1 Cor. 1:9). We may now enjoy Him, participate in Him, and share Him with one another.

Furthermore, 1:30 says, "Of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became wisdom to us from God: both righteousness and sanctification and redemption." It is of God that we are in Christ Jesus, and Christ has become wisdom to us. Such a Christ has been given to us.

Christ is God's present, God's gift, to us. This present is a person; He is the Son of God and also the God-man. God has also called us into the enjoyment of this gift and has made this gift to be wisdom to us, righteousness and sanctification and redemption. This is Christ as a man revealed in 1 Corinthians 1.

THE SPIRIT OF GOD

The second element in the meal offering is the oil, which signifies the Spirit of God. First Corinthians has a great deal to say about the Spirit. Paul speaks of the Spirit of God

in chapters two and three. In 2:4 he says that his speech and preaching were "in demonstration of the Spirit," and in verse 12 he tells us that we have received "the Spirit which is from God, that we may know the things which have been freely given to us by God." Then in 3:16 he goes on to say, "Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwells in you?" Many Christians do not realize that they are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in them. Do you know that in your daily life there is One who indwells you? Do you realize that the Spirit of God takes you as His dwelling place? The Spirit has been given to us, and now He dwells in us.

In 6:17 Paul says, "He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit." This indicates the mingling of the Lord as the Spirit with our spirit. Since we are one spirit with the Lord, we are part of Him. This does not mean that we are part of God as an object of worship; it means that we are a part of the Lord in our life experience. In our spirit we are one with the divine Spirit. We have been oiled with the Spirit, and we have even been joined to the Spirit. Not only have we received the Holy Spirit—we are one with Him.

If we were not one with the Spirit, we could not have the church life. The church life is a life of humanity oiled by the Holy Spirit and with the Holy Spirit. We are one with the Holy Spirit, and we need to remain in this oneness.

CHRIST IN RESURRECTION

In 1 Corinthians we also have the frankincense, that is, Christ in resurrection. In fact, one entire chapter, chapter fifteen, is devoted to the matter of resurrection. Therefore, in this book we surely have the fragrance of the resurrected Christ.

Some of the Corinthians had been deceived by the Devil to say that there would be no resurrection of the dead. Paul argued with them, saying, "If there is no resurrection of the dead, neither has Christ been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then is our preaching vain; your faith also is vain; and we are found also false witnesses of God, because

we witnessed concerning God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise if indeed the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, neither has Christ been raised" (15:13-16).

In 15:9 and 10 Paul speaks concerning his experience of the resurrected Christ. First, in verse 9 he refers to himself as "the least of the apostles." Then in verse 10 he says, "But by the grace of God I am what I am; and His grace unto me was not in vain, but I labored more abundantly than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me." In this verse the grace of God equals resurrection; it equals the resurrected Christ. The grace of God which we are enjoying today is Christ in resurrection. With Paul we can say that it is not I but the grace of God, not I but Christ in resurrection.

In verse 58 Paul gives us a word of encouragement. "Wherefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." Our labor is not in vain because we are laboring not in our natural life but in the resurrection of Christ. Our labor for the Lord in His resurrection life will never be in vain.

REMAINING IN THE STATE IN WHICH WE WERE CALLED

In chapter seven Paul charges the believers to remain in the state in which they were called. "Each one, brothers, in what state he was called, in this let him remain with God" (v. 24). He uses the slaves as an example. "Were you a slave when called? Let it not concern you; but, if even you are able to become free, use it rather. For he who was called in the Lord when a slave is the Lord's freedman" (vv. 21-22a). Instead of doing a work of emancipation, Paul encouraged the believers who were slaves to remain in slavery, the state in which they were called, and live a life that can endure slavery and overcome it. The slaves have a particular opportunity to demonstrate the reality of resurrection and to glorify Christ by living a life that overcomes slavery. What a testimony such a living would be!

The principle is the same with married life. Paul says, "A wife should not be separated from her husband" (v. 10). In verses 12 and 13 he goes on to say, "If any brother has an unbelieving wife and she consents to dwell with him, let him not leave her; and a wife who has an unbelieving husband and he consents to dwell with her, let her not leave her husband." This requires a high humanity. The reason there are so many divorces today is that people's humanity is too weak. To stay with a husband or wife who is difficult to live with and whom we may not like requires that we "be a man" and have an uplifted humanity.

I knew a married couple who, before they were saved, decided to get a divorce. They did not love each other, and they were determined to be divorced. However, they heard the gospel, received the Lord Jesus, and were saved. From that time on, they had Christ as another person living in them, and He uplifted their humanity and changed their character. They dropped the idea of divorce and began to live together in sweetness, in the fragrance of Christ's resurrection. Those who contacted them could sense the fragrance of the resurrection life of Christ.

Paul's way in 1 Corinthians 7 is very unusual and also very wise. He did not force a brother to stay with his wife. Rather, he charged the saints to remain with God in the state in which they were called. Those who are married should not leave their wife or husband, for to leave one's spouse is actually to leave God. Married believers are to remain with their spouse in the presence of God.

The point here is that the saints should not expect to have a change in their status. Concerning this, we may take Paul as an example. He, a Jew, was born under Roman imperialism. However, he never encouraged the Jews to emancipate themselves from the Romans. On the contrary, in Romans 13 he charged the saints to be subject to the authorities of the Roman empire. This indicates that he encouraged them not to change their status but to remain in the state in which they were called.

The worse this state is, the more opportunity one has to

live Christ. Those in slavery can live Christ in resurrection while they are in slavery. This is to be a man. We all can be men oiled with the Spirit and joined to the Spirit to be one spirit, and we can be fully in resurrection, manifesting the fragrance of the resurrected Christ.

THE CROSS OF CHRIST

The salt—the fourth element of the meal offering—can also be found in 1 Corinthians. In writing to the Corinthians, Paul spoke regarding the cross of Christ and the crucified Christ. "Jews indeed ask for signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified" (1:22-23a). Paul did not say that he preached Christ glorified; he said that he preached Christ crucified. Paul did not preach miracles or wisdom—he preached Christ crucified.

The crucified Christ is a Christ who does nothing to save Himself. When the Lord Jesus was on the cross, "the chief priests with the scribes, mocking with one another, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save! Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe!" (Mark 15:31-32a). No matter how much He was challenged, the Lord Jesus remained on the cross, doing nothing to save Himself.

To the Corinthians Paul preached such a crucified Christ. To the Greeks, who were proud of their culture and wisdom, this was foolishness. The situation is the same today. People are still proud of their culture and wisdom, and we need to preach the crucified Christ to them.

First Corinthians 1:18 says, "The word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." Through the preaching of the gospel, the word of the cross can save people. If we would have power in preaching the gospel, we need to live a crucified life. We must learn to live a crucified life, being crossed out every day. We may experience this in our married life, for every wife is a cross to her husband and every husband is a cross to his wife. This arrangement, which is for our salting, is of the Lord's sovereignty.

We are salted not only in our married life but also in the church life. There is such a thing as being salted in the church life. On the one hand, in the church life we have happiness. On the other hand, we also have the unpleasantness that comes from being salted. Deep within, the brothers may feel that they are being salted, crossed out, by the sisters. The sisters may have the same feeling about the brothers. In the church life a great deal of salting takes place.

In 1 Corinthians Paul does not teach us to be glorified. He teaches us to be crucified. Without the cross, there is no church life. If there is no salt, there is no meal offering. The meal offering must be salted.

DEALING WITH LEAVEN— THE SINFUL AND NEGATIVE THINGS

We have pointed out that in the meal offering there is neither leaven nor honey. In 1 Corinthians both leaven—the sinful and negative things—and honey—the natural life—are dealt with.

In 5:6b-8 we have the dealing with leaven. "Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, even as you are unleavened. For indeed our Passover, Christ, has been sacrificed. Let us therefore keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with leaven of malice and evil, but with unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." Here we see that leaven is not tolerated in the church life.

DEALING WITH HONEY— THE NATURAL LIFE

First Corinthians 15:10 indicates that in Paul's experience the honey, the natural life, was dealt with. Recall that in this verse he says, "I labored more abundantly than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God." Paul's labor was not by the I, not by the natural life, not by honey.

Paul certainly was not a person with a weak character. Before he was saved he was very strong in character, taking the lead to persecute the saints. But after he was saved, he

was made an apostle and he labored more than the other apostles. However, his labor was not in the natural life.

In the church life the natural life and the natural affection should be dealt with. This means that there should be no honey in the church life. We all like to be natural and live a natural life, but in the church life the natural life is not permitted. It must be put to death. The honey of the natural life must be killed by the salt, by the cross of Christ.

We should not put any leaven or honey in the meal offering. This means that in the church life we should not have the negative things or the natural life.

ONE BREAD

The church life is a corporate meal offering signified by the one bread in 10:17. "Seeing that we who are many are one bread, one Body; for we all partake of the one bread." This bread, or cake, signifies the corporate life.

We enjoy this corporate life when we partake of the Lord's table. Do you take the bread and the cup by yourself? Of course not! You partake of the bread and the cup with the saints. This is a matter of fellowship. This is the reason 10:16 says, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a fellowship of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a fellowship of the body of Christ?" Because this is a matter of fellowship, we partake of the bread and of the cup in a corporate way. This corporate partaking is a sign of the church life; it is also a testimony of the church life.

All the points covered in 1 Corinthians are related to the church life, to the corporate life. According to this book, for this corporate life we need to be a man who is oiled with the Holy Spirit, who lives a life under the cross with the resurrection of Christ as the frankincense, and who does not have leaven or honey. This is the church life as a meal offering.

The whole church life is a meal offering. In this meal offering the top portion is for God's enjoyment, and the remainder is for us to take as our daily food in our service to God. We, therefore, are a meal offering as food for God's satisfaction and for the nourishment of others.

God wants to have a meal offering in every locality. He desires that every local church be a meal offering that satisfies Him and that fully supplies the saints day by day.

Our hunger is satisfied not only by Christ but also by the church life. The church life satisfies us because the church life is a corporate meal offering, with the top portion for God and the remainder for us. Therefore, we are fed by and with the church life. The church life is the meal offering to be our daily supply. Hallelujah for the meal offering church life!

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE SEVENTEEN

THE PEACE OFFERING
CHRIST AS THE PEACE
BETWEEN GOD AND GOD'S PEOPLE
FOR THEIR CO-ENJOYMENT IN FELLOWSHIP

Scripture Reading: Lev. 3:1, 5-7, 12; 6:12; 7:37

The word in Leviticus concerning the offerings was spoken by the Lord in a little tent, the tent of meeting. In the wilderness, apart from millions of people who were busy doing many things, the very God who created the universe came into a small tent. Whatever the Triune God spoke there was for eternity. Through God's wonderful speaking, that little tent of meeting will gradually issue in the New Jerusalem. Every aspect of this speaking concerning Christ and our enjoyment of Christ in togetherness with God will be fulfilled in the New Jerusalem. There in the New Jerusalem we will surely realize that Christ is our burnt offering, meal offering, peace offering, sin offering, trespass offering, wave offering, and heave offering. All these offerings will eventually issue in the New Jerusalem.

In Leviticus the offerings are in a particular sequence. First we have the burnt offering and then the meal offering and then the peace offering. The burnt offering signifies that we must be absolutely for God, and the meal offering indicates that Christ is our daily food. When we are absolutely for God and live by feeding on Christ, the result is peace. We have peace with God and with one another. This means that when Christ satisfies us, He becomes the peace between us and God. Today we are in this peace, which is Christ.

Christ is the One by whom and through whom we are absolutely to God and for God. Christ is also the One on

whom we are feeding every day. He is our daily food. This Christ is now the peace we enjoy with God and with one another. Therefore, the burnt offering, the meal offering, and the peace offering are the basic offerings for us to enjoy Christ as our peace with God and with one another. This is the significance of the sequence of these three offerings.

When we get out of Christ, we have no peace. If we are short of peace, we are short of Christ. The amount of peace we have depends on how much of Christ we have. Having peace is a measurement to show us to what degree we enjoy Christ.

There is no reason for the church people not to have peace. We should not try to have peace by our own effort. The more we try in ourselves to have peace, the less peace we will have. The only way to have peace is to enjoy Christ every day. In the morning we should take Christ as our burnt offering and offer Him to satisfy God. Then we should take Him as our daily food to meet that day's particular need.

We should enjoy Christ today and forget about yesterday and about tomorrow. Yesterday is gone, and we are not in tomorrow. Since yesterday is gone, none of us can remain in it. Whether we were a failure or a success yesterday, yesterday is passed. As Christians we do not have tomorrow; we only have today. Do not bother about tomorrow—live today! What do we have today? We have Christ. Christ is today.

We have seen the significance of the sequence of the first three offerings. Now let us consider a number of matters related to the peace offering.

I. ILLUSTRATED BY THE FATTED CALF AS A PEACEFUL ENJOYMENT BETWEEN THE RECEIVING GOD AND THE RETURNED PRODIGAL IN LUKE 15:23-24

The peace offering is illustrated in Luke 15:23 and 24 by the fatted calf as a peaceful enjoyment between the receiving father, that is, God, and the returned prodigal son, a sinner. The prodigal son came back in a wretched way, but the father

was loving, and he immediately became the receiving father. After the father received the prodigal, the fatted calf was slain for their enjoyment. This fatted calf is an illustration of Christ as our peace offering for our enjoyment with our receiving God. The father and the returned son had a rich enjoyment of the peace offering.

II. THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE PEACE OFFERING TO THE BURNT OFFERING AND THE MEAL OFFERING

A. The Peace Offering Is Based upon God's Satisfaction in the Burnt Offering

The peace offering is based upon God's satisfaction in the burnt offering. The peace offering which God and we enjoy today is based upon Christ's being the burnt offering. This is indicated by Leviticus 3:5 and 6:12. Speaking of the peace offering, 3:5 says, "Aaron's sons shall offer it up in smoke on the altar upon the burnt offering, which is on the wood that is on the fire; it is an offering by fire of a satisfying fragrance to Jehovah." Here we see that the burnt offering is a base for the peace offering to be received by God. With the burning of the burnt offering as the basis, God receives the peace offering.

B. The Peace Offering Is an Issue of the Enjoyment of God and Man in the Meal Offering

The peace offering is an issue of the enjoyment of God and man in the meal offering (7:37). On the one hand, the peace offering is based on the burnt offering; on the other hand, the peace offering is an issue of the enjoyment of the meal offering.

This is not a matter of doctrine but of experience. If we would enjoy Christ as peace in a practical, daily way, we must first take Him as our burnt offering to satisfy God. Then we must feed on Him as the meal offering, enjoying Him as our food. Immediately Christ will become our peace offering. I believe that we all have experienced this.

Although we have experienced Christ as the offerings, we may not have had the knowledge of the pictures in Leviticus. In presenting these pictures, Leviticus uses a number of technical terms. Many of us have experienced Christ without knowing these technical terms. One of these terms is *burnt offering.* In the morning, we may pray, "Father God, I love Your Son, and I would like to offer Him to You." We enjoy Christ so sweetly and present this Christ to God to make Him happy. This is to present Christ to God as the burnt offering.

After presenting Christ to God as the burnt offering, we may say, "O Lord, You are my daily supply. Without You I cannot live." This is taking Christ as the meal offering, as the life supply. *Meal offering* is the technical term for *life supply.*

When we take Christ as the burnt offering and as the meal offering, we have peace. We have the sense that something within us is joyful and that we are right with God and acceptable to Him. Earlier you might have had a problem and thus were not at peace with God, but now there is no problem, and you are at peace. This is the enjoyment of Christ as the peace offering. We all may have this experience and enjoyment every day.

III. DIFFERENT KINDS OF PEACE OFFERING

In Leviticus we see that there are different kinds of peace offering. Just as the burnt offering is of different sizes, so the peace offering is of different kinds.

A. Not Due to Christ but Due to the Different Conditions of the Offerers' Enjoyment of Christ

The fact that the peace offering is of different kinds is not due to Christ but is due to the different conditions of the offerers' enjoyment of Christ. Sometimes we enjoy a large Christ. At other times something happens, perhaps some disturbance in our family life, that limits our enjoyment of Christ. This does not mean that Christ has become smaller;

it means that the condition in which we enjoy Christ has become narrow and small. Satan seeks to limit our enjoyment of Christ and to narrow the condition in which we are enjoying Christ. Therefore, we must learn to overcome all kinds of situations, even praying in our "private room" (Matt. 6:6) in order to avoid interruptions, so that we may be in a better and higher condition to enjoy a larger Christ.

B. From the Herd, Male or Female

1. Male

Leviticus 3:1 says, "If his offering is a sacrifice of peace offerings—if he offers it from the herd, whether male or female, he shall offer it without blemish before Jehovah." The male signifies the stronger offerer who enjoys Christ as a male of the herd.

It is not Christ who differs in being either strong or weak; it is we who are either strong or weak. If we are strong, we enjoy a stronger Christ. If we are weak, we enjoy a weaker Christ, not a Christ who is weak in Himself but who is weaker in our experience due to our weakness. When we are weak or disappointed, we may have a weaker enjoyment of the strong Christ. Because we are weak, He is weak in our experience.

2. Female

The female signifies the weaker offerer who enjoys Christ as a female of the herd.

Actually, all animals from the herd are strong. Christ Himself is strong. Whether we enjoy a strong Christ or a weak Christ depends on our condition. If our condition is strong, we will enjoy a strong Christ. If our condition is weak, we will enjoy a weak Christ.

C. From the Flock, a Sheep or a Goat

1. Sheep

Leviticus 3:6 and 7 say, "If his offering for a sacrifice of peace offerings to Jehovah is from the flock, male or female, he shall offer it without blemish. If he is offering a sheep for

his offering, then he shall offer it before Jehovah." A sheep signifies that some enjoy Christ in His perfection and beauty as a sheep. I believe that we all have had this kind of experience, enjoying Christ in His perfection and beauty.

2. Goat

Verse 12 says, "If his offering is a goat, then he shall offer it before Jehovah." Here a goat signifies that some enjoy Christ as a goat, not much in His perfection and beauty.

According to Matthew 25, the sheep are good and the goats are not good. How, then, can we experience Christ sometimes as a sheep and sometimes as a goat? If our condition is pitiful, we will not enjoy Christ as a sheep in His perfection and beauty. Rather, we will enjoy Him as a goat without perfection and beauty. Suppose a brother tries to enjoy Christ after quarreling with his wife. At such a time his enjoyment of Christ will be poor; he will enjoy Christ not as a sheep but as a goat. This indicates that in our feeling Christ differs according to our condition. Of course, it is not Christ Himself who differs. It is we who differ in our feeling according to our condition.

IV. WITHOUT BLEMISH

The peace offering was to be without blemish (3:1, 6). This signifies being without sins and transgressions. As our peace offering, Christ is perfect. He is without blemish.

V. LAYING HANDS ON THE HEAD OF THE OFFERING

The one who offered the peace offering was to lay his hand on the head of the offering (3:2, 8, 13). This signifies the union of the offerer with the offering. Instead of the word "union," perhaps we should use the word "identification." Through the laying on of hands, the offerer is identified with the offering.

Concerning this, we should be careful about saying that Christ replaces us. Our relationship with Christ is not a matter of replacement; it is a matter of identification. It is

even more than union. Thus the word union cannot fully convey the truth regarding our fellowship with Christ. Our fellowship with Christ is a matter of identification, a matter of us becoming Him and of Him becoming us. We and Christ are one. We become Him and He becomes us. We should therefore change our concept concerning replacement. To be replaced by Christ means that we are removed altogether. Our relationship with Christ is a matter not of replacement but of being one with Him.

VI. SLAUGHTERED AT THE DOOR OF THE TENT OF MEETING

The peace offering was slaughtered at the door of the tent of meeting (vv. 2, 8, 13). This signifies that Christ was slain on the earth and before God.

Today we may enjoy Christ here on earth. Do not wait to go to heaven to enjoy Christ. Enjoy Christ on earth, right where you are today. There is a proverb which says that distant water cannot quench our thirst. If Christ were only in heaven, He would not have anything to do with us. Today we are enjoying Christ on earth, in the very place where we are.

VII. THE BLOOD DASHED ON THE ALTAR ALL AROUND

The blood of the peace offering was dashed on the altar all around (vv. 2, 8, 13). This indicates that the blood is for peace in the offerer's conscience.

This blood was not brought into the Holy of Holies to appease God; it was dashed around the altar where the offerer was standing. This shows us that the blood of the peace offering gives us peace and assurance. When we see the blood of the peace offering, we have the assurance that our sins have been washed away. The blood of the offering was shed for our sake, and it is now before our eyes. Therefore, we can say, "Thank You, Lord. My sins have been forgiven. I know this because I see Your blood. The blood is the evidence that God has forgiven my sins."

VIII. ALL THE FAT THAT COVERS THE INWARDS, THE TWO KIDNEYS AND THE FAT ON THEM, THE APPENDAGE ON THE LIVER, AND THE ENTIRE FAT TAIL TO BE BURNED ON THE ALTAR

All the fat that covered the inwards, the two kidneys and the fat on them, the appendage on the liver, and the entire fat tail were to be burned on the altar (vv. 3-5, 9-11, 14-16). This signifies that God should be the first enjoyer, enjoying the first, the best part, of the offering. The best part of the peace offering is God's portion.

IX. AS FOOD OF THE OFFERING BY FIRE

"The priest shall offer them up in smoke on the altar; it is the food of the offering by fire for a satisfying fragrance" (v. 16). This signifies that the peace offering is a kind of burnt offering (1:9, 13, 17) as food to God for His satisfaction and enjoyment.

X. THE BREAST AND THE RIGHT THIGH OF THE OFFERING FOR THE PRIESTS

The breast and the right thigh of the offering were for the priests (7:30-34). This signifies that all the believers who serve God as priests may enjoy Christ with God and may enjoy Him as the loving ability and standing strength. When we eat the breast of Christ, we have His loving ability. We love others and are concerned for them in love. When we eat the thigh of Christ, we have the strength to stand.

XI. THE FAT AND THE BLOOD OF THE OFFERING NOT TO BE EATEN BY THE PRIESTS

The fat and the blood of the offering were not to be eaten by the priests. "It shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations wherever you dwell, that you shall not eat any fat or any blood" (3:17). Not eating the fat and the blood signifies that the best part of Christ is for God's satisfaction and that His blood for our redemption satisfies God's requirements. So in the universe only Jesus' blood is edible to His believers.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE EIGHTEEN

THE SIN OFFERING
CHRIST FOR THE SIN OF GOD'S PEOPLE

(1)

Scripture Reading: Lev. 4:1-35; 1 John 1:5-9; Col. 1:12; Rom. 5:12; 7:17, 20; 8:3; John 1:14; 2 Cor. 5:21; John 3:14; Rom. 6:6; Heb. 2:14; 4:15; Gal. 5:19-21; John 12:31

In the foregoing messages we covered the first three of the five basic offerings—the burnt offering, the meal offering, and the peace offering. The fourth basic offering is the sin offering, and the fifth is the trespass offering. In this message we will begin to consider the sin offering.

THE SEQUENCE OF THE ARRANGEMENT OF THE OFFERINGS

I admire the sequence of the arrangement of the five basic offerings. This sequence is not according to human thought, which would put the sin offering first. We know that we are sinful, and, as the first thing, we want our sin to be dealt with. After this, we might take the burnt offering, the meal offering, and the peace offering. The divine sequence is different from this. The divine sequence opens with the burnt offering, showing us that the primary thing with us should be that we are absolute for God. The burnt offering is followed by the meal offering, which shows us that we should take Christ as our life supply and live by Him daily. As the issue of taking Christ as the burnt offering and the meal offering, we have peace. Although we have peace, we still have certain problems—sin within and sins without—and these surely need to be dealt with.

The sequence of the offerings in Leviticus corresponds to

the sequence in chapter one of 1 John. Verse 5 says, "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." Verse 6 tells us that if we say that we have fellowship with the very God who is light and yet "walk in the darkness, we lie and are not practicing the truth." Verse 7 continues, "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin." This indicates that as we are having fellowship with God and enjoying Him, we will realize that between us and God there is a problem, and this problem is sin.

Sin and Sins

The New Testament deals with the problem of sin by using both the word *sin* in singular and the word *sins* in plural. Sin refers to the indwelling sin, which came through Adam into mankind from Satan (Rom. 5:12). It is dealt with in the second section of Romans, 5:12 to 8:13 (with the exception of 7:5, where *sins is* mentioned). Sins refer to the sinful deeds, the fruits of the indwelling sin, which are dealt with in the first section of Romans, 1:18 to 5:11. However, the singular sin in 1 John 1:7 with the adjective *all* does not denote the indwelling sin but every single sin we have committed (v. 10) after we have been regenerated. This sin defiles our purged conscience and needs to be cleansed away by the blood of the Lord Jesus in our fellowship with God.

Our sin, the indwelling sin in our nature (Rom. 7:17), has been taken care of by Christ as our sin offering (Lev. 4; Isa. 53:10; Rom. 8:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 9:26). Our sins, our trespasses, have been taken care of by Christ as our trespass offering (Lev. 5; Isa. 53:11; 1 Cor. 15:3; 1 Pet. 2:24; Heb. 9:28). After our regeneration we still need to take Christ as our sin offering as indicated in 1 John 1:8 and as our trespass offering as indicated in verse 9.

First John 1:8 says, "If we say that we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us." This verse speaks of indwelling sin, the sin which we inherited by our birth. This is the sin mentioned in Romans 5:12. If we say that, after we have been saved and regenerated, we do not

have sin, we are self-deceived. Although we have been saved and regenerated and although we seek the Lord, love Him, and have fellowship with Him, we still have sin indwelling us. This is a fact. If we deny it, the truth is not in us.

First John 1:9 goes on to say, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous that He may forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." This refers to the confession of our sins after our regeneration, not the confession of our sins before it. Here "sins" denotes our sinful deeds.

A Picture of the Sequence in 1 John

The sequence of the five offerings in Leviticus 1 through 5 is a picture of the sequence in 1 John 1. The burnt offering, the meal offering, and the peace offering bring us into fellowship with God. When we take Christ as our burnt offering before God and when we take Him as our daily life supply, we are brought into divine peace, and in this peace we enjoy the Triune God in fellowship. Therefore, the issue of our experience of the first three offerings is fellowship with God, who is light. In the light we see our failures, our mistakes, and our wrong attitude toward others. Eventually we realize not only that we have outward sins but also that sin dwells in our flesh. We even realize that we ourselves are sin. We have the deep realization that we are nothing but sin.

We may try to be good and do what is right. However, our situation turns out to be the opposite, and we learn to say with Paul, "Now it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells in me" (Rom. 7:17). Through our fellowship with God, who is light, we discover that we are sinful, that we have sin inwardly and sins outwardly. Inwardly we have a sinful "mother," and outwardly we have sinful deeds, which are the "children" of this sinful mother.

Galatians 5:19-21 speaks of the works of the flesh. These works include strife, jealousy, divisions, and parties. Can we say that we are without strife and jealousy in our church life? We cannot say this. In the church life there may also be parties; that is, the saints may take sides with certain ones. This was the situation in Corinth. "Each of you says, I am

of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ" (1 Cor. 1:12). If we have strife, jealousy, divisions, and parties in our church life or family life, we are living and acting in the flesh. If we say that we have fellowship with God and still have these works of the flesh, we are walking in darkness and we are self-deceived. If we have strife, jealousy, divisions, and parties in our church life, this means that our church life is in darkness. Likewise, if we say that we are in fellowship with God but are wrong in our attitude toward our husband or wife, we are self-deceived.

If we truly take Christ as our burnt offering to satisfy God and as our meal offering to be our daily food, we should be in the light and walk in the light. Then in the divine light we will see our failures and shortcomings. If we have an improper attitude toward our husband or wife, we will realize this and confess that it is wrong. If we have criticized certain brothers or taken sides with certain saints, we will realize that this also is wrong. Oh, may we all be willing to be enlightened and look to the Lord for light! If we say that we are enjoying the Lord, we must be in the light.

Colossians 1:12 tells us that Christ is the portion of the saints in the light. Christ is not the portion of the saints in darkness or in criticism or in parties. Where are we—in light or in darkness? We cannot enjoy Christ as the portion of the saints unless we are in the light.

After we enjoy Christ as the first three offerings, we need Him as the sin offering. As we are enjoying Him, we may say from the depths of our being, "Lord, I thank You that I am in Your presence. I love You, Lord, and I take You as my daily supply." Spontaneously the light will shine. The light may shine on a word we spoke to our spouse or on our criticizing of a certain brother. Immediately we will confess and ask the Lord to forgive us.

Quite often, as I was enjoying Him, the Lord enlightened me concerning my speaking well of a certain person and showed me that my speaking was from my flesh, from my natural being, not from my spirit. Therefore, I had to make

confession to the Lord concerning my speaking well of others and of their good points.

Anything that is not in the spirit, whether it is good or evil, is of one source—the flesh. Criticizing others is of the flesh, and speaking well of others from our natural being is also of the flesh. Only what we do by walking, speaking, and behaving absolutely according to the spirit, setting our mind on the spirit (Rom. 8:6), is not of the flesh.

In Romans 8:4 Paul says that the righteous requirement of the law is fulfilled in those who walk according to the spirit. Paul does not say that when we do good things the righteous requirement of the law is fulfilled in us, for doing good things is not according to the tree of life but according to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Instead of trying to do good, we should simply walk according to the spirit. If we do not have the anointing in our spirit, we should not say anything good or bad. This is to walk in the spirit and to be delivered from the flesh.

THE FLESH AND THE CROSS

From the time I brought the Lord's recovery to the United States, I have stressed four matters: Christ, the Spirit, life, and the church. The burden concerning these matters has been very heavy. In this message, however, I am burdened to speak about the flesh and the cross. We need to know what the flesh is and how it is dealt with by the cross of Christ. In the Lord's recovery today, we need a word concerning the flesh and the cross. Our enjoyment of Christ may be full of leaven and honey and may also be lacking in salt. Therefore, I am burdened to minister salt, the cross, to the churches.

In speaking about the flesh and the cross, my concern is not doctrinal but experiential. As long as we live in this body, we still have the flesh. We need to be on the alert. Yes, we have been buried with Christ in baptism, but Satan tries to resurrect what has been buried. Therefore, we need to be watchful, especially when we rise up in the morning. Having enjoyed the Lord in fellowship the night before, we may have

slept peacefully. But when we rise up in the morning, the evil flesh may try to follow us. Although the flesh has been buried, it will still try to incite us to think negatively about our wife or husband or about certain brothers. We need to realize that such thoughts are a devilish resurrection of our flesh.

At such a time we need to pray, saying, "Lord, have mercy on me. I do not want to walk by this ugly flesh instigated by Your enemy. I want to enjoy You, Lord." Then, perhaps with tears, we may go on to pray, "Father, I take Your Son, my dear Lord, as my burnt offering. I cannot be absolutely for You, but I can enjoy such a life in Him. I take Him as my burnt offering to offer to You, Father. I also take Him as my daily food." This will bring us into the enjoyment of Christ as the peace offering. Then, as we are before the Lord, we will be enlightened and exposed, and we will see what kind of person we are. At this point we need the dear Lord Jesus as our sin offering. This is to take as our sin offering the very Christ who is our burnt offering, meal offering, and peace offering. This sequence is not a doctrinal matter. Rather, it is according to our personal, and often painful, experience.

Whenever we have the experience of enjoying peace with the Triune God, we will realize our need of the sin offering. We will confess to the Lord, saying, "Father, I have never realized that I am so sinful. I am not only sinful—I am sin. Sin dwells in my flesh, and I am a totality of sin. I surely need my Lord Jesus to be my sin offering. How I treasure Him as my sin offering!"

Whatever issues from the flesh is sin. Whether we criticize others or praise them, both have their source in the flesh and are sin. The only way to deal with this flesh is the cross, the salt. We need much salt in our daily life, family life, and church life. Only when we have the salt will the "germs" become inactive. The church life today needs "pest control," the killing of germs by the experience of the cross. This killing is the Lord's mercy; it is the Lord's merciful salvation to us.

SIN, THE FLESH, SATAN, AND THE WORLD

According to the New Testament, there are four things that cannot be separated: sin, the flesh, Satan, and the world. These four things are one.

Three Denotations of Flesh in the Bible

In the Bible the word *flesh* has different denotations. First, the flesh denotes the meat of the human body (Gen. 2:21). Second, in Genesis 6:3 the flesh denotes fallen mankind. This is also the denotation in Romans 3:20, where Paul says that "by the works of law no flesh shall be justified" before God. Third, the flesh denotes the corrupted body (Rom. 7:18). God created the human body. But after the body was corrupted, it became the flesh. In contrast to a spiritual person, who lives in the spirit, and a natural person, who lives in the soul, a fleshly, or fleshy, person lives in the lusts of the flesh (1 Cor. 3:1, 3; 2:14).

The Word Becoming Flesh

John 1:14 says, "The Word became flesh." What is the meaning of *flesh* here? According to the context of the whole Gospel of John, the flesh in 1:14 denotes fallen, sinful man. God, the Word, became a fallen, sinful man *but only in likeness.* Paul makes this clear when he tells us in Romans 8:3 that God sent "His own Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin." This proves that the flesh in John 1:14 is the flesh of sin. The meaning of the incarnation is that God became a sinful man *in likeness.* In his note on this verse, Dr. Ryrie says, "Jesus Christ was unique, for He was God from all eternity and yet joined Himself to sinful humanity in the incarnation."

The type of the brass serpent (John 3:14; Num. 21:4-9) indicates that Christ did not have the flesh of sin but only the likeness of the flesh of sin. When the children of Israel sinned against God, they were bitten by serpents and were dying. Actually, in the sight of God, they were dead. God told Moses to lift up a brass serpent on their behalf for God's judgment, that by looking upon that brass serpent they

might be saved and live. The brass serpent was their savior. This is a type. In John 3:14 the Lord Jesus applied this type to Himself, showing that when He was in the flesh, He was, to use Paul's words, in the likeness of the flesh of sin, which likeness was the form of the brass serpent. It had the form of the serpent but not the poison. Christ was made in the likeness of the flesh of sin, but He had no participation in the sin of the flesh (2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15). The brass serpent is a type of Christ as our Savior. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that everyone who believes in Him may have eternal life" (John 3:14-15).

The Lamb of God, the Brass Serpent, and the Grain of Wheat

In the Gospel of John three figures are used to describe Christ in His death: the Lamb of God (1:29), the brass serpent (3:14), and a grain of wheat (12:24). These figures describe three aspects of Christ as our Savior. In dealing with sin, He is the Lamb. In dealing with Satan, the old serpent, He is the brass serpent, the One in the likeness of the flesh of sin. In releasing the divine life to produce us as the many sons of God, He is the grain of wheat. Therefore, He is the Lamb-Savior, He is the Serpent-Savior, and He is the Grain-Savior. We have Him as our Savior in three aspects—to deal with our sin, to destroy the old serpent, and to produce us as the many sons of God.

I believe that Adam, the man created by God, was handsome. The Lord Jesus, on the contrary, had no comeliness or beauty and was not outwardly attractive (Isa. 53:2). He was a man exhausted from all kinds of sorrow (Isa. 53:3). Our Lord became a fallen man in likeness. However, when the Lord Jesus was on the cross, God counted that likeness as real.

Sin in the Flesh, the Old Man, Satan, and the World Dealt With through the Death of Christ on the Cross

The New Testament emphasizes the fact that Christ was crucified in the flesh and died in the flesh. He did not die in

anything other than the God-condemned flesh. Romans 8:3 says, "God sending His own Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin and concerning sin, condemned sin in the flesh." When the Lord Jesus was crucified in the flesh, God condemned sin in the flesh. Sin is not merely a matter; sin is a person, and this person needed to be condemned. Through the Lord's death on the cross, God condemned sin in the flesh. This means that when the flesh was crucified, sin in the flesh was condemned.

Romans 6:6 tells us that our old man was crucified with Christ. Our old man is in the flesh. Because Christ was crucified in the flesh, our old man, who is in the flesh, could be crucified with Him. Our old man was crucified with Christ in the flesh.

Through the death of Christ not only was sin condemned and not only was our old man crucified, but also Satan, the Devil, was destroyed (Heb. 2:14). Furthermore, through the cross of Christ the world was judged and the ruler, the prince, of the world was cast out (John 12:31). Therefore, through the death of Christ on the cross four things were dealt with: sin in the flesh, the old man, Satan, and the world. This means that through Christ's death in His flesh all negative things were dealt with.

We need to have this realization whenever we take Christ as our sin offering. The sin offering means that sin in the flesh has been condemned, that our old man has been crucified, that Satan has been destroyed, and that the world has been condemned and the ruler of the world cast out.

We all need to learn to take Christ as such a sin offering. When we enter into fellowship with the Triune God through Christ as the burnt offering, the meal offering, and the peace offering, then we need to apply Christ as our sin offering.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE NINETEEN

THE SIN OFFERING
CHRIST FOR THE SIN OF GOD'S PEOPLE

(2)

Scripture Reading: Lev. 4:1-7, 13-18, 22-25, 27-30, 32-34

In this message we will cover a number of matters related to the sin offering.

I. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SIN OFFERING

A. For the Sin of Ignorance

A number of times Leviticus 4 speaks of the sin of ignorance (vv. 1-2, 13, 22, 27). A sin of ignorance refers to a mistake, error, or oversight; that is, it denotes sinning unintentionally. Although we may not have the intention to sin, we nevertheless sin unintentionally.

The sin of ignorance in Leviticus 4 signifies the sin in our fallen nature, the indwelling sin. The sin which we inherited from Adam dwells in our flesh. Many times we sin unintentionally. These sins come from the indwelling sin. Sin came in through Adam's fall and entered into the human race (Rom. 5:12). Therefore, with all human beings there is something called sin.

In Romans 7 sin is personified, because it can dwell in us (v. 17), kill us (v. 11), and do many things in us. Thus, sin is a living person. We cannot find a verse which says that sin is Satan himself. However, the Bible indicates that sin is the nature of Satan. Since sin is the nature of Satan, sin is actually Satan himself.

Sin entered the human race at the time of Adam's fall. This means that Adam's fall opened the gate for sin, which is the nature of Satan and even Satan himself, to come into our

being. Romans 7 tells us clearly that sin dwells in our flesh (vv. 17, 20, 23). We have often wanted to do good, for example to honor our parents or regard our brother, yet the outcome was just the opposite. We sinned unintentionally, doing something that we had no intention of doing. Because Paul had this kind of experience, he could say, "It is no longer I that do it but sin that dwells in me" (Rom. 7:20b).

In Romans 7 we can see two persons. One person does not want to sin, and the other person, who is within the first person, sins. This indicates that Paul was living a life of two persons—a life of himself, Saul of Tarsus, and a life of something that is called sin. These two persons lived together, but not willingly. Sometimes they were good friends, and sometimes they fought with each other.

Romans 7 is a picture of our experience not only before we were saved but even today. Have you not discovered that there is a war going on within you? On the one hand, we may say, "I love the church." On the other hand, something within us says, "I do not like the church." Sometimes we may say, "I love all the saints. All of them are dear and lovable." However, there may be a certain elder whom we cannot love. There is a fighting within us. We aspire to be holy, but the outcome is not holiness. All day long we commit sins of ignorance.

We may have been Christians for years, but there is still a war going on within us. We may want to be perfect, but we do many things that are sins of ignorance. Therefore, since sin dwells within us and we commit sins of ignorance, we are not trustworthy.

Anything that is done out of our flesh is sin. In the eyes of God, even our love that is out of the flesh is sin. Not only the bad things are sin, but even the good things that are out of the flesh are sin. It is the source, not the outcome or issue, that counts. This is the reason Galatians 5:24 says, "They who are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts."

According to the human view, the flesh may seem to be good as well as bad. But whether we are good, bad, or in

the middle, as long as we are flesh we are sin. The flesh is altogether one with sin (Rom. 8:3), and sin is altogether one with Satan. Actually, sin is Satan. Furthermore, Satan is one with the world, and the world is one with the prince of the world (John 12:31). These five things are one matter: the flesh, sin, Satan, the world, and the prince (the authority or power) of the world.

Today's world is related to the flesh, sin, Satan, and the prince of the world. The word *prince* here implies authority or power. The world is actually the struggle for power. Every person and every nation are struggling for power. Everywhere there is competition, rivalry, for power. In the universities both the professors and the students are struggling for power. For example, a professor may say that he is trying to help society or that he wants to invent something to benefit society. Actually he, along with everyone else, is struggling for power. This struggle for power is the result, the issue, of the flesh, sin, Satan, the world, and the prince of the world.

Galatians 5:16-26 speaks of the struggle between the flesh and the Spirit. Verse 26, the concluding verse of this section, says, "Let us not become vainglorious, provoking one another, envying one another." In this verse is the struggle for vainglory. This indicates that even in the church life there may be the struggle for vainglory. This is proved by the fact that Paul's word here was written to churches, to the churches of Galatia (Gal. 1:2), which was a province of the ancient Roman Empire. We all seek vainglory. If this were not our situation, Paul would not have needed to say this word to us. We may think that the things mentioned in 5:16-26 existed among the churches of Galatia but are not among us today. However, we should not read these verses as applying to them alone; we should include ourselves when we read such verses. Just as we apply John 3:16 to ourselves, so we should also apply Galatians 5:16-26.

The sin offering has a broad denotation. It deals not only with sin itself but also with our flesh, with Satan, the evil one in our flesh, with the world, and with the struggle for

power. According to the Bible, sin is involved with these four things.

Satan is the prince of the world. Satan may even be proud of being such a prince. Isaiah 14 reveals that although he was close to God, he was not satisfied. He wanted to be above God or at least to be in rivalry with Him. Therefore, when the Bible condemns sin, it condemns Satan and also the flesh, the world, and the struggle for power. Everything that is happening on earth is related to the struggle for power. All the good speeches, lectures, and explanations given by men are just cloaks to cover the struggle for power.

B. God Sending His Son in the Likeness of the Flesh of Sin and concerning Sin, Condemning Sin in the Flesh on the Cross of Christ

The sin offering also signifies that God, sending His own Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin and concerning sin, condemned sin in the flesh on the cross of Christ (Rom. 8:3). Christ became flesh; that is, He came in the likeness of the flesh of sin (John 1:14). Furthermore, God made Christ, who did not know sin, sin on our behalf on the cross (2 Cor. 5:21). While Christ was on the cross, He was judged in the form of the serpent for our sin (John 3:14). In this way God condemned sin in the flesh on the cross of Christ.

II. THE EFFICACY OF THE SIN OFFERING

The efficacy of the sin offering is not just in the fact that it deals with sin. The result is far greater. In the sin offering, the fallen man, the old man, included in the flesh of Christ, is dealt with (Rom. 6:6); sin in the nature of fallen man is condemned (Rom. 8:3); Satan, sin itself, is destroyed (Heb. 2:14); the world is judged; and the prince of the world is cast out (John 12:31). This is the revelation in the holy Word concerning the efficacy of the sin offering.

If we see this revelation, we will see that taking Christ as our sin offering is not simply a matter of confessing our sin

and having it dealt with. Taking Christ as our sin offering also means that our old man, Satan, the world, and the struggle for power are dealt with. Since all these things are included in the sin offering, taking Christ as our sin offering is not a simple matter but a matter that involves the fallen man, sin in the nature of fallen man, Satan, the world, and the struggle for power.

III. DIFFERENT KINDS OF CATTLE FOR THE SIN OFFERING

In Leviticus 4 there are different kinds of cattle for the sin offering.

A. A Young Bull, a Buck of the Goats, a Ewe of the Goats, or a Female Lamb

The sin offering may be a young bull, a buck of the goats, a ewe of the goats, or a female lamb (Lev. 4:3,14, 23, 28,32). This signifies that Christ as the sin offering is experienced by different people in different degrees. In Himself as the sin offering, Christ does not differ in size. He is always the same. However, our realization, presentation, and application of Christ as the sin offering may differ in degree.

The size of Christ as our sin offering depends on the degree to which we take Christ as our sin offering. We may take Christ as our sin offering to a lower degree or to a higher degree. One brother may take Christ as his sin offering to deal only with his sin, not realizing that sin implies the flesh. A second brother may realize that the sin offering implies the flesh but may not realize that it also implies dealing with Satan. If we see that as long as sin dwells in us, the flesh, Satan, the world, and the struggle for power are also present, we can offer Christ as a large bull.

B. Without Blemish

Leviticus 4 tells us that the sin offering is without blemish (vv. 3, 23, 28, 32). This signifies that Christ is without sin (2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15).

IV. LAYING HANDS ON THE HEAD OF THE OFFERING

Leviticus 4 speaks of laying hands on the head of the offering (vv. 4,15, 24, 29, 33). This signifies the union of the offerer with the offering.

V. THE OFFERING SLAUGHTERED BEFORE JEHOVAH

The sin offering was slaughtered before Jehovah (vv. 4, 15, 24). This signifies that Christ as the sin offering was slaughtered before God, that He was recognized by God (Isa. 53:10a).

VI. THE BLOOD OF THE SIN OFFERING

The blood of the sin offering has four different kinds of effects.

A. Some of the Blood Brought into the Tent of Meeting and Sprinkled Seven Times toward the Veil of the Holy of Holies

Some of the blood of the sin offering was brought into the tent of meeting and sprinkled seven times toward the veil of the Holy of Holies (Lev. 4:5-6, 16-17). This signifies that the blood of Christ has been brought into the Holy of Holies in the heavens for our redemption (Heb. 9:12). Christ's blood covers our situation with God in the Holy of Holies.

B. Some of the Blood Put upon the Horns of the Incense Altar

Some of the blood was put upon the horns of the incense altar (Lev. 4:7a, 18a). This signifies that the redemption of Christ's blood is effective for us to contact God in prayer (Heb. 10:19). This is why we need to pray through the blood, contacting God in our prayer through the blood.

C. Some of the Blood Put upon the Horns of the Altar of Burnt Offering

Some of the blood was put upon the horns of the altar of burnt offering (Lev. 4:25a, 30, 34a). This signifies that the blood of Christ is effective for our redemption. The blood of

Christ as the sin offering brings us into the presence of God, that is, into the Holy of Holies; it gives us the position and right to contact God in prayer; and it is effective for our redemption.

D. All the Rest of the Blood Poured Out at the Base of the Altar of Burnt Offering

All the rest of the blood was poured out at the base of the altar of burnt offering (4:7b, 18b, 25b, 30b, 34b). This signifies the blood of Christ at the standing of the cross for the peace in our conscience that we are redeemed and accepted by God.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE TWENTY

THE SIN OFFERING
CHRIST FOR THE SIN OF GOD'S PEOPLE

(3)

Scripture Reading: Lev. 4:8-15, 19, 21, 26, 31, 35; 6:25; 16:3, 5

Before we consider more aspects of the sin offering, I would like to give a further word concerning sin. In the New Testament sin is a personified matter. It is not something small but is a very crucial matter.

In this universe there are two sources. One is God, and the other is Satan, God's enemy and adversary (the word *Satan* means adversary). Satan became God's enemy and adversary when he entered into a struggle with God for power (Isa. 14). Satan also tempted the Lord Jesus with respect to power (Luke 4:5-7). The whole universe today is a matter of the power struggle between Satan and God. All the world follows Satan and has become a part of this evil struggle. Therefore, under the influence of Satan, all of humankind is engaged in a power struggle. For example, the employees in a certain corporation may be striving for a promotion. This is a small part of the universal power struggle, a struggle that can be found everywhere.

This power struggle is one of the five items whose aggregate is sin. These items are the flesh, sin, Satan, the world, and the prince of the world. The prince of the world signifies the struggle for power. Every human being, including little children, likes to be a prince, a leader, and everywhere on earth today there is a power struggle. As we will see, this power struggle is related to the sin offering.

When we repented to the Lord and received Him as our Savior, we were enlightened to see that we are evil and under

God's condemnation. The more we love the Lord, the more we realize that we are evil. The more a believer prays, the more he feels that he is too evil. Eventually, we are brought to the realization that even today as a Christian seeking after the Lord we are nothing but a totality of sin. We are not only evil and sinful—we are the totality of sin.

If we realize that we are sinful and begin to confess our sins, we may find that the more we confess, the more there is to confess. This was my experience in 1935. One day, having the deep sense that I needed to be alone with the Lord, I went to a secluded place, kneeled down, prayed, and began to confess my sins. My confession went on for a long time. Prior to that time, I did not know how sinful I was or how many sins I had. I saw that everything I had done since my youth was sinful, and I made a thorough confession to the Lord.

We need to pray and take the Lord Jesus as our burnt offering, as the One who is absolute for God. Enjoying Christ as the burnt offering will lead us to take Him as our life supply, as our meal offering, which is Christ in His humanity becoming our daily food. We need to enjoy Him until we feel that we have peace with God, with ourselves, and with everyone. Immediately we will be in the light, and the light will shine within us, upon us, and around us. Then we will realize that we have sinned and that we are sin. This is the experience in 1 John chapter one. God is light (v. 5). In order to have fellowship with Him, we must walk in the light as He is in the light. If we do this, we will realize that we have something called sin (vv. 7-8).

The sin spoken of in 1 John 1 is not an insignificant matter. Sin is God's enemy, Satan himself, and it involves the power struggle between Satan and God. This power struggle includes us; we are involved in it.

Why are we not absolute for God? We are not absolute for God because something within us is for ourselves and not for God. This is the struggle. A sister may experience this struggle while shopping in a department store. She may want to buy a particular item, but she senses that the Lord does not

agree. She begs the Lord to give her permission to make the purchase this one time. Her begging is actually a sign of a struggle between her and the Lord. Satan is hidden within such a struggle.

We struggle with the Lord about many things. We love the Lord, we attend the church meetings, and we participate fully in the church life. On the surface everything appears to be fine. However, only we ourselves know how much we are in a struggle with God day after day. God wants us to be absolute for Him, but we may be willing to be absolute for Him only to a certain degree. We may criticize others for not being absolute for God, but how much are we absolute for Him? Instead of being utterly absolute for God, we engage in a power struggle with Him.

Who can say that he is absolute for God? Since none of us is absolute for God, we need Christ as our burnt offering. Only Christ is absolute for God.

In dealing with sin, Paul was eventually brought to something deeper—not merely to sin itself but to the law of sin (Rom. 7:25; 8:2). Many Christians do not realize that there is such a thing as the law of sin. Do you know what the law of sin is? The law of sin is simply the spontaneous power, strength, and energy to struggle with God. Something within us is living and active; it is crouching in our inner being, watching over us. Whenever we have even a little thought of being for God, something within us rises up to take us over. This is the law of sin. In his experience, Paul found out not only that sin dwelt in his flesh, but also that within him there was a natural power, strength, and energy to resist whenever he desired to be for God. This made him a wretched man (Rom. 7:24). This is the law of sin as the deeper meaning of sin.

We have often been defeated by this thing that is crouching within us. For example, we may want to love the Lord, but spontaneously the law of sin operates within us, and after a short time the thought of loving the Lord disappears.

It was through his experience with the commandment regarding greed, or coveting, that Paul discovered the law of

sin (Rom. 7:7-8). All of the Ten Commandments deal with outward matters except the commandment not to covet. This commandment touches the greed within us. Paul did not want to be greedy, but he could not help it. When he tried to obey this commandment, something within him rose up and wrought in him "coveting of every kind." Paul was thus a victim of the law of sin.

We should not take Christ as our sin offering in a superficial way. Rather, we should take Him as our sin offering to a deeper extent. This will remake our entire being.

Now that we have seen that sin involves a power struggle and that the law of sin is the spontaneous power, strength, and energy to struggle with God, let us go on to consider some further aspects of the sin offering in Leviticus 4.

VII. ALL THE FAT THAT COVERS THE INWARDS AND THAT IS ON THE INWARDS, THE TWO KIDNEYS AND THE FAT ON THEM, AND THE APPENDAGE ON THE LIVER BEING BURNED ON THE ALTAR OF BURNT OFFERING

All the fat that covers the inwards and that is on the inwards, the two kidneys and the fat on them, and the appendage on the liver were burned on the altar of burnt offering (Lev. 4:8-10, 19, 26, 31, 35). This signifies that the inwards of Christ as the tender and sweet part are offered to God for His satisfaction that He may be willing to forgive us.

These parts of the sin offering were burned on the altar of burnt offering. This indicates that God's acceptance of the sin offering is based on the burnt offering. Without the burnt offering as the base, the sin offering cannot be accepted by God.

VIII. THE WHOLE OFFERING, INCLUDING ITS HIDE, ALL ITS FLESH, WITH ITS HEAD. LEGS, INWARDS, AND DUNG, TO BE BURNED OUTSIDE THE CAMP

The whole offering, including its hide, all its flesh, with its head, legs, inwards, and dung, was burned outside the

camp (vv. 11-12, 21). This signifies that Christ as the sin offering suffered reproach outside the Jewish religion—a human organization (Heb. 13:11-13). Christ was crucified outside Jerusalem, which was considered a camp representing the Jewish religious organization.

A. At a Clean Place

The sin offering was burned at a clean place. This signifies the place where Christ as the sin offering was rejected by man and where man's sin is cleared.

B. At the Place Where the Ashes Are Poured Out

The place where the sin offering was burned was a place where the ashes were poured out.

1. The Ashes of the Burnt Offering

The ashes of the burnt offering signify God's recognition and acceptance of the offerings. How do we know that God has accepted the burnt offering? We know this by the fact that it has been turned to ashes. Because the ashes are a sign that God has received the burnt offering, the ashes are dear.

2. For the Offerers' Assurance and Peace

The ashes are for the offerers' assurance and peace in their heart concerning God's redemption of their sin. The ashes are a sign assuring us that God has accepted our sin offering for the redemption of our sin.

IX. WHEN ALL THE CONGREGATION OF ISRAEL SINNED IGNORANTLY, THE ELDERS WERE TO REPRESENT THE ASSEMBLY TO OFFER THE SIN OFFERING

When all the congregation of Israel sinned ignorantly, the elders were to represent the assembly to offer the sin offering (vv. 13-15). This signifies that the elders of the church may represent the church to offer Christ as its sin offering.

X. THE SIN OFFERING BEING SLAUGHTERED IN THE PLACE WHERE THE BURNT OFFERING IS SLAUGHTERED

The sin offering was to be slaughtered in the place where the burnt offering was slaughtered (Lev. 6:25). This indicates that the sin offering is based upon the burnt offering, and it signifies that Christ is the sin offering for us based upon His being the burnt offering. Christ must be the burnt offering for God's satisfaction that He might be qualified to be our sin offering.

If we have never enjoyed Christ as the burnt offering, we cannot realize how sinful we are. We heard the gospel and repented, realizing that we are sinful. But we cannot know how sinful we are until we enjoy Christ as our burnt offering. The burnt offering means that mankind, created by God for the purpose of expressing and representing Him, should be for nothing other than God and should be absolutely for God. However, we are not absolutely for God. We need to realize this and take Christ as our burnt offering. Only when we enjoy Christ as our burnt offering will we realize how sinful we are.

If we realize how sinful we are, we will know that our love as well as our hate may be sinful. Ethically, to hate others is wrong and to love others is right. We may think that in the eyes of God loving others is acceptable and hating others is not acceptable. But in the eyes of God we hate people for ourselves and also love people for ourselves, not for God. From this point of view, loving others is just as sinful as hating others. Whatever we do for ourselves and not for God—whether it is moral or immoral, good or evil, a matter of love or of hate—is sinful in the eyes of God. As long as you do a certain thing for yourself, it is sinful.

God created us that we might be for Him. He created us to be His expression and His representation. He did not create us for ourselves. But we live independently of Him. When we hate others, we are independent of God, and when we love others, we are also independent of God. This means that in God's sight our hatred and our love are the same.

Furthermore, neither our hatred nor our love is from our spirit. Rather, both our hatred and our love are from our flesh, and both are from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil signifies Satan. We should not think that only doing evil is of Satan and doing good is not. Doing both good and evil may be of Satan. We need to realize that anything we do out of ourselves, whether good or evil, is for ourselves, and since it is for ourselves it is sin.

I would point out once again that sin involves a power struggle. We may love others for ourselves—for our name, position, benefit, and pride. This kind of love is in the power struggle with God. We need to pray, "Lord, save me from doing anything for my pride, for my name, for my promotion, for my benefit, for my interests." This is to be saved from the power struggle with God. When we love others for our name and promotion, we are not for God. This kind of love is of Satan; it is in the flesh, and it is sin. Whatever is in the flesh is sin, whatever is sin in our flesh is Satan, and whatever is done there by Satan is the power struggle.

Some may wonder about our love as Christian parents for our children. Our love for our children may be in the flesh. The New Testament charges us to raise up our children in the Lord. However, we may raise up our children for ourselves and our future. This is sin.

Even in the church life we may do things that are not for God but for ourselves. We may do something that is very good, yet deep within our hidden intention is to do that good thing for ourselves. This is sinful. For example, in giving a testimony or in praying, we may want everyone to say "amen" to us. We may offer a high, spiritual prayer, but our aim in doing so may be to receive the "amens." Such a prayer is sinful because it is not absolutely for God. From this we see that even in our prayer there is the power struggle with God. We desire position, not God.

Because we may have hidden motives in doing spiritual things, the Lord Jesus spoke concerning those who do things apparently for God but actually for the purpose of advancing themselves. Therefore, He said, "Take heed not to

do your righteousness before men to be gazed at by them" (Matt. 6:1). Concerning giving alms He said, "Let not your left hand know what your right hand is doing" (v. 3). Concerning prayer He went on to say, "When you pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites; for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners that they may appear to men" (v. 5). Concerning fasting He said, "Whenever you fast, do not be as the hypocrites of a sad countenance; for they disguise their faces so that they may appear to men to be fasting" (v. 16). Even in doing righteousness, giving alms, praying, and fasting there may be a power struggle with God. To do these things for ourselves and not for God is sinful in His eyes. Those who do such things for themselves give no ground to God; instead, all the ground is for themselves.

To take Christ as the sin offering is very deep. The experience of the sin offering is altogether related to our enjoyment of the Lord Jesus as our burnt offering. The more we love the Lord and enjoy Him, the more we will know how evil we are. Sometimes, when we love the Lord to the uttermost, we may feel that there is no place to hide ourselves. Paul had such a realization concerning himself. When he was seeking the Lord, he saw that there was nothing good in himself.

XI. FOR THE PRIESTS' SERVICE, THE SIN OFFERING BEING FOLLOWED BY THE BURNT OFFERING

For the priests' service, the sin offering is followed by the burnt offering (Lev. 16:3, 5). This signifies that we, as the priests of God, after enjoying Christ as the sin offering, must take Him as the burnt offering that we may live Him for God's satisfaction.

On the one hand, the sin offering is based on the burnt offering. On the other hand, the burnt offering follows the sin offering. The more we enjoy the Lord Jesus as our burnt offering, the more we realize that we are sinful. Then we take Him as our sin offering more deeply than ever, and this

causes us to enjoy Him more as the burnt offering. Hence, the burnt offering is before our enjoyment of the sin offering and also after it.

The only way we can know ourselves thoroughly is to enjoy Christ as the burnt offering. By enjoying Christ as our burnt offering, we will realize that we are not for God absolutely. We may be for God to some degree, even to a large degree, but we still reserve something for ourselves.

Whenever we touch the holy things, the spiritual things, and the service of God in the church life, we must bring the sin offering with us. This is clearly revealed in the Old Testament type. Whenever God's people did something with God, even the most holy things, they needed the sin offering. We also need the sin offering today because we are not clean and pure and we are not absolutely for God. Who among us can say that he is absolutely for God? No one can say this. Therefore, in all that we do for the Lord, we need the sin offering. Even in speaking for the Lord, we need to take Christ as our sin offering, hiding ourselves in Him and asking Him to cover us with His precious blood.

First, the Lord saves us, and then He attracts us to love Him, to take Him, and to enjoy Him. By taking Him and enjoying Him as the burnt offering, our sinfulness is exposed, and we see that we are not absolutely for God as He is. Others in the church life may appreciate us, but inwardly we know that we are not good, that we are not absolute for God. We may love the church and seemingly we have given everything for the church, but we are not absolute for God. There are still reservations within us.

By enjoying the Lord as the burnt offering and the meal offering, we realize that we are sinful. So we take Him as the sin offering and then as the trespass offering. This is what we see in chapter one of 1 John. As we are enjoying the Triune God in the divine fellowship, we realize that we still have sin inwardly and that we have committed sins outwardly. We then receive the cleansing of the precious blood. This becomes a cycle. The more we are cleansed, the more we enter into fellowship with the Triune God; the more we enjoy

this fellowship, the more we are enlightened; and the more we are enlightened, the more we realize that we are sinful, even sin itself. It is by this cycle that we are delivered and saved from our self. Actually, we are delivered and saved from sin, from the flesh, from Satan, from the world, from the prince of the world, and from the power struggle. The more we enjoy Christ, the less power struggle we will have with God. Eventually we will give every inch to Him.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE TWENTY-ONE

THE TRESPASS OFFERING
CHRIST FOR THE SINS OF GOD'S PEOPLE

(1)

Scripture Reading: Lev. 5:1-10; 7:2

In this message we will begin to consider the trespass offering. We may think that, as the last of the five basic offerings, the trespass offering is not very important and rather easy to understand. Actually, the trespass offering is extremely important and is difficult to understand adequately. Therefore, in our study of Leviticus, we need to read 5:1-10 carefully and attentively.

In talking about sin, many people do not realize that there is a great difference between sin and sins. Sin is a matter of indwelling sin as the nature of Satan within us. Sins are a matter of outward sinful deeds. The sin offering deals with sin, and the trespass offering deals with sins, transgressions, and trespasses, including lies, mistakes, and all kinds of wrongdoing. Trespasses are transgressions, and transgressions are different kinds of sins.

I. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TRESPASS OFFERING

We first need to see the significance of the trespass offering.

A. The Difference between the Sin Offering and the Trespass Offering

There is an important difference between the sin offering and the trespass offering. The sin offering signifies Christ as our offering resolving sin in our fallen nature (Rom. 8:3; 2 Cor. 5:21). The trespass offering signifies Christ as our

offering resolving the problem of sins in our conduct (1 Pet. 2:24; Isa. 53:5-6, 10-11 in ASV).

Romans 8:3 says, "God sending His own Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin and concerning sin, condemned sin in the flesh." God has condemned sin. How did He do this? He did it by sending His own Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin.

The phrase "likeness of the flesh of sin" combines sin and the flesh. Our flesh today is the flesh of sin. As we have pointed out, sin and the flesh are related to Satan, the world, and the prince of the world. Whereas our flesh is the flesh of sin, Christ came only in the *likeness* of the flesh of sin. In Him there was no sin; He did not have sin in His human nature. Nevertheless, in appearance He bore the likeness of the flesh of sin.

The flesh of fallen mankind is the flesh of sin. In other words, the flesh of the fallen human race is one with sin. Where the flesh is, there is sin. The word *flesh* signifies a fallen person, and every fallen person is sin. Whether we love others or hate them, we are sin. Genesis 6:3 says that fallen man became flesh. Since man has become flesh and the flesh is of sin, the flesh and sin are one. They are identical. As fallen human beings, we are flesh, and the flesh is sin.

God condemned sin by sending His Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin. When the Lord Jesus was on the cross, He was sin in the eyes of God. Christ was crucified in His flesh. This means that His flesh was crucified. Since His flesh was crucified, sin was condemned because sin and the flesh are identical. God judged the flesh, and He judged sin. He did this by judging Jesus on the cross. When God judged Jesus, He judged the flesh and sin. Moreover, at that time God destroyed Satan in the flesh, judged the world that was hanging on Satan, and condemned the prince of the world and the power struggle. One was crucified, but five things were dealt with: sin, the flesh, Satan, the world, and the power struggle. These five things are one.

Second Corinthians 5:21 says, "Him who did not know

sin He made sin on our behalf." The Lord Jesus did not know sin, but God made Him sin on the cross for our sake. When the Lord Jesus was on the cross, He was not only a sinful person in likeness, even as the brass serpent was a serpent in form (John 3:14), but He was also made sin by God. If Jesus had not been made sin, sin could not have been judged when He was crucified. Sin was condemned because Christ, while He was on the cross, was made sin on our behalf by God.

Whereas the sin offering deals with the sin in our nature inwardly, the trespass offering deals with the sins in our conduct outwardly (1 Pet. 2:24). As the marginal notes in the American Standard Version indicate, Isaiah 53:10 puts the trespass offering together with the sin offering. The same thing is true of chapter five of Leviticus.

B. The Trespass Offering Eventually Becoming the Sin Offering

The trespass offering eventually becomes the sin offering (Lev. 5:6-8, 11-12). This signifies that Christ's redemption for our sin resolves the problem of sin in its two aspects—sin in our inward nature and sins in our outward conduct. These two aspects of sin make up the totality of sin. John 1:29 speaks of this totality: "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" Although the word *sin* is in the singular, it does not refer merely to the sin in our nature; it denotes the totality of sin, comprising both inward sin and outward sins.

II. A FEMALE FROM THE FLOCK, A SHEEP OR A GOAT, TWO TURTLEDOVES OR TWO YOUNG PIGEONS, OR THE TENTH PART OF AN EPHAH OF FINE FLOUR FOR THE TRESPASS OFFERING

Leviticus 5:5-7 and 11 tell us that the trespass offering may be a female from the flock, a sheep or a goat, two turtledoves or two young pigeons, or the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour. This signifies that the trespass offering for our outward sins, for which even a little fine flour is sufficient, is

lighter than the sin offering, which needs a bull, or at least a lamb (4:4, 32).

III. TWO TURTLEDOVES OR TWO YOUNG PIGEONS, ONE FOR A SIN OFFERING AND THE OTHER FOR A BURNT OFFERING, FORMING A TRESPASS OFFERING

Leviticus 5:7 says, "But if he cannot afford a sheep, then he shall bring his trespass offering to Jehovah for that in which he has sinned, two turtledoves or two young pigeons, one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering." Here we see that two turtledoves or two young pigeons, one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering, form the trespass offering. This signifies that a trespass is out of the inward sin and out of not living for God. The inward sin needs the sin offering. Not living for God needs the burnt offering. The two are a complete type of Christ as the trespass offering resolving our sins.

In 5:7 we can see the source of a trespass and also the reason for a trespass. From where does a trespass come? What is its source? The source of every trespass is the sin that is in our flesh. What is the reason for a trespass? The reason is our not living for God. Therefore, concerning trespasses we have a source with a reason.

We may say that the inward sin is like a man, a husband, and that not living for God is like a woman, a wife. The marriage of these two produces a child, and the name of the child is trespass.

We may also use a fruit tree to illustrate inward sin, not being for God, and trespasses. A fruit tree needs a proper atmosphere and environment in which to grow. When a fruit tree grows in such an atmosphere and environment, fruit is produced. In this illustration the inward sin is the fruit tree, not loving God and not living for Him make up the atmosphere and environment in which the tree grows, and trespasses and transgressions are the fruit.

Why do we make mistakes and do things that are wrong? We spontaneously and even unintentionally do such things

because we have sin in our flesh and because we are not for God and do not love Him and live for Him.

If we are for God, we will be sincere, faithful, and careful. This can be proved by our experience. Whenever we are not for God, we become loose, and we may reason, murmur, and criticize others. In Philippians 2:12-14 Paul charges us to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, doing all things without murmurings and reasonings. When we are for God, we do not murmur, reason, criticize, gossip, or debate. When we are not for God, we are careless in talking about others. But when we are for God, we are very careful about what we say.

The reason for our mistakes and transgressions is our not living for God. Because we are fallen, we are not for God absolutely. Since we were created by God, we should be absolutely for God, yet we are not. We may be for God to a great degree, but we are not for Him absolutely. Our not being absolutely for God indicates that we are still in a fallen situation. We are fallen, a fallen person is flesh, and this flesh is sin, which produces trespasses as the children, as the fruit.

According to 5:7, we need both the sin offering and the trespass offering. The sin offering takes care of the source; the trespass offering takes care of the "children," or the "fruits," produced from this source. From this we see that God is concerned about the source—the sin within us—and also about the fruit which is produced from this source—the outward trespasses. Therefore, we need both the sin offering and the trespass offering.

These two offerings actually deal with one thing—sin. Sin includes both indwelling sin and outward sins. In other words, it is a matter of sin in its totality. As we have pointed out, this is the meaning of the word *sin* in John 1:29. The Lord Jesus, the Lamb of God, has dealt with sin in its totality. On the cross, He was the sin offering and also the trespass offering.

Leviticus 5:1-3 mentions some particular transgressions. Verse 1 says, "When a person sins in that he hears a public charge to testify, and he is a witness, either he has seen or known the matter, and he does not declare it, then he shall

bear his iniquity." The Hebrew expression translated "public charge to testify" literally means the "voice of an oath." "Bear his iniquity" means to bear the responsibility of sin or guilt. This verse refers to a person who hears a public charge to testify and does not declare what he knows and thus must bear his iniquity.

We may think that what is spoken of here is insignificant and that it has nothing to do with us today. However, this seemingly unimportant matter exposes where we are; it shows that we are not absolutely for God. If we are really for God and live for Him, especially in the church life, we will be faithful, honest, and sincere to testify what we know. We will testify of the truth. To fail in this matter is to be dishonest and unfaithful; it is to be unlike our God, who is faithful and honest.

Leviticus 5:2 goes on to say, "Or when a person touches any unclean thing, whether the carcass of an unclean beast, or the carcass of unclean cattle, or the carcass of an unclean creeping thing, and it is hidden from him and he is unclean, then he is guilty." Here we see that if a person does nothing more than touch a carcass, he is unclean, for he has touched the uncleanness of death. This is a type that has a spiritual application to us. There is a great deal of death among the children of God today, and this death is spreading. Moreover, there are different kinds of death, signified by the carcasses of unclean beasts, cattle, and creeping things. The words "it is hidden from him" indicate that we may not be aware that we have touched the uncleanness of spiritual death. But if we are enlightened by the Lord, we will realize how much we have touched the uncleanness of spiritual death and have been defiled by it.

Leviticus 5:3 continues, "Or when he touches the uncleanness of man, whatever his uncleanness is whereby he is unclean, and it is hidden from him, when he knows it, then he is guilty." The uncleanness of man here signifies the natural man, the natural life. With the natural man there is uncleanness. Everything that is discharged from the natural man and the natural life is unclean.

In our contact with one another as members of the Body, there may be uncleanness—the uncleanness of spiritual death and the uncleanness of the natural being. As we are fellowshipping with one another, we need to be aware of these two kinds of uncleanness. For example, a brother may speak a loving word to you, or he may speak a word of appreciation and respect, but his word is altogether natural. If you take that word, you will be defiled, for you will touch the uncleanness of man, the uncleanness of the natural being.

One day, as I was having fellowship with Brother Nee, he told me that politeness is a kind of leprosy. Being polite is different from being nice. For the sake of a proper human living, we should always be nice to others. To be polite is actually to put on a mask. This means that politeness is a matter of pretending. For instance, one brother may be polite with another brother and then gossip with others about him and criticize him. This is leprosy, something that is even worse than being natural.

The word in Leviticus 5 was spoken not to individuals but to the congregation of God's people. In typology this word is spoken to the church. Among the saints in the church, there may be different kinds of death. Death often spreads among the saints. We may not realize how much we have touched the uncleanness of spiritual death. The spreading of gossip and criticism is the spreading of spiritual death. We may touch death day after day without realizing it. Also, the saints may have "buddy-buddy" relationships and love others in a natural way, not in the spirit. This kind of love is natural, fleshly, and unclean.

If we are enlightened by the Lord through this portion of the Word, we will realize that we surely need the trespass offering. The more we are with the Lord and the more we take Him as the burnt offering, the more we will see that we need Him as the trespass offering and as the sin offering. We need the sin offering to deal with indwelling sin as the source and the trespass offering to deal with the "children," the trespasses produced from this source.

IV. THE BLOOD OF THE TRESPASS OFFERING

A. Some of the Blood Sprinkled on the Wall of the Altar

Some of the blood of the trespass offering was sprinkled on the wall of the altar (5:9a; 7:2). This signifies the sprinkling power of Christ's blood upon sinners (1 Pet. 1:2).

B. The Remainder of the Blood Squeezed (Drained) Out at the Base of the Altar

The remainder of the blood was squeezed (drained) out at the base of the altar (Lev. 5:9b). This signifies the blood of Christ as the base of God's forgiveness to sinners (Eph. 1:7).

V. NO OIL OR FRANKINCENSE PUT UPON THE FINE FLOUR AS A SIN OFFERING FOR THE TRESPASS OFFERING

Leviticus 5:11 tells us that the one who brings "the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour for a sin offering" is not to "place oil upon it nor put frankincense on it, for it is a sin offering." This signifies that the Holy Spirit and the fragrance of Christ's resurrection are not involved with sin.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE TWENTY-TWO

THE TRESPASS OFFERING
CHRIST FOR THE SINS OF GOD'S PEOPLE

(2)

Scripture Reading: Lev. 5:1—6:7; 7:2

The word in Leviticus 5 was spoken not to an individual saint but to God's congregation, to God's people as an assembly. This word was not given to help and instruct an individual saint. Rather, this word was given for the purpose of keeping God's chosen people, as a body, proper, holy, and separated to Him. Furthermore, what is spoken here should not be applied to secular, human society. God does not have the intention to make the entire human society a congregation like the children of Israel in ancient times. God's intention in Leviticus was to keep His chosen people clean and holy that He might dwell among them. The tabernacle was in the midst of the people, and God wanted the people, who were around the tabernacle, to be holy. This was the reason the word in Leviticus was given.

Let us now consider chapter five of Leviticus verse by verse.

In typology, every aspect of Leviticus 5 has a spiritual significance. Verse 1 says, "When a person sins in that he hears a public charge to testify, and he is a witness, either he has seen or known the matter, and he does not declare it, then he shall bear his iniquity." This verse actually deals with lying. A lie involves Satan, for he is the father of lies (John 8:44).

Leviticus 5:2 says, "When a person touches any unclean thing, whether the carcass of an unclean beast, or the carcass of unclean cattle, or the carcass of an unclean creeping thing, and it is hidden from him and he is unclean, then he

is guilty." This verse speaks of the carcasses of beasts, cattle, and creeping things. The beasts are wild animals, and the cattle are domesticated animals. According to chapter eleven, the animals in this verse typify different kinds of people. Some people are like beasts, others are like cattle, and still others are like creeping things. The word *carcass* in 5:2 signifies death. The carcasses of these three kinds of animals—the carcass of beasts, the carcass of cattle, and the carcass of creeping things—thus signify three kinds of death. One kind of death is wild like a wild beast. A second kind of death is mild like a gentle, domesticated animal. A third kind of death is subtle like a creeping thing. In typology this indicates that among God's people there may be three kinds of death: wild death, mild death, and subtle death.

Among God's people, that is, in the church life, there may not only be death; there may be different kinds of death. Death may spread among us in a wild way, in a mild way, or in a subtle way. During my years in the church life, I have seen these three kinds of death. I have seen the kind of death that is wild and the kind of death that is mild and gentle. I have also seen the kind of death that creeps in in a subtle, cunning way. Have you not experienced some kind of death in the church life? Perhaps you have experienced the kind of death that is typified by the carcass of a creeping thing, the death that comes in to spread its poison secretly and subtly.

Regardless of its kind, death is death, and it is unclean. Every kind of death—wild, mild, and subtle—is filthy and defiling. It is not easy in the church life to stay away from the uncleanness of these different kinds of death.

According to the typology in the Old Testament, sin is not as dirty as death. If one sinned, he could be forgiven and cleansed immediately by offering a trespass offering (5:10). But if one touched death, he had to wait a few days to become clean. From this we can see that death is more defiling than sin. However, we in the church life may think that sin is serious but that touching death is common and not

serious. But in the eyes of God to touch death is the most serious thing.

The poison of death can damage and destroy the saints. In Romans 14 Paul says that we should not destroy the work of God by doing things carelessly (vv. 15, 20). Christ has redeemed and saved the saints, and we should not destroy them by acting carelessly. The Lord has done a lot of gracious, redemptive work on the saints in the Lord's recovery, and for years we have been working to build up the saints. No one should destroy the gracious work of Christ on the saints. No one should destroy those on whom we have been working for their building up. Would not our hearts be hurt to see the saints destroyed by the poison of death? We need to be sober, fair, calm, and kind to consider whether we are really building up the Body of Christ or unconsciously doing something to destroy God's work by spreading the poison of death.

Leviticus 5:3 says, "When he touches the uncleanness of man, whatever his uncleanness is whereby he is unclean, and it is hidden from him, when he knows it, then he is guilty." The "uncleanness of man" here signifies the uncleanness of man's natural life. The Lord Jesus said that nothing that goes into us defiles us; rather, what comes out of us defiles us (Matt. 15:17-20). The natural life, like death, brings in uncleanness. In the church life, in the holy community, death and the natural life may be prevailing.

The natural life includes the matter of natural affection. Either we do not care for one another or we love one another in a natural way, in the way of natural affection. Someone may have had an affection for you in the past, but today he does not care for you at all. This is not according to our Christian nature to love, help, and take care of others. It is altogether in the natural realm. We may love others or, seeking vain glory and being jealous of others, we may envy them. This love and this envy are both of the natural life.

Leviticus 5:4 continues, "Or when a person utters an oath, speaking rashly with his lips to do evil or to do good, in whatever a man may speak rashly with an oath, and it is

hidden from him, when he knows it, then he is guilty in any of these." Here we have the matter of speaking rashly, of speaking something before God in a hasty, careless, and reckless way. We may hear about a certain thing and immediately say that we like it or do not like it and that we will do this or that concerning it. To speak in such a way indicates not merely that we do not live for God but that we do not even fear God. Who are we to say rashly that we do not like a certain thing? God may like it. We are not God, and we need to be careful about speaking hastily. Instead of expressing our opinion about a matter, we should say nothing and, if necessary, bring the matter to the Lord, praying and asking Him to show us whether we should have a share in it or stay away from it. This is the right attitude of a person who fears God.

In 5:1-4 we have four items as illustrations of things which need the trespass offering. If we were to make a list of such things, we would not list the four items mentioned here: not witnessing what we know (v. 1), touching the carcass of an animal (v. 2), touching the uncleanness of man (v. 3), and speaking rashly (v. 4). God speaks of these items, for He knows the real situation and need of His people.

The first item, not witnessing what we know, is actually a matter of lying. As we have pointed out, this involves Satan, the father of lies. Therefore, Satan is alluded to here.

The second item is death in three forms—wild, mild, and subtle. Death is the most hateful thing in the eyes of God. Death is spread in a wild way, in a gentle way, and in a subtle way. This is the real situation among God's congregation in this age.

The third item is the natural life with its uncleanness. It is very common for Christians to walk and act in the natural life. Is the natural life not prevailing in today's church life? Those who are sociable in a natural way are often well received, but those who walk in the spirit are often misunderstood. A great deal of the natural life can be seen among Christians and in God's congregation today.

The fourth item is rash speaking. Those who speak

rashly are quick to say whether or not they like a certain thing. These four things are listed by God as sins, and, as such, they need the trespass offering.

Leviticus 5:5 and 6 say, "And it shall be when he is guilty in any of these, then he shall confess that in which he has sinned; and he shall bring his trespass offering to Jehovah for his sin which he has committed, a female from the flock, a sheep or a goat for a sin offering; and the priest shall make propitiation for him concerning his sin." The largest trespass offering is a sheep or a goat. This trespass offering reminds us mainly of one thing: that our sins issue from the sin that dwells in us. Apparently we are dealing with sins; actually we are dealing with sin as the source of our sins. For this reason the trespass offering is a sin offering. We realize that we have committed sins, but in the eyes of God these sins have their source in sin. Therefore, what we offer to God to deal with our sins eventually is not merely a trespass offering but is a sin offering.

We may wonder how a trespass offering can become a sin offering. What we bring to God to deal with our sins is a trespass offering. But after we bring this offering to God, it becomes a sin offering. The reason for this is that God will not propitiate us only for our sins; He will propitiate us also for our sin. His way is not merely to remove the fruit from the tree but also to uproot the tree. If the tree is uprooted, the fruit will be thoroughly dealt with. Our problem is not only the sins we have committed; our problem is also the indwelling sin. What we offer to God should deal with sin as well as sins. Therefore, God calls this trespass offering a sin offering.

Verse 7 goes on to say, "But if he cannot afford a sheep, then he shall bring his trespass offering to Jehovah for that in which he has sinned, two turtledoves or two young pigeons, one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering." This verse reveals that the trespass offering is related not only to the sin offering but also to the burnt offering. According to this verse, the trespass offering is composed of

the sin offering and the burnt offering. Put together, these two offerings constitute the trespass offering.

We may think that our only problem is the sins we have committed. Actually our real problem is the indwelling sin and our not living for God. The root, the source, of our sins is our sin, and the reason for our sins is that we are not absolute for God. Therefore, we not only need the trespass offering to deal with our sins; we also need the sin offering to deal with the root of our sins—the sin within us—and the burnt offering to deal with the reason for our sins—our not being absolute for God. If we deal with the source of our sins and with our not being absolute for God, we also deal with our trespasses.

Verses 8 and 9 continue, "He shall bring them to the priest, who shall offer the one for the sin offering first; he shall nip its head at the neck, but shall not sever it; and he shall sprinkle some of the blood of the sin offering on the wall of the altar, and the remainder of the blood shall be squeezed out at the base of the altar; it is a sin offering." These verses speak not of the trespass offering but of the sin offering and the blood of the sin offering. Some of the blood is sprinkled on the wall of the altar, signifying the sprinkling of Christ's blood upon sinners (1 Pet. 1:2). The remainder of the blood is squeezed out at the base of the altar, signifying that the blood of Christ is the base of God's forgiveness to sinners (Eph. 1:7).

Verse 10 speaks of the second bird. "The second bird he shall then prepare as a burnt offering according to the ordinance. Thus the priest shall make propitiation for him concerning his sin which he has sinned, and he shall be forgiven." According to the regulations, we should be absolute for God. Since we are not absolute for God, we need the burnt offering in addition to the sin offering.

VI. A HANDFUL OF FINE FLOUR BURNED ON THE ALTAR, AS AN OFFERING OF JEHOVAH BY FIRE

Verse 11 tells us, "But if he cannot afford two turtledoves or two young pigeons, then he shall bring his offering for

that in which he has sinned, the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour for a sin offering; he shall not place oil upon it nor put frankincense on it, for it is a sin offering." A handful of fine flour burned on the altar, as an offering of Jehovah by fire, indicates that the fine flour for the trespass offering for God to forgive our sins is based upon the shedding of blood on the altar (Heb. 9:22), and it signifies that the perfect Christ is our trespass offering based upon the shedding of His blood on the cross (Col. 1:20).

For propitiation there is the need of the shedding of blood, but in Leviticus 5:11 fine flour is used for a sin offering. This fine flour typifies the humanity of Jesus. Thus, the trespass offering not only includes the sin offering and the burnt offering, but it even refers to the humanity of Jesus.

We commit many sins not only because we have sin within us and not only because we are not absolute for God, but also because we do not have the humanity of Jesus. Jesus would never commit sins. He has no sin in Him, and He is absolute for God. His humanity has no part with the father of lies. His humanity would never touch anything of death or of the natural life. Furthermore, His humanity would never do or speak anything rashly, hastily, or recklessly. Rather, as John 7:3-8 illustrates, when He was on earth, He always spoke and acted with consideration.

Why do we have sin in us? Why are we not absolute for God? The reason we have sin in us and are not absolute for God is that we are lacking the humanity of Jesus.

The tenth part of an ephah of fine flour offered for a sin offering signifies that only a small portion of the humanity of Jesus is needed. This indicates how little we use the Lord's humanity. We are what we are because we are short of the Lord's humanity. Due to this shortage, we are full of lies, death, the natural life, and rashness. However, the humanity of Jesus is an all-inclusive dose to kill our germs, to heal our disease, and to supply our need. I believe that there would be a great change in our married life and in our relationship with the brothers and sisters in the church life if we had more of the humanity of Jesus.

VII. THE REMAINDER OF THE FINE FLOUR FOR THE TRESPASS OFFERING BEING THE PRIEST'S, LIKE THE MEAL OFFERING

Leviticus 5:13 says, "Thus the priest shall make propitiation for him concerning his sin which he has committed in any of these things, and he shall be forgiven; and the remainder shall be the priest's, like the meal offering." The remainder of the fine flour for the trespass offering being the priest's signifies that the redeeming Christ is the serving one's food.

VIII. A PERSON SINNING AGAINST THE HOLY THINGS OF JEHOVAH, AGAINST JEHOVAH, AND LYING TO, EXTORTING FROM, OR SWEARING FALSELY TO HIS FELLOW MAN

Leviticus 5:15, 17-18; 6:2-3, 6 speak of a person sinning against the holy things of Jehovah, or sinning, making error, against Jehovah, or a person sinning and acting unfaithfully against Jehovah, and lying to his fellow man in regard to a deposit or a security, or through robbery, or extorting from his fellow man, or finding what was lost and lying about it, and swearing falsely. Such a person needs a ram without blemish out of the flock, according to the valuation by the shekel of the sanctuary, for a trespass offering. This signifies that the Christ who is without sin and who measures up to the divine scale is qualified to be the trespass offering for our sins against the holy things of God, or against God, or against man in the above-listed trespasses.

IX. THE ONE SINNING AGAINST THE HOLY THINGS OF GOD AND THE ONE SINNING AGAINST MAN NEEDING TO MAKE RESTITUTION

The one sinning against the holy things of God needs to make restitution and add to it one-fifth more and give it to the priest (5:15-16). Likewise, the one sinning against man in any defrauding needs to make restitution for it in full, add to it one-fifth more, and give it to whom it belongs on the day he is found guilty (6:2-6). This signifies that the one offering

the trespass offering should be righteous in material things according to the divine scale, standard, and measurement.

X. THE TRESPASS OFFERING BEING SLAUGHTERED WHERE THE BURNT OFFERING IS SLAUGHTERED

"In the place where they slaughter the burnt offering they shall slaughter the trespass offering" (7:2a). The trespass offering being slaughtered where the burnt offering is slaughtered indicates that the trespass offering is based upon the burnt offering, and it signifies that Christ is the trespass offering for us based upon His being the burnt offering.

The trespass offering is not simple. It includes dealing with the indwelling sin and with not being absolute for God. It also includes the liar Satan, the death among God's congregation, the natural life with its uncleanness, and the presumption of doing things rashly before God without fear and consideration. Furthermore, the trespass offering includes robbing and defrauding our fellow man.

How can we experience the trespass offering? The experience of the trespass offering is the result of our enjoyment of Christ as the burnt offering, the meal offering, the peace offering, and the sin offering in the fellowship of God and in the divine light. The experience of the trespass offering is therefore the issue of the enjoyment of the Triune God. Our experience of the trespass offering implies our being absolute for God and our knowing that we have sin within us as the source of all kinds of trespasses toward God and man.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE TWENTY-THREE

THE LAW OF THE BURNT OFFERING

Scripture Reading: Lev. 6:8-13

Beginning with this message, we will cover the laws of the offerings. The laws of the offerings are the ordinances and regulations of the offerings. For each offering there is a law, a regulation, an ordinance. The laws of the offerings appear to be quite simple. Actually, as we will see, something of deep and high spiritual significance is hidden in these laws.

I. THE BURNT OFFERING BEING UPON THE HEARTH (FIREWOOD) ON THE ALTAR ALL NIGHT UNTIL THE MORNING

A. Signifying That Anything Offered as a Burnt Offering Must Be Put on the Place of Burning to Be Burned

Leviticus 6:9a says, "Command Aaron and his sons and say, This is the law of the burnt offering: the burnt offering itself shall be upon the hearth on the altar all night until the morning." This signifies that anything offered as a burnt offering must be put on the place of offering to be burned. This is something that worldly people cannot understand, for they are raised and educated to become something in the world. Worldly parents certainly do not teach their children to offer themselves to God to be burned.

By the Lord's mercy and grace, our heart is different from the heart of the unbelievers. We know that the burnt offering indicates that we have a heart that is absolute for God in this age. We are not for anything else, and we have no other interest. Even though we encourage the young people to get the best education, education is not the thing

we love. The young people may get the highest education, but they need to realize that on this earth we Christians will eventually be nothing but ashes. This will be the issue of our offering ourselves to God as a burnt offering and of our being burned.

I would like to say a word to the young people who have the heart to serve the Lord full-time. I must tell you that hardships await you and that there is no future for you on earth. You will have nothing earthly on which to rely for your security and for your human living. You may feel that you will be very useful to God, but in the end you will be ashes. Everyone wants to be somebody, but if you would serve the Lord Jesus full-time, you must prepare yourself to be nobody, even to be ashes. Are you willing to be burned? To be burned to ashes is a matter not of enjoyment but of suffering. The destiny of a full-timer is a life of suffering. What is offered to God as a burnt offering must be on the place of burning, not on the place of anything glorious or high. Eventually, the outcome of such a life, a life of suffering, a life without a future and without security, will be a heap of ashes.

Although we have no earthly security, I can testify that we have the Lord Jesus as our security. Christ is my security, even though He sometimes hides Himself from me in order to test me. As a result of my experience and learning, I can tell you that the best time to enjoy the Lord Jesus is when He is hiding from you. After seeming to disappear for a while, He will spontaneously appear to us again. This is often His way with us. Such a Christ is our real security.

B. What Is Offered Should Remain at the Burning Place through the Dark Night until Morning

The burnt offering's being upon the hearth (firewood) on the altar all night until the morning also signifies that what is offered should remain at the burning place through the dark night until morning. "All night" means all this dark age. The age we are in is a dark night. The burnt offering

should be burning continually through the whole night until the morning.

No matter how long the night may be, eventually there will be a morning, a sun rising. The real sun rising will be the Lord's coming back, and we are waiting for this. However, we should not expect the Lord Jesus to come back quickly to spare us from the trial of the dark night. The more we ask Him to come quickly for this reason, the more He may delay His coming for our sake and for the sake of our passing through a longer dark night.

Recently I spoke a word to the full-timers in Taipei concerning sufferings and hardships. I told them to be prepared to have a life that will not be easy and to take a way that will not be smooth but rugged. We need to remain on the place of burning and be burned throughout the dark night until morning.

II. THE FIRE ON THE ALTAR BEING KEPT BURNING CONTINUALLY AND NOT GOING OUT

The fire on the altar should be kept burning continually (6:9b, 12a, 13). Verse 12a says, "The fire on the altar shall be kept burning on it; it must not go out."

A. Signifying That God as the Burning Fire in the Universe Is Ready to Receive (Burn) What Is Offered to Him as Food

The continual burning of the fire on the altar first signifies that God as the holy fire in the universe is ready to receive (burn) what is offered to Him as food. God's receiving us is His burning us. When we are burned by God, we should be happy because this burning means that God is receiving us.

B. Signifying That God's Desire to Accept What Is Offered to Him Never Ceases

The continual burning of the fire also signifies that God's desire to accept what is offered to Him never ceases. God desires to accept us, and He accepts us by burning us. The more He burns us, the more He accepts us.

III. THE PRIEST BURNING WOOD ON THE ALTAR EVERY MORNING

The priest burned wood on the altar every morning (v. 12b). This signifies the need of the serving one's cooperation with God's desire. This cooperation is to add more fuel to the holy fire to strengthen the burning for the receiving of the burnt offering as God's food. As we are being burned, we need to add more wood to burn ourselves and also to burn our fellow serving ones. Do not quench the fire but add more wood to keep the fire burning.

If there were only one serving one, the burning fuel would be exhausted. Therefore, we need more serving ones, more companions in being burned. The more serving ones there are, the more fuel there will be to burn ourselves and others.

The priest was to burn wood on the altar every morning. The morning signifies having a new start for the burning.

IV. THE PRIEST PUTTING ON HIS LINEN GARMENT AND LINEN BREECHES OVER HIS FLESH IN TAKING UP THE ASHES OF THE BURNT OFFERING

"The priest shall put on his linen garment, putting on linen breeches over his flesh" (v. 10a). Linen is fine, pure, and clean. The priest's putting on his linen garment and linen breeches thus signifies that fineness, purity, and cleanness are needed in handling the ashes (the result) of the burnt offering. We should not think of the ashes as waste that can be handled in a careless manner. On the contrary, the ashes are the result of the burnt offering, and in handling this result we need to be proper. We need to be fine, pure, and clean.

V. THE PRIEST PUTTING ON OTHER GARMENTS TO CARRY THE ASHES OUTSIDE THE CAMP

"Then he shall take off his garments and put on other

garments, and carry the ashes outside the camp to a clean place" (v. 11). This signifies the stateliness in handling the ashes (the result) of the burnt offering. In God's eyes, the result of our burnt offering is highly regarded. It is fine, pure, and clean. Thus, in carrying the ashes outside the camp, the priest wore stately garments and carried the ashes in a stately way. This teaches us to have a high regard for the result of our burnt offering.

To become a full-timer is to offer ourselves to God as a burnt offering. Concerning this, there should be and must be a result. We should regard this result and not despise it or consider it insignificant. The result of our being a burnt offering will be something that carries out God's New Testament economy. What we do as full-timers is not merely to preach the gospel to save sinners, to establish local churches, to teach the Bible, or to help people to grow in life and in truth. What we do must result in the building up of the Body of Christ, which is a miniature of the coming New Jerusalem.

What we are doing is actually extraordinary, but to the worldly people it is nothing. To them what we are doing is ashes. However, God has a high regard for these ashes. Eventually these ashes will become the New Jerusalem. Have you ever realized that the ashes, the result of the burnt offering, will be the coming New Jerusalem? I realize this, and I believe it. I believe that I will be there and that what I am doing will be part of that city. The New Jerusalem is our destiny and our destination.

How can the ashes of the burnt offering become the New Jerusalem? Ashes indicate the result of Christ's death, which brings us to an end, that is, to ashes. But Christ's death brings in resurrection. In resurrection, the ashes become precious materials—gold, pearls, and precious stones—for the building of the New Jerusalem. All three precious materials come from the transformation of the ashes. When we are brought to ashes, we are brought into the transformation of the Triune God.

VI. THE PRIEST ARRANGING THE BURNT OFFERING ON THE ALTAR AND BURNING THE FAT PORTIONS OF THE PEACE OFFERING ON IT

"The priest shall…arrange the burnt offering on it; and he shall offer up in smoke the fat portions of the peace offerings on it" (6:12b). This indicates that to burn the burnt offering is to lay the foundation for the sweetness of the peace offering. The burnt offering is therefore for the enjoyment of the peace offering. In its spiritual significance, the peace offering implies fellowship with the Triune God and includes the enjoyment of the Triune God. The burnt offering was burned, but it was burned for the peace offering.

A. Signifying That We Should Have the Burning of Our Burnt Offering Laid as a Foundation for Our Sweet Fellowship with God

The burning of the fat portions of the peace offerings in 6:12 signifies that we should have the burning of our burnt offering laid as a foundation for our sweet fellowship with God. Regardless of how much we feel that we are enjoying Christ, if we do not have the real offering of the burnt offering, our enjoyment is in self-deceit. The real enjoyment of the Lord is based on our offering ourselves to God as a burnt offering. If we mean business with God and offer ourselves to Him and live a life that is absolute for Him, then our enjoyment of Christ will be real and not imaginary.

We should not deceive ourselves but consider whether we have the necessary foundation for us to enjoy the Triune God. This is not a matter of how we feel; it is a matter of actually having a proper foundation for the enjoyment of Christ. We lay this foundation by offering ourselves to the Lord as a burnt offering, and therefore we are willing to be absolute for the Lord, and we actually are absolute for Him. If we have such a foundation, then, whether we feel like we are enjoying the Lord or not, we are enjoying Him in reality. However, if we live a loose life day by day, yet feel that we are enjoying the Lord, we deceive ourselves, because our enjoyment has

no foundation. Our need to have a foundation for the enjoyment of Christ is clearly pictured here in the type.

B. Signifying That on the Foundation of the Burnt Offering Our Peace Offering Should Be Burned for a Fragrance to God

Leviticus 6:12b also signifies that on the foundation of the burnt offering our peace offering should be burned for a fragrance to God. Not only the foundation should be burned, but even the very peace, the very fellowship, we enjoy should also be burned. The burnt offering should be burned, and our peace offering also should be burned. This means that both our absoluteness for God and our enjoyment of the Triune God should be a matter of burning. Thus, there is burning upon burning.

In this message we have seen the regulations concerning the burnt offering. If we desire to offer Christ as our burnt offering, taking Him as our burnt offering and enjoying Him as our absoluteness toward God, we need to follow all these regulations.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE TWENTY-FOUR

THE LAW OF THE MEAL OFFERING

Scripture Reading: Lev. 6:14-23

The meal offering is not common food for common people. The meal offering is food only for the priests. All New Testament believers are priests. Thus, the meal offering is for those in the church life who are God's actual and practical priests today.

I. THE MEAL OFFERING TO BE OFFERED BEFORE JEHOVAH IN FRONT OF THE ALTAR

Leviticus 6:14 says, "This is the law of the meal offering: the sons of Aaron shall offer it before Jehovah in front of the altar." The meal offering being offered before Jehovah signifies that the meal offering is offered to God in His presence. The meal offering being offered in front of the altar signifies that the meal offering is offered in relation to the redemption of Christ on the cross. The altar is a type of the cross. In the Old Testament there is the altar, but in the New Testament there is the cross. "In front of the altar" therefore means in relation to the redemption of Christ on the cross. The meal offering is offered to God in His presence, but it must be offered in relation to the redemption of Christ on the cross.

II. THE PORTION OF THE MEAL OFFERING TO AARON AND HIS SONS TO BE EATEN IN A HOLY PLACE, IN THE COURT OF THE TENT OF MEETING

Leviticus 6:16 says, "The remainder of it Aaron and his sons shall eat; it shall be eaten unleavened in a holy place; they shall eat it in the court of the tent of meeting." This verse speaks of the portion of the meal offering which was

for Aaron and his sons, that is, the portion which is for the priests in their priestly service.

A. Signifying That We Enjoy Christ as Our Meal Offering (Life Supply for Our Service) without Sin

Eating the priests' portion of the meal offering in a holy place signifies that we enjoy Christ as our meal offering (life supply for our service) without sin. The word *holy* here indicates that the enjoyment of the meal offering must be without sin.

B. Signifying That We Enjoy Christ in a Separated, Sanctified Realm

Eating the meal offering in a holy place also signifies that we enjoy Christ in a separated, sanctified realm. We can take Christ as our meal offering, as our daily life supply, only in a holy place. A holy place is a sanctified realm.

C. Signifying That We Enjoy Christ in the Sphere of the Church

The priests' portion of the meal offering was eaten in the court of the tent of meeting. The tent of meeting typifies the church. Therefore, eating the meal offering in the court of the tent of meeting signifies enjoying Christ in the sphere of the church. Outside the sphere of the church, there is no meal offering for us. The meal offering can be applied only in the sphere of the church life. We can enjoy Christ as our meal offering for our priestly service only within the circle of the church life. Our enjoyment of Christ as the meal offering must be holy, it must be in a sanctified realm, and it must be in the sphere of the church life.

Christ is our meal offering that we may serve God as priests. However, many real believers today are priests of God in name but not in actuality. In their daily life, they are not priests of God.

To be a priest one does not need to be a full-timer. We became priests by our regeneration. Having been regenerated,

we should now live a life as God's priests, serving God. You may serve God as a priest even though you have a full-time job. We may be engaged in different kinds of proper employment, but we can still do our work in the sense of being priests to God. For example, a brother who is a physician may carry out his medical practice as a priestly service, preaching the gospel to unbelievers to bring them to Christ and ministering life to believers. If we all behaved as priests in this way, serving God in His gospel, in His mercy, in His grace, and in His life, this would be the best way to preach the gospel.

However, the actual situation among believers is the opposite. More than half of the people in the United States may be Christians, but it is rare to hear of anyone preaching the gospel in their place of employment. Many believers live like worldlings, like common people, not like priests. What a shame! Since we are priests, we need to ask ourselves about our gospel preaching.

According to my study of the New Testament, the first thing we should do as God's priests is to preach the gospel and bring the sinners to God as offerings. This is what Paul did; his preaching of the gospel was a priestly service (Rom. 15:16). In his priestly service he offered the Gentiles to God. Do we have some saved sinners whom we can offer to God?

The book of Leviticus is altogether concerned with the priests. Nearly every chapter concerns the life, living, need, and supply of the priests and all the other things related to them. If we are not priests in actuality, we are not qualified to enter into this book. Therefore, I am deeply burdened to beg you to come back to your heavenly calling as priests of God. The first duty of our priestly service must be to bring sinners to present to God as offerings.

Paul said that he was saved to be an example to all the believers (1 Tim. 1:16). He was the believers' pattern, and his first duty was to gain sinners and offer them to God as offerings. His work of preaching was the real New Testament priestly service. Surely Paul knew what it meant to have Christ as his meal offering for his priestly service. But the meal offering may not be as real to us as it was to Paul,

because only to a small degree is our life actually the life of a priest. How sad it would be if we only talked about the priestly service but were not actually in it!

In these days while I am considering the book of Leviticus, my heart is weeping. The more I read and study this book, the more my heart is weeping. Among us there is little that would cause us to be joyful. We are talking about the priestly food, but who are the priests, and where are they? In this message I am burdened to stress this one point—the book of Leviticus is for the priests.

Regarding the priestly service, we need to consider our situation and ask ourselves where we are. The prophet Haggai charged the people of Israel to consider their ways (Hag. 1:5-11). We all need to reconsider our way. What kind of believers are we? Are we priestly believers or common believers?

III. NOT BAKING THE MEAL OFFERING WITH LEAVEN

Speaking of the meal offering, Leviticus 6:17a says, "It shall not be baked with leaven." Not baking the meal offering with leaven signifies that our working on Christ as our life supply must be without sin.

IV. CONSIDERING THE MEAL OFFERING MOST HOLY. LIKE THE SIN OFFERING AND THE TRESPASS OFFERING

The meal offering "is most holy, like the sin offering and like the trespass offering" (v. 17b). Here the meal offering is mentioned in relation to the sin offering and the trespass offering. We should consider all these offerings most holy.

A. Signifying That to Enjoy Christ as the Life Supply We Need to Deal with Sin in Our Fallen Nature

The sin offering deals with sin in our fallen nature. If we would enjoy Christ as our life supply, we need to deal with the sin in us.

B. Signifying That to Enjoy Christ as the Life Supply We Also Need to Deal with the Sins in Our Conduct

The trespass offering deals with the sins in our conduct. If we would enjoy Christ as our life supply, we need to deal not only with sin but also with our sins.

When we enjoy Christ as our daily supply for our priestly service, we need to realize that this enjoyment involves dealing with the sin in our fallen nature and also dealing with the sins in our conduct. If we try to enjoy the meal offering without such a dealing, we commit sin. We cannot take Christ as the meal offering unless we deal with our inward sin and our outward sins. This is the reason the meal offering refers us to the sin offering and to the trespass offering.

V. EVERY MALE AMONG THE SONS OF AARON EATING OF THE MEAL OFFERING

A. Signifying That the Partakers of Christ as the Life Supply Should Be Strong in Life

"Every male among the sons of Aaron may eat of it; it is their perpetual due throughout your generations from the offerings of Jehovah by fire" (v. 18a). Here we see that every male among the sons of Aaron could eat of the meal offering. This signifies that the partakers of Christ as the life supply should be strong in life.

When we hear that we need to be strong in life to partake of the meal offering, we may be disappointed, feeling that we are disqualified. This is the reason that nearly every day I make a strong petition to the Lord: "Lord, have mercy on us all." Our situation is probably suitable only for the Lord's mercy. Actually, according to this particular statute in the law of the meal offering, we are not qualified to partake of the meal offering. We are not the males among the sons of Aaron; that is, we are not the stronger ones in life among the saints. It is the stronger ones in life who are qualified to enjoy Christ as the meal offering.

No matter how much we may think we have the daily

enjoyment of Christ, we actually have not enjoyed Him that much. Our enjoyment is short because we have a problem in life. We are still so young and feeble in life. We are not the proper males. What we are, God knows, and we also know. We cannot say that we are adequately strong in the divine life. For this reason we need to ask the Lord to have mercy on us all. We need the Lord's mercy.

B. Signifying That the Partakers of Christ Should Be God's Serving Ones—Priests

The males among the sons of Aaron eating of the meal offering also signifies that the partakers of Christ should be God's serving ones—priests. If we do our daily work without serving God as a priest, we cannot share in the real enjoyment of Christ. In such a case, we may think that we have this enjoyment, but our thought does not correspond to the actual situation.

VI. THE MEAL OFFERING OF AARON AND HIS SONS ON THE DAY WHEN AARON IS ANOINTED

"This is the offering of Aaron and his sons which they shall offer to Jehovah on the day when he is anointed" (v. 20a). This signifies that the enjoyment of Christ as the life supply is related to the priestly service. Again and again I would emphasize the fact that the enjoyment of Christ as the meal offering is related to our priestly service.

A. The Tenth of an Ephah of Fine Flour as a Continual Meal Offering

Verse 20b speaks of "the tenth of an ephah of fine flour as a continual meal offering." This signifies that the top portion, the tenth part, of the enjoyment of Christ should be for God. This also signifies that this kind of enjoyment of Christ should continue in our priestly service.

B. Half of the Meal Offering in the Morning and Half in the Evening to Keep It a Continual Offering

Half of the meal offering was offered in the morning and

half in the evening to keep it a continual offering (v. 20c). This signifies the continual enjoyment of Christ in the priestly service.

The meal offering is only for the priests, and it is prevailing only in the priestly service. We may be priests, but our priestly service may not be prevailing. If this is our situation, then the priestly food will likewise not be prevailing. This spiritual food can be prevailing only in a prevailing priestly service. We must be serving priests in actuality. Then the priestly food will actually be our portion.

C. The Meal Offering Being Entirely Burned and Not Eaten by the Priest

"It is a perpetual statute; it shall be entirely offered up in smoke to Jehovah. Every meal offering of a priest shall be entirely burned; it must not be eaten" (vv. 22b-23). This signifies that the enjoyment of Christ for God's satisfaction should be absolute.

Our enjoyment of Christ is measured by the extent to which we are actually priests serving God. Our feeling is not the measurement. We are priests, but if there is a problem with our priestly service, there will also be a problem with the enjoyment of Christ as the meal offering.

In doing anything, we need to be in the right position. If we are not in the right position, then we cannot have anything to do with that particular matter. Although we are priests, in a practical way we may be in the wrong position and therefore cannot have the real enjoyment of Christ as the meal offering.

My loving intention in speaking this word is to encourage you to reconsider your way. Do not think that you are all right. I can testify to you that daily I need to reconsider my way and my situation. This is a serious matter because none of us knows when the Lord might take him. We may be taken at any time. Once the Lord takes us away, it will be too late for us to do anything about our situation. We have been clearly told that at His coming the Lord will set up a judgment seat (Rom. 14:10; 2 Cor. 5:10). We all will stand there

and give an account to Him. In particular, we will have to confess all the words that came out of our mouth while we were on earth (Matt. 12:36-37). Therefore, we need to be careful in what we speak.

My desire is not to be an expositor of the Bible. My burden is to minister the Lord's word in a living and enlightening way. I would like all the dear saints to be enlightened and to see some light concerning themselves, concerning the church, and concerning God's New Testament economy. It is crucial that we be brought into the light and that the light shine upon us, around us, and within us.

We need to remember that the first three offerings—the burnt offering, the meal offering, and the peace offering—bring us into the light. In the light we are enlightened to see our sin and our sins. This is what we need.

Whether we are old or young, whether we have been saved for many years or for a few months, we need to be enlightened. We all need to be brought into the divine light. We thank the Lord that we are children of light (Eph. 5:8). Since we are children of light, we must be in the light to be clear first concerning ourselves and then concerning God's economy. This is what I am expecting to see.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE TWENTY-FIVE

THE LAW OF THE SIN OFFERING

Scripture Reading: Lev. 6:24-30

In this message we will consider the law of the sin offering.

It is not difficult for us to consider as law the Ten Commandments given through Moses. However, we may find it hard to regard as a law something that concerns the enjoyment of Christ, We may think that if there is a law concerning the enjoyment of Christ, there will not be any enjoyment. Nevertheless, each of the five offerings has its own law. Therefore, the sin offering has its law, and with this law there are a number of regulations.

As descendants of Adam we have a fallen life, a lawless life unwilling to be ruled, governed, or controlled by anyone. Our Adamic life is rebellious, and our Adamic nature is lawless. But when we were saved and regenerated, we received another life—the divine life, the life of God—and this life is the opposite of our fallen, lawless life. This means that as genuine believers in Christ, we have two lives, an old one and a new one. The first is the natural, human life, and the second is the divine life, the eternal life. It is not too much to say that the divine life is God Himself; it is God within us to be our life. Whereas the fallen, natural life is lawless, the divine life within us is absolutely according to law and regulation.

Every kind of life has its own law. For example, a bird flies according to the law of the bird life, and a peach tree bears peaches according to the law of the peach tree life. The divine life also has its own law.

The law of the sin offering is according to the law of what we have enjoyed of Christ. In our enjoyment of Christ as the burnt offering, we need to realize that Christ is a life and

this life has a law. The law of the burnt offering, therefore, is written according to the law of the Christ whom we have enjoyed. The principle is the same with the other offerings. The peace offering and the meal offering are a living person, Christ. As a living person, Christ has a life with a law. Thus, the law of the peace offering and the law of the meal offering correspond to the life law of Christ. Apparently, the written law concerns only the peace offering and the meal offering. Actually, in our experience, the law of the peace offering and the law of the meal offering become a living law, a law of the very life of the Christ whom we enjoy.

Every law in letters is written according to a certain life. If we were to write a law concerning elderly people, that law would have to correspond to the life of elderly people. The same would be true with a law written concerning young people. This principle applies to the law given to us by God. God has given us a law that we should worship Him because we have a worshipping life. God would never give such a law to animals, because they do not have such a life.

Three portions in the New Testament indicate that even in the enjoyment of Christ we need to be regulated. In 1 Corinthians 9:26 and 27 Paul says, "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so I box, not as beating the air; but I buffet my body and lead it as a slave, lest having preached to others, I myself should become disapproved." Literally, the Greek word translated "buffet" means to beat the face under the eye black and blue. This is not to ill-treat the body as in asceticism, nor to consider the body evil as in Gnosticism. This is to subdue the body and make it a conquered captive to serve us as a slave for fulfilling our holy purpose. In these verses we see not only requirements but demands. Here we have the strongest demand of the strongest law.

Galatians 6:15 and 16 say, "Neither is circumcision anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. And as many as shall walk by this rule, peace be upon them and mercy, even upon the Israel of God." In verse 15 Paul tells us that "neither is circumcision anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creation." This is grace. Today we do not need

circumcision or uncircumcision—we only need grace. But in verse 16 Paul goes on to tell us that the way to receive mercy and peace is to "walk by this rule," the rule of the new creation. God has saved us to the state and condition of a new creation with Christ as its life. Now we need to walk by the rule of this new creation.

The rule of the new creation will regulate us in the time we go to bed at night and rise in the morning. On the Lord's Day in particular, the rule of the new creation will urge us to rise up a little earlier, pray for the meeting, and come to the meeting early to meet with the Lord and worship Him.

The reward for walking according to the rule of the new creation is mercy and peace. I can testify that when I walk according to this rule, I have mercy and peace. If we walk according to the rule of the new creation in the way we prepare for and come to the meeting on the Lord's Day, we will receive mercy and peace.

Walking by the rule of the new creation is a matter of law. In the new creation, there is a new life, and within this new life, there is a new law. This new law is actually the Lord Himself within us, regulating us all the time.

We are God's new creation, and we have the life of this new creation. With this life there is a regulating law. In our daily living, we need to be regulated by this law.

In Philippians 3:13 and 14 Paul tells us that he is forgetting what is behind, stretching forward to what is before, and pursuing "toward the goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Then in verses 15 and 16 he says, "Let us therefore, as many as are full-grown, have this mind; and if in anything you are otherwise minded, this also God shall reveal to you. Only this, whereunto we have attained, by the same rule let us walk." The Greek word translated "walk" here means to walk orderly; it is derived from a word which means to range in regular line, to march in military rank, to keep step, to conform to virtue and piety. Thus, Paul is here charging us to walk in line, in order, and in a regulated way.

These three portions of the New Testament all indicate the

same thing—that in the enjoyment of grace we need to be ruled.

I. THE SIN OFFERING BEING SLAUGHTERED BEFORE JEHOVAH WHERE THE BURNT OFFERING IS SLAUGHTERED

"Speak to Aaron and to his sons and say, This is the law of the sin offering: in the place where the burnt offering is slaughtered the sin offering shall be slaughtered before Jehovah" (Lev. 6:25a). This signifies two things. First, it signifies that Christ as our sin offering was slain before God. Second, it signifies that Christ was offered to God as our sin offering based upon His being the burnt offering to God.

We may think that if we bring an offering to God, we may slaughter it anywhere. However, here God requires His people to slaughter the sin offering before Him in the place where the burnt offering is slaughtered. The offering must be presented according to God's regulations. From this we see that even though we today are enjoying Christ as grace, there are still regulations that we must follow in the enjoyment of Christ.

II. THE SIN OFFERING BEING MOST HOLY

The sin offering is most holy (6:25b). This signifies that Christ as our sin offering offered to God was most holy in that He dealt with sin in our nature intrinsically and with the whole of our sinful nature. The sin offering deals not only with the sin in our conduct outwardly but also with the sin in our nature intrinsically. This offering deals with the whole of our sinful nature. Therefore, the sin offering is most holy.

III. THE PRIEST OFFERING THE OFFERING FOR SIN, EATING IT IN A HOLY PLACE, IN THE COURT OF THE TENT OF MEETING

A. Signifying That He Who Serves Sinners with Christ as Their Sin Offering Shares the Enjoyment of Christ as the Sin Offering

"The priest who offers it for sin shall eat it. In a holy

place it shall be eaten, in the court of the tent of meeting" (6:26). This signifies that he who serves sinners with Christ as their sin offering shares the enjoyment of Christ as the sin offering. If we serve sinners with Christ, we are serving as priests. When we minister Christ to others in this way, both we and the ones we are serving will enjoy Christ as the sin offering.

B. Signifying That He Enjoys Christ as the Sin Offering in a Separated, Sanctified Realm, in the Sphere of the Church

The priest's eating the sin offering in a holy place, in the court of the tent of meeting, also signifies that he who ministers Christ as the sin offering to sinners enjoys Christ as this offering in a separated, sanctified realm, in the sphere of the church.

We may think that as long as we are serving others with Christ, we can do this anywhere. However, according to the spiritual rule, we must do this according to God's regulation.

IV. WHOEVER TOUCHES THE FLESH OF THE SIN OFFERING BEING HOLY

Whoever touched the flesh of the sin offering was holy (6:27a). This signifies that whoever touches Christ as the sin offering is separated and sanctified, forsaking sin and having his natural flesh dealt with, for Christ as the sin offering has dealt with sin and our sinful flesh on the cross.

We need to realize that when we bring Christ as the sin offering to a sinner, this Christ is holy. When a sinner touches this holy Christ, he becomes sanctified and is made holy. Immediately this sanctified one will forsake sin and have his natural flesh dealt with.

We need to have such a realization and faith concerning Christ as the sin offering. Then we should bring the gospel—that is, Christ Himself—to others and let them touch Him. The Christ whom we minister to others is the sin

offering. On the cross He dealt with the intrinsic sin in our being and with our sinful flesh.

V. THE GARMENT ON WHICH THE BLOOD OF THE SIN OFFERING WAS SPATTERED BEING WASHED IN A HOLY PLACE

"When any of its blood is spattered on a garment, you shall wash what it was spattered on in a holy place" (6:27b). This signifies that the daily walk of the one who has received redemption through the blood of Christ as the sin offering should be dealt with (cf. Eph. 4:22-24). Our daily walk, signified by the garment, should be dealt with continually.

The garment on which the blood of the sin offering was spattered was washed in a holy place. This signifies that the daily life of one who has received redemption through the blood of Christ as the sin offering should be dealt with in a separated, sanctified realm. From this we see that we should have regard for the blood of Christ and never consider it common.

VI. THE EARTHEN VESSEL, IN WHICH THE SIN OFFERING IS BOILED, BEING BROKEN

"An earthen vessel in which it is boiled shall be broken" (6:28a). This signifies that the one who, as an earthen vessel, has a relationship with Christ as the sin offering should be broken. To preach Christ to others as the sin offering, we as the earthen vessels need to be broken. If we are not broken and yet preach the gospel in our natural life, we will not see much result. We need to be broken vessels.

VII. A BRONZE VESSEL, IN WHICH THE SIN OFFERING IS BOILED. BEING SCOURED AND RINSED WITH WATER

"If it is boiled in a bronze vessel, then it shall be scoured and rinsed with water" (6:28b). This signifies that the one who has been enlightened and judged by the Spirit (likened

to a bronze mirror) to be regenerated needs not to be broken but dealt with by being scoured and rinsed.

If we would go to preach Christ as the sin offering to others, we must be dealt with, either by being broken or by being scoured and rinsed. We cannot go in a natural way.

VIII. EVERY MALE OF THE PRIESTS EATING OF THE SIN OFFERING, WHICH IS MOST HOLY

"Every male among the priests may eat of it; it is most holy" (6:29). This signifies that all the stronger ones can enjoy Christ as the most holy offering in ministering Christ as the sin offering to sinners.

We should not think that preaching the gospel is a small thing. It requires us to be strong in the life of Christ.

IX. THE SIN OFFERING, THE BLOOD OF WHICH IS BROUGHT INTO THE TENT OF MEETING TO MAKE PROPITIATION IN THE HOLY PLACE, IN THE HOLY OF HOLIES, NOT BEING EATEN BUT BURNED WITH FIRE

"No sin offering shall be eaten from which any of the blood is brought into the tent of meeting to make propitiation in the holy place; it shall be burned with fire" (6:30). The propitiation mentioned here was made in the Holy of Holies (16:27). This verse signifies that Christ as the sin offering dealing with our sin and with our sinful nature on the cross to accomplish God's redemption for us is wholly for God's enjoyment, and we should not share it. But in our ministering Christ as the sin offering to sinners, we can share Him.

Concerning Christ as the sin offering, there is a portion that is only for God, and there is a portion for us to share. The top portion is for God's enjoyment. God made Christ a propitiation for sinners, and we have no share in this. This is absolutely for God. However, when we preach Christ to others, ministering Him as the sin offering, we can share Him. Thus, God has His part, and we have our part.

These regulations concerning the sin offering are called "the law of the sin offering." This indicates that even in the

enjoyment of Christ, we must go along with all the regulations in life. We should not have our own choice in the way to enjoy Christ. We must enjoy Christ in the way chosen by God.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE TWENTY-SIX

THE LAW OF THE TRESPASS OFFERING

Scripture Reading: Lev. 7:1-10

In my study of biographies and history, I have received much help from the living and practices of two persons, George Müller and Hudson Taylor. George Müller, a leading one among the British Brethren, rose up every morning to walk in the open air and to read the Bible and pray as he walked. As he read, he prayed. He testified that from this practice he received the best nourishment, edification, knowledge, and building up in his Christian life. The practice of Hudson Taylor, the founder of the China Inland Mission, was very similar. He also rose up in the morning to spend time with the Lord in the Word, and he testified of the nourishment he received.

I mention the practice of George Müller and Hudson Taylor because I am concerned for the Christian life of the young ones. In the Christian life, spiritual birth is only the beginning. If a human being is to be raised properly and to grow adequately in every phase of life, he must be raised in a good home and attend school from kindergarten through high school. This is the law according to the physical life. The principle is the same in the Christian life. We need a spiritual home where we can grow and a spiritual school where we can receive a proper education. In addition, we need to behave ourselves, cooperating with both the home and the school. This is the law according to the spiritual life.

When we were regenerated, we received another life—the divine life, the life of God—which is different from our natural life. Whether our natural life is good or bad, we need to forget that life and go along with the second life, the

divine life. In this second life there is a law that corresponds to the five laws in Leviticus 6 and 7 concerning the enjoyment of Christ in five aspects. Today, we need to go along strictly with this second life. If we do this, we will receive much spiritual benefit.

Every life has its own law and its own sense. The divine life, therefore, has a law and also a sense. To us today, this life is not objective but is altogether subjective. The divine life is in us. This life within us is subjective to such an extent that often we find it difficult to distinguish our original, natural life from our second, divine life. Nevertheless, it is a fact that the divine life is within us, and this life has a particular sense.

Some illustrations will help you understand what I mean by the sense of the divine life within us. Before you were saved, you may have enjoyed a certain kind of worldly entertainment. When you wanted to participate in that kind of entertainment, you simply did so. But after being saved and regenerated, quite often you would have a sense or feeling within that would not agree with your participating in that worldly amusement. You may then have felt that it was better to use the time to pray, and something within you—the sense of the divine life—would agree.

Sometimes the inner sense may not agree with your intention to spend a certain available time in prayer. After further consideration, you may have the desire to visit your cousin to preach the gospel, and the inner sense may agree. Praying and preaching the gospel are both good and holy things; however, the inner sense may agree with the latter and not with the former. Thus, you do not have the peace to stay home and pray, but you do have the peace to preach the gospel. Such an experience tells you that now you have something which you did not have before you were saved—the divine life with its law and its sense or feeling. If you take care of this inner sense, the sense of the divine life, you will keep the law of this life.

I would like to help you to make a decision, to make up your mind, to live and walk according to the law of the new life. You need to decide not to live any longer according to the

old way. You are not what you were before you were saved. You are a new creation, a regenerated person, a member of the new man.

Immediately after their regeneration, some believers have not only the desire and the aspiration but even the ambition to be new, holy, heavenly persons. But perhaps some of you have not yet made such a decision. I am concerned that you will continue to live, act, and behave in the old way. Therefore, I would urge you, even beg you, to make a decision that you will not be as you were in the past.

Because we are regenerated persons, we should be different in everything from what we were in the past. We were generated through our parents to receive the natural, human life, but we were regenerated by God to receive the divine life and thereby to become God's children. Now we need to live like children of God.

If you were adopted by the president, surely you would decide spontaneously to live and act like a child of the president. We need to realize that we are children of the Lord of the whole universe, the One who is much higher than the president. Since we are children of such a God, we should behave as His children.

Although we are the children of God, we may come to the meetings of the church in either a proper or an improper way. Some may come to the meeting on the Lord's Day sloppily dressed. They may also come late and take a seat according to their preference. Of course, the meeting is full of grace, and some grace may rain on them, but it is questionable how much grace they will receive and how much they will treasure it. Others may come to the meeting on the Lord's Day properly washed and dressed, and prepared not only in their spirit but also in their whole being. They may even come early, take an appropriate seat, and pray for the meeting. Surely they will receive more grace, and they will treasure what they receive. They will receive spiritual benefit, and they will in turn be a benefit to the church.

We need all kinds of regulations in our Christian life. Some may feel that this is too legal, but here in the type

we do have the laws, the regulations, for the enjoyment of Christ.

Let us now consider the various aspects of the law of the trespass offering.

I. THE TRESPASS OFFERING BEING MOST HOLY

"This is the law of the trespass offering; it is most holy" (Lev. 7:1). Like the meal offering and the sin offering, the trespass offering is most holy. This signifies that Christ as our trespass offering is most holy in dealing with the sins in our conduct.

When we apply Christ as our trespass offering, we must do this in a holy way. We should never apply this offering in a loose or careless way, much less in a sinful way. Concerning the trespass offering, we need to remember that God uses this offering to refer us to the sin offering, reminding us that sin is in our flesh and that sin includes Satan, who is the father of lies (John 8:44), the world (1 John 5:19), and the power struggle. The trespass offering also refers us to the burnt offering, reminding us that we commit sins because we are not fully and wholly for God. The reason we lose our temper or strive with certain saints is that we are not wholly for God. Since the trespass offering refers us to the sin offering and the burnt offering, we should not take the trespass offering in a light way. Actually, nearly the entire Christian life is involved with the trespass offering. Therefore, we should have the proper realization of this offering and apply it according to its law.

II. THE TRESPASS OFFERING BEING SLAUGHTERED IN THE PLACE WHERE THE BURNT OFFERING IS SLAUGHTERED

"In the place where they slaughter the burnt offering they shall slaughter the trespass offering" (Lev. 7:2a). This signifies that Christ as our trespass offering in dealing with the sins in our conduct is based upon His being the burnt offering to God.

Both the sin offering and the trespass offering are based on the burnt offering. Because Christ is the burnt offering, He is qualified to be the sin offering and the trespass offering. If Christ were not absolute for God, Christ would not be qualified to be our sin offering and trespass offering. Rather, He Himself would have needed someone to be His sin offering and trespass offering. Being absolute for God is the foundation, the base, for our Savior's being our sin offering and trespass offering. This reminds us and strengthens us when we take Him as our trespass offering to take Him also as our burnt offering so that in Him, with Him, and through Him we may be absolute for God.

III. EVERY MALE OF THE PRIESTS EATING OF THE TRESPASS OFFERING IN A HOLY PLACE

"Every male among the priests may eat of it. It shall be eaten in a holy place; it is most holy" (v. 6). Every male of the priests eating of the trespass offering in a holy place signifies that all the stronger ones can enjoy Christ as the trespass offering in ministering Christ to others in dealing with the sins in their conduct. To minister Christ as the trespass offering to a brother who has committed sins requires that you be a stronger one.

This enjoyment of Christ must be in a holy place, in a separated, sanctified realm. If we would help others to take Christ as their trespass offering for their sins, we must be strong, and we must do this in a realm that is not common or worldly but that is holy and sanctified, separated from all other places.

IV. AS THE SIN OFFERING, SO IS THE TRESPASS OFFERING—ONE LAW FOR BOTH

"As the sin offering, so is the trespass offering; there is one law for them" (v. 7a). This signifies that sin and trespasses (sins) are of the same category. All are sin in its totality. This is the reason the word *sin* in John 1:29 includes sin and sins; that is, it includes the totality of the category of sin.

V. THE PRIEST WHO MAKES PROPITIATION WITH THE TRESPASS OFFERING HAVING IT

"The priest who makes propitiation with it shall have it" (v. 7b). This signifies that the one who ministers with Christ as the trespass offering shares such a Christ. When we minister Christ as the trespass offering to others, we share in Him as this offering. This encourages us to minister Christ.

VI. THE PRIEST WHO OFFERS ANY MAN'S BURNT OFFERING HAVING THE HIDE OF THE BURNT OFFERING

"The priest who offers any man's burnt offering, that priest shall have for himself the hide of the burnt offering which he has offered" (v. 8). This signifies that the one who ministers with Christ as the burnt offering shares and enjoys Christ in His enveloping power.

When we serve others with Christ, we share a particular part of Christ—His "hide," which signifies His enveloping power. To envelop something is to wrap it with some kind of covering, and this covering serves as a protection to that thing. Christ's enveloping power is His covering, protecting, and preserving power. If a cow had no hide, the cow would not be protected and preserved. Today Christ is our covering. He not only covers us but also protects and preserves us and everything related to our being. We experience Christ as our covering, protecting, and preserving power when we minister Him as the burnt offering to others. Because we have a thick hide covering and preserving us, we are protected in every way, and nothing will hurt us.

VII. EVERY MEAL OFFERING BAKED IN THE OVEN OR PREPARED IN A PAN OR ON A GRIDDLE BEING FOR THE PRIEST WHO OFFERS IT

"Every meal offering which is baked in the oven, and any that is prepared in a pan or on a griddle, shall be for the priest himself who offers it" (v. 9). Here we see that these meal offerings with which the priest served eventually became his to enjoy for the priesthood. This signifies that the one who ministers Christ as the suffering One partakes

of and enjoys such a Christ. As long as we serve Christ to others, we will have as our enjoyment the very Christ whom we serve.

VIII. EVERY MEAL OFFERING MINGLED WITH OIL OR DRY BEING FOR ALL THE PRIESTS

"But every other meal offering, whether mingled with oil or dry, shall be for all of Aaron's sons, to all alike" (v. 10). This signifies that all those who minister Christ mingled with the Spirit or in Himself alike partake of and enjoy such a Christ.

What we have in these verses is the law of the trespass offering. If we minister Christ to others, we will enjoy Him. This is a law, a regulation, made by God.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE TWENTY-SEVEN

THE LAW OF THE PEACE OFFERING

Scripture Reading: Lev. 7:11-38

The law of the peace offering is a long law concerning the enjoyment of Christ. No Christian would ever imagine that the enjoyment of Christ would be so regulated. Both the Old Testament and the New Testament have warnings concerning the improper, or lawless, enjoyment of Christ. First Corinthians 11:17 says that we could meet together not for the better but for the worse. Verse 27 says, "Whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner shall be guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord." Verse 29 speaks of the one who "eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the body." Here we see that the word in the New Testament is more solemn than that in the Old Testament.

Let us now consider a number of points related to the law of the peace offering.

I. THE PEACE OFFERING FOR THANKSGIVING BEING OFFERED WITH THE MEAL OFFERING OF UNLEAVENED CAKES MINGLED WITH OIL, UNLEAVENED WAFERS ANOINTED WITH OIL, AND CAKES OF FINE FLOUR SATURATED. MINGLED WITH OIL

The first kind of peace offering is the peace offering for thanksgiving. Of all the different peace offerings, this one is the weakest. Concerning this kind of peace offering, Leviticus 7:12 says, "If he offers it for thanksgiving, then with the thanksgiving sacrifice he shall offer unleavened cakes mingled with oil, and unleavened wafers anointed with oil, and cakes of fine flour saturated, mingled with oil." This signifies

that Christ, whether mingled with the Spirit without sin, or anointed with the Spirit without sin, or as the fine One saturated with the Spirit, as the meal offering in our enjoyment of Him in His conduct, is our peace offering, crucified with the shedding of His blood on the cross (Col. 1:20), in our thanksgiving to God.

II. WITH THE PEACE OFFERING FOR THANKSGIVING, CAKES OF LEAVENED BREAD BEING OFFERED

"With the thanksgiving sacrifice of his peace offering, he shall offer his offering with cakes of leavened bread" (v. 13). This signifies that the offerer, though enjoying Christ as the One without sin, still has sin.

The reason the peace offering for thanksgiving is the weakest kind of peace offering is that it includes leaven. This indicates that the offerer still has sin and is therefore in a weak condition.

III. FROM THE MEAL OFFERING THE OFFERER OFFERING ONE PIECE FROM EACH OFFERING AS A HEAVE OFFERING TO JEHOVAH, AND IT BEING FOR THE PRIEST WHO OFFERS THE PEACE OFFERING

"And from it he shall offer one from each offering as a heave offering to Jehovah; it shall be for the priest who dashes the blood of the peace offering" (v. 14). This has a twofold significance. First, since the heave offering is a type of Christ in His ascension, this signifies that Christ as the meal offering in all His aspects is offered to God as the One in ascension. Second, this signifies that such a Christ is partaken of and enjoyed as food by the one who ministers Christ as the peace offering. When we minister the ascended Christ to others, we partake of the very Christ whom we minister.

IV. THE FLESH OF THE THANKSGIVING SACRIFICE OF THE PEACE OFFERING BEING EATEN ON THE OFFERING DAY AND NO PART OF IT BEING LAID ASIDE UNTIL MORNING

"The flesh of the thanksgiving sacrifice of his peace

offering shall be eaten on the day it is offered; he shall not lay aside any of it until morning" (v. 15). This signifies that the maintaining power of this kind of offering is rather small, that it has to be fully enjoyed on the offering day, and that our experience and enjoyment of Christ in this aspect should be fresh daily.

We may be thankful to God and offer Him a peace offering. This is an offering in which we enjoy Christ in God's presence. However, the peace offering for thanksgiving is a weaker offering, and its enjoyment cannot be carried from one day to the next. The lasting power of this offering is not great.

V. THE SACRIFICE OF THE OFFERING, AS A VOW OR A FREEWILL OFFERING, BEING EATEN ON THE OFFERING DAY AND THE REMAINDER ON THE NEXT DAY

"But if the sacrifice of his offering is a vow or a freewill offering, it shall be eaten on the day he offers his sacrifice, and on the next day the remainder of it may be eaten" (v. 16). This signifies that the maintaining power of the peace offering for a vow or a freewill offering is stronger than that for thanksgiving, that it should be eaten on the offering day, and that our stronger enjoyment of Christ could last longer. If our offering is stronger, our enjoyment of this offering will last longer.

VI. THE FLESH OF THIS OFFERING EATEN ON THE THIRD DAY NOT BEING ACCEPTED BUT BEING AN ABHORRENT THING, AND THE EATER BEING CONDEMNED

"If any of the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offering is eaten at all on the third day, it shall not be accepted; it shall not be accounted to him who offered it. It shall be an abhorrent thing, and the person who eats of it shall bear his iniquity" (v. 18). This signifies that our enjoyment of Christ in its oldness shall not be pleasant to God and not right with Him. The lawless enjoyment of Christ is abhorrent to God. Therefore, in 1 Corinthians 11 Paul warns us that in coming to the Lord's table, we must be careful.

VII. THE FLESH OF THIS OFFERING TOUCHING ANYTHING UNCLEAN NOT BEING EATEN BUT BURNED WITH FIRE

"The flesh that touches anything unclean shall not be eaten; it shall be burned with fire" (v. 19a). This signifies that the enjoyment of Christ as our peace should be kept from all uncleanness.

VIII. THE FLESH OF THE PEACE OFFERING WHICH HAS NOT TOUCHED ANYTHING UNCLEAN BEING EATEN BY THE PERSON WHO IS CLEAN

"And as for other flesh, anyone who is clean may eat of it" (v. 19b). This signifies that the enjoyment of Christ as our peace should not only be kept from all uncleanness but should also be eaten by a clean person.

IX. AN UNCLEAN PERSON WHO EATS THE FLESH OF THE PEACE OFFERINGS THAT BELONG TO JEHOVAH BEING CUT OFF FROM HIS PEOPLE

"But the person who eats the flesh of the sacrifice of peace offerings that belong to Jehovah while his uncleanness is upon him, that person shall be cut off from his people. And when a person touches anything unclean, whether the uncleanness of man, or an unclean beast, or any unclean abomination, and then eats of the flesh of the sacrifice of peace offerings that belong to Jehovah, that person shall be cut off from his people" (vv. 20-21). This signifies that the unclean person who partakes of Christ as his peace, as at the Lord's table (1 Cor. 10:16-17), shall be put aside from the fellowship of the enjoyment of Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 5:13b). An unclean person is a sinful person. Such a person should be removed from the fellowship at the Lord's table.

X. THE SONS OF ISRAEL NOT EATING ANY FAT OF AN OX, A SHEEP, OR A GOAT

"You shall not eat any fat of an ox, a sheep, or a goat" (Lev. 7:23). This signifies that in their daily living the sons of Israel should consider God's food, as indicated by the fat

of the ox, sheep, and goat, which fat signifies the tender, fine, and excellent part of the person of Christ.

This matter is crucial. As priests, in our eating we need to be concerned about God's food and should not eat the fat, which is God's portion. When we are practicing our priestly service, we are serving God, and we should consider not our own things but God's things. The fat, the top portion of the offerings, must not be eaten by the priests but must be offered to God for His satisfaction.

XI. THE FAT OF CATTLE WHICH DIED OF THEMSELVES OR WERE TORN BY BEASTS NOT EATEN BY THE SONS OF ISRAEL BUT PUT TO OTHER USES

"The fat of that which dies of itself and the fat of that which is torn by beasts may be put to any other use, but you shall certainly not eat it" (v. 24). This signifies that the dirtiness of death spoils the significance of God's enjoyment of Christ. God hates death and does not want to look upon anything related to it.

XII. WHOEVER EATS THE FAT OF AN OFFERING BY FIRE OFFERED TO JEHOVAH BEING CUT OFF FROM HIS PEOPLE

"Whoever eats the fat of a beast from which an offering by fire is offered to Jehovah, the person who eats shall be cut off from his people" (v. 25). This signifies that we who enjoy Christ as our offering to God should keep the excellent part of the person of Christ for God that we might not be put aside from the fellowship of the enjoyment of Christ. This fellowship of the enjoyment of Christ refers to the Lord's table. At the Lord's table, we have the fellowship of the enjoyment of Christ.

XIII. THE BLOOD, WHETHER OF BIRD OR OF BEAST, NOT EATEN BY THE SONS OF ISRAEL

"Moreover, wherever you dwell you shall not eat any blood, whether of bird or of beast" (v. 26). This signifies that

only the blood of Jesus should be taken by us for our redemption (John 6:53-56; Heb. 9:12).

XIV. ANY PERSON WHO EATS ANY BLOOD BEING CUT OFF FROM HIS PEOPLE

"Any person who eats any blood, that person shall be cut off from his people" (v. 27). This signifies that anyone who regards the blood of Christ as a common thing shall be put aside from the fellowship of the enjoyment of Christ. We must regard the blood of Christ as special, particular, and precious. If we eat other blood, we make the blood of Christ common. This is sin.

XV. THE OFFERER OF THE PEACE OFFERING BRINGING PARTS OF HIS OFFERING FOR THE OFFERINGS OF JEHOVAH BY FIRE, THE FAT BURNED TO GOD BY FIRE ON THE ALTAR WITH THE BREAST AS A WAVE OFFERING BEFORE JEHOVAH FOR AARON AND HIS SONS

"He who offers the sacrifice of his peace offerings to Jehovah shall bring his offering to Jehovah from the sacrifice of his peace offerings: his own hands shall bring the offerings of Jehovah by fire; he shall bring the fat with the breast, that the breast may be waved as a wave offering before Jehovah. And the priest shall offer up the fat in smoke on the altar; but the breast shall be for Aaron and his sons" (vv. 29-31). This signifies that we who take Christ as our peace offering should offer the excellent part of Christ (the fat) to God for His satisfaction, with the loving part of Christ (the breast) in resurrection for the serving ones' enjoyment.

The wave offering refers to Christ in His resurrection. The top part of the peace offering is for God; it is burned by fire and goes to God. The loving part, the breast, is allotted to us, the serving ones, for our enjoyment.

XVI. THE RIGHT THIGH OF THE PEACE OFFERING GIVEN TO THE PRIEST AS A HEAVE OFFERING

"The right thigh you shall give to the priest as a heave offering from the sacrifices of your peace offerings. He from

among Aaron's sons who offers the blood of the peace offerings and the fat, he shall have the right thigh for a portion" (vv. 32-33). This signifies that the part of strength of Christ (the right thigh) in His ascension is given to the serving one as a portion for his enjoyment.

Verses 29 through 33 reveal that the top part, the fat, goes to God and that the loving part, the breast, and also the part of strength, the right thigh, go to the serving ones. The more we minister Christ as the peace offering and the more we offer Christ as the peace offering to God, the more we will have the loving capacity and the strengthening power of Christ. In this way, we become stronger and more loving.

XVII. JEHOVAH HAVING TAKEN THE BREAST OF THE WAVE OFFERING AND THE THIGH OF THE HEAVE OFFERING OUT OF THE PEACE OFFERINGS AND HAVING GIVEN THEM TO THE PRIESTS AS THEIR PERPETUAL DUE

"I have taken the breast of the wave offering and the thigh of the heave offering from the sons of Israel out of the sacrifices of their peace offerings, and have given them to Aaron the priest and to his sons as their perpetual due from the sons of Israel" (v. 34). This signifies that God has allotted, in our enjoyment of Christ as the peace offering, the loving capacity and the strengthening power of Christ to us, the New Testament priests, as our eternal portion for our enjoyment in serving God.

XVIII. THIS BEING THE PORTION OF THE ANOINTING OF AARON AND HIS SONS FROM THE OFFERINGS OF JEHOVAH BY FIRE IN THE DAY WHEN THEY WERE BROUGHT TO SERVE JEHOVAH AS PRIESTS

"This is the portion of the anointing of Aaron and of the anointing of his sons from the offerings of Jehovah by fire, in the day when they were brought to serve Jehovah as priests. These Jehovah commanded to be given to them from the sons of Israel in the day when he anointed them; it is their

perpetual due throughout their generations" (vv. 35-36). This signifies that the enjoyment of Christ's loving capacity and strengthening power is related to God's anointing of us for our priesthood.

We have been anointed by God to be priests, and God has allotted to us Christ's loving capacity and strengthening power. Hence, we can love and stand to serve God as priests.

XIX. THIS BEING THE LAW FOR THE BURNT OFFERING, THE MEAL OFFERING, THE SIN OFFERING, THE TRESPASS OFFERING, THE CONSECRATION, AND THE SACRIFICE OF PEACE OFFERINGS

"This is the law for the burnt offering, the meal offering, the sin offering, the trespass offering, the consecration offering, and the sacrifice of peace offerings, which Jehovah commanded Moses at Mount Sinai, in the day when He commanded the sons of Israel to offer their offerings to Jehovah, in the wilderness of Sinai" (vv. 37-38). This signifies that our consecration for the priesthood must be with the all-inclusive Christ as all the five offerings and according to their regulations.

Our text (v. 37) uses the term "the consecration offering." Actually, this should simply be "the consecration." There is not here a sixth offering called the consecration offering. Rather, the five offerings are for the consecration. At the time of consecration, God assigned these offerings, in different aspects, for the priests' enjoyment.

We have seen that in chapters one through five, the offerings are in a particular sequence: the burnt offering, the meal offering, the peace offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering. This record is not according to doctrine but according to our practical experience. But in giving the laws of the five offerings, the sequence has changed greatly. Here the law of the burnt offering is first, followed by the law of the meal offering, of the sin offering, of the trespass offering, and of the peace offering. This latter sequence is according to the total picture of God's economy. In God's heart and in His desire, God would have Christ to be four kinds of offerings to

us—the burnt offering, the meal offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering. The burnt offering is the qualification for the sin offering, and the meal offering is the qualification

for the trespass offering. With these four offerings, two are for the qualification, and two are for the result. The sin offering and the trespass offering are for a particular result. When these four offerings are in action, the result is peace. This peace is what God desires. God's heart is that we would enjoy His economy around His Son, Christ. Christ is our burnt offering, meal offering, sin offering, and trespass offering so that we may enjoy Him as peace. In our thanksgiving, in our vows, and in our freewill offerings, we enjoy Christ as our peace with God. This is the record of the totality of God's economy.

In Leviticus 1—7 we have two records: a record according to experience and a record according to God's economy in its totality. The four offerings—the burnt offering, the meal offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering—are all for us to enjoy Christ as our peace with God in every way.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE TWENTY-EIGHT

THE CONSECRATION OF AARON AND HIS SONS

(1)

Scripture Reading: Lev. 8:1-21

In this message we will begin to consider the consecration of Aaron and his sons.

In Hebrew, the word *consecrate* (Exo. 28:41; 29:9, 33, 35) means "to fill the hands." Through Aaron's consecration to receive the holy position of high priest, his empty hands were filled (Lev. 8:25-28).

The word *consecration* is sometimes translated "ordination." Consecration is on our side; we consecrate ourselves to God. Ordination is on God's side; He ordains us.

As a result of my study of Exodus and Leviticus, I am convinced that for Aaron and his sons to be consecrated to serve as priests meant that their empty hands were filled. Aaron and his sons appeared empty-handed before Moses at the entrance of the tent of meeting. But when they were consecrated, their empty hands were filled with the type of Christ in different aspects.

The first seven chapters of Leviticus describe five categories of offerings: the burnt offering, the meal offering, the peace offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering. Then five kinds of laws are given concerning the application of the five kinds of offerings. The result of the application of these offerings is peace. Peace is the totality of what Christ is to us with God. Under Christ's redemption, we are enjoying Christ as a totality, and this totality is peace, which implies rest, enjoyment, and satisfaction.

After the record of the offerings, Leviticus describes

the consecration of the priesthood. This indicates that the offerings in chapters one through seven are for the consecration, or ordination, of the priests.

According to the spiritual significance of this book, we all are priests. We have been reborn, regenerated, to be priests (Rev. 1:6; 5:10). As long as we have been regenerated, we are the real priests. However, we need a day of consecration on which we give ourselves to God and say, "Lord, I am Yours because You bought me. You redeemed me with Your blood, and You have regenerated me. Now that I have Your life and the enjoyment of Your redemption, I would like to offer myself to You. I give myself to You to serve You as Your servant, even as Your slave." God will immediately accept our offer and ordain us to be His serving ones, His priests. Thus, consecration is on our side, and ordination is on God's side.

Leviticus is not a book for ordinary people; it is a book for priests. Since we have been sanctified and separated from ordinary people, we are no longer common. We are a particular people—we are priests. All the offerings refer to Christ, and whatever Christ is to us and does for us is to constitute us priests. This constitution is the divine ordination.

God constitutes us to be something different from what we are by our natural birth. In our first birth, our original birth, we were constituted sinners (Rom. 5:19). Regardless of their class or social status, all human beings have been constituted sinners. All are sinners by birth. But through our second birth, we who believe in Christ have been constituted priests. Now we need our consecration and God's ordination to make our priesthood official.

Let us now consider the details concerning the consecration of Aaron and his sons.

I. AT THE ENTRANCE OF THE TENT OF MEETING

The consecration of Aaron and his sons took place at the entrance of the tent of meeting (Lev. 8:3-4). This signifies that our consecration for the priesthood is not only before God but also for the church life.

I like the expression "at the entrance of the tent of meeting." In Leviticus 8 the tent of meeting signifies the church life. We are God's priests in the church and for the church.

II. MOSES BRINGING AARON AND HIS SONS NEAR AND WASHING THEM WITH WATER

"Then Moses brought Aaron and his sons near and washed them with water" (v. 6). This signifies that for our consecration for the priesthood we need to be washed by the Spirit (1 Cor. 6:11).

Here Moses somewhat signifies Christ, and the water typifies the Holy Spirit. Christ washes us with the Holy Spirit. For the priesthood, which refers both to the priestly service and to a body of persons who are priests, we need to be washed by the Spirit. Therefore, 1 Corinthians 6:11 tells us that we have been washed, cleansed, by the Spirit.

III. MOSES CLOTHING AARON WITH THE HIGH PRIEST'S GARMENTS

In Leviticus 8:7-9 Moses clothed Aaron with the high priest's garments. "He put the tunic on him, girded him with the sash, clothed him with the robe, and put the ephod on him; and he girded him with the band of the ephod, and with it he bound it to him. And he put the breastplate on him, and in the breastplate he put the Urim and the Thummim. And he placed the turban upon his head, and on the turban, at its front, he placed the golden plate, the holy crown." This signifies that Christ as our High Priest is adorned with all the excellencies of His divine and human attributes and virtues. These attributes and virtues are Christ's garment. (See Life-study Messages on Exodus 28.)

IV. MOSES CLOTHING THE SONS OF AARON WITH THE PRIESTLY GARMENTS

"Then Moses brought Aaron's sons near and clothed them with tunics, girded them with sashes, and bound caps on them, as Jehovah had commanded Moses" (v. 13). Moses' clothing the sons of Aaron with priestly garments signifies

that the New Testament priests are adorned with all the attributes and virtues of Christ.

The New Testament uses clothing to refer to our outward expression (Matt. 21:7; John 13:4). Our outward expression should be the expression of Christ's divine attributes. These attributes include the divine love, kindness, and holiness. Christ's divine attributes are expressed in human life as virtues. This means that the divine attributes become human virtues, and the human virtues are the expression of the divine attributes. The divine attributes and human virtues are not merely combined and united but mingled. For example, as a man Christ had human love, but this human love was mingled with the divine love. What God is (oil) was mingled with what Christ is (fine flour) in His humanity. In this way, God's nature was included in the expression of Christ's humanity. Because in Christ the divine attributes were mingled with the human virtues, His love, kindness, and mercy are extraordinary. In Him, the divine love, kindness, and mercy were mingled with the human love, kindness, and mercy.

This mingling of the divine attributes and the human virtues has become our clothing, because we who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ (Gal. 3:27). To put on Christ is to be clothed with Christ. The very Christ with whom we are clothed is our priestly garment. Now whether we are a husband or a wife, a parent or a child, a teacher or a student, we should wear our priestly garment—a garment that is the expression of Christ's divine attributes mingled with His human virtues. Especially when we are going out to preach the gospel to sinners, we need to wear this garment. The expression of Christ should be our uniform. As we contact others, we need to impress them with the expression of Christ, that is, with the Christ with whom we are clothed. If we do this, we will have power and authority in our gospel preaching.

When we are ordained by God to serve Him as priests, He clothes us with Christ. One day you may consecrate yourself to the Lord to be a priest. Immediately, God, Christ, and the

Holy Spirit will adorn you. Sometimes the Lord's servants will work with the Triune God to adorn the saints with Christ. I am a little servant of God co-working with Him to adorn you with Christ, to help you to change your uniform from the uniform of your natural human life, culture, and nationality to the uniform of Christ. The different cultural uniforms divide, but the unique uniform of Christ makes us one.

V. MOSES ANOINTING THE TABERNACLE, THE ALTAR, AND THE LAVER WITH ALL THEIR UTENSILS TO SANCTIFY THEM

"Moses took the anointing oil and anointed the tabernacle and all that was in it, and sanctified them. And he sprinkled some of it on the altar seven times, and anointed the altar and all its utensils, and the laver and its base, to sanctify them" (Lev. 8:10-11). This signifies that Christ and the church, then the cross and the washing of the Spirit, are related to the New Testament priesthood for the priests' sanctification.

In the Bible, the tabernacle typifies Christ as an individual (John 1:14), and it also typifies the church as the dwelling place of God. In Leviticus 8 the tabernacle denotes the church much more than it denotes Christ. Moses anointed the priests, and he also anointed the tabernacle. The anointing of the tabernacle signifies the anointing of the church, in which we, the New Testament priests, serve God.

In ancient times, the priests and the tabernacle were two separate entities. Today the priests and the church are one and inseparable. We, the priests, are the church, and the church is we. Hence, for us today, the priests and the church are not two separate entities but one entity. Since we and the church are one, if we are anointed, the church also is anointed. Likewise, if the church is anointed, we also are anointed.

The altar in verse 11 refers to the burnt offering altar in the outer court. All the offerings were offered on this altar. The laver was a basin where the priests washed their hands and feet. The altar signifies the cross, and the laver signifies the Holy Spirit as the washing Spirit. In the washing Spirit

is the washing water of life. The church, the cross, and the washing of the Spirit are all provisions for our practical consecration to be the priests today.

The church, the cross, and the washing Spirit are related to sanctification. Formerly, we were common; that is, we were not different from our relatives, neighbors, classmates, and colleagues. But now, having been consecrated and ordained to be God's priests, we are a sanctified people. To sanctify is to separate, to make particular, to make holy. We must be a group of people who are not only clean and pure but also separated, particular, and holy. We should be very different from the common people. This does not mean, however, that we need to wear peculiar clothing to show that we are sanctified. We should wear ordinary clothing, yet in this ordinary clothing there should be a consecration.

Regardless of our background, we all need to be sanctified, for we have consecrated ourselves to God, and He has ordained us. Do you not have the sense deep within that you have been ordained? One day, perhaps recently, you prayed, "Lord, I give myself to You absolutely." As long as you have prayed such a prayer, you have consecrated yourself to the Lord. God has accepted your consecration and has ordained you, filling your empty hands with Christ. God's ordination is signified by the word *sanctify*.

God's ordination is a matter of sanctification. Since God has sanctified us, we are no longer common.

The anointing brings the Triune God mingled with humanity to the priests and to the church life. This anointing includes Christ's human living, His death on the cross, and His resurrection. According to Exodus 30, the anointing oil is an ointment composed of oil, typifying the Spirit, compounded with four spices, signifying humanity (typified by the number four), human living, the death of the cross, and resurrection. When we are anointed as priests and as the church, we are anointed with the Triune God compounded with Christ's humanity, human living, death, and resurrection. This anointing of the priests and the tabernacle also involves the sin offering (Lev. 8:14-17) and the burnt offering

(vv. 18-21). All the elements of the anointing oil, the compound Spirit, with the sin offering and the burnt offering must be constituted into our being. Then we will be real priests to God, not by what we are through our natural birth but by the Triune God compounded with Christ's humanity, human living, death, resurrection, and ascension.

VI. MOSES ANOINTING AARON TO SANCTIFY HIM

Leviticus 8:12 tells us that Moses "poured some of the anointing oil upon Aaron's head, and anointed him to sanctify him." This signifies that Christ as our High Priest was anointed by God for His sanctification.

VII. A BULL AS THE SIN OFFERING FOR THE CONSECRATION OF THE PRIESTHOOD

Verses 14 through 17 speak of the bull of the sin offering for the consecration of the priesthood. This offering signifies the stronger and richer Christ as our sin offering for the assuming of our New Testament priesthood. (For details, see Life-study Messages on Exodus 29.)

The sin offering deals with our natural man, our flesh, the personified sin that dwells in us, Satan, the world hanging on Satan, and the power struggle. If we would be New Testament priests, all these things must be dealt with by Christ as the sin offering. When Christ was crucified as our sin offering, He dealt with the natural man, the flesh, the indwelling sin, Satan, the world, and the power struggle. In the divine ordination, such a sin offering is applied to us that we may be prevailing priests serving God.

VIII. A RAM AS THE BURNT OFFERING FOR THE CONSECRATION OF THE PRIESTHOOD

Verses 18 through 21 speak of the ram of the burnt offering for the consecration of the priesthood. This burnt offering, which is also included in God's ordination of the priests, signifies the strong Christ as our burnt offering for the assuming of our New Testament priesthood. The burnt offering reminds us

that as serving ones we must be absolute for God. Because we are not absolute for God, we need to take Christ as our burnt offering.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE TWENTY-NINE

THE CONSECRATION OF AARON AND HIS SONS

(2)

Scripture Reading: Lev. 8:14-29

In this message we will consider further the consecration of Aaron and his sons.

In the consecration of the priesthood, the first thing carried out was the anointing of the priests. This indicates strongly that the consecration or anointing of the priesthood is to make God one with us, for the anointing oil signifies that whatever God is, whatever He does, and whatever He will do are ours. What God has done, what He is doing, and what He will do involve many things, such as Christ's incarnation, human living, death, resurrection, ascension, and coming back. All this has been anointed upon us, that is, made one with us. This is the positive side of the ordination of the priesthood.

In the consecration of Aaron and his sons, the offerings immediately followed the anointing. The offerings remind us of who and what we are, and of what we should be yet are not.

The sin offering is the first to do such a reminding. Aaron had been anointed with the anointing oil, which signifies that the Triune God with all that He is, has done, and will do was now Aaron's. This anointing also indicates that Aaron was one with the Triune God. However, this anointed one still needed a strong reminding that by himself and in himself he was sin, a sin-constituted sinner, and flesh with nothing good in him; that he was a natural man, a part of the old creation, which is absolutely saturated, possessed, usurped, and indwelt by the

evil one; and that he was filled with the world and the power struggle.

The Triune God had ordained Aaron to be His serving one and had anointed him with Himself. However, Aaron still needed to realize what he was. Thus, God used the sin offering to remind him of what he was. On the first day of Aaron's priesthood and every day thereafter, he had to offer the sin offering to God so that he would be reminded of what he was.

We today are God's priests. He has chosen, appointed, and ordained us to be His holy priests. Whatever the Triune God has done, is doing, and will do is ours. He is one with us, and we are one with Him. However, we still need to be reminded that, in ourselves, we are sin, flesh, and the old man, that we are the old creation, which is saturated with Satan, the evil one, and that we are filled with the world and its power struggle. If every day and all during the day the brothers, co-workers, and elders would remember this, being reminded of what they are, the situation among us would be different.

Concerning our life and work, we need to ask ourselves whether the one moving, acting, and doing things is the old man or God's priest. Do you have the assurance to say that whatever you are doing in the church life, in the Lord's work, and in the recovery is of the divine priesthood and not of the flesh? Who can say that his hands are clean and that he is absolutely free from the flesh? Because we cannot say this, we need the sin offering as it is typified in Leviticus. We need this offering not only to be forgiven by God but also to be reminded of what we are. Even in loving others we need to be reminded that we are sin, flesh, the old man, and the old creation and that we are filled with worldliness. If we love others according to our flesh, taste, and choice, our love is sinful in the eyes of God, for such a love is linked to the evil one. Furthermore, as we pray and share in the meetings, we may have thoughts that come from the flesh, where sin is hidden and where Satan moves secretly. This is our actual situation. Thus, we need the sin offering not only at

the time of our ordination as priests but also every time we practice our priesthood.

In the ordination of the priests a ram was used for a burnt offering. The burnt offering reminds us that we should be absolute for God yet we are not. As ordained priests of God, we should therefore receive His mercy and grace to be absolute for God in Christ, with Christ, and through Christ.

Since Aaron had been anointed by God, why did he still need the burnt offering? Aaron needed this offering because God wanted Aaron to be reminded that he should be absolute for God yet he was not. This should remind us that we today are likewise not absolute for God. It should also warn us that every day we need to offer a burnt offering. Daily we need to offer a burnt offering for our priesthood, for our priestly service. The elders and co-workers in particular should offer the burnt offering every morning. We should tell the Lord, "Lord, throughout this day remind me that I should be absolute for You. Yet, I realize that I am not and cannot be absolute for You. Lord, I trust in You and take You as my life, my person, and my absoluteness. My absoluteness for God is You, Lord." This is to live Christ.

We may be familiar with the words "live Christ," but we may not understand the real significance of living Christ. Do we live Christ at home and in the church life? In our family life and in our dealing with the saints, are we absolute for God? When our self-feeling or self-interest is touched by others, we may become offended. Does this not indicate that we are not absolute for God? We surely need to be reminded that, in ourselves, we are not absolute for God.

According to Leviticus, the burnt offering should be offered every morning (6:12-13). The burning of the burnt offering should not cease. "The burnt offering itself shall be upon the hearth on the altar all night until the morning, and the fire of the altar shall be kept burning on it" (6:9). This indicates that the burnt offering should burn through the dark night of this age until morning, until the Lord Jesus comes again.

IX. THE SECOND RAM AS THE CONSECRATION OFFERING FOR THE CONSECRATION OF THE PRIESTHOOD

The second ram was used as a consecration offering (7:37) for the consecration of the priesthood (8:22-32). This ram signifies the strong Christ for our assuming of the New Testament priesthood. We need a strong Christ for our consecration.

A. Some of the Blood Put on Aaron's and His Sons' Right Ear, Thumb of Their Right Hand, and Big Toe of Their Right Foot

"Moses took some of its blood and put it on the tip of Aaron's right ear, and on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot. And he brought Aaron's sons near, and Moses put some of the blood on the tip of their right ear, and on the thumb of their right hand, and on the big toe of their right foot" (8:23-24a). This signifies that the redeeming blood of Christ cleanses our ears, our hands, and our feet for the assuming of our New Testament priesthood. The service of the New Testament priesthood includes functioning in the meetings, preaching the gospel, and visiting the saints in their homes. For all these services, we need the cleansing of the blood of Christ.

Our moving (feet) and working (hands) are always under the direction of our hearing. We act according to what we hear. Therefore, in the church life, hearing is crucial.

By hearing we have been saved, and by hearing we may be nourished and edified. However, by hearing we may also be damaged and killed, and we may do evil things to others because of what we hear. Our hearing is a problem. In 2 Timothy 4:3 Paul speaks of those who "heap up to themselves teachers tickling the ear." Therefore, God's dealing must first touch the source—our hearing.

If any church would stop hearing negative things, that church would be very healthy and living. The church that is the weakest and the most deadened is the one full of criticism, gossip, and reasoning.

The principle is the same in married life. A certain brother may be very living. But if his wife speaks to him in a negative way, he will be poisoned and deadened and will find it hard to pray in the church meeting. Likewise, if a brother passes on a negative word to his wife, she will be deadened by it. These illustrations from the church life and from married life show the importance of hearing.

Since we are God's priests, we need to ask ourselves what kind of things we are willing to hear. Do we intend to hear positive things or negative things? Because we often hear unclean things, things that are unhealthy and contagious, we need to wash our ears with the blood of Christ. According to the Bible, where the blood washes, there the Spirit anoints. After the washing of the blood, we will enjoy the anointing of the Spirit. Then we will forget the negative things we heard, or at least we will not repeat these things. We will also become healthy and living, and the church will go on in our health.

Wherever we go, we need to take care of our hearing. If we do this, whatever we hear will be right and positive. Then we will go the right way and do the right work. However, if we do not take care of our hearing but give ear to negative speaking, our deeds and work will be affected in a negative way.

The purpose of the consecration offering (Lev. 8:23) is not to deal with our sin and trespasses but to deal particularly with our ear, our thumb, and our toe, that is, with our listening, our working, and our acting. If we are not careful about our ears, we will be gossipers and those who spread reasonings and debates. Then instead of ministering Christ, we will spread death. Today some devote themselves to spreading death and not to spreading Christ, the truth, and the gospel. Our listening ear, our working hand, and our walking toe must be redeemed by the blood of Christ. We must let the blood of Christ release us from all the negative things. Then all the positive things of Christ will fill our hands.

B. Moses Dashing the Blood on the Altar All Around

Leviticus 8:24b says, "Then Moses dashed the blood on

the altar all around." This signifies that the blood of the redeeming Christ is for the redemption from our sin.

C. One Unleavened Cake, One Cake of Oiled Bread, and One Wafer Placed upon the Portions of the Fat and upon the Right Thigh, All These Put on the Palms of Aaron and of His Sons, Waved as a Wave Offering before Jehovah, Taken from Their Palms and Offered Up in Smoke upon the Altar upon the Burnt Offering for a Consecration Offering by Fire to Jehovah for a Satisfying Fragrance

In 8:25-28 we see that one unleavened cake, one cake of oiled bread, and one wafer were placed upon the portions of the fat and upon the right thigh. Then all these portions were put on the palms of Aaron and of his sons, waved as a wave offering, taken from their hands, and offered up in smoke upon the altar upon the burnt offering for a consecration offering by fire to Jehovah for a satisfying fragrance. This signifies that the tender, excellent, and strong parts of Christ, with the three kinds of cakes, with His sinless but Spirit-mingled humanity in different aspects as food, are offered to God in Christ's resurrection as a satisfying and fragrant offering in the fellowship of His sufferings unto death on the cross for our assuming of the New Testament priesthood.

Leviticus 8:26 speaks of "one unleavened cake, and one cake of oiled bread, and one wafer." This verse also refers to the fat and the right thigh. The unleavened cake, the cake of oiled bread, and the one wafer indicate respectively that we have Christ as our daily food without sin, that we have Christ as our daily food mingled with the Spirit, and that we have Christ as the food that is so available and easy to take in and that is good for feeding the young ones. We feed ourselves with the cakes, and we feed others with the wafers. The fat signifies the portion of Christ that is for God, and the right thigh signifies Christ as our strength to stand.

Verse 27 says, "Then he put all these on the palms of Aaron and on the palms of his sons, and waved them as a wave offering before Jehovah." Through this filling of the hands, they became consecrated, ordained priests. Today our hands can also be filled with the all-inclusive Christ, with the Christ who is the unleavened cake, the cake mingled with oil, the wafer, the fat, and the right thigh. We have the Christ who is God's portion (the fat) and the Christ who is our standing power (the right thigh). We also have Christ as cakes to feed ourselves and as wafers to feed others, especially the young ones.

All these things were waved before Jehovah. This means that they were a wave offering, which signifies Christ in resurrection. Nothing here is natural; rather, everything is in Christ's resurrection. In resurrection Christ is food for us and for the young ones. In resurrection Christ is also God's portion and our standing power.

"Moses took them from their palms and offered them up in smoke on the altar upon the burnt offering; they were a consecration offering for a satisfying fragrance, an offering by fire to Jehovah" (v. 28). Here we see that the consecration offering is not merely a ram but has been increased to include other items. This all-inclusive offering was offered in Christ's resurrection to God for His satisfaction.

If we intend to be New Testament priests, we need to take care of all the matters signified in these verses. In order to function as New Testament priests, preaching the gospel, functioning in the church, visiting people in their homes, and caring for the saints, we need to pay attention to all that is covered in 8:24-28. In particular, we need to realize that the priesthood is a burning service. In this service we burn ourselves and cause others to be burned. This burning is upon Christ's burning. As we burn upon Christ's burning, we have the fellowship of Christ's sufferings unto death on the cross for the practice of the New Testament priesthood.

D. The Breast Waved as a Wave Offering before Jehovah for Moses' Portion

"Moses took the breast and waved it as a wave offering

before Jehovah; it was Moses' portion from the ram of consecration, as Jehovah had commanded Moses" (v. 29). This signifies that the loving capacity of Christ in His resurrection is for the one who ministers Christ to us in our consecration for the priesthood.

This verse indicates that the serving one deserves a particular portion of Christ. When you preach Christ, you deserve Christ. When you preach the gospel, you deserve the rich enjoyment of the gospel. Whenever we, the serving ones, minister Christ to others, we deserve to enjoy the very Christ we minister to them.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE THIRTY

THE CONSECRATION OF AARON AND HIS SONS

(3)

Scripture Reading: Lev. 8:30-36

Before we consider some further matters related to the consecration of Aaron and his sons, I would like to give an additional word concerning the application of the blood to the right ear, the right thumb, and the big toe of the right foot and also a word about putting the offering on the palms of the priests.

Some of the blood of the ram of consecration was put on Aaron's and his sons' right ear, on the thumb of their right hand, and on the big toe of their right foot. This signifies that the redeeming blood of Christ cleanses our ears for hearing, our hands for working, and our feet for walking. This is for the assuming of our New Testament priesthood.

Our hearing is mentioned first because it affects our working and our moving. The blood of Christ deals with our ear for listening to God's word, to God's speaking. To serve God as priests, we should be faithful slaves, or servants, to God. As Isaiah 50:4 and 5 indicate, a servant must have a hearing ear. A servant who does not listen to his master's word cannot serve him according to his will, heart, and desire.

When we were sinners, we did not have an ear to listen to God's word, to God's speaking. Daily we listened to many other things, but we did not listen to the word of God. Now that we have been saved and ordained as God's priests, His servants, the primary thing is to listen to God's speaking. In typology, when a slave wanted to stay with his master, the

master brought him to the doorpost and pierced his ear (Exo. 21:2-6), indicating that the slave must be keen to listen to the master's word. As God's priests today, we must learn to listen to His word.

The first thing that we as God's priests need to deal with is our listening. Positive listening will rescue us from negative listening. If we listen to God's word from morning to evening, we will not have an ear to listen to any negative speaking. Negative talk prevails and spreads in the church life because certain ones turn their ears from God to something else. These ones do not speak Christ, the word of God, grace, or the gospel. Instead, they listen to negative things, and they work and move according to the negative things they hear. The result is the spreading of death. If we turn our ears from other things back to God Himself, there will not be any problems, and only life will be spreading, not death.

The principle is the same in our married life. If a sister wants to have a good husband, she should not speak to him negatively but should talk to him about God, Christ, grace, the gospel, and the divine light. This kind of speaking will build up her husband and cause him to seek the Lord. However, if she speaks negatively to her husband, she will deaden him. The same is true, both positively and negatively, of the way a brother speaks to his wife. We all need to be careful about our listening. We need to have the redeeming blood of Christ applied to our ear, our thumb, and our toe.

The cleansing of the right ear, the right thumb, and the big toe of the right foot was needed on two occasions: at the ordination of the priests and at the time of the cleansing of a leper (Lev. 14:14). Both the lepers and the priests needed to have their ear, thumb, and toe cleansed with the redeeming blood. This indicates that in the eyes of God we sinners who have been ordained as God's priests are lepers. As God's priests, His servants, we need to have our ears redeemed from listening to anything other than God and have them brought back to listening to the word of God. Also, we need

to have our working hand redeemed from doing anything other than God's work. Furthermore, our toe for walking also needs to be redeemed.

In 8:26-28 we see that one unleavened cake, one cake of oiled bread, and one wafer (belonging to the meal offering) were placed upon the portions of the fat and the right thigh (another category of offerings). These two categories of offerings as a whole were put on the palms of Aaron and his sons. At that point, the hands of Aaron and of his sons were no longer empty. These offerings were then waved before Jehovah (v. 27), probably by those whose hands had been filled with them. This waving signifies Christ's move in His resurrection. The offerings were first "killed," and then they were waved, that is, resurrected, thereby becoming offerings before Jehovah in Christ's resurrection.

The two cakes, the wafer, the fat, and the thigh were then offered up in smoke (indicating a slow burning to bring out the flavor) upon the burnt offering for a consecration offering by fire to Jehovah for a satisfying fragrance (v. 28). This satisfying fragrance is for God alone; it is His portion for His enjoyment. The tender, excellent parts (the fat), the strong part (the right thigh), and the two cakes and the one wafer—signifying different aspects of Christ's sinless and Spirit-mingled humanity—are food not for the priests but for God. God's portion was offered on the altar, which signifies the cross. This indicates that we offer God's food in the fellowship of Christ's suffering unto the death of the cross. Although this is for God's satisfaction, it is also for our assuming of the New Testament priesthood.

We may proclaim the fact that we are God's priests, but probably none among us ever realized how many matters are involved in being a priest. Fifty-five years ago I did not know that I needed the sin offering to remind me that I am nothing but flesh, an old man in the old creation who is linked with Satan, the world, and the struggle for power. I claimed to be a priest of God, yet I practiced my priesthood in ignorance. I did not know that to be a priest in the New Testament priesthood I needed Christ's humanity, His strengthening power, and His

loving capacity (signified by the breast waved as a wave offering—v. 29). If we all check our past, God's light of grace will expose where we were as God's priests—in the old creation, in the flesh, and in the natural life with the natural love, the natural affection. Concerning this, we all need to be exposed and cleansed. We need the cleansing blood on the tip of our right ear, on our right thumb, and on the big toe of our right foot.

E. Moses Sprinkling Aaron and His Sons and Their Garments with the Anointing Oil and Some of the Blood to Sanctify Them

"Moses took some of the anointing oil and some of the blood which was on the altar, and sprinkled it on Aaron, on his garments, on his sons and on the garments of his sons with him; and he sanctified Aaron, his garments, and his sons and the garments of his sons with him" (v. 30). This signifies that God sprinkles us, the New Testament priests, and our conduct (garments), with the compounded Spirit and the redeeming blood of the cross of Christ to separate us, to make us holy unto Him.

No matter how much God has been working on us, dealing with our sin, our natural life, and the old man, we still need more "coats" of the anointing oil. The anointing oil refers to the processed Triune God with all that He has become, has done, and has passed through. Such a Triune God, who has been processed and has been compounded with the "spices" of incarnation, human living, an all-inclusive death, a wonderful resurrection, and an excellent ascension, has become the anointing oil, the ointment, to "paint" us (Exo. 30:23-30). We need to be painted again and again with the processed Triune God as the anointing oil.

In order to have the proper knowledge of our New Testament priesthood, we need to study the book of Leviticus. Leviticus is not only for the Old Testament saints. If we understand the typology of this book, we will see that point after point applies to us in a practical way today.

F. The Flesh with the Bread of the Consecration Offering Eaten by the Priests at the Entrance of the Tent of Meeting

"Then Moses said to Aaron and to his sons, Boil the flesh at the entrance of the tent of meeting, and eat it there with the bread which is in the basket of the consecration offering, as I have commanded, saying, Aaron and his sons shall eat it" (v. 31). This signifies that Christ as the redeeming One with His humanity is food to us (John 6:51), the New Testament priests, at the entering in of the church life.

In Leviticus 8:28 we have God's portion, and in verse 31 we have our portion. The flesh here refers to Christ as the redeeming One, and the bread refers to His humanity. Christ as the redeeming One with His humanity is our food.

G. The Remains of the Flesh and of the Bread Burned with Fire

"What remains of the flesh and of the bread you shall burn with fire" (v. 32). This signifies that the inexhaustible riches of Christ should be kept by God's holiness.

Verse 32 indicates that the Christ whom we offer to God for His enjoyment and whom we also enjoy is inexhaustible. After God's portion has been offered to Him and we have enjoyed our portion, something still remains. In Leviticus 8 the remainder was burned with fire, which signifies God's holiness. From this we see that the inexhaustible riches of Christ should be kept in and by God's holiness.

X. THE CONSECRATING PRIESTS REMAINING AT THE ENTRANCE OF THE TENT OF MEETING FOR SEVEN DAYS FOR THEIR PROPITIATION

The consecrating priests remained at the entrance of the tent of meeting for seven days for their propitiation (8:33-36). This signifies that our assuming of the New Testament priesthood should be thorough and complete for our propitiation at the entering in of the church life.

Verses 33 through 35 say, "You shall not go out from the entrance of the tent of meeting for seven days, until the day when the period of your consecration is fulfilled; for you shall be consecrated seven days. As it was done this day, so Jehovah has commanded to do, to make propitiation for you. You shall remain at the entrance of the tent of meeting day and night for seven days, and keep the charge of Jehovah, that you may not die; for so I have been commanded." The same procedure was repeated for seven days. Each day the program was carried out in a solemn way, for every aspect of the program was solemn. This solemnity is indicated by the words "that you may not die." Therefore, no one dared to be careless or loose. Everyone was aware of the seriousness of what was taking place and of what might happen if anyone was careless.

These verses should be a warning to us not to enter into the enjoyment of Christ in a careless way. We especially need this warning with respect to the Lord's table. The bread signifies Christ's body, and the wine signifies His blood. If we eat the bread and drink the wine without the proper discernment, our eating and drinking could be to our own judgment (1 Cor. 11:27-29). We need to be warned of the seriousness of participating in the fellowship in the enjoyment of Christ in a light or loose way.

The consecration of the priesthood lasted for seven days, with the same things repeated each day. Through this repetition, Aaron and his sons were no doubt deeply impressed with every matter. As God's priests today, we also need to remember all the things involved in our consecration and ordination as priests. In particular, we need to be reminded that, in ourselves, we are sinners, even the flesh of sin.

The consecration of Aaron and his sons is solemn not only in its typology but also in its application to us today. If we realize the seriousness of this matter, we will also realize how much we need the Lord's mercy and the cleansing of His blood. We will ask the Lord to be merciful to us, and we will hide under the covering of His blood.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE THIRTY-ONE

THE INITIATION OF THE PRIESTLY SERVICE OF AARON AND HIS SONS

Scripture Reading: Lev. 9:1-21

The book of Leviticus shows us a new beginning, in which, for the first time, God's people offered offerings to God according to God's regulations. This was the first time God's people offered Christ to God not merely according to their need but also according to God's laws, His regulations. Before that time, some, such as Abel, Noah, and Abraham, offered to God, but it was not until the Israelites kept the Passover (Exo. 12:1-28) that offerings were presented to God according to His instructions. Strictly speaking, although the Passover lamb was an offering, it was not called an offering.

In Leviticus, after the erecting of the tabernacle, God had a dwelling place on earth from within which He spoke to His people. The first category of speaking concerned the offerings (Lev. 1—7). The offerings were not only needed by man and requested by God but were also ordained by God in regulations which were absolutely according to God's mind and desire. Moses should have realized the significance of these offerings in regard to the matter of propitiation (Lev. 9:7), yet in the details of the offerings he may have understood very little.

In Leviticus the Israelites began to practice offering to God in a way which had never been done before. The offerings were now offered to God not by an individual but by a people, a congregation, and not at the place of their choice. God asked the people to come to the entrance of the tent of meeting to contact Him and to offer their offerings by priests, not by themselves. (This is different from the offering of the offerings by Abel,

Noah, and Abraham, who were not only offerers but serving priests.) The manner in which the offerings were offered became a ceremony, a form, to be carried out before God at the entrance of His dwelling place according to His regulations, laws, and arrangement. All this was surely something new.

Although Moses did not see that the offerings were Christ, God was actually giving commands to His people about how to apply Christ as all the offerings according to God's laws. We today need to learn how to apply Christ according to God's requests. Early in the morning, we need to apply Christ as our burnt offering, sin offering, and meal offering so that we may have something to live by during the day.

Let us now consider the record in Leviticus 9:1-21 regarding the initiation of the priestly service of Aaron and his sons.

I. ON THE EIGHTH DAY

The initiation of the priestly service of Aaron and his sons took place on the eighth day (v. 1), which signifies resurrection (Mark 16:9a). This indicates that all the priestly service must be in resurrection (cf. Rev. 20:6).

The eighth day in Leviticus 9:1 refers to the day after the seven days of the consecration of Aaron and his sons. During each of these seven days, Aaron and his sons went through the same procedure. On the eighth day, the day after that course of consecration, they had a new beginning. The eighth day thus implies both a new beginning and the ending of the oldness.

As priests of God, our priesthood, our priestly service, must be altogether in resurrection. The natural life, the old man, and the flesh have no ground here. Unfortunately, however, in our actual church life there are many natural things, and there is much oldness. Such things are not on the eighth day; that is, they are not in the realm of resurrection but in the realm of the natural life.

We condemn evil things, but we may not condemn those good things which are done in the old creation. For example, we condemn hatred, but we may not condemn a love which is natural and not in the Spirit. In the New Testament, on the

contrary, there is a concern regarding natural love, which is actually a kind of "honey." According to Leviticus 2, neither leaven nor honey was allowed to be added to the meal offering. Leaven refers to what is evil, and honey, to what is naturally good. Whereas natural hatred is leaven, natural love is honey. Natural hatred is evil, but natural love is good. However, both good and evil are from the same source—the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Since natural hatred and natural love are natural, both belong to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; and since both belong to this tree, both should be condemned. This is the reason that when, in the Gospel of John, the Lord Jesus was asked questions regarding good and evil, right and wrong, yes and no, He referred the people to life. The Lord's concern is life, not good and evil.

The priestly service we render to God must be in resurrection. The reality of resurrection is Christ as the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b). Anything we do in the Spirit is on the eighth day, in resurrection. Anything we do outside the Spirit, in our natural life, mind, or emotion, is not on the eighth day, not in resurrection.

I hope that all the saints, including the newly saved ones, will receive this word concerning the priestly service on the eighth day. When you intend to show love toward a particular person, you need to consider whether this love arises from your spirit or from your natural emotion. Is this love a matter of your natural likes or dislikes, a matter of liking one person but not another? Further, because of your natural love for a certain one, you may treat that one in a preferential way. This is honey, and honey eventually ferments and becomes the same as leaven. This means that, in the eyes of God, natural love is just as evil as natural hatred.

Quite often the Lord will require us to love someone whom we cannot love in our natural life and with our natural love. The only way we can love that one is with a love which is not natural but is in resurrection. All our service must be in spirit, in resurrection.

II. AARON PREPARING HIS SIN OFFERING AND HIS BURNT OFFERING AND MAKING PROPITIATION FOR HIMSELF AND FOR THE PEOPLE

Leviticus 9:7 says, "Then Moses said to Aaron, Come near to the altar and prepare your sin offering and your burnt offering, and make propitiation for yourself and for the people; and prepare the offering of the people, and make propitiation for them, as Jehovah has commanded." In this verse we see that Aaron was to make propitiation for himself and for the people. The term *propitiation* needs to be distinguished from the terms *redemption* and *atonement,* for these words do not have the same meaning; there are important differences. Redemption was completed by the Lord Jesus' death on the cross and this term should be used only for the New Testament. Before He shed His blood on the cross, there was not such a thing as redemption. What we have in the Old Testament is propitiation. Sometimes the Hebrew word for propitiation is translated "atonement." Atonement is a matter of at-one-ment; it refers to appeasing the situation between two parties in order to bring them together, to make them one. Propitiation refers to the appeasing of a situation between two parties by doing something for one party to satisfy the demands of the other party.

As sinners, we had a problem with our righteous God. Although He loved us, something unrighteous existed between us and Him. Not until this unrighteous situation was appeased could we be one with God. Therefore, on the cross Christ accomplished redemption for us. Christ not only shed His blood to accomplish redemption, but in His ascension He entered into the heavens and presented His blood before God. Through this presentation of His blood, He acquired, gained, an eternal redemption for us (Heb. 9:12). When we believed into Christ, we entered into Him and received this redemption.

How did God deal with the sins of the Old Testament saints before Christ came? God covered their sins, but He

did not remove them. Paul tells us clearly that "it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins" (Heb. 10:4). Rather, with such sacrifices there was "a calling to mind of sins year by year" (v. 3) at the feast of propitiation. The sins of the Old Testament saints remained, but these sins were covered. This covering took place on the propitiation cover (Rom. 3:25), which was the lid of the ark of the testimony. Inside the ark were the two tablets, with five of the Ten Commandments inscribed on each. The Ten Commandments condemned anyone who approached God. But the blood of the sin offering shed on the day of propitiation was sprinkled on the lid of the ark for the making of propitiation. Hence, the cover of the ark was known as the propitiation cover.

In Leviticus 9:7 Aaron was told to make propitiation for himself and for the people. He had a problem with God, and he needed to do something to appease the situation so that he could have peace with God.

A. Signifying That Aaron as a Sinful Person Needed to Take Christ as His Sin Offering and Burnt Offering for Him to Be a Priest to Serve God

Aaron's preparing his sin offering and burnt offering and making propitiation for himself first signifies that he, as a sinful person, needed to take Christ as his sin offering and burnt offering for him to be a priest to serve God. Before he could serve as a priest, Aaron had to have his situation appeased. He needed the sin offering and also the burnt offering.

Today the sin offering reminds us of many negative things, and the burnt offering reminds us that we should be absolute for God, yet we are not. We need to take Christ as our sin offering to redeem us back to a peaceful situation with God, and we need to take Christ as the burnt offering, as the One who lives in us and for us a life that is absolutely for God.

B. Signifying That Aaron Typified Christ Offering Himself as a Sin Offering for the Redemption of God's People and as a Burnt Offering for God's People to Be God's Satisfaction

Aaron's preparing the sin offering and the burnt offering also signifies that Aaron typifies Christ's offering Himself as a sin offering for the redemption of God's people and as a burnt offering for God's people to be God's satisfaction. In the sin offering God's people are one with Christ; hence, we are redeemed in Him. He has acquired, gained, redemption. As long as we are one with Him, we have redemption. In the burnt offering Christ is one with God's people; hence. He is living in us that we may live Him for God's satisfaction.

The sin offering is something in death, and the burnt offering is something in resurrection. We are one with Christ in His death, and He is one with us in His resurrection.

C. Signifying That Whatever Christ as Our High Priest Did, He Did for Us, That We Might Be Redeemed from Sin and Made God's Satisfaction

Finally, Aaron's preparing the sin offering and the burnt offering signifies that whatever Christ as our High Priest did, He did for us, that we might be redeemed from sin and made God's satisfaction. In the living Christ we are made God's satisfaction by living absolutely for Him.

III. AARON OFFERING FOR THE PEOPLE THE SIN OFFERING, THE BURNT OFFERING, AND THE MEAL OFFERING

"Then he brought the offering of the people, and took the goat of the sin offering which was for the people and slaughtered it, and he offered it for sin, like the first. And he brought the burnt offering, and offered it according to the ordinance. He also brought the meal offering and filled his palms with it, and offered it up in smoke on the altar in addition to the burnt offering of the morning" (vv. 15-17). This

signifies that Christ offered Himself for us as our sin offering to deal with our sin, as our burnt offering to satisfy God, and as our meal offering to be God's food and also our food. Every morning we should take Christ as these offerings, praying, "Lord, for this new day I take You as my sin offering, burnt offering, and meal offering, that I may live by You, with You, and in You and even live You for God's satisfaction."

IV. AARON OFFERING FOR THE PEOPLE THE PEACE OFFERING

In 9:18-21 we see that Aaron offered the peace offering for the people. This signifies that Christ offered Himself as our peace offering for us and God to enjoy Him as peace. We enjoy this peace as we enjoy Christ at the Lord's table.

The enjoyment of Christ as the peace offering in verses 18 through 21 is based upon Christ as our sin offering, burnt offering, and meal offering, as covered in verses 7 through 17. Perhaps you are wondering why there is no mention of the trespass offering in these verses. Here the trespass offering is included in the sin offering.

This is the first time in human history that Christ is applied in such a way and to such an extent. In this application Christ is our sin offering, our burnt offering, and then our meal offering for our daily living, with the result that we enter into peace, which is Christ Himself. This is the initiation of the offerings, pointing to the living Christ, whom we are enjoying and eating every day as our daily food.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE THIRTY-TWO

THE ISSUE OF THE PRIESTLY SERVICE

Scripture Reading: Lev. 9:4, 6, 22-24

In this message we will pay our attention to the issue, the result, of our priestly service. It is difficult to speak about the result of our priesthood because this issue is not something material but something spiritual, mysterious, heavenly, and divine. The issue of the New Testament priestly service is the appearing of God to us (v. 4), the appearing of God's glory to us (vv. 6, 23b), the divine blessing (vv. 22-23), and the consuming fire (v. 24). Let us now consider each of these matters.

I. THE APPEARING OF GOD TO US

The appearing of God to us is related to our taking Christ as the offerings. As we confess our mistakes, failures, and wrongdoings, we spontaneously take Christ as our sin offering and trespass offering. This may lead us to take Him as our burnt offering. We may tell Him, "Lord Jesus, You are my burnt offering. I cannot be absolute for God, but You can. Now I take You, Lord, as my absoluteness for God." This kind of prayer indicates that we desire to live Christ for God's satisfaction. The sin offering and the burnt offering will then lead us to take Christ as the meal offering. We will offer the top portion to God as His food, and we will feed on Christ as our daily food, as our daily life supply. Furthermore, we will be brought into a sense of peace, into a tranquil situation, and enjoy Christ as our peace, rest, satisfaction, and comfort. As the issue of taking Christ as all these offerings, God's presence will be with us. This is the appearing of God to us. We cannot see Him or touch Him in a physical way, but we have the sense that He has appeared

to us. Unable to deny the sense that God has appeared to us, we will want to worship and adore Him, offering to Him our praise and thanksgiving. This is the experience of the appearing of God to us as the result of our priestly service. We should have such an experience not only early in the morning but also during the day.

We may experience God's appearing to us in different situations. For example, we may enjoy God's appearing while we are preaching the gospel. In our gospel preaching we may apply Christ as the offerings, and as a result we enjoy the appearing of God to us. Often we have this enjoyment in the church meetings. God may appear to us even as we are taking a walk.

Our New Testament priesthood issues in the enjoyment of God in His appearing. Usually God's appearing will be tranquil and cause us to be silent. Sometimes God will sovereignly arrange our circumstances to match the tranquility of His appearing. At such times it seems that the entire universe is quiet and that we and God are alone. This tranquil appearing of God is the first result of our New Testament priestly service.

II. THE APPEARING OF GOD'S GLORY TO US

The second issue of the priestly service is the appearing of God's glory to us. When we serve God in our spirit by enjoying Christ according to God's regulations, we will enjoy God's appearing, which is often followed by the appearing of God's glory. God's glory is God expressed. When God is expressed, that is glory.

When we serve God with Christ as the offerings according to God's regulations and not according to our own choice, we will often enjoy the appearing of God's glory. We will see God expressed in different ways. For example, when we enter the home of an unbeliever for the preaching of the gospel, we may sense God's glory manifested in our speaking or in his expression or attitude toward us. Furthermore, we often enjoy God's glory, His expression, in the church meetings. Perhaps a particular meeting is not very living, but

then someone offers a living prayer, and the meeting is resurrected and revived. At such a time we may sense that God is expressed in glory.

In 2 Corinthians 3 Paul wrote concerning the glory of the Old Testament ministry and the glory of the New Testament ministry. "Now if the ministry of death, in letters engraved in stone, came in glory, so that the sons of Israel were not able to gaze at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, which was being done away, how shall not rather the ministry of the Spirit be in glory? For if the ministry of condemnation came in glory, much rather the ministry of righteousness abounds in glory" (vv. 7-9). With Moses, who had the Old Testament ministry of death and condemnation, there was a glory, a physical glory, on his face. We who have the ministry of the New Testament, of the Spirit and of righteousness, have a glory in life and in spirit.

The Christian meeting is wonderful and mysterious because it is related to God. The Lord Jesus said, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there I am in their midst" (Matt. 18:20). We believe that the Lord is with us in every meeting, but He is present in different ways and, depending on our situation in the meetings, He causes us to have different kinds of senses regarding the meeting. For instance, on one occasion He may cause us to have a sense of deadness to indicate that our situation is wrong. On another occasion He may stir up everyone in the meeting, and all the attendants will have the sense that God is stirring them up. This kind of stirring up is altogether divine, and in it God appears to us in His glory, in His expression.

The appearing of God's glory in the church meetings is related to our enjoyment of Christ as the offerings. If in a church of two hundred saints, sixty would enjoy Christ as the offerings all day, in the evening when they come together, the appearing of God and the very expression of God would be among them. Their coming together into the name of Christ is the expression of God. However, the situation would be the opposite if none of the saints enjoyed

Christ as the offerings. Their coming together would not be the expression of God.

The atmosphere of the meetings indicates what we are with God. No one can pretend. The meeting is truly an exhibition of our Christian life, in particular, of the degree to which we enjoy Christ in our private daily life and in our family life. Our meeting is an exhibition of our actual enjoyment of Christ. If we enjoy Christ, the meeting will be an exhibition of the riches of Christ. If we do not enjoy Christ, there will not be an exhibition of the riches of Christ in the meeting. In this matter shouting and praising do not help, for the meeting is not under our control. The point here is that our experience of Christ affects the meetings; it especially affects, even determines, the atmosphere of the church meetings.

The atmosphere of the meetings is an indication of the appearing of God's glory, and this appearing depends on the ministering of Christ as the offerings. When we minister Christ as the different offerings, we enjoy Him, and those to whom we minister also enjoy Him. This will affect the atmosphere of the meetings because it will issue in the appearing of God's glory to us.

III. AARON BLESSING THE PEOPLE

Leviticus 9:22 says, "Then Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed them; and he came down from offering the sin offering, the burnt offering, and the peace offerings." This signifies that Christ as our High Priest after His crucifixion blessed us in His resurrection (Luke 24:50).

The Lord in His resurrection is with us all the days until the consummation of the age (Matt. 28:20). The Lord's presence with us is His blessing. As long as we have His presence, we are under His blessing. When His blessing is with us, even our mistakes become blessings. But without His presence, even if we are right in everything, there is nothing but vanity. Although our High Priest has gone into the heavens. He is still present with us, and His presence is

a blessing not only in the church life but also in our family life and in our practical daily life.

The Lord's presence as our blessing comes to us through our application of Him as all the offerings. Every day we need to apply Christ as our sin offering, burnt offering, meal offering, and peace offering. If we apply Him as these offerings, we will have His blessing, which is His presence.

John 3:16 says that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. In what way did God give His Son to us? He gave Him to us as all the offerings. When we take the sin offering, we take an aspect of Christ. When we take the burnt offering, we take another aspect of Christ. When we take the meal offering and the peace offering, we take yet other aspects of Christ.

Our Savior is the unique sin offering. When we repented and believed in the Lord Jesus, we applied Him as the sin offering without realizing it. Later, we might have been inspired to be absolute for God. Although we had not heard about the burnt offering, we prayed and offered ourselves to God. At that time, the Spirit might have shown us that we are sin, even leprous, and that we cannot be absolute for God. Then we might have prayed, "Lord Jesus, I cannot be absolute for God, but You are absolute, and You can be my absoluteness." This is to take Christ, the Son given to us by God, as the burnt offering.

Many Christians understand John 3:16 in a very general way. How can we accept Christ as the great gift from God if we do not apply Christ as the offerings? If we would enjoy this all-inclusive person, we need to apply Him daily as our sin offering, burnt offering, meal offering, and peace offering. Then we will enjoy His presence as our blessing in every way.

IV. MOSES AND AARON ENTERING INTO THE TENT OF MEETING AND COMING OUT TO BLESS THE PEOPLE

"Moses and Aaron went into the tent of meeting, and when they came out they blessed the people" (Lev. 9:23a). This signifies that Christ as our Prince and High Priest

entered into the heavens to be our kingly Priest (Acts 5:31; Heb. 4:14; 7:1) and will come out of the heavens to bless us.

Both Moses and Aaron typify Christ. Moses was the leader, the prince, and Aaron was the high priest. Today Christ is our Prince and our High Priest. When He comes to us, He comes with blessings, and His being with us is the all-inclusive blessing we need. We can enjoy this blessing only by applying Christ as the offerings. If we apply Him as the sin offering, the burnt offering, the meal offering, and the peace offering, we will have the blessing we need.

The blessing of Aaron and Moses upon the Jews is still in effect. This blessing will continue until the entire house of Israel repents and turns to the Savior at His second coming. The principle is the same with the spiritual blessing we enjoy today. A spiritual blessing lasts much longer than we realize. I am still enjoying certain blessings which I received many years ago. A spiritual blessing, therefore, is a great matter.

The New Testament tells us to bless others and not to curse them (Luke 6:28; Rom. 12:14). Even if we are hated, persecuted, and evilly spoken of, we should bless those who persecute us and pray that the Lord will forgive them. In our feeling, no person should be under a curse.

V. FIRE COMING OUT FROM GOD AND CONSUMING THE BURNT OFFERING

"Then fire came out from before Jehovah and consumed the burnt offering and the portions of fat on the altar; and when all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces" (Lev. 9:24). This fire signifies that God's holiness as a consuming fire accepts our offerings by burning. Anything that corresponds to God's holy nature God's holiness accepts by consuming it. But anything that does not meet the requirements of God's holiness will be judged by God's holiness through burning. In such a case, the fire represents the God who is the consuming fire (Heb. 12:29).

After we enjoy God's presence, the appearing of His glory, and the Lord's blessing, we should be prepared to receive the consuming fire. It is a spiritual law that God's blessing is

followed by the consuming fire of suffering. This fire is a sign that God has accepted what we have offered to Him in Christ and with Christ.

The same fire, which is the representative of God's holiness, may either be a consuming fire for God's acceptance or a judging fire. The consuming fire accepted the offering up of Stephen (Acts 7:55-59), whereas with the coming of Titus in A.D. 70 this consuming fire judged the mixture at Jerusalem.

To us today, the consuming fire may be a divine acceptance of our offering to God, or it may be God's judgment due to our offenses. How do we know whether the consuming fire is God's acceptance or God's judgment? This can be discerned by our situation. If we enjoy Christ and offer Him to God, the consuming fire will be God's acceptance. However, if we offend God's government and a burning comes to us, this burning is God's judgment upon us for touching His government. This is a serious matter.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE THIRTY-THREE

THE LESSON AND THE REGULATIONS FOR THE PRIESTS

(1)

Scripture Reading: Lev. 10:1-11

In chapters one through nine of Leviticus, we have seen the offerings and their laws, the consecration of Aaron and his sons, the initiation of the priestly service, and the issue of the priestly service. The issue of the priestly service includes the appearing of God, the appearing of God's glory, the blessing of the people, and fire coming out from before God and consuming the burnt offering (9:24). This consuming fire, which represents God's holiness, is used by God in two different kinds of situations, one positive and the other negative. In a positive situation, when we have something for God and offer it to God, He accepts it by consuming it with fire. This consuming is positive; it is the divine acceptance of what we are, what we do, and what we have for God. In a negative situation, holy fire comes from God as judgment. Such a negative case—the case of Nadab and Abihu—is found in Leviticus 10:1-11, the section which we will consider in this message.

The case of Nadab and Abihu in 10:1-11 goes together with the events of the previous chapter. It seems that this sad case happened on the same day in which "fire came out from before Jehovah and consumed the burnt offering and the portions of fat on the altar" (9:24).

Nadab and Abihu, sons of Aaron, did something that seemingly was good: they offered something to God. However, they offered "strange fire" (10:1), common fire, not fire from the heavens. God judged this offering of strange fire by

consuming the two priests who offered it. This shows us, on the one hand, that God is merciful and kind, and, on the other hand, that He is quite severe and strict. After the blessings of that excellent and glorious day in chapter nine, the day of God's initiation of the application of Christ to His people for their enjoyment, we might have tolerated the mistake recorded in chapter ten. But with God there was no tolerance. Immediately after God blessed, He judged.

The consuming of the offerings by the heavenly fire was altogether positive. That consuming was a strong confirmation that God is the true and living God and that He was with His people, the people of Israel. Furthermore, this consuming by fire was a confirmation of what Moses had done and of what he had told the people about God. Before that time, the Israelites might have wondered what kind of God they had, for they had heard about Him through Moses, but they had not seen Him. Now there was a particular day with all kinds of laws, regulations, and offerings, a day that was formal and official. On this day God's glory appeared, and His blessing came upon His people. Furthermore, on this day there was the divine acceptance of the offerings. This acceptance came in the form of consuming fire. This fire came down from heaven; it was not from the earth, and it did not originate with the children of Israel. When fire came from heaven to the very spot—the altar—where the offerings were and consumed the offerings, the people saw it, shouted, and fell on their faces (9:24b).

Not long afterward, the consuming fire appeared again but in a negative way. Instead of accepting, the holy fire judged. In chapter nine the holy fire consumed in the sense of accepting; in chapter ten the holy fire consumed in the sense of judging. Concerning Nadab and Abihu, 10:2 says, "Fire came out from before Jehovah and consumed them, and they died before Jehovah." A similar thing occurred in Acts. On the day of Pentecost the glory of God came down from heaven (Acts 2:1-4), but not long afterward a couple cheated the Holy Spirit and died as a result (Acts 5:1-11). In the case in Leviticus 10, the offering of something not sanctified, a

common, worldly fire, brought in judgment. The holy, heavenly fire consumed Nadab and Abihu, and they died.

The more we consider the case of Nadab and Abihu, the more we realize that God is not only merciful but also holy, not only kind but also severe. Therefore, we should not be careless in serving Him or in touching the divine things.

Leviticus 10:9 and 10 say, "Do not drink wine or strong drink, you or your sons with you, when you come into the tent of meeting, that you may not die; it is a perpetual statute throughout your generations, that you may make a distinction between the holy and the common, and between the unclean and the clean." This charge indicates that the reason Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire might have been that they were drunk with wine. This made them loose and careless and caused them to act without fear. As a result, they suffered God's holy judgment.

In both the Old Testament and the New Testament, the principle is the same concerning the result of carelessness in serving God and in touching the divine things. In the case both of Nadab and Abihu and of Ananias and Sapphira the result was death. This shows us that the careless touching of the divine things is serious and may result in death. According to the New Testament, this death may not be physical but spiritual.

Let us now consider in some detail the case of Nadab and Abihu.

I. THE LESSON OF NADAB AND ABIHU

In 10:1-11 we have the lesson of Nadab and Abihu. The consuming of Nadab and Abihu probably took place at the end of the day of glory and blessing described in chapter nine. What happened to these two sons of Aaron is surely a lesson for us today.

A. Nadab and Abihu Offering Strange Fire before Jehovah

"The sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, each took his censer and put fire in it, and placed incense upon it, and offered

strange fire before Jehovah, which He had not commanded them" (v. 1). This signifies man's natural enthusiasm, natural affection, natural strength, and natural ability offered to God.

Nadab and Abihu were not judged because they did something that was not for God. They were judged because they acted according to the natural life. They did something for God, but they did it in a natural way. They might have loved God, but they loved Him in a natural way.

We should be burning for the Lord and hot; however, our hotness should not be natural but spiritual. We progress from being natural to being spiritual by taking the way of the cross. Whatever we are in the natural life should be crossed out. The natural man has already been crucified with Christ. Now in our Christian life and walk we need to hold the attitude that our natural man has been crucified and must be set aside. Since the natural life has already been condemned, we should condemn it today. We need to realize that our natural man has been judged by God on the cross, and for this reason it should not be regarded or honored.

Our serving in the church and our testifying in the meetings can easily be natural. If we speak in the meetings in a natural way, we will offer strange, or common, fire, and this will bring in spiritual death. Whenever we testify in a natural way, our being is deadened, and the meeting with its atmosphere also is deadened.

We all need to learn not to touch the holy things of God with the natural life. Not only should the things be right, but the way should also be right. It is not adequate simply to do the right thing. We must do the right thing in the right way. To offer strange fire to God is to do the right thing in the wrong way, and this brings in the judgment of death.

It is not easy to be purified from being natural. We may often exercise our natural enthusiasm, natural affection, natural strength, or natural ability. Everything natural in us needs to be dealt with.

The life of Moses is an illustration of dealing with the natural man. Moses said that "the days of our years are

threescore years and ten" and that "by reason of strength" they may be fourscore years (Psa. 90:10). According to his understanding, the age of eighty marks the end of man's life. It is significant, therefore, that Moses was called by God when he was eighty years old. This indicates that Moses' natural life had come to an end and that whatever he did for God was in resurrection. At the age of eighty Moses had a new beginning, and from then on he did not act according to his natural life but according to a resurrection spirit.

Regardless of our age, we all need to learn not to do or say things with the natural strength, by the natural ability, or for the natural affection. We must regard everything natural as a snake, a poison.

The fire offered by Nadab and Abihu was common fire; it was not fire from the altar. The fire from the altar, having touched the offerings, was holy and also sanctified. However, Nadab and Abihu did not offer such a sanctified and sanctifying fire but a common fire. This fire was not from Jehovah but from man; it was not from the heavens but from the earth, and it had no base of propitiation. Without propitiation the situation between man and God cannot be appeased. Rather, the problems between man and God remain.

Due to the influence of Catholicism and Protestantism, many Christians today are loose and careless concerning the worship and service of God. They do not take this worship and service seriously, and the result is the exercise of the natural life issuing in spiritual death.

B. Fire Coming Out from before Jehovah and Consuming Them to Death before Jehovah

Leviticus 10:2 tells us that "fire came out from before Jehovah" and consumed Nadab and Abihu, and "they died before Jehovah." This fire is the opposite of common fire. This fire is from God, not from man; it is from the heavens, not from the earth; and it is for judgment, not for acceptance.

The fire in verse 2 is also fire for the sanctification of God by His serving ones who come near to Him (v. 3a). The death

of Nadab and Abihu sanctified God. Their death tells us that God is not common but holy and that we should not offer anything common to this holy God. From the death of Nadab and Abihu we learn that God must be honored as a holy God. If we are not serious with Him, we will be judged, and His judgment upon us will be His sanctification of Himself.

The fire in verse 2 was also for the glorification of God before His people (v. 3b). Aaron and the people might have felt that this consuming fire was only a matter of punishment and judgment, but with God this fire was a matter of His glorification.

C. The Corpses of Nadab and Abihu Being Carried Away from the Front of the Holy Place outside the Camp

"Moses called Mishael and Elzaphan, the sons of Uzziel, the uncle of Aaron, and said to them, Come near; carry your brothers away from the front of the holy place outside the camp. So they came near and carried them in their tunics outside the camp, as Moses had spoken" (vv. 4-5). This signifies that the deadness of unholiness should be kept away from the sphere of God's holiness and also from the community, the fellowship, of God's people.

D. The Priests Not Disheveling Their Hair nor Tearing Their Garments over God's Death-judgment upon Their Relatives, That They May Not Die and That God May Not Be Angry with All the Congregation

"Moses said to Aaron, and to Eleazar and to Ithamar, his sons, Do not dishevel your hair nor tear your garments, that you may not die and that He may not be angry with all the congregation" (v. 6). This signifies that even God's death-judgment upon the relatives should not be an excuse for His serving ones to be disorderly in their subjection to the headship of Christ and to break the perfection of their conduct, that they might not suffer deadness in their spiritual life and cause God to be unhappy with His people.

The requirement in verse 6 indicates that we must mean business with God. In coming to Him and in touching His service and work, we must be serious. Even if relatives are lost due to God's death-judgment, we must take care of God's concern and not our own concern. Behaving in such a situation as though we have suffered no loss shows that we are under the headship of Christ.

E. The Whole House of Israel Bewailing the Burning Which Jehovah Has Kindled

Leviticus 10:6c says, "But let your brothers, the whole house of Israel, bewail the burning which Jehovah has kindled." This signifies that the whole body of God's people should grieve over the judgment of God upon the unholiness of His serving ones.

F. The Priests Not Going Out from the Entrance of the Tent of Meeting So That They May Not Die, for the Anointing Oil of Jehovah Is upon Them

"And you shall not go out from the entrance of the tent of meeting so that you may not die, for the anointing oil of Jehovah is upon you" (v. 7a). The priests could not leave the entrance of the tent of meeting even to attend the funeral, because the holy anointing oil, which typifies the processed Triune God, was upon them. This signifies that God's serving ones, bearing the Holy Spirit of God, should not leave the entering in of the church life that they may not suffer spiritual deadness.

G. The Priests Not Drinking Any Wine When They Come into the Tent of Meeting That They May Not Die, and That They May Make a Distinction between the Holy and the Common, between the Unclean and the Clean, and That They May Teach the People All the Statutes of Jehovah

"Jehovah spoke to Aaron, saying, Do not drink wine or strong drink, you or your sons with you, when you come into

the tent of meeting, that you may not die; it is a perpetual statute throughout your generations, that you may make a distinction between the holy and the common, and between the unclean and the clean, and that you may teach the sons of Israel all the statutes which Jehovah has spoken to them through Moses" (vv. 8-11). This signifies that God's serving ones coming into the church life should not drink anything of the worldly enjoyment, of the fleshly interest, and of the natural excitement that they might not suffer spiritual deadness but be able to make a distinction between the holy and the common and between the clean and the unclean, and to teach God's people His regulations.

If we pay attention to the lesson of Nadab and Abihu, we will learn a great deal. Surely this lesson will then govern us in touching the things concerning God.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE THIRTY-FOUR

THE LESSON AND THE REGULATIONS FOR THE PRIESTS

(2)

Scripture Reading: Lev. 10:12-20

In the foregoing message we covered the lesson for the priests. In this message we will consider the regulations for the priests.

II. THE REGULATIONS FOR THE PRIESTS

Although on a day of glory, a day full of blessing and enjoyment, something severe happened to Aaron (10:1-11), in 10:12 we have a further expression of God's mercy and grace. "Moses spoke to Aaron, and to Eleazar and to Ithamar, his sons who remained, Take the meal offering that remains of the offerings of Jehovah by fire and eat it unleavened beside the altar, for it is most holy." This verse speaks not of the burnt offering, the sin offering, or the trespass offering but the meal offering. The meal offering here is a matter of God's mercy and grace. To our thought, immediately after the correction in 10:1-11, Aaron and his sons needed a sin offering. But Moses told them to eat the meal offering. Something was presented to Aaron and his sons for their eating. To give others something to eat at the time of need is to show them mercy.

The holy fire that consumed Nadab and Abihu was for judgment. This judgment was exercised not on unbelievers but on God's people. According to 1 Corinthians 11:27-32, this kind of judgment is a disciplinary punishment, a merciful correction, not a judgment for perdition. The judgment of God on Aaron's two sons did not terminate God's mercy on

His people. As Leviticus 10:12 indicates, here God's mercy went along with His punishment and correction.

A. Aaron and His Sons Eating the Remainder of the Meal Offering, of the Offerings of Jehovah by Fire, without Leaven in a Holy Place beside the Altar, as Their Portion

Aaron and his sons ate the remainder of the meal offering, of the offerings of Jehovah by fire, without leaven in a holy place beside the altar, as their portion (vv. 12-13). This signifies that the remaining part of Christ in His humanity as our meal offering is for us, the New Testament priests, to enjoy as our portion. According to Leviticus 2, the top portion of the meal offering, with the frankincense, was to be offered to God by fire. The remainder of the meal offering was for the priests. As the meal offering, Christ is firstly for God's satisfaction, and then He is for our enjoyment and satisfaction.

Once again I would emphasize the fact that the meal offering in verses 12 and 13 comes immediately after the disciplinary judgment upon Nadab and Abihu and indicates that God is merciful. After this death-judgment Moses did not say, "Aaron, you have made mistakes, and now is the time for you to offer a sin offering to God." Rather, instead of telling Aaron and his sons to offer a sin offering or a burnt offering, Moses told them to eat the remainder of the meal offering. This indicates that the judging and correcting God continues to be merciful.

The meal offering, which was most holy, was to be eaten in a holy place, that is, in a place where God is. This means that the meal offering was to be eaten in God's presence. Furthermore, it was to be eaten beside the cross (the altar). Without the cross we have no position to enjoy anything of Christ. Also, the meal offering was to be eaten without sin (unleavened) as an offering that could be accepted by God in the fire of His holiness.

B. The Breast of the People's Peace Offerings as the Wave Offering and the Thigh as the Heave Offering Offered to Jehovah with the Offerings by Fire of the Portions of Fat Being Eaten by the Priests in a Clean Place

The breast of the people's peace offerings as the wave offering and the thigh of the heave offering offered to Jehovah with the offerings by fire of the portions of fat were to be eaten by the priests in a clean place (vv. 14-15). This signifies that we, the New Testament priests, share with God some aspects of Christ as the believers' peace offering.

The breast of the wave offering signifies the loving capacity of Christ in His resurrection. Christ has the particular capacity to love with God's love. His loving capacity is not in the natural life but in resurrection.

The thigh of the heave offering signifies Christ's strengthening power in His ascension. The strongest parts of our physical body are the thighs. They have not only the standing power but also the strengthening power. Today Christ is strengthening us in His ascension.

The breast and the thigh were to be eaten in a clean place, signifying a clean condition apart from sin or any negative thing. Furthermore, they were to be eaten as an offering that could be accepted by God in the fire of His holiness.

C. The Sin Offering Which Is Most Holy and the Blood of Which Was Not Brought into the Holy of Holies, Being Eaten by the Priests in the Holy Place That They Might Bear Away the Iniquity of the Congregation to Make Propitiation for Them before Jehovah

The sin offering which was most holy and the blood of which was not brought into the Holy of Holies was eaten by the priests in the holy place that they might bear away the iniquity of the congregation to make propitiation for them before Jehovah (vv. 17b-18). This signifies that we, the New

Testament priests, partake of Christ as the believers' sin offering. This partaking is in the sense of participating in Christ's life, the life that bears others' sins, as our life supply, that we may be able to bear the problems of God's people. We partake of this offering in the church life in order to minister Christ's sin-dealing life to the believers that they may deal with their sins. The goal of such a dealing is to appease the situation of the believers with God and to restore their broken fellowship with God.

Verse 17 speaks of making propitiation for the people. The word *propitiation* in the Old Testament does not refer to the redemption accomplished and completed by Christ. Rather, propitiation in the Old Testament is a type pointing to the redemption of Christ.

The Hebrew word translated "make propitiation" is *kaphar,* which means "to cover." The noun form of this word is rendered "propitiatory cover" in 16:2, 13-15, and refers to the lid of the ark of the testimony. When someone came to contact God, immediately the Ten Commandments within the ark in the Holy of Holies exposed his sinful condition, indicating that there was a problem between this sinful person and the righteous God. Thus, there was no peace between these two parties. However, the blood of the sin offering was sprinkled upon the lid that covered the ark, signifying that the sin of the one coming to contact God had been covered.

In the Old Testament time Christ had not yet come, but there was a type pointing to Christ. That type was the animal sacrifice which was offered to God as a sin offering. On the day of propitiation the animal was slain, and its shed blood was brought into the Holy of Holies and sprinkled on the lid of the ark. In this way the problem between God and man was covered but not settled. This covering temporarily satisfied God's requirement. This is to propitiate, to appease, to do something for the owing party to satisfy the requiring party, producing peace between the two parties.

Hebrews 9:12 clearly speaks of Christ's redemption, telling us that "through His own blood" Christ has "entered

once for all into the Holy of Holies, having found an eternal redemption." The accomplished and completed redemption of Christ was obtained when He brought His blood to the heavens and sprinkled it there. In this way Christ found, obtained, procured, redemption. Redemption was accomplished by Christ on the cross, and it was obtained by Christ the Redeemer from the hand of the redeeming God. What we receive today is not merely propitiation or some kind of appeasing but the accomplished and completed redemption. Now we are enjoying such a redemption.

Leviticus 10:17 and 18 indicate that we, the New Testament priests, partake of Christ as the believers' sin offering in the sense of participating in Christ's life, the life that bears others' sins, as our life supply, that we may be able to bear the problems of God's people. If we would take Christ as the sin offering, we need to realize that after eating such a Christ we should bear the problems of God's people.

Eating is not only for satisfaction; it is also for working (2 Thes. 3:10). If we eat Christ as our sin offering, the offering that has accomplished redemption for us and has solved our problems with God, we must bear the responsibility to solve the problems of God's people.

If you become aware that a certain brother has a problem with sin, you should first bear the burden to pray for him. Then according to the Spirit's leading, you may go to visit him, not to condemn him or to point out his failure but to fellowship with him to bring him into the presence of the Lord and into the sense of the Lord's mercy and grace. If you can bring him into the light of God, the light will shine upon him and within him, and he will see his sinfulness, mistakes, and shortcomings.

Do not try to help a sinful one by exposing him or by directly pointing out his shortcomings. If you do this, you will insult him. Every sinner holds to his prestige. If you point out a brother's sin, he will not confess it but will hold to his prestige. Furthermore, instead of bringing the brother into the light, you will provoke him and cause problems.

The best way to help a sinful brother is to be a person who lives in the fellowship of the Lord. Then when you visit such a one, you will bear with you an atmosphere of fellowship, and you will bring that one into fellowship with the enlightening God. In this fellowship he will be enlightened and will touch God's mercy and grace. The mercy and grace of the divine life will soften his hard heart and warm his cold heart. (Because sinning causes one's heart to become hard and cold, the heart of a sinful brother needs to be softened and warmed.) In the softening and warming light of God, the brother will see his sinfulness and confess it. There will be no need for you to mention it. This way of helping a sinful brother is the way of love in wisdom.

If we would bear the problems of God's people, we need to have a rich enjoyment of Christ as our sin offering. Then with much prayer and consideration we should contact others in love and with wisdom, ministering Christ's sin-dealing life to them that they may deal with their sins. If we contact others in this way, we will not damage them or the church but rather will do something to bear the problems of God's people.

D. Due to the Weakness concerning God's Death-judgment upon Nadab and Abihu, Aaron and His Sons Being Not Fit to Eat the Sin Offering

Due to his weakness concerning God's death-judgment upon Nadab and Abihu, Aaron and his sons were not fit to eat the sin offering (Lev. 10:16-17a, 19-20). This signifies that if we are weak in accepting God's judgment upon the serving ones who are intimate and close to us, we will not be able to partake of Christ as our sin offering in the sense of taking His sin-dealing life as our life supply to minister Him to the believers as the sin-dealing life.

"Moses diligently inquired about the goat of the sin offering, and found that it had been burned up! And he was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons who remained, and said, Why have you not eaten the sin offering in the holy

place?" (vv. 16-17a). Since the blood of this sin offering had not been brought inside, into the holy place, they should have eaten it as Moses had commanded (v. 18). Moses therefore rebuked them for not doing so. Then Aaron said to Moses, "See, today they have offered their sin offering and their burnt offering before Jehovah, and such things as these have happened to me! If I had eaten the sin offering today, would it be pleasing in the sight of Jehovah?" (v. 19). On the one hand, Aaron and his sons were weak concerning God's death-judgment; on the other hand, Aaron had a proper consideration, for he and his sons were sorrowful and unhappy, and eating the sin offering under such circumstances would not have been pleasing to the Lord. Aaron told Moses that because of their sorrow, it would not have been fitting for them to eat the sin offering. "When Moses heard that, it was pleasing in his sight" (v. 20). Aaron's response pleased Moses, who represented God, and thus God also must have been pleased.

This incident indicates that with respect to keeping the regulations made by God, in God's mercy there is a margin that is out of consideration for our circumstances. Aaron and his sons had not kept God's regulation in a legal way. They had not followed the divine regulation, not because of disobedience but because of a positive consideration of their circumstances.

These verses also show us that we should not keep God's regulations in a rushed way. Instead of following the divine regulation in a hurried way, Aaron and his sons considered their situation and circumstances, and thus did not keep the regulation legally. What Aaron and his sons did was seemingly against God's regulation, but actually it was something done in wisdom.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE THIRTY-FIVE

A CONCLUDING WORD ON THE OFFERINGS AND THE PRIESTHOOD

Scripture Reading: Heb. 1:2-3; 2:14; 3:1; 4:14-15; 6:20; 7:22, 25-26; 8:1-2; 9:11-12, 24-28; 10:5-7, 9-10, 19-21; 12:2, 24; 13:21

This message, which will focus on Hebrews as an exposition of Leviticus, is a concluding word to all the foregoing messages on the offerings and the priesthood.

THE ALL-INCLUSIVE CHRIST AS HE IS REVEALED IN HEBREWS

In the book of Hebrews there are many references to the book of Leviticus, especially to the offerings and the priesthood. For example, Leviticus often speaks of the high priest. No other New Testament book speaks as much about Christ as the High Priest than the book of Hebrews does.

In the book of Leviticus itself we cannot see how great, excellent, wonderful, all-inclusive, and inexhaustible is the Christ whom we offer and enjoy as the offerings. In Leviticus we can see that all the offerings typify Christ, but we do not get the realization and the sense of how great Christ is. No word can express the greatness of the Christ who is all the offerings.

For a revelation of the all-inclusiveness of Christ, we need to come to the book of Hebrews. Let us now briefly survey the aspects of Christ revealed in Hebrews.

THE CREATOR, THE UPHOLDER, AND THE HEIR

Hebrews 1:2 and 3 tell us that Christ is the Maker, the Creator, of the universe and that He is also the Upholder of the universe He created. Furthermore, God has appointed Christ to be the Heir of all things of the universe.

THE EFFULGENCE OF GOD'S GLORY AND THE EXPRESS IMAGE OF HIS SUBSTANCE

In verse 3 we see that Christ is the effulgence of God's glory and the express image of His substance. The effulgence of God's glory is like the shining or brightness of the light of the sun. Christ is the shining, the brightness, of the Father's glory. The express image of God's substance is like the impress of a seal. Christ the Son is the expression of what God the Father is.

THE ONE WHO HAS DESTROYED THE DEVIL

"Since therefore the children have partaken of blood and flesh, He also Himself in like manner shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who has the might of death, that is, the Devil" (2:14). The wonderful One, who is the Maker of the universe, partook of blood and flesh in order to destroy the Devil, to bring him to naught. In the fullness of time, the Son of God came to become flesh (John 1:14; Rom. 8:3) by being born of a virgin (Gal. 4:4), that He might destroy the Devil in man's flesh through His death on the cross.

THE APOSTLE AND THE HIGH PRIEST

In Hebrews 3:1 we see that Christ is "the Apostle and High Priest of our confession." As the Apostle, Christ is the One sent to us from God and with God. As the High Priest, Christ is the One who went back to God from us and with us. As the Apostle, Christ came to us with God to share God with us that we may partake of the divine life, nature, and fullness. As the High Priest, Christ went to God with us to present us to God that we and all our case may be fully cared for by Him. Thus, 4:14 and 15 say, "Having therefore a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast the confession. For we do not have a high priest who is not able to sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tried in all respects like us, yet without sin." As such a High Priest, Christ bears us in the presence of God and cares for all our needs.

THE FORERUNNER

Hebrews 6:20 reveals that Christ is our Forerunner. The Lord Jesus as the Forerunner took the lead to pass through the stormy sea and to enter into the heavenly haven, "into that which is within the veil" (v. 19), to be the High Priest for us according to the order of Melchisedec, the order of the priesthood that is in both humanity and divinity. As the Forerunner, He has cut the way into glory.

THE SURETY OF A BETTER COVENANT

"By so much also Jesus has become the surety of a better covenant" (7:22). In this verse Christ is the surety of a better covenant. Christ's being the surety of a better covenant is based on His being the living and perpetual High Priest. The word *surety* here means that Christ has pledged Himself to the new covenant and to all of us. He is the bondsman, the guarantee that He will do everything necessary for the fulfillment of the new covenant.

THE HIGH PRIEST WHO IS ABLE TO SAVE US TO THE UTTERMOST

"Wherefore also He is able to save to the uttermost those who come forward to God through Him, seeing He is always living to intercede for them. For such a High Priest befits us, holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and become higher than the heavens" (7:25-26). Having passed through the heavens (4:14) and even being higher than the heavens (7:26), the Lord Jesus is always living to intercede for us. Christ as our High Priest undertakes our case by interceding for us. He appears before God on our behalf, praying for us that we may be saved and brought fully into God's eternal purpose.

THE MINISTER IN THE HEAVENS

"We have such a High Priest, who sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the holy places, even of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man" (8:1-2). The heavenly Christ is ministering

in a tabernacle pitched by the Lord and not by man. This tabernacle, this sanctuary, is in the third heaven, in which is the heavenly Holy of Holies. Christ, as a Minister of the true (heavenly) tabernacle, ministers heaven (which is not only a place but a condition of life) into us, so that we may live a heavenly life on earth as He did while He was here.

THE ONE WHO ENTERED INTO THE HOLY OF HOLIES IN THE HEAVENS AND OBTAINED AN ETERNAL REDEMPTION

"Christ having come a High Priest of the good things that have come, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made by hand, that is, not of this creation, nor through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, entered once for all into the Holy of Holies, having found an eternal redemption" (9:11-12). Since Christ as the Lamb of God took away the sin of the world (John 1:29) by offering Himself on the cross as the sacrifice for sins once for all (Heb. 9:14; 10:12), His blood, which He sprinkled in the heavenly tabernacle, has accomplished an eternal redemption for us. Through this, Christ "found an eternal redemption." Here the word *found* really means obtained, procured. By sprinkling His blood in the heavens before God, Christ has found, obtained, procured, eternal redemption for us.

THE ONE APPEARING BEFORE GOD FOR US

Christ appeared the first time to take away our sin and our sins, and He will appear a second time apart from sin (9:24-28). Hebrews 9:24 says that Christ is now appearing "before the face of God for us." He "has been manifested for the putting away of sin by His sacrifice" (v. 26b). This indicates that He is the sin offering. Verse 28 goes on to say that He has been "once offered to bear the sins of many." This indicates that He is also the trespass offering.

THE REPLACEMENT OF THE OLD TESTAMENT OFFERINGS

Hebrews 10:5-10 tells us that when Christ came, God had

no more desire for or pleasure and interest in the animal sacrifices (vv. 6, 8). Christ's coming annulled the Levitical offerings. Nevertheless, the significance of all these offerings remains with Christ.

God prepared a human body for Christ, the incarnated God-man (v. 5), so that He could be the replacement of all the Old Testament offerings. By replacing the offerings of the first covenant with Himself, Christ did the will of God (vv. 7, 9), taking away the first, the offerings of the Old Testament, and establishing the second, Himself as the reality of all those offerings.

In Leviticus we have the first category of the offerings. As the replacement of these offerings, Christ is the second category of offerings. He is now the burnt offering, the meal offering, the peace offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering. He is also the wave offering, the heave offering, the consecration offering, the freewill offering, and the offering for thanksgiving. Therefore, God no longer has any pleasure in the sacrifices of the first covenant. Today God's pleasure is only in a unique person—Jesus Christ. He, the all-inclusive Christ, is all the offerings.

CHRIST, OUR PERPETUAL DUE

All the aspects of Christ revealed in Hebrews are inexhaustible. He is the Creator, the Upholder, the Heir, the One who has destroyed the Devil, the Apostle, the High Priest, the Forerunner, the Surety, the heavenly Minister, the One appearing before God on our behalf, and the replacement of all the Old Testament offerings. Christ is the reality of every positive thing (Col. 2:16-17), including you and me (Phil. 1:21; Gal. 2:20).

Such a wonderful Christ is our perpetual due. This means that the all-inclusive Christ is our eternal portion for us to enjoy. We not only offer Christ to God—we also enjoy Him as we offer Him to God. We thus enjoy Christ with God, for we and God are co-eaters, eating Christ together in fellowship. This enjoyment is marvelous, and it is impossible for human words to describe it adequately.

CHRIST, THE GIFT WE HAVE RECEIVED FROM GOD

Christ is God's gift to us. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son" (John 3:16). In the offerings, Christ is also the gift we offer to God. (The Hebrew for offering in Leviticus 1:2, *corban,* means a gift or present.) What gift could be greater than Christ? Christ is surely the greatest gift!

We enjoy Christ as God's gift in the "gift shop" of the church. Every local church is a gift shop displaying Christ. This unique gift has thousands of aspects. Just as a diamond has many facets, so Christ has a great many facets. In one facet He is the Father, while in another facet He is the Son.

Enjoying Christ in His aspects and facets is for our worship of God; it is also for our fellowship with Him and with one another and for our eating in our daily living. Worship that is humanly manufactured is an abomination in the eyes of God. Real worship is to give Christ to God as a present, as a gift, and then to enjoy this gift with God. Hence, Christ is for God and also for us. In our worship we may say, "Father, I offer Your Son as a present for You to enjoy." When we do this, the Father may say, "A portion of this gift is for you and for all your brothers and sisters to enjoy."

THE CENTRAL THOUGHT OF LEVITICUS

The central thought of Leviticus is that the universal, all-inclusive, and inexhaustible Christ is everything to God and to God's people. Today we can speak of the enjoyment of Christ, but one day all things will be headed up in Christ (Eph. 1:10). At that time, Christ will be everything to God and man. The enjoyment of this one person will be the unique celebration in the universe. This wonderful One has thousands of aspects, titles, and names, and every one is for us to enjoy.

THE INEXHAUSTIBLE CHRIST BEING THE LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT DWELLING IN US

Hebrews 13:21 tells us that God equips us for every good work in the doing of His will, doing in us that which is

well-pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ. This verse indicates that the great, wonderful, and inexhaustible Christ is now in us. This Christ in us is the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45). As the Spirit within us, He is so available and easy to experience. If we would simply pray a little, we would pray ourselves into our spirit to touch this One and enjoy Him. He is inexhaustible yet so available. As we enjoy Him in the above-mentioned aspects, we will be led into the experience of His humanity, His divinity, His death, His resurrection, and His ascension, and we will grow in Him in all these aspects.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE THIRTY-SIX

DISCERNMENT IN DIET

Scripture Reading: Lev. 11:1-24a, 26-27a, 29-31a, 41-44; Acts 10:9b-14, 27-29

The book of Leviticus may be divided into two main sections. The first section, comprising chapters one through ten, covers the offerings and the priesthood. The second section, comprising chapters eleven through twenty-seven, covers the holy living of God's holy people. After God speaks in the first section concerning the offerings and the priesthood, He speaks in the second section concerning His people in their entirety. The priests are not the only ones who should have a holy life and a holy living. The people of God, among whom the priests serve, should also be holy.

Leviticus is a book of types, a book of typology. In the first seven chapters we have the different kinds of offerings, all of which are types. The priesthood in chapters eight through ten should also be considered a type. Furthermore, all the matters in chapters eleven through twenty-seven concerning the holy living of God's holy people should also be regarded as types. These chapters cover the living of the Israelites, God's people in the Old Testament. However, if we have the proper understanding of the types, we shall realize that all the types in these chapters are types of the living of the New Testament believers.

Because Leviticus is a book of types, there is the need for it to be expounded. Without the proper expounding, it is difficult for anyone to know this book. Nevertheless, some have claimed that there is no need for the exposition of the Bible. According to their concept, if we do not understand a certain portion of the Word the first time we read it, we should read

it again and again until we do understand it. However, this is not true of a book like Leviticus. I assure you, even if you were to read Leviticus hundreds of times, you would still be unable to understand it. If we are to know this book, it must be opened to us through the proper expounding.

The book of Leviticus has been opened by God's people collectively. It has been opened by God's people for God's people. This opening began with the Apostle Paul, who expounded Leviticus while writing the Epistle to the Hebrews. Peter also received some understanding of Leviticus through the vision given to him in Acts 10. The vision of a "certain vessel like a great sheet" (v. 11) in which were all kinds of animals was a fulfillment of Leviticus 11. Acts 10, therefore, is an exposition of Leviticus 11. From this we see that the expounding of the book of Leviticus began with the apostles.

This expounding has continued throughout the centuries, and now we are standing on the shoulders of the expositors who have preceded us. In particular, we are indebted to the Brethren, who were raised up by the Lord in England a century and a half ago. After I was saved, I was with the Brethren for seven and a half years. During those years, I learned much from them concerning typology and prophecy. The Brethren teachers had a lot to say about the animals in Leviticus 11. Without the help I received from the Brethren, I could not understand what is covered in this chapter. Just as I am standing on the shoulders of the Brethren, you are standing on my shoulders. I hope that in the years to come you who are standing on my shoulders will see more than I have seen.

Since the book of Leviticus is written fully in types, certain points are very difficult to understand. One extremely difficult point is found in 11:3a, which speaks of whatever "divides the hoof and is cloven-footed." Here we have two matters: dividing the hoof and being cloven-footed. In verse 7 we are told that the pig divides the hoof and is cloven-footed. What is the difference between these two things? I do not know. The Chinese version of the Bible makes dividing the hoof and being cloven-footed into one thing. In other words, the scholars who prepared that translation thought that to

divide the hoof was to be cloven-footed. The difference between dividing the hoof and being cloven-footed requires further study.

The title of this message is "Discernment in Diet." Discernment in diet is a matter of discernment in food-stuffs, of discernment in what we eat. Eating is not a great thing. Why, then, must we take care of our eating if we are to live a holy life? In order to answer this question, we need to remember that Leviticus is a book of types, and in types there are figures which bear a particular significance. The significance is different from the thing itself. This is true of the animals mentioned in Leviticus 11. All these animals bear a great significance, for they typify persons; they are figures that describe different kinds of persons. This is proved by Acts 10:9b-14, 27-29. Peter "beheld heaven opened, and a certain vessel like a great sheet descending, being let down by four corners onto the earth, in which were all the four-footed animals and reptiles of the earth and birds of the heaven" (vv. 11-12). At first, Peter did not understand that these animals, reptiles, and birds were figures of people. Eventually he came to understand this, for in the house of Cornelius there were people, not beasts (vv. 27-28).

I. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF EATING

The first thing we need to consider in relation to discernment in diet is the significance of eating. To know this significance is to know the real meaning of eating in Leviticus 11.

A. To Contact the Things outside of Us That Could Affect Us Inside

To eat is to contact the things outside of us that could affect us inside. This especially refers to our contacting of people. When we eat we contact something that is outside of us, something that has nothing to do with us. However, if we eat that thing, it can affect us inside. In Leviticus 11 the things we eat signify people, and eating signifies our contacting of people.

B. To Receive Things from the Outside That Can Be Digested Inside to Become Our Constituent Expressed in Our Living

To eat is not merely to contact something but also to receive something into us. Once a thing is received into us, that thing can be digested inside to become our constituent, that is, our being, our constitution. We all are a constitution of the food we eat and digest. Eventually, what we digest becomes us; it becomes our very constitution. This indicates that contacting people is an important matter. If we intend to live a holy life as required by the holy God, we need to be careful about our contact with people. Our contact with certain kinds of people can cause us to be reconstituted and thus make us another kind of person. Whatever we contact we will receive, and whatever we receive will reconstitute us, making us a different kind of person from what we are now.

II. THE CATEGORIES OF LIVING CREATURES THAT ARE CLEAN WITH RESPECT TO DIET

In chapter eleven of Leviticus five categories of animals are covered: first, the beasts, including cattle; second, the aquatic animals, the animals in the water; third, the birds, the animals in the air; fourth, the insects; and finally, the creeping things. All creeping things are unclean, but in the other four categories some animals are clean and others are unclean. Let us now consider the four categories of living creatures that are clean with respect to diet.

A. Beasts That Divide the Hoof and Chew the Cud

Beasts that divide the hoof and chew the cud (vv. 2-3) signify persons who have discernment in their activities and who receive the word of God with much reconsideration. A divided hoof signifies discernment. A horse has whole hooves, not divided hooves. Hence, a horse signifies a person who does not have the power, the strength, to discern things. Such a person cannot discern what things are of God and what things are of Satan, what things are heavenly and what things are earthly, what things are spiritual and what things

are fleshly. We need to discern not only what is good and what is bad but also what is of our spirit and what is of our flesh, as well as what things are of the new man and what things are of the old man.

Let us use as an illustration the difference between going to a theater and going to a church meeting. To go to a theater is to do something earthly, but to go to a church meeting is to do something heavenly. However, to a person, even a Christian, who does not have divided hooves there is little difference between going to a theater and going to a church meeting. Such a person lacks discernment in his activities. In his activities he does not have the discerning ability. We should be careful in contacting this kind of person, for contact with him may defile us. We need to have divided hooves, the ability and strength to discern what is of God and what is not of God, what we should do and what we should not do.

Chewing the cud signifies receiving the word of God with much consideration and reconsideration. Just as a cow chews its cud, we should consider and reconsider the word of God. We may do this while we pray-read early in the morning. As we are pray-reading, we may consider and reconsider the word. This is to chew the cud to receive nourishment by reconsidering what we receive from God's word.

In verses 2 and 3 we see God's wisdom. The two phrases "divides the hoof" and "chews the cud" are very meaningful. On the one hand, we need to chew the cud, eating the word of God by chewing it again and again. On the other hand, we need to have a walk that is full of discernment. However, many people today do not have divided hooves, and they do not chew the cud. They never even touch the word of God. We should not contact those who do not have divided hooves or chew the cud. We need to avoid such people, lest they affect us and influence us.

B. Aquatic Animals Having Fins and Scales

Aquatic animals having fins and scales (v. 9) signify persons who can move and act freely in the world and at the same time resist its influence. Fins help fish to move, to act,

in water according to their wishes. Because they have fins, fish may even swim against the current.

Scales protect the fish and keep those fish which live in salt water from being salted. Fish may live in salt water for years without being salted because they have scales to keep the salt away. Therefore, fins strengthen the fish to move, and scales protect them from being salted.

In the Bible, the sea signifies the fallen, corrupted world. The whole world today is a vast sea, and many of those living in this sea do not have fins or scales. They cannot move freely in the world and at the same time resist its influence. As believers in Christ, we should have fins and scales and therefore be able to act freely in the sea of the world without being salted by it.

On the one hand, we should have fins and scales. On the other hand, we should be careful in contacting those who do not have fins and scales. Be careful of friends, neighbors, and even relatives who do not have fins and scales. When some hear this, they may say, "What about preaching the gospel to people by visiting them in their homes? Should we knock on the doors of only those who have scales?" I would answer that such door knocking in itself is a big scale that shields us. Nevertheless, even in preaching the gospel we need to be careful in our contact with people. We do not want to be salted with worldly salt.

C. Birds That Have Wings for Flying and That Eat Seeds of Life as Their Food Supply

Birds that have wings for flying and that eat seeds of life as the food supply (cf. vv. 13-19) signify persons who can live and move in a life that is away from and above the world and who take things of life as their supply of life. Because clean birds have wings for flying, they are able to fly away from and above the world. Also, clean birds eat seeds of life as their food supply. On the contrary, the unclean birds in 11:13-19 do not feed on seeds. Because the seeds of life do not satisfy them, these unclean birds feed on carcasses.

We Christians should be like birds that have wings and that feed on the seeds of life. This means that we should live and move in a life that is away from and above the world and that we should take the things of life as our supply of life. Moreover, when we contact others, even other believers, we need to discern whether they are clean birds, like sparrows, which feed on seeds, or unclean birds, like hawks, which like to live on the things of death. If we have contact with unclean birds, we shall be influenced by their taste and eventually that will turn us into an unclean bird. For this reason, we must be careful in contacting those who feed on the things of death.

D. Insects Having Wings and Having Jointed Legs above Their Feet for Leaping on the Ground

Insects having wings and having jointed legs above their feet for leaping on the ground (vv. 21-22) signify persons who can live and move in a life that is above the world and who can keep themselves from the world. If we are the kind of persons signified by these insects, we shall have wings for flying away from anything worldly, sinful, or fleshly. We shall be able to soar above the world. We also shall have jointed legs with which to jump up from the world. This means that we are able to leave the world at any time, either by flying or by jumping. We Christians are those who can jump and fly. However, those without wings and jointed legs cannot leave the world at all. They can only stand on the earth and remain in the world.

If we are to live a holy life, we need to consider the kind of people we are contacting. Do they have divided hooves, and do they chew the cud? Do they have fins and scales? Do they have wings for flying? Do they feed on the seeds of life and not on the things of death? Do they have wings and jointed legs? How good it is to have contact with such people!

III. THE CATEGORIES OF LIVING CREATURES THAT ARE NOT CLEAN WITH RESPECT TO DIET

In Leviticus 11 there are five categories of living creatures that are not clean with respect to diet.

A. Beasts That Do Not Divide the Hoof and Beasts That Go on Their Paws

Beasts that do not divide the hoof and beasts that go on their paws (vv. 4-8a, 26a, 27a) signify persons who do not have discernment in their activities and persons who walk and move without discernment.

B. Aquatic Animals That Do Not Have Fins and Scales

Aquatic animals that do not have fins and scales (vv. 10-12) signify persons who cannot move and act freely in the world and at the same time resist its influence. Such people do not have the strength to resist the influence of the sinful world.

C. Birds That Eat Flesh and Carcasses as Their Food Supply

Birds that eat flesh and carcasses as their food supply (vv. 13-19) signify persons who live in contact with death. In their eating they contact death. The more we contact those who, spiritually speaking, are full of death, the more we shall be defiled by death. If we contact such a person, we shall be filled with spiritual death.

D. Insects That Have Four Feet for Creeping About

Insects that have four feet for creeping about on the earth (vv. 20, 23-24a) signify persons who live on the earth and who are unable to keep themselves from the world. They can only creep about on the earth, for they do not have the ability to fly above the world.

E. Creatures That Creep on the Earth or Go on Their Belly or on Four Feet, or Have Many Feet of All the Creeping Things That Creep on the Earth

Creatures that creep on the earth or go on their belly or on four feet, or have many feet of all the creeping things that creep on the earth (vv. 29-31a, 41-44) signify Satan with all

the evil spirits and demons, persons who are filled with Satan, who contact evil spirits and demons, and persons who live in the world and cleave to the world, being unable to sever themselves from the world. The Bible likens Satan to a serpent (Rev. 12:9). The evil spirits are fallen angels, and the demons are disembodied spirits of creatures from the pre-Adamic age. Many people contact evil spirits and are possessed by demons. Furthermore, many cleave to the world, being unable to sever themselves from the world. We should never contact Satan, the evil spirits, or the demons. Likewise, we should not contact persons possessed by demons or persons who cleave to the world, lest we be brought under their influence.

If we intend to live in a holy way, we need to exercise care concerning our contact with people. Contacting people is a very important matter, especially for us Christians. We should not contact others without caution, and we should not form friendships in a careless way. Careless friendships, the Bible indicates, will corrupt us.

We all must learn to be careful and cautious in contacting people. We need to know the four categories of clean living creatures and the five categories of unclean living creatures. When we are about to have contact with a particular person, we need to consider whether he is clean or unclean. Such a consideration will preserve us and keep us from being defiled or corrupted.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE THIRTY-SEVEN

ABSTAINING FROM DEATH

Scripture Reading: Lev. 11:24-25, 27b-28a, 31-35, 39-40, 36a, 37, 3, 9, 21, 44-45

We have seen that chapter eleven of Leviticus is concerned with the matter of diet, with the matter of eating. Now we need to see that this chapter is also very much concerned with death. In Leviticus 11 the word "carcass" is used at least thirteen times, and the word "dead" is used twice. Without death, there could not be any carcasses. A carcass actually denotes death. As long as there is a carcass, there is death.

The fact that this chapter speaks of death in relation to diet indicates that our diet, our eating, is a matter of life or death. If we contact clean things, we get life. But if we contact unclean things, we get death.

In this chapter the words "abomination" and "detestable" also refer to uncleanness. We should detest uncleanness, hate it to the uttermost, because it brings us death. Whenever we touch something that is unclean, we touch death. In Leviticus 11 uncleanness is synonymous with death. Where there is uncleanness, there is death. Moreover, death consummates in a carcass. The carcasses even of the clean living creatures are unclean (vv. 39-40).

Death is an ugly, abominable thing. Therefore, we need to abstain from death. Apparently chapter eleven speaks of abstaining from uncleanness; actually this chapter tells us to abstain from death. The death from which we should abstain is not mainly physical death but spiritual death. Spiritual death is more prevailing on earth than physical death. Spiritual death is everywhere. Not only sinful, worldly places but

even the most moral, ethical places are full of spiritual death. Chapter eleven of Leviticus warns us to abstain from spiritual death.

As a help to understanding what spiritual death is, let us consider the significance of the two trees in the garden of Eden—the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

After God created man, He placed him before these two trees (Gen. 2:8-9). The tree of life is simply, singly, purely, and absolutely of life. With this tree there are no complications. Instead, there is only one thing—life. The man created by God was thus in a situation where he was facing the tree of life.

In the Bible, God is signified, or illustrated, by a tree (e.g. Hosea 14:8). When God became incarnated and lived on earth, He said of Himself, "I am the vine" (John 15:5a). A vine grows by spreading and for this reason it is available to us. A pine, on the contrary, grows upward. We cannot reach the top of a fully-grown pine tree, but we easily have access to a vine. I am glad that the Lord said not that He was a pine but that He was a vine. Our God is high, yet He lowered Himself to become a vine, spreading Himself to reach the four corners of the earth.

This vine is the tree of life. We can prove this by putting John 15:5a together with John 14:6a, where the Lord says, "I am the life." On the one hand, He is the vine, a tree; on the other hand, He is life. Therefore, He is the tree of life. Christ, the embodiment of the Triune God, is the tree of life.

The Bible not only begins with the tree of life in Genesis but also consummates with the tree of life in Revelation. Revelation 22:2a says, "On this side and on that side of the river was the tree of life." Verse 14 of that chapter goes on to say, "Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have right to the tree of life." These verses speak of the tree of life in the New Jerusalem. What about today? In the church life today we may enjoy Christ as the tree of life. According to Revelation 2:7, the Lord has promised Himself to us as the tree of life for our enjoyment. "To him who

overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God." Today's church life is a prefigure, a miniature, of the New Jerusalem, which is the paradise of God. In a very real sense, therefore, in the church life we are in the paradise of God enjoying Christ as our tree of life.

In Hosea 14:8 the Lord likens Himself to an evergreen tree. He is not only the tree of life—He is also the evergreen. As the tree of life, He is ever green.

In the garden of Eden there was not only the tree of life but also the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The tree of life signifies God Himself as the totality and source of life. When God placed Adam in the garden, He knew that in this universe there was also another source—God's enemy, Satan. There is not only one source—God as the source of life; there is also a second source—Satan as the source of death. Just as God is the totality and source of life, Satan is the totality and source of death. Therefore, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil signifies death.

Whereas life is pure and single, death is complicated. The tree that signifies death is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Here we have three things which make death a complicated matter: knowledge, good, and evil. Since knowledge is related to death, the more knowledge we have, the more we are involved with death. Likewise, good is involved not with life but with death. Evil, of course, is an element of death. We all count evil with death, but we may count knowledge and good with life. In the Bible, however, life stands by itself, but both knowledge and good go with death. Eventually, knowledge, good, and evil all consummate in death.

In order to live a holy life, we need to abstain from anything that belongs to death. In particular, we need to abstain from the common practice of gossiping. Those who have the habit of gossiping may pretend to be concerned about others and their situation. Actually, due to their habit of gossiping, they are merely seeking more knowledge for the purpose of gossiping. The source of the habit of gossiping is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Through Adam's fall this tree has been implanted into

us. Even though we have been saved and have had God as the tree of life planted into our being, we still have the tree of the knowledge of good and evil within us. This means that each of us is a miniature garden of Eden. We have God within us as the tree of life and also Satan as the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Gossiping has nothing to do with the tree of life, for gossiping never imparts life to the listeners. To gossip is to be involved with death; it is to spread death, which is of God's enemy, to others. To abstain from gossip is to abstain from death. If we would live a holy life, a life that abstains from anything related to death, we must stay away from the source of death; that is, we must stay away from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

I. ALL DEAD THINGS BEING UNCLEAN, AND DEATH BEING MORE DEFILING AND ABOMINABLE THAN SIN

All dead things are unclean. Uncleanness, therefore, equals death.

Death is more defiling and abominable than sin. But according to our concept, sin is more serious than death. If we do not have the right concept concerning death, it will not be easy for us to realize that death is more defiling than sin. Because of our ethical and moral concepts, we know that lying is sinful. If someone lies to us, we shall condemn that lie as sinful. However, we may not realize that talk which is ethical may nevertheless be filled with death. For example, we may not realize talking with a brother about his family may involve death. Such talk may be ethical but still be filled with death.

Using another illustration, I would point out that even giving a book to a brother may involve death. Suppose a brother gives a book to another brother with the intention of pleasing him. Even such a good thing may be filled with death. We should give something to a brother not with the purpose of pleasing him but simply because we are following the Lord's leading. It is political to have a purpose, an intention, when we give something to a brother.

Suppose one's intention in giving a book to a brother is to please the brother so that he will then stand with the one who gave him the book. This kind of intention is filled with death, and those who have spiritual understanding, spiritual discernment, will recognize it. The issue of giving a book with this intention is the forming of a party, and such a party will spread death. First, the one who receives the book will be defiled by death. Then between these two brothers who have formed a party, there will be nothing but death. The giving of the book was apparently good, but it involved death.

From this illustration we can see that death is more hidden than sin. It is not easy for us to see through a thing and discern that it is filled with death. A deed like the giving of a book may have a very good appearance but may actually be filled with the uncleanness of death. Death surely is more defiling and abominable than sin.

A. Through a Trespass Offering Any Sin Shall Be Forgiven Immediately

Leviticus 5 reveals that through the trespass offering any sin shall be forgiven immediately (vv. 2, 17-18). From this we see that to deal with sin, to have sin forgiven, is easy. We simply offer the trespass offering, and then we are forgiven.

B. A Person Touching the Carcass of Any Animal Shall Be Unclean until the Evening, and a Person Touching the Carcass of Any Man Shall Be Unclean Seven Days

According to Leviticus 11, a person touching the carcass of any animal shall be unclean until the evening (vv. 24-25, 27b-28a, 31b, 39-40). "Until the evening" means until the end of one's daily life. This indicates that it takes time for us to be cleansed from the defilement of death. Our experience proves this. If we commit a trespass and then confess it to the Lord, we shall be forgiven immediately, and the matter is settled. But if we are defiled by death, we cannot be cleansed "until the evening." This means that a certain period of time

must pass before we can be cleansed from the defilement of death.

Time is not a factor in being forgiven of our sins, but it is a factor in being cleansed from the defilement of death. We Christians deal with sins simply by confessing them and applying the Lord's precious blood to our case. As soon as we do this, we are forgiven and cleansed. However, if we touch a "carcass" and are thereby defiled by death, this defilement will remain with us for quite a period of time. Although it does not take time for us to be cleansed from sin, it does take time for us to be cleansed from the defilement of death. This proves that death defiles us more and longer than sin does.

Whereas a person who touches the carcass of an animal shall be unclean until the evening, a person who touches the carcass of a man shall be unclean seven days (Num. 19:11,13). This indicates not only that death is more serious than sin, but also that the carcass of a man is more defiling than the carcass of an animal. In the sight of God, human beings are the most defiling element.

II. A PERSON DEFILED BY THE CARCASS OF ANY ANIMAL SHALL WASH HIS CLOTHES

A person defiled by the carcass of an animal shall wash his clothes (Lev. 11:25, 28a, 40). This signifies that the defilement of death should be cleansed from our conduct in our daily life. Clothes signify our daily walk, our daily life. Our daily life should be washed from the defilement of death.

III. ANYTHING UPON WHICH THE CARCASS OF ANY ANIMAL FALLS IS UNCLEAN, AND ANYTHING THUS DEFILED SHALL BE WASHED IN WATER

Anything upon which the carcass of any animal falls is unclean, and anything thus defiled shall be washed in water (v. 32). This signifies that the defilement of death should be cleansed away by the cleansing of the Spirit of life. The water in 11:32 signifies the Spirit of life. When we are defiled by touching death, we need to confess our sins and then pray

ourselves into the Spirit. It is in the Spirit that our daily life, our daily walk, which has been defiled by death, will be cleansed.

IV. THE CARCASS OF ANY ANIMAL FALLING INTO AN EARTHEN VESSEL OR UPON AN OVEN OR A STOVE MAKES IT UNCLEAN, AND IT SHALL BE BROKEN

The carcass of any animal falling into an earthen vessel or upon an oven or stove makes it unclean, and that vessel or oven or stove shall be broken (vv. 33, 35). This signifies that, like the vessel, our natural man, being defiled by death in our daily life, should be broken. The vessel in verse 33 signifies our natural man, our being, our self. Our natural man is a vessel. Once the vessel of our natural man has been defiled by death in our daily life, this vessel should be broken. Our natural man, our being, our self, which has been defiled by death, needs to be broken by the cross of Christ.

V. ANY FOOD IN THE EARTHEN VESSEL UPON WHICH WATER COMES AND ANY DRINK IN THE VESSEL SHALL BE MADE UNCLEAN BY THE FALLEN CARCASS

Any food in the earthen vessel upon which water comes and any drink in the vessel shall be made unclean by the fallen carcass (v. 34). This signifies that a person who is touched by the earthly flow or mixed with it in his daily life is easily affected by the defilement of death. If we are worldly, it is easy for us to be defiled by anything of death.

VI. A SPRING OR A CISTERN HOLDING WATER SHALL REMAIN CLEAN

A spring or a cistern holding water shall remain clean (v. 36a). This signifies that anything that has the flow of the living water, which washes away the defilement of death at any time, remains clean. The spring of living water signifies the Spirit, and the cistern of the living water signifies Christ, who holds the living water. As long as we have the

spring and the cistern, the Spirit and Christ, in our daily life, we shall remain clean.

VII. IF ANY PART OF THE CARCASS OF AN ANIMAL FALLS ON ANY SEED FOR SOWING, THE SEED IS CLEAN

If any part of the carcass of an animal falls on any seed for sowing, the seed is clean (v. 37). This signifies that anything that is living and possesses life that has the strength to resist defilement remains clean. The seed that has the life with the strength to resist defilement is a type of Christ.

VIII. THE CONCLUSION

I would now like to add a conclusion to what we have covered in these two messages on chapter eleven of Leviticus.

A. Christ Is the Reality of Cleanness

The matter of eating involves cleanness. This cleanness typifies the very Christ who is our content, life supply, and spiritual food. Christ is the real cleanness. He is the reality of cleanness.

B. Only Christ and All That Is out of Christ Are Clean for Our Food Supply

Only Christ and that which is out of Christ are clean for our food supply. This only is what we should contact, eat, and receive.

C. In Terms of Typology:

1. Christ Divides the Hoof and Chews the Cud

Christ divides the hoof and chews the cud (v. 3). When Christ walked on earth, His hooves were fully divided, and He chewed the cud. He was full of discernment, and He received the word of God with much reconsideration.

2. Christ Has Fins and Scales

Christ has fins (v. 9). When He was on earth, He could

move freely without being caught by worldly things. Christ also has scales (v. 9). Because of these scales, He could withstand the influence of the corrupted world.

3. Christ Has Jointed Legs above the Feet and Leaps on the Ground

Christ has jointed legs above the feet and leaps on the ground (v. 21). Therefore, when He was on earth, He could live and move in a life that was above the world, and He could keep Himself from the world.

4. Christ Is a Spring or a Cistern That Holds Living Water

Christ is a spring or cistern that holds living water (v. 36). He is the spring of the living Spirit of God, and He is also the holder of this living Spirit.

5. Christ Is a Seed for Sowing

Christ is a seed for sowing (v. 37). This is clearly revealed in the New Testament.

D. Christ Is the Supply in Our Daily Life in Every Aspect

Even such a chapter as Leviticus 11 is full of Christ. He is the supply in our daily life in every aspect. As the reality of all the positive things in the whole universe (Col. 2:17), He is all the clean living creatures. The clean living creatures that walk on earth, live in the water, and fly in the air are all types of Christ. Christ is the One who can soar in the air and live in salt water. Furthermore, all the offerings in chapters one through seven also typify Christ. In the sight of God, He is all the offerings. As long as we have Christ, we have the proper thing to contact, to eat, and to digest. In every way, He is our life supply. He is even our cleanness.

E. Only Christ Is Able to Keep Us Holy, as God Is Holy

"I am Jehovah your God; you shall therefore sanctify

yourselves and be holy, for I am holy.…For I am Jehovah, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God; you shall therefore be holy, for I am holy" (vv. 44-45). Only Christ is able to keep us holy, as God is holy.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE THIRTY-EIGHT

UNCLEANNESS IN HUMAN BIRTH

Scripture Reading: Lev. 12; Col. 2:11-12; Heb. 10:5-7

In this message on chapter twelve we come to the matter of uncleanness in human birth. Leviticus 12 reveals that the very source of our being is unclean. Chapter eleven tells us to be careful in contacting certain kinds of persons lest we be defiled, but chapter twelve indicates that we are altogether unclean from birth. Uncleanness is the source from which we were born.

I. A WOMAN'S RELATIONSHIP TO HUMAN BIRTH

The first thing we need to consider in Leviticus is woman's relationship to human birth.

A. In Figure, Woman Representing All Mankind

1. In God's Economy All Mankind Being Female

In figure, woman represents all mankind. In God's economy, in His divine dispensation and divine arrangement, all mankind is female. Whereas woman in the Bible represents mankind, man represents God and Christ. Christ is the unique male, and all those who are married to Him are females.

2. The Uncleanness within the Woman Signifying the Uncleanness within All Mankind

The uncleanness within the woman signifies the uncleanness within all mankind. We all, males and females alike, are unclean.

B. The Human Birth Coming Out of the Woman Being Unclean, Signifying That:

1. The Source of All Mankind Is Unclean

The fact that the human birth coming out of the woman is unclean signifies that the source of all mankind is unclean. Since the source is unclean, whatever is born of the source must also be unclean.

We are unclean by birth, and now we remain unclean in our living. We do not become unclean simply by contacting something unclean; we are unclean already by birth. We were unclean even when we were in our mother's womb. Hence, we were born in uncleanness and live in uncleanness. No matter how careful we may be, simply because we are a part of mankind we are unclean. Not only are we unclean—we are uncleanness itself. Human beings are totally unclean. If we are under the Lord's enlightenment, under the divine light, we shall realize that from head to toe we are a totality of uncleanness.

The second section of Leviticus shows us not only who we are but also what we are. We are uncleanness. Nevertheless, Leviticus requires that we live a holy life. How can uncleanness live a holy life? Logically speaking, this is impossible. It is absolutely impossible for uncleanness to live a holy life. However, as we shall see, in God's salvation there is the provision for us to live a holy life.

2. The Uncleanness of Mankind Is from Within

In contrast to the uncleanness in diet dealt with in chapter eleven, which is from without, the uncleanness of mankind is from within. Chapter eleven covers outward uncleanness, but chapter twelve covers inward uncleanness, the uncleanness of our entire being from birth. Leviticus 12, therefore, goes to the source of uncleanness and touches the root of uncleanness. Chapter eleven simply charges us to live a clean life by contacting what is clean and by avoiding what is unclean. This kind of cleanness is outward; it is a matter of outward conduct. Chapter twelve, however, touches our birth, not merely our

outward conduct following our birth. Leviticus 12 deals with the source from which we came.

II. THE UNCLEANNESS OF THE MALE'S BIRTH BEING FOR SEVEN DAYS, AND THAT OF THE FEMALE'S BEING FOR FOURTEEN DAYS

The uncleanness of the male's birth is for seven days, but that of the female's is for fourteen days (vv. 2, 5a). This signifies that the male (representing the strong ones) is fully (signified by the seven days) unclean in spite of his strength, and that the female (representing the weak ones) is doubly (signified by the fourteen days) unclean in her weakness. This shows us that the females are twice as unclean as the males. The numbers seven and fourteen indicate this. Seven is the number of fullness, and fourteen is two times seven. The "seven days" in verse 2 signify fully unclean, unclean in full, and the "two weeks" (fourteen days) in verse 5a signify twice this uncleanness.

III. AFTER THE BIRTH OF A MALE, THE WOMAN REMAINING IN THE UNCLEANNESS OF THE BLOOD FOR THIRTY-THREE DAYS, AND AFTER THE BIRTH OF A FEMALE, FOR SIXTY-SIX DAYS

After the birth of a male, the woman was to remain in the uncleanness of the blood for thirty-three days, and after the birth of a female, for sixty-six days (vv. 4a, 5b). This signifies that the uncleanness of a male's birth should be tested (signified by the forty days—seven days plus thirty-three days) for cleanness, and that the uncleanness of a female's birth should be doubly tested (signified by the eighty days—fourteen days plus sixty-six days) for cleanness. In the Bible the number forty denotes a period of testing. The children of Israel wandered in the wilderness for forty years, and the Lord Jesus was tempted, that is, tested, for forty days. Because the birth of a human being is altogether unclean, it required a test for cleanness. The birth of a male was tested for forty days, and the birth of a female was doubly tested for eighty days.

IV. DURING THE TEST OF THE UNCLEANNESS, THE WOMAN NOT BEING ALLOWED TO TOUCH ANY HOLY THING OR GO INTO THE SANCTUARY

During the test of the uncleanness, the woman was not allowed to touch any holy thing or go into the sanctuary (v. 4). This signifies that man is not allowed to touch the things concerning God or go into the presence of God until his uncleanness is dealt with.

How can our uncleanness be dealt with? The next two points, which are crucial, will answer this question.

V. ON THE EIGHTH DAY AFTER THE BIRTH THE MALE BEING CIRCUMCISED

On the eighth day after the birth the male was to be circumcised (v. 3). This signifies that the flesh of the unclean person should be put aside through the death of Christ that he might be brought into the resurrection of Christ, not only to be cleansed but also to have a new beginning of life (Col. 2:11-12).

After a week of seven days, there is the eighth day. The eighth day is a new start, the start of a new week. In the Bible the eighth day refers to Christ's resurrection. Resurrection, of course, is a new start. Death ends the old course, and resurrection begins a new course and is therefore a new start.

As Christians, we have had two starts. We had the first start when we were born in uncleanness and into uncleanness. We were born to be uncleanness. In nationality we may be different, but in our real being we are all the same. Every human being, regardless of race, is born uncleanness. This was our first start.

According to God's plan, God's economy, He has made a way for us to have a second start, a new start. God counts in weeks. The end of a week is the end of a course, which is followed by a new course. Our new course is not in the original creation but in resurrection. We were born in the old creation, but we were reborn a new creation. In the first start, we were in the category of the old creation, which is signified by seven days. In God's economy, the course of human

life is seven days. After being born into the old creation, we stayed there for just seven days. Then on the eighth day, the day of Christ's resurrection, we had a new start.

We should be full of joy whenever we come across the words "the eighth day" or "the first day of the week" (John 20:1, 19, 26) in our reading of the Bible. Today, as believers in Christ, we are not in the first seven days—we are in the eighth day. We are in the second course. This course is eternal, for in Christ we shall live forever. The Lord Jesus said, "Everyone who lives and believes in Me shall by no means die forever" (John 11:26). Whereas our second course is eternal, our first course is very short, only seven days. Whether we are saved early in life or at an advanced age, in the sight of God our first course is only a week in length. God in His economy has shortened our first course, but He has prolonged our second course, even making it eternal just as He Himself is eternal.

Leviticus 12:3 says, "On the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised." To be circumcised is to be cut; it is to have that part of our being which is condemned in the sight of God cut off. Actually, our entire being should be circumcised, cut off. For our whole being to be circumcised is for it to be put to death.

We were born uncleanness, which is good only for death. In our first course we were good for nothing but death. This was the reason John the Baptist commanded people to repent (Matt. 3:1-2). John then baptized, put into death, those who repented (vv. 5-6). To be baptized is to be buried. When we repented, our whole being was cut off, put to death, and then it was buried. According to Colossians 2:11-12, our baptism was our circumcision. Therefore, to be circumcised simply means to be put to death and buried.

Our being in the first course had to be terminated by being cut off and buried. This happened on the eighth day, the day of resurrection. The old man, the man in the first course, was terminated by death. In typology, in figure, this death is signified by circumcision. This is why, in the Old Testament, according to God's dispensation, God's economy,

every male had to be circumcised on the eighth day. This is a type signifying that everyone should be terminated, cut off, and that this termination should take place in the resurrection of Christ. This is according to God's economy.

In Adam we were born into the first course, but in Christ we were reborn into the second course. Our first course started when we were born, and our second course started when Christ was resurrected. When Christ was resurrected, we were resurrected with Christ and in Christ (Eph. 2:5; 1 Pet. 1:3). This means that with us the second course started before the first course. We were resurrected in Christ before we were born in Adam. It is a wonderful fact that before we were born we had already been resurrected.

Our salvation is the greatest miracle in the universe. Before the foundation of the world, we were chosen and predestinated in Christ (Eph. 1:4-5). In eternity we were destined to be in Christ. Then, in time, we were born, and eventually we became believers. Now we are in Christ.

God in His economy determined that we would have a new start through Christ's death and by His resurrection. Christ's death was a knife that cut off our entire being. After being put to death by Christ's death, we were regenerated in His resurrection. Thus, we have the eighth day as a new start, and we are now in the second week.

We have pointed out that circumcision signifies that the flesh of an unclean person is put aside through the death of Christ that he might be brought into the resurrection of Christ, not only to be cleansed but also to have a new beginning of life. The flesh is our entire being. The Bible regards fallen human beings as flesh (Rom. 3:20). Our flesh has been put aside by the death of Christ, that is, by the cross. As a result, we have been brought into the resurrection of Christ, not only to be cleansed but also to have a new beginning of life.

In your reading of Leviticus 12, have you ever realized that this chapter indicates that we have been put to death and then put into the resurrection of Christ? Our being put to death is indicated by the word "circumcision," and our being put

into the resurrection of Christ is indicated by the words "the eighth day." Circumcision signifies the cross of Christ, and the eighth day signifies the resurrection of Christ. In our first course we were born in uncleanness and into uncleanness; we were even born uncleanness. But in God's salvation we have experienced the eighth day, which has brought us into a new course. This is the new beginning that we have in Christ.

We need enlightenment and also the spiritual sight to see Christ in chapter twelve of Leviticus. With the light and the sight we shall have a clear view of Christ in this chapter. The word "Christ" is not found in Leviticus 12, but there are indications that Christ is here. Christ died for us to terminate our first course and, on the eighth day, to begin our new course in His resurrection.

VI. AFTER THE COMPLETION OF THE TEST OF THE UNCLEANNESS, A BURNT OFFERING AND A SIN OFFERING NEEDING TO BE OFFERED

After the completion of the test of the uncleanness, a burnt offering and a sin offering needed to be offered (vv. 6-8). This signifies that after our uncleanness by birth is fully dealt with, we need Christ to be our burnt offering for our not being for God and to be our sin offering for our sin (Heb. 10:5-7).

Christ is revealed in this chapter not only by the eighth day and by circumcision but also by two kinds of offerings—the burnt offering and the sin offering. Both the burnt offering and the sin offering are Christ. Christ meets our every need. His death is our circumcision, and His resurrection is our eighth day. After we have been dealt with through His death and resurrection, we still need Him to be our burnt offering and our sin offering.

We need Christ as the burnt offering because we are not absolute for God. Christ, however, was absolute for God. Therefore, as the burnt offering He takes our place; He replaces us. Now we take Him as our burnt offering. In Him we are one with Him as the burnt offering offered to God.

Therefore, He is our burnt offering, and we are God's burnt offering in Him.

Not only are we not absolute for God, but we are sinful in the eyes of God. Thus we need Christ not only as our burnt offering but also as our sin offering.

In Leviticus 12 Christ is indicated by four matters: the eighth day, circumcision, the burnt offering, and the sin offering. All these matters indicate that Christ meets our need. His death ended our old course, and His resurrection begins our new course. Now we need Christ in order to live a life that is absolute for God and without sin. To meet this need, He is our burnt offering and our sin offering.

Chapter twelve reveals that we were born uncleanness and that the totality of our being needs to be dealt with by being cut off through the death of Christ. When Christ was crucified, we also were crucified. We were dealt with, cut off, circumcised. Then in Him we entered into His resurrection, which is our new beginning, the start of a new course. Now in this new course He is our life and our living, for He is our burnt offering, a life that is absolute for God. He is also our sin offering to take care of the sinful things that are still in our flesh as we live on earth. He surely meets our need!

Through this study of Leviticus 12, we can see once again how wonderful the Bible is. In the eight verses of this chapter we see so much concerning ourselves and our source and also concerning Christ Himself, His death for us, and His resurrection.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE THIRTY-NINE

UNCLEANNESS ISSUING FROM WITHIN MAN

(1)

Scripture Reading: Lev. 13:2-28

In Leviticus 11 we see that we need discernment in diet, discernment in eating; that is, we must be careful in what we contact and receive. In chapter twelve we see that human birth involves uncleanness, for we were born uncleanness. Now in chapter thirteen we come to the matter of leprosy.

Discernment in diet concerns what we should contact outwardly and what we should receive from the outside. Our birth in uncleanness, on the contrary, concerns not what we contact outwardly but what we are inwardly. We are uncleanness by birth. This uncleanness is something within us. We were born sinners. We did not become sinners by doing something sinful or by receiving something from outside of us that caused us to be changed in our disposition or in our constitution. No, we are sinners by birth. Whether we contact something clean or unclean, we are still sinners. Being a sinner has nothing to do with what we contact outwardly; rather, being a sinner is a matter of our birth.

It is difficult to analyze leprosy. We may say that leprosy originates from outside a person, that it is caused by the entering into a person of the germs of leprosy. We may also say that leprosy comes from within, since a person cannot develop leprosy unless the element of leprosy enters into his being to give rise to this disease. Leprosy, therefore, comprises both an outside factor and an inward effect. The cause is from the outside, but the effect is inward.

We need to consider three things: discernment in diet, human birth with its uncleanness, and leprosy. These three

matters cover all our problems, and our living of a holy life has much to do with them. We need to ask ourselves about what we contact, about our birth, and about leprosy with its outward factor and inward effect. If we cannot solve the problems we have related to these things, it will be impossible for us to live a holy life. How can we live a holy life if we contact the wrong things, if we are persons born uncleanness, and if we are subject to an outward factor and an inward effect that make us leprous? It would be impossible. Can a leper live a holy life? Certainly not! In order to live a holy life, we must deal with our contact with things, with our birth, and with our leprous condition.

I. LEPROSY SIGNIFYING THE SERIOUS SIN ISSUING FROM WITHIN MAN

Leprosy (v. 2b) signifies the serious sin issuing from within man, such as willful sin, presumptuous sin, and opposing God with determination (cf. Miriam—Num. 12:1-10; Gehazi—2 Kings 5:20-27; and Uzziah—2 Chron. 26:16-21).

Leprosy does not actually begin from within a person; it begins from without, with some kind of germs or bacteria that get into a person's being. Then the leprosy issues from within one's being, as illustrated by three Old Testament cases—the cases of Miriam, Gehazi, and Uzziah.

Leprosy always comes from rebellion. Miriam rebelled against Moses, who was God's deputy authority. Her rebellion had a cause, and the cause was Moses' marrying a Cushite woman (Num. 12:1). As the result of her rebellion, Miriam became leprous (v. 10). Her leprosy came from her rebellion.

In 2 Kings 5:20-27 Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, rebelled against Elisha's practices. Elisha would not receive anything as a reward from Naaman, a Gentile who was healed of leprosy. After Gehazi received gifts from the cleansed leper, Naaman's leprosy was transferred to him. Gehazi also became leprous because of rebellion.

In 2 Chronicles 26:16-21 King Uzziah rebelled against God's regulation concerning the priesthood. According to this regulation, the king could not participate in the

priesthood. But Uzziah rebelled against this regulation, and as a result of his rebellion he became leprous. In each of these three cases, the leprosy first entered into the rebellious one and then issued from within that one.

According to the Old Testament, leprosy is the outcome of a certain cause, and that cause is rebellion against God's authority, against God's deputy authority, against God's regulation, and against God's economy. We all must admit that we have rebelled against God's authority and against His deputy authority. Furthermore, we have often rebelled against God's regulation. Finally, we have also rebelled against God's entire economy. Therefore, in God's eyes we all became leprous. Leprosy entered into us and then issued forth from within us.

Leprosy is sin. In the Bible the first case of sin was Satan's rebellion. Satan rebelled against God, and that rebellion became the sin that is now in the universe. Before Satan's rebellion there was not such a thing as sin. Sin was invented, not created, by the rebellious archangel Lucifer.

Sin is actually leprosy. The denotation of sin in the biblical sense is rebellion. Sin, therefore, is rebellion against God, against God's representative, or deputy, authority, and against God's plan, arrangement, government, and administration. As a whole, sin is rebellion against God's economy. This rebellion was invented, inaugurated, by Satan himself. Eventually, sin came into mankind. "Through one man sin entered into the world" (Rom. 5:12a). Having entered into man, this sin, this leprosy, now issues from within man. As a result, we are leprous. Whenever we do something against God, that thing is leprous. From this we can see that sin is a matter of leprosy. Leprosy signifies sin.

When the Lord Jesus came down from the mountain where He decreed the constitution of the kingdom of the heavens, the first thing He did was cleanse a leper (Matt. 8:1-4). This leper represents the fallen descendants of Adam, all of whom are lepers. The sin that was invented by Satan entered into mankind through Adam and made us all lepers. Leprosy now

issues in many different kinds of sins, that is, in many expressions, manifestations, of rebellion.

II. A SWELLING (RISING), AN ERUPTION, OR A BRIGHT SPOT ON THE SKIN OF ONE'S FLESH

A swelling (rising), an eruption, or a bright spot on the skin of one's flesh (Lev. 13:2a) signifies man's outward expressions in unruliness, in friction with others, and in pride and self-exaltation. Swellings, eruptions, and bright spots on the skin of one's flesh are signs of leprosy. Spiritually speaking, these indicate unruliness, lawlessness. Unruliness is a kind of eruption. An unruly person is one who is not under any ruling.

Friction with others also indicates leprosy. We should not think that friction between brothers is insignificant. Friction is an eruption which indicates that leprosy is issuing from within a person. The same is true of pride and self-exaltation. All these are symptoms, signs, that one is leprous.

III. BEING BROUGHT TO THE PRIEST, BEING EXAMINED BY HIM, AND BEING SHUT UP (ISOLATED) FOR SEVEN DAYS

Being brought to the priest, being examined by him, and being shut up (isolated) for seven days (vv. 2c-28) signify being brought, on the one hand, to the Lord and, on the other hand, to one who serves God, being examined by them, and being kept from contact with others for a complete course of time. The Lord Jesus and those who serve God, the serving priests, are qualified to examine one to determine whether or not he has leprosy.

IV. THE APPEARANCE OF LEPROSY

Let us now consider the appearance of leprosy. The appearance of leprosy is the substance of leprosy. What we have in this chapter concerning the appearance of leprosy is the divine diagnosis, the divine medicine.

A. The Hair Turning White

The hair turning white (v. 3a) signifies that the strength for behavior, the strength to live a normal life, is deteriorating. The Israelites had dark hair. For the dark hair of an Israelite to turn white was a sign that one was weakening. It indicated the presence of disease.

B. The Disease Being Deeper Than the Skin of the Flesh

Verse 3b speaks of the disease being deeper than the skin. First, there is an eruption and then the disease sinks deeper than the skin of the flesh. This signifies that one's wrong behavior is covered and is not confessed.

C. The Bright Spot in the Skin of the Flesh Becoming White, Not Appearing to Be Deeper Than the Skin, and the Hair in It Having Not Turned White

Verse 4a speaks of the bright spot in the skin of one's flesh being white and not appearing to be deeper than the skin, and of the hair in it not having turned white. These are good signs, good symptoms, not signs of leprosy, for they signify that one's wrong behavior is confessed, not covered, and that his strength for behavior has not deteriorated.

D. The Diseased Spot Having Faded and the Disease Having Not Spread in the Skin

Leviticus 13:6 says, "On the seventh day the priest shall examine him again; and if the diseased spot has faded, and the disease has not spread in the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him clean; it is a harmless eruption." The diseased spot having faded and the disease having not spread in the skin signify that one's weakness has been swallowed up by life through Christ's recovery work in him with grace. Such a person has been healed, recovered.

E. If the Skin Has a White Swelling (Rising) and It Has Turned the Hair White, and There Is an Emergence of Raw Flesh in the Swelling, It Is a Chronic Leprosy in the Skin of the Flesh

"The priest shall examine him, and if there is a white swelling in the skin and it has turned the hair white, and there is an emergence of raw flesh in the swelling, it is a chronic leprosy in the skin of his flesh, and the priest shall pronounce him unclean; he shall not isolate him, for he is unclean" (vv. 10-11). This signifies that the old sin has come back again through the weakness of the strength for behavior.

F. If the Leprosy Breaks Out Farther in the Skin and Covers All the Skin from Head to Foot, and All the Skin Has Turned White, the One with Leprosy Is Clean

"If the leprosy breaks out farther in the skin, and the leprosy covers all the skin of him who has the disease from head to foot, as far as the priest can see, then the priest shall examine him, and if the leprosy has covered all his flesh, he shall pronounce him who has the disease clean; it has all turned white; he is clean" (vv. 12-13). This signifies that one who is full of sin and who is willing to confess all his sin before God is cleansed. This is the opposite of what our opinion would be. According to the type here, if one is full of sin, absolutely sinful, yet does not cover his sin but instead makes a thorough confession before God, he will be forgiven and cleansed. However, one who is not willing to be exposed, one who hides himself, will remain leprous. Hiding ourselves and covering our sin are signs of leprosy.

G. When Raw Flesh Appears on the Skin, It Is Leprosy

"But on the day raw flesh appears on him, he shall be unclean. The priest shall examine the raw flesh and

pronounce him unclean; the raw flesh is unclean; it is leprosy" (vv. 14-15). Here we see that when raw flesh appears on the skin, it is leprosy. This signifies that the old sin has come back again.

H. If the Raw Flesh Again Turns White, the Leprosy Is Cleansed

"But if the raw flesh turns again to white, then he shall come to the priest; and the priest shall examine him, and if the diseased spot has turned white, then the priest shall pronounce him who had the disease clean; he is clean" (vv. 16-17). This signifies that if the repeated sin is confessed, it will be cleansed.

I. A White Swelling (Rising) or a Reddish-white Bright Spot in the Skin of the Flesh Where a Boil Was Is Leprosy

"When there is in the skin of the flesh a boil, and it has healed, and in the place where the boil was there is a white swelling, or a reddish-white bright spot, then it shall be shown to the priest. And when the priest examines it, if it appears lower than the skin, and the hair in it is turned white, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is a leprous disease; it has broken out in the boil" (vv. 18-20). This signifies that one becomes weak in his outward living after being saved and has new weak points manifested in his conduct.

J. When the Flesh Has in Its Skin a Burn by Fire, and the Raw Flesh of the Burn Becomes a Bright Spot, Reddish-white or White, It Is Leprosy

"When the flesh has in its skin a burn by fire, and the raw flesh of the burn becomes a bright spot, reddish-white or white, then the priest shall examine it. If the hair in the bright spot has turned white, and it appears deeper than the skin, it is leprosy; it has broken out in the burn. The priest shall

pronounce him unclean; it is a leprous disease" (vv. 24-25). This signifies that a saved person's acting by the flesh, for example his losing his temper, his justifying himself, and his not being willing to forgive others, is like a sign of sickness. Losing our temper is a sin; it is thus a sign of spiritual leprosy. The same is true of self-justification. Justifying ourselves, that is, excusing ourselves and not confessing our failures, mistakes, and wrongdoings, is a symptom of spiritual leprosy. Likewise, being unwilling to forgive others is also a symptom of spiritual leprosy. It is difficult for us fallen human beings to forgive others, but it is easy for us to remember those who have offended us. Sometimes we may seem to forgive our brothers and sisters in the Lord, but we forgive without forgetting the offense. We remember the offense and may even talk to others about it, all the while claiming that we have forgiven the offending party. This is forgiveness without forgetting, and it is a sign of spiritual sickness.

In the church life we all are tested concerning how pure we are in our motive, purpose, and activities. The church life will prove where we are, what we are, and who we are. Our person, our heart, our mind, our emotion, our intention, our motive, our purpose—all these will be tested by the church life. Perhaps our motive is pure to a degree, but it may not be absolutely pure. Who among us can say that he is absolutely pure in motive, intention, will, and purpose? None of us can say this. Remember, we were born uncleanness, and we are a totality of uncleanness. It is impossible for one who is a totality of uncleanness to be absolutely pure in motive.

If we see that we are a totality of uncleanness and that it is impossible for us to be absolutely pure in our motive, intention, and purpose, we shall realize how much we need God's full salvation. We need Christ with His death and resurrection. We need Christ to be our burnt offering and our sin offering. As our burnt offering, Christ is our living. As our sin offering, Christ takes care of our sin, not the sin before we were saved but the sin that we still have after our salvation. We have Christ with His death and resurrection, and we have

Christ as the burnt offering and the sin offering. This is God's full salvation.

Before we go to sleep at night, we should have a time of confession before the Lord, asking Him to forgive our sins and impurities. In particular, we need to ask the Lord to forgive any impurity in our motives. We should take Him once again as our sin offering and trespass offering and apply His precious, cleansing blood to our situation. Then with a purged conscience, a conscience cleansed by the blood and by the Spirit, we shall be able to sleep in peace.

The second section of Leviticus, a section that deals with our holy living, begins with the three matters of discernment in diet, the uncleanness of our birth, and our leprous condition. Leprosy is the sin invented by Satan. Sin came into us through the fall of our father Adam. When Adam fell, the very leprosy invented by Satan entered into us. This leprosy still remains in us. This was the reason Paul could say, "If what I do not will, this I do, it is no longer I that do it but sin that dwells in me" (Rom. 7:20). Paul realized that the germ of leprosy is within us. Having entered into us, leprosy now issues forth from within us as sins, offenses, and transgressions. For these we need Christ to be our sin offering and trespass offering.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE FORTY

UNCLEANNESS ISSUING FROM WITHIN MAN

(2)

Scripture Reading: Lev. 13:29-31, 33, 34b, 37-41, 45-46; 1 Cor. 5:13

In the foregoing message we covered leprosy in a general way. In this message we shall consider leprosy in a detailed way.

V. A DISEASE ON THE HEAD AND ON THE BEARD

Leviticus 13:29 speaks of a disease on the head and on the beard. In the Bible the head, especially the hair of the head, signifies our glory. First Corinthians 11 indicates that hair is related to glory.

A beard is related not to glory but to dignity. It is not easy to explain what dignity is. It would not be adequate to say that dignity is a kind of honor. Dignity is actually self-assumed honor. A person of high social standing may be honored by others. However, if a person assumes honor, that is a matter of dignity. Spiritually speaking, a beard is related to dignity, to one's self-assumed honor. To have a beard is to display one's dignity.

The fact that there can be a disease on the head, which signifies glory, and on the beard, which signifies dignity, indicates that it is easy for leprosy to be hidden within human glory and dignity. It is not leprous for a person to be honored, but it is leprous for one to assume honor to himself.

Leviticus 13, in which we see God's wisdom, gives us a divine diagnosis of our sin. Leprosy is a synonym of sin, and sin is a synonym of rebellion. Sin is rebellion. In the universe there is actually only one sin, and this sin is rebellion.

According to the principles set up by God in His creation, everything is in order and is related to a certain kind of authority. There is authority everywhere in the universe. There is authority in the family and in the schools. If there were no authority in this country, there could not be any peace or order. Rebellion is versus authority. Those who rebel oppose authority.

In the divine sense, authority is a synonym of God Himself. God is the authority in the universe. Satan tried to break this divine authority, but he failed and was judged for his rebellion. Today as God's created, chosen, redeemed, and saved people, and especially as His regenerated children, we should be the most submissive, obedient ones.

Romans 5 indicates that to sin is to be disobedient. Sin came into the human race through the disobedience of Adam (v. 19). Do you know what disobedience is? It is rebellion. Disobedience is a synonym of rebellion. Disobedience is rebellion, and rebellion is a synonym of Satan. Just as rebellion is a synonym of Satan, so authority is a synonym of God.

Anything that is related to rebellion is of Satan. The expression of rebellion in us today has many aspects. Every aspect is a sin or a trespass or a transgression or an overstepping or an offense. These things may be small in appearance, but they all are expressions of the unique sin—rebellion.

We need to remember that the source of sin is rebellion and that rebellion is Satan's invention. Sin, therefore, comes from Satan. Furthermore, every kind of sin has the nature of rebellion and bears the appearance of rebellion. Even the smallest sin contains the element of rebellion. Hence, to sin is to be in rebellion against God. Whenever we sin we rebel against God.

A. A Disease on the Head

A disease on the head (Lev. 13:29a) signifies something wrong in the subjection to authority and in the thinking of the mind. Any wrongness in thinking involves a wrong attitude toward authority. The source of wrong thinking is rebellion. If one's attitude toward authority is wrong, his

thinking will be wrong. But if one's attitude toward authority is right, there will not be any wrongness in his thinking.

B. A Disease on the Beard

A disease on the beard (v. 29b) signifies considering oneself as somebody, being self-dignifying, hunting for others' exaltation. Instead of considering ourselves as somebody, we should regard ourselves as nobody.

It is leprous to be self-dignified or to hunt for others' exaltation. This hunting for exaltation can be observed in the behavior of children. For example, in the presence of guests, visitors, and relatives, a little boy will often make a show of himself in order to be praised by them. He behaves in such a way because he is hunting for others' exaltation.

It is possible even in giving messages for us to seek to be exalted by others. The one speaking may assume dignity by trying to make a display of how learned, knowledgeable, and eloquent he is. It is very easy for one speaking in public to become leprous in this way.

C. Yellow Thin Hair

Leviticus 13:30 says, "The priest shall examine the diseased spot; if it appears to be deeper than the skin with yellow thin hair in it, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is a scall, it is leprosy of the head or the beard." Yellow thin hair signifies the deteriorating of the strength for living a normal Christian life. Spiritually speaking, if we are strong in our spirit to live a proper and normal Christian life, we shall have black hair. But if our hair becomes yellow and thin, that is a sign that our spiritual strength is deteriorating. Yellow thin hair is a sign of disease, and this disease comes from rebellion. Such hair is a sign of rebellion against God; it indicates that, at least in certain things, one is not submissive or obedient to God's word. Even the slightest disobedience to God's word in the Bible will cause our hair to become yellow and thin.

Sometimes a sister will notice that her husband has become weak spiritually, that he is weak in the things of

God and in taking the word of God. This brother has yellow thin hair, which is a sign of leprosy, a sign of rebellion.

D. The Disease Not Appearing to Be Deeper Than the Skin and There Being No Black Hair in It

Verse 31 goes on to say, "And if the priest examines the disease of the scall, and it does not appear deeper than the skin, and there is no black hair in it, then the priest shall isolate him who has the disease of the scall for seven days." This verse speaks of the disease not being deeper than the skin and there being no black hair in it. This signifies that a person's sin is not covered and that he does not have the strength to resist it. For the disease not to be deeper than the skin is a positive sign; it indicates that a person's sin is not covered, that he does not have the tendency to cover his sin. There being no black hair is a negative sign; it indicates that the strength to resist sin is lacking. Actually, the situation described in this verse is neutral, and for this reason the priest was required to isolate the diseased person for seven days.

E. Shaving the Beard but Not the Hair

Shaving the beard but not the hair (v. 33) signifies dealing with considering oneself as somebody, with self-dignifying, etc., but keeping the subjection to authority. As 1 Corinthians 11 indicates, not to shave one's hair is to keep one's subjection to authority. Shaving the hair is a sign of rebellion. Spiritually speaking, we should keep our hair but shave our beard. Some, however, cut off their hair and keep their beard. This indicates that they are rebellious and self-dignified and seek exaltation from others.

F. Washing the Clothes

Verse 34b speaks of washing one's clothes. Clothes signify our conduct, our daily walk. Washing the clothes signifies dealing with the stains of weak points in conduct, offenses, defects, words of rebellion, and improper activities. Since we

all have such things, we need a thorough washing first by the blood and then by the Spirit.

G. Black Hair Growing in the Scall

"But if the scall remains unchanged in its appearance and black hair has grown in it, the scall is healed; he is clean, and the priest shall pronounce him clean" (v. 37). Black hair growing in the scall is a good sign, for it signifies that the strength for one to live a normal Christian life increases in his weakness. Right at the diseased spot black hair is growing. This means that spiritual strength is coming back at our point of weakness.

H. White Bright Spots on the Skin of the Flesh

Verse 38 speaks of a man or a woman having "bright spots on the skin of their flesh, white bright spots." These white bright spots signify the disease of self-display.

I. A Dull (Darkish) White in the Skin of the Flesh

"If the bright spots in the skin of their flesh are a dull white, it is a tetter that has broken out in the skin; he is clean" (v. 39). This signifies the recovery from the weakness of self-display. When one makes a display of himself, assuming honor, he will have white bright spots. These spots are a negative sign. A dull white in the skin of the flesh is a positive sign; it indicates that one has humbled himself and has been recovered from the disease of self-display.

J. The Head Being Bald

Verse 40 says, "When a man loses the hair of his head and is bald, he is clean." This signifies the losing of subjection to authority, yet without rebelling. Here there is no sign of rebellion, only the sign of the loss of subjection to authority.

K. The Forehead Being Bald

Verse 41 continues, "And if he loses the hair from his forehead and is bald at the forehead, he is clean." The

forehead being bald signifies being neither in subjection to authority nor in rebellion before men and on public occasions.

VI. THE LEPER'S OPEN CONFESSION OF HIS LEPROSY TO OTHERS

Leviticus 13:45 and 46 tell us about the leper's open confession of his leprosy to others. This means that a sinner makes an open confession of his sin to others.

A. Wearing Torn Clothes

Verse 45 says, "And as for the leper in whom the disease is, his clothes shall be torn and the hair of his head disheveled, and he shall cover his upper lip and cry, Unclean, unclean!" Here we have several aspects of the leper's confession of his leprosy to others. The first aspect is wearing torn clothes. This signifies that a man who committed sin admits his moral bankruptcy. Tearing one's clothes is a sign of admitting that one is bankrupt in morality.

B. Having the Hair Disheveled

The hair of the leper's head was to be disheveled. This signifies that he is utterly lacking in subjection to authority, being unruly and reckless. Such a person is rebellious and does not care for any kind of authority. His disheveled hair is a sign of his unruliness; it indicates that he is disorderly and that he does not care for regulations and rules.

C. Covering the Upper Lip

A leper was also to cover his upper lip. He "was to have the lower part of his face bound around with a bandage, leaving the mouth just freedom enough to make the declaration, Unclean, unclean!" (George Bush). Covering the upper lip indicates that whatever issues out of a leper (a sinner) is filthy and contagious and that he should not be contacted.

D. Crying, "Unclean, Unclean"

The leper had to cry, "Unclean, unclean!" This indicates self-condemnation without ceasing.

E. Dwelling Alone outside the Camp

"He shall remain unclean all the days that the disease is in him; he is unclean. He shall dwell alone; his dwelling shall be outside the camp" (v. 46). Dwelling alone outside the camp signifies that, until he clears up his sinfulness, the one who has sinned should stay outside the church and be isolated from the fellowship among God's people (1 Cor. 5:13).

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE FORTY-ONE

UNCLEANNESS ISSUING FROM WITHIN MAN

(3)

Scripture Reading: Lev. 13:47-49, 53-59

In studying Leviticus 13, a chapter full of types and figures, we need the proper knowledge and understanding of the Bible as a whole. Otherwise, we shall have either no understanding of this chapter or an understanding that is wrong or biased. Chapter thirteen of Leviticus first deals with leprosy on a person's body and then with leprosy in a garment. As we shall see, chapter fourteen deals with leprosy in a house. These are the three basic categories of leprosy.

VII. LEPROSY IN A GARMENT

In the Bible our garments signify our outward conduct, our daily living. Leprosy in a garment (vv. 47-59) signifies the filthiness in one's outward living, conduct, contact with people, etc.

A. Three Kinds of Garments

In Leviticus 13 three kinds of garments are mentioned.

1. Woolen Garments

Verse 47 speaks of a leprous disease in a woolen garment. Woolen garments signify one's conduct, contact with people, etc., in meekness. Since wool is mild, it signifies behavior that is meek.

2. Linen Garments

Linen garments (v. 47c) signify one's conduct, contact with people, etc., in plainness. Linen is pure, plain, and simple. As

signified by linen, our conduct should be pure, plain, and simple.

3. Leather Garments

Clothing made from leather is warm. Hence, leather garments (v. 48b) signify one's conduct, contact with people, etc., in warmness.

As signified by these three kinds of garments, our conduct should be in meekness, in plainness, and in warmness. There should not be any leprosy—the expression of sin and rebellion—in any of these kinds of conduct.

B. Warp and Woof in the Garments

To consider the warp and the woof in the garments is to consider the textiles used in making the garments. The warp goes from the bottom to the top, and the woof goes from left to right.

1. Warp in the Garments Signifying One's Outward Conduct toward God

The warp runs from bottom to top and from top to bottom. Thus warp in the garments signifies our outward conduct toward God, our relationship with God. In our conduct toward God there should be no leprosy, no rebellion.

2. Woof in the Garments Signifying Man's Outward Conduct toward Men

In textiles the woof goes from left to right and from right to left. Thus woof signifies our outward conduct toward others. This aspect of our conduct should be pure, clean, from any leprosy, from any rebellion.

Our conduct in our daily walk is actually a matter of interweaving, that is, a condition which involves both God and man. We are not complete if we are right merely with God or merely with man. We need to be proper with both God and man. This means that in our garments, in our conduct, there will be leprosy neither in the warp nor in the woof.

C. The Greenish or Reddish Appearance in the Garment

The greenish or reddish appearance in the garment (v. 49) signifies the abnormal and strange change in one's living and conduct. Suppose a garment belonging to a certain Israelite suddenly became greenish or reddish. That would be an abnormal change in the appearance of the garment. Such a change typifies an abnormal change in our behavior. Our daily living and conduct should be normal. However, a person's conduct may change in a way that is abnormal and strange. This is a sign of disease, a sign of leprosy.

D. The Greenish or Reddish Disease Spreading in the Garment, Becoming a Malignant (Fretting) Leprosy

The greenish or reddish disease spreading in the garment, becoming a malignant (fretting) leprosy (v. 51), signifies the spreading sin that is becoming worse in malignancy (fretting). The words "malignant" and "fretting" indicate a disease that spreads by eating the flesh. Such a malignant leprosy signifies sin that is spreading within a person by eating up his being. At the beginning, the sin may be very small in scale and very low in degree. Now, however, the sin is spreading by devouring the person, becoming worse and worse in its malignancy.

E. Burning the Garment in Fire

"He shall burn the garment, whether diseased in woven or knitted material, in wool or in linen, or any article of leather, for it is a malignant leprosy; it shall be burned in the fire" (v. 52). Burning the garment in fire signifies eliminating the sinful and filthy living and conduct. When we discover that something sinful in us is becoming worse and worse, we should eliminate that thing by "burning" it, that is, by dealing with it by the cross of Christ.

F. Washing the Garment, the Disease of Which Has Not Spread

Burning a garment signifies a strong dealing. Sometimes instead of such a strong dealing, we need another kind of dealing—the dealing signified by washing a garment. Concerning this, verses 53 and 54 say, "But if the priest examines it, and the disease has not spread in the garment, in woven or knitted material, or in any article of leather, then the priest shall command that they wash the thing in which the disease is, and he shall isolate it another seven days." Washing the garment, the disease of which has not spread, signifies dealing with the suspected weakness in one's living and conduct. It may not be clear whether a certain thing is a real sin or a suspected sin. In such a case it is sufficient to wash the garment. This is to deal with a matter by the washing Spirit of God, who is likened to water for washing.

G. A Rotting, a Deeper Fretting Leprosy

"After it has been washed the priest shall again examine the diseased article and if the diseased spot has not changed its appearance, though the disease has not spread, it is unclean; you shall burn it with fire; it is a rotting, whether on its inside or on its outside" (v. 55). A rotting, a deeper fretting leprosy is very serious; it signifies the corroding sin that is becoming worse and deeper, having no change in appearance through repentance and confession. This is the kind of sin that can take over a person, devouring him and swallowing him up.

In our Christian life we daily need two things—repentance and confession. A day without repentance and confession is not a good day. Just as we need to wash our hands again and again, we need to repent and confess again and again. Every day we have things to repent of and confess. If we would live a holy life we need a daily washing, and this washing comes through our repentance and confession.

We need to repent and confess in our married life and our family life. In our married life we should be willing to say to our spouse that we are sorry. If we are not willing to say that

we are sorry, we shall have problems with our husband or wife. In our family life the parents should be willing, when they have offended their children, to tell them that they are sorry. The word "sorry" implies repentance and confession.

God's forgiveness of His children has certain terms or conditions. The main condition is our confession (1 John 1:9), and confession comes out of our repentance. We cannot confess unless we repent.

In order to live a holy life, we need to know the things concerning discernment in diet, concerning our birth, and concerning our condition. After learning these things, we must come to realize our need of daily repentance. We need to repent because it is so easy for us to make mistakes. Furthermore, we need to repent of what issues from within us. We may use the cleansing of our physical body as an illustration. During the day our hands do not touch anything unclean. Nevertheless, we shall become unclean through what issues out from within us. For this reason, we need a daily washing. The principle is the same in our Christian life. Even if we do not contact anything unclean, we still need to repent of what issues from within our being. This means that we need to repent not only of what we do but of what we are. Remember, we are a totality of uncleanness. As such, we need daily repentance and confession.

H. The Diseased Spot That Has Faded after the Washing of the Garment to Be Torn Out of the Garment

"If the priest examines it, and the diseased spot has faded after it has been washed, he shall tear it out of the garment or the leather, or out of the woven or knitted material" (Lev. 13:56). This signifies the eliminating of the suspected weakness in one's living and conduct. The fading of a diseased spot in a garment after washing is a good sign, a sign of healing, of recovery. Nevertheless, that faded spot should be torn out of the garment. This means that the faded spot should be cut off. This indicates that we need to

cut off, have a thorough dealing with, our suspected weakness.

I. After the Diseased Spot Being Torn Out of the Garment, the Disease Breaking Out Again in the Garment

Verse 57 speaks of the disease breaking out again in the garment after the diseased spot has been torn out of the garment. "Then if it appears again in the garment, in the woven or knitted material, or in any article of leather, it is a breaking out; you shall burn with fire the thing in which the disease is." The breaking out again of the disease is a bad sign. It signifies that one's weakness, after being dealt with and eliminated, has come out again.

J. After the Disease Has Departed through Washing, the Washed Garments to Be Washed a Second Time

"But the garment, or the woven or knitted material, or any article of leather from which the disease departs when you have washed it, shall then be washed a second time, and it shall be clean" (v. 58). The washing of garments a second time after the disease has departed through washing signifies that one's weakness, having been dealt with, should be dealt with a further, a second, time.

The points we have covered in this message show us that we need to do four things: repent, confess, deal with certain matters, and eliminate certain matters. If we would live a normal, proper, holy Christian life, we daily need to repent, confess, deal with our actual and even suspected weaknesses, and eliminate those weaknesses from our conduct. From this we can see that there are many details involved in dealing with sin, leprosy, and rebellion.

Chapters thirteen and fourteen of Leviticus cover the matter of sin in more detail than any other chapters in the Bible. These chapters deal with sin not only in our being and in our conduct but also in our house, our dwelling. There is thus a threefold dealing with sin—with leprosy in one's

body, in one's clothing, and in one's house. A person may be unclean first in his body and then in his clothing and in his house. We need to be cleansed from sin, from leprosy, in a threefold way.

If we want to deal with these three kinds of leprosy, we need to repent again and again, even every hour. No matter how careful we may be, in our behavior and in our contact with others we are not perfect. The only perfect person is the Lord Jesus. In every respect His behavior was perfect. We, however, surely are not perfect. We were born uncleanness, and our very being is unclean. How, then, could we be perfect? How could we be pure? For us, this is impossible. Therefore, we need to repent of our failures, confess our mistakes, and deal with our failures and mistakes, seeking even to eliminate them.

In Leviticus 13 different words are used to describe and diagnose leprosy: swelling, eruption, bright spot, white, raw flesh, chronic, boil, reddish-white bright spot, scall, yellow hair, greenish, malignant. If in our study of this chapter we pay attention to all these expressions, we shall be enlightened concerning the ugliness of leprosy. We shall see how troublesome and contagious leprosy is. In particular, we shall be enlightened concerning the leprous condition of our own being, for in all these details we shall see a portrait of ourselves.

If we are enlightened regarding ourselves, we shall no longer be self-dignified. How could a leper, an unclean person, be self-dignified? This is impossible. There is no dignity or honor in leprosy. None of us should be honored, dignified, and glorified. Who, then, should be honored? Only the Lord Jesus is worthy to receive glory and honor. He alone should be honored and glorified.

Because this chapter gives us such a clear picture of our negative situation, it surely helps us to know ourselves. I can testify that I have been greatly helped by studying this chapter through the years. I cannot easily forget what I am, for I have been enlightened deeply and in detail through Leviticus 13. I have seen what I am in myself. Often this chapter reminds me that I have nothing to be proud of. Apart from

the Lord's mercy, this leprosy would spread and consume my entire being.

Leviticus 13 humbles us. This chapter shows us that we are altogether leprous, that we are a totality of rebellion. There is rebellion in every part of our being. With us there is no submission, no subjection, no obedience. Therefore, we need to live a life of repentance and confession, a life of dealing with our shortcomings and eliminating them by the cross of Christ. Then we may live a holy life.

I use the word "may" because from experience I know that we cannot be perfect even for a whole day. We may have a good start in the morning but not so well the rest of the day. Have you ever been perfect, living a holy life, for one whole day? I cannot remember ever having such a day. How about you?

Chapter thirteen of Leviticus reveals that we are a totality of leprosy. Every aspect of the uncleanness in which we were born is a matter of leprosy, of rebellion. Rebellion, uncleanness, leprosy, sin—these are synonyms. To say that we were born uncleanness means that we were born rebellion. We are the totality of rebellion. Since this is our situation, if we are to live a holy life, we need to repent and confess all day long.

Consider Isaiah's reaction when he saw the glory of Christ (Isa. 6:1; John 12:41). He said, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips" (Isa. 6:5). Concerning our tongue, James said, "The tongue no one among men is able to tame" (James 3:8a). He also said, "If anyone does not stumble in word, this is a perfect man" (v. 2). How much trouble is caused by our lips and our tongue! When we speak it is very easy for us to say something sinful, something that requires our repentance and confession.

In Leviticus 12 we see that we are a totality of uncleanness, and in Leviticus 13, that we are a totality of leprosy. This leprosy is sin, and sin is rebellion. Therefore, we need a continual repentance and confession.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE FORTY-TWO

THE CLEANSING OF THE LEPER

(1)

Scripture Reading: Lev. 14:1-9

In this message we come to a most wonderful thing— the cleansing of the leper. In the foregoing messages we saw a portrait of what we are in a negative way. This portrait exposes us to the uttermost, revealing what we are in ourselves. Now we come to the matter of cleansing, which is the all-inclusive salvation God has prepared and accomplished for us. Here we see a Christ who is all-inclusive. He has the blood, the Spirit, and everything we need to be cleansed. In Him we have the rich, complete, and extensive provision of God's salvation. We all need to know this cleansing, this salvation, and experience it in full.

I. THE LEPER BEING BROUGHT TO THE PRIEST

"This shall be the law of the leper on the day of his cleansing. He shall be brought to the priest" (Lev. 14:2). The leper being brought to the priest signifies an unclean person being brought to the Lord. In preaching the gospel we are actually bringing unclean persons, sinners, to the Lord.

II. THE PRIEST GOING OUTSIDE THE CAMP TO EXAMINE THE LEPER

The priest going outside the camp to examine the leper (v. 3a) signifies the Lord Jesus leaving His original place and humbling Himself to be nigh to the sinner. The Lord came from the heavens to the earth in order to be nigh to us, the sinners. This is portrayed in Matthew 8. "When He had come down from the mountain, great crowds followed Him.

And behold, a leper approached and worshipped Him, saying, Lord, if You are willing. You can cleanse me. And stretching out His hand, He touched him, saying, I am willing; be cleansed. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed" (vv. 1-3). This leper should have been isolated, excluded, from the people of God. He should not have been touched by others, lest the contagious disease be passed on to them. Nevertheless, having sympathy in love for the leper, the Lord Jesus came nigh to him and touched him.

III. THE LEPER WHO WAS TO BE HEALED NEEDING TO SEEK FOR CLEANSING BEFORE GOD

In Leviticus 14:4-9 we see that the leper who was to be cleansed needed to seek for cleansing before God. This signifies that the one who is sick of the sin of leprosy, although he has been healed by the life within, still needs to have his shortcomings and defilement dealt with before God that he might be cleansed. Cleansing from leprosy requires not only the action from God's side but also the coordination from our side. As lepers, as sinners, we need to seek for cleansing. Our seeking is our cooperation with God's grace and love.

The one who had been healed of leprosy still needed to be cleansed. To be healed is one thing, and to be cleansed is another. The process, the procedure, of cleansing includes many items which we shall now consider.

A. With Two Live Clean Birds

"The priest shall give orders to take for him who is to be cleansed two live clean birds" (v. 4a). These two birds, which are clean and full of life, are types of Christ. Christ is here typified by the bird life, the life that is able to fly in the air above the earth.

1. Birds

Birds are able to transcend the earth. The birds in verse 4a signify that Christ came from the heavens and that He belongs to the heavens and transcends the earth.

2. Live Birds

The live birds signify that Christ is full of life. He is living because He is full of life.

3. Clean Birds

The clean birds here signify that only Christ is clean and is without any defilement. In this matter, Christ and we are opposite. With us everything is unclean; with Him everything is clean. We are uncleanness, but He is cleanness.

4. Two Birds

The two birds signify, on the one hand, that Christ died for us that our filthiness might be taken away and, on the other hand, that He rose for us that we might be delivered from our weakness. Christ died on the cross to take away our sins. This is typified by the first bird. Christ rose from among the dead for us that we might be delivered from our weakness by the power, strength, and energy of life. This life is the resurrection life, life in resurrection. It is also the divine life, the eternal, uncreated life of God. We receive this life from the resurrected Christ, who is typified by the second bird. Hence, these two birds signify two aspects of Christ—Christ in crucifixion and Christ in resurrection.

B. With Cedar Wood

Cedar wood (v. 4b; cf. 1 Kings 4:33) signifies the honorable and high humanity of the Lord, which enables Him to be our Savior. In the Old Testament, plants are often types of the Lord's humanity. Wood, in particular, is such a type. Cedar wood typifies the uplifted humanity of the Lord.

C. With Hyssop

In 1 Kings 4:33 Solomon "spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall." Hyssop was among the smallest of the plants. The hyssop in Leviticus 14:4b signifies that the Lord was willing to be lowly in becoming in the likeness of men that He might be nigh to man and become man's Savior. On

the one hand, as typified by cedar wood, the Lord has the highest standard of humanity; on the other hand, as typified by the hyssop, He was willing to be lowly that He might be available to us.

D. With Scarlet

Scarlet (v. 4b), a dark red color, implies much in typology. Scarlet here signifies that the Lord lowered Himself to become a man that He might do the will of God and shed His blood on the cross for our redemption, thus becoming the honorable and high King. The color scarlet signifies the shedding of blood. Thus it signifies Christ's redemption accomplished by His shedding His blood on the cross. Scarlet also implies kingship. Christ was slain, crucified, for redemption and through that redemption He became the King. The Savior has become the King not by fighting but by dying, by being crucified.

E. With an Earthenware Vessel Filled with Living Water, over Which One Bird Was to Be Killed

Verse 5 says, "The priest shall order one bird to be killed in an earthenware vessel over fresh water." The Hebrew word translated "fresh" literally means "living." An earthenware vessel filled with living water over which one bird was to be killed signifies that through death in the flesh the Lord offered Himself to God through the eternal and living Spirit (cf. Heb. 9:13-14).

The earthen vessel signifies the Lord's humanity, and the living water signifies the living and eternal Spirit of God. Over an earthen vessel filled with living water a bird was to be killed. This signifies that Christ was killed in His humanity filled with the living, eternal Spirit. In Hebrews 9:14 we have the fulfillment of this type. This verse tells us that Christ through the eternal Spirit offered Himself to God. When He was dying on the cross, He offered Himself to God through the living water—the eternal, living Spirit of God—that filled Him. Christ was not alone when He was on the cross, for the eternal Spirit was in Him and with Him.

Without Paul's word in Hebrews 9:14 we could not understand the type in Leviticus 14:5. In the type a number of details are covered in a very simple way. Here we have an earthenware vessel, living water, and a bird that was slain. When we put this type together with Hebrews 9:14, we see that when Christ (the slain bird) was being crucified. He was in His humanity (the earthenware vessel), yet within Him was the eternal Spirit, the living Spirit of God (the living water). Through the Spirit who filled Him, Christ offered Himself to God.

F. The Other Bird, the Cedar Wood, the Scarlet, and the Hyssop Being Dipped in the Blood of the Killed Bird That It Might Be Sprinkled Seven Times on the Leper Who Was to Be Cleansed

"As for the live bird, he shall take it, and the cedar wood, the scarlet, and the hyssop, and dip them and the live bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the fresh water. And he shall sprinkle it seven times on him who is to be cleansed of the leprosy, and shall pronounce him clean" (Lev. 14:6-7a). This signifies that the Lord's perfect redemption not only causes man to be cleansed objectively in his position, but also causes man to experience subjectively in the Holy Spirit the Lord's suffering in shedding His blood in His noble, high, and lowly humanity, and to experience His death, resurrection, ascension, and glorification. All these matters are implied in the type.

In 14:6 four things—the other bird, the cedar wood, the scarlet, and the hyssop—were dipped in the blood of the killed bird. I believe that these four things were bound together, that the scarlet was a thread that bound together the bird, the cedar wood, and the hyssop and made them into a bundle. This bundle was then dipped in the blood of the killed bird that this blood might be sprinkled seven times on the leper who was to be cleansed.

The Lord's redemption, His noble, high, and lowly humanity, and His resurrection, ascension, and glorification

are all implied in this type. We have seen that the cedar wood typifies Christ's noble and high humanity, and the hyssop, His lowly humanity. The slain bird, of course, signifies His redemption. What signifies His resurrection, ascension, and glorification? His resurrection is signified by the other bird, the live bird. These two birds signify Christ in two aspects—in His death and resurrection. On the one hand, as signified by the killed bird, He was killed. On the other hand, as signified by the live bird, He was resurrected. The dying Christ became the living Christ through resurrection. Christ's ascension is signified by the live bird's flying, soaring, in the air. The Lord's glorification is signified by the scarlet, which implies kingship. Christ is glorified in His kingship. Christ was humbled in His incarnation, shamed in His crucifixion, and glorified in His kingship. Therefore in this one type we see the all-inclusive Christ, for here we have His humanity, which is both high and lowly, His redemption, and His resurrection, ascension, and glorification.

G. Letting the Live Bird Go Free over the Open Field

"He shall let the live bird go free over the open field" (v. 7b). This signifies that the living Christ causes the cleansed sinner not only to die and resurrect but also to experience His ascension. These have all been accomplished for us by Christ, and we only need to experience and enjoy them. In the crucified Christ, the killed bird, we died. Now in the resurrected Christ, the live bird, we are soaring in ascension. We have been freed, and there are no frustrations.

I say once again that to expound this type we need the knowledge of the entire Bible. This is proper theology, biblical theology. Biblical theology has much to do with the leprosy in Leviticus 13 and 14. If this theology were not involved with our leprosy, we would be altogether separated from God. He would be God, having nothing to do with us, and we would be lepers, having nothing to do with Him. But biblical theology is involved with our leprosy, and God can

be seen in the typology in Leviticus 14:4-7. In this type we see the Lord's redemption and the saving power in His resurrection. We have been redeemed by the crucified Christ, and now we are in the resurrected Christ, soaring in the air with Him.

H. The Leper Who Was to Be Cleansed Washing His Clothes, Shaving Off All His Hair, and Bathing Himself in Water

"He who is to be cleansed shall then wash his clothes, and shave off all his hair, and bathe himself in water, and he shall be clean" (v. 8a). This signifies that, on the one hand, a sinner who is to be cleansed needs to experience Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension and, on the other hand, he needs to bear the responsibility himself to deal with and cut off all that is of his old living and natural life.

1. The Hair of the Head

The leper who was to be cleansed was required to shave off all his hair. The hair of the head signifies man's glory. Almost everyone can find an area in which to boast, to glorify himself, to make a display before others. This is typified by the hair of the head.

2. The Beard

The beard, which also was to be shaved off, signifies man's honor. People often esteem themselves honorable and have a superior feeling that they are above others. This is a matter of man's honor typified by the beard.

3. The Eyebrows

The beauty of the human face is mainly with the eyebrows. Thus, the eyebrows signify man's excellencies, merits, and virtues. These are man's naturally good and strong points, which

do not issue from the experience of God's salvation but from one's natural birth.

4. All the Hair of the Body

All the hair of the body signifies man's strength and ability. As human beings, we have our natural strength and ability. This means that we have hair all over our body, and this hair must be shaved off.

5. Bathing Oneself in Water

Bathing oneself in water signifies dealing with one's entire being. This is to have our entire being buried in water.

Added together, these five items equal getting rid of the self with all its glory, honor, excellencies, merits, virtues, strength, and ability. If we get rid of ourselves in this way, we shall surely be clean. There will be no leprosy. However, as long as the self exists, we shall have leprosy in some way—in the hair of our head, in our beard, in our eyebrows, in the hair of our body, in our self. Therefore, our entire being should be washed, buried, terminated, in deep water. Then because we have nothing and are nothing, we shall be clean.

I. The Leper Who Was to Be Cleansed Remaining outside His Tent for Seven Days

"After that he may enter into the camp, but shall remain outside his tent for seven days" (v. 8b). This signifies that a sinner who is to be cleansed is still unable to recover the fellowship with the brothers; he needs to be watchful, to wait, and to be dealt with further. Even after a leper had shaved off all his hair and had bathed himself in water, he still needed to wait, to watch over himself, and to be dealt with further. This indicates that to deal with our sin, our leprosy, our rebellion, which comes from Satan, is a serious matter with God. Because sin is so serious, we should not deal with it in a loose, light, or careless way.

J. On the Seventh Day the Leper Who Was to Be Cleansed Shaving Off All the Hair from His Head, His Beard, and His Eyebrows—Even All His Hair—Washing His Clothes, and Bathing His Flesh in Water

Leviticus 14:9 says, "And on the seventh day he shall shave off all his hair from his head, his beard, and his eyebrows—even all his hair. Then he shall wash his clothes and bathe his flesh in water, and he shall be clean." After watching and waiting for seven days, he shaved his entire body once more, washed his clothes, and bathed his flesh. This signifies that a sinner who is to be cleansed needs to bear the responsibility for dealing with every part of his natural life and daily walk. This is the way of cleansing shown to us in the divine revelation. Here we see that God wants us to deal with our sin and our sinful self in such a serious way. If we deal with ourselves definitely, thoroughly, and absolutely, we shall be cleansed.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE FORTY-THREE

THE CLEANSING OF THE LEPER

(2)

Scripture Reading: Lev. 14:10-32

As New Testament believers, we enjoy the Lord's cleansing. However, if we simply read and understand the New Testament, we shall not have a clear, detailed picture of what is involved in this cleansing. For this we need the types in Leviticus 14. From the types we see that to cleanse us of our leprosy the Lord had to be incarnated, to become a human being. As typified by the cedar wood, His humanity was high and honorable. As typified by the hyssop, He was willing to be lowly in becoming in the likeness of men. On the one hand, His standard was high; on the other hand, His status was very low. Both were for the producing of the scarlet thread. Furthermore, the two birds typify Christ in two other aspects, with the slain bird signifying Christ in His crucifixion and the live bird signifying Christ in His resurrection. Without Christ in all these aspects, we could not be cleansed of our leprosy, of our sin.

I do not believe that the ancient Israelites understood the significance of the two birds, the cedar, the hyssop, the killing of one bird over an earthenware vessel filled with living water, binding together the live bird, the cedar, the hyssop, and the scarlet thread and dipping this bundle into the blood of the killed bird that this blood might be sprinkled seven times on the one who was to be cleansed. Although the Israelites saw these things and experienced them, they did not understand them. However, we today do understand these types. Now we can see that for our cleansing we need a Christ of many aspects, a Christ who has gone through a

number of processes. The blood shed by Him has been sprinkled upon us, and this sprinkling connects us, the sinners, to Christ, the Redeemer.

Although the Lord has shown us much concerning these types, we hope that in the coming years He will show us even more.

The previous message covered only the first part of the procedure, or the process, of the cleansing of a leper. In this message we shall cover the second part of this process.

In the cleansing of the leper, Christ is revealed not only as the two birds, the cedar wood, the hyssop, and the scarlet thread but also as four kinds of offerings: the trespass offering, the sin offering, the burnt offering, and the meal offering.

The sin offering deals with our sinful nature, with sin as the nature of our fallen being. The nature of our fallen being is sin, and this sinful nature is the essence, the substance, the element, of Satan. Our sinful nature—the sin in our being—is satanic. We may even say that it is Satan himself. Sin, which is rebellion, is Satan. This sin has been injected into us, causing us to be constituted sinners (Rom. 5:19), that is, sinners in constitution. Human beings, therefore, are a constitution of sin. We need to see that our being is fully constituted with sin, with the enemy of God.

The sin offering deals with our nature of sin. Sin is our nature; it is even our very self. When Christ died on the cross, He did not only die for our sins but was also made sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21). Christ was crucified as sin. When He was crucified, sin also was crucified, and we were crucified as well. When Christ was crucified as sin, sin, Satan, and we ourselves were crucified with Him. This is the significance of the sin offering.

The trespass offering deals with our sins, which are the issues of the sin within us, the sin which is our nature, our being, our constitution. Sins, the different fruits of sin, are also called offenses, trespasses, and transgressions. Therefore, we need both the sin offering and the trespass offering. We need the sin offering to deal with sin, the source of

our sins. We need the trespass offering to deal with all the issues of sin.

The sin offering and the trespass offering are actually of one category to deal with sin in total, including our sin and our sins. "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). "Sin" here is a totality of sin which includes our sinful nature and our sinful deeds. Christ is the offering that deals with both sin and sins. In dealing with our sin, He is the sin offering. In dealing with our sins, He is the trespass offering. Because these offerings are both concerned with the same thing—dealing with the totality of sin—in chapters five and six of Leviticus they are sometimes applied interchangeably, with the trespass offering becoming the sin offering and the sin offering becoming the trespass offering.

In relation to the sin offering and the trespass offering, I would like to say a word concerning propitiation. Leviticus 14:18 speaks of the priest making propitiation for a leper before Jehovah. It is difficult to translate the Hebrew word for propitiation. The King James Version renders this Hebrew word as "atonement." Atonement is a matter of at-one-ment. Two parties have a problem, perhaps a quarrel, that needs to be settled. Because of the problem, these parties are not at one. They need something that will appease their situation, solve their problem, and make them one.

Propitiation is a matter of appeasing a problem or a situation in which one party has offended another party or owes something to another party. Unless the problem is settled, there cannot be peace between the two parties. A third party comes in to act on behalf of the first party to remove the offense so that the second party can be one with the first party. This is to appease, to propitiate.

In Leviticus 14 the leper is one party, the offending party, and God is the other party, the offended party. The problem, of course, is leprosy. We have pointed out that leprosy signifies sin, that sin is rebellion, and that rebellion is Satan. These four things—leprosy, sin, rebellion, and Satan—are synonyms. This means that they are one. Because between God and man there is the problem of leprosy, there is the need of an

appeasing to get rid of the leprosy, which is sin, rebellion, and Satan himself. For this appeasing the two birds are not adequate. The two birds can accomplish the cleansing but not the propitiating. Propitiation requires the sin offering, the trespass offering, the burnt offering, and the meal offering. Only when we have these four offerings can we have propitiation as well as cleansing.

A leper, a sinner who is under God's condemnation and who has a problem with God, needs three things: healing, cleansing, and propitiating. For a leper to need propitiation means that he needs to be brought back into fellowship with God. Propitiation removes the obstacle between the leper and God. Christ has come not only to cleanse us but also to make propitiation for us. In order to make propitiation He had to be our sin offering, trespass offering, burnt offering, and meal offering.

We have seen the significance of the sin offering and the trespass offering. Now we need to see the significance of the burnt offering and the meal offering.

Christ is the burnt offering to make us absolute for God. For this purpose He is also the meal offering to feed us, to supply us with food. In order to do anything we need food, which gives us the strength to live. If we would be absolute for God, we need something to supply us, something to support, sustain, and feed us. What we need is Christ as our meal offering, as our food. Christ is the meal offering for us to eat. The more we enjoy Christ as the meal offering, the more we shall live a life that is a burnt offering absolute for God.

After the problems of our sin and our sins have been solved, we need to enjoy Christ as the meal offering. The meal offering is a composition of fine flour and oil. The fine flour typifies the fineness of Christ in His humanity, and the oil typifies the Spirit. These two things, the fine flour and the oil, combined and mingled, become our food. In the morning especially, we may enjoy Christ as the fine flour mingled with oil, the Spirit. This is Christ as our meal offering to support and sustain us that we may live a life that is absolutely for God as a burnt offering.

Through these four kinds of offerings the problem between us and God is fully solved, and the situation between us and God is appeased. Now we have not only been healed and cleansed, but also propitiation has been made for us.

In the matter of the cleansing of the leper in Leviticus 14, we can see Christ in many aspects. We see Christ as the cedar wood and as the hyssop in His incarnation. We see Christ shedding His blood to produce the scarlet thread. We see Christ as the two birds: the one bird killed over an earthenware vessel (His humanity) filled with living water (the eternal Spirit), and the other bird released to fly over the open field. Now we also see Christ as the sin offering, the trespass offering, the burnt offering, and the meal offering. How wonderful is this picture of Christ!

IV. THE LEPER WHO WAS TO BE CLEANSED NEEDING TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM OF HIS SIN AND SINS BEFORE GOD

In 14:10-32 we see that the leper who was to be cleansed needed to solve the problem of his sin and sins before God. This signifies that a sinner who is to be cleansed, even though he has been cleansed, still needs to solve the problem of his sin and sins before God. This means that the sinner needs propitiation.

A. Presenting the Offerings before God on the Eighth Day

Presenting the offerings before God on the eighth day (vv. 10-11) signifies that man is freed in Christ in resurrection from the flesh of the old creation.

1. Offering One of the Male Lambs for a Trespass Offering, with the Log of Oil, Both of Which Were Waved for a Wave Offering before Jehovah

"The priest shall take one of the male lambs and offer it for a trespass offering, with the log of oil, and he shall wave them as a wave offering before Jehovah" (v. 12). Here "log," a

Hebrew term, denotes a certain quantity (a pint) of oil, which signifies the Holy Spirit. "Wave" here signifies resurrection. A wave offering is an offering of resurrection and in resurrection. Therefore, offering one of the male lambs for a trespass offering, with the log of oil, both of which were waved before Jehovah, signifies that the death of the Lord Jesus as the trespass offering deals with our sins, and His resurrection in the Holy Spirit frees us from our trespasses, that we, having died to sins, might live to righteousness.

2. The Male Lamb as the Trespass Offering to Be Slaughtered in the Holy Place Where the Sin Offering and the Burnt Offering Were Slaughtered

"He shall slaughter the male lamb in the place where the sin offering and the burnt offering are slaughtered, in the holy place" (v. 13a). The holy place here is not the holy place in the tabernacle, but the area at the entrance of the tent of meeting where the animals were slaughtered, which was considered holy. Slaughtering the trespass offering in this place signifies that the Lord Jesus' being able to deal with our sins is based on His bearing our sin as our sin offering and on His living absolutely for God as our burnt offering. Christ's being the sin offering and the burnt offering is the base for Him to be the trespass offering.

3. The Trespass Offering Belonging to the Priest and Being Most Holy

"The trespass offering, like the sin offering, belongs to the priest; it is most holy" (v. 13b). This signifies that the serving one who leads others to deal with sins also enjoys Christ as his holy portion. For example, when we visit people in their homes and minister Christ to them so that they may be saved, we ourselves enjoy Christ. The Christ who becomes their Savior also becomes our portion for our enjoyment. This means that while we minister Christ to others, we eat Him, enjoying Him as our portion.

4. The Blood of the Trespass Offering to Be Put on the Tip of the Right Ear of Him Who Is to Be Cleansed, on the Thumb of His Right Hand, and on the Great Toe of His Right Foot

"The priest shall take some of the blood of the trespass offering, and the priest shall put it on the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed, and on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot" (v. 14). This signifies that man has trespasses because, first, his ears are wrong in not listening to God, and second, his hands are wrong in not doing the things of God, and third, his feet are wrong in not taking the ways of God. Therefore, he needs to be cleansed with the blood of the Lord Jesus as his trespass offering.

5. Some of the Oil to Be Poured into the Palm of the Priest's Left Hand and to Be Sprinkled with His Right Finger Seven Times before Jehovah

"Then the priest shall take some of the log of oil and pour it into the palm of his own left hand. And the priest shall dip his right finger in the oil which is in the palm of his left hand, and with his finger sprinkle some of the oil seven times before Jehovah" (vv. 15-16). This signifies that the Spirit of the Lord's resurrection has laid a perfect foundation before God.

6. Some of the Rest of the Oil to Be Put on the Tip of the Right Ear of the One Who Was to Be Cleansed, on the Thumb of His Right Hand, and on the Great Toe of the Right Foot, upon the Blood of the Trespass Offering

"And some of the rest of the oil which is in his palm the priest shall put on the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed, and on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot—upon the blood of the trespass offering" (v. 17). This signifies that man can solve the problem of

his trespasses only by listening to the word of God, doing the things of God, and taking the ways of God in the Spirit of resurrection, based on the redemption of the blood of the Lord Jesus as our trespass offering.

Here we have two layers: the layer of the blood and the layer of the oil. The blood signifies Christ's redeeming blood, and the oil signifies the Spirit of resurrection. First, the blood is applied to the tip of the right ear, to the thumb of the right hand, and to the great toe of the right foot. This is for the washing away of our trespasses and wrongdoings. Following the application of the blood is the application of the oil to the places where the blood is applied. This indicates that, based upon the redemption of Christ, the Spirit comes to help us to do the right things—to listen to God's word, to do the things of God, and to take the ways of God. This will keep us from any kind of trespass.

7. The Remainder of the Oil in the Priest's Palm to Be Put on the Head of Him Who Was to Be Cleansed

"And what remains of the oil in the priest's palm he shall put upon the head of him who is to be cleansed. Thus the priest shall make propitiation for him before Jehovah" (v. 18). Putting the oil on the head signifies that the authority of the headship, the thoughts of the mind, and the control of the entire being of the sinner who is to be cleansed are dealt with in the cleansing Spirit of resurrection.

Only a small amount of oil is put on the tip of the ear, on the thumb, and on the toe. All the remainder of the oil is put on the head. Because the head is the source of many problems, more oil, more Spirit, is applied to it. The problems related to the head are of three categories. First, the head is not under God's authority. Second, the head is filled with the thoughts of the mind. Third, the head directs our entire being. Therefore, the head is the most troublesome part of the body. For this reason, the head needs all the remainder of the oil, of the Spirit. Having the Spirit poured upon our head will help us to subject ourselves to God's authority,

taking Him as our head. It will also adjust our thoughts and help us to direct, to control, our whole being in the right way.

8. The Sin Offering to Be Offered to Make Propitiation for Him Who Was to Be Cleansed from His Uncleanness

"The priest shall then offer the sin offering, and make propitiation for him who is to be cleansed" (v. 19a). This signifies that the Lord Jesus was offered as our sin offering to deal with our uncleanness at the root (the sinful nature) of our sins, which are dealt with by the Lord Jesus as the trespass offering.

9. The Burnt Offering to Be Offered with the Meal Offering

"And after that he shall slaughter the burnt offering. And the priest shall offer the burnt offering and the meal offering on the altar; and the priest shall make propitiation for him, and he shall be clean" (vv. 19b-20). This signifies that the sinner who is to be cleansed, after having been cleansed from the uncleanness of sin and sins through Christ as his sin offering and trespass offering, offers himself in Christ as the burnt offering to God and lives and walks absolutely for God by the life of Christ as the meal offering. Thus the sinner who is to be cleansed is fully cleansed from his uncleanness. The leper has now been healed, cleansed, and propitiated.

10. The Poor Who Were Not Able to Afford So Much Were to Offer One Male Lamb for a Trespass Offering to Be Waved and One-tenth of an Ephah of Fine Flour Mingled with Oil for a Meal Offering, and a Log of Oil

The poor who were not able to afford so much were to offer one male lamb for a trespass offering to be waved and one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour mingled with oil for a meal offering, and a log of oil (vv. 21-32). This signifies that a sinner who is to be cleansed should partake of Christ at least at some minimum level, that is, as much as he can. But

in principle he must take Christ as his sin offering, trespass offering, burnt offering, and meal offering, and he must take His mingling and cleansing Spirit.

B. Christ as Our Food and as Our Sin Offering, Trespass Offering, Burnt Offering, and Meal Offering

I would like to close this message with a word concerning certain aspects of Christ unveiled in chapters eleven through fourteen of Leviticus. Chapter eleven unveils that Christ is our food of life, supplying us in the form of food to deal with our uncleanness in the outward contact with people. Chapter twelve unveils that our origin is unclean. Thus, Christ has become our sin offering to deal with our sinful nature. Chapters thirteen and fourteen unveil that what issues from within us also is unclean. Hence, Christ has become our trespass offering to deal with our sinful deeds. Moreover, Christ is our burnt offering and our meal offering that we may have the life supply to live a life which is absolutely for God. With Christ as our offerings we have been brought back to God to live a life that is fully pleasing to Him.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE FORTY-FOUR

THE LEPROSY IN A HOUSE

Scripture Reading: Lev. 14:33-53

In the messages on Leviticus 13 we saw that leprosy may be in a person and also in one's garments. In this message we shall consider the leprosy in a house.

I. THE LEPROSY IN A HOUSE SIGNIFYING SINS AND EVILS IN A CHURCH

Everything in the book of Leviticus is a type. This includes the house in chapter fourteen. Based upon the principle that Leviticus is written in the form of types, we may interpret the house in 14:33-53 as a type of the church. As New Testament believers, we recognize that our real house is not our physical house but the church. Without the proper church life, we are homeless. Only when we are in the church and live the proper church life are we truly at home. Many have testified upon entering into the church life that they are now at home. The house in Leviticus 14, therefore, typifies the church as our house, our home, and the leprosy in a house signifies sins and evils in the church (vv. 33-48).

A. God Putting a Leprous Disease in a House of the Land of Israel's Possession

Leviticus 14:34 speaks of God's putting a leprous disease in a house of the land of Israel's possession. This signifies that when the condition of a church becomes abnormal, God causes the leprous sin to appear in the church, reminding and warning the believers that they no longer have a house to live in and are no longer able to enjoy all the blessings God promised in His salvation.

During the more than fifty years I have been in the Lord's recovery, I have passed through many turmoils. Sometimes the turmoil reached the point that there was leprosy in the house. When the church becomes leprous, sick because of sins and evils, we have the sense that we have lost our home, that we have become homeless. Furthermore, when the church is sick of leprosy, we lose the enjoyment of Christ. Since there is no longer a proper church, we are no longer able to enjoy all the blessings God has promised in His salvation.

B. The Owner of the House Coming and Telling the Priest That Something Like a Leprous Disease Has Appeared in His House

"When you enter into the land of Canaan, which I give to you for a possession, and I put a leprous disease in a house of the land of your possession, then he who owns the house shall come and tell the priest, saying, Something like a leprous disease has appeared in my house" (vv. 34-35). The owner's coming and telling this to the priest signifies that the leading brothers or those who are concerned for the church approach the Lord or the apostle, the Lord's deputy, and tell the Lord or His deputy. This is what we need to do when the church is sick.

C. To Empty the House So That All That Is in the House Should Not Become Unclean

"The priest shall then order that they empty the house before he goes in to examine the disease, so that all that is in the house shall not become unclean" (v. 36a). This signifies to do one's best to prevent and eliminate the contagion.

In order to stop the contagion, we should be careful about our talking, for gossiping will spread the disease. From experience we know that gossip spreads the contagious disease in the church. If we listen to gossip, we shall be contaminated.

By being careful about gossip, we shall help to stop the spread of the contagious disease.

D. The Priest Going In to Examine the House

"After that the priest shall go in to examine the house" (v. 36b). This signifies that the Lord or the apostle comes to examine. This kind of examination is not a matter of condemnation; rather, it is a kind of grace for healing.

E. If the Disease Is in the Walls of the House with Greenish or Reddish Depressions and Appears to Be beneath the Surface of the Wall, the Priest Shall Shut Up the House for Seven Days

"He shall examine the disease, and if the disease is in the walls of the house with greenish or reddish depressions, and it appears to be beneath the surface of the wall, then the priest shall come out of the house, to the entrance of the house, and shut up the house for seven days" (vv. 37-38). This signifies that the problem of the church is not only on the surface, but it is deeper, beneath the surface. The communication and fellowship of the church should be kept under observation for a complete course of time. When there is such a sickness in the church life, the elders, the responsible ones, should do their best to watch over the communication between the saints and the fellowship among them for a complete course of time. The more of this kind of observation there is, the better.

F. After the Examination of Seven Days, if the Disease Has Spread in the Walls of the House, the Stones in Which the Disease Is Shall Be Removed and Thrown into an Unclean Place outside the City

"And the priest shall return on the seventh day and examine it; and if the disease has spread in the walls of the house, the priest shall order that they remove the stones in which the disease is, and throw them into an unclean place outside the city" (vv. 39-40). This signifies that after the observation of a complete period of time, if the problem of the church is still

spreading, the believer or believers involved in the problem should be removed from the fellowship of the church and be considered unclean, like the outsiders (cf. 1 Cor. 5). This means that when the church is sick of a certain disease, the elders should first observe the situation. If the problem is becoming worse, the source of the problem—the believer or believers who have become involved in the disease—should be removed from the fellowship, the communication, of the church in order to stop the spread of the disease and to eliminate the disease. Actually, the problem may need to be dealt with from many directions. How we handle the situation depends on our observation and on the wisdom we receive from God.

G. Scraping the House All Around Inside and Pouring Out the Mortar Which Was Scraped Off into an Unclean Place outside the City

"And he shall have the house scraped all around inside, and they shall pour out the mortar which they scraped off into an unclean place outside the city" (v. 41). This signifies that because of a few believers, the whole church should be dealt with, and whatever is dealt with should be put out of the church as unclean.

H. Taking Other Stones and Putting Them in the Place of the Removed Stones

"Then they shall take other stones and put them in the place of those stones" (v. 42a). Putting other stones in the place of the removed stones signifies the using of other believers to fill up the gap. When the church becomes sick with leprosy, it often becomes necessary to remove from the fellowship of the church the saints who are involved in the problem. This will create a gap, and we should seek to fill this gap with other believers.

I. Taking Other Mortar and Plastering the House

"And he shall take other mortar and plaster the house" (v. 42b). This is important, for it signifies the renewing of

the church with new experiences of the Lord's gracious works.

In dealing with the leprosy in a house, it is not adequate to remove certain believers and then fill the gap with other believers. We need to have a new start in the church life, that is, to renew the church with new experiences of the Lord's gracious works. This is typified by taking other mortar and plastering the house. This is not a matter of simply dealing with a problem but of bringing in the riches of Christ in a new way. If we are unable to do this but simply do something in a legal way to remove certain persons and replace them with others, this will make the church empty, and in this emptiness the church will suffer even more. Therefore, the leading ones need to pray, perhaps with fasting, that the church will receive something new in the experiences of Christ's gracious works. Then the church life will be renewed, replastered with new mortar, and all the members will be happy about the renewed church life.

J. If the Disease Breaks Out Again in the House after the Removal of the Stones, the Scraping of the House, and the New Plastering, It Is a Malignant Leprosy in the House and It Is Unclean; the House Should Be Broken Down

"If the disease breaks out again in the house after he has removed the stones and scraped the house, and after it has been plastered, then the priest shall come and examine it, and if the disease has spread in the house, it is a malignant leprosy in the house; it is unclean. He shall break down the house, its stones, its timber, and all the mortar of the house; and he shall carry them outside the city into an unclean place" (vv. 43-45). This signifies that after the dealing, if additional serious sins break out, the whole church should be torn down. This is most pitiful. If the situation of a church reaches the point where it cannot be cured, healed, then it will be necessary for that church to be terminated.

K. During the Shutting Up of the House, He Who Goes into the House Shall Be Unclean until the Evening

"Moreover, he who goes into the house all the days that it is shut up shall be unclean until the evening" (v. 46). This signifies that with him who touches the defiled things, the old day should be ended and there should be a new beginning.

Whenever there is a problem in the church life, the leading ones should endeavor to have something new in the experience of Christ that the church may have a new start. Such a new start is able to rescue the diseased church from its problems. However, if we pay attention fully to the problems, there will either be more problems or the problems will be intensified. Thus, there is the need of much seeking, through prayer and fasting, of new experiences of the Lord, experiences that will be a rescue of the diseased church life. This means that we should try our best to end the old day of the diseased church life and to help the church to have a new beginning.

L. He Who Lies Down in the Diseased House and He Who Eats in It Shall Wash Their Clothes

"And he who lies down in the house shall wash his clothes; and he who eats in the house shall wash his clothes" (v. 47). This signifies that those who do not have a positive service in the church in which there is a problem and those who only enjoy the supply in that church should also be dealt with in their living and behavior.

Leviticus 14:47 speaks of those who lie down and eat in a diseased house. Lying down in a diseased house signifies that one is not positively involved in the church service. If we are involved seriously in the church life, we shall not have time to lie down. Lying down is an indication that one is indifferent to the church life or that one is not positively in the church service. Eating in a diseased house signifies that one cares only for the supply and enjoyment in the church life. Such a person likes to have a good time in the church. He comes to the

meetings not to serve but to eat, to enjoy. He has no intention of doing anything in the church service.

Here in verse 47 we can see two of the categories of saints in the church life: those who come to the church to lie down, to rest, and those who come to the church to eat, to receive the supply and to have enjoyment. Although these saints are not positively engaged in the church service, having no heart for this, they are good at criticizing others. They do not speak in the meetings, but they criticize those who do. As they rest in the church and enjoy the supply, they find fault with others. These saints need to wash their clothes. This means that by washing they need to cleanse their conduct and behavior.

We need to ask the Lord to be merciful to us that none of us will be those lying down or caring only for our eating. We all should be those who serve in the church.

M. If the Disease Has Not Spread in the House after the New Plastering, the House Is Clean, and the Disease Has Been Healed

"But if the priest comes in and examines it, and the disease has not spread in the house after the house was plastered, then the priest shall pronounce the house clean, for the disease has been healed" (v. 48). This signifies that if no sin is spreading after the renewing of the church with the new experiences of the Lord's gracious works, the church is clean and has no problem. I have seen this a number of times in the past. In each case there was a healing, a rescue, mainly by the new experiences of Christ.

II. THE CLEANSING OF THE LEPROSY IN A HOUSE

In 14:49-53 we have the cleansing of the leprosy in a house, that is, the cleansing in a church.

A. In the Same Way as the Cleansing of Leprosy in a Man

Leviticus 14:49-51 reveals the leprosy in a house is cleansed in the same way as the cleansing of leprosy in a

man. This signifies that the whole church experiences once again the suffering, death, resurrection, ascension, and entering into glory with Christ. In order for a church to be cleansed, the church needs to experience again the processes through which the Lord Jesus has passed.

B. The Purging of the House with the Blood of the Bird and the Living Water

"Thus he shall purge the house with the blood of the bird and the fresh water, and with the live bird, the cedar wood, the hyssop, and the scarlet" (v. 52). This signifies that the whole church needs to be cleansed with the eternally efficacious blood of Christ and His eternal and living Spirit. Hence, we always depend on the blood and the Spirit, both of which are seen in the type. In the type we have the blood of the slain bird, the water, and the oil. The blood of the bird signifies the blood of Christ, the water signifies the cleansing Spirit, and the oil signifies the anointing Spirit. When a church becomes sick, it needs these two elements—the blood of Christ and the Spirit—to recover it.

C. Letting the Live Bird Go Free over the Open Field

"Then he shall let the live bird go free outside the city over the open field" (v. 53a). This signifies that the church enters with Christ into the realm and experience of His resurrection and ascension. When a diseased church is healed, surely this church will not remain on an earthly level but will rise up to the heavens and soar in the heavens. Nothing will be able to hinder, restrict, restrain, or bind such a church. As long as a church is on the earthly level, it will be bound by the earthly ties. But when the church enjoys Christ's resurrection and ascension, the church is above the earth, enjoying freedom in the heavens.

D. The House Being Clean

Leviticus 14:53b says, "Thus he shall make propitiation for the house, and it shall be clean." The house being clean

signifies that the church is fully clean to be the mutual dwelling of God and man.

Often there are problems in the church. It seems that in the church life problems are unavoidable. With a new church there are few problems, if any, but with an older church there are more problems. Just as it is easy for an older person to become ill, so it is easy for an older church to have problems.

Perhaps when you came into the church life, you enjoyed a church honeymoon. However, a church life honeymoon, like a honeymoon in married life, does not last very long. During our church life honeymoon, we may think that the church is marvelous, that it is a real paradise. However, when the honeymoon is over, our eyes will be opened to see all the problems, defects, and shortcomings in the church. Just as the eyes of Adam and Eve were opened after they ate of the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and they knew that they were naked, so our eyes will be opened to see things that are not positive or pleasant. If we dwell on these things, we shall want a separation from the church life and eventually a divorce.

We need to realize that the church is the best place on earth. What, then, shall we do about the problems in the church? We should pray to be renewed in the experiences of Christ. We should not pray too much for others or about the situation. Instead, we should pray for ourselves that we might be able to bring something new of Christ into the church life. This is the way for a diseased church to be healed. Sometimes a church will be healed through the new experiences of the new ones.

The more we experience Christ in a new way, the more the church will be healed. A diseased church cannot be healed by discussion, argument, and debate. The more we engage in these things, the more trouble there will be. We need to pray for ourselves and for the church that through the new experiences of Christ we as members and the church as a whole may have a new start and enter into a new age. This is the only way for a diseased church to be healed.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE FORTY-FIVE

THE CLEANSING OF THE DISCHARGES FROM MAN'S AND WOMAN'S BODY

Scripture Reading: Lev. 15:1-31

In Leviticus 11 through 15, a section of five chapters, four troubling things are covered: our contact with people, the uncleanness of our birth, leprosy, and our discharges. In this message on 15:1-31 we shall cover the matter of the cleansing of the discharges from man's and woman's body.

We have pointed out that chapters eleven through twenty-seven of Leviticus intend to give us the way to live a holy life as God's holy people. If we would live such a life, we need to realize that we are involved with four things. First, we are involved with the common matter of the contact with people. Second, we must recognize the uncleanness of our birth. The source, the origin, of our being is unclean. Third, we have the problem of our leprosy. Our condition is one of being filled with leprosy. Fourth, we have the problem of discharges. No matter what kind of person we may be, we all have discharges, and, as chapter fifteen shows us, these discharges are altogether unclean. Furthermore, the uncleanness of our discharges is contagious.

Leviticus indicates strongly that whatever comes out of our being is unclean. For this reason, chapter fifteen tells us to stay away from any discharge that issues from the human body and from the contagion of uncleanness.

Because we were born uncleanness and are a totality of uncleanness, whatever comes out of us is unclean. Also, the uncleanness of what issues from us is contagious and therefore causes others to be unclean. This is the crucial point in chapter fifteen.

Chapter sixteen of Leviticus is actually a continuation of chapter ten. The intention of God's revelation in the five chapters that come between chapters ten and sixteen is to show us four basic troubling factors. The first of these factors is our contact with people. We should not consider this an insignificant thing. On the contrary, our contact with people is of great importance. Contacting the wrong kinds of persons can cause us to be defiled and thus discredit us in the matter of a holy living as God's holy people. The second troubling factor is the uncleanness of our birth. We need to realize that our source, our origin, is uncleanness. We are uncleanness itself. Our birth, source, and constitution are all uncleanness. The third factor is our leprous condition. Inwardly and outwardly we are leprous. The fourth factor is our discharge with its uncleanness and contagion. All the discharges, all the things that issue from our body, are unclean and contagious.

According to the Bible, our body is our embodiment. Our body is our being, our constitution. Whatever comes out of our body, out of our constitution, as a discharge is unclean and contagious.

In 15:1-13 we see that the one who has a discharge is unclean and anything or anyone he touches becomes unclean. As we consider these verses, we realize that there is uncleanness everywhere. Everything has been dirtied by human discharges, by that which comes out of our being. The more we realize this, the more we shall treasure those verses in chapter fifteen which indicate that Christ is the factor of our cleansing.

We need to be deeply impressed with the fact that whatever issues from us is unclean and should be condemned and eliminated. After reading 15:1-13, we may wonder where we can stay without being defiled by the uncleanness of human discharges. Everywhere there is the uncleanness that issues from us human beings. If we realize this, we shall not want to remain on earth but desire to be raptured.

After studying the four troubling factors in chapters eleven through fifteen, I have come to realize fully that we

are unclean, corrupt, and contagious. The things that come out of us are uncleanness, and this uncleanness is contagious.

These five chapters on the four negative things show us that we all are a heap of corruption. The entire world, all of humanity, is a heap of corruption. Apart from Christ, there is no place for us to be. We must be in Christ. Only the Lord Jesus can cleanse us. He alone is the cleansing factor.

The title of this message is "The Cleansing of the Discharges from Man's and Woman's Body." Here "body" means our being, our constitution. Thus, the discharges from our body are the discharges from our being or from our constitution.

I. THE DISCHARGE FROM MAN'S BODY

A. A Man Being Unclean Because of His Discharge

"Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, When any man has a discharge from his body, because of his discharge he is unclean" (v. 2). This signifies that whatever issues from man's body, whether or not it is according to the law of the physical body, is unclean. Any kind of discharge is unclean.

B. Whether His Discharge Runs or Has Stopped, It Is His Uncleanness

"This shall be his uncleanness in his discharge: whether his body runs with its discharge, or has stopped from its discharge, it is his uncleanness" (v. 3). This signifies that whatever issues from man's natural life, whether good or bad, is filthy.

C. Everything and Anyone Touched by or Touching Man's Discharge Being Unclean

Verses 4 through 11 tell us that everything and anyone touching man's discharge is unclean. This signifies that anything touched by or touching the issue of man's natural life is unclean.

D. The Uncleanness Being until the Evening

The uncleanness was until the evening (vv. 5c, 6c, 7c, 8c, 10c, 11c). This signifies that the uncleanness of the issue of man's natural life should be ended (death) that there might be a new beginning (resurrection). The phrase "until the evening" signifies coming to an end through death. Then there will be a new day, a new beginning, which is resurrection.

If we would be clean, having a clean place in which to stay, we must come to an end. We must die by taking the cross of Christ. In this way we come to the evening of our old course, the evening of the old creation. Then through the cross and after the cross, we shall be in a new day. We shall be in resurrection.

E. Washing the Clothes and Bathing in Water

In Leviticus 15 washing the clothes and bathing in water are spoken of a number of times (vv. 5b, 6b, 7b, 8b, 10b, 11b). This signifies not only dealing with our outward living and behavior and all the media through which man's natural life is contacted, but also dealing with ourselves by washing in the water of life in the word of God, purging away anything that is affected by our natural life.

We need the cross of Christ to end our old life, and we need the resurrection of Christ to have a new beginning. In addition, we need the water of life, which is the washing, cleansing, Spirit. We also need the word because the cleansing Spirit of life is embodied in the word. Whenever we come in our spirit to the word we touch something within the word that washes us. After we touch this washing element in the word, we shall continue to be cleansed in our being by it throughout the day. Therefore, we need the cross of Christ, the resurrection of Christ, and the Holy Spirit as the water of life in the word of God. Now we should come to the word with our spirit. As a result, we shall purge away anything that has been affected by our natural life.

F. Rinsing the Hands in Water

Verse 11a refers to rinsing the hands in water. This signifies purging away our filthiness with the word of God and with the life and Spirit in the word of God.

Again we would emphasize our need of the cross of Christ, the resurrection of Christ, the Spirit, the divine life, and the holy Word. These things are the place where we should be. We should be in the death of Christ and in His resurrection. We should also be in the Spirit, in the divine life, and in the holy Word. We thank the Lord that there is a place for us! Naturally speaking, there is no clean place on earth. But, spiritually speaking, there is a wonderful place for us to stay. This place is the death of Christ, the resurrection of Christ, the Spirit of life, the divine life, and the holy Word.

G. The Earthenware Vessel Touched by the Discharging One Being Broken and Every Wooden Vessel Being Rinsed in Water

"The earthenware vessel which he who has the discharge touches shall be broken; and every wooden vessel shall be rinsed in water" (v. 12). This signifies that the created and fallen man (earthenware vessel) should be broken, whereas the God-created humanity (wooden vessel) should be kept but needs to be rinsed with the word of God and with the life and Spirit in the word of God.

After the fall, we human beings became quite complicated. On the one hand, we are God's created people; on the other hand, we have become a fallen, corrupted people. As fallen, corrupted people, we need to be broken. This is signified by the breaking of the earthenware vessel. As God's created people, however, we do not need to be broken, yet we do need to be rinsed with the Spirit, the divine life, and the holy Word. This is signified by the rinsing of the wooden vessel in water. Day by day we should live under the rinsing of the Spirit, the divine life, and the holy Word.

H. The Cleansing of Man's Discharge

1. Counting Seven Days for Cleansing, Then Washing the Clothes and Bathing the Body in Fresh Water

"When he who has the discharge is cleansed from his discharge, he shall count seven days for his cleansing; then he shall wash his clothes, and bathe his body in fresh water, and he shall be clean" (v. 13). This signifies that the dealing with our natural life should be to the extent that our natural life is fully terminated, and that we should be cleansed with the word of God in His Spirit.

2. On the Eighth Day Taking Two Turtledoves or Two Young Pigeons and Coming before Jehovah, and Giving Them to the Priest That He May Offer Them, One for a Sin Offering and the Other for a Burnt Offering

"Then on the eighth day he shall take two turtledoves or two young pigeons and come before Jehovah, to the entrance of the tent of meeting, and give them to the priest; and the priest shall offer them, one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering. Thus the priest shall make propitiation for him before Jehovah because of his discharge" (vv. 14-15). This signifies that man living by his natural life needs not only the redemption of Christ to deal with his sinful nature, but also the life of Christ that he may live for God.

Here Christ is typified by the two turtledoves or two young pigeons. One of these birds is a sin offering, and the other, a burnt offering. The function of Christ as the sin offering is to deal with our sinful nature. The function of Christ as the burnt offering is to be our life that we may live a life that is absolute for God. We need Christ in these two ways, in these two aspects. Only Christ can meet our need. When we have Christ as our sin offering and as our burnt offering, the problem of our discharges is solved.

II. ALL OTHER DISCHARGES OF MAN AND WOMAN TO BE DEALT WITH IN THE SAME WAY

In 15:2-15 we see how certain discharges are to be dealt with. Verses 16 through 30 show us that all other discharges of man and woman are to be dealt with in the same way.

III. SEPARATING THE SONS OF ISRAEL FROM THEIR UNCLEANNESS THAT THEY MAY NOT DIE BY DEFILING GOD'S TABERNACLE

"Thus you shall separate the sons of Israel from their uncleanness, that they may not die in their uncleanness by defiling My tabernacle which is in their midst" (v. 31). This signifies that once a man, having been defiled by any issue of his natural life and having not yet been separated from his uncleanness, touches the church, he will suffer death (mainly spiritual death).

Verse 31 indicates that human discharges are related to God's dwelling place. If we still have discharges, we shall defile God's dwelling place. In typology this means that if we still have the defilement that comes from the issue of the natural life, we shall defile the church life. For the church life, we need to be fully dealt with in our natural life by the cross of Christ, by the resurrection of Christ, by the Spirit with the divine life, and by contacting the holy Word with our spirit. Then we shall be kept from the filthiness of the human, natural discharges.

Although man's discharge is not as serious as leprosy, its effects are more serious than those of leprosy. From experience we know that even if we seem to be perfect and complete, doing nothing wrong, we still have discharges, the issue of the natural life, in our family life or church life. We need to realize that anything that issues from our natural being is uncleanness, and this uncleanness is contagious, causing everyone, everything, and every place to be defiled. For this reason, the effects of our discharges are even more serious than those of leprosy.

It may be rather easy to stay away from leprosy, but it is not easy to stay away from the effects of human discharges.

There is no need for us to do anything outwardly in order to be defiled. As long as we are alive, we shall have unclean discharges. We shall be made unclean by that which issues from our being.

This matter of our discharges should cause us to be discredited in our own eyes. However, everyone gives himself high credit. We may regard only ourselves as right and everyone else as wrong. We may think that we are excellent and hold on to our prestige. Nevertheless, there is something about us that is not worthy of credit, and this thing is our natural discharge. Seemingly we have no problems, but we are still defiled by the unclean discharges of our natural life.

Because of our discharge, we need Christ. We need His death, His resurrection, His Spirit, His life, and His word. All day long we need to stay in the death, resurrection, Spirit, life, and word of Christ. In our Christian life we need to learn not to move out of these five things. If we stay in Christ's death, resurrection, Spirit, life, and word, we shall have a proper Christian life and church life. Then day by day we shall live a revived life and an overcoming life in the death, resurrection, Spirit, life, and word of Christ.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE FORTY-SIX

THE PROPITIATION

(1)

Scripture Reading: Lev. 16:1-16; Heb. 10:1-4

In this message we come to the matter of propitiation. Propitiation is a very difficult term in theology. The definition given in most dictionaries is not according to the meaning of the Hebrew word. The Hebrew word translated "propitiation" in Leviticus 16 means to cover; it has the same root as the word for the cover of the ark. In the ark, the place where God was to meet with His people and where the people were to meet with God, were the two tablets of the Ten Commandments. This means that the tablets of the Ten Commandments were in front of God and in front of the one coming to meet with God. The Ten Commandments pointed out all the sins committed by the one who was approaching God.

Between God and the one approaching Him there is a problem. The problem is not with God, for He loves His people and wants to meet with them. The problem is that His people have committed sins, doing many things contrary to His commandments.

The Ten Commandments are a portrait of what God is. God is love and light, and He is holy and righteous. These four words—love, light, holy, and righteous—describe what kind of God God is. God is full of love and light, and He is righteous and holy. The Ten Commandments were given by Him to show us that He is such a God.

The tablets of the Ten Commandments stood before the one who approached God and exposed him as being a sinner.

Therefore, between God and the one approaching Him there was the problem of sin and sins. How could a sinful person approach and converse with the One who is love and light and who is righteous and holy? This problem had to be solved. Otherwise, there would be an obstacle, a hindrance, between God and the one approaching Him.

We have seen that we were born unclean and are surrounded by people who are unclean. Thus there is a problem not only with our birth but also with our contact with others. Through this contact it is very easy for us to be contaminated. Furthermore, in our condition we are altogether leprous; we are a totality of leprosy. In addition, whatever comes out of us as a discharge is unclean, contagious, and contaminating. How can such a person approach God, who is clean, holy, and righteous, and converse with Him? It is impossible. God loves man, but man is in a pitiful situation. This situation reveals what we need. We need propitiation.

I have pointed out that the Hebrew word for propitiation means to cover and that the word for the cover of the ark comes from the same root. There was the need for the tablets of the Ten Commandments in the ark to be covered. Only if the Ten Commandments were covered could the situation between us and God be appeased.

Propitiation appeases our situation. In propitiation it is not mainly God but our situation with God that is appeased. The problem is with us, not with God. God is not angry with us. God loves us, but there is nevertheless a problem between us and God. For this reason, our situation needs to be appeased by the cover that is placed over the condemning, judging commandments.

We do not need to beg God to forgive us. He is ready to forgive us, once He has the standing to do so. Because God is righteous, His forgiveness requires that He have the standing to forgive us. Suppose we were to say, "God, I know that You love me. I beg You to forgive me." If we said this, God would reply, "Yes, I do love you. There is no need for you to beg Me to forgive you. But what about the Ten Commandments? I shall put a cover over them for you. Then your

situation will be appeased." How wonderful that through propitiation our situation with God has been appeased!

In preaching the gospel, some have said that God is angry with us, but that Jesus, our Friend, asks God to do Him a favor and forgive us. According to this kind of gospel preaching, God grants the Lord's request and forgives us. This way of preaching the gospel is absolutely wrong because it describes God altogether in a wrong way.

John 3:16 says, "God so loved the world." The "world" here means fallen mankind. Although mankind is fallen, God still loves mankind. We should not have the thought that He is angry with us. Instead of being angry with us, He loves us. He has loved us to such an extent that in eternity past He prepared a way first to cover our sins and then to remove them. In the Old Testament God's economy was to cover man's sins; in the New Testament God's economy is to take away man's sins.

Even though in the Old Testament time man's sins were not taken away, God still provided something to cover the Ten Commandments so that the situation of fallen man might be appeased. On the cover of the ark were the two cherubim watching over the Ten Commandments. In typology the cherubim signify God's glory. Thus for the cherubim to watch over the Ten Commandments was for God's glory to watch over the Ten Commandments. The glory of God was watching over the Ten Commandments, waiting to see what the holy and righteous God would do with the approaching sinner. A cover was inserted to cover the Ten Commandments so that the glory of God could not see the Ten Commandments but could see only the cover. This is the way it is with God: He sees only the cover; He does not see the Ten Commandments. In Leviticus 16:2, 13-15 this cover is called the propitiatory cover. Hence, in the Old Testament propitiation was, according to the Hebrew, a matter of covering.

In the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the word propitiation is used to denote the cover of the ark. The Greek word for propitiation means to appease a

situation between two parties. Between these parties there is a problem that makes them unable to converse. Then something takes place to appease the situation. In the Old Testament it is the cover of the ark that appeases the situation involving God and fallen man. Because the Ten Commandments were covered and the situation was appeased, the one approaching God could be at peace, and there was nothing to hinder God and the one approaching Him from conversing with each other. Therefore, the Old Testament reveals that the cover of the ark, in which were the Ten Commandments and which was in the holy of holies, was the place where God met with His people.

The King James Version uses the expression "mercy seat" to translate the Hebrew word for propitiatory cover (Lev. 16:2) and "atonement" to translate the word for propitiate. Many theologians use the words atonement (an Old Testament matter) and redemption (a New Testament matter) interchangeably. Also, certain hymns use the word atonement where the word redemption is called for. What we have in the New Testament is not atonement but redemption.

Atonement means at-one-ment. To make atonement is to cause two parties to be one; it is to bring these parties into an at-one-ment, to make these parties one. In the Old Testament this atonement, this at-one-ment, equals propitiation. In our version of Leviticus we use the word propitiation instead of atonement.

There is a difference between propitiation in the Old Testament and redemption in the New Testament. In the Old Testament sins were covered, but they were not taken away. This covering of sin and sins in the Old Testament was a matter of propitiation. In the New Testament sins are taken away. "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). Here "sin" is a totality of sin and sins. The crucial point is that sins are not covered but are taken away. This is a matter of redemption.

According to Hebrews 10:1-4, propitiation in the Old Testament could not take away sins. If this propitiation had

been able to take away sins, there would have been no need for the people to offer the sin offering continually year after year. The repetition of the offering was an indication that the taking away of sins for the accomplishment of redemption was yet to take place. It was necessary for the Lord Jesus to come to die on the cross for our redemption.

Hebrews 10:5-9 is a quotation of Psalm 40:6-8, which is a prophecy concerning Christ. Hebrews 10:5 says, "Wherefore, coming into the world, He says, Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me." A body was prepared for Christ that He might be the real offering not to cover sin and sins but to take away the totality of sin. This the Lord Jesus did when He died on the cross. On the cross He took away sin to accomplish full redemption. Now what we have in the New Testament is not merely the covering of sins to appease the situation but a full, completed redemption that solves the entire problem of sin.

The first ten chapters of Leviticus cover the offerings and the priesthood. Chapters eleven through fifteen are very negative and show us what we are, where we are, what our condition is, and what issues out from us. Through these chapters we are fully exposed. These chapters are not merely a mirror but an x-ray that thoroughly exposes us. Now we know what we are, where we are, and in what kind of condition we are. We also know that what issues from our natural being is unclean. With Paul we can say, "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, nothing good dwells" (Rom. 7:18a). We are a totality of uncleanness, a totality of leprosy. Since we are such, we need a sin offering to solve the root problem of sin. Furthermore, as sinners we are not for God but altogether for ourselves. Therefore, we also need a burnt offering.

Our real situation is that we are sinful and that we are not for God. No matter what kind of person we may be, we are sinners, and we are not for God. Thus we need a sin offering and a burnt offering. We need a sin offering to solve the root problem of our sin. We need a burnt offering so that we can be for God.

Christ is both the sin offering and the burnt offering. According to Hebrews 10, Christ came to do two things: to take away our sins (vv. 10-12) and to do the will of God (vv. 7, 9). Christ came to take away our sin, to solve our root problem of sin. He also came to do the will of God, for He is fully and absolutely for God. Christ, therefore, is the sin offering and the burnt offering.

The Old Testament was a time not of taking away of sins but of covering sins. What we have in Leviticus 16 is the covering of sins. Concerning the propitiation in this chapter, two offerings are needed for the covering of sins—the sin offering and the burnt offering. To cover our sins and to thereby appease our situation with God, we need these two offerings.

Let us now go on to consider the many details in Leviticus 16 concerning the propitiation.

I. AARON BEING FORBIDDEN TO ENTER AT ALL TIMES INTO THE HOLY OF HOLIES WITHIN THE VEIL, IN FRONT OF THE PROPITIATORY COVER ON THE ARK, LEST HE DIE

"And Jehovah said to Moses, Tell your brother Aaron that he should not enter at all times into the holy of holies within the veil, in front of the propitiatory cover which is on the ark, lest he die; for I will appear in the cloud above the propitiatory cover" (v. 2). This signifies that man, being sinful because of the fall, is unable to enter into God's presence by himself.

In the tabernacle there were the holy place and the holy of holies. The showbread table, the lampstand, and the incense altar were in the holy place, and the ark containing the two tablets of the Ten Commandments was in the holy of holies. A veil separated the holy place from the holy of holies. The high priest could come into the holy place at any time. However, because the shekinah glory, the glory of God, was in the holy of holies and because God's presence was on the cover of the ark (the propitiatory cover), the high priest could not enter that place at all times, lest he die,

even as Aaron's sons died (10:1-2). This indicates that in himself fallen man is forbidden to enter God's presence, which was concealed by the veil.

II. FOR AARON TO ENTER INTO THE HOLY OF HOLIES, HE SHOULD BRING A YOUNG BULL FOR A SIN OFFERING AND A RAM FOR A BURNT OFFERING

"Aaron shall enter into the holy of holies in this way: with a young bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering" (16:3). This signifies that man's coming near to God must be through Christ as his sin offering and his burnt offering.

In chapters eleven through fifteen, we are shown a picture of fallen man. This picture reveals that man is a totality of uncleanness, a totality of rebellion, a totality of leprosy. As such, man cannot enter into God's presence without Christ as his sin offering and burnt offering.

III. AARON PUTTING ON A HOLY LINEN TUNIC, WEARING LINEN BREECHES OVER HIS FLESH, GIRDING HIMSELF WITH A LINEN SASH, AND BEING ATTIRED WITH A LINEN TURBAN IN ORDER TO ENTER INTO THE HOLY OF HOLIES

"He shall put on a holy linen tunic, and linen breeches shall be over his flesh, and he shall gird himself with a linen sash, and be attired with a linen turban; these are holy garments" (v. 4a). This signifies that the one who comes near to God should take Christ as his righteousness and holiness in order that he may cover his entire being and express Christ.

All the linen garments worn by Aaron are types of God's righteousness and holiness. Both God's righteousness and His holiness are Christ. Aaron's wearing these linen garments typifies our wearing Christ today. Whenever we come into the presence of God, we must wear Christ as our tunic, breeches, sash, and turban. Christ as God's righteousness and holiness must be our entire covering. With Christ covering our whole being, we shall express Christ. Therefore, we need Christ not only as our sin offering and as our burnt offering but also as our covering.

IV. AARON BATHING HIS FLESH IN WATER AND PUTTING THE HOLY GARMENTS ON

Verse 4b tells us that Aaron was to bathe his flesh in water and put the holy garments on. This signifies that one should deal with himself first, and then put on Christ as his covering, righteousness, and holiness. First we should deal with ourselves. This is signified by the bathing in water. Then we should put on the different aspects of Christ as our covering. This is signified by the putting on of the holy garments.

V. AARON TAKING FROM THE CONGREGATION OF THE SONS OF ISRAEL TWO BUCKS OF THE GOATS FOR A SIN OFFERING AND ONE RAM FOR A BURNT OFFERING

"And he shall take from the congregation of the sons of Israel two bucks of the goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering" (v. 5). This signifies that anyone who desires to enter into God's presence and serve Him must himself experience Christ as the sin offering and burnt offering for those whom he is serving.

The sin offering is negative, and the burnt offering is positive. For the negative offering goats were used (cf. Matt. 25:32-33, 41), and for the positive offering a ram was used. As serving saints, we need to experience Christ as the sin offering and as the burnt offering not only for ourselves but also for those whom we serve. First we experience Christ as the sin offering and the burnt offering, and then we minister what we have experienced to others so that they may have the same experience.

VI. AARON OFFERING THE BULL AS A SIN OFFERING FOR HIMSELF AND FOR HIS HOUSEHOLD

In verses 6 and 11 we are told that Aaron was to offer the bull of the sin offering, which was for himself, to make propitiation for himself and his household. This indicates that Aaron, as a type of Christ, did not need propitiation, but as a type of us, he needed propitiation for the fulfillment of the priesthood.

VII. AARON TAKING THE TWO GOATS FROM THE CONGREGATION, SETTING THEM BEFORE JEHOVAH,CASTING LOTS FOR THEM, ONE FOR JEHOVAH AND THE OTHER FOR AZAZEL, AND OFFERING THE GOAT FOR JEHOVAH AS A SIN OFFERING, BUT PRESENTING THE GOAT FOR AZAZEL ALIVE BEFORE JEHOVAH AND SENDING IT AWAY INTO THE WILDERNESS TO AZAZEL

"Then he shall take the two goats and set them before Jehovah at the entrance of the tent of meeting. And Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats, one lot for Jehovah and the other lot for Azazel. Aaron shall bring the goat on which the lot for Jehovah fell, and offer it as a sin offering. But the goat on which the lot for Azazel fell shall be presented alive before Jehovah to make propitiation with it, to send it away into the wilderness to Azazel" (vv. 7-10). Verses 20b-22 go on to say, "Then he shall bring the live goat. And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over it all the iniquities of the sons of Israel and all their transgressions, even all their sins; and he shall put them on the head of the goat and send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who is standing ready. Thus the goat shall bear away on itself all their iniquities to a solitary land; and he shall let the goat go in the wilderness." All this signifies that Christ as the sin offering for God's people, on the one hand, deals with our sin before God and, on the other hand, sends sin, through the efficacy of the cross, back to Satan, from whom sin came into man.

If we study this chapter thoroughly, we shall realize that Azazel signifies Satan, the sinful one, the one who is the source, the origin, of sin. The goat that was for Jehovah was to be killed, but the goat that was for Satan, the Devil, was to be sent away. This is good news, the complete and perfect gospel, for it signifies that sin has been sent back to Satan, its source. Sin came from Satan and entered into man, and there is no way for fallen man to get rid of it. But Christ died on the cross for our sins and as our sin offering. According to Hebrews 2:14, through His death on the cross, Christ destroyed "him who has the might of death, that is, the

Devil." Through His death Christ has destroyed Satan, the source of sin. Therefore, the cross gives Christ the position, the strength, the power, and the authority to take sin away and send it back to Satan. Sin came from Satan, and it should be sent back to him. Satan will take sin with him to the lake of fire. All those who are not saved will help Satan to bear sin in the lake of fire for eternity.

We praise the Lord that we have been saved and that our sin has been taken away. We all should rejoice in the word spoken by John the Baptist: "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). Before Christ came, sin was covered, but it was not taken away. Although sin remained, it was covered in the sight of God, and the problem between man and God was appeased. As a result, the Old Testament saints could have peace with God. But because Christ has come to die on the cross for our sin, our sins, as well as the sins of the Old Testament saints, they have been taken away and sent back to Satan. Such is the efficacy of the cross of Christ. Through His cross the Lord Jesus has the position and qualification with the power, strength, and authority to take sin away from the redeemed one and send it back to its source, Satan.

VIII. AARON TAKING A CENSER FULL OF COALS OF FIRE FROM OFF THE ALTAR AND BOTH HIS HANDS FULL OF FINELY GROUND INCENSE OF SPICES, BRINGING THEM INSIDE THE VEIL, AND PUTTING THE INCENSE ON THE FIRE THAT THE CLOUD OF INCENSE MAY COVER THE PROPITIATORY COVER UPON THE ARK, SO THAT HE WOULD NOT DIE

"And he shall take a censer full of coals of fire from off the altar before Jehovah, and both his hands full of finely ground incense of spices, and bring them inside the veil. He shall put the incense on the fire before Jehovah, that the cloud of incense may cover the propitiatory cover which is upon the testimony, so that he will not die" (vv. 12-13). This signifies that in His resurrection the Lord Jesus became a

sweet fragrance to be the means and the protection for us to draw near to God with all boldness and be accepted by God without suffering death. This is one of the results produced through the redemptive, blood-shedding death (signified by the coals of fire from off the altar and the finely ground incense of spices) of the Lord Jesus on the cross.

On the one hand, in God's redemption Christ is the offerings that we may be redeemed from sin and that our sins may be taken away from us. He is the sin offering and the burnt offering. On the other hand, Christ is the sweet-smelling incense for our acceptance. The sweet savor, the fragrance, of the incense comes from the burning. Without being burned, the incense would not have a sweet savor. The fire with which the incense was burnt came from the altar in front of the tabernacle. For our redemption Christ is the offerings on the altar in the outer court. For our acceptance Christ is the incense burnt on the incense altar, the golden altar, in the holy place with the fire from the altar in the outer court. This means that His being burned as the incense to be our acceptance before God depends on His death on the cross for our sins.

As sinners, we were sinful in the sight of God. Furthermore, we were not at all acceptable to Him. No fragrance came out of us, only unclean discharges. Therefore, on the negative side, Christ first became the offerings to take away our sin. Then on the positive side, with His death on the cross as the basis, He became the incense for our acceptance.

In Leviticus 16 we have two particular pictures of Christ. One picture shows us Christ as our offerings to take away our sin and to send it back to Satan. This solves the problem of our sin. However, we still are not fragrant to God. Thus in the second picture we see that Christ, based upon His death, is burnt as a fragrance to God for our acceptance.

Now we can understand why we must come to God in Christ. "In Christ" does not only mean without sin; it also means with fragrance. This fragrance satisfies God. When He smells it, He is happy and satisfied. In His resurrection Christ is such a satisfying fragrance to God.

IX. AARON TAKING SOME OF THE BLOOD OF THE BULL, SPRINKLING IT WITH HIS FINGER ON THE FRONT OF THE PROPITIATORY COVER, AND SPRINKLING THE BLOOD BEFORE THE PROPITIATORY COVER SEVEN TIMES

"He shall take some of the blood of the bull and sprinkle it with his finger upon the front of the propitiatory cover; and he shall sprinkle some of the blood with his finger before the propitiatory cover seven times" (v. 14). This signifies that the redeeming blood of Christ was brought into the presence of God to meet God's righteous requirement for our propitiation.

The Lord Jesus shed His blood on the cross. Then this blood was brought into the holy of holies in the heavens and sprinkled upon the propitiatory cover there and also before God. In this way Christ made complete redemption for us. In the words of Hebrews 9:12, He "found an eternal redemption." "Eternal" here means perfectly complete not only in quantity but also in time. This redemption is also complete in its efficacy. It is eternal in time, in quantity, and in efficacy.

X. AARON SLAUGHTERING THE GOAT OF THE SIN OFFERING FOR THE PEOPLE, BRINGING ITS BLOOD INSIDE THE VEIL, AND SPRINKLING ITS BLOOD ON AND BEFORE THE PROPITIATORY COVER

"Then he shall slaughter the goat of the sin offering which is for the people, and bring its blood inside the veil, and he shall do with its blood just as he did with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it upon the propitiatory cover and before the propitiatory cover" (v. 15). This signifies that the Lord Jesus was crucified on the cross, and His blood was brought into the heavens and sprinkled before God for our propitiation. Now we have the eternal redemption, which brings us directly into the presence of God so that we may serve Him as the living God (Heb. 9:14).

XI. BECAUSE OF THE UNCLEANNESSES OF THE SONS OF ISRAEL AND BECAUSE OF THEIR TRANSGRESSIONS, EVEN ALL THEIR SINS, THE HOLY OF HOLIES AND THE TENT OF MEETING ALSO NEEDING PROPITIATION

"Thus he shall make propitiation for the holy of holies because of the uncleannesses of the sons of Israel and because of their transgressions, even all their sins. And so he shall do for the tent of meeting which dwells with them in the midst of their uncleannesses" (v. 16). This signifies that although we have been redeemed and washed by the blood of Christ, we are still in the old creation and still live in uncleanness. Hence, in our worship of God there is still the consciousness of sin, which also needs the propitiation by the blood of Christ.

Because we are still in the old creation and still live in uncleanness, we still have the consciousness of sin. This is why we need to say to the Lord again and again, "Lord Jesus, I take You as my trespass offering and as my sin offering." We shall continue to have this consciousness of sin until we are raptured and transfigured in our body, fully conformed to the image of Christ in His glory. One day we shall be in that state. But while we are still in the old creation, we still have the consciousness of sin and need Christ as our sin offering and trespass offering.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE FORTY-SEVEN

THE PROPITIATION

(2)

Scripture Reading: Lev. 16:17-34

In this message we shall consider further the details concerning the propitiation in Leviticus 16.

XII. WHEN AARON WENT IN TO MAKE PROPITIATION IN THE HOLY OF HOLIES, NO MAN SHOULD HAVE BEEN IN THE TENT OF MEETING

"No man shall be in the tent of meeting when he goes in to make propitiation in the holy of holies until he comes out, and has made propitiation for himself, for his household, and for all the assembly of Israel" (v. 17). This signifies that the Lord Jesus alone can make propitiation for our sins. Only the Lord Jesus was qualified to die for us and for our sins. Only He was qualified to accomplish redemption for our sins in the holy of holies. Concerning this, the type in Leviticus 16 is definite and clear.

XIII. AFTER MAKING PROPITIATION FOR HIMSELF, FOR HIS WHOLE HOUSEHOLD, AND FOR THE WHOLE HOUSEHOLD OF ISRAEL, AARON COMING OUT TO THE ALTAR AND MAKING PROPITIATION FOR IT

A. Putting the Blood of the Bull and the Blood of the Goat on the Horns of the Altar All Around

"Then he shall go out to the altar which is before Jehovah and make propitiation for it: he shall take some of the blood of the bull and some of the blood of the goat, and put it

upon the horns of the altar all around" (v. 18). The bull was for Aaron and his household, and the goat was for the entire people of Israel. The four horns were toward the four directions of the earth. Putting the blood of the bull and of the goat on the horns of the altar all around signifies that the efficacy of the redemption on the cross is toward the four corners of the earth.

B. With His Fingers Aaron Sprinkling Some of the Blood on the Altar Seven Times

"And with his finger he shall sprinkle some of the blood on it seven times" (v. 19a). This signifies that the full efficacy of the blood shed on the cross by Christ is so that the sinner may be at peace in his heart. When we sinners look at the blood sprinkled on the altar, we know that our sin and sins have been dealt with. Knowing that the problem of sin has been solved, we have peace in our heart.

Whereas the blood sprinkled on the altar is for our peace, the blood sprinkled on the propitiatory cover is for God's satisfaction. First the blood was sprinkled on the propitiatory cover within the veil. This was for God to see. It is for His satisfaction. Then the blood was sprinkled on the offering altar in the outer court. This is for us to see. It is for our satisfaction. Both God and we are satisfied through the blood of the redeeming Christ.

C. Cleansing the Altar and Sanctifying It from the Uncleannesses of the Sons of Israel

Verse 19b tells us that Aaron was to cleanse the altar and "sanctify it from the uncleannesses of the sons of Israel." This signifies that all the world's sins were gathered upon the cross of Christ and were cleansed away.

The word "uncleannesses" in verse 19 refers to our sin, to our leprosy, to our rebellion, even to the satanic nature within us. Because the people of God were still in this uncleanness, even the altar used by God for the redemption of His people was contaminated. By this we can see how contagious is the uncleanness of God's people. This uncleanness

has its source (Satan), its birth, and its living, which is leprosy. Therefore, we are a totality of uncleanness discharging unclean things to contaminate others and make them unclean. By the cross of Christ this uncleanness has been dealt with and taken away. Now there is a clean situation in which we and God may enjoy each other.

XIV. AARON FINISHING MAKING PROPITIATION FOR THE HOLY OF HOLIES, THE TENT OF MEETING, AND THE ALTAR

Verse 20a speaks of Aaron's finishing "making propitiation for the holy of holies, the tent of meeting, and the altar." This signifies that the sin offering is offered not only for the removal of uncleanness but also for the perfecting of holiness.

The holy of holies, the most holy place in the universe, was contaminated by the uncleanness of God's redeemed people. Because the holy of holies was contacted by unclean people, even it needed propitiation. The same was true of the tent of meeting and the altar. The fact that propitiation was made for all these indicates that the sin offering is not only for the removal of uncleanness but also for the perfecting of holiness. What Christ accomplished on the cross was not only for the removal of our uncleanness but also for the perfecting of God's holiness, into which we have been brought. Now we are in this holiness enjoying God as our holiness.

XV. AARON GOING BACK INTO THE TENT OF MEETING, TAKING OFF THE LINEN GARMENTS, LEAVING THEM THERE, BATHING HIS FLESH IN WATER IN A HOLY PLACE, AND PUTTING ON HIS GARMENTS, THEN COMING OUT AND OFFERING HIS BURNT OFFERING AND THE BURNT OFFERING OF THE PEOPLE AND MAKING PROPITIATION FOR HIMSELF AND FOR THE PEOPLE

"Then Aaron shall come into the tent of meeting, and take off the linen garments which he put on when he went into the holy of holies, and leave them there. And he shall bathe his flesh in water in a holy place and put on his garments; then he

shall come out and offer his burnt offering and the burnt offering of the people, and make propitiation for himself and for the people" (vv. 23-24). This signifies that after we have received the redemption of the Lord Jesus and the problem of our sins has been solved, we need the cleansing of the Spirit that we may take Christ as our burnt offering to live for God by the life of Christ.

Before Aaron bathed himself, he offered the sin offering for himself and for the people. Then after he bathed, he came to the altar to offer the burnt offering for himself and also for the people. From this we can see that the sin offering is for the burnt offering, that the sin offering is offered in view of the burnt offering. In other words, the sin offering has a purpose—to bring us to the burnt offering. This means that we sinners have been redeemed for the purpose of becoming God's satisfaction. We have been redeemed so that, taking Christ as our life and life supply, we might become those who in Christ live absolutely for God. Thus as redeemed ones, we are no longer sinners but those who are absolutely for God's satisfaction. The complete redemption of Christ implies not only the removal of sin but also our living for God absolutely. This is the purpose of Christ's redemption.

If Christ's redemption only removed our sin but did not enable us to live for God absolutely, His redemption would not be complete. We praise the Lord that through Christ's redemption not only has our sin been taken away, but we have been made by Christ into those who in Him as our burnt offering may now live for God absolutely. In this complete redemption, Christ is both the sin offering and the burnt offering. He is our sin offering for the removal of our sins, and He is our burnt offering to make us those who are absolutely for God. By taking Christ as our burnt offering and by living in Him by His life and with His life supply, we are able and qualified to live for God absolutely.

XVI. THE FAT OF THE SIN OFFERING BEING OFFERED IN SMOKE ON THE ALTAR

"And he shall offer up in smoke the fat of the sin offering

on the altar" (v. 25). This signifies that the Lord Jesus' death on the cross is for our redemption, and that His heart toward God and for God is for God's acceptance.

The fat of the sin offering signifies the heart of Christ, the tender part of Christ. This tender part of Christ is altogether toward God and for God. His heart toward God and for God is for God's acceptance.

In the scene portrayed in Leviticus 16, two things are sweet to God. First, the heart of Christ, which is toward God and for God, is sweet to God. Second, Christ eventually becomes the incense burning on the incense altar with the fire from the offering altar, and this burning incense becomes a sweet savor to God. Both of these involve that which is acceptable to God and that which becomes God's acceptance of us. We are accepted in Christ as the incense burned before God and also in Christ's heart, which is toward God and for Him. With the sin offering, therefore, we have two things: Christ as the incense burned on the incense altar and the heart of Christ signified by the fat burned on the offering altar.

XVII. THE ONE WHO LET THE GOAT GO TO AZAZEL WASHING HIS CLOTHES, BATHING HIS FLESH IN WATER, AND AFTER THAT COMING INTO THE CAMP

"He who let the goat go to Azazel shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and after that he may come into the camp" (v. 26). This signifies that the one who is defiled by contacting anything related to sin must deal with his outward living and with himself as well.

The one who let go the goat who bore the sins of the people to Azazel was related to sin and defiled by it. Therefore, he had to bathe himself and wash his clothes. He had to deal with his outward living (signified by the clothes) and also with himself. This indicates that whenever we are defiled by contacting something related to sin, we need to wash, to deal with, both our conduct and ourselves.

XVIII. THE BULL AND THE GOAT OF THE SIN OFFERING BEING TAKEN OUTSIDE THE CAMP, AND THEIR HIDES, FLESH, AND DUNG BEING BURNED WITH FIRE

"The bull of the sin offering and the goat of the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make propitiation in the holy of holies, shall be taken outside the camp, and they shall burn their hides, their flesh, and their dung with fire" (v. 27). This has a twofold significance.

First, this signifies that the Lord Jesus accomplished on the cross, once for all, the eternal and perfect redemption, and His serving ones have no participation in this matter. He alone accomplished a perfect and eternal redemption on the cross, signified by the altar outside the tabernacle. Furthermore, He Himself alone entered within the veil into the holy of holies. We, His serving ones, had no part in the accomplishment of redemption.

Second, what is described in verse 27 signifies that the Lord who accomplished redemption was rejected by man. Hence, whoever receives His redemption should go with Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach (Heb. 13:13). The camp signifies a religious organization, in particular the organization of the Jewish religion. To be outside the camp is to be outside organized religion. Today we are outside organized religion bearing the Lord's reproach. To bear the Lord's reproach means that we bear the same reproach He bore. The reproach He suffered now becomes our reproach. In the Lord's recovery, we bear His reproach because of our standing concerning the church, that is, because we are standing on the ground of the oneness of the Body of Christ. When those in the denominations criticize and oppose our standing in the local churches, we bear the Lord's reproach.

XIX. THE ONE WHO BURNED THE BULL AND THE GOAT OF THE SIN OFFERING WASHING HIS CLOTHES, BATHING HIS FLESH IN WATER, AND AFTER THAT COMING INTO THE CAMP

"And he who burns them shall wash his clothes and

bathe his flesh in water, and after that he may come into the camp" (v. 28). This signifies that the one who is defiled by contacting anything related to sin must deal with his outward living and with himself as well. The significance here is thus the same as that concerning the one who let the goat go to Azazel.

XX. AFFLICTING THEIR SOULS

Verse 29a says, "This shall be a perpetual statute for you: in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall afflict yourselves." Literally, "yourselves" means "your souls." The Israelites understood "afflict" here to indicate total abstinence from food, fasting (cf. Isa. 58:3, 5, 10). In Leviticus 16:29 afflicting one's soul signifies mourning, repenting, and feeling sorrowful for sin.

XXI. NOT DOING ANY WORK

The people were not to do any work on that day (v. 29b), for it was "a sabbath of solemn rest" to them (v. 31). This signifies that redemption has been completely finished by Christ. There is nothing left for man to do, and man should rest in the redemption of Christ.

If we try to work for our redemption, we shall insult Christ and belittle His redemption. Since we have seen Christ's redemption, have received it, and are enjoying it, we should cease from our labor. In this matter Martin Luther was right to revolt against the erroneous teaching of the Roman Catholic Church concerning working for our salvation. Complete redemption has been accomplished in a full way by Christ, and now we are enjoying it without any labor.

XXII. A PROPITIATION BEING MADE FOR THE PEOPLE OF THE ASSEMBLE FOR ALL THEIR SINS ONCE A YEAR

"And make propitiation for the holy sanctuary, and make propitiation for the tent of meeting and for the altar, and make propitiation for the priests and for all the people of the assembly. This shall be a perpetual statute for you to make

propitiation for the sons of Israel for all their sins once a year" (vv. 33-34a). This signifies that the offering was unable to make man perfect and that it was only a shadow of the coming good things, until the Son of God would come to complete the full redemption. The "coming good things" (Heb. 10:1) refer to the things accomplished by Christ. These good things are revealed in Hebrews 9 and 10, two chapters that give us the content of this point.

What we have in Leviticus 16 is a shadow, not the reality. The reality, the body, of this shadow is Christ with all His accomplishments and achievements. The shadow helps us to appreciate the reality and to know the details of the reality. Nevertheless, we do not care for the shadow—we care for the reality. We care for Christ and for all He has achieved and accomplished.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE FORTY-EIGHT

TAKING CARE OF THE SACRIFICES AND OF THE BLOOD

Scripture Reading: Lev. 17:1-16

In this message we shall consider two matters in Leviticus 17 that are difficult to comprehend—taking care of the sacrifices and taking care of the blood. If we would understand chapter seventeen, we need to see that it is a continuation of chapter sixteen.

In order to see the connection between Leviticus 16 and 17, we need a view of the arrangement of this book. Leviticus is a book on God's serving ones, the priests. In the preceding book, Exodus, the tabernacle was built up, the priesthood was set up, and, to some extent, the offerings were arranged. At the end of Exodus, the service to God from His people began. Following Exodus, there is the need of a book to tell us about the serving ones in God's service, the priests, about the details concerning all the offerings, and about the kind of life and living the priests should have. The priests' life should correspond to what God is. God is holy, so the living of the priests as God's serving ones should also be holy. The priests should be holy even as God is holy. This is indicated by the sequence of the books of Exodus and Leviticus.

The first ten chapters of Leviticus show us the offerings with the priesthood. The next five chapters show us who and what the serving ones are, what their origin, condition, and situation are, and what comes out of them. All these things are negative. Nevertheless, the negative portrait in chapters eleven through fifteen is a background for presenting to us Christ as the One we need.

In chapter sixteen we have a type, a shadow, of God's redemption, which, at the time this book was written, was

still to come. According to God's concept and in His divine economy, there is the need of redemption. Because the Old Testament time was not the time for redemption to take place, a type, shadow, of the coming redemption was needed. This shadow is the propitiation in Leviticus 16. In this propitiation four of the five basic offerings presented in chapters one through seven are involved: the burnt offering, the meal offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering. The one offering not involved yet is the peace offering. Later, particularly in chapter nineteen, we shall see that the propitiated people enjoyed the peace offering. Therefore, in chapter sixteen, the propitiation is fully applied, but the result of the four offerings—the peace offering—is not yet applied.

At the end of chapter sixteen, everything is wonderful. In type, this chapter signifies that we have been propitiated and that we may now enjoy Christ as the burnt offering and live on Him as the meal offering. Furthermore, we have come out of the camp to follow Him, the suffering One, bearing His reproach. What else do we need? It seems that we are not in need of anything. Using New Testament terms, we have been redeemed and, to some extent, replaced. We are living Christ as the life that is absolute for God, we are enjoying Him as our daily life supply, and we are following Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach and living a godly life. With us, everything is fine, but the situation around us is still very complicated. For this reason, there is the need of chapter seventeen.

Leviticus 17 is a reminder and a warning regarding the abuse of the sacrifices. To abuse the sacrifices is to apply them wrongly, improperly. It is to apply the sacrifices not according to God's economy but according to man's choice, not according to God's desire but according to our preference. There should be a limitation with respect to the application of the sacrifices. They should not be applied everywhere or anywhere or in the place of our choice. The application of the sacrifices is not a matter of our choice, desire, intention, and enjoyment; it is a matter of God's intention, desire, and choice. God has a unique choice regarding the use, the application, of

the sacrifices prepared for Him. This is why the subject of this message is concerned with two things—taking care of the sacrifices and taking care of the blood.

First, we must take care of the sacrifices and then of the blood. The sacrifices (vv. 5, 7) refer to Christ. In the whole universe Christ is the unique sacrifice. Eventually, for the sake of our need, this unique sacrifice becomes many sacrifices. It is one sacrifice in many aspects: the trespass offering, the sin offering, the burnt offering, the meal offering, and the peace offering. Hence, Christ is one sacrifice becoming five sacrifices, or one sacrifice in five aspects.

The sacrifices in chapter seventeen refer to Christ in His person. Christ is the unique sacrifice applied to our situation. As such a One, He meets our need in five aspects. He is our trespass offering, sin offering, burnt offering, meal offering, and peace offering. Christ is everything to us. In particular, He is all the offerings. Therefore, to take care of the sacrifices means to take care of Christ.

In the Bible, the blood refers to Christ's redemptive work. Whereas the sacrifices refer to Christ's person, the blood refers to Christ's work. Our New Testament faith, the unique faith, is a composition of the person and work of Christ. When we put together Christ's person and work, we have the Christian faith. We believe in Christ, and we believe in His work. This is our faith, which is according to the teaching of the New Testament and according to God's eternal economy.

As believers in Christ, we treasure the two matters that constitute the faith in which we believe. We treasure Christ's person, and we treasure Christ's redemptive work. In Leviticus 17, Christ's person is typified by the sacrifices, and Christ's work is typified by the blood. We must care for the sacrifices and the blood; that is, we must care for the person of Christ and His redemptive work.

In chapter seventeen of Leviticus, the Israelites were charged not to offer their sacrifices in any place they desired. Instead, they were required to bring their sacrifices to a unique place, to the one place chosen and designated by God. God's unique choice was "the entrance of the tent of

meeting," "before the tabernacle of Jehovah" (v. 4). This unique place—the entrance of the tent of meeting—signifies the church. Today the church is the place of God's tabernacle, the place of the tent of meeting. The sacrifice was to be offered only at the place where the tabernacle was. This signifies that today Christ should be applied in the church, the place of God's dwelling. In Leviticus God's dwelling place on earth was the tabernacle. In the New Testament age God's dwelling place is the church. Therefore, as signified by offering the sacrifices at the entrance of the tent of meeting, we should apply Christ in the church, the place of God's dwelling today. To apply Christ outside the church is to abuse Christ.

Concerning the matter of applying Christ in the church, I would ask you to consider why we do not have a name to designate what we are as the church. We are simply the church. Often we are reproached because we do not use a name to designate the church, such as Episcopalian, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, or Baptist. To name ourselves in this way would be to offer sacrifices anywhere, according to our taste. This is typified in Leviticus 17 by offering the sacrifices in an abusive way.

To apply Christ in an abusive way is to apply Him without regulation, restriction, or limitation. Today many like to have a proper noun as a name to designate the church. But to designate the church in this way is to denominate it, and this is to be abusive in the application of the sacrifices.

Many years ago I had a conversation with some Christians who found fault with our standing concerning the church. They said to me, "You are too narrow. Christ is omnipresent. He is everywhere. He is present in China, in Great Britain, in America. Christ is in every church—Lutheran, Anglican, Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian." I answered by saying, "Yes, Christ is everywhere. But why does He have to bear so many names? Is there a Chinese Christ? A British Christ? An American Christ? Is there a Lutheran Christ or a Wesleyan Christ?" To answer these questions with a "no" is to lose the case.

To designate the church by taking a name in addition to the name of Christ is to abuse Christ. We may use marriage as an illustration. A married lady should have one husband and one married name. Suppose Mary Jones marries Mr. Smith. Her name should then be Mary Jones Smith. If she were to take any other name, she would be abusing the name of her husband. She would in fact be prostituting herself. The principle is the same with abusing Christ by applying Him outside the church, that is, by applying Him anywhere we choose according to our preference. This kind of abuse, this kind of prostituting of one's self, is typified in Leviticus 17, where the expression "prostitute themselves" is emphatically used (v. 7).

According to Leviticus 17, the worship of God must be limited to the place of God's choice. This is the place of God's dwelling on earth. Every sacrifice is to be brought to this place. This means that Christ is to be applied in the church. However, many Christian workers today do not have this concept. Instead of applying Christ in the place chosen by God, they apply Christ everywhere. To do this is to abuse Christ.

Let us now consider in detail from Leviticus 17 the two matters of taking care of the sacrifices and of the blood.

I. TAKING CARE OF THE SACRIFICES

Verses 3 through 9 speak of taking care of the sacrifices. To take care of the sacrifices is to take care of Christ and treasure Him as our sacrifices to God.

A. Sacrifices to Be Offered to God Only at the Entrance of the Tent of Meeting before Jehovah, and Their Blood to Be Shed on the Altar

According to verses 3 through 6, the sacrifices were to be offered to God only at the entrance of the tent of meeting before Jehovah, and their blood was to be shed on the altar. This signifies that our taking of the Lord Jesus as our sacrifices offered to God and our participating in His redeeming

blood must be at the entrance of God's dwelling place (the church) on earth and must be through the cross.

B. A Sacrifice as a Peace Offering to Jehovah

Verse 5b speaks of a sacrifice of a peace offering to Jehovah. This signifies Christ as our peace with God that we may enjoy Him with man and with God in fellowship and joy, as in our enjoying of Christ in the breaking of bread for the remembrance of Him (1 Cor. 10:16).

Leviticus 16 refers to the sin offering, the trespass offering, the burnt offering, and the meal offering, but there is no mention of the peace offering. We have the peace offering in chapter seventeen. The peace offering is the result of the four other main offerings. In other words, chapter seventeen is the result of chapter sixteen. Thus, the sacrifices in 17:5 refer to the result of the sin offering, trespass offering, burnt offering, and meal offering.

1. Dashing the Blood on the Altar

"The priest shall dash the blood on the altar of Jehovah at the entrance of the tent of meeting" (v. 6a). This signifies that Christ's blood was shed on the cross.

2. Offering Up the Fat in Smoke for a Satisfying Fragrance to Jehovah

The priest also was to "offer up the fat in smoke for a satisfying fragrance to Jehovah" (v. 6b). The fat here typifies Christ's excellencies. The satisfying fragrance is a fragrance that satisfies God. Offering up the fat in smoke for a satisfying fragrance to Jehovah signifies that Christ's excellencies are offered up to God through God's holy fire for a fragrance to satisfy God.

3. No Longer Offering Sacrifices to the Goat Demons, to Which They Prostituted Themselves

"They shall no longer sacrifice their sacrifices to the goat demons, to which they prostitute themselves. This shall be

a perpetual statute to them throughout their generations" (v. 7). This signifies no longer having fellowship with demons so as to commit spiritual fornication (1 Cor. 10:20-21).

The Hebrew for "goat demons" may also be translated "goat idols." The word "prostitute" here indicates that for an Israelite to abuse the sacrifices by offering them in the place of his choice was to make himself a prostitute. This is a matter of spiritual prostitution, of spiritual fornication.

If we are narrow-minded in saying that the church is the place where Christ should be applied, then God Himself is narrow-minded in this matter, for we are simply following Him. Only God's choice is the right choice. His requirement is that the sacrifices be offered only at the place of His dwelling. Concerning this, we must be as holy as He is and as narrow as He is. God is our pattern, and we must follow Him. Otherwise, instead of being a pure virgin presented to Christ (2 Cor. 11:2), we shall conduct ourselves like the great prostitute in Revelation 17. Leviticus 17 indicates in the matter of the sacrifices God is narrow-minded, and we must be the same, even if it causes us to bear the Lord's reproach (Heb. 13:13).

C. A Sacrifice as a Burnt Offering

In Leviticus 17:8 the burnt offering is mentioned. The burnt offering signifies Christ as our burnt offering to God, by whose life we can live absolutely for God.

1. Offering at the Entrance of the Tent of Meeting

The burnt offering was to be offered to Jehovah at the entrance of the tent of meeting (v. 9a). This signifies taking Christ as our burnt offering to God at the entrance of God's dwelling place (the church).

2. The One Not Offering the Burnt Offering at the Entrance of the Tent of Meeting to Be Cut Off from the People

Verse 9b tells us that the one who did not offer the burnt offering to Jehovah at the entrance to the tent of meeting was

to be cut off from the people. To be cut off from the people signifies to be removed from the fellowship of God's people. If we apply Christ as the burnt offering in a denominated place and not in the church, we shall be cut off from the proper fellowship of God's people.

II. TAKING CARE OF THE BLOOD

Leviticus 17:10-16 speaks of taking care of the blood. To take care of the blood is to take care of and to treasure the blood of Christ. Later we shall see that different bloods typify different beliefs. Every kind of blood signifies a belief. We should not take care of any blood other than the blood of Christ. There is only one kind of blood that we can drink (John 6:53-56), that is, receive, and that is the blood of Christ. Exodus 12 indicates this. The children of Israel were to sprinkle the blood of the Passover lamb on their doorposts (vv. 7,13). They were to accept only that blood.

A. The Blood, in Which Is the Life of the Flesh, Being Given by God to Make Propitiation on the Altar for the Souls of God's People

"For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make propitiation for your souls; for it is the blood which, by the life, makes propitiation" (Lev. 17:11). This signifies that the blood of the Lord Jesus was shed on the cross for our redemption.

B. The Blood of a Hunted Animal or Bird to Be Covered with Earth

"Any man of the sons of Israel, or of the aliens who sojourn among you, who takes in hunting an animal or bird that may be eaten, shall pour out its blood and cover it with earth" (v. 13). This signifies that all the blood other than the blood of the Lord Jesus that man can obtain cannot redeem us from our sins and should be buried. To bury is to give up, to abandon, to reject. We reject all other bloods; we "bury"

them. The only blood we accept and treasure is the blood of Jesus shed on the cross as the altar.

C. The Blood of That Which Dies of Itself or Which Is Torn by Beasts Not Being Good for Eating

Verse 15a speaks of "that which dies of itself or is torn by beasts." As with the other verses in chapter seventeen, we need to understand this typologically.

1. The Blood of That Which Dies of Itself

The blood of that which dies of itself signifies the blood of one who sacrifices himself for the good of others, which blood cannot redeem us from our sins. Only the blood of Jesus Christ, whom God bruised (Isa. 53:10) on the cross, can cleanse us from all sin (1 John 1:7).

Throughout history a number of heroes have shed their blood for others. But this kind of blood cannot redeem us. Therefore, we must reject it.

2. The Blood of That Which Is Torn by Beasts

The blood of that which is torn by beasts signifies the blood of one who is martyred by wild people, who are like beasts, which blood also is unable to redeem us from our sins. Only the blood of Jesus Christ, whom God judged on the cross (Isa. 53:8), is able to wash us from our sins (Rev. 1:5). On the cross, God bruised Christ and judged Him for us. Thus Christ's blood is the unique redeeming blood. Only His blood can redeem us from all our sins.

The religions in the world today are formed mainly with one of the two things typified in Leviticus 17:15a as the basis. They are based either on one who sacrificed himself for the good of others, or on one who was martyred. In the United States there are many different religions that are based upon persons. To form a religion on such a basis is to receive a different blood. For example, those who form a religion based on Buddha drink the blood of Buddha. Likewise, those who base their religion on Mohammed drink the

blood of Mohammed. From this we see that different beliefs, different religions, are based on different persons, that is, on different bloods.

D. The One Who Ate That Which Died of Itself or Was Torn by Beasts Being Unclean until the Evening

"Every person who eats that which dies of itself or is torn by beasts, whether he is a native or an alien, shall wash his clothes, and bathe in water, and be unclean until the evening; then he shall be clean" (Lev. 17:15). This signifies that the one who takes any blood, that is, any belief, other than the blood of the Lord Jesus is unclean until the matter is cleared up and brought to a complete ending.

If you study the statistics concerning the increase of religion, you will discover that in the United States it is very difficult to bring one who is a real pagan to the Lord. The reason is that nearly everyone is occupied with some kind of belief or religion. Speaking according to typology, nearly all the people have drunk a blood other than the blood of the Lord Jesus. It is not an easy thing to remove that blood and to replace it with the blood of Jesus Christ.

God has ordained that there be only one blood that we should drink, one belief that we should receive. The one blood is the blood of Jesus Christ shed on the cross. The one belief is the belief in the Christ who died on the cross for us. However, the modernists preach a Christ other than the Christ who died on the cross for our redemption. This means that they have another belief. Furthermore, today the sacrifices are offered everywhere, according to one's choice.

In the Lord's recovery we are offering Christ in the place chosen by God, because we are standing on the unique ground of the oneness of the Body of Christ for the church life. We do not have any other standing. We do not take anything or anyone as our standing other than the oneness of the Body of Christ. Meeting on this ground, the place chosen by God, we apply Christ. This is to offer the sacrifices, to apply Christ, according to God's choice.

If we applied Christ elsewhere, we would be prostituting ourselves, making ourselves into a prostitute who does not have a definite husband. That would be spiritual fornication.

In the past, we drank different bloods. Now in the church life in the Lord's recovery, we are drinking one blood. This is practiced in particular at the Lord's table. We drink the unique blood, the blood of Jesus Christ. We apply Christ according to God's choice.

The Lord's recovery is a matter of caring for Christ in His person and in His redemptive work. Today we are practicing the church life in taking care of Christ in these two aspects. We take care of His unique person and of His unique work. We do not have any other person or any other work. We are here for Christ with His redemptive work.

After making a careful study of this chapter, I have the full peace to say that here we have a type showing us how we should take care of Christ in His person and redemptive work. This type indicates that we should offer Christ only in the place that is according to God's choice and that we should believe only in Christ's redemptive work, not in anything that replaces it.

1. The One Who Ate That Which Died or Was Torn by Beasts Washing His Clothes and Bathing in Water, and If He Did Not Do This, Bearing His Iniquity

Leviticus 17:15 tells us that the one who ate that which died of itself or was torn by beasts was to wash his clothes and bathe in water. Verse 16 continues, "But if he does not wash them and bathe his flesh, he shall bear his iniquity." This signifies that the one who takes any blood other than the blood of the Lord Jesus should deal with his former behavior and with what he was in the past concerning religion, and should purge himself. Otherwise, he will be condemned.

2. This Aspect of the Type Being Crucial

This aspect of the type in the divine revelation is crucial in relation to the people who live in a world like today's, a

world full of confusion in the matter of religion. Every sinner should believe only in Jesus Christ and take His blood for his redemption that he might be saved before God. All other beliefs and religions should be abandoned and buried.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE FORTY-NINE

THE HOLY LIVING OF THE HOLY PEOPLE— PUTTING OFF THE OLD LIFE AND PUTTING ON THE NEW

Scripture Reading: Lev. 18—20

The subject of this message is "The Holy Living of God's Holy People—Putting Off the Old Life and Putting On the New." This message covers chapters eighteen through twenty. This long section of the Word is equivalent to Ephesians 4:17—5:14 in the New Testament, which charges the holy people of God to put off, as regards their former manner of life, the old man and put on the new man, which according to God was created in righteousness and holiness of the truth (Eph. 4:22, 24), living a life that is holy, as God is holy.

By reading Ephesians 4:17—5:14 we are helped to understand Leviticus 18—20, and by reading this section in Leviticus we are helped to understand this portion of Ephesians. The more we read Ephesians 4:17—5:14, the more we understand chapters eighteen through twenty of Leviticus. In Old Testament terms, God's people were not to live according to the Egyptians, among whom they once lived, nor according to the Canaanites. They were to put off the old man with the old manner of life and to put on the new man with the new manner of life. Leviticus 18:3 says, "You shall not do as they do in the land of Egypt, in which you lived, and you shall not do as they do in the land of Canaan to which I am bringing you; you shall not walk in their customs." Here we see that the Israelites were to live a new life, a life neither in the manner of the Egyptians, among whom they once lived, nor in the manner of the Canaanites, to whose land they were to be brought, but in the manner of God's holy people. To put off the living of the Egyptians and

the Canaanites was to put off the old man, and to live a life according to God's holiness was to put on the new man.

In Leviticus 18 through 20 we have many ordinances and statutes of the law (20:22). The law is composed firstly of the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments, which are the basic elements of the law, are simple, short, and definite. Because the Ten Commandments are brief, they need explanation and extension. The ordinances and statutes are explanations and extensions of the Ten Commandments. Leviticus 18—20 is full of statutes and ordinances, which are explanations and extensions of the Ten Commandments. As a whole, the law is composed of the Ten Commandments plus the explanations and extensions of the Ten Commandments.

Many readers of the Bible, and even some translators of the Bible, do not understand the difference between statutes and ordinances and regard them as synonymous. Actually, there is an important difference between an ordinance and a statute. An ordinance is a statute with a judgment. However, a statute, a regulation, that does not include a judgment is simply a statute. In chapters eighteen through twenty of Leviticus, there are regulations that are without judgments; these regulations do not tell us how to judge a case. These regulations are statutes. Other regulations include judgments and therefore should be considered ordinances and not merely statutes.

In Leviticus 18—20 there is no repetition of the Ten Commandments, but there is the explanation and extension of the Ten Commandments. For example, one of the Ten Commandments forbids the worship of idols, and in the regulations concerning witchcraft there is an extension of this commandment (19:26, 31; 20:6). Another example is the extension in 20:9 of the commandment to honor our parents. This verse says, "If any man curses his father or his mother, he shall certainly be put to death; he has cursed his father or his mother; the guilt for his blood shall be upon him." Many other examples of statutes and ordinances can be found in these chapters. In this message I shall only deal with certain matters, which are quite peculiar and are not covered elsewhere.

I. THE SONS OF ISRAEL PUTTING OFF THE FORMER EGYPTIAN CONDUCT

The sons of Israel were charged to put off the former Egyptian conduct (18:3a). This signifies that the believers should put off the former, old way of living.

II. NOT WALKING IN THE CUSTOMS OF THE CANAANITES, INTO WHOSE LAND THEY WOULD COME

The Israelites were also charged not to walk in the customs of the Canaanites, into whose land they would come (18:3b). This signifies that, after being saved, the believers should not be conformed to the living and conduct of the worldly people.

III. HAVING GOD'S HOLY LIVING

The sons of Israel were to have God's holy living (18:4—20:27). This signifies putting on the new man. Living a holy life according to God's holiness is equal to putting on the new man.

IV. BEING HOLY, BECAUSE GOD IS HOLY

These chapters emphasize the requirement that God's people be holy because He is holy. "You shall be holy, for I, Jehovah your God, am holy" (19:2). "You shall sanctify yourselves therefore and be holy, for I am Jehovah your God" (20:7). "You shall be holy to Me, for I Jehovah am holy; and I have separated you from the peoples to be Mine" (20:26). Being holy because God is holy signifies walking according to God's holiness, living a holy life.

V. OFFERING A SACRIFICE OF PEACE OFFERINGS TO JEHOVAH THAT IT MAY BE ACCEPTED

"When you sacrifice a sacrifice of peace offerings to Jehovah, you shall sacrifice it so that you may be accepted" (19:5). This signifies that the breaking of bread for the remembrance of the Lord should be done in a way that is acceptable to the

Lord (cf. 1 Cor. 11:17-21). We must not have the Lord's table in an abusive way but in a proper way.

We have seen that the propitiation in Leviticus 16 involved four of the five basic offerings: the sin offering, the trespass offering, the burnt offering, and the meal offering. The issue of these offerings is the peace offering. This means that these four offerings issue in a result, and this result is that we enjoy peace with God and with God's people. This is the peace offering.

Chapters eighteen through twenty are not concerned with propitiation but with the holy living of God's holy people. In this kind of living it is important that we have fellowship, communion, mutual enjoyment, in peace. This is fully signified by the peace offering.

The peace offering is the Old Testament type of the Lord's table. When we have the Lord's table, we enjoy the peace offering. At the Lord's table we enjoy Christ as our peace offering for our fellowship with God and with one another. This enjoyment of the peace offering issues from the trespass offering, the sin offering, the burnt offering, and the meal offering. Our enjoyment of Christ as these four offerings will have an issue, a result—the enjoyment of Christ as our peace offering for us to have fellowship with God and with our fellow believers.

Through the four offerings in Leviticus 16, our negative situation is propitiated. Thus, concerning the holy living in Leviticus 18—20, we need to take care of the enjoyment of Christ as our peace offering.

A. The Sacrifice Was to Be Eaten on the Day of the Offering or on the Next Day, but What Remained until the Third Day Was to Be Burned with Fire

"It shall be eaten on the day you sacrifice it, or on the next day; but what remains until the third day shall be burned with fire" (19:6). This signifies that the saints' fellowship with one another and with God should be kept fresh. Our

enjoyment of Christ as the peace offering for our fellowship with God and with one another should be fresh.

B. If the Sacrifice Was Eaten at All on the Third Day, It Was an Abhorrent Thing Not Acceptable to God

"If it is eaten at all on the third day, it is an abhorrent thing; it will not be accepted" (19:7). This signifies that the enjoyment of the saints' stale fellowship with one another and with God is not acceptable but abhorrent to God.

We should not have any stale practices at the Lord's table. We should not come to the Lord's table with anything stale. Rather, we should come with something new. For this, we need a new repentance, a new confession, a new dealing, and a new touch with the Lord. In other words, we need a new washing, a new bathing in the Word or in the Spirit, so that we can have a fresh remembrance of the Lord. When we have a fresh enjoyment of the Lord. He also will have a fresh enjoyment because of our fresh enjoyment.

C. The One Who Ate the Stale Sacrifice Bearing His Iniquity, Having Profaned the Holy Thing of Jehovah, and Being Cut Off from His People

"And he who eats it shall bear his iniquity, for he has profaned the holy thing of Jehovah; and that person shall be cut off from his people" (19:8). This signifies that the one who participates in the saints' stale fellowship is guilty of having despised the holy things of God and will lose the fellowship among God's people.

VI. NO MIXTURE BEING ALLOWED

"You shall keep My statutes. You shall not breed your cattle with a different kind; you shall not sow your field with two kinds of seed; and you shall not put on a garment of two kinds of materials mixed together" (19:19). The fact that no mixture was allowed indicates that God wants everything to be after its kind (cf. Gen. 1:11, 21, 24-25), without any kind

of mixture. In the church life we should avoid any kind of mixture.

A. Breeding Cattle without Mixture

In Leviticus 19 three illustrations of mixture are given. The first illustration is the breeding of cattle without mixture. This signifies that life is not allowed to be mixed; those living by the life of God must not live by the flesh. To live by the life of God on the one hand and by the flesh on the other hand is a mixture. Such mixture is not acceptable to God.

B. Sowing Seed without Mixture

The second illustration in verse 19 is sowing seed without mixture. This signifies that the ministry of the word is not allowed to be mixed. The word of God that is ministered should not be mixed with the word of the world.

C. Making Garment Material without Mixture

The third illustration is that of making garment material without mixture. This signifies that our conduct is not allowed to be mixed. Those living in the life of the New Testament should not live by the ordinances of the Old Testament, and those who belong to the Lord should not live according to the customs of the Gentiles.

In both Catholicism and Pentecostalism there is the mixture of the things of the New Testament with certain things from the Old Testament. The garments worn by the cardinals in the Catholic Church are similar to the robes worn by the priests in the Old Testament. Furthermore, many of the formalities and rituals in Catholicism are from the Old Testament. In Pentecostalism there is much prophesying in the Old Testament manner, with the speaker often saying, "Thus saith the Lord." In this kind of speaking the Old Testament, especially the Psalms and Isaiah, may be quoted more frequently than such New Testament books as Ephesians and Romans. I doubt if anyone in Pentecostalism speaks the way Paul did in 1 Corinthians 7. First Paul said, "I have no commandment of the Lord, but I give my opinion as having

received mercy of the Lord to be faithful" (v. 25). After giving his opinion, Paul concludes, "I think that I also have the Spirit of God" (v. 40b). Paul's speaking is very different from the speaking of those in Pentecostalism who pretend to be Old Testament prophets and whose speaking is a mixture of the New Testament with the things of the Old Testament.

VII. THE GOOD LAND VOMITING OUT THE DEFILED AND UNHOLY PEOPLE

Three verses in Leviticus 18 and 20 speak of the land vomiting out its inhabitants (18:25, 28; 20:22). Leviticus 20:22 says, "You shall therefore keep all My statutes and all My ordinances and do them, that the land where I am bringing you to dwell may not vomit you out." The good land vomiting out the defiled and unholy people signifies that the all-inclusive Christ as our dwelling place and everything we need for our enjoyment will vomit us out of Himself (Rev. 3:16).

This matter of the land vomiting out the people implies a great deal. It implies that the land is the supply for the existence and living of God's people. It also implies that the land is for their enjoyment. If the people are proper with the land, the land will allow them to enjoy it. Otherwise, the land will vomit them out; it will give them up. This indicates that if we are not proper with Christ, who is our good land, He will vomit us out and not allow us to enjoy Him any more.

The ordinances and statutes in Leviticus 18—20 cover many things. First, we are forbidden to have anything to do with demons, idols, spiritism, and witchcraft (19:4, 26; 20:2, 6, 27). These ordinances and statutes also cover humanity and include such matters as reverencing our mother and father (19:3a; 20:9), respecting aged persons (19:32), not mistreating the alien but instead loving him (19:33-34), having just measures and weights (19:35-36), not lying or deceiving (19:11), not oppressing one's neighbor (19:13), not mistreating the deaf or the blind (19:14), not being partial in judgment (19:15), not going about as a slanderer (19:16), and

not hating our brother in our heart (19:17). The most crucial thing is that we never commit any kind of incest. Incest is the most destructive thing to humanity, and a lengthy section of these chapters is devoted to it in detail. We must be pure in this matter.

Chapters eighteen through twenty of Leviticus show us a very high standard of morality. We need to live a high human life, a human life that is according to God's image. God is holy and righteous, and He is love and light. We, then, must live a life that is full of light. For us to serve God, we need a holy life with the highest standard of morality and ethics. Although we are serving God, we must nevertheless have a proper human life with all those around us, not only with our relatives and neighbors but also with the sojourners. We need to treat everyone properly. This is God's requirement because He is righteous, holy, loving, and full of light.

We should not think that in the Lord's recovery we care only for Christ, the Spirit, life, and the church and not for ethics and morality. Yes, due to the lack in Christianity, we have stressed Christ, the Spirit, life, and the church. However, this certainly does not mean that we do not care for the highest standard of ethics and morality. In the Life-study of Luke I presented the high standard of the Lord's humanity, which is the model, the pattern, for us to take and to follow. In order to live a life that matches our service to God, we must live a high standard of humanity. This high standard of humanity is strict, right, frank, bright, and loving.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE FIFTY

THE HOLY LIVING FOR THE PRIESTHOOD AND THE DISQUALIFICATIONS FROM THE PRIESTHOOD

Scripture Reading: Lev. 21:1-24

I very much appreciate the sequence in the book of Leviticus. In chapters eleven through fifteen our condition is exposed. Then in chapter sixteen propitiation is presented to us. In chapter seventeen we have the matter of treasuring the person of Christ and His redemptive work. Following this, chapters eighteen through twenty deal with the holy living of God's holy people. This brings us to Leviticus 21, which covers the holy living for the priesthood.

It is crucial for us to realize that every one of God's people should be a priest. All of God's people, not just a group among the whole of the people, should be priests. The holy living of the holy people is for the priesthood. Having covered this holy living as it is revealed in chapters eighteen through twenty, we now need to see that such a holy living is for the priesthood.

Leviticus 21 has two sections. The first section, verses 2 through 15, is on the holy living for the priesthood. The second section, verses 16 through 24, is on the disqualifications from the priesthood. Although we have been regenerated into the holy priesthood, we might still be disqualified from the priesthood in some ways, even in many ways.

I. THE HOLY LIVING FOR THE PRIESTHOOD

A. The Priests Not Being Allowed to Defile and Profane Themselves for a Dead Person among Their People, except for Their Relatives

Leviticus 21:1-4 tells us that the priests were not allowed

to defile and profane themselves for a dead person among their people, except for their relatives. This signifies that we, the New Testament believers, being priests of God, should not behave ourselves like the common people to defile and profane ourselves.

As a holy people for God's holy priesthood, we must be careful not to touch anything that would defile us or profane us. To be profaned is to be made common, to be made worldly, to be made like those who are in death. We have been sanctified, made holy, and we should not be profaned.

B. Not Making Any Baldness on the Head, nor Shaving Off the Corners of the Beard, nor Making Any Cuttings in the Flesh

"They shall not make any baldness on their head, nor shave off the corners of their beard, nor make any cuttings in their flesh" (v. 5). This signifies that we should accept what God has ordained for us and subject ourselves to God's authority, not making any change or any display or performance by our human labor, but being natural. The more natural we are in this sense, the better.

To make our head bald indicates that we do not subject ourselves to God's headship, that we do not accept God's authority over us. Therefore, we should not make any baldness on our head.

To shave off the corners of the beard or to make cuttings in the flesh indicates that we are engaging in human labor to have some change in our body, which was designed and created by God. In a sense, to change ourselves in this way is to defile ourselves. Therefore, instead of making such changes, we should be natural.

C. Being Holy to God and Not Profaning the Name of God, for They Offer the Offerings by Fire as the Food of God

Leviticus 21:6 says, "They shall be holy to their God and not profane the name of their God, for they offer the offerings

of Jehovah by fire, the food of their God; therefore they shall be holy." Verse 8 goes on to say, "You shall sanctify him, for he offers the food of your God; he shall be holy to you, for I Jehovah, who sanctify you, am holy." This signifies that we, the ones who minister Christ to God as food for God's enjoyment, should separate ourselves to be holy unto God.

As God's priests, we are actually God's "cooks." For us to offer Christ to God means that we "cook" Christ as God's food for His satisfaction. We need to eat, and God also needs to eat. We eat what He cooks for us, and He eats what we cook for Him. As God's cooks, we should be a holy people, a people undefiled, so that we would not profane the name of our holy God.

D. Being Pure in Marriage

Verses 7 and 9 tell us that the priests were to be pure in marriage. This signifies that we, the New Testament priests, should be pure in our closest human relationship. We must be pure in this relationship in order to keep the status of the holy priesthood.

E. Having the Anointing Oil for the Priesthood

Verse 10a speaks of the priest "on whose head the anointing oil has been poured." This signifies that we, the New Testament priests, have the anointing Spirit for our priestly service. We have been anointed with the all-inclusive Spirit. Today this Spirit is not only within us but also upon us for our priestly service.

F. Wearing the Garments of Consecration of the Priesthood

Verse 10b speaks of the priest "who has been consecrated to wear the garments." This signifies that we should live a life that befits our priestly service.

Here "consecrated" actually means inaugurated. In Exodus 29 we see that when the priests were inaugurated, they were clothed with priestly garments, and from that time onward the priests wore the garments of their consecration.

Garments signify our living, our conduct. For us as God's priests today to wear the garments of consecration is for us to have a living that befits our priesthood.

G. Not Disheveling the Head

According to verse 10c, the priest was not to dishevel his head. This signifies that we should not be disobedient, unrestrained, or disorderly in our actions. Speaking typo-logically, we should keep our hair in good order and thereby show that we submit to God's headship, that we submit to our God in His authority. Furthermore, we should be restrained in our walk, especially in our speaking. It is wrong to speak in a loose way without restraint. One who walks in the holiness of God is one who is continually ruled by God's presence. Hence, he is orderly in his daily walk. In all that we do and say, we should be in good order.

H. Not Tearing Their Garments

The priests were not allowed to tear their garments (v. 10d). For a priest to tear his garments would be a sign that he was bankrupt in behavior. The priests' not tearing their garments signifies that we should not make ourselves bankrupt in morality.

I. The High Priest Not Defiling Himself Even by the Death of His Father or His Mother, Because of the Sanctuary and the Consecration of the Anointing Oil

"Neither shall he go near any dead person, nor defile himself even for his father or his mother; neither shall he go out from the sanctuary and profane the sanctuary of his God; for the consecration of the anointing oil of his God is upon him: I am Jehovah" (vv. 11-12). This signifies that when we bear the highest priesthood, having the closest fellowship with God, we should restrain our natural affection, not defiling ourselves even by our affection for our parents.

These verses indicate that the higher our priesthood is, the more requirements there are. The priests could take

care of their father and mother in their death, but the high priest could not be defiled even by the death of his father or mother. He had to remain in the priesthood as the high priest because of the sanctuary and because of the anointing oil that was upon him. He had to remain separated and consecrated to God for His holy priesthood. When we bear the highest priesthood today, we also shall have to control our natural affection, not defiling ourselves even by our affection for our parents. Humanly speaking, this is not easy. However, we have a life that affords us the strength to live such a holy life.

J. Being Pure in the Matter of Marriage, Even concerning the High Priest's Offspring

Leviticus 21:7, 9,13-15 speak of purity in marriage, even concerning the high priest's offspring. This signifies that we who bear the highest responsibility in God's service should be pure in our closest human relationship, for ourselves and even for our offspring.

All the points we have covered in this section are regulations for the living of a life that befits our priesthood. According to the New Testament, we all are priests; we are not laymen. Since we are priests, we should live a life not only of the holy people but also of the holy priests. The people are somewhat ordinary, but the priests are altogether separated unto God, that is, sanctified, holy, to God.

II. THE DISQUALIFICATIONS FROM THE PRIESTHOOD

The second section of chapter twenty-one (vv. 17-24) concerns the disqualifications from the priesthood. This section shows us what can cause us to be disqualified from the priesthood, to lose our qualifications as God's priests.

A. The Priest with a Blemish (Defect) Not Being Allowed to Come Near to Offer the Food of His God

The priest with a blemish, that is, some kind of defect, was not allowed to come near to offer the food of his God

(vv. 17-21). This signifies that anyone among us who is deficient in Christ is not able to take care of Christ as food offered to God. As God's priests, we daily take care of Christ, ministering Him to our God as His food for His satisfaction. But if we have a defect, we shall be disqualified from this priestly service. Therefore, we must be careful about defects.

B. The Blemishes (Defects) That Disqualify a Person from the Priesthood

Let us now consider the various defects that disqualify a person from the priesthood.

1. Blindness

Blindness (v. 18b) disqualified a person from the priesthood. Blindness signifies a lack of sight for seeing because of the shortage of Christ as the enlightening light. If we are short of Christ in His light, we shall not have the adequate sight, and this shortage will disqualify us from the priesthood.

As New Testament believers, we are God's priests, yet we still need the sight to see spiritual things. For this, we need to experience Christ, particularly in the sense of light. If we experience Christ in this way, we shall be under His enlightening. Then we shall receive the light and the sight to see what others cannot see.

2. Lameness

Lameness (v. 18c) signifies the lack of strength for acting because of the shortage of the strengthening Christ. Many believers today are lame, crippled, and are thus disqualified from the New Testament priesthood. The old way of meeting and serving in traditional Christianity is a cause of this lameness, for it annuls the organic function of the believers and thereby annuls their qualification to serve as priests.

We need to learn to do everything in the strengthening Christ. Paul could say, "I can do all things in Him who empowers me" (Phil. 4:13). If we learn to enjoy Christ's

strengthening, we shall not be lame and shall not walk in a crippled way.

3. A Flat Nose

A flat nose (v. 18d) signifies the lack of Christ as our sensation in our service of God. Many things in the spiritual realm cannot be seen or touched, but they can be sensed, that is, "smelled." If we would be able to sense these things, we need a proper nose. This means that in order to serve God as priests, we need a keen sense of smell. This is a necessary part of our spiritual life. The seeker in Song of Songs is praised for having a nose "as the tower of Lebanon" (S.S. 7:4b). This kind of nose is not flat but is elevated and has a keen sense of smell.

4. Having One Limb Longer Than the Other

Having one limb longer than the other (v. 18e) signifies overstepping and overtouching outside of Christ. Some saints overstep or overtouch outside of Christ. We, however, should remain within our limit, and our limit is Christ. We should be limited by our experience of Christ. If we are limited in this way, we shall be balanced and not have one limb longer than another.

5. A Broken Foot or Hand

A priest with a broken foot or a broken hand was disqualified. A broken foot or hand (v. 19) signifies some part of our being that is not complete in Christ. In our spiritual life we should be complete, perfect, and balanced. If any part of our being is damaged, we shall be disqualified from serving God.

6. Being a Hunchback

Being a hunchback (v. 20a) signifies having the sight that is able to see only the things on earth, not the things in heaven, because of the lack of the experience of the heavenly Christ (cf. Col. 3:1-3). If we lack the experience and enjoyment of the heavenly Christ, we may be a hunchback. We need to look upward and consider the things in the heavens

because our Christ is there. Our hope and our citizenship are also in the heavens (Col. 1:5; Phil. 3:20). Instead of being a hunchback, we should be those with a straight back. We should be a heavenly people.

7. Being a Dwarf

Being a dwarf (v. 20b) signifies the lack of the stature of Christ in the growth in life (cf. Eph. 4:13). Some saints are spiritual dwarfs. They have listened to many messages and they know a lot, but they have not increased in stature. With them the measure of Christ remains the same. They have become old dwarfs.

8. A Defective Sight

A defective sight (v. 20c) signifies the sight in spiritual things that is not perfect because of the lack of a full view of Christ. How much sight we have depends on how much we have experienced Christ in a full view. Having a full view of Christ will strengthen and even widen our sight.

9. Eczema

Eczema (v. 20d) signifies some expression that is abnormal in life, making oneself feel uneasy and making others feel badly, because of the lack of the Spirit of Christ. Certain saints have spiritual eczema. This means that they have something abnormal in life that, due to an "itching," causes them to have no peace and that gives them an unpleasant appearance, an appearance that makes others uncomfortable.

10. Scabs

Scabs (v. 20e) signify something that causes oneself to be uncomfortable and in its appearance bothers others, because of a lack in living Christ.

Scabs and eczema are in the same category of defect. Both cause a saint to be uncomfortable and to have an appearance, an expression, that is troubling to others in the church life.

There are such saints in the church, and often they cause trouble because of their "itching" and abnormal expression.

11. Damaged Testicles

Damaged testicles (v. 20f) signify that the spiritual reproductive function is damaged because of the serious lack of the experience of Christ as life. If we do not have the adequate experience of Christ as life, the organs for spiritual reproduction will be damaged.

C. The Blemished Ones Being Permitted to Eat the Food of God, both the Most Holy and the Holy, but Not to Come In unto the Veil or Approach the Altar, That They May Not Profane the Sanctuaries of Jehovah, Who Sanctifies Them

"He may eat the food of his God, both the most holy and the holy, but he shall not come in unto the veil or approach the altar, because a blemish is in him, so that he may not profane My sanctuaries; for I am Jehovah who sanctifies them" (vv. 22-23). This signifies that although the defective believers can enjoy Christ, the food of God, as their food, they are not qualified to serve God in the church, God's sanctuary, or around the cross of Christ, typified by the altar, lest they profane the holy things of God.

If, as New Testament priests, we have a blemish, a defect, this will disqualify us from doing the priestly service. Nevertheless, we would still be qualified to enjoy Christ as our food.

If we study Leviticus 21 using the outline contained in this message, we shall be clear concerning what kind of persons we should be in order to keep our qualifications to serve God as priests. We need to live a holy life, a life that befits our priesthood, and we need to keep ourselves complete, perfect, and properly balanced. How can we be this kind of person? We can be such persons only by contacting the perfect Christ, enjoying Him and experiencing Him day

by day. He will make us complete, perfect, and properly balanced. Then we shall have all the qualifications required for us to serve as priests in the New Testament age.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE FIFTY-ONE

THE HOLINESS IN ENJOYING THE HOLY THINGS AND THE ACCEPTABLE WAY FOR THE OFFERING OF A VOW AND A FREEWILL OFFERING

Scripture Reading: Lev. 22:1-33

Chapter twenty-two of Leviticus covers two things: the holiness in enjoying the holy things (vv. 2-16) and the acceptable way for the offering of a vow and a freewill offering (vv. 18-33).

I. THE HOLINESS IN ENJOYING THE HOLY THINGS

We need holiness for the enjoyment of the holy things. In order to be qualified to enjoy the holy things, we need a certain amount of holiness. We need holiness, sanctification, separation to God, to a certain degree.

A. The Holy Things Sanctified to Jehovah by the Sons of Israel

"Speak to Aaron and to his sons, that they keep themselves apart from the holy things of the sons of Israel which they sanctify to Me, so that they may not profane My holy name: I am Jehovah. Say to them, Any man among all your offspring throughout your generations who comes near the holy things which the sons of Israel sanctify to Jehovah while he is unclean, that person shall be cut off from before Me: I am Jehovah" (vv. 2-3). The holy things here signify Christ, whom God gives to His serving ones for their enjoyment. Everything that the people offered to God is a type of Christ, whom God gives to us, the serving ones, for our enjoyment. Hence, the holy things are the Christ whom we experience and enjoy.

B. An Unclean Person Being Forbidden to Eat the Holy Things, Unless He Has Bathed His Flesh in Water, That He May Not Sin and Die

In verses 3 through 9 we see that an unclean person was forbidden to eat the holy things, unless he had bathed his flesh in water, that he might not sin and die. This signifies that we should not enjoy Christ while we are defiled with unclean things, until we deal thoroughly with the defilement, that we may not be condemned and suffer spiritual death. This means that if we would enjoy Christ, we must be careful about our situation. If we are unclean or defiled in any way, we must have a thorough dealing, mainly by bathing, washing, ourselves in the Holy Spirit. Otherwise, we shall suffer a certain amount of spiritual death.

C. An Outsider, a Sojourner of a Priest, or a Hired Servant Being Forbidden to Eat the Holy Things

"No outsider shall eat of a holy thing; a sojourner of a priest or a hired servant shall not eat of a holy thing" (v. 10). This signifies that an unsaved person or one who has no share in God's service may not enjoy Christ. Such persons have no part in the priesthood and are forbidden to eat the holy things.

D. A Purchased Slave of a Priest and Those Who Were Born in a Priest's House Being Permitted to Eat the Holy Things

"But if a priest buys a slave, the purchase of his money, that one may eat of it; and those who are born in his house may eat of his food" (v. 11). This signifies that the ones purchased by Christ with His precious blood and born of God in His house may enjoy Christ. Since we have been purchased by Christ and since we were born of God in His house, we are surely qualified to enjoy Christ.

E. The Priest's Daughter Who Married an Outsider Was Forbidden to Eat the Heave Offering of the Holy Things, but If She Became a Widow or Was Divorced, and Had No Child and Returned to Her Father's House, She Was Permitted to Eat Her Father's Food

"And if the priest's daughter marries an outsider, she shall not eat of the heave offering of the holy things. But if the priest's daughter becomes a widow or is divorced, and has no child, and she returns to her father's house as in her youth, she may eat of her father's food; but no outsider shall eat of it" (vv. 12-13). This signifies that a believer who is attracted away by an outsider may not enjoy the ascended Christ. But if he cuts off his relationship with the outsider without leaving any connection and returns to the church, he may still enjoy Christ.

For one to be a daughter of the priest means that such a one belongs to the priesthood. If we who belong to the priesthood are attracted by an outsider, we are finished with the priesthood and with the enjoyment of Christ. However, if that attraction dies and we return to the church life, then our enjoyment of Christ will be recovered.

F. A Man Who Ate a Holy Thing through Ignorance Adding One-fifth More to It and Giving It to the Priest

"If a man eats a holy thing through ignorance, then he shall add one-fifth more to it and give the holy thing to the priest" (v. 14). Here we see that if someone ate a holy thing without knowing that it was holy, he was required to make restitution by adding one-fifth more to the holy thing and giving it to the priest. This signifies that our careless enjoyment of Christ should not be considered a real enjoyment of Christ but should be dealt with before God.

It is possible for us to be self-deceived regarding the enjoyment of Christ. We may think that we are enjoying Christ, when that enjoyment is not the real enjoyment of

Christ. Such a false enjoyment of Christ needs to be dealt with before God.

II. THE ACCEPTABLE WAY FOR THE OFFERING OF A VOW AND A FREEWILL OFFERING

We have briefly covered the need of holiness for the enjoyment of Christ as the holy things. Now we shall consider from verses 18 through 33 the acceptable way for the offering of a vow and a freewill offering.

A vow is much stronger than a freewill offering. Once made, a vow is something very stable, and it must be kept. A freewill offering, on the contrary, is a matter of our free will. We may make a freewill offering and then not follow through with it or even forget it. We may have a freewill offering toward God and later want to change it. This refers to a kind of consecration that is not stable or sure. A vow, however, is like an oath made with God that cannot be retracted. It must be kept. A saint may consecrate himself to God of his free will, but after a period of time, he may forget about it. But a vow cannot be cancelled. Hence, the offerings for a vow are stronger than those for a freewill offering. Furthermore, a certain offering may be accepted as a freewill offering but not as an offering for a vow.

A. AN OFFERING FOR A VOW, FOR A FREEWILL OFFERING, OR AS A PEACE OFFERING THAT WAS OFFERED TO JEHOVAH FOR A BURNT OFFERING NEEDING TO BE A MALE WITHOUT BLEMISH, OF THE HERD, OF THE SHEEP, OR OF THE GOATS, THAT IT MIGHT BE ACCEPTED

In 22:18-21 we see that an offering for a vow, for a freewill offering, or as a peace offering that was offered to Jehovah for a burnt offering had to be a male without blemish, of the herd, of the sheep, or of the goats, that it might be accepted. This signifies that our offering of the Christ whom we experience that is offered to God as God's food must be without blemish, that it might be accepted.

An offering for a vow, for a freewill offering, and as a peace offering could all be for a burnt offering. The significance of

the burnt offering is to be absolute for God. We should be absolute for God, but often we are not absolute for Him. Thus we may wish to make up our mind to have a vow with God that we would be absolute for God for the rest of our life. This vow offered to God eventually becomes a burnt offering with the significance of being absolute for God for our entire life.

A freewill offering may also become a burnt offering. Of our free will we may choose to be absolute for God. Such a freewill offering may also be offered to God as a burnt offering.

It is difficult to explain how a peace offering may be offered to God as a burnt offering. I believe that many of us have experienced this at the Lord's table. While we were enjoying the Lord as the peace offering at His table, we said to ourselves, "In the past I was not absolute for the Lord. Now as I am enjoying Him, I decide to be absolute for the Lord from now on." This is the peace offering becoming a burnt offering.

At times, we may make a strong decision to be absolute for God. This is a vow becoming a burnt offering. At other times, we may spontaneously as an exercise of our free will choose to be absolute for God. This is a freewill offering becoming a burnt offering. Sometimes while we are enjoying Christ at the Lord's table, we may have the thought that we should be absolute for God. This is a peace offering becoming a burnt offering. From this we see that three different kinds of offerings—an offering for a vow, for a freewill offering, and as a peace offering—may become a burnt offering for us to be absolute for God.

According to 22:18-21, each of these offerings needed to be a male without blemish, of the herd, of the sheep, or of the goats. A male here signifies a strong Christ. In whatever way we offer a burnt offering to God, our offering must be a strong Christ without blemish whom we have experienced.

B. Anything Blind, or Broken, or Maimed, or That Had Sores, or an Eczema, or Scabs Was Not to Be Offered as Food to Jehovah by Fire

"Anything blind, or broken, or maimed, or that has sores, or an eczema, or scabs—such you shall not offer to Jehovah

or make of them an offering by fire on the altar to Jehovah" (v. 22). This signifies that our offering of the Christ whom we experience, if it is blemished as typified by the six defects mentioned in this verse, should not be offered to God as His food for His satisfaction. Rather, we need to enjoy a Christ who is perfect, who is without defect, and who always bears a pleasant appearance. Then we shall be able to offer this One to God as God's food. This means that we shall be able to feed God with Christ for God's satisfaction.

C. An Ox or a Sheep That Had a Member Too Long or Too Short Being Allowed to Be Offered for a Freewill Offering but Not Being Accepted for a Vow

"As for an ox or a sheep that is deformed or stunted, you may offer it for a freewill offering, but for a vow it will not be accepted" (v. 23). The Hebrew for "is deformed or stunted" may also be translated "has a member that is too long or too short." A longer member is a member that exceeds the limit; a shorter member is one that is under the proper measure. Verse 23 signifies that we may, in a general way, offer to God as food the Christ whom we experience too much or too little, but if we offer in a stronger way, our offering will not be accepted.

Verse 23 indicates that we may not be balanced even in the experience of Christ. Sometimes our experience of Christ may surpass the limit. At other times it may be under the proper measure. For example, some saints stress the enjoyment of Christ, but they do not bear any fruit. The enjoyment of Christ is covered in John 15. "Abide in Me and I in you" (v. 4a). If we abide in the Lord, we shall absorb the rich life-juice from Him. Then He will abide in us to supply us and support us with all His riches. The issue of this is the bearing of fruit. Abiding in Christ issues in fruit-bearing. However, some saints emphasize the enjoyment of Christ by abiding in Him, but they do not bear fruit. This kind of experience of Christ is typified in Leviticus 22:23 by a member

that is too long. Their lack of fruit is the evidence that their experience of Christ is not balanced.

The Lord Jesus said, "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes it away.…If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is dried up; and they gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned" (John 15:2a, 6). This is not to perish—it is to lose the enjoyment of Christ. If a branch is cut off from the vine, it loses its enjoyment of the vine. We have seen such a thing with certain saints who claimed that they did not care for anything other than the enjoyment of Christ but who did not bear any fruit, even after a period of years. Their kind of enjoyment was an overstretching; it was like a member that is too long. No fruit issued from their experience of Christ.

Other saints are short in the enjoyment of Christ, and, as a result, they likewise do not bear fruit. Regarding the experience of Christ, these saints are not up to the standard. Those who are too much and those who are too little in their experience of Christ are alike in that they fail to bear fruit.

In John 15 we see the proper, balanced way to experience Christ. We need to abide in Christ that we may enjoy Him, yet we still need to bear fruit. We need to check whether or not our enjoyment of Christ is real by the matter of fruit-bearing. Bearing fruit is the evidence that our enjoyment of Christ is within the limit.

In John 15:16 the Lord Jesus says, "You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and I appointed you that you should go forth and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain." The Lord does not say that we should simply abide in Him without doing anything, for that would be to exceed the limit and thus to have an overstretching enjoyment of Christ. We need to visit others that we might bear fruit.

Then regarding abiding and fruit-bearing we shall be balanced. Abiding is for fruit-bearing, and fruit-bearing is an evidence of the real enjoyment of Christ. If we are really enjoying Christ, we shall go forth to bear fruit.

D. Anything with Its Testicles Bruised, Crushed, Broken, or Cut Not Being Allowed to Be Offered to Jehovah

"And anything with its testicles bruised, or crushed, or broken, or cut, you shall not offer to Jehovah; you shall not do this in your land" (Lev. 22:24). This signifies that we should not offer to God as food the Christ whom we have experienced with the spiritual function damaged in any way. We need to enjoy Christ as One whose reproductive organ has not been damaged. This means that the Christ whom we experience should have a reproducing organ that is perfect and whole that we may be able to produce more and more of Christ. According to John 15, this is to bear fruit.

E. Anything Obtained from the Hand of Foreigners That Was Offered to God as His Food, Having Ruin and a Blemish in It, Not Being Accepted by Him

"Neither shall you offer as the food of your God any of these things obtained from the hand of a foreigner; for they are ruined, a blemish is in them; they shall not be accepted for you" (v. 25). This signifies that our offering of the Christ whom we experience that is offered to God as food by the way of the unbelievers will not be accepted by God. Concerning offering Christ to God, nothing should be done in a foreign way. We should not enjoy Christ and offer Christ to God in a way that is according to the unbelievers. If we do this, our offering will not be accepted by God.

F. A Newborn Bull, Sheep, or Goat Needing to Remain with Its Mother until the Eighth Day, and Thereafter Being Accepted for an Offering by Fire to Jehovah as His Food

"When a bull, or a sheep, or a goat is born, it shall remain seven days with its mother, and from the eighth day on it shall be accepted for an offering by fire to Jehovah" (v. 27). This signifies that our experience of Christ must grow to the

level of resurrection before it will be accepted as an offering to God for His food.

If our experience of Christ is not up to the level of resurrection, something natural remains with us. Such an experience is somewhat childish. Therefore, we need to grow in the experience of Christ.

I like to hear the young ones testifying of their experience of Christ. However, because their experience of Christ is not yet at the eighth day, they need to grow in experiencing Christ. Even if our experience of Christ is on the seventh day, we still are not up to the level. Our experience of Christ needs to come to the eighth day; that is, it needs to be on the level of resurrection.

If our experience of Christ is to reach the level of resurrection, we must learn how to reject our natural life and to abandon everything in our being that is natural. For example, the new believers have begun to love the Lord, but their love for Him is natural. We should love the Lord, but we should not love Him with our natural love. We should love the Lord by having our natural life crucified. On the one hand, we should love the Lord; on the other hand, we should deny our natural life to the uttermost. This will help us to grow up to the level of resurrection in loving the Lord. When we love the Lord in this way, no part of our love for Him remains natural. We all need to deny our natural love, natural ability, and natural strength in doing anything for the Lord. Then we shall live a life that is for Christ up to the standard of His resurrection.

G. An Ox or a Sheep Not Being Allowed to Be Slaughtered with Its Young on the Same Day

"Whether it is an ox or a sheep, you shall not slaughter both it and its young on the same day" (v. 28). This signifies that what we offer of Christ to God as God's food must match our measure in the divine life. Our offering of Christ to God must match the measure of the divine life we have experienced.

If we have the growth in the divine life, we shall be able to offer something of Christ to God as His food. However, if we are too immature in the divine life, we shall not be able to offer anything to God that would be acceptable to Him as food.

H. A Sacrifice of Thanksgiving to Jehovah Needing to Be Sacrificed So That It May Be Accepted, by Eating It on the Day It Is Sacrificed, Not Leaving Any of It until Morning

"And when you sacrifice a sacrifice of thanksgiving to Jehovah, you shall sacrifice it so that you may be accepted. It shall be eaten on that day; you shall not leave any of it until morning: I am Jehovah" (vv. 29-30). This signifies that our offering of Christ as a thanksgiving to God must be fresh and new, with nothing left to become stale. If our offering is stale, it is still an offering, but it is not acceptable to God. Everything we offer to God should be fresh and new. Our experience of Christ needs to be adjusted, balanced, fresh, and new.

We need to have fresh and new experiences of Christ. This will create thanksgiving within us. Then what we offer to God of the Christ whom we have experienced will not be stale but will be fresh and new.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE FIFTY-TWO

THE FESTIVALS

(1)

Scripture Reading: Lev. 23:1-14

In this message we come to a wonderful matter in the book of Leviticus—the festivals.

According to the sequence of this book, by the end of chapter twenty-two we have been brought from our uncleanness to the priesthood with its enjoyment. The next item is the festivals, which are for rest and enjoyment, both of which are types of Christ as our rest and enjoyment. This indicates that in Leviticus, a book of God's priesthood for God's service in the fellowship of God, our service results, issues, in Christ as the rest and enjoyment we have with God and with one another. In other words, the issue of this service is the festivals.

These festivals did not take place occasionally at certain times. On the contrary, they were appointed by God, ordained by Him. God ordained the festivals that His people might rest with Him and be joyful with Him, that they might enjoy all that He has provided for His redeemed people. They were to enjoy all these things with God and with one another.

I. THE SEASONS APPOINTED BY JEHOVAH AS HOLY CONVOCATIONS

Leviticus 23:2 says, "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, The appointed seasons of Jehovah which you shall proclaim as holy convocations—My appointed seasons are these." The word "convocation" denotes something larger and more serious than a meeting. A convocation is a special assembly called for a special and particular purpose. The

seasons appointed by Jehovah as holy convocations signify the gathering of God's redeemed people to have a festival with God for His joy and enjoyment that the redeemed may participate in it with Him and with one another. A festival, therefore, was for nothing except rest and enjoyment. This rest and enjoyment were not individual but corporate.

A. The Weekly Season—the Sabbath

"Six days work may be done, but on the seventh day there shall be a sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation; you shall not do any work; it is a sabbath to Jehovah wherever you dwell" (v. 3). The weekly season—the sabbath—signifies rest for God's redeemed people to enjoy with God and with one another. Every seven days there was to be a day for rest and enjoyment. On that day there was to be an assembly, a holy convocation. This indicates that on the sabbath God's redeemed people were to gather together. If they did not come together, they would have been able to enjoy rest with God, but they could not have enjoyed rest with God and with one another in a corporate way.

1. Being the Principal Denotation of All the Annual Seasons (Feasts) for God's Redeemed People to Rest with God and with One Another

The principal denotation of all the annual seasons (feasts) is for God's people to enjoy rest with God and with one another. The weekly rest is thus the denotation of each of the seven annual seasons. Every annual feast, like the weekly rest, was a rest.

2. A Solemn Rest

The weekly sabbath was a solemn rest. It was not something light or common but something quite holy, sacred, and important for God's enjoyment and His people's enjoyment. This solemn rest signifies a genuine and thorough rest of God and with God for God's redeemed people to enjoy with Him and with one another.

3. A Holy Convocation

Whenever a festival took place, it was a holy convocation. A holy convocation signifies a corporate enjoyment of rest, not by individual believers separately but by the church corporately. In such a gathering we have the enjoyment of God before God, with God, and with one another.

4. Not Doing Any Work

On the sabbath no one was allowed to do any work. This signifies having no need of human labor.

5. A Sabbath to Jehovah

The sabbath was "to Jehovah." This signifies a rest for God's enjoyment, participated in by His redeemed people. In all the convocations, in all the festivals, we are doing one thing—resting before God and with God and one another.

B. The Annual Seasons (Feasts)

There were seven annual seasons (feasts). Seven is the number of fullness. The seven annual feasts were in the fullness of God's riches.

In the Bible the number seven is composed two ways: four plus three and one plus six. The seven festivals in Leviticus 23 are in two groups, with four in the first group and three in the second. The four festivals in the first group all took place in the first month of the year. The three festivals in the second group took place in the seventh month of the year. According to their dispensational fulfillment, the first four have taken place already, and the last three will take place in the future.

1. The Feast of the Passover

"These are the appointed seasons of Jehovah, the holy convocations, which you shall proclaim at their appointed times. In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month in the evening is the passover to Jehovah" (vv. 4-5). The feast of the Passover signifies Christ (1 Cor. 5:7b) as our redemption to begin our enjoyment of God's salvation with God.

a. In the First Month of the Year

The Passover is in the first month of the year. This signifies the beginning of a course.

b. In the Denotation of a Passing Over

The Passover is in the denotation of a passing over. This signifies that the judging God has passed over us, the sinners who are in our sins, so that we may enjoy Him as our feast. Today we have a feast, which is the redeeming God Himself, and we are enjoying Him for rest and for joy.

2. The Feast of Unleavened Bread

"And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread to Jehovah; for seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall not do any laborious work. For seven days you shall offer an offering by fire to Jehovah. On the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation; you shall not do any laborious work" (Lev. 23:6-8). The feast of unleavened bread signifies the Christ who is without sin (2 Cor. 5:21) for our enjoyment as a feast in a life apart from sin.

The feast of unleavened bread, the second feast, begins immediately after the first feast, the Passover. The first feast is on the fourteenth day of the first month, and the second feast begins on the next day. Actually, these two feasts—the feast of Passover and the feast of unleavened bread—are put together. The first feast is the beginning, and the second is the continuation. Whereas the first feast is for just one day, the fourteenth day of the first month, the second feast lasts for seven days, from the fifteenth day through the twenty-first day.

In that the feast of unleavened bread lasts for seven days, it typifies, or signifies, the entire course of our Christian life. The course of our entire Christian life is a feast of unleavened bread, a feast without sin. We have been redeemed from sin, and now the Redeemer, who is without sin, is our feast for our entire Christian life. Today we are in a feast enjoying rest, enjoying God, and enjoying our Redeemer, apart from

sin. As those who are enjoying this feast, we have nothing to do with sin.

a. Eating Unleavened Bread for Seven Days

Eating unleavened bread for seven days (v. 6b) signifies that we live a sinless life daily by enjoying Christ for the full course of our Christian life. In their teaching, the Brethren did not have much to say about Christ being our life apart from sin for our entire Christian life. Therefore, we need to emphasize this matter today. Having passed through the Passover, we are now enjoying the feast of unleavened bread. In this feast we enjoy one bread—the unleavened bread—which signifies the Christ who is unleavened, the Christ who is apart from sin.

When did we have our Passover? It is not easy to answer this question. Corporately as God's New Testament people, we passed through the Passover on the day the Lord Jesus established His table. The Lord's table is the replacement of the Old Testament Passover. The Lord Jesus, the very Lamb of the Passover, after being examined for some days, was put to death on the Passover. In the evening before He was crucified, He established the table (Matt. 26:26-30). First He "took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is My body" (v. 26). Then He gave them the cup, saying, "Drink of it, all of you; for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins" (vv. 27b-28). This is the Lord's table becoming the replacement of the Passover. Although we have passed through this feast, we still keep it. Every week, on the first day of the week, we have the New Testament Passover. Hence, we are still enjoying this feast.

Individually we passed through the feast of Passover at the time we were saved. This means that, individually, we passed through the Passover at different times. Immediately after that feast, we were put into another feast, the feast of unleavened bread. The main thing we enjoy in the Passover feast is Christ as our Lamb. In the feast of unleavened bread, the main thing we enjoy is Christ as the

unleavened bread, as our life supply without sin. Now for our whole Christian life we live day by day on this bread that is without sin.

b. On the First Day Having a Holy Convocation and Not Doing Any Laborious Work

On the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the people were to have a holy convocation and not do any laborious work (v. 7). This signifies that from the very beginning of the course of our Christian life we enjoy Christ corporately as our feast, without our human labor.

c. For Seven Days Offering an Offering by Fire to God

For seven days the people were to offer an offering by fire to God (v. 8a). This signifies that we offer Christ as food to God continually through the full course of our Christian life. Christ is our food. After we enjoy Him as food, He becomes our offering to God to be food for God. At the Lord's table we make a display to the entire universe that during the week we take Christ as our unleavened food, as our life supply apart from sin, and that we come to the table with Him. Then we offer to God for His satisfaction the One we have been enjoying as our food. In so doing, we experience Him as our enjoyment.

d. On the Seventh Day Having a Holy Convocation and Not Doing Any Laborious Work

On the seventh day also the people were to have a holy convocation and not do any laborious work (v. 8b). This signifies that we continue to enjoy Christ corporately, without our human labor, until the last day of the course of our Christian life.

3. The Feast of the Firstfruits

The third annual feast is the feast of the firstfruits (vv. 9-14). This feast signifies the resurrected Christ (1 Cor. 15:20) for our enjoyment as a feast in His resurrection.

This feast took place less than three days after the Passover feast. Christ was crucified at the time of the Passover feast, and then on the third day He was resurrected. The day of His resurrection was the feast of the firstfruits. This is Christ in His resurrection as the firstfruits.

a. The Sheaf (Not One Single Stalk of Wheat) of the Firstfruits of the Harvest Being Brought to God

"Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, When you enter into the land which I give to you and reap its harvest, you shall bring the sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest" (v. 10). This signifies that the resurrected Christ, with some of the Old Testament saints (cf. Matt. 27:52-53), was brought to God. When Christ was resurrected, some of the Old Testament saints were resurrected with Him. "Coming out of the tombs after His rising, they entered into the holy city and appeared to many" (Matt. 27:53). With Christ, these resurrected saints became not a "stalk" but a "sheaf that was brought to God, just as in the type the firstfruits were brought into the sanctuary and presented to God for His fresh enjoyment.

b. The Sheaf of the Offering to Be Waved before Jehovah on the Day after the Sabbath (the Eighth Day) That God's People Might Be Accepted

"And he shall wave the sheaf before Jehovah that you may be accepted; on the day after the sabbath the priest shall wave it" (Lev. 23:11). This signifies that Christ was resurrected that we might be justified before God and accepted by God (Rom. 4:25b).

c. On the Day of the Wave Offering a Male Lamb a Year Old, without Blemish, to Be Offered as a Burnt Offering to Jehovah

"On the day that you wave the sheaf, you shall offer a male lamb a year old without blemish as a burnt offering to Jehovah" (v. 12). This signifies that the resurrected Christ,

being fresh, tender, meek, strong, and without blemish, is offered to God as a burnt offering that is absolutely for God.

This life that is absolutely for God implies not only Christ Himself but also all of us who were resurrected with Him. When Christ was resurrected, we all were resurrected in Him and with Him (Eph. 2:6). This means that we were resurrected before we were born, a fact that is clearly revealed in 1 Peter 1:3. We all were offered to God with Christ as a burnt offering on the day of His resurrection. Now in Christ and with Christ as a burnt offering for God, we may live a life that is absolutely for God.

d. The Waved Sheaf's Meal Offering of Fine Flour Mingled with Oil as an Offering by Fire to Jehovah for a Satisfying Fragrance

"*Its* meal offering shall be two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mingled with oil as an offering by fire to Jehovah for a satisfying fragrance" (Lev. 23:13a). This signifies the resurrected Christ as our meal offering mingled with the anointing Spirit, offered to God as food in His resurrection as a fragrance for God's satisfaction.

The resurrected Christ is first our burnt offering and then our meal offering. As the burnt offering, Christ is for us to live a life that is absolutely for God. As the meal offering, Christ supplies us, supports us, and strengthens us to live such an absolute life for God.

Christ was crucified and buried, and then on the third day He rose from among the dead. With this resurrected One some Old Testament saints were resurrected. I believe that this is a sign indicating that all who believe in Him will one day be resurrected. The resurrected Christ has become a burnt offering that includes all His believers, who may now live a life that is absolutely for God. Christ has also become a meal offering mingled with oil, which signifies the Holy Spirit. Actually, in His resurrection Christ Himself became this Spirit. The fine flour in the meal offering is also Christ Himself. He was a grain (John 12:24), but He was finely ground into fine flour which is mingled with oil to become

the meal offering, which is the life supply to support us to live a life that is absolutely for God.

e. With the Drink Offering of Wine

With the burnt offering and the meal offering there was the drink offering of wine (Lev. 23:13b). This signifies the resurrected Christ in His human life who lived absolutely for God and was poured out on the cross, offered to God in His resurrection for God's enjoyment.

On the cross Christ was not only crucified; He was also poured out. He was crucified as the sin offering, the trespass offering, the burnt offering, and the peace offering, but He was poured out as the drink offering, as the wine poured out before God for His satisfaction. Christ included us when He was crucified and also when He was poured out. In Christ we all were poured out to God as a drink offering. Today we have to live a life as a burnt offering that is absolutely for God. This life is supported by the meal offering as our daily food. Meanwhile, since God is One who enjoys drinking, we should also be a drink offering poured out for God's drinking. Such a drink offering is altogether for God's enjoyment to be our enjoyment with Him and with one another.

f. No Bread of Wheat nor Roasted Grain nor Fresh Ears to Be Eaten until the Sheaf of the Firstfruits of the Harvest Was Brought to God

"And you shall eat neither bread nor roasted grain nor fresh ears until that same day, until you have brought the offering of your God; it shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations wherever you dwell" (v. 14). This signifies that the resurrected Christ ascended to the heavens and was offered to God with all the fruit in His resurrection as God's food for God's satisfaction first. Then He became man's supply for man's satisfaction.

The resurrected Christ, the fresh Christ in His resurrection, was first to be enjoyed by God. This is the firstfruits, and the firstfruits are for God's enjoyment. Then the resurrected Christ becomes our enjoyment with God and with one another.

The feast of the Passover, the feast of unleavened bread, and the feast of firstfruits all took place within about three days. Christ was crucified on the Passover, and, within three days, He was resurrected on the day of the feast of firstfruits. Between the feast of the Passover and the feast of firstfruits, the feast of unleavened bread began. Therefore, all three of these feasts took place within the time of the Lord's death and resurrection. Through His death and resurrection we now enjoy the feast of Passover, the feast of unleavened bread, and the feast of firstfruits. As we shall see in the next message, we still need the feast of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was poured out from the heavens for the completion of our New Testament Christian feast. We enjoy Christ in His death, we enjoy Christ in His resurrection, and we enjoy Christ in His being poured out from the heavens as the economical Spirit of God.

These four feasts are constituted of Christ's death, Christ's resurrection, and Christ's being poured out as the economical Spirit of God. These feasts have become our enjoyment, and we are keeping them continually. We Christians are always having festivals for the enjoyment of Christ in His death, in His resurrection, and in His being poured out from the heavens as the economical Spirit.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE FIFTY-THREE

THE FESTIVALS

(2)

Scripture Reading: Lev. 23:15-22

In this message we come to the fourth feast, the feast of Pentecost. This feast belongs to the first group of feasts, which includes the feast of the Passover, the feast of unleavened bread, the feast of the firstfruits, and the feast of Pentecost.

These four feasts may be applied both to history and to our experience. The Passover was on the fourteenth day of the first month of the Jewish year. On this day Jesus Christ was slain as our Passover. Whereas the Passover in the Old Testament was a type, Christ is the real Passover to us. He is the reality of the Passover, the fulfillment in history of the type of the Passover. The feast of the Passover was followed by the feast of unleavened bread and the feast of the firstfruits. Christ's resurrection was the fulfillment of the feast of the firstfruits and is the reality of this feast. The feast of the firstfruits was followed by the feast of Pentecost.

These historical facts can be applied to us in our experience according to the history of Christ. In other words, what Christ has accomplished and achieved in His history can become our experience. This is why the first group of feasts can be applied in two ways—to Christ's history and to our Christian experience.

When we were saved, we experienced the feast of the Passover. Because Christ was slain for us, God could pass over us. We thus enjoyed the reality of the Passover. What the Jews enjoyed in Egypt was merely a type; what we enjoy is the reality. This is a matter not only of Christ's history but of our experience.

After we experienced the feast of the Passover, we began to enjoy Christ as our unleavened bread and to live an unleavened life. Christ is unleavened, sinless. With Him there is no sin. We can live such a life by being supplied and supported by Him.

In our experience we also enjoy Christ as our feast of the firstfruits. As the resurrected One, He is now living within us. Christ is not only the unleavened One but also the One who died and lived again and who lives forever. He lives within us as the firstfruit for our daily enjoyment.

The fourth feast, the feast of Pentecost, or the feast of weeks, took place seven weeks after Christ's resurrection. The time from Christ's resurrection to the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was poured out from the heavens by the ascended Christ, was fifty days. Pentecost means fifty days. Christ's resurrection was on the first day of the week. This day is also called the eighth day. Counting seven weeks from this day, we reach the fiftieth day, which was also a first day of the week and an eighth day. Christ rose up on the first day of the week, and the day of Pentecost took place also on the first day of the week.

After His resurrection, the Lord Jesus appeared to His disciples over a period of forty days (Acts 1:3). Although He would appear and then disappear, He never left the disciples. On the day of His resurrection. He appeared to them and breathed Himself as the life-giving Spirit into them (John 20:22), and from that time onward He was living not only among the disciples but also within them. The Lord's appearing to the disciples simply means that He made His presence visible to them; it does not mean that He ever left them. The Lord's appearing and disappearing was a training to the disciples. During those forty days after His resurrection, the Lord Jesus was training His disciples to realize and enjoy His invisible presence. Even though He was invisible, they could still appreciate and experience His invisible presence. Today the Lord Jesus is also with us and in us. We cannot see Him. But we believe that He is with us and in us.

After those forty days, the Lord Jesus ascended to the

heavens, leaving the disciples on earth. For the next ten days they prayed continually in one accord. Then on the fiftieth day a great event took place—the consummation of the Triune God was poured out. This consummation is the all-inclusive, life-giving, compound Spirit of the processed Triune God. Such a One—the totality of the Triune God—was poured out upon the one hundred twenty disciples, who represented the Body of Christ.

Pentecost is the full issue of Christ's resurrection, and Christ's resurrection is the issue of His death. Without death there cannot be resurrection. The Lord's death on the cross issued in His resurrection, and His resurrection issued not only in His ascension but also in His being poured out as the consummation of the processed Triune God upon His Body. Since this happened on Pentecost, the feast of Pentecost is a great manifestation of God's economy.

As a result of what took place on the day of Pentecost, the Body of Christ came into existence. Prior to that time, in God's economy there was only the individual Christ to fulfill the desire of God's heart. But at Pentecost the Body of Christ came into being to match Christ, to make Him a corporate Christ. Now Christ has a Body, and this Body is His increase, His enlargement, His extension, even His expansion. Today we are a part of Christ's extension. Every local church is a small part of the universal extension of Christ, which came into being on the day of Pentecost.

The first four festivals form a group that bears a great significance. This significance includes the death of Christ, the resurrection of Christ, the ascension of Christ, and the outpouring of the consummated Spirit of the processed Triune God to produce the Body of Christ as the enlargement, the increase, the extension, the expansion, of the unlimited, individual Christ into a universal, corporate Christ.

Historically, the first four festivals are all related to Christ. He is the fulfillment and reality of the Passover, the unleavened bread, and the firstfruit. In a spiritual form, as the consummation of the processed Triune God, Christ is also the fulfillment and reality of Pentecost. All these

historical instances have become our experience. We have participated in the Passover, in the unleavened bread, and in the firstfruit, and we have become a part of Pentecost.

Pentecost is a matter of forty-nine days plus the first day of the week. This involves eight first days, from the first first day, the day of resurrection, to the eighth first day, which is the fiftieth day. This indicates from resurrection to resurrection. Here everything is in resurrection, for we have eight times resurrection.

We all are those in resurrection. We were produced on the first first day of the week, and we have come to the eighth first day. Now we are a part of Christ's expansion, part of His increase, enlargement, and extension. No longer is Christ merely an individual Christ; He is now a corporate Christ. This corporate Christ includes us. The church, therefore, is Christ incorporated.

We need to see that we are now in Pentecost and that the component of Pentecost is eight times resurrection. Here we have the expansion of the incorporated Christ. This expansion as the enlargement, the increase, of Christ is actually the mingling of the processed Triune God with His chosen and redeemed people. There is such a mingling in the universe, a mingling that is the achievement of God's eternal economy and the fulfillment of God's eternal desire. We may not have much realization of this today, but we shall have the full realization of it in the New Jerusalem. Do you know what the New Jerusalem is? The New Jerusalem is the real increase, enlargement, expansion, and extension of the all-inclusive, immeasurable, untraceable Christ, who fills all in all. Praise the Lord that we all are parts of the enlargement of Christ produced on the day of Pentecost!

4. The Feast of Pentecost (the Feast of the Fiftieth Day, Counting from the Day after the Sabbath, the Day on Which the Sheaf of the Wave Offering Was Brought to God, to the Day after the Seventh Sabbath)

"You shall count from the day after the sabbath; from the

day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering, there shall be seven complete weeks. You shall count fifty days to the day after the seventh sabbath" (Lev. 23:15-16a). The feast of Pentecost was the feast of the fiftieth day, counting from the day after the sabbath, the day on which the sheaf of the wave offering was brought to God, to the day after the seventh sabbath. This signifies the resurrection of Christ in its sevenfold fullness reaching the realm of the complete fullness, bearing the full responsibility (signified by the number fifty, which is ten times five, the number of responsibility) for the testimony of resurrection.

When the angels look at us from the heavens, they see us as testimonies of Christ's resurrection. We, however, may still have the feeling that we are unclean and leprous, that we have unclean discharges, and that we are surrounded by confusion and all kinds of religion. But in the sight of God we all are a part of the testimony of Christ's resurrection. Now that we are in Leviticus 23 and in the feast of Pentecost, we should forget all the negative things. Here there is no uncleanness or leprosy. Instead, there is the extension of Christ.

a. Offering a New Meal Offering to Jehovah of Two Loaves of Bread Baked with Leaven as Firstfruits to Jehovah

"Then you shall offer a new meal offering to Jehovah. You shall bring from your dwellings two loaves of bread of two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour as a wave offering; they shall be baked with leaven as firstfruits to Jehovah" (vv. 16b-17). This signifies that the fine flour, typifying Christ at the stage of the firstfruits, has become the two loaves, typifying the church in two sections at the stage of Pentecost, one of which sections is the church of the Jews and the other the church of the Gentiles, both of which had sins (signified by the leaven) within them, offered to God as the new meal offering for God's satisfaction.

The type in Leviticus 23:17 does not speak of one loaf or of three loaves but of two loaves. These two loaves signify

the two parts of the church as the Body of Christ, the Jewish part and the Gentile part. These two parts are represented by the saints in Jerusalem and by those in the house of Cornelius.

Why were the loaves in 23:17 to be baked with leaven when according to Leviticus 2 there was to be no leaven in the meal offering? The reason is that in each part of the church as the Body, as typified by these two loaves, there still is sin. We see this clearly in the book of Acts, for example, with the sin of Ananias and Sapphira in chapter five and the murmuring over the distribution of food in chapter six.

As the type indicates, not only is Christ the firstfruits but the church also is the firstfruits. The two loaves that were baked with leaven and that typify the church were firstfruits. Christ, the firstfruit as the fine flour, was the firstfruit on the day of resurrection. Eventually, this fine flour became the two loaves. Hence, these loaves are the increase, the expansion, of the fine flour that came out of the firstfruit on the day of resurrection. Typologically this indicates that Christ has become the church, that the church is the enlargement of Christ. As such an enlargement of Christ, the church with its two parts is offered to God for His satisfaction.

b. Offering with the Bread Seven Lambs a Year Old without Blemish, One Young Bull, and Two Rams as a Burnt Offering to Jehovah, with Their Meal Offerings and Drink Offerings, as an Offering by Fire of a Satisfying Fragrance to Jehovah

"And you shall offer with the bread seven lambs a year old without blemish, one young bull, and two rams; they shall be a burnt offering to Jehovah, with their meal offerings and their drink offerings, as an offering by fire of a satisfying fragrance to Jehovah" (v. 18). This signifies that the church on the day of Pentecost was a corporate man offered to God as a burnt offering to live absolutely for God, with a living as a meal offering mixed with leaven—sins—and as a drink offering (pouring out its life for God by being martyred) to be an offering by fire

accepted by God by being consumed for the satisfaction of both God and man.

In the sight of God, the early church was a drink offering because many of the believers were martyred. They poured out their soul to God for His satisfaction, even as Christ poured out His soul on the cross to God.

c. Offering One Male Goat for a Sin Offering and Two Male Lambs a Year Old for Peace Offerings, Waved with the Bread of the Firstfruits as a Wave Offering before Jehovah

"You shall offer one male goat for a sin offering, and two male lambs a year old for a sacrifice of peace offerings. And the priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits as a wave offering before Jehovah, with the two male lambs; they shall be holy to Jehovah for the priest" (vv. 19-20). This signifies that because of its sins, the church on the day of Pentecost needed Christ as its sin offering, and for the sake of the fellowship of man with God and man with man, it needed Christ as its peace offering. At the same time, it enjoyed Christ as its wave offering.

With the church at Pentecost there were the sin offering, the peace offering, and the wave offering. The sin offering is for sin, the peace offering is for fellowship, and the wave offering signifies resurrection. All three offerings refer, of course, to Christ.

d. Proclaiming and Having a Holy Convocation and Not Doing Any Laborious Work

"On that same day you shall make a proclamation; you shall have a holy convocation; you shall not do any laborious work. It shall be a perpetual statute wherever you dwell throughout your generations" (v. 21). This signifies having God's redeemed people as the church enjoy Christ with God without any need of human labor to add anything. Because everything has been completed, finished, there is no need of any human labor. Instead of labor, there should be rest.

e. In Reaping the Harvest of the Land, Not Reaping Completely the Corners of the Field, Neither Gathering the Gleanings of the Harvest but Leaving Them for the Poor and for the Aliens

"When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not completely reap the corners of your field, neither shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest; you shall leave them for the poor and for the alien: I am Jehovah your God" (v. 22). This signifies that the grace of Christ in His resurrection at the feast of Pentecost has a remainder in which we, the poor and the Gentiles, may participate.

We are those typified by the poor and the aliens, and our portion is the gleanings. This is the extraordinary portion of God's grace. Such a portion is illustrated by the case of the Canaanite woman in Matthew 15. When the Lord Jesus said to her, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs," she replied, "Yea, Lord; for even the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table" (vv. 26-27). Instead of being offended by the Lord's word, she admitted that she was a "dog." She also realized that Christ, the "children's bread," had been rejected by the Jews and had become the "crumbs" under the table for the Gentile dogs to enjoy. This is the gleanings, the harvest at the corners of the field, that was to be left for the poor and the aliens.

We may be poor Gentiles, but we have our portion of the Pentecost harvest. Now we may enjoy the Pentecost Triune God, the Pentecost Christ, and the Pentecost all-inclusive Spirit as our portion. This portion has made us part of Christ's increase, enlargement, extension, and expansion.

The first four festivals—Passover, unleavened bread, firstfruits, and Pentecost—are all related to food and to the matter of eating for God's satisfaction, yet God's heart still remembers the poor and the aliens. Hence, we, the Gentiles, are able to participate in the grace of Christ at the feast of Pentecost as that which was accomplished on the church.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE FIFTY-FOUR

THE FESTIVALS

(3)

Scripture Reading: Lev. 23:23-44

After living on earth as a God-man for thirty-three and a half years, the Lord Jesus died on the cross as the fulfillment and reality of the type of the Passover. By His death on the cross He accomplished redemption and terminated all the negative things in the universe. The outcome of such a death was resurrection with the issue of the divine life, which is the reality of the consummated Triune God to be our portion. In Christ's resurrection we all have a portion in this consummated Triune God.

After His resurrection, the Lord Jesus ascended to the heavens. In His ascension He poured out Himself as the consummation of the processed Triune God in the form of the economical Spirit.

Although our God is eternally perfect. He still needed a consummation. Before His incarnation, He was merely God without a consummation. But as the result of the processes through which He passed, He has been consummated. The consummation of the processed Triune God is the all-inclusive, life-giving, compound Spirit. As such a consummation. He poured out Himself upon us, making us a part of His enlargement. This is the significance of Pentecost.

Pentecost is the issue of Christ's resurrection, and His resurrection is the issue of His all-inclusive death. All this has become a wonderful feast for God and for us.

The ultimate issue of the processed Triune God is Pentecost. By the time we come to the feast of Pentecost, all the negative things have been cleared away, and all the positive

things have been released. The processed Triune God as the consummated One has been poured upon us to bring us into Himself so that we may be His extension, enlargement, increase, and expansion. Now we are Christ's Body, and in this Body we have the mingling of the consummated, processed Triune God with the chosen, redeemed, regenerated, and transformed tripartite man. The entire universe is for this, and it will remain forever. Eventually, it will become the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth as the complete, eternal testimony of the consummated Triune God with His redeemed ones.

Having covered the first four feasts, we shall go on in this message to cover the last three—the feast of the blowing of trumpets, the feast of propitiation, and the feast of tabernacles.

The first group of four feasts took place in the first half of the year. The second group of three feasts took place in the second half of the year. The first four feasts point to the past and to the present. These feasts have been fulfilled in Christ, yet we are still experiencing and enjoying them. We are enjoying the feast of Passover, and we are still in the feast of unleavened bread and the feast of the first-fruits. Furthermore, we are still in the feast of Pentecost, which is actually a feast of the church.

The second group of feasts points to the future, to the coming days, to the time of the Lord's coming back. When the Lord Jesus comes back, these three feasts will be fulfilled.

5. The Feast of the Blowing of Trumpets

Leviticus 23:23-25 tells us of the feast of the blowing of trumpets. This feast signifies God's calling together of His scattered people (the dispersed Israelites) and His reminding them that He will issue such a call to them (Matt. 24:31; cf. Isa. 27:13; Psa. 81:3).

a. On the First Day of the Seventh Month, the Beginning of the Second Half of the Year

"Speak to the sons of Israel and say. In the seventh month,

on the first day of the month, you shall have a solemn rest, a memorial proclaimed by blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation" (Lev. 23:24). Here we see that the feast of the blowing of trumpets was on the first day of the seventh month, the beginning of the second half of the year. This signifies the second half of God's redemption, which is to be accomplished on Israel, the first half having been accomplished on the church. Although the second half of God's redemption will be applied to Israel, it will still be related to us.

Between the fourth feast, Pentecost, and the fifth feast, the blowing of trumpets, there appears to be nothing. Actually, this interval is the church age, which is called the age of mystery. The church age lasts from the day of Pentecost, when the church came into being, until the day God calls His scattered people to come back together.

The feasts of Pentecost and the blowing of trumpets may be compared to two distant mountain peaks which appear to be close together but actually are very far apart. We may liken the distance between these two peaks to the time span between the feast of Pentecost and the feast of the blowing of trumpets. The time span has already been more than nineteen hundred years. This long period of time is the age of the church, the age of mystery.

b. To Have a Solemn Rest

The feast of the blowing of trumpets was a solemn rest (v. 24b). This signifies causing God's gathered people to enter into God's genuine and thorough rest.

During the twenty-seven hundred years since the carrying away to Babylon, the Jews have been a people without rest. They lost their homeland because they rejected the God of rest. Only a part of the homeland has been recovered, and the Jews today are still struggling, for they are a people without rest. When the trumpet sounds, God will call His scattered people, who have so long been without rest, back to the land of their fathers. Then they will have rest with God. They will enjoy Christ as the absolute and thorough rest. For the Jews, that will be a real feast.

c. As a Memorial
Proclaimed by the Blowing of Trumpets

This feast was a memorial proclaimed by the blowing of trumpets (v. 24c). This signifies that from the time the children of Israel slew the Lord Jesus and were scattered, there has been nothing among them that could be a memorial before God. But at the Lord's coming back, God's calling them together from their dispersion back to their fathers' land will be a real memorial to them.

d. To Have a Holy Convocation

The solemn rest proclaimed by the blowing of trumpets was a holy convocation. Having such a holy convocation signifies returning to God and becoming a corporate people.

e. Not Doing Any Laborious Work
but Bringing an Offering by Fire to Jehovah

"You shall not do any laborious work; you shall bring an offering by fire to Jehovah" (v. 25). This signifies that without the need of any human labor, God's gathered people will be able to offer Christ to God as food for the satisfaction of both God and man.

6. The Feast of Propitiation

The sixth feast is the feast of propitiation, the day of propitiation closely following Israel's repentance unto God (vv. 26-32). This signifies that the day of man's redemption follows our trumpeting of the gospel and man's repentance as a reaction to it.

a. Having a Holy Convocation

The feast of propitiation was a holy convocation (v. 27b). This signifies that it is not a festival for individuals but for a congregation.

b. Afflicting Their Souls
and Bringing an Offering by Fire unto Jehovah

On the day of propitiation, the people were to afflict their souls and bring an offering by fire to Jehovah (vv. 27c, 29).

This signifies mourning, repenting, and feeling sorrowful for sin, and offering Christ as food to God for the satisfaction of both God and man. According to Zechariah 12, this is what the Jews will do when the Lord Jesus comes back.

c. Not Doing Any Work but Having a Sabbath of Rest

On the day of propitiation, the people were not to do any work but were to have a sabbath of rest (vv. 28, 30-32a). This signifies that God's redeemed people do not need to do any work for their redemption but should rest in the redemption God has accomplished for them, that God too may rest in His redeemed.

d. On the Ninth Day of the Month in the Evening, from Evening to Evening God's Returned People Keeping the Sabbath

"On the ninth day of the month at evening, from evening to evening you shall keep your sabbath" (v. 32b). This signifies that the rest of God's redeemed people is a full and complete rest.

On the first day of the seventh month was the festival of the blowing of trumpets, and the feast of propitiation was on the tenth day of that month. The festival of the blowing of trumpets will be fulfilled when the Lord Jesus comes back, and the trumpet sounds to call together God's dispersed people, to call back the scattered Jews to their fathers' land. After the Lord Jesus has descended from the air to the earth, the Jews will repent, mourn, and return to God, receiving Christ as their Savior. This will be a literal fulfillment of the feast of propitiation.

However, the typology of this feast has already been fulfilled spiritually with us. On the cross, Christ accomplished propitiation. Using the New Testament term, He accomplished redemption. When we repented, believed, and received Christ as our Savior, we experienced this feast. Therefore, the feast of propitiation has a double application. Spiritually this feast has been applied to us, and literally it will be applied in the future to the Jews.

7. The Feast of Tabernacles

Leviticus 23:33-43 speaks of the feast of tabernacles. This feast signifies the coming millennium as a dispensational, joyful blessing for God's redeemed people to enjoy with God for a full period of time in God's old creation. This will take place not in the new heaven and new earth but on the restored earth.

a. For Seven Days

"Speak to the sons of Israel and say, On the fifteenth day of this seventh month is the feast of tabernacles for seven days to Jehovah" (v. 34). These seven days signify that the festival of tabernacles is not for one day only but for a complete course of days. This complete course will be a thousand years.

b. On the First Day Having a Holy Convocation, Not Doing Any Laborious Work

"On the first day there shall be a holy convocation; you shall not do any laborious work" (v. 35). This signifies that from the first day it is not a festival for individuals but for a congregation to enjoy rest without the need of any human labor.

c. For Seven Days Bringing an Offering by Fire to Jehovah

"For seven days you shall bring an offering by fire to Jehovah" (v. 36a). This signifies the offering of Christ day after day as food to God for the satisfaction of both God and man. According to this type, in the millennium every day an offering will be presented to God to signify that Christ is God's food in our experiences offered to God for His satisfaction so that we and God may enjoy mutual rest.

d. On the Eighth Day Having a Holy Convocation, a Sacred Assembly, to Bring an Offering by Fire to Jehovah, and Not Doing Any Laborious Work

"On the eighth day you shall have a holy convocation, and you shall bring an offering by fire to Jehovah; it is a

sacred assembly; you shall not do any laborious work" (v. 36b). This signifies that in the resurrection of Christ God's people as a sacred congregation offer Christ as food to God for the satisfaction of both God and man, not needing to do any work but resting. This indicates that the entire thousand years of the millennium will be a rest for God and for God's redeemed people.

e. Bringing an Offering by Fire to Jehovah —a Burnt Offering, a Meal Offering, a Sacrifice, and a Drink Offering, Each on Its Own Day

"These are the appointed seasons of Jehovah which you shall proclaim as holy convocations, to bring an offering by fire to Jehovah—a burnt offering and a meal offering, a sacrifice and drink offerings, each on its own day—Besides the sabbaths of Jehovah, besides your gifts, besides all your vows, and besides all your freewill offerings which you give to Jehovah" (vv. 37-38). This signifies offering Christ to God as different offerings, each on its own day, for God to enjoy with His people. Here we see that in God's heart for His enjoyment and satisfaction is Christ as everything. In different aspects Christ is God's satisfaction and enjoyment.

f. Having Gathered the Produce of the Land

"Then, on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered the produce of the land, you shall keep the feast of Jehovah seven days" (v. 39a). This signifies that the millennium will come after the harvest of what God desires to obtain on earth.

After the creation of the earth, God will go through four main dispensations. The first is the dispensation of the fathers, also called the dispensation before law or without law, from Adam to Moses. The second is the dispensation of law, from Moses to Christ's first coming. The third is the dispensation of the church, from Pentecost to Christ's second coming. The fourth is the dispensation of the millennium, the kingdom of the thousand years. In these four dispensations, God has been doing much for His new creation. In His

old creation God created the universe. The center of this old creation is the man created by God. In His eternal plan God has a purpose with man, and this purpose is to produce a people for His expression, which will consummate in the New Jerusalem.

During the four dispensations, God is working with man in the old creation. God is dispensing Himself into man to make him a new creation. Eventually, after the four dispensations, this new creation will consummate in the New Jerusalem, which will be the totality of the result of God's work of the new creation among the old creation. Today, we are in the third dispensation, the dispensation of the church. In the coming age we shall be in the fourth dispensation, the dispensation of the kingdom, either as the overcomers or as those being disciplined.

The millennial kingdom will be a full harvest of what God has been doing in the last three dispensations. Hence, the millennial kingdom will be a feast both to God and to His redeemed. If we read the New Testament carefully, we shall realize that in the millennium God's redeemed will include two peoples—the church and the kingdom of Israel. Both peoples will enjoy this feast.

g. Taking the Fruit of Beautiful Trees, Branches of Palm Trees, Boughs of Leafy Trees, and Willows of the Brook, and Rejoicing before God for Seven Days

"On the first day you shall take the fruit of beautiful trees, branches of palm trees, boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before Jehovah your God for seven days" (v. 40). This signifies the evergreen, nourishing, beautiful, and rich scenery of the humanity of Christ being lived out from God's redeemed people.

Trees are of the plant life, and in typology plants signify Christ's humanity. The trees in verse 40 signify different aspects of Christ's humanity. Christ is not only full of fruit but also full of leaves, which in a particular way show the beauty of His humanity.

"You shall rejoice before Jehovah your God for seven days" (v. 40b). This signifies the humanity of Christ being lived out of God's redeemed people in the millennium. Even today, as we are living in the church life, our relatives may be able to see something upon us that is green, beautiful, and overcoming. Some parents have testified of seeing such an expression in their children. In the millennium all the overcomers will live out the evergreen, nourishing, beautiful, and rich scenery of the humanity of Christ.

h. God's Redeemed People to Dwell in Booths for Seven Days

"You shall keep it as a feast to Jehovah for seven days in the year; it shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations; you shall keep it in the seventh month. You shall dwell in booths for seven days; all who are native in Israel shall dwell in booths" (vv. 41-42). This signifies that the coming millennium will be a conclusion of all that God has done with His redeemed people in the full course of the ages, the dispensations, in His old creation.

In the four dispensations man cannot have a solid dwelling place. Even today we are still dwelling in tabernacles, in booths. Eventually, the present, portable tabernacles will become a solid one—the New Jerusalem with a foundation of twelve layers.

II. THE DISPENSATIONAL FULFILLMENT OF THE SEVEN FESTIVALS AS TYPES

Now that we have covered the seven festivals, I would like to say a word concerning the dispensational fulfillment of the seven festivals as types.

A. The Feast of the Passover

The feast of the Passover was fulfilled on the day of Christ's death (Matt. 26:2, 17-19, 26-28; 1 Cor. 5:7).

B. The Feast of Unleavened Bread

The feast of unleavened bread is being fulfilled in the church age (1 Cor. 5:7-8).

C. The Feast of the Firstfruits

The feast of the firstfruits was fulfilled on the day of Christ's resurrection (1 Cor. 15:20).

D. The Feast of Pentecost

The feast of Pentecost was fulfilled fifty days after Christ's resurrection, on the day of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4; cf. Acts 1:3).

The above four feasts were dispensationally fulfilled in the same year, even in the first half of the year, when Christ died, resurrected, and ascended to pour out the Holy Spirit. This is all related to God's redemption and has been applied to us as Christians.

E. The Feast of the Blowing of Trumpets

The feast of the blowing of trumpets will be fulfilled at Christ's second coming (Matt. 24:31).

F. The Feast of Propitiation

The feast of propitiation will be fulfilled on the day of Israel's return to God, after they have been gathered back to their fathers' land (Rom. 11:26-27; Zech. 12:10-14). Israel's return to God will be not only a physical return to the land of their fathers but also a spiritual return to God Himself.

G. The Feast of Tabernacles

The feast of tabernacles will be fulfilled in the coming millennium for a thousand years (Rev. 20:4-6) as a conclusion of all the ages of God's old creation, for the coming of the new heaven and the new earth with the New Jerusalem as their center (Rev. 21:1-2). The millennium will usher the new creation of God into the new heaven and new earth, where it will remain for eternity as the New Jerusalem, which will be the totality of God's new creation produced out of His old creation.

The last three feasts will be fulfilled in the "seventh month" of the year, when Christ will come back.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE FIFTY-FIVE

THE ARRANGEMENT OF THE LAMPSTAND AND THE SHOWBREAD TABLE AND THE DEATH JUDGMENT OF THE BLASPHEMING OF THE HOLY NAME

Scripture Reading: Lev. 24:1-23

Leviticus 24 is a parenthesis between chapter twenty-three on the feasts and chapter twenty-five on the jubilee, the feast of feasts that was to take place every fifty years. Actually, chapter twenty-five is the continuation of chapter twenty-three, but chapter twenty-four is inserted between them. This chapter mainly covers four things: the tending of the lamp in the tabernacle, the arranging of the showbread in the tabernacle, the blaspheming of the name of God, and the taking care of human life and animal life.

In order to serve God as priests, we need to take care of two things properly and adequately. These two things are light and food. We are, of course, referring not to the natural and human light and food but to the divine light and the divine food. As priests serving God, we need to live, act, behave, and serve under the divine light. If there had been no light in the tabernacle, it would have been difficult for anyone to enter it and to act, move, and serve God there. Thus, the first thing we need is light. In a sense, light is more important than food.

Along with light, we need food. We need the divine food as our supply so that we may be able to act properly, move, behave, and serve God with sufficient supply and strength. (See messages ninety through ninety-four of the Life-study of Exodus, where the showbread table and the lampstand are covered in a fuller way.)

We need to take care of the two matters of light and food. This means that we need to be enlightened under the divine

light, the light which is the light of life (John 1:4). This life requires the food supply. Therefore, we need to have the proper supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ in our spirit (Phil. 1:19) so that we may have the adequate daily life supply. With such a supply we shall be strengthened. Then we shall be able to walk properly, move, and serve God with sufficient strength under His divine light.

I. THE ARRANGEMENT OF THE LAMPSTAND AND THE SHOWBREAD TABLE

Leviticus 24:1-9 covers the arrangement of the lampstand and the showbread table. Here the word *arrangement* means to take care of, to tend.

A. The Arrangement of the Lampstand

Verses 2 through 4 show us the arrangement of the lampstand.

1. The Pure Beaten Olive Oil for the Light

"Command the sons of Israel to bring you pure beaten olive oil for the light" (v. 2a). The pure beaten olive oil for the light signifies the pure Holy Spirit, typified by the water issuing from the side of Christ (John 19:34), coming out of the crucified Christ, typified by the pressed olives, for the shining of Christ as the lampstand in God's dwelling place.

Olives, which are a type of Christ, had to be pressed that the oil could come out. This signifies that Christ was "pressed" by being crucified that the Holy Spirit could flow out of Him as the living water and also as the oil for the shining of Christ as the lampstand.

2. The Light of the Lampstand Shining Continually from Evening until Morning

The sons of Israel were "to cause the lamp to burn continually" (v. 2b). Verse 3 goes on to say, "Outside the veil of the testimony in the tent of meeting, Aaron shall tend it from evening to morning before Jehovah continually; it shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations." This signifies

that the divine light of Christ shines continually in the house of God.

3. Aaron the High Priest Arranging the Lamps before Jehovah Continually

"He shall tend the lamps on the pure lampstand before Jehovah continually" (v. 4). This signifies that Christ as our High Priest continually takes care of His divine light, causing it to shine for God continually.

Many of us have experienced Christ's taking care of the light within us. In the morning we contact the Lord as the High Priest. In our contact with Him, He takes care of the light within us. If in the morning we do not have any contact with the Lord, we shall be short of light the whole day. Although we may not be in darkness, we shall have the sense that there is no light within us. However, if we spend some time with the Lord in the morning, the light will come in spontaneously. Something will be shining within us the whole day. That shining is the very Christ whom we experienced and enjoyed in the morning tending Himself within us as the shining light.

B. The Arrangement of the Showbread

Leviticus 24:5-9 shows us the arrangement of the showbread.

1. Twelve Cakes Made with Fine Flour, Each of Two-tenths of an Ephah

"You shall take fine flour and bake twelve cakes with it; two-tenths of an ephah shall be in each cake" (v. 5). This signifies that the resurrected Christ, the Christ who produced the church (typified by the two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour—23:13, 17), is the element that constitutes the food in full (typified by the number twelve) for all God's people and for God to enjoy.

The number twelve in 24:5 certainly refers to the twelve tribes of Israel. This indicates that this kind of food supply is sufficient to nourish all the people of God.

Christ's being our food is related to the church life. This

indicates that if we hope to be nourished adequately, we must live a life that is related to the church life.

2. Placing the Twelve Cakes in Two Rows, Six in Each Row, on the Pure Gold Table before Jehovah

"And you shall place them in two rows, six in a row, upon the pure gold table before Jehovah" (v. 6). This signifies that the believers enjoy Christ in parallel for a testimony (typified by the number two) based on Christ's holding us up (signified by the table) by His pure, divine nature (signified by the pure gold).

3. Putting Pure Frankincense with Each Row That It May Be a Memorial Portion for the Bread as an Offering by Fire to Jehovah

"You shall put pure frankincense with each row, that it may be a memorial portion for the bread as an offering by fire to Jehovah" (v. 7). This signifies that it is with the fragrance of His resurrection as a memorial portion that Christ becomes food to both God and us.

Actually, the cakes of bread were food for the high priest and for the priests. But verse 7 tells us that they were an offering by fire for God's food. From this we see that what we eat is what God eats, and what God eats is what we eat. This indicates that we as God's serving ones, the priests, are one with God. What we enjoy is God's enjoyment, and what God enjoys is our enjoyment. God and we, we and God, are one in His service. Here we have the nourishment of Christ.

If we get into the depths of all these points, we shall realize the kind of life we should live by. In this life is an element which is the fragrance of the resurrection of Christ. This kind of enjoyment is always a memorial, something that is worthy of remembrance.

4. Sabbath by Sabbath Aaron Setting the Bread in Order before Jehovah Continually

"Sabbath by sabbath he shall set it in order before Jehovah continually; it shall be a perpetual covenant on the part of the

sons of Israel" (v. 8). This signifies that our enjoyment of Christ as our food should be set in order afresh that we may have rest with God continually.

The word *sabbath* brings in the thought of rest. Sabbath by sabbath, that is, rest by rest, the cakes are arranged as food for God and also for us.

5. Aaron and His Sons Eating the Bread in a Holy Place as a Most Holy Portion of the Food Offered to God

"It shall be for Aaron and his sons, and they shall eat it in a holy place; for it is a most holy portion for him from the offerings of Jehovah by fire, as a perpetual due" (v. 9). This signifies that we, God's serving ones, should enjoy Christ as a most holy portion of the food offered to God in the church as the holy place.

It is necessary that we interpret the holy place in verse 9 as signifying the church. It is in the church that we offer Christ to God as His food supply for His enjoyment. Then we shall enjoy this food. We shall enjoy what God enjoys. Christ is what God enjoys and also what we enjoy.

Here we would note that 24:1-9 unveils that for us, the holy people of God, to live a holy life, we need the arrangement of Christ afresh as the divine light to shine over us and as the divine food to nourish us.

II. THE DEATH JUDGMENT OF THE BLASPHEMING OF THE HOLY NAME

The second main section of Leviticus 24 (vv. 12-23) deals with the death judgment of the blaspheming of the holy Name. This is very important, for along with the enlightenment and the nourishment we must always honor the divine Name. We must take care of the Name of our God.

A. The Story of the Blaspheming of the Holy Name Being Recorded after the Record concerning the Arranging of the Showbread Table

The story of the blaspheming of the holy Name is recorded

after the record concerning the arranging of the showbread table. This signifies that in our enjoyment of Christ in His fullness we should sanctify the holy Name and not profane it.

In the prayer in Matthew 6:9-11, the first petition is "Let Your name be sanctified" (v. 9). To sanctify the Lord's name is to separate it as something unique. The Lord's name is unique, and it should not be put with other names. To sanctify, to separate, the name of the Lord from common names is to honor and respect the holy Name.

B. The Story of the Son of an Israelite Woman Who Had Married an Egyptian

In Leviticus 24:10 and 11 we are told that "the son of an Israelite woman, whose father was an Egyptian… blasphemed the Name and cursed." This story signifies that the joining of a man of God with a man of the world brings forth a result that will profane God, causing the profaning one to be cut off from the enjoyment of Christ in His fullness. According to this chapter, if we profane the name of God, making it common and not sanctifying it, we shall be finished with the enjoyment of Christ as our shining light and nourishing food.

In Leviticus 24 we see that we need to take care of our being enlightened and of our being nourished. In order to enjoy Christ as our light and as our food, we must sanctify the holy Name. This means that we must live a life that always sanctifies our God, a life that always regards our God as the unique One, separate from all other names.

This chapter also reveals that we need to take care of both the human life and the animal life. The human life is for the expression of God, and the main purpose of the animal life is to be offered to God. The human life is to express God, and the animal life is to be the means for us to worship God. Therefore, we need to take care of the human life and the animal life, the life for the expression of God and the life for the worship of God.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE FIFTY-SIX

THE SABBATH YEAR AND THE JUBILEE

(1)

Scripture Reading: Lev. 25:1-22

In this message we come to Leviticus 25, a well-known chapter on the jubilee. However, this chapter begins not with the jubilee but with the sabbath year. We all are familiar with the sabbath day, but we may not know very much about the sabbath year.

I. THE SABBATH YEAR

Leviticus 25:2-7, 18-22 speak of the sabbath year. This sabbath was not a day of rest but a year of rest. The sabbath year was a rest not only for man but also for the land.

God is a God of rest. He worked, but after He worked He rested. In Genesis God rested not by Himself but with man. After His work, God enjoyed rest with man. Therefore, on the seventh day both God and man were at rest.

In order for there to be a jubilee, it was necessary for God's people to have the practice of observing the sabbath year. Every seventh year was to be a sabbath, and that year was to be a rest for man and also for the land. It was a year of rest for God, for man, and for the land.

The sabbath day refers to Christ, and the sabbath year also refers to Christ. Christ is our sabbath not merely for one day but for a full year. Hence, the sabbath year denotes Christ in His fullness as our rest. We need to enjoy Him not only as our sabbath day but also as our sabbath year, that is, not only as our rest in part but as our rest in full. The sabbath year is for us to enjoy Christ in full as our rest with God. If we keep this in mind, we shall enjoy much more of Christ.

A. The Land Keeping a Sabbath to Jehovah

"When you enter into the land which I give you, the land shall keep a sabbath to Jehovah. Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard and gather in its produce; but in the seventh year the land shall have a sabbath of solemn rest, a sabbath to Jehovah" (vv. 2-4a). The sabbath day being for man, one day out of every week, and the sabbath year being for the land, one whole year out of every seven years, signify that Christ is the realm of the full rest that we may enjoy Him as our rest to the fullest.

B. Not Sowing the Field, nor Pruning the Vineyard, nor Reaping the Harvest, nor Gathering the Grapes of the Untrimmed Vine

"You shall neither sow your field nor prune your vineyard. That which grows of itself from your harvest you shall not reap, and the grapes of your untrimmed vine you shall not gather; it shall be a year of solemn rest for the land" (vv. 4b-5). This signifies that rest is purely and wholly of grace and that all human labor should cease absolutely. When the land rests, the laborers, the farmers working on the land, must also rest. It is good to have a long rest, but such a time of rest may be a test to us. We may become bored and be tempted to do something that is contrary to the divine thought. We all need to learn how to labor with God and also how to cease our work and rest with God as long as He desires to rest.

C. The Sabbath Produce of the Land to Be Food for All Kinds of People and for the Cattle and the Animals

"The sabbath produce of the land shall be food for you, for your male and female slaves, for your hired servant, and for the sojourner who lives with you. For your cattle also and for the animals that are in your land, all its produce shall be for food" (vv. 6-7). This signifies that it is all a matter of grace toward anyone, regardless of his status.

In the seventh year the produce of the land became common. Although the land still belonged to its owners, what the land produced belonged to everyone, to every kind of person, and even to the cattle and all the animals. This means that the produce of the land was common. We may say that this is God's communism, a communism that results from the grace of God and that makes us rich, not the human communism that is forced upon people and makes them poor. In this common enjoyment of the produce of the land, there is real freedom.

D. God Commanding His Blessing in the Sixth Year so that the Land Would Yield a Crop Sufficient for Three Years

"If you should say, What shall we eat in the seventh year if we do not sow or gather in our crops? Then I will command My blessing on you in the sixth year, so that it will yield a sufficient crop for three years. When you sow in the eighth year, you will eat of the old crop until the ninth year; until its produce comes in, you will eat the old" (vv. 20-22). This signifies that the sufficient grace of God surpasses our need threefold.

Forced communism is against God's will. According to God's will, we should have a proper enjoyment of all things that are in common. The possession of the land is not common, for the land still belongs to each owner. What is common is the produce of the land in the seventh year. In this year everything produced by the land becomes common for the purpose of enjoyment. For this purpose, God blesses the land to produce food threefold. This practice of keeping the sabbath year ushers us into the jubilee.

II. THE JUBILEE—THE PENTECOSTAL YEAR

According to Young's Concordance, the Hebrew word for *jubilee* means a time of shouting. This shouting is, of course, not of mourning but of rejoicing; it is a joyful shouting.

God realized that in ancient times there was, economically speaking, the need for natural resources to be balanced

among the children of Israel. After the Israelites entered into the good land, the land was divided among them by lots. None of these lots was to be sold permanently. Rather, in the year of jubilee any lots that had been sold were to be returned to the original owners.

During the years before the jubilee, some of the people might not have been able to keep their property. Because of poverty or illness they might have been forced to sell their property in whole or in part. However, at the time of jubilee, at the time of shouting, the land reverted to its owner. This return of the land was God's way of balancing the ownership of land among the people. Thus there could not be any landlords, for in God's wisdom the divine regulation, the divine ordinance, was a balance of the natural resources. This ordinance was to be put into effect every fifty years. From this we see that thirty-five centuries ago, a long time before Marx invented communism, God made provision in the holy Word for the balance of the land. Every fifty years, without the original owners doing anything or paying anything, the land was returned to them and once again became their possession.

In type, the jubilee portrays our situation as poor sinners. Our situation was that the longer we lived, the more we lost of our divinely allotted portion. Because we lived in a sinful way, we lost the divine rights. The more we committed sin, the more of these rights we lost. Eventually, we sold all that we had inherited by birth. We even lost ourselves. We sold ourselves not to a proper buyer but to Satan and sin. This was the reason Paul could say, "I am fleshly, sold under sin" (Rom. 7:14b). Lake Paul, we also were slaves sold to sin; we had lost to Satan our rights. We should not consider Satan and sin two separate things. These two are one. Therefore, when we sold ourselves to sin, we sold ourselves to Satan and thus fell into the hands of Satan under sin. As descendants of Adam, we all had sold the rights allotted to us by God and even sold ourselves to sin and Satan. Furthermore, we could do nothing about our situation; we did not have the means to redeem ourselves. We were hopeless. Then one day, jubilee came.

In Luke 4:18 and 19 the Lord Jesus proclaimed the jubilee with words of grace (see Life-study of Luke, Messages Twelve and Sixty-four through Sixty-nine). When He came, jubilee came with Him. Christ has accomplished the full redemption of God for sinners. Now when we preach the gospel, we make a proclamation of the New Testament jubilee.

The jubilee is not a Pentecostal day but a Pentecostal year. The principle is the same here as with the sabbath year. Elsewhere we read of the sabbath day, but in Leviticus 25 we have the sabbath year. Likewise, elsewhere Pentecost is a day, but here we have the Pentecostal year.

A. The Fifty Years That Consummated in the Jubilee Comprising Eight Sabbath Years, Being Sabbath upon Sabbath, to Be an Eightfold Sabbath

The fifty years that consummated in the jubilee comprising eight sabbath years, being sabbath upon sabbath to be an eightfold sabbath (cf. v. 8), signifies the superabundance of the fullness of God's rest with satisfaction to us.

The first and last years of this fifty-year period were eighth years, and in between there were six eighth years. Hence, there was a total of eight eighth years. Since the number eight signifies resurrection, this indicates that the jubilee is something that is altogether from resurrection, to resurrection, in resurrection, and with resurrection.

The jubilee is a matter of sabbath upon sabbath, an eightfold sabbath signifying resurrection upon resurrection. This eightfold sabbath signifies a superabundance of the fullness of God's rest with satisfaction to us. This is not simply rest but rest with satisfaction.

B. The Blast of the Trumpet Going Forth on the Tenth Day of the Seventh Month of the Jubilee, on the Day of Propitiation

"Then you shall cause the blast of the trumpet to go forth on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the day of propitiation you shall cause the trumpet to go forth through all

your land" (v. 9). This signifies that the jubilee is based on the propitiation for sin that the full freedom might be proclaimed to all the people. This type was fulfilled by the full redemption of Christ for the proclamation of the full freedom to all the human race.

Young's Concordance shows us that there are two Hebrew words that are translated *jubilee.* The first of these words bears the denotation of a time of shouting; the second bears the denotation of trumpeting. This kind of trumpeting is actually a shouting. Jubilee is a matter of joy becoming a shout. The jubilee, therefore, was a time of excitement. Many of us experienced such joy and excitement when we got saved. We were happy and full of rejoicing. Our salvation was a real jubilee.

The preaching of the gospel is simply the proclamation of the jubilee. We need to go forth and sound the trumpet so that the people may shout. Today most people are silent. But if we proclaim the jubilee, sounding the trumpet, they will begin to shout. They will learn to say, "Amen! Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!"

C. Sanctifying the Fiftieth Year and Proclaiming Freedom throughout the Land to All Its Inhabitants, That Year Being a Jubilee to the People

"You shall sanctify the fiftieth year and proclaim release throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee to you" (v. 10a). Verse 11a also speaks of the jubilee: "The fiftieth year shall be a jubilee to you." This signifies that the full responsibility (typified by the number fifty) to meet all the requirements of God has been fulfilled so that man does not need to bear any responsibility.

Human life is hard. It is full of responsibility, and everyone bears a great deal of responsibility. But in the jubilee there is no labor and there is no responsibility—everyone is free. There is no need even to reap. We may simply go to the field and eat without any burden or responsibility. Instead of responsibility, we have rest, enjoyment, and shouting.

Many of us had such an experience when we were saved. On the day of our salvation, we were released, fully freed from all our burdens. This is the experience and enjoyment of the jubilee.

D. Each One Returning to His Possession, and Each One Returning to His Family

"Each of you shall return to his possession, and each of you shall return to his family" (v. 10b). "In this year of the jubilee each of you shall return to his possession" (v. 13). This signifies that in the New Testament jubilee the believers have returned to their lost divine possession and to their divine family.

We all had lost the possession allotted to us by God. But in our salvation, the New Testament jubilee, we returned to our possession. Furthermore, we have returned to our family, to the divine family. We had sold ourselves as slaves and thus lost the right to be with our family. But the year of jubilee came, and we were released to return both to our possession and to our family. Now we are rich, and we are free in our divine family. Therefore, we need to shout joyfully, making a joyful noise to the Lord in the church meetings. This is the real jubilee.

E. Israel in the Present Age and in the Coming Millennium

In the present age the whole race of Israel has become poor and has lost the land of Canaan. At the Lord's second coming, the coming millennium will be a jubilee to them, and they will return to their lost possession. They will have a long family reunion, a reunion that will last a thousand years.

Here I would like to point out that with the seven feasts in Leviticus 25 there are two consummations. The first group of feasts—Passover, unleavened bread, firstfruit, and Pentecost—consummates in the feast of Pentecost to have the Body of Christ. With the second group of feasts—the blowing of trumpets, propitiation, and tabernacles—the highlight is the

millennium. These three feasts will consummate in the millennium. Therefore, the first consummation is Pentecost to produce, to bring in, the church life, and the second consummation is the millennium to bring in the full jubilee.

F. Neither Sowing, nor Reaping, nor Gathering the Grapes of the Untrimmed Vines, but Eating the Produce Directly from the Field

"The fiftieth year shall be a jubilee to you; you shall neither sow nor reap that which grows of itself, nor shall you gather the grapes of the untrimmed vines. For it is a jubilee; it shall be holy to you. You shall eat its produce directly from the field" (vv. 11-12). This signifies that in God's jubilee no human work is needed. It is altogether a rest to man, and God bears all the responsibility-

G. In Buying or Selling the Land, the Price Was to Be Calculated according to the Number of Years after the Jubilee

In buying or selling the land, the price was to be calculated according to the number of years after the jubilee (vv. 14-15). "According to the greater number of years you shall increase its price, and according to the fewness of years you shall reduce its price" (v. 16a). This signifies that our enjoyment of the divine possession in grace is within the limit of God's grace. The measure of grace we receive is the measure of the jubilee we enjoy. Our enjoyment of the divine possession is measured by God's grace.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE FIFTY-SEVEN

THE SABBATH YEAR AND THE JUBILEE

(2)

Scripture Reading: Lev. 25:23-34

Certain crucial words describe the jubilee. Some of these words are shouting, release or freedom, possession, and family. The jubilee is a time of shouting. It is also a time when we are released, freed, from slavery and captivity. We had lost our divine possession, but in the New Testament jubilee our possession has been returned to us for our enjoyment. In the jubilee we are also restored to our family. If we put all these matters together, we shall have a complete understanding of what jubilee is. We were in slavery and in captivity, but we have been released and restored to our possession for our enjoyment and to our family that we may have real fellowship in God's grace.

The year of jubilee was also a sabbath year. This is the reason the first matter revealed in Leviticus 25 is the sabbath year. The eighth sabbath year was the jubilee, a sabbath year full of rest, release, and enjoyment. In this year of jubilee all the divine possessions were balanced again according to God's economy. The produce of the land became free and common not only to man but also to the beasts.

H. The Land Possessed by the Children of Israel Belonged to God and Was Not to Be Sold into Permanent Ownership

"The land shall not be sold into permanent ownership, for the land is Mine; for you are aliens and sojourners with Me" (v. 23). This signifies that our divine possession belongs to

God, and we cannot lose it forever, even though we might become defeated or fallen. It is safeguarded by God's grace.

In the New Testament there is much teaching concerning the kingdom reward and the kingdom punishment. We may be defeated and even disciplined during the millennium, but our spiritual ownership of the divine possession cannot be lost permanently. After the millennium, those believers who are disciplined will be restored to the ownership of their divine possession, especially in the new heaven and the new earth, to enjoy the blessing of the New Jerusalem. It is of the grace of God that we shall be restored to our divine possession for eternity.

I. Concerning the Redemption of the Land That Had Been Sold

Leviticus 25:24-28 speaks of the restoration of the land that had been sold. This record is very meaningful but rather complicated and thus requires careful attention.

1. Regaining Our Enjoyment of the Divine Possession

Although we might become weak and backslidden and thus lose our enjoyment of the divine possession, we can still regain it. We may lose this enjoyment for a while, but eventually it will be restored to us.

2. The Children of Israel Regaining What They Have Lost

Although the children of Israel have lost all that they have received from God through the generations, at the Lord's coming back to them they will regain it. At the Lord's coming back the Israelites will regain ownership of their God-allotted portion.

3. When an Israelite Became Poor and Sold Some of His Possession, His Nearest Relative Was to Come as His Redeemer and Redeem What He Had Sold

"In all the land you possess, you shall grant a redemption

for the land. When your brother becomes poor and sells some of his possession, then his nearest relative shall come as his redeemer and redeem what his brother has sold" (vv. 24-25). This signifies that we have become poor and have sold our possession, and the Lord Jesus, our nearest relative, has come as our Redeemer to redeem for us what we have sold.

In Adam we sold everything. But the Lord Jesus is our relative as our Redeemer, and He has redeemed everything for us. This is illustrated in the book of Ruth, where we see that Ruth was redeemed by her relative Boaz. In the book of Ruth, therefore, we have a full story of jubilee.

4. If an Israelite Had No One to Redeem His Possession for Him but Had Acquired the Means for Its Redemption, He Could Redeem It by Himself

"If a man has no one to redeem it, but has acquired the means and has sufficient for its redemption, then let him compute the years since he sold it, and refund the overpayment to the man to whom he sold it, and return to his possession" (vv. 26-27). This signifies that the children of Israel, not recognizing the Lord Jesus as their nearest relative, have put themselves in a position to bear the responsibility for their redemption until they become able to redeem themselves. However, to this day they are still unable to do it, and practically they will never be able to do it. When the Lord Jesus comes back, they will recognize Him as their relative, and then they will be redeemed by Him.

5. If a Man Did Not Have Sufficient Means to Redeem His Possession, It Remained until the Year of Jubilee, in Which It Was Released to Him

"But if he does not have sufficient means to restore it to him, then that which he sold shall remain in the hands of him who bought it until the year of jubilee; and in the jubilee it shall be released, and he shall return to his possession" (v. 28). This signifies that we were unable to redeem what we

had lost until the New Testament jubilee, in which all that we had lost is released to us to be our possession.

In these verses we see that there were three ways for an Israelite to recover his lost possession. First, it could be redeemed by his nearest relative. This is a matter of grace. Second, if he had the means, he could redeem it himself. Third, if he did not have a relative to redeem it for him and if he could not redeem it himself, he could wait for the year of jubilee, when the sold possession would spontaneously be restored to him. This also is a matter of grace. The jubilee is thus a very good type of God's grace.

J. Concerning the Redemption of the House That Had Been Sold

Leviticus 25:29-34 speaks of the redemption of the house that had been sold.

1. If an Israelite Sold a House in a Walled City, the Right Would Be Given to Him to Redeem It within One Year, but after One Year the Right Would Be Ended and the House Would Not Be Released to Him, Even in the Jubilee

"If a man sells a dwelling in a walled city, he shall have the right of redemption within the year after its sale; his right of redemption shall last a full year. If it is not redeemed within the space of a full year, then the house that is in the walled city shall remain in permanent ownership to him who bought it throughout his generations; it shall not be released in the jubilee" (vv. 29-30). This signifies that if a believer has lost the enjoyment of the church life, it can be restored only within a short limit of God's grace. If the lost enjoyment of the church life is not restored in the church age, it will still be lost in the millennium. This is according to the principle of taking away from him who has not (Matt. 25:29). Hence, the loss of the enjoyment of the church life is more serious than the loss of the enjoyment of Christ as our divine possession.

Concerning the redemption of a house in a walled city, there is a statute of limitations. After one full year, the house could not be redeemed, even in the jubilee. However, we may think that the jubilee is able to accomplish the restoration of everything, but this is not the case, for there is a time limit.

A house in a walled city is a type of the church life. We may sell anything else, but we should not sell the church life. If we do sell the church, we have only a limited time to recover it, and not even the jubilee can help us in this matter. The enjoyment of the church life can be restored only within a short time of God's grace, as indicated by the one year.

The one full year typifies the church age. We should not think that the church age is long. Actually, the church age is short. The New Testament warns us that the church age is short. The Lord Jesus Himself has said, "I come quickly" (Rev. 3:11). Only the lazy, idle servant says, "My master is delaying his coming" (Matt. 24:48b). Rather, the Lord is hastening His coming, and it will not be long before the church age is ended. The church age will not be lengthened, prolonged. No one can tell whether the church life will be ended tomorrow by the Lord's coming back. The church age is only for a little time, for a short time of God's grace. Today we are in the church life, but it will be ended by the Lord's coming back.

If you lose the church life and do not redeem it in a quick way, you will also lose the church life in the millennium. This means that the lost enjoyment of the church life will not be restored to you during the millennium. As we have pointed out, this is according to the principle of taking away from him who has not. If you do not have the church life in this age, then the church life will be taken away from you in the coming age. In Matthew 25 to lose the reward of the coming kingdom is to lose the enjoyment of the church life.

Losing the enjoyment of the church life is more serious than losing the enjoyment of Christ. The reason is that it is easy for the enjoyment of Christ to be restored. If we lose the enjoyment of Christ today, we can recover it quickly and

easily. The Lord is gracious, and at any time He will restore Himself to us for our enjoyment. However, it takes a much longer time to recover the lost church life, for there is a hardship that frustrates us from coming back to the church life. We should be warned by this not to sell the church life. But if we do sell it, we should endeavor to have our lost church life restored to us as soon as possible, for the church age may be cut short at any time. If we do not recover our lost church life in this age, we shall be deprived of the enjoyment of the Body life of Christ until we have been disciplined during the millennium. Then in the New Jerusalem we shall be restored to the Body life of Christ.

Although there is in the New Testament such a teaching concerning the loss of the church life, not many Christian teachers have seen it. Having this view of the loss and recovery of the church life will help us to realize our need to live a proper church life today. Once we lose the church life, there is the danger that we shall lose it also during the coming millennium. Therefore, we need to consider losing the church life more serious than losing the enjoyment of Christ.

2. The Houses of the Villages That Had No Walls around Them Were Considered as the Fields of the Country and Could Be Redeemed and Were to Be Released in the Jubilee

"But the houses of the villages that have no walls around them shall be considered as the fields of the country; they may be redeemed, and they shall be released in the jubilee" (v. 31). This signifies that in a place in which there are some believers who cannot be considered a church, the lost enjoyment of Christ can be restored.

Those in a situation typified by the houses of the villages without walls cannot lose the church life because there is no church life in their place. They are not living the church life, for they are simply a small group of believers who cannot be considered a church. To these believers the lost enjoyment of Christ can be restored.

3. A Permanent Right of Redemption Was Given to the Levites for the Houses in the Cities of Their Possession

"As for the cities of the Levites, the Levites shall have a permanent right of redemption for the houses in the cities of their possession. And if anyone of the Levites does not redeem it, then the house that was sold in the city of his possession shall be released in the jubilee; for the houses of the cities of the Levites are their possession among the sons of Israel" (vv. 32-33). This signifies that if any loss of the enjoyment of the church life occurs to the believers who are adequately engaged in the service of God in a church, it can be restored to them without any limitation of time.

If we are those who serve God adequately in the church life and we lose the church life, it will be easy for it to be restored to us. From this we see that it is very good for us to serve in the church life more and more. The more we serve in the church life, the more secure our enjoyment of the church life will be. It will not be easy for us to lose the church life, but if we do lose it, it can be restored easily and quickly.

4. The Fields of the Pasture Lands of the Levites Were Their Permanent Possession and Were Not to Be Sold

"But the fields of the pasture lands of their cities shall not be sold, for that is their permanent possession" (v. 34). This signifies that the believers who are adequately engaged in the service of God in a church will not lose the enjoyment of Christ permanently.

The two items in these verses related to the Levites surely encourage us to serve in the church life. The more we are engaged in God's service, the better. If we are engaged in this service, it will not be easy for us to lose the enjoyment of Christ. If we lose the enjoyment of the church, it will be easy to have it restored to us. Thus, for both the enjoyment of Christ and the enjoyment of the church life, we need to engage ourselves more and more in the church service.

Nevertheless, we need to realize that even in the jubilee, which is altogether a matter of grace, there is still a statute of limitations regarding the matter of the church life as typified by the house in a walled city. If we lose such a church life, we need to redeem it within the time limit prescribed by the statute of limitations.

When we were young, the Lord showed us the revelation concerning the matter of the kingdom reward and dispensational discipline during the millennium, and we began to teach and preach this. A number of Christian preachers, teachers, and pastors argued with us, quoting Ephesians 2:8, which says, "By grace you have been saved through faith." Then they went on to claim that what we were teaching was not a matter of grace. Yes, Ephesians 2:8 does say that we are saved by grace. But we also need to pay attention to Ephesians 5:5, where Paul says, "Every fornicator or unclean person or person of unbridled greedy lust, who is an idolater, has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." Those who live an unclean life will not have any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. This means that in the coming age of the kingdom, certain genuine, saved believers will have no inheritance. Due to their unclean life, they have lost the church life in this age and the inheritance of the kingdom in the coming age.

I do not know of one person who lost the church life because of something that was an offense to God who later came back to the church life. In each case, a saint did something that caused him to lose the church life, but that one did not return to the church life during the remainder of his life. They all died without having the lost church life recovered to them.

I do not speak these words as a threat but as a warning concerning the New Testament jubilee. Actually, even this kind of speaking is a sounding of the jubilee, telling the Lord's people that the jubilee is a jubilee, but there is nonetheless a limitation concerning the house in a walled city.

If we lose the house, that is, the church life, we can redeem it, but only within a certain time limitation. If we do

not redeem our lost church life during the time allotted, we shall also lose the church life in the coming age, and the church life will not be restored to us until after the coming age, when we shall be disciplined, trained, corrected, and punished in order to be cleansed, prepared, and perfected for the eternal age. We cannot lose the church life eternally, but we can lose it temporarily and dispensationally for a thousand years. This understanding is consistent with the Bible as a whole, for we see it both in the type in Leviticus 25 and in the clear words of the New Testament.

The warning about losing the church life eventually turns out to be a part of the jubilee. Regarding the jubilee, we should not be loose, shouting in a careless way. Rather, we need to be careful and be warned that concerning the recovery of the lost church life there is a time limitation. If we lose the church life, we should try to recover it right away, for we do not know how long the church age will last. To God one day may be as a thousand years, but to us a thousand years is a thousand years either for discipline or for reward.

The serious matter of dispensational reward and punishment during the coming age of the millennium is part of the gospel, in particular of the gospel as it is taught in Matthew. In Matthew we have the gospel of the kingdom. This gospel warns us concerning reward and punishment. "Unless your righteousness surpass that of the scribes and Pharisees," says the Lord Jesus in Matthew 5:20, "you shall by no means enter into the kingdom of the heavens." This teaching concerning the kingdom is different from that found in the Gospel of John. In John we do not have the gospel of the kingdom but the gospel of life. According to the Gospel of John, we enter the kingdom of God simply by regeneration (John 3:3, 5). This is the kingdom of life, and as long as we receive the divine life, we are in the kingdom of life. What we have in the Gospel of Matthew, however, is not the kingdom of life but the kingdom of the kingdom. In this message I am trumpeting, sounding out, an aspect of the jubilee that is a part of the gospel of the kingdom. We all need to listen to the kingdom gospel.

In Leviticus 25 there are two kinds of enjoyment: the enjoyment of the land and the enjoyment of the house. The enjoyment of the land typifies the enjoyment of Christ, and the enjoyment of the house typifies the enjoyment of the church life. We should not be careless in the church life, lest we lose it. There is the definite possibility of losing the church life in this age and then of suffering the loss of the church life in the coming age, in the thousand years of the kingdom.

It is possible to have the land without the house, but having the house surely implies having the land. The enjoyment of the land does not assure the enjoyment of the house, but the enjoyment of the house does assure the enjoyment of the land. As long as we enjoy the house, we may have the assurance that we are also enjoying the land. If we enjoy Christ, that does not assure us that we are also enjoying the church life. But as long as we are in the enjoyment of the church life, we are also in the enjoyment of Christ. The church assures us of Christ for our enjoyment.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE FIFTY-EIGHT

THE SABBATH YEAR AND THE JUBILEE

(3)

Scripture Reading: Lev. 25:35-55

In this message we shall cover some further matters related to the jubilee.

K. The Way to Sustain a Brother Who Had Become Poor

Leviticus 25:35-38 speaks of the way to sustain a brother who had become poor.

1. A Brother of the Israelites Becoming Poor and Unable to Support Himself

A brother of the Israelites becoming poor and unable to support himself (v. 35a) signifies a believing brother becoming poor and unable to take care of himself. From the type here we are told how to take care of such a brother.

2. Sustaining the Poor Brother That He May Live with You, Not Taking Interest from Him in Money nor Gain in Food

"If your brother beside you becomes poor and is unable to support himself, then you shall sustain him as you would an alien or a sojourner, so that he may live with you. Do not take interest from him or increase, but fear your God, that your brother may live with you. You shall not give him your money at interest, nor give him your food for gain" (vv. 35-37). This signifies that we should help the brother who becomes weak in spirit without taking any advantage of him.

In the church life it is possible to take advantage of a

brother while we are helping him. We may take advantage of a brother not only in one way and in one aspect but in a number of ways and in a number of aspects. We should not do this, for we should never take advantage of a brother who is weak. Instead, we should take care of him in love so that he may live before the Lord as we do. We should live by Christ, in Christ, and with Christ, and our brother should live this way with us.

L. Concerning a Brother Who Had Sold Himself to Another Brother

Leviticus 25:39-55 concerns a brother who had sold himself to another brother.

1. An Israelite Brother Who Became Poor and Sold Himself to Another Brother Was Not to Be Made a Slave but a Hired Servant until the Year of Jubilee

"If your brother beside you becomes poor and sells himself to you, you shall not make him serve as a slave. He shall be with you as a hired servant and as a sojourner. He shall serve with you until the year of jubilee" (vv. 39-40). This signifies that if a brother becomes poor spiritually and is in debt to you, you should not consider him as your slave but as a helper to you until a revival comes to him. In this point we interpret jubilee as a kind of spiritual revival.

In the church life a certain saint may be in debt to you spiritually speaking. Because a saint may owe you something, it is easy for you to consider this one to be your slave. We may have such a feeling in our heart, and our attitude and spirit may express the feeling that the one indebted to us is our slave. This is wrong. No matter how much a saint may owe us spiritually, we should consider that one not as a slave nor even as a servant but as a helper until he is revived by the grace of God. Then this one who has been under our care will be fully recovered. In a number of cases, certain brothers rendered spiritual help to a weaker one, but this kind of

help eventually became an offense to the one who was helped. The more a saint was helped, the more he was offended. From this we see that it is possible for our spiritual care of others to cause offense. If our spirit and attitude are wrong, if we consider ourselves superior to the ones we are helping and look down on them, if we regard them as lowly slaves or servants, our help and care will, in the long run, result in offense. This should be a warning to us. Whenever we are helping or caring for a weaker brother, we need to respect him. Even in gospel preaching we should not consider ourselves superior to those to whom we preach. Likewise, in home meetings and in small group meetings, we should never regard ourselves as leaders and think that we are higher than or superior to the ones we are helping. Such an attitude offends others.

In helping others we should have the attitude that we are their servants. In 2 Corinthians 4:5 Paul says, "We do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake." Paul was an apostle and he had God's oracle, yet he did not behave as one superior to those whom he served. It is altogether wrong to have a superior attitude. Concerning this, we need to learn of the Lord. When He came as our Savior, He came to serve us as a slave. He was God's Slave serving God's redeemed ones. This is our example. If we keep this in mind, we shall be able to help the brothers properly for the long run.

2. At the Jubilee He and His Sons Going Back to His Own Family and Returning to the Possession of His Fathers

"Then he shall go out from you, he and his sons with him, and go back to his own family, and return to the possession of his fathers" (v. 41). This signifies that at the time of revival the brother who is in debt to you spiritually will be released from you.

Actually, we may not be able to help a younger brother or a weaker brother very much, but we may help him to remain in the church until the jubilee, a time of revival, comes to

him. This revival brings in God's sufficient and adequate grace to meet the brother's need.

We should always remember that what we can do for others really does not mean very much. At most, we can help to maintain a situation. Paul says, "I planted, Apollos watered, but God made to grow; so that neither is the one who plants anything nor the one who waters, but the One who makes to grow, God" (1 Cor. 3:6-7). Here we see that neither the one who planted nor the one who watered could do anything to give life to those whom they served. God is the One who gives life. We, therefore, must learn the lesson of humility. Yes, we may do a lot, but not a lot can be accomplished. We may plant and water, but the plant will not grow unless God gives the growth. When God gives growth, there is a revival, a revival that brings in all the grace needed for the spiritual life.

Whether we shall be a profit to the church life or a loss depends on our motive, our spirit, and our attitude. In helping a weaker one, your attitude unconsciously may be that such a one is your servant or that he is beneath you. While he is under your care, he is actually under your bondage. Thus, the helped one is in bondage to the helping one. However, when a revival comes, the brother who has been in bondage to you will be released from your bondage. If you do not realize this today, eventually you will realize that the one whom you help may be in bondage to you and needs a jubilee, a spiritual revival, in order to be released from this bondage.

3. Not Ruling Over a Sold Brother with Harshness

"You shall not rule over him with harshness, but you shall fear your God" (v. 43). Not ruling over a sold brother with harshness signifies that we should not harshly treat a brother who is in debt to us spiritually.

4. Purchasing Male and Female Slaves from the Nations and from the Sojourners and Considering Them as Possessions, but Not Taking Slaves from the Israelites

In 25:44-46 we see that God's people could purchase male

and female slaves from the nations and from the sojourners and consider them as their possessions, but they were not to take slaves from among the Israelites. This signifies that we should not treat the brothers like the outsiders.

As long as a certain one is a saint, we must treat that one as a brother or as a sister. The words *brother* and *sister* are not religious titles. When we use these words, we should really mean what we say. Our brothers and sisters in the Lord are our spiritual relatives in the divine life. The unbelievers, however, cannot be considered our brothers and sisters, because they do not have the divine life, as we do. But because we and our brothers and sisters have the same life, the divine life, we are in reality of the same one divine family. Therefore, we should not treat them like the outsiders.

5. An Israelite Brother Who Sold Himself to an Alien or to a Sojourner Was to Be Redeemed by His Brother, His Uncle, or Any of His Blood Relatives, or by Himself If He Acquired Sufficient Means

In verses 47 through 49 we see that an Israelite brother who sold himself to an alien or a sojourner was to be redeemed by his brother, by his uncle, or by any of his blood relatives, or by himself if he had acquired the sufficient means. This signifies that we should help a brother who is spiritually in debt to outsiders so that he may be released from his indebtedness, or so that he may become able to release himself by his own means.

Perhaps you are wondering how a brother could be spiritually in debt to an outsider. The best way to explain this may be to give a number of illustrations.

Suppose a certain brother is not humble in his contact with his neighbors. This brother may offend one of his neighbors by being too proud. As a result, the brother becomes spiritually indebted to his neighbor. If you become aware of the situation as you are visiting with the brother, you should help him to be adjusted in his relationship with his neighbor. This will save him from that indebtedness and help his

spiritual life and his testimony. No doubt, this will also help his preaching of the gospel in his neighborhood.

Another brother may be very peculiar in his dress or in the way he keeps his hair. This causes those around him to feel uncomfortable. Since he is a dear brother, we need to fellowship with him, pray with him, digest some verses with him, and, without correcting him, help him to gradually adjust himself through the growth in life. If this brother receives the growth in life, this will adjust him. In other words, the growth in life will transform him, and he will realize that it is better for him not to be peculiar or strange in his dress or appearance.

A sister may become spiritually indebted to her mother-in-law, who is an unbeliever. If you become aware of this indebtedness and you realize that the sister needs help, it would not be right to avoid touching the situation. You need to pray for the sister and also pray about her situation. Then you may say to her, "Sister, you are saved, but your mother-in-law is not yet saved. She is still an unbeliever. She doesn't know what sin is, and she doesn't know the flesh. But you and I are believers. We know what the flesh is, and we know that we are charged not to walk by the flesh. Sister, I see that your attitude toward your mother-in-law is not good. I speak this to you frankly in love so that you may know that you may lose the Lord's testimony in your family. You need to pray." I believe that such a word will help the sister to be released from her indebtedness to her unbelieving mother-in-law.

In their actual daily situation, many believers have become indebted to outsiders. In our attitude, in the way we express ourselves, in the way we contact people, and in the way we deal with our neighbors, relatives, classmates, and colleagues, we may be indebted to outsiders. This may be an important reason why we do not spread the gospel. Sometimes we cannot preach the gospel to others because we are spiritually indebted to them.

Actually, not many brothers in the church life are spiritually rich. Rather, many have become spiritually poor. Those

who are poor need help. Perhaps we also have become spiritually poor and thus need to receive help from other brothers.

6. The Selling Price and the Amount of the Refund for Redemption to Be Calculated according to the Number of Years Relative to the Jubilee

The selling price and the amount of the refund for redemption was to be calculated according to the number of years relative to the jubilee (vv. 50-53). This signifies that our release from slavery is related to and based on God's grace.

The jubilee involves the matters of selling and buying. We may sell our property and even ourselves, yet have the intention of redeeming what we have sold, either our property or ourselves. This is altogether related to God's grace because eventually we realize that we are unable to do anything about our situation. Since we cannot redeem our possession or ourselves, we must leave the matter of redemption to the jubilee. Hence, we all need to learn that we live by grace. We cannot redeem either our possession or ourselves. Redemption depends absolutely on God's grace.

7. The Sold One Who Was Not Redeemed by These Means Was to Be Released in the Year of Jubilee

"And if he is not redeemed by these means, then he shall be released in the year of jubilee, he and his sons with him" (v. 54). This signifies that we can be released from our slavery wholly by the grace of God. We do not need any other means.

The one who did not have any means to redeem himself was in a helpless situation until the year of jubilee, the time when he was released. This indicates that for our redemption we do not need any means other than the grace of God. However, every human being likes to try to find a means, a way, to be released, but often the circumstances arranged by God do not allow us to do anything for ourselves. Thus, we

have to remain in our helpless situation until the jubilee, the grace, comes to us. Then we shall be fully released from our slavery.

In Leviticus 25 the land typifies Christ, and Christ told us that He would build the church upon Himself (Matt. 16:18). The houses built on the land and within the walled cities typify the church built upon Christ.

Now we need to see that the enjoyment of Christ is based on the principle of grace, whereas the enjoyment of the church life is based on the principle of righteousness. In Hebrews 5:13 we have the expression "the word of righteousness." The book of Hebrews deals with the enjoyment of the church life, and most of what is written in this book is the word of righteousness. This indicates that the enjoyment of the church life is according to the principle of righteousness. Because this enjoyment is of righteousness, there is a statute of limitations. If we keep this statute, we shall have the enjoyment of the church life in this age and also in the coming age. We need to be careful about this matter.

According to Leviticus 25, there were houses in the land that were not in walled cities. We interpret these houses as signifying free groups. In one sense it is not good to be in a free group. In another sense there is an advantage to being in a free group, and the advantage is that in a free group it is not easy to lose our right to enjoy the church life.

In type, Leviticus 25 shows us three kinds of Christians: those who remain in the church life, those who lose the church life, and those who are in the free groups. We should be those who stay in the church life.

In this portion of Leviticus concerning the jubilee we have seen the enjoyment of Christ, the enjoyment of the church life, and the matter of the proper relationship with the saints. According to my experiences, the easiest of these three to have is the enjoyment of Christ. It is not as easy to enjoy the church life as it is to enjoy Christ. The hardest of these is to have the proper relationship with our fellow saints. This is a matter of utmost concern, for it touches our motive, our spirit, our attitude, and our words.

When we are living in the church life, we need others. This is indicated in verse 35 by the words "that he may live with you." We need the saints to live with us. If we do not have any saints living with us, we do not have the church life.

The church life does not depend only on our loving the Lord or on our loving the church life; the church life depends especially on our care for the other saints. We need to take care of the saints in a good way, and this care involves our motive, our spirit, our attitude, and our words. In contacting the saints, we may be wrong in our motive, attitude, and spirit, and our words may not be altogether according to the leading of the Lord. I can testify that much of my daily confession to the Lord concerns my motive, spirit, attitude, and words in relation to the saints.

If the Body of Christ is to be built up, we need to live with other saints and they need to live with us. If we cannot live together with the saints, there will be no church life, and if there is no church life, there cannot be the building up of the Body of Christ.

Jubilee is not just a matter of shouting, release, recovery, and restoration, for in the last section of Leviticus 25 there are three tests. These three tests are loving the Lord, loving the church life, and caring for our fellow saints. How do you live with the saints, with your "church mates"? How do you help them to live with you? How can we maintain a situation in which we live together as church mates? This depends on our way of keeping our fellowship and our relationship with them, and it depends on our motive, our spirit, our attitude, and our words. We need a pure motive, a pure and perfect spirit, and a right attitude with the right utterance. This will not only help, edify, and build up the saints; it will also spontaneously build up the Body of Christ. When the Body of Christ comes into existence in a practical way, then the jubilee will be among us.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE FIFTY-NINE

THE WORD OF WARNING

(1)

Scripture Reading: Lev. 26:1-20

According to our understanding, we may think that the book of Leviticus should end with the jubilee in chapter twenty-five. However, two chapters still remain. In chapter twenty-six we have the word of warning, and in chapter twenty-seven, the devotions concerning a vow. The fact that the chapter on the word of warning immediately follows the chapter on the jubilee indicates that, concerning the jubilee, we should not shout too much or be too excited. We need, instead, to have a sober mind to consider the situation. For this reason, the jubilee, a time of shouting, is followed by a word of warning. After this, there is an additional word, something like a postscript, in chapter twenty-seven. In this message we shall begin to consider the word of warning.

The word of warning in Leviticus 26 is not merely a human speaking. No, the way of speaking, the contents, and everything related to this word are not simply human but are the divine oracle. Only God can speak this way, and only God can present a word of warning in such a way and with such contents, contents that are truly marvelous, full of facts and foretellings.

In this word of warning we can see the destiny of apostate Israel. Israel had been chosen by God from the time of Abraham, the first of their fathers. God later redeemed them out of Egypt, brought them through the wilderness, and placed them in the good land, where He was with them for quite a while. However, the people of Israel became apostate, and, in a sense, God gave them up.

God apparently took His hand off them and left them to themselves. It seems that for twenty-seven centuries the hand of God has been kept away from His people. Actually, this has not been the situation. In this word of warning there is a kind of prophecy pointing out that the God who had chosen Israel has never given them up. His mercy upon them has never stopped. Eventually, His mercy will come in to bring them back to their fathers' land.

The word of warning in Leviticus 26 is full of instruction; it is full of things that we need to study and learn. However, in the two messages on this chapter I shall simply present the basic points, leaving the rest to the enlightening Spirit who, I believe, will speak to you.

I. NOT HAVING IDOLS, NOT MAKING THEM OR BOWING DOWN TO THEM

"You shall not make idols for yourselves, or set up for yourselves a carved image or a pillar, or place a figured stone in your land to bow down to it; for I am Jehovah your God" (26:1). Not having idols, not making them or bowing down to them, signifies that besides God we should have no other goals that we are seeking after, that we may not lose the position to enjoy our divine possession.

We are in the jubilee. But if we seek something other than God, we may lose the enjoyment of the jubilee. Whatever we seek as a goal other than God is an idol. For example, we may pursue a college degree in such a way that it becomes an idol, a goal we are seeking other than God. This, of course, does not mean that we do not need a proper education. The point is that we should not make a degree a goal that we are seeking other than God Himself. We should have one goal, a unique goal—God as our one aim.

II. KEEPING GOD'S SABBATH

"You shall keep My sabbaths" (v. 2a). Keeping God's sabbath signifies that we should know that the work of God was done entirely by Himself that we might enjoy it, and that there is no need for us to do any work.

We need to learn to enjoy what God has achieved. This, however, is a hard lesson, for we have been taught to work and to do many things. This item teaches us not to work but to respect, enter into, and enjoy what God has done for us. Although Christ has accomplished everything for us, we may not be in the enjoyment of this achievement. Instead of enjoying what Christ has done, we may keep on laboring, setting Christ's achievement aside. This is offensive to the Lord. Therefore, we need to learn to receive, regard, respect, and enjoy what God has done and not try to do something for ourselves.

III. REVERENCING GOD'S SANCTUARY

The people were also warned to reverence God's sanctuary (v. 2b). The sabbath stands for a lot, and the sanctuary stands for even more. Reverencing God's sanctuary signifies that we should regard with reverence all that God is and has accomplished in Christ as His dwelling, embodiment, and expression (John 1:14; Col. 2:9) and in the church as the enlargement of Christ for God's dwelling and eternal manifestation (Eph. 2:22; Rev. 21:10).

The sanctuary in Leviticus 26:2 implies God's dwelling, embodiment, and expression in Christ and God's dwelling and eternal manifestation in the church. However, among Christians today these things are neglected, for many do not have the adequate knowledge of what God is in Christ as His embodiment and of what God has done in the church to make it the enlargement of Christ and the manifestation of God. Because neglecting these matters is against God's economy, we need to be warned to regard them.

IV. THE OBEYING ONES TO BE BLESSED

If we take the first three points as the main aspects of the warning, we shall obey God's warning. In 26:3-13 we see that the obeying ones will be blessed. This signifies that we, the New Testament believers, are blessed by walking according to the Spirit, with six issues. We shall now consider these issues.

A. Rains Given in Their Season

"If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments and do them, then I will give you rains in their season" (vv. 3-4a). Rains in their season signify that the Spirit, typified by rain, is given to the church or to the individual believers in due time.

In the Old Testament, God uses rain, called the early and latter rain (Deut. 11:14; Jer. 5:24; Joel 2:23) to signify the Spirit. If we obey God by taking care of the three foregoing matters, we shall enjoy the Spirit as rain upon us.

B. The Land Yielding Its Rich Produce That the People May Eat the New Food Always and Dwell Securely in the Land

Verses 4b and 5 tell us that if the people obey, "the land will yield its produce, and the trees of the field will yield their fruit. Your threshing will overtake the vintage, and the vintage will overtake the time of sowing; and you will eat your bread to the full and dwell securely in your land." Verse 10 goes on to say, "You will eat old store long kept, and clear out the old to make room for the new." This signifies that we dwell in Christ as our good land and enjoy the riches of Christ for our satisfaction and security. Spiritual satisfaction and security are always the issue of our obedience to God's warning.

C. Peace Being Given in the Land without Threats, Savage Beasts, and the Sword

"I will give peace in the land, and you will lie down, and no one will make you afraid. I will eliminate savage beasts from the land, and the sword will not pass through your land" (v. 6). This signifies that the church is normally in a peaceful situation, having no savage beasts (Acts 20:29) or fightings, one with another, among the saints.

D. Chasing the Enemies, Five Chasing a Hundred and a Hundred Chasing Ten Thousand

"But you will chase your enemies, and they will fall before you by the sword. Five of you will chase a hundred, and a

hundred of you will chase ten thousand; and your enemies will fall before you by the sword" (vv. 7-8). This signifies that the church will chase the enemies in the coordination of the Body.

According to verse 8, five will chase a hundred and a hundred will chase ten thousand. In the first case each one chases twenty, and in the second case each one chases a hundred. These figures imply the Body life and the coordination of the Body. The greater the coordination, the greater will be our chasing power. This is the Body principle.

E. Fruitfulness in Multiplication

"I will have regard for you and make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will confirm My covenant with you" (v. 9). Fruitfulness in multiplication signifies that the church will be fruitful and multiply. The lack of increase or multiplication in the church is a strong sign that before God the church is wrong in some way. If there is no fruitfulness in multiplication, we need to find out what is wrong.

F. God's Dwelling Being among the People

"I will make My dwelling among you, and My soul will not abhor you" (v. 11). God's making His dwelling among the people signifies that God's dwelling will be built up in the church for God's delight that He may dwell among His people (cf. 2 Cor. 6:16-18).

V. THE DISOBEYING ONES TO BE CHASTISED THAT THEY MAY REPENT

In Leviticus 26:14-39 we see that the disobeying ones will be chastised that they may repent. This signifies that the believers who do not walk according to the Spirit but according to the flesh will suffer chastisement, not just once but on many levels with a number of punishments, that they may be forced to repent.

A. On the First Level —the Appointing of Sudden Terror

In 26:14-17 we have the chastisement on the first level.

This is the appointing of sudden terror. This refers to a threat that comes in suddenly.

1. A Consuming Disease and a Fever Causing the Eyesight to Fail and the Life to Waste Away, and the Enemy Eating What They Have Sown in Vain

"I also will do this to you: I will appoint over you sudden terror, a consuming disease and a fever that will cause your eyesight to fail and your life to waste away; you shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies will eat it" (v. 16). This signifies that we will be sick in the spirit and even in the body so that we lose our eyesight and our life, and the enemy will enjoy what we have done in emptiness.

2. Being Struck Down before the Ruling Enemies and Fleeing When No One Pursues

"I will set My face against you, and you will be struck down before your enemies; those who hate you shall rule over you, and you will flee when no one pursues" (v. 17). This signifies that we will become so weak that we will not be able to stand before the enemies but will flee from them. This is a description of a church that is weak because of disobedience to God's warning.

B. On the Second Level —Being Disciplined Sevenfold

In verses 18 through 20 we have the chastisements on the second level. Here God's people are disciplined sevenfold. "And if after all this you will not listen to Me, then I will go on to discipline you sevenfold for your sins" (v. 18). Such a discipline is much more severe.

1. The Heavens Being Made like Iron, Giving No Rain

"And I will break the pride of your power; I will make

your heavens like iron and your earth like brass" (v. 19). This signifies that the Spirit will not come to us from the heavens.

This word about the heavens being made like iron was fulfilled in the land of Palestine until World War I. History tells us that since this word was spoken and the children of Israel became disobedient to God's warning, the heaven above the holy land became hard as iron, giving no rain. Also, because of the dryness, the soil was blown away. This situation is a fulfillment of God's foretelling.

2. The Earth Being Made like Brass, Yielding No Produce

Leviticus 26:19b tells us that the earth would be made like brass. Verse 20 continues, "Your strength shall be spent in vain, for your land shall not yield its produce, and the trees of the land shall not yield their fruit." This signifies that we will have no spiritual produce for our spiritual food. Without satisfaction in food, it is hard to live securely. Not having food or security is the result of disregarding God's warning.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE SIXTY

THE WORD OF WARNING

(2)

Scripture Reading: Lev. 26:1-20

In the next message we shall cover the second part of the word of warning in Leviticus 26. In this message I would like to give a further word on what was covered in the previous message.

The Basis for Our Obedience

In 26:1-20 we are given a basis for our obedience, and this basis includes three matters. First, we should not have idols (v. 1). This signifies that besides God we should have no other goals that we are seeking after, so that we may not lose the position to enjoy our divine possession. Second, we should keep God's sabbaths (v. 2a). This signifies that we should know that the work of God was done entirely by Himself that we might enjoy it, and that there is no need for us to do any work. Third, we need to reverence God's sanctuary (v. 2b). This signifies that we should regard with reverence all that God is and has accomplished in Christ as God's dwelling, embodiment, and expression (John 1:14; Col. 2:9), and in the church as the enlargement of Christ for God's dwelling and eternal manifestation (Eph. 2:22; Rev. 21:10). We need not only to understand these points in letter but also to see their intrinsic significance.

The Processed Triune God as Our Unique Goal

God Himself must be our unique goal. As His creatures and especially as His children, we should not seek anything

other than Him. He should be the unique goal after which we are seeking.

Our God today is the processed Triune God. As such, He is not the same as He was in Genesis 1. God has been processed. This means that He has passed through many processes. He has passed through incarnation, through human living, through an all-inclusive death, and through a wonderful resurrection. Furthermore, He has entered into ascension. He has also descended to gain us and to enable us to gain Him, making Himself one with us and making us one with Him and constituting us with Him. This is a matter of the mingling of the processed Triune God with us. Today this processed Triune God should be our unique goal.

The Work God Has Accomplished for Our Rest

The second item in the basis of our obedience is realizing what God has done. This means that we should take God's work and rest because of it. However, most people neglect God's work and, instead, try to do something for themselves and by themselves. This is the situation among believers as well as unbelievers. Many believers ignore what God's work has accomplished for them and work by themselves to accomplish something for themselves. But it is an insult to God to ignore what He has done for us that we may rest in Him and in His work. To rest in God and in His work is to keep His sabbath.

We may ignore God's work and seek to do something for ourselves and by ourselves under the cloak of doing something for God. Such a thing may have a good appearance, but it is actually an insult to God, for it ignores what He has done for us that we may rest in Him and enjoy what He has done for us. Instead of ignoring what God has done, we should deny what we can do or want to do. We need to deny our work but honor God's work and rest in Him.

The Result of God's Work

The basis for our obedience is first God Himself and then God's work. Now we come to the third item in the basis for our

obedience, and this is the result of God's work. What is the result, the issue, of God's work? In brief, it is the church as the enlargement of the consummated Christ to be God's dwelling, God's embodiment, God's expression, and God's eternal manifestation. This is the church, and such a church is the result, the issue, the produce, of God's work.

These three matters—God, God's work, and the result of God's work—are covered fully in the sixty-six books of the Bible. In the Old Testament we see the types, and in the New Testament we see the fulfillment. The entire Bible is thus an unveiling of these three things. First we have the processed Triune God and His work for our rest, and then, as the result of His work, we have the church as the expression and the enlargement of the consummated Christ. We need to see this. Seeing these three things will give us a strong basis for obeying, going along with, God.

Honoring the Processed Triune God

We may talk about obeying God without knowing what it really means to obey God. To obey God is to honor Him as the processed Triune God. In eternity God was perfect, but He still needed to pass through a process in order to be consummated. Some think that if we speak this way about God, we do not reverence Him. Actually, it is to honor Him. In eternity past God was perfect, but He was not complete. Before His incarnation, God had divinity, but He did not have humanity. But after He became a man, He had humanity as well as divinity. Today our God is not merely God with divinity; He is the God-man with both divinity and humanity. He is Jesus and Emmanuel. In the name *Jesus* we can see the holy name *Jehovah,* for the name Jesus means "Jehovah the Savior." Jesus is also Emmanuel, which means "God with us." Hence, in the name *Emmanuel* we can see both God and man. From this we see that our God today is the God-man; He is of both divinity and humanity. He is divinely human and humanly divine.

When God became a man. He did not set His Godhead aside. No, Jesus lived by God and with God; He lived in

oneness with God. As He said, He was never alone because the Father was always with Him (John 16:32; 8:29).

Because Jesus was a man with God in Him and one with Him, He was a mystery, even to His disciples. They knew He was human, for they had seen Him eat and also weep. But although He was a man, He did marvelous things, things which no man was able to do. Hence, the disciples must have wondered about Him, asking themselves who He was. One day He asked them, "Who do you say that I am?" (Matt. 16:15). As the One with divinity and humanity, He is a wonderful person; He is altogether a mystery. Our God today is such a God.

When Moses received from God the word of warning that was to be given to the children of Israel, he did not know God as the One who had been processed. At that time God was only the perfect God; He had not yet been completed. But the God we know today is different from the God Moses knew. This certainly does not mean that there are two Gods. No, there is one God, but He is in two stages. Moses knew God at the stage when He was only God without being a man. However, we worship God not only as God but also as the God-man. There is a Man in heaven, and this Man is the very God. This is our God, the God of the Christians.

Some Christians may not realize that their God is the God-man who has passed through incarnation, human living, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. After He became incarnate, He lived on earth as the God-man, as God in a man, for thirty-three and a half years. He lived in a carpenter's home in the despised town of Nazareth. He worked as a carpenter Himself, and in history some have even referred to Him as the Carpenter of Nazareth. He was a carpenter, but He was also the very God. It is almost unimaginable that God was in a man doing the work of carpentry.

For thirty-three and a half years the Lord Jesus lived on earth as a wonderful man who was the expression of God. Having passed through the process of human living, He passed through the process of death. He was buried in the

tomb, and He entered into Hades, where He remained for a period of time. All this was part of the process of death.

After passing through the process of death, the Lord Jesus entered into resurrection where He was released not only in His divinity but also with His humanity. Therefore, in His resurrected being there is not only divinity but also humanity. Everything of the natural state was brought into resurrection. Although no one can understand this fully or explain it adequately, it is clearly revealed in the Bible.

As the resurrected One, the Lord Jesus ascended into the heavens, to the highest peak in the universe, and He is there today as a person who is God with humanity (Acts 7:55).

As such a God with humanity, He is "condensed" as the all-inclusive, compound, indwelling, life-giving, consummated Spirit. This Spirit is the consummated, processed Triune God. Because He is condensed, it is easy for Him to impart Himself into our spirit. Now He is one with us, and we are one with Him (1 Cor. 6:17). Who, then, are we? We are the enlargement of the wonderful Christ who is the embodiment of God. This enlargement is God's dwelling, God's expression, and God's eternal manifestation.

The Vision of the Processed Triune God with His Word and the Result of His Word Constituting Us into Obedient Ones

We need to take the processed Triune God, His work, and the result of His work as the basis for our obedience. With these three things as our basis, we shall obey God. We shall listen to Him, receive His word, go along with Him, and desire to be one with Him.

Seeing the vision of the processed Triune God with His work and the result of His work will constitute us into obedient ones. We will say, "Amen, Lord. I love You, I love Your work, and I love the result of Your work. In this result I am one with You, and You are one with me. You are working Yourself into me, and I am being constituted with You. Lord, obeying You is not hard or harsh but sweet and enjoyable. I like to enjoy all that You are, to enjoy Your work, and to enjoy

the result of Your work. Lord, here I am in the enjoyment of Yourself, of Your work, and of the church life!" Surely, if we see such a vision and have such an enjoyment, we shall be fully satisfied, and it will be easy for us to give up the world and obey God.

Receiving God's Blessing

If we obey God, we shall receive His blessing. According to Leviticus 26:3-13, this blessing has six issues. The first of these issues is the rain, which signifies the Spirit. The second issue is the food of the land for our satisfaction, which signifies dwelling in Christ as our good land and enjoying the riches of Christ for our satisfaction and security. The third issue is the peace given in the land, which signifies a peaceful life in the church. The fourth issue is chasing the enemies, with five chasing a hundred and a hundred chasing ten thousand, which signifies the church chasing the enemies in the coordination of the Body. Once we were individuals, but now we are a corporate Body. The fifth issue is fruitfulness in multiplication, which signifies the church being fruitful and multiplying. The sixth issue is God's dwelling place being among the people, which signifies that God's dwelling place will be built up in the church for God's delight that He may dwell among His people. To be God's dwelling place is a great blessing, even the consummate blessing. If we obey God, we shall enjoy His blessing with these six issues.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE SIXTY-ONE

THE WORD OF WARNING

(3)

Scripture Reading: Lev. 26:21-46

According to the word of warning in Leviticus 26, the obeying ones will be blessed (vv. 3-13), but the disobeying ones will be chastised that they may repent (vv. 14-39). This chastisement is on five levels. As we have seen, the first level is the appointing of sudden terror (vv. 14-17). This terror comprises both a consuming disease and a fever and also being defeated by the enemies. The chastisement on the second level is a matter of being disciplined sevenfold, with the heavens being made like iron, giving no rain, and the earth being made like brass, yielding no produce (vv. 18-20). In this message we shall go on to see the chastisement on the other three levels (vv. 21-39) and then the repentance of the people and the remembrance of God (vv. 40-45).

C. On the Third Level—Bringing Plagues Sevenfold

The chastisement on the third level brings in plagues sevenfold (vv. 21-22).

1. Plagues

"Then if you walk contrary to Me and are not willing to listen to Me, I will bring even more plagues upon you, sevenfold according to your sins" (v. 21). These plagues signify troubles among the believers in the church (1 Cor. 1:11; 2 Cor. 12:20).

2. Beasts Bereaving People of Their Children and Destroying Their Cattle, Reducing the Number of People and Making Their Roads Desolate

"And I will send against you the beasts of the field, and they shall bereave you of your children, and destroy your cattle, and make you few in number, so that your roads become desolate" (v. 22). This signifies that in the church fierce people (Acts 20:29) will rise up to bereave the believers of their life produce, to destroy their spiritual possessions, to reduce their number, and to desolate their communications.

D. On the Fourth Level—Striking Sevenfold

The chastisement on the fourth level is a matter of striking sevenfold.

1. Bringing a Sword

"I will bring a sword upon you that will execute vengeance for the covenant" (v. 25a). This signifies that in the church there will be fightings among the brothers. Fightings among the brothers is a sign of God's chastisement.

2. Sending the Pestilence

"If you are gathered together within your cities, I will send the pestilence among you" (v. 25b). This signifies that in the church there will be some kind of contagious disease. The "germs" of this disease are spread mainly through gossip and vain talk.

3. Delivering the People into the Hand of the Enemy

"You shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy" (v. 25c). This signifies that the believers in the church will be taken over by the enemy. During my history in the church life, I have seen such a thing happen a few times.

4. Cutting Off the Supply of Bread So That It Will Be Delivered by Weight and People Will Not Be Satisfied

"When I cut off your supply of bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and they will deliver again your bread by weight; and you will eat and not be satisfied" (v. 26). This signifies that in the church the spiritual supply will be cut off to a greatly reduced amount, so that there will be no satisfaction for the believers. We also have seen this happen in the church life. In a certain church there was a long period of time when there was no distribution of the spiritual food supply. As a result, in that church there was starvation.

E. On the Fifth Level—Being Disciplined Sevenfold Again

In the chastisement on the fifth level the people are disciplined sevenfold again (vv. 27-39).

1. Eating the Flesh of Their Children

"And you will eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters you will eat" (v. 29). This signifies that the church becomes so poor that it is unable to satisfy its members but bereaves them of their food supply. In such a situation the shortage of the food supply reaches the extent of there being nothing to eat except the "children," that is, what the church members produced in the past.

2. Their Carcasses Being Cast upon the Carcasses of Their Idols

"I will destroy your high places, and cut down your incense altars, and cast your carcasses upon the carcasses of your idols; and My soul shall abhor you" (v. 30). This signifies that the fleshly churches place themselves as carcasses upon the goals other than God that were sought by them as idols and destroyed by God. Here we see that in such a church God comes in to destroy both the idols and those who worship them. In such a church there is nothing but a heap of carcasses.

3. Their Cities Being Laid Waste and Their Sanctuaries Being Desolated, with No Smell of a Satisfying Fragrance to God

"I will lay waste your cities, and desolate your sanctuaries; and I will not smell your satisfying fragrance" (v. 31). This signifies that the churches are laid waste and their worship is desolated, and there is no satisfaction as a fragrance to God.

4. The Land Being Desolated and Inhabited by Their Enemies

"I will desolate the land, so that your enemies who dwell in it will be appalled over it" (v. 32). This signifies that the church's enjoyment of Christ as the rich land is desolated and stolen by the enemies. In such a church there is no longer the enjoyment of Christ, for this enjoyment has been stolen by the enemy. A church in which this happens is a church which has lost the enjoyment of Christ to the uttermost.

5. Being Scattered among the Nations and Chased by the Unsheathed Sword

"And I will scatter you among the nations and unsheathe the sword after you; your land shall be a desolation and your cities a waste" (v. 33). The unsheathed sword signifies God's death judgment. The people being scattered among the nations and chased by the unsheathed sword signifies that the church is scattered among the Gentiles and driven by the death judgment of God.

6. The Land Enjoying Its Sabbath during Their Captivity

"Then the land will enjoy its sabbaths all the days that it lies desolate, while you are in the land of your enemies; then the land will rest and enjoy its sabbaths. All the days that it lies desolate it will keep a sabbath, a sabbath which it did not keep in your sabbaths, when you lived upon it" (vv. 34-35). The land enjoying its sabbath during their captivity signifies that

the church's enjoyment of Christ as the rich land lies waste after the believers are scattered among the Gentiles. Thus far in my church life, I have not seen this kind of situation.

7. In the Enemies' Lands Faintness Being Sent into the Hearts, the People Being Driven and Fleeing as though Fleeing from the Sword, Stumbling over One Another, Perishing among the Nations Being Consumed and Rotting in the Land of Their Enemies

"And as for those of you who are left, I will send faintness into their hearts in the land of their enemies, so that the sound of a driven leaf will chase them, and they will flee as though fleeing from the sword, and they will fall when no one pursues. They will stumble over one another as if before the sword, though no one pursues, and you will not be able to stand before your enemies. You will perish among the nations, and the land of your enemies will consume you. Those of you who are left will rot away in their iniquity in the lands of your enemies; and also because of the iniquities of their fathers, they will rot away like them" (vv. 36-39). This signifies that the church in its captivity is under suffering and is eventually consumed by the enemies. This is the conclusion of the divine chastisement, a chastisement which in four of its levels is sevenfold. For chastisement to be sevenfold means that it is intensified.

VI. THE REPENTANCE OF THE PEOPLE IN CAPTIVITY AND THE REMEMBRANCE OF GOD

Now we come to a matter that is quite encouraging—the repentance of the people in captivity and the remembrance of God (vv. 40-45).

A. Confessing Their Iniquity, Humbling Their Uncircumcised Heart, and Accepting the Punishment of Their Iniquity

Verses 40 and 41 speak of God's people confessing their

iniquity, humbling their uncircumcised heart, and accepting the punishment of their iniquity. This signifies that the church in its captivity under the enemies repents, confesses its sins, and accepts God's punishments for its sins.

B. God Remembering His Covenants and the Land

"Then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, My covenant also with Isaac, and My covenant with Abraham as well I will remember; and I will remember the land" (v. 42). This signifies that for the church in captivity God remembers His new covenant and Christ as the rich land. Often when we repent and confess, we have the experience of God remembering the new covenant and also remembering Christ, who has been given to us as our rich land.

C. In Spite of His Chastisement God Not Rejecting the People, Neither Destroying Them Utterly nor Breaking His Covenant with Them

"And yet in spite of this, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them, neither will I abhor them so as to utterly destroy them and break My covenant with them; for I am Jehovah their God" (v. 44). This signifies that God, having chastised the church severely, will not reject it, nor will He destroy it utterly or break His covenant with it. No matter what the situation may be, we are still under God's New Testament covenant, and we still have our portion.

At this point we should note that chapter twenty-five of Leviticus concerns the grace of God, signified by the jubilee, whereas chapter twenty-six concerns the administration of God (chastisement, government, kingdom). In the New Testament, the grace of God is covered by the ministry of Paul, and God's administration is covered by the ministry of Peter. Keeping this in mind will be helpful to us as we read the New Testament.

The fulfillment of God's promise to His people can be seen in the history of Israel. In the 1920s we studied books on prophecy and came to know the promises concerning Israel in Leviticus and Deuteronomy. I believed God and I believed all

the prophecies recorded in the Bible, yet I wondered how the Jews could be formed into a nation, since they had lost their land and it was occupied by the Moslems. I was waiting for the time when the Jews would be formed into a nation in their fatherland, the Holy Land, Palestine. Suddenly, in 1948, the Jews returned to their fathers' land and formed a government and a nation there.

Let me tell you the story very briefly according to what I recall from my reading of newspapers and books.

During World War I, the British had a shortage of a certain chemical which was crucial for manufacturing ammunition. A Jewish scholar who was living in Great Britain knew how to produce this chemical. An agreement was made between the British government and this scholar that if he would help the British to produce the needed chemical, they would return Palestine to the Jews after the war. (At that time Palestine was under the Ottoman Empire, which had joined with Germany in the war.) When the war was over, the British government did not keep its word. The League of Nations, which was dominated by Great Britain and France, gave Lebanon to France and the land on either side of the Jordan River to England as protectorates.

The Jews were deeply disappointed by the failure of Great Britain to keep its promise. I believe that this failure was an offense to God. From that time onward, God's blessing was turned away from Great Britain to another direction.

During World War II, Hitler killed six million Jews. This stirred the hearts of the Jewish people, and they realized that as long as they did not have their own land and government, they had no protection. I believe that many prayers were offered to God by the devoted, Orthodox Jews. I also believe that God heard their prayers.

At the end of the war, the United States proposed that the Jews return to their fathers' land. Great Britain agreed, and preparations were made. In 1948 the British forces went ahead of the Jews to drive the Palestinians from their homes, and the Jews moved in. It was in this way that the Jews returned to their fatherland and formed a government.

When I got to know this in the newspaper in Shanghai, I was greatly surprised. I was alive to see the fulfillment of part of a great biblical prophecy. My belief in the prophecies of the Bible was confirmed.

In 1948 the Jews did not take possession of the old section of Jerusalem, which was still controlled by Jordan. However, in 1967, during what is called the Six Day War, Israel took over the remainder of Jerusalem and the West Bank of the Jordan River.

Although the Jews have regained the Holy Land, they have not yet fully and wholly repented to God. The majority of the Jews remain in their unbelief. The government of Israel may care for religion, but it does not care for God. I do not know of one statesman among the Jews who has been godly. However, the devoted Jews care for God, and some of them pray day and night. I believe that they know Leviticus 26 and, at least to some extent, keep this word. God surely is in the process of answering their prayers according to His promise. One indication of this is Israel's being able to stand against so many Moslem and Arab nations. Israel stands because God is behind them.

This brief review of history testifies that the prophetic word in God's holy Word is true. I have seen the fulfillment of this word, and it is still being fulfilled today. God is God, and His word concerning Israel will be fulfilled in full. He will preserve Israel until the Lord's coming back.

Today we need to follow the spiritual principles in Leviticus 26. If we are wrong, we should repent. Then we shall receive back the blessing for our enjoyment.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE SIXTY-TWO

DEVOTIONS FOR A VOW

(1)

Scripture Reading: Lev. 27:1-15

In this message we come to the last chapter of Leviticus, a chapter concerning the devotions for a vow.

The book of Leviticus concludes with a vow which we need to have with God. After the twenty-six foregoing chapters, in which many things are covered, this book speaks in chapter twenty-seven about our making a vow to God. This vow is of four kinds of devotions: the devotion of a person, the devotion of cattle, the devotion of a house, and the devotion of a part of a field. These four kinds of devotions surely express what God wants from us, the persons who have enjoyed all the blessings and all the visitations in the foregoing chapters.

In the first section of this book, we have seen the offerings with the priesthood. The offerings refer to Christ, and the priesthood indicates the body of priestly service that takes care of the offerings. In the second section we have seen our condition, which is a matter of uncleanness and unclean discharge. After seeing our condition, we were brought into the enjoyment of the feasts, and this leads us into the jubilee. Then we received a warning. Now, at the end of Leviticus, we need a vow.

Actually, the Christian life should be a life of a vow. I believe that within the heart of every saved one there is, to some extent, a vow to God. This vow may be evident or it may not be evident; it may be strong or it may be rather weak. Nevertheless, there is some kind of vow within every saved one. At least there is a desire which may result in a vow. The desire

toward God is the source, and this desire results in a vow to God. Our desire toward God eventually becomes a vow made to God.

On our part, the Christian life is a life of making a vow to God. This should happen not only once but again and again. Every time we experienced a revival we made a vow to God. Now every morning when we are revived we make a kind of vow to God. Therefore, our Christian life is a life of a vow.

Leviticus concludes with devotions for a vow. The totality of all the things in this book is a vow. When we add together the offerings, the priesthood, our condition, our enjoyment of Christ, and the jubilee, the sum, the total, is a vow. This vow then becomes our life, our living. The Levitical living, therefore, is the living of a vow.

The book of Leviticus begins with our offering of Christ in many aspects to God for the satisfaction of both God and man, and it ends with our devoting ourselves and our possessions to God for our vow to Him. But what does the word *devote* mean? What does it mean to say that we devote ourselves to God? Some may think that devote is the same as to offer or to consecrate. According to my understanding, to devote is stronger than to offer or to consecrate; it is also stronger than to give, to present, to yield, and to surrender. A devotion must always go with a vow. Something may be offered or given without a vow being involved; but if something is given to a person in a will, that is a kind of devotion with a vow. Such a devotion cannot be changed. For this reason, to devote is stronger than to offer.

I. FOUR KINDS OF DEVOTIONS FOR A VOW

Leviticus, a book of the priesthood, ends with our devotion of ourselves and of our possessions, our cattle, land, and houses. In chapter twenty-seven we have not four kinds of consecrations for a vow but four kinds of devotions for a vow (vv. 2-25).

A. The Devotion of a Person to God

In 27:2-8 we read of the devotion of a person to God.

1. The Valuation of the Person

Verse 2 speaks of making "a special vow to Jehovah involving the valuation of persons." Thus the devotion here involves the value of a person. This indicates that when we devote ourselves to God, this devotion involves our value.

a. By God—in the Eyes of God

How much we are valued is not according to our estimation; it is according to God.

b. According to the Shekel of the Sanctuary

The value of a person is also "according to the shekel of the sanctuary" (v. 3b). This means that it is according to the holy scale of God's dwelling. In other words, it is according to the spiritual scale of the church, which is God's dwelling today.

2. Different Kinds of Valuations

In verses 3 through 8 there are different kinds of valuations.

a. Of a Male from Twenty to Sixty Years Old, Fifty Shekels of Silver

"The valuation of a male from twenty years old up to sixty years old shall be fifty shekels of silver" (v. 3a). The ones in this category, the most valuable, signify those who are spiritually strong, mature, experienced, and able to war in the church.

The number fifty is composed of five times ten. Five is the number of responsibility. Hence, fifty is ten times responsibility. Those whose valuation is fifty shekels of silver must bear the greatest responsibility.

b. Of a Female from Twenty to Sixty Years Old, Thirty Shekels

"And if it is a female, the valuation shall be thirty shekels" (v. 4). Here we see that the valuation of a female from twenty to sixty years old is thirty shekels, second to that of

the males above. The female signifies those who are weaker than and inferior to the male. This is God's ordination and it is according to His creation.

c. Of a Male from Five to Twenty Years Old, Twenty Shekels

"If the person is from five years old up to twenty years old, the valuation for the male shall be twenty shekels" (v. 5a). Those in this category, the third most valuable, signify those who are spiritually young in the church (cf. 1 John 2:13-14).

d. Of a Female from Five to Twenty Years Old, Ten Shekels

The valuation of a female from five to twenty years old is ten shekels (v. 5b), second to the male.

e. Of a Male from One Month to Five Years Old, Five Shekels

"And if the person is from a month old up to five years old, the valuation of the male shall be five shekels of silver" (v. 6a). Those in this category are the least valuable of the males and signify those who are spiritually the young children (cf. 1 John 2:13).

f. Of a Female from One Month to Five Years Old, Three Shekels

The valuation of a female from one month to five years old is three shekels (v. 6b), the least valuable.

g. Of a Male from Sixty Years Old and Upward, Fifteen Shekels

"If the person is from sixty years old and upward, if it is a male, the valuation shall be fifteen shekels" (v. 7a). The age from sixty years old and upward indicates a male's deterioration. This signifies those who are spiritually deteriorated.

h. Of a Female from Sixty Years Old and Upward, Ten Shekels

The valuation of a female from sixty years old and upward is ten shekels (v. 7b). This signifies the female's deterioration.

3. The Person Who Was Poorer than the Valuation to Be Valued by the Priest according to His Means

"But if he is poorer than the valuation, then he shall be presented before the priest, and the priest shall value him; according to the means of him who vowed, the priest shall value him" (v. 8). This signifies that we are not valued according to our spiritual age but according to our spiritual ability, not according to what we should do spiritually but according to what we can do spiritually.

The valuation of a person has a purpose. If you want to redeem yourself from your vow, you have to pay the cost according to your valuation. In the church life we may devote ourselves to God. Our valuation according to the spiritual scale may be a certain amount, but according to our actual condition and ability we may not be able to afford to pay that much.

Here we would note that in God's redemption there is no difference of degree, but in our devotion there is the difference of degree. What we are and what we can do spiritually will be valued at our devotion.

B. The Devotion of Cattle to God

In verses 9 through 13 we have the devotion of cattle to God.

1. To Be Holy

"If it is cattle such as they may offer as an offering to Jehovah, all such that a man gives to Jehovah shall be holy" (v. 9). To be holy is to be sanctified to God and thus to belong to God, becoming His possession.

2. Not to Be Replaced or Exchanged

"He shall not replace it or exchange it, a good for a bad, or a bad for a good" (v. 10a). Once devoted it is God's forever, and its status cannot be changed by any replacement or exchange. It is difficult to change your status once you have devoted yourself. Changing your mind about your devotion will only cause trouble.

3. If an Exchange Were Made, both the Devoted Animal and That for Which It Was Exchanged Would Be Holy

"If he should exchange animal for animal, then both it and that for which it is exchanged shall be holy" (v. 10b). Both animals would become God's. This indicates that God aspires after our devotion.

Once something has been devoted to God, being placed on the altar, it cannot be returned. From this we see that we need to be careful in the matter of devoting ourselves to God. God means business; He does not play around with us. Whenever you consecrate yourself to Him you need to have a thorough consideration. Do not make your devotion in a light way.

4. If an Unclean Animal, Which Should Not Have Been Offered to Jehovah, Was Devoted, It Was to Be Valued by the Priest

"If it is an unclean animal, which they may not offer as an offering to Jehovah, then he shall set the animal before the priest, and the priest shall value it as either good or bad; according to the valuation of the priest, so it shall be" (vv. 11-12). This signifies that even though what we devote to God is unclean, through the valuation of our Mediator, the Lord Jesus, the motive of our devotion is still valuable to some degree before God.

5. If the Devoting One Intended to Redeem It, He Had to Add One-fifth of Its Value to the Valuation

"But if he would indeed redeem it, then he shall add

one-fifth of its value to the valuation" (v. 13). This signifies that we should be careful, not owing anything to God in our devotion.

Some saints have had a change of mind after devoting themselves to God, and as a result they became indebted to God. We need to be careful about this, not owing God anything in our devotion. We should not become debtors to God lest God thereby have the position to claim something from us.

C. The Devotion of a House

Verses 14 and 15 speak of the devotion of a house.

1. A House Sanctified to Jehovah to Be Valued by the Priest

"If a man sanctifies his house to be holy to Jehovah, then the priest shall value it as either good or bad; just as the priest values it, so it shall stand" (v. 14). This signifies that our devotion related to the church should be valued by our Mediator, the Lord Jesus.

When we came into the church life, we had the desire to devote ourselves and to be for the church. We need to be careful in making such a decision. Otherwise, in the sight of God, we may become debtors to the church.

2. If the Devoting One Intended to Redeem His House, He Had to Add One-fifth of the Valuation That It Might Be His

"And if he who sanctified it would redeem his house, then he shall add to it one-fifth of the valuation in money, and it shall be his" (v. 15). This signifies that we should not take advantage of our devotion related to the church life that we may keep the enjoyment of the church life. Otherwise, we will be churchless persons.

The book of Leviticus, even in the matter of our consecration, gives us detailed instructions. Nowhere in the New Testament can we find so many details concerning our consecration, or concerning what is called in Leviticus devotion. We

must take care of our devotion in these details regarding ourselves, our possessions, and our house and land. Then we shall be at peace and we shall be a joy to the Lord. Otherwise, in our consecration we may make ourselves debtors either to God or to the church.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE SIXTY-THREE

DEVOTIONS FOR A VOW

(2)

Scripture Reading: Lev. 27:16-34

In this message we shall continue to consider the devotions for a vow in chapter twenty-seven.

D. The Devotion of a Field

Leviticus 27:16-25 speaks of the devotion of a field.

1. A Part of a Field Sanctified to Jehovah to Be Valued according to the Seed Required

"If a man sanctifies part of a field of his possession to Jehovah, then the valuation shall be according to the seed required for it: a homer of barley seed for fifty shekels of silver" (v. 16). This signifies that our devotion related to the enjoyment of Christ as the rich land should be valued according to the seed of the divine life required for our spiritual increase.

A field sanctified, devoted, to Jehovah was to be valued according to the seed required. Suppose a piece of land was devoted thirty-five years before the jubilee. For each of these thirty-five years a certain amount of seed would be required. The value of this piece of land would be higher than a piece of land devoted only twenty years before the jubilee.

In our interpretation of verse 16, we speak of our devotion related to the enjoyment of Christ. The land typifies Christ. However, we should not interpret verse 16 as typifying the devoting of a part of Christ. Such an interpretation is neither meaningful nor logical. Although we cannot devote a part of Christ or devote our enjoyment of Christ, we can have a

devotion that is related to the enjoyment of Christ. The three previous devotions—of ourselves, of our cattle, and of our houses—are all for us to enjoy Christ. The more we have these three kinds of devotions, the more we shall be in a position to enjoy Christ. Therefore, this chapter concludes that all our devotions consummate in the enjoyment of Christ.

Our devotion related to the enjoyment of Christ should be valued according to the seed of the divine life required for our spiritual increase. In the type, the more seed required, the higher was the value of the land. The valuation was according to the seed required for the period of time before the jubilee. In our spiritual interpretation of this, "according to the seed required" actually denotes the prospect. Suppose I devote something for the enjoyment of Christ as the good land. How should this devotion be valued? This devotion should be valued according to its prospect. The greater the seed required, the greater is the prospect for increase. The lesser the seed required, the lesser is the prospect for the increase of the number in the church. If our devotion related to the enjoyment of Christ will afford a greater prospect for the increase of the church, this devotion will be more valuable. However, if our devotion, our consecration, will afford only a limited prospect for increase, our devotion will not be as valuable as one that affords a greater prospect.

Perhaps you are wondering why we interpret verse 16 this way. The reason for this interpretation is the fact that seed is for increase. On the one hand, the seed indicates the value of the land. On the other hand, spiritually speaking, the seed indicates the life increase; it indicates multiplication. We may consecrate ourselves to the Lord, but our consecration may not afford very much prospect of the increase of the church. If our consecration affords a greater prospect of the increase of the church, surely this consecration will be more valuable than one that does not have such a prospect. Let us take Paul as an example. When Paul devoted himself for the enjoyment of Christ, that devotion had a great prospect of the increase of the church.

2. The Valuation to Be Also according to the Number of Years from the Jubilee

"If he sanctifies his field from the year of jubilee, it shall stand according to the valuation; but if he sanctifies his field after the jubilee, then the priest shall calculate the money for it according to the years that remain until the year of jubilee, and it shall be deducted from the valuation" (vv. 17-18). The longer the time before the jubilee, the greater was the value of the devoted land. This signifies that our devotion related to the enjoyment of Christ should be valued also according to the measure of God's grace from the jubilee.

In these verses we have two ways of valuation: according to the seed required and according to the number of years from the jubilee. Actually, these two ways are one. The greater the number of years before the jubilee, the greater would be the seed required. The lesser the number of years, the lesser would be the seed required.

Paul's consecration afforded a larger prospect of the increase of the church. Paul's consecration also provided him a great opportunity to enjoy the grace of God.

The more increase we bring in, the more grace we have a share in. The more increase our consecration affords, the more grace we enjoy. This is related to the number of years. If we devote ourselves to the Lord early in life, we shall have more years to bring sinners to the Lord and thus to contribute to the increase of the church. This increase will then indicate that we have enjoyed the Lord's grace. The amount of grace is measured by the amount of increase. The greater the increase, the greater is the grace, and the lesser the increase, the lesser is the grace. This realization urges us to devote ourselves earlier—the earlier, the better. For example, if you have waited until now to preach the gospel by visiting people in their homes, you will afford less prospect of increase than if you had begun last year but more than if you wait until next year. This indicates that the earlier you devote yourself to gospel preaching the better. Preaching the gospel will help you to enjoy Christ. You may enjoy the Lord

in the morning by pray-reading a few verses, but you will have more enjoyment of Christ if you preach the gospel by visiting people. To visit people with the gospel requires a certain amount of devotion. As we devote ourselves, our time, and our energy to preaching the gospel, we shall be helped to enjoy the Lord more. This kind of devotion to preaching the gospel consummates not only in people being saved but also in our enjoyment of Christ. The principle is the same with participating in home meetings to nourish the new ones.

The point I wish to emphasize here is this: The more we devote ourselves to the Lord in anything, the more we are related to the enjoyment of Christ. The amount, the degree, the level, of the enjoyment of Christ is figured by the seed required and by the number of years to the jubilee. The seed required indicates the prospect of increase to the Body. The greater the seed required, the greater will be the increase we shall bring in for the Body. The greater the number of years to the jubilee, the greater will be the grace for our enjoyment.

3. The Sanctifying One Who Redeemed the Field Was to Add One-fifth of the Valuation

"And if he who sanctified the field would indeed redeem it, then he shall add to it one-fifth of the valuation in money, and it shall remain his" (v. 19). This signifies that we should pay a price for our devotion related to the enjoyment of Christ as the rich land.

If we have devoted something and we want to get it back, we have to pay the price. If we do not devote, there is no need to redeem or to pay anything. In such a case, nothing is added to our enjoyment of Christ. But if we devote and we want to reclaim what is devoted, we have to pay the price and then add one-fifth of that price. The important matter here is not the amount added to the price—it is getting ourselves involved with the enjoyment of Christ.

Whether we are right or wrong, it is good to devote. As long as we devote, we are involved with and related to the

enjoyment of Christ. In the past I knew quite a number of saints who consecrated themselves to the Lord in a wrong way, but they all became involved with the enjoyment of Christ.

4. If the Sanctifying One Did Not Redeem the Land or Had Sold It to Others, It Could Not Be Redeemed Anymore

"But if he does not redeem the field, or if he has sold the field to another man, it shall not be redeemed anymore" (v. 20). This signifies that if in our devotion related to the enjoyment of Christ as the rich land we will not pay a price, we will lose this enjoyment for a certain time.

5. In the Jubilee the Devoted Field Purchased by Another Would Be Holy to Jehovah and Would Belong to the Priest; but If It Had Been Purchased as the Purchaser's Possession, It Would Return to the Original Devoter and Seller, and the Purchaser Was to Give Its Valuation as a Holy Thing to Jehovah

"And when the field is released in the jubilee, it shall be holy to Jehovah, as a devoted field; his possession shall belong to the priest. But if he sanctifies a field which he has purchased to Jehovah, which is not of the fields of his possession, then the priest shall calculate the amount of its valuation up to the year of jubilee, and he shall give the amount of its valuation on that day as a holy thing to Jehovah. In the year of jubilee the field shall return to the one from whom it was bought, to whom the possession of the land belongs" (vv. 21-24). This signifies that in our devotion related to the enjoyment of Christ as the rich land, we cannot take advantage of others and we must be fair with God.

Suppose the owner of a piece of land devoted that land to God. Later, perhaps because he had become poor, he sold that devoted piece of land to another person, who bought it

by paying the amount of the valuation plus one-fifth of that amount. Thus this piece of land became the possession of this other person. However, according to the statute of the jubilee, the land was to be returned to the original owner, who was the devoter and also the seller. Although the owner had sold the land, it was not to remain sold forever. At the time of jubilee the one who purchased the land is taken out of the picture, for he was to be the possessor of the land only until the jubilee, at which time the land reverted to its original owner. As we have pointed out, this signifies that in our devotion related to the enjoyment of Christ we cannot take advantage of others and we must be fair with God.

II. THE REGULATIONS FOR DEVOTION

Leviticus 27:26-33 speaks of the regulations for devotion.

A. The Firstborn among the Beasts, Which Belonged to Jehovah, No One Was Permitted to Sanctify

"But the firstborn among the beasts, which as a firstborn belongs to Jehovah, no one may sanctify; whether it is an ox or a sheep, it is Jehovah's" (v. 26). This signifies that we may not devote anything that is owned by God. The firstborn are owned by God already; therefore, we have no right to devote them.

B. The Devoted Beast That Was Unclean Was to Be Ransomed, with One-fifth of the Valuation Added to It, or Sold according to the Priest's Valuation

"And if it is among the unclean beasts, then he shall ransom it according to the valuation, and shall add one-fifth of its value to it; and if it is not redeemed, it shall be sold according to the valuation" (v. 27). This signifies that even though what we have devoted to God is unclean, through the valuation of our Mediator, the Lord Jesus, the motive of our devotion is still valuable to some degree before God. A certain thing we may wish to devote to God may not be acceptable to

Him, but, through the Lord Jesus, the motive of our devotion is still dear to God.

C. No Devoted Thing Devoted to Jehovah Being Sold or Redeemed but Being Most Holy to Jehovah

"But no devoted thing which a man may devote to Jehovah out of all that he has, whether of man or of beast, or of the field of his possession, shall be sold or redeemed; very devoted thing is most holy to Jehovah" (v. 28). This signifies that our devotion must be so strong that it cannot be altered.

D. No One Who Should Certainly Have Been Put to Death and Who Had Been Devoted to God Could Be Ransomed

"No one who has been devoted from among men shall be ransomed; he shall certainly be put to death" (v. 29). This signifies that whatever we devote to God that should be destroyed should not be released back to us.

E. The Tithe of Everything Was Holy to God; It Was Not to Be Devoted, but It Could Be Redeemed with an Addition of One-fifth of Its Value, and It Was Not to Be Exchanged; Otherwise, Both It and That for Which It Was Exchanged Would Be Holy to God

"And every tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the trees, is Jehovah's; it is holy to Jehovah. If a man would indeed redeem any of his tithes, he shall add one-fifth of its value to it. And every tithe of the herd or of the flock, whatever passes under the rod, the tenth one shall be holy to Jehovah. He shall not inquire whether it is good or bad, neither shall he exchange it; and if he should exchange it, then both it and that for which it is exchanged shall be holy; it shall not be redeemed" (vv. 30-33). This signifies that anything that belongs to God we have no right over,

and we may not dispose of it or change its ownership in any way.

After considering all these points, we can see how earnest God is in desiring our devotion. Whatever we devote, God treasures. This should encourage us to devote ourselves to the Lord in our person, in our possessions, and in everything we can do.

Chapter twenty-seven of Leviticus impresses us with the fact that God aspires that we all give ourselves to Him in whatever we are, in whatever we have, and in whatever we can do. This is God's desire, His aspiration. He is thirsty for this. He wants to see us devoting ourselves to Him, even if it is in a wrong way. He likes to see that we devote to Him our time, ability, possessions, strength, whatever we have, and whatever we can do. As long as we devote ourselves to Him in so many aspects, He is pleased. He accepts such a devotion. This is the emphasis in Leviticus 27.

Leviticus, a book on what God has done for our enjoyment, ends with God's aspiration that we devote ourselves to Him. God has done everything for us, and now He needs us to enjoy Him. He wants to have more enjoyers. He has prepared everything for us. The feast is ready, and we should come and dine. Here at the end of Leviticus God expresses His aspiration and expectation that we make a vow with Him to devote to Him whatever we are, whatever we have, and whatever we can do. The purpose of this devotion is that we enjoy the Lord in all that He has prepared for us. Everything has been prepared, but many seats at His feast have not yet been filled. Therefore, God is calling, encouraging, and even urging us to devote ourselves to Him for our enjoyment of Him in all that He has prepared and provided for us.

THE PROPHECIES IMPLIED IN LEVITICUS

In the book of Leviticus prophecies are implied. These implied prophecies are in the types and also in the warning.

A. In the Types

Prophecies are implied in the types of the feasts, in the

type of the harvest and the gleanings, and in the type of the jubilee. The feast of the Passover denotes the death of Christ (23:5). The feast of the firstfruits denotes the resurrection of Christ (23:10-11). The feast of Pentecost denotes the producing of the church (23:15-17). The harvest left at the corners of the field and the gleanings for the alien and for the poor denote God's salvation left for the Gentiles (23:22). The feast of the blowing of trumpets denotes God's calling back of His scattered people—Israel (23:24). The feast of propitiation denotes the repentance and salvation of the people—Israel—called back by God (23:27). The feast of tabernacles denotes the coming millennium (23:34, 39-42). The jubilee for people to be freed to return to their possessions denotes that at Christ's second coming the children of Israel will be freed to return to their lost possessions (25:8-41).

B. In the Warning

Even in the warning (26:1-46) some prophecies are implied. The warning indicates that in obeying God Israel will be blessed, but in disobeying God Israel will be chastised. Furthermore, in the warning we see that God will not abhor and reject Israel, nor will He utterly destroy them. Finally, when Israel repents to God, He will remember them and visit them.

LIFE-STUDY OF LEVITICUS

MESSAGE SIXTY-FOUR

A CONCLUDING WORD

In the twenty-eight foregoing messages, we covered the last seventeen chapters of Leviticus. These seventeen chapters form the second section of this book. Now, in this concluding word, I would like to consider six matters that are the main points in chapters eleven through twenty-seven of Leviticus.

OUR SITUATION

The first five chapters of this section of Leviticus unveil our situation. According to these chapters, our contact with others may be unclean, and our source, our origin, is uncleanness. Furthermore, our condition is one of leprosy, and whatever comes out of us as a discharge is unclean. This is our situation as it is clearly unveiled to us in chapters eleven through fifteen.

CHRIST'S REDEMPTION

The second main point is Christ's redemption. Instead of the word *redemption,* the word used in Leviticus is *propitiation.* Christ's redemption, His propitiation, has solved our problems and has brought us back to God. We have not only been redeemed back to God and brought into His presence—we have been brought into God Himself. Now we are in the consummated Triune God, and here, in Him, we have full enjoyment.

THE ENJOYMENT OF THE RICHES OF THE PROCESSED AND CONSUMMATED TRIUNE GOD

Having been brought back to God and into God by Christ's redemption, we may now enjoy all the riches of the processed

and consummated Triune God. This is fully revealed in Leviticus 23, a chapter that speaks of the seven feasts, which are seven festivals for our enjoyment of all the riches of our God. It is in God Himself that we have the enjoyment of His riches. By enjoying the riches of the processed and consummated Triune God, we become His expression. This means that we become the Body of Christ as the enlargement of Christ to express Christ.

THE JUBILEE

Our enjoyment of the riches of the processed and consummated Triune God brings us to the fourth point—the jubilee. The jubilee is the completion and the consummation of our enjoyment of the riches of the Triune God in God Himself. When we enjoy the Triune God in all His riches and when we have this enjoyment in the Triune God Himself, we will reach the jubilee, which will be for eternity.

THREE CRUCIAL ITEMS

The fifth point is our realization that three items are crucial to us.

God as Our Unique Goal

God Himself should be our unique goal, our unique aim. Apart from Him we should not have any other goal. We should not seek anything other than God. Our goal is the Triune God processed, completed, and consummated to be our full enjoyment.

Respecting God's Completed Work

We all need to respect God's completed work, the work that God has accomplished for our interest and for our rest. God's work has been accomplished, and it has been accomplished for our rest. Therefore, we need to regard God Himself and His work for our interest.

God's work has a result, and this result is His enlargement, His extension. This enlargement is the Body of Christ, which is the mingling of the processed Triune God and His chosen

and redeemed people as one entity. This entity is God's dwelling, God's embodiment, and God's expression. Eventually, it will be God's manifestation in eternity.

Obeying God

Based upon the fact of having God as our unique goal and regarding His completed work, we obey God. To obey God simply means to go along with God. To obey God is to agree with all that He is and with all that He has accomplished. When we obey God, we agree with God and with His work. We also agree with the result of God's work, which is His enlargement. When we agree with God and go along with Him, we spontaneously obey Him, and by obeying Him we receive His rich blessing.

MAKING A VOW

Finally, we need to see that there is the need for those who are willing and able to enjoy God, to enjoy God's work, and to enjoy the result of God's work. If we would be those who enjoy God, God's work, and the result of God's work, we need to respond to God's desire by making a vow. Our response to God's desire that we be His enjoyers should not be ordinary but particular. This means that it should be a vow. We need to make a vow in which we tell God that we shall enjoy Him according to what is revealed in the book of Leviticus. We should tell Him that we want to enjoy Him by regarding Him, by respecting His work, and by honoring the result of His work. This is a vow to enjoy the processed, completed, and consummated Triune God. This Triune God is embodied in Christ, and Christ is one with His Body, which is His expression.

We all need to regard God, His work, and the result of His work, go along with Him, and become those who enjoy Him. For this, we have to respond to God by making a vow. Are you willing to do this? Let us all make such a vow today.