Biblical Exposition & Sermons

Leviticus

Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (Ⅲ)



Paul C. Jong



Leviticus Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (III)

Biblical Exposition & Sermons



Hephzibah

“For on that day the priest shall make atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the LORD” (Leviticus 16:30)

The ordinances of cleanness and the sacrifices of atonement in Leviticus were not merely rules for daily life in ancient Israel. They are a shadow of salvation, showing how a sinner is made clean and comes before the holy God.

This book examines the word in Leviticus chapters 11 through 18 in connection with the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus Christ has accomplished. Born as descendants of Adam, people cannot help but commit sin. Yet for mankind in such a state, Jesus took upon Himself the sin of mankind by being baptized by John, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and completed salvation by rising again from death. People become sinless not by their own deeds, but by believing this word of salvation that God has established.

This book guides readers to lay down their own righteousness and believe in this perfect atonement, so that they may obtain true cleansing and the assurance of salvation.

This is a book that everyone must seek out

and read now,

before the Antichrist appears,

as this world is heading toward destruction.

<u>You must believe now.</u>

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Leviticus

Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (III)

PAUL C. JONG

Hephzibah Publishing House

A Ministry of THE NEW LIFE MISSION
SEOUL, KOREA

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Leviticus seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (III)

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First Edition: 2026
Published: October 2026

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Scripture quotations used in this book are from the '*New King James Version (NKJV)', 'American Standard Version (ASV)'*.

ISBN 978-89-282-6330-1
Illustration: Young-ae Kim
Reviewed: Elizabeth
Translator: Elizabeth
Printed in South Korea
Cover art generated with AI and retouched

Hephzibah Publishing House
A Ministry of THE NEW LIFE MISSION
Seoul, Korea

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We offer a prayer of thanks to the Lord for giving us the Word of salvation and blessing us with the gospel of being born again by water and the Spirit.

I would also like to thank God's servants and brothers and sisters for their invaluable service in publishing this book. We all worked hard to write this book.

I hope and pray that this book will help many souls be born again, and I would like to express my sincere gratitude once again to everyone who worked hard with me.

I sincerely hope that the Lord will allow the gospel of being born again by water and the Spirit to be spread throughout the world through those who believe in Jesus.

PAUL C. JONG

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Preface

In Leviticus are recorded the ordinances God appointed to sanctify His people and to have them live according to the word of God. As we read the command to love one's neighbor, the ordinances by which the priests were to handle the holy things, and the words about offering gifts to God and keeping the feasts, we come to wonder why God appointed such laws and what meaning they convey to our faith and life today. I hope that you, the readers, will understand God's will contained in this word, and will clearly realize how the people who have received the remission of sins through the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit are to believe in and serve God. In this book, Leviticus seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (III), I intend to examine Leviticus chapters 19 to 23 in order and preach that word.

Reading God's ordinances through the gospel of the water and the Spirit

To understand rightly God's will of salvation revealed in the Old and New Testaments, one must first know and believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The words about the law of sacrifice and the atonement in the Old Testament are a shadow that shows beforehand the salvation Jesus Christ would come to this earth and accomplish. Jesus had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him once and for all by receiving baptism from John, paid the price of that sin in full by shedding His blood on the Cross, and then accomplished our salvation by rising again

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from death. When we know and believe this word of the gospel, we come to understand how the atonement God promised in the Old Testament was accomplished through Jesus Christ. Moreover, through the word He gives to the people who have received the remission of sin, we learn the faith and life of serving God in thanksgiving for the grace of salvation.

In the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the "water" refers to the baptism Jesus received from John. With that baptism Jesus bore our sins, and with the blood He shed on the Cross He received in our place the judgment of those sins. God the Father planned our salvation; God the Son, Jesus, accomplished that salvation according to the Father's will; and God the Holy Spirit testifies of this truth of salvation. By believing in our hearts this word of the gospel—that Jesus has borne and removed all our sins—we receive the remission of sins and become God's children.

This faith becomes the foundation for understanding all the words of the Bible. Reading the law, we come to realize our own sins of failing to live according to God's will, and in the law of sacrifice we look into the way of atonement God prepared for sinners. In the prophecies of the prophets we learn the promise of the Savior who was to come, and in the New Testament we come to know the work of Jesus Christ, who fulfilled that promise. We also come to receive the instructions and rebukes given to the saints as the word that teaches what God's children who have received the remission of sins are to believe and how they are to live. I hope that through this book you, the readers, will realize the grace of God, who has sanctified us, and live according to the word with the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

To those who wish to know the gospel of the water and the Spirit in more detail, I recommend reading Have You Truly

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Been Born Again of Water and the Spirit? by Pastor Paul C. Jong. Once you come to know the meaning of atonement contained in the baptism Jesus received from John and in the blood of the Cross, it will also help you understand not only the law of sacrifice in Leviticus but also the word God gives to the people who have received the remission of sins.

The life of the people whom God has sanctified

God delivered the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt and made them His own people. God, who had saved them, also taught them what to believe and how to live. The word, *"You shall keep My statutes, and perform them: I am the LORD who sanctifies you" (Leviticus 20:8)*, reveals God's command and, together with it, who it is that sanctifies the people. As we read this word, we must engrave on our hearts the command to live a holy life, and at the same time look into the grace God has bestowed in order to sanctify sinners.

In Leviticus chapters 19–23 are recorded the rules to be observed in daily life and the warnings against sin, the ordinances concerning the priests and the holy things, and the words concerning the gifts offered to God and the feasts. God had the people follow His word, from how they treated their neighbors to how the priests ate the holy things and offered the gifts. In this book I intend to look at these ordinances together, and to explain the holiness God requires of His people and the grace by which He sanctifies them.

Among them, let us look at the ordinances concerning the holy things in Leviticus chapter 22. It was not that Aaron and his sons could eat the holy things at any time just because they were priests. A priest who had touched anything unclean had to wash

his body with water, and after the sun had set and he had become clean he could eat the holy things. Those who handled what God had set apart as holy themselves also had to follow the ordinances He had appointed. They were not to take their own uncleanness lightly just because they had been entrusted with the office of serving God.

This word makes us think about with what faith we who have received the remission of sins are to serve God. Though we have become God's children, as we live we still harbor wrong thoughts and commit sins in word and deed. At such times we must acknowledge that the word of God is right, and confess our faults before God. And we must believe the word of the gospel that Jesus bore even those sins with the baptism He received from John and received the judgment in our place on the Cross. Just as the priests washed their bodies with the water God had prepared, we obtain cleanness of heart by believing the word of the Lord, who has removed all our sins, and serve God.

The atonement Jesus has accomplished is the eternal atonement that has removed all our sins. Whenever our own shortcomings are exposed, we must confirm, through the word, the atonement the Lord has already accomplished. The ground that assures us of the remission of our sins does not lie in our own deeds or feelings. It lies in the fact that the Lord has borne and removed all our sins and in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that testifies of it. This faith does not make us hide our faults or take sin lightly. Rather, it makes us acknowledge our faults honestly and turn from them, and serve the Lord again with thankful hearts.

God commanded the people not to deceive or oppress their neighbors, but to care for and love the poor and the stranger. He also had them gather together at the appointed feasts to offer gifts, and remember God, who had bestowed on them the grace

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of leading them out of Egypt and had given them the produce of the land. The faith that fears God had to appear in this way in both worship and daily life. We who have received the remission of sins must also love our neighbors, remembering the grace of salvation, and serve in thanksgiving with what God has given us. Rather than putting our own will first, we must follow the word and live a life of preaching the gospel together with the Church of God.

In this book, Biblical Exposition, sermons, and Questions and Answers are woven together. The "Biblical Exposition" of each chapter looks at the flow of the text and the ordinances, and explains their meaning verse by verse. The "sermon" testifies of the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, by which Jesus has removed our sins, and explains the life in which the saints who have received the remission of sins serve the Lord according to the word of God. And the "Questions and Answers" explain, in question-and-answer form, the things one may wonder about while reading the text, helping you understand the meaning of the word more clearly. I hope that you, the readers, will read the Bible text itself and examine step by step how what this book explains is connected with the word.

I want everyone who reads this book to realize, through the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the love of God toward them. I hope you will believe the fact that Jesus has borne and removed all our sins, and enjoy the assurance of the remission of sins and peace of heart. I also hope that, in thanksgiving for that grace, you will preach this gospel to others as well. I pray that this book will establish your faith firmly and help you serve the Lord according to the word of God. ✉

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CHAPTER

19

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Leviticus Chapter 19 seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Leviticus 19:1–4—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The word of the passage

"And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them: You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy. Every one of you shall revere his mother and his father, and keep My Sabbaths: I am the LORD your God. Do not turn to idols, nor make for yourselves molded gods: I am the LORD your God" (Leviticus 19:1–4).

The center of this word is, without question, the words of verse 2, *"You shall be holy."* The reverence for parents and the keeping of the Sabbath in verse 3 and the prohibition of idols in verse 4 are all concrete contents that show how a holy people must live in actual life.

The holiness that Leviticus 19:1–4 demands cannot be obtained by human deeds or merits. Jesus bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of

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those sins on the Cross, and saved us by rising again from death. The one who has received the remission of sins by believing in this gospel of the water and the Spirit must examine his life by the word of God and live following the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

2. The standard of holiness begins from God

The words *"And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying"* mean that this command did not come from a human ethical consensus or from the personal thoughts of Moses. The standard of holiness does not change according to the age, the culture, or the feelings of people, but comes from God Himself.

People try to change the standard of good and evil in the direction that is favorable to themselves. But God says, "Be holy, for I am holy." A person must not judge by a standard he has set for himself, saying, "I am good enough as I am," but must look at himself before the holiness of God.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit also starts from here. If a person evaluates himself by the standard of his own deeds, he may think that he is righteous. But when he stands before the holy God, no one can claim to be righteous by his own deeds. The law reveals exactly this.

3. The command of holiness given to *"all the congregation"*

God did not give this word to the priests only, but commanded that it be delivered to *"all the congregation of the children of Israel."*

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Holiness is not required only of pastors or of people who hold a special office. All the people who belong to God must live holy lives. It is not a matter of showing a holy appearance only in the temple or during the hours of worship; the home, the workplace, human relationships, the way one uses money, the way one spends time, and even the purposes in one's heart must belong to God.

Here, "To be holy" means first of all to be set apart for God and to belong to Him. It does not simply mean to be morally respectable or to show a religious appearance. Because God had delivered Israel out of Egypt and made them His own people, they now had to live not according to the ways of Egypt and Canaan, but according to the will of God.

Therefore the order is as follows.

—God first saved Israel out of Egypt.

—He made them His own people.

—After that, He commanded them to *"be holy."*

A holy life is not the price paid to obtain salvation, but the life that a people who have been saved and belong to God must live.

4. The two functions of the word "Be holy, for I am holy"

This command has two functions together.

First, it reveals the sin of people.

When we examine ourselves by the standard of the holiness of God, no one can say, "I have lived a completely holy life." We have not honored our parents perfectly, we have loved other things more than God, and we have lived according to our own desires and purposes. Therefore this command breaks down our

own righteousness and makes us realize the fact that we need a Savior.

Second, it shows the direction in which the saved person is to live.

It is not that a person whose sins have been washed away may disregard the holiness of God. Rather, because he believes in the grace of God who has made him holy, he must now pursue a holy life according to the Spirit.

1 Peter 1:15–16 applies the word of Leviticus, just as it is, to the saints of the New Testament.

"But as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, 'Be holy, for I am holy.'"

Therefore holiness has two aspects.

—The holiness by which God the Father has cleansed us and made us a holy people through the salvation Jesus Christ accomplished

—The holiness that a person who has already been made holy must pursue in actual life according to the Spirit

The former holiness is the grace of salvation that we receive by faith, and the latter holiness is the fruit of life that the person who has received that grace must bear.

5. The holiness accomplished in the gospel of the water and the Spirit

People cannot reach the holiness of God by their own efforts. That is why Jesus, the Son of God the Father, came to this earth in the body of a man.

When Jesus received baptism from John, He said, *"For thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness."* Jesus bore the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John,

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received the judgment of that sin by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death. The Gospel of John testifies of Jesus as *"The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."*

This is the gospel of the water, the blood, and the Spirit.

—The water shows that Jesus bore the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John.

—The blood shows that He bore the punishment of that sin on the Cross.

—The Holy Spirit testifies that this work of salvation is the truth God has accomplished.

—The rising again of Jesus from death is the confirmation of our justification and of our new life.

Therefore the holiness of a believer does not come from his own self-cultivation. It is believing in the gospel of the washing away of sin that Jesus accomplished.

1 Corinthians 6:11 says as follows.

"But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God"

That we "were washed, sanctified, and justified" does not mean that people produced these things by their own deeds. We have obtained by faith what Jesus Christ accomplished.

This does not mean, however, that a saved person may live however he pleases. The gospel denies legalism and also denies licentiousness.

—Legalism says, "I will live a holy life and so obtain salvation."

—Licentiousness says, "I have already been saved, so there is no need to live a holy life."

—The faith of the gospel confesses, "Because Jesus has made me holy, I will now live a holy life according to the Spirit."

6. The word that says to revere one's parents

The command *"Every one of you shall revere his mother and his father"* shows that holiness begins in the closest human relationship.

A person may behave piously in church and yet speak carelessly to his parents. But God regards the attitude with which one treats one's parents as an important part of a holy life.

To revere one's parents does not mean to serve one's parents as if they were God. Nor does it mean to obey unconditionally everything one's parents say, or to acknowledge even their wrongs as right. It is to respect one's parents under God, to be thankful to them, and to fulfill the responsibilities that are needed.

In the New Testament, too, this command has not been abolished.

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother" (Ephesians 6:1–2).

The important expression here is *"in the Lord."* Honoring one's parents must be done within the will of God. If parents command sin or demand that one abandon one's faith, one cannot obey even that. Nor may the word about honoring one's parents be used to force someone to endure and hide violence or abuse. The right application is, when necessary, to keep one's distance or to ask for help, while not giving oneself over to hatred and a desire for revenge.

Honoring one's parents can appear concretely in the following ways.

—Remembering the labors of one's parents and being thankful for them

—Not treating them carelessly in word and attitude

—Caring for parents who are elderly or in difficulty

—Even when one must speak of the wrongs of one's parents,

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speaking with truth and love, not with contempt

—Dealing before God with the wounds that have arisen in one's relationship with one's parents, and not giving oneself over to a desire for revenge

The one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not obtain salvation by honoring his parents. Because he knows the fact that God has saved by grace a person as lacking as himself, he shows compassion and patience toward his parents as well.

7. *"Keep My Sabbaths"*

The Sabbath of Leviticus chapter 19 is first of all an actual ordinance of the covenant given to Israel. It was the day on which they stopped their work on the seventh day, remembered God, and confessed the fact that their life and livelihood were sustained not by their own labor alone but by the grace of God.

The Sabbath was not simply "a day of not working." It was time that belonged to God; it was an institution of grace and compassion in which they worshiped God and let even their servants, sojourners, and livestock rest.

Jesus said as follows.

"The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27–28).

The Lord of the Sabbath is not the rule itself, but Jesus Christ. Therefore one must not try to be justified by the act of keeping the Sabbath.

Colossians 2:16–17, too, does not let anyone condemn the saints of the New Testament on account of festivals or Sabbaths, and says that such things are a shadow of things to come and that

their substance is Christ.

The true rest to which the Sabbath points is accomplished in Jesus Christ. When a sinner ceases from trying to become righteous by his own deeds and merits and believes in the salvation Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection, his soul enters into rest.

Therefore the Sabbath regulation of the Mosaic covenant must not be applied to the saints of the New Testament, just as it is, as a condition of salvation. One is not saved because one has kept a particular day of the week, nor is one's salvation canceled because one has failed to keep a particular day of the week.

Yet the principles of faith contained in the Sabbath are still important.

—We acknowledge that God is the Lord of our life and livelihood.

—We cease from trying to become righteous by our own deeds and rest in the completed salvation of Christ.

—We set apart time for worship and the word.

—We do not make rest a tool of greed, but share rest and compassion with our family and neighbors as well.

—We establish order in our lives so that a busy life does not make us forget God.

8. The reason reverence for parents and the Sabbath appear together

Reverence for parents is respecting the order of relationships that God has established, and keeping the Sabbath is respecting the time that God has set apart.

Therefore holiness is not an abstract feeling. A holy life is

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revealed in the following two areas.

—How I treat people

—Whom I acknowledge as the Lord of my time and my life

One cannot say that one loves God while treating those close to oneself carelessly, and it is also hard to say that one belongs to God while using all one's time for greed and success. God is the God who rules not only our worship but also our homes and our time.

9. "Do not turn to idols"

Here, "idols" refers first of all to actual objects of idolatry. It is a command not to serve false gods that have no power at all or the images that people have made.

In the words *"nor make for yourselves molded gods,"* the important part is *"for yourselves."* An idol is a god that people have made for their own desires. The living God cannot be manipulated to suit the desires of people, but an idol is something people make and use in order to get what they want.

The core of idolatry is not merely bowing down before a carved image. It is loving, relying on, and fearing a created thing more than the Creator, and living for it.

Today, too, if one exalts and serves money, success, honor, power, a spouse, children, health, an ideology, or one's own plans above God, that becomes an idol in one's heart. The saints must acknowledge the wrong of having engraved something other than God on their hearts and relied on it, and must serve God alone.

Money itself is not an idol. But if one trusts money more than God, money becomes an idol. Family is a gift of God, but if one puts one's family before God, it can become an idol. Even the

work of the church or one's own work of service can degenerate into an idol if it becomes a means of exalting one's own honor and self.

The one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must examine his heart in this way.

—If this were to disappear, would I want to abandon even God?

—Am I going against the word of God in order to obtain this?

—Do I believe that this determines my security and my worth?

—Do I serve God, or am I trying to use God to achieve my own purposes?

10. The repetition of *"I am the LORD your God"*

At the end of verse 3 and verse 4, the words *"I am the LORD your God"* are repeated.

This is not simply the closing of a command. It is God confirming the covenant relationship, saying, "You are My people, and I am your God."

—The reason we must revere our parents is that God is the Lord of relationships.

—The reason we must keep the Sabbath is that God is the Lord of time.

—The reason we must cast away idols is that the LORD alone is the true God.

—The reason we must be holy is that we are a people who belong to God.

Therefore a holy life is not simply a life of keeping the rules well, but a life that comes from the faith that says, "I am not my own; I am one of the people of God."

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11. The actual life of the one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Even the one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit can reveal his shortcomings and commit sin on this earth. But at such a time he must not lower the standard of the holiness of God or rationalize his sin.

At the same time, he must not fall into condemnation, seeing his shortcomings and thinking that he has become a sinner again. The gospel in which Jesus bore all sins and received the judgment does not change.

The response of right faith is as follows.

—We acknowledge that the word of God is right.

—We acknowledge our wrongs concretely.

—We believe that Jesus bore even that sin.

—When necessary, we apologize to our parents or neighbors and set right the damage.

—We change the environment and habits of our lives so that we do not keep giving ourselves over to the same sin.

—We seek not only our own will but the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and act according to the word.

Galatians 5:16 says as follows.

"Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh."

To live according to the Spirit is not to live according to one's own thoughts while speaking the name of the Holy Spirit. It is to acknowledge the word of God that has already been written, to believe in the gospel, and to choose the will of God over the lust of the flesh.

Conclusion

The flow of Leviticus 19:1–4 is clear.

God first saves His people, and then says to them, *"You shall be holy."* That holiness is revealed in the attitude with which one treats one's parents, in the way one uses one's time, and in what one loves and relies on most.

But no one can become holy by himself by keeping this command perfectly. That is why Jesus bore the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John, received the punishment of that sin on the Cross, and rose again from death. The Holy Spirit testifies of this salvation of the water and the blood.

The one who believes in this gospel obtains washing, sanctification, and justification in Christ. And by the strength of that grace of salvation, he now respects his parents, enjoys true rest in Christ, casts away the idols of his heart, and lives a holy life according to the Spirit.

Therefore the word *"You shall be holy"* does not end as a despairing demand to the unsaved person to become holy by his own strength. In the gospel of the water and the Spirit, it is heard like this.

"I have cleansed you through Jesus Christ and made you My people; now live a holy life according to the Spirit, as I am holy."

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Leviticus 19:5–10—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The word of the passage

"(And when ye offer a sacrifice of peace-offerings unto Jehovah, ye shall offer it that ye may be accepted –ASV). It shall be eaten the same day you offer it, and on the next day. And if any remains until the third day, it shall be burned in the fire. And if it is eaten at all on the third day, it is an abomination. It shall not be accepted. Therefore everyone who eats it shall bear his iniquity, because he has profaned the hallowed offering of the LORD; and that person shall be cut off from his people. When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. And you shall not glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather every grape of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger: I am the LORD your God" (Leviticus 19:5–10).

This passage is divided broadly into two parts.

—Verses 5–8: the ordinance concerning the peace offering offered to God and the eating of that offering

—Verses 9–10: the ordinance that a part of the harvest be left for the poor and the stranger

On the surface, the ordinance of sacrifice and the ordinance of farming seem to have nothing to do with each other. But when they are seen within the central command of Leviticus chapter 19, *"You shall be holy,"* they are connected as one.

The one who has been reconciled with God does not handle what he offers to God in his own way, nor does he monopolize

for himself alone the possessions he has received from God. Reconciliation at the altar must lead to compassion and sharing toward one's neighbor.

2. *"That ye may be accepted"*

The peace offering is the sacrifice that expresses peace, thanksgiving, and fellowship with God. A part of the offering was burned and offered to God, a part went to the priest, and the rest was eaten together by the one who offered the sacrifice and his family.

Therefore the peace offering was not simply a sacrifice in which an offering was killed and presented, but a sacrifice in which they ate together before God and enjoyed peace and thanksgiving.

Yet God did not simply say, "Offer a peace offering," but said, *"That ye may be accepted."*

This word means that worship is not accepted by God merely on the basis of a person's zeal or feelings. However sincere the one who offers may claim to be, if he disregards the method God has appointed, it cannot be accepted.

We can think of the sacrifices of Cain and Abel. Both of them offered an offering, but God accepted Abel and his offering, and did not accept Cain and his offering. What matters is not simply the fact that one has offered something, but whether one has offered it with the faith and in the way that God accepts.

It is the same with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. A person must not try to be reconciled with God by his own zeal, tears, fasting, service, or offerings of money. The way of reconciliation that God has appointed is Jesus Christ.

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3. Jesus Christ, to whom the peace offering points

The fundamental cause of man's becoming an enemy of God is sin. In the state of having sin, one cannot draw near to the holy God. Because this wall of sin cannot be torn down by human effort, Jesus became our peace offering.

Jesus bore all the sins of the world by receiving baptism from John. And in the body in which He bore those sins, He was hung on the Cross and died shedding His blood, and so received the punishment of sin. After that, Jesus rose again from death and gave us new life and justification.

Therefore reconciliation with God is not something a person obtains by first appeasing God. It is what God accomplished by sending His Son, and by Jesus settling the problem of sin with the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection.

"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1).

Because Jesus, the peace offering, has accomplished everything, the believer draws near to God relying not on his own merit but on the righteousness of Jesus.

Here we must be careful. The act of offering a peace offering is not in itself an independent merit that reconciles a person with God. The fact that the sacrificial offering had to die in the sinner's place shows that the price of sin is death, and ultimately makes us look to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

4. Eat it the same day you offer it and on the next day

When we look at Leviticus chapter 7 together with this, there were cases in which the peace offering was offered as a

thanksgiving offering, and cases in which it was offered as a vow or a voluntary offering.

—The peace offering of thanksgiving had to be eaten on the day it was offered.

—The peace offering of a vow or a voluntary offering could be eaten until the next day.

—In no case could it be kept and eaten until the third day.

Leviticus 19:5–8 commands that the flesh of the peace offering be eaten on the day it is offered and on the next day, and that whatever remains until the third day be burned. The separate ordinance that the thanksgiving offering be eaten on the same day must also be distinguished (Leviticus 7:15–16).

Why did God give such a strict regulation of time?

First, because the flesh of the peace offering was not ordinary food but a hallowed thing set apart for God.

After the sacrifice had been offered, the flesh that remained could not be stored and disposed of at will like personal property. From the moment it was offered to God, it had become holy, and so it had to be handled according to the command of God.

Second, the peace offering was a holy meal that the community shared together.

Rather than piling up the flesh for a long time and possessing it alone, the family and the community had to eat it together within the appointed period. The sacrifice of reconciliation was not to degenerate into personal accumulation and greed.

Third, it means that holy worship cannot be changed for the sake of convenience.

The command of God took precedence over the human judgment that said, “It can still be eaten, so it is all right,” or “It is a waste to throw it away, so let us eat it.” One may also think of the hygienic effect of preventing the flesh from going bad, but the reason the passage itself directly gives is not hygiene but that

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it “profanes the hallowed offering of the LORD.”

Therefore this word must not be reduced to a mere ancient rule for the storage of food.

5. How the ordinance of the third day should be applied spiritually

If the flesh that remained until the third day was eaten, it became an abomination and was not accepted. Even after the offering had been presented, they had to follow the word God had appointed.

The direct meaning of the passage is clear. It is that a holy offering must not be used at one’s own will beyond the period God has appointed.

The one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must live by faith today as well, in the following way.

Even a saved person commits wrongs as he lives. At such a time he must not cover up his wrong, or hold on to it in his heart for a long time and remain sunk in self-condemnation. He must acknowledge the wrong as a wrong and, if necessary, apologize to the person he has harmed and set things right. And he must draw near to God again, believing the fact that Jesus bore even that sin.

This does not mean sacrificing Jesus again or being saved again. The salvation of Jesus was completed once and for all. To apply the peace offering by faith today means to remember and believe again the completed salvation, and to come out into the light rather than avoiding God because of one’s present wrongs.

The Holy Spirit does not let the one who has received the remission of sins rationalize his wrongs. He makes him realize his wrongs, makes him acknowledge that the word of God is

right, and makes him look again to the salvation Jesus accomplished with the water and the blood.

Therefore the faith of reconciliation avoids two extremes.

—The licentiousness that says, "Jesus has removed everything, so it does not matter if I sin"

—The self-condemnation that says, "I have done wrong again, so I have been abandoned by God"

The faith of the gospel confesses, "I have done wrong. But the salvation of Jesus, who bore even this sin, is perfect. Now, according to the Spirit, I will turn from the same sin and walk with God."

6. The sin of handling holy things in one's own way

If the flesh that remained was eaten on the third day, it became *"an abomination"* and the sacrifice was not accepted. Furthermore, the one who ate it had to bear the responsibility for having profaned *"the hallowed offering of the LORD."*

To eat the offering in violation of the period God had appointed was to profane the hallowed offering of the LORD. The one who offered the sacrifice had to follow the word of God rather than his own judgment.

This gives an important lesson for worship and the gospel today as well.

The gospel of God must not be used for human purposes. If one makes the gospel a means of gathering money, a means of dominating people, or a means of exalting one's own honor, one is using what is holy to suit one's own desires.

Nor may the grace of God be made a means of rationalizing sin. The word that Jesus has removed all sins is not a permission to go on remaining in sin, but the power that delivers us from the

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condemnation and the power of sin and makes us live doing righteousness.

To be *"cut off from his people"* means a very grave covenantal judgment. The passage does not explain in detail whether this expression concretely means expulsion from the community, death, or the direct judgment of God. But what is clear is that God does not take lightly the profaning of what is holy.

7. Leave the corners of the field

The passage suddenly moves its setting from the altar to the field.

When the people of Israel reaped their grain, they were not to reap all the way to the corners of the field, nor to pick up again the ears of grain that had fallen during the harvest. Likewise they were not to pick the fruit of the vineyard without leaving any, nor to pick up again the fruit that had fallen to the ground.

They had to leave it *"for the poor and the stranger."*

This was not a mere recommendation of charity but a command of God. God did not say to the people of Israel, "You obtained it by your labor, so it is all yours." Since the land, the rain, the sunlight, life, and the harvest were ultimately given by God, a portion for the poor and the stranger was already included within the harvest.

Therefore leaving it was not a matter of the owner generously bestowing his own property as a special favor. It was setting out, from what God had entrusted to him, the portion God had appointed.

8. A law not only for the poor but also for the stranger

God did not mention only the poor among the Israelites, but spoke of the stranger as well.

The stranger was a person who could hardly receive sufficient protection from land or kin. Because his language and culture were different and he lacked a social network, there was a great possibility of his becoming economically vulnerable. God made a place in the fields and vineyards so that the strangers too could eat.

This shows that the compassion of God is not confined within bloodline and nation. The people of God must not love only those who are close to them. They must also make room to live for the stranger, for those who can hardly receive protection, and for those whose social foundation is weak.

Deuteronomy chapter 24 makes clear the reason for this command as follows.

"And you shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I command you to do this thing" (Deuteronomy 24:22).

Israel, too, had been sojourners and slaves in Egypt. Because God had pitied them and saved them, they too had to pity the poor and the stranger.

It is the one who remembers grace who can show grace.

9. The ordinance of gleaning protected dignity

God did not simply say to gather the remaining grain and distribute it one-sidedly to the poor. He had it left in the field so that the poor and the stranger could gather the ears of grain themselves.

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Two things are contained together in this institution.

—For the one who owns, the responsibility of limiting his greed and sharing

—For the poor, the opportunity to work themselves and obtain the food they need

In the Book of Ruth, Ruth the Moabite woman received the protection of exactly this ordinance. Ruth gleaned in the field of Boaz, and Boaz did not keep only the minimum of the law, but commanded his workers to let her glean even among the sheaves and to pull out some grain on purpose and leave it.

Boaz did not say, “I have left the corners of the field, so my responsibility is over.” He looked into Ruth’s circumstances, protected her safety, and took care that she could gather enough. This is what it looks like to actually show the compassion of God contained within the letter of the law.

10. The reason the peace offering and the ordinance of gleaning are connected

Verses 5–8 speak of the sacrifice by which one is reconciled with God, and verses 9–10 speak of sharing for the poor and the stranger.

This arrangement shows a very important fact.

One cannot say that one has been reconciled with God while turning away from the need of one’s neighbor. If one says at the altar that one gives thanks to God, but in the field tries not to leave a single grain, that thanksgiving has not been carried over into life.

The meal of the peace offering was a meal shared and eaten together, and the ordinance of gleaning was a life of sharing the harvest. Both ordinances carry the meaning that one must not

monopolize alone what one has received from God.

The New Testament, too, speaks of the same principle.

"But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased" (Hebrews 13:16).

The one who has been reconciled with God through the sacrifice of Jesus no longer offers the sacrifice of atonement with the sacrifice of animals. But he lives offering the sacrifices of thanksgiving and praise, of doing good and sharing.

Sharing is not an act that adds anything to the sacrifice of Jesus. The salvation of Jesus is perfect. Sharing is the fruit of thanksgiving that comes from the one who has received that perfect salvation.

11. The gospel of the water and the Spirit and a life of sharing

The one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit knows the fact that he has received grace freely.

Jesus came to us first when we were in sin and had become enemies of God. He bore our sins with the baptism He received from John, paid the price of those sins on the Cross, and rose again from death. We received this salvation by faith, without any merit.

Therefore the sharing of the one who believes in the gospel is not for the sake of piling up his own righteousness.

—One is not saved by giving to the needy.

—Nor do one's sins disappear by helping the poor.

—Nor is one acknowledged by God as a more righteous person because one has shared much.

But if a person who has received great grace without any merit keeps his heart shut even when he sees the need of his

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neighbor, he must examine again the meaning of the grace he has received.

"But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3:17–18).

The gospel is not a doctrine confessed only with words, but the word of life that opens the heart and stretches out the hand. The Holy Spirit makes us realize that the owner of our possessions is not ourselves but God, and leads us to share willingly with those in need.

12. What it means today to "leave the corners of the field"

Since not all the saints today are farmers, the form of this command cannot be carried out just as it is. But the principle of this word applies very concretely to our lives.

—Leaving a margin in one's income: without consuming all one's income for one's own desires, one can set apart a certain portion for people in difficulty, for the spread of the gospel, and for the needs of the community.

—Leaving a margin in one's time: not only possessions but also time and strength are received from God. One must not fill up all one's time with one's own schedule, but must leave a margin in which to care for the sick, the lonely, and those who need help.

—Not squeezing out the last bit of profit in business: paying employees and business partners their due, and not pursuing only maximum profit by taking advantage of those in a weak position, is also a life that leaves the corners of the field.

—Protecting the dignity of the one who receives help: one must not help in order to display oneself or to make the other person dependent. When possible, it is necessary to provide opportunities and an environment so that the other person can stand up again and live responsibly.

—Making room for strangers and unfamiliar people: one must not despise those who can hardly receive protection, such as foreign workers, migrants, and the socially isolated, but must treat them fairly and look into their actual needs.

—Delivering the gospel together with actual care: one must neither provide the poor with material things only while turning away from the salvation of their souls, nor speak only the gospel while turning away from their immediate hunger and pain. Jesus, while saving souls, also had compassion on the sick and the hungry.

13. *"I am the LORD your God"*

Verse 10 ends with the declaration *"I am the LORD your God."*

The reason we must help the poor is not simply to maintain social order. It is because God is their God. God is the Lord of the owner of the field, and God is the Creator of the poor and the stranger as well.

This word sets right the human way of thinking about ownership.

To the thought that says, "I worked for it, so it is all mine," God says, *"I am the LORD your God."* Since it is God who gave the strength to work, the land, the rain, the sunlight, and the opportunity to harvest, the one who owns must live as a steward of God.

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Conclusion

Leviticus 19:5–10 shows true holiness at the altar and in the field at the same time.

The peace offering makes us look to Jesus Christ, who would reconcile human beings who had become enemies of God because of sin with God. Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose again from death. The one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit enjoys peace with God, relying on this completed salvation.

The one who has received that peace does not store up the grace of God within himself only. As one leaves the corners of the field, he leaves room for his neighbor in his possessions, his time, and his abilities. He does not despise the poor and the stranger, but cares for their actual needs while protecting their dignity.

Therefore the gospel message of this passage can be summed up like this.

“Jesus Christ has become the peace offering for you; so believe not in your own deeds but in His righteousness, and enjoy peace with God. And do not monopolize alone the grace you have received freely, but leave the corners of your life so that the poor and the stranger can live.”

Leviticus 19:11–12—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The word of the passage

"You shall not steal, nor deal falsely, nor lie to one another. And you shall not swear by My name falsely, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I am the LORD" (Leviticus 19:11–12).

These two verses show how the command of Leviticus 19:2, *"You shall be holy,"* must appear in our property relationships, our words, our conscience, and our attitude toward God.

The sins listed in the passage can lead from one to another.

—One covets and takes what belongs to another.

—One deceives the other person in order to hide it.

—When pressed about the facts, one lies.

—In the end, one swears by the name of God in order to make others believe one's lie.

Trying to hide the sin of violating a neighbor's property, one can go as far as the sin of using the name of God as a guarantee for one's own falsehood. God regards falsehood committed in one's relationships with people as, in effect, a sin that profanes God Himself.

2. *"You shall not steal"*

Stealing refers first of all to the actual act of taking another person's possession without his consent. Stealing someone else's money or goods, not returning what was entrusted to one,

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and taking possession of what one borrowed as if it were one's own are clear cases of stealing.

Leviticus 6:2–3 explains concretely how stealing, deceiving, and swearing falsely are connected.

"If a person sins and commits a trespass against the LORD by lying to his neighbor about what was delivered to him for safekeeping, or about a pledge, or about a robbery, or if he has extorted from his neighbor, or if he has found what was lost and lies concerning it, and swears falsely—in any one of these things that a man may do in which he sins:"

Stealing does not mean only stealing things in secret.

—Using money or goods entrusted to one as if they were one's own

—Not returning a lost item even though one knows who its owner is

—Taking unjust profit by exploiting another person's weakness

—Not paying a person who has worked the wages that are rightly due to him

—Gaining unjust profit by hiding the terms of a transaction or the defects of goods

—Taking another person's labor or creative work as if it were one's own

These things, too, fall under the principle of stealing.

The root of stealing is not only in the hands, but in the covetousness of the heart. First a heart that covets what belongs to another arises, and when that covetousness is carried into action, it becomes stealing.

Jesus said that stealing and deceit do not enter a person by chance from outside, but come out of the heart of man.

"For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness,

wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man" (Mark 7:21–23).

Therefore the problem of stealing is not completely solved merely by restraining the hands. The greed and self-centeredness in the heart must be dealt with.

3. *"Nor deal falsely"*

To deceive is to hide or distort the facts intentionally so as to make another person believe a falsehood to be the truth.

If stealing is taking away another person's property, deceiving is taking away another person's opportunity to judge rightly. Making someone make a choice that he would not have made had he known the facts is also a kind of robbery.

Deception takes many forms.

—Not mentioning the defects of a product even though one knows them

—Intentionally hiding unfavorable terms in a contract

—Misleading people by inflating figures or results

—Shifting the responsibility for a wrong onto another person

—Telling only part of the facts so as to create a false impression on the whole

—Achieving one's own purposes by exploiting people's fears or their religious devotion

This does not mean, however, that not telling all information to everyone is in itself lying. Keeping a legitimate secret, protecting another person's privacy, or waiting for the right time to speak is different from deceiving. What the passage forbids is intentional deception that seeks to lead the other person into a wrong judgment.

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God looks not only at the result but also at the motive. A person may claim, “I did not tell a lie directly,” but if he intentionally caused the other person to misunderstand, he has deceived before God.

4. *“Nor lie to one another”*

The passage does not simply say, “Do not lie,” but says, “Do not lie to one another.” This is a command that protects the trust of the covenant community.

If people can no longer believe one another’s words in the home and the church, in the workplace and in society, relationships collapse and the community cannot be maintained either.

Lying is not simply saying wrong information. Saying something that differs from the facts because one was mistaken or remembered wrongly must be distinguished from an intentional lie. A lie is intentionally saying what is false in order to protect oneself or one’s own interests, while knowing the facts.

Lying usually comes from self-protection.

—One lies because one wants to avoid punishment.

—One lies in order to save face.

—One lies in order to gain profit.

—One lies in order to appear more righteous and more capable than one actually is.

—One tells yet another lie so that a lie already told will not be exposed.

A new lie becomes necessary to protect the first lie, one comes to shift the responsibility onto others, and in the end one wounds many people.

That is why lying is not a simple slip of the tongue but a sin

that destroys relationships.

5. The way stealing and lying are connected

Stealing and deceiving, lying and swearing falsely, can be connected to one another and lead to greater wrongs.

When a person steals what belongs to another, he has to hide it. When someone asks, “Did you take it?” he deceives, saying, “I do not know.” When evidence appears, he makes up yet another story. If he is still not believed, he may say, “I swear before God.”

In this way one sin calls forth another.

In Leviticus chapter 6, too, the person who has taken possession of what belongs to another denies the facts, and in the end goes as far as swearing falsely. Therefore God does not look at sin only as a single act that has appeared outwardly, but looks together at the covetousness that gave birth to that sin and at all the falsehoods that follow in order to hide that sin.

The law reveals this fact before people. People think of themselves as “decent people who have not committed any great sin,” but when they stand before the word of God, they discover that there are covetousness, deceit, and falsehood in their hearts.

It is not that the law produces sin. It reveals as sin the sin that is already in the heart.

6. *“Swear by My name falsely”*

Swearing falsely is calling on the name of God and asserting that one’s words are true, while knowing that they are false.

This is more serious than a simple lie. It is because one drags

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God into the lie as a witness. It is as if the one who lies were claiming, “God, too, guarantees that my words are true.”

The name of God is not a tool for winning people’s trust. Using the name of God to dress up one’s own falsehood as the truth is an act of putting God forward as if He guaranteed one’s falsehood.

Today it can appear in the following forms.

—Saying, “I swear before God,” while lying

—Claiming, “God has spoken to me,” in order to push through one’s own ideas

—Saying that it is for the work of God while obtaining money by deceiving people

—Asserting that unverified words are the will of God

—Controlling other people by packaging one’s own desires as the command of God

Claiming that “God has said” something when God has not said it is to appropriate the name of God as the authority for one’s own words.

7. *“Nor shall you profane the name of your God”*

Swearing falsely profanes the name of God. Here the name of God does not mean merely a pronunciation or a title. It represents the person and the holiness of God, His truthfulness and His authority.

God is the One who does not lie. Yet when a person calls on the name of God to guarantee a falsehood, he presents the truthful God as if He were One who supports lies.

Also, if a person who says he believes in God continually deceives others and does not turn back at all, the people of the world come to see wrongly not only that person but even the

God he says he believes in.

The saints must follow the word of God that says not to lie. When they realize the wrong of having lied, they must acknowledge it, believe the gospel that Jesus settled even that sin with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross, and turn to the honest way. The ground of salvation is not the perfect conduct of a person, but the righteousness Jesus Christ accomplished.

But if one uses the claim of having been saved to rationalize falsehood and fraud, that is not the attitude of one who believes in the gospel. The grace of God is not a license that changes sin into something that is not sin, but the power that makes one acknowledge sin, cast it away, and live truthfully.

8. The honest speech Jesus spoke of

Jesus rebuked the attitude of repeating oaths in order to make one's words believed, and said:

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

If a person's everyday words are truthful, there is no need to add every time, "It is really so," or "I swear to God." The words of a Christian must be believable in themselves.

That does not mean, however, that honesty may be used as an excuse for wounding others. Insulting someone while saying, "I only told the facts," is not a truthful life. The New Testament teaches that one is to speak the truth, but to speak it in love.

Therefore holy speech must have two things together.

—Truthfulness that does not distort the facts

—Love that seeks to give life to the other person and build him up

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9. Human beings revealed before the gospel of the water and the Spirit

When a person reads this word, he can easily resolve, "From now on I will not steal and I will not lie." But the purpose of God does not lie in merely strengthening resolutions.

The law shows our fundamental state.

Before a person steals something with his hands, he covets it in his heart. Before he tells a lie with his mouth, there is a heart that does not want to acknowledge its own wrong. When he faces the crisis of his falsehood being exposed, he can shift the responsibility onto another person, and can even use the name of God.

When we truthfully acknowledge this, we come to know that we cannot become righteous before God by self-cultivation alone. The law shows sin, but it cannot wash away that sin. The washing away of sin was done by Jesus Christ.

10. Jesus, in whom there is no deceit, bore our sins

The Bible testifies of Jesus like this.

"'Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth'" (1 Peter 2:22).

Jesus did not steal, did not deceive, did not lie, and did not profane the name of God. He is the One without blemish who fulfilled the law perfectly.

Yet Jesus, who was without sin, received baptism from John. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus bore all the sins of the world, including the sin of stealing, the sin of deceiving, the sin of lying, and the sin of profaning the name of God.

And in the body in which He bore those sins, He was hung on the Cross and died shedding His blood, and so received the judgment of sin. By rising again from death, Jesus made us righteous and gave us new life.

This is the salvation accomplished with the water, the blood, and the Spirit.

—The water testifies that Jesus bore sin by receiving baptism from John.

—The blood testifies that He received the punishment of that sin on the Cross.

—The Holy Spirit testifies that the salvation Jesus accomplished is true and perfect.

Therefore the way for a person who has lied to be saved does not lie in resolving to become a person who never tells a single lie. He must first acknowledge that he is a deceitful person, and believe the gospel that Jesus bore that sin and received the judgment.

11. Why the one who believes in the gospel must live truthfully

The one who has received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel does not obtain salvation by living honestly. He has already received washing and justification by believing in the righteousness of Jesus.

But the Spirit of truth dwells in the heart of the one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The Holy Spirit does not let him feel comfortable with falsehood. He makes him realize the falsehood, acknowledge it, and turn to a truthful life.

The New Testament speaks of this change as follows.

"Therefore, putting away lying, 'Let each one of you speak

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truth with his neighbor,' for we are members of one another" (Ephesians 4:25).

And as for stealing, it does not simply say, "Do not steal."

"Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need" (Ephesians 4:28).

The change the gospel brings is clear.

—The one who used to take what belonged to others works honestly with his own hands.

—The one who used to gather only for himself gives to those in need.

—The one who used to protect himself with lies speaks the truth.

—The one who used to use the name of God for his own purposes hallows the name of God.

Salvation does not end with "saying that a thief is no longer a thief." It changes the direction of that person's life from a life of taking to a life of giving.

12. Even the one who has received the remission of sins must fulfill the responsibility of restitution

Leviticus chapter 6 did not let the person who had taken away what belonged to another, or taken possession of it by lying, finish merely by offering a sacrifice when he realized his sin.

"Or all that about which he has sworn falsely. He shall restore its full value, add one-fifth more to it, and give it to whomever it belongs, on the day of his trespass offering" (Leviticus 6:5).

For a person to keep holding on to what he has taken away

while saying that he seeks the remission of sins from God is not a true turning back. The remission of sins is received through the sacrifice of Jesus, but the damage one has done to people must be set right as far as possible.

This does not mean that the Old Testament regulation of one-fifth must be applied mechanically in every case to the saints of the New Testament. But the principle of restitution is still important.

—What was stolen must be returned.

—Profit gained by deceiving must be given back.

—A reputation damaged by a lie must be restored by making the facts known.

—If one has shifted the responsibility onto another person, that responsibility must be set right.

—If the damage cannot be fully restored, one must responsibly make it good as far as possible.

The faith that Jesus has removed sin is not an excuse for avoiding restitution. Rather, it is the strength that enables one to escape from the fear of condemnation and to acknowledge one's wrong and take responsibility for it.

13. When a saved person has lied

Even the one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit can lie or hide his wrong because of the weakness of the flesh. At such a time, two wrong responses must be avoided.

The first is rationalizing the sin.

One must not say, "Jesus has removed all sins, so this is not a problem." Even though one has received the remission of sins, a lie is a lie, stealing is stealing, and the damage the other person has suffered is real as well.

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The second is falling into self-condemnation.

Nor must one think, “I have lied again, so my salvation has been canceled and I have become a sinner again.” The salvation Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John and the Cross is perfect.

The right response is as follows.

—One acknowledges that the word of God is right.

—One acknowledges one’s lie concretely.

—One believes the fact that Jesus bore even this sin.

—One tells the facts to the person one deceived and apologizes.

—If there is material damage, one makes restitution.

—One puts in order the causes and the environment so that the same falsehood is not repeated.

—One chooses truthful words, receiving the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

This is not a process of receiving salvation again, but the process by which a person who has already been saved lives in the light of the truth.

14. *“I am the LORD”*

Verse 12 ends with the words *“I am the LORD.”*

A person can steal and not be caught. He can deceive the other person perfectly. He can attach the name of God to a lie and put to rest the suspicions of others.

But God is not deceived.

The words *“I am the LORD”* mean that God is the witness of every transaction, every conversation, and every oath. Even the acts hidden from people are laid bare before God.

In order to save deceitful people from sin, the LORD God

Himself accomplished the work of salvation in Jesus Christ. Therefore there is no need to hide one's falsehood. One has only to acknowledge it before God, believe in the salvation Jesus accomplished, and come out into the light.

Conclusion

Leviticus 19:11–12 is not simply a moral admonition that says, "Live a good life and do not lie."

This word reveals the sinful nature of man, in which stealing comes from covetousness, deceiving and lying come in order to hide the stealing, and in the end one comes to use even the name of God for one's own falsehood.

Before the law, a person comes to acknowledge that he is not truthful and that he is a being who cannot become righteous by himself. And he comes to Jesus, who is without sin and in whom there is no deceit.

Jesus bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John, received the punishment of those sins on the Cross, and rose again from death. The one who believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit obtains the remission of sins and justification.

And the one who has received the Spirit of truth does not rationalize falsehood. With the hands that used to steal he works honestly; having been one who used to take, he shares; with the mouth that used to deceive he speaks the truth; and he does not use the name of God for his own purposes but hallows it.

Therefore the gospel conclusion of this word is as follows.

"Do not hide your falsehood and dress yourself up as a righteous person before God. Acknowledge your true self before the law, and believe in the perfect washing away of sin that Jesus

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Christ accomplished with the water and the blood. And, following the Spirit of truth, turn from a life of taking to a life of sharing, and from deceitful words to true words."

Leviticus 19:13–14—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The word of the passage

"(Thou shalt not oppress thy neighbor, nor rob him: the wages of a hired servant shall not abide with thee all night until the morning –ASV). You shall not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling block before the blind, but shall fear your God: I am the LORD" (Leviticus 19:13–14).

This word seems to list two different ordinances, but at its center there is one principle.

It is that one must not take profit for oneself by exploiting the weakness of the other person and the difference in power.

The hired worker is in a weaker position than his employer, the deaf person can hardly hear and respond to words directed at him, and the blind person cannot see the danger placed before him. People can exploit those weaknesses, but God sees and hears everything. That is why God said at the end, *"Fear your God: I am the LORD."*

2. *"Thou shalt not oppress thy neighbor, nor rob him"*

'To oppress' is to press down the other person by using the

power and position one has. ‘To rob’ means to take away unjustly, or not to give, what should go to the other person.

This does not refer only to the act of a robber stealing another person’s goods. Deliberately delaying money that must be paid under a contract, or cutting down the rightful payment by taking advantage of the fact that the other person is too weak to protest, is also included in the spirit of this word.

In ancient Israel, the hired worker often lived on what he earned each day. That is why God spoke more concretely in Deuteronomy, like this.

“Each day you shall give him his wages, and not let the sun go down on it, for he is poor and has set his heart on it” (Deuteronomy 24:15).

To the hired worker his wages were not spare money but the living expenses on which his family would eat that day. Therefore holding back his wages all night was not a simple delay of business, but something that threatened the survival of a poor person.

The important fact here is that paying wages is not charity but justice. It is returning what the worker already has the right to receive for his labor.

Today, too, the one who pays wages must pay the rightful payment he promised at the proper time. Setting a regular payday must be distinguished from deliberately holding back wages that are already due. The following acts go directly against the spirit of the passage.

—Deliberately delaying wages even though one has the ability to pay

—Unjustly withholding severance pay, allowances, or overtime pay

—Taking advantage of the fact that foreign workers or day laborers find it hard to protest

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—Holding back the payments of subcontractors or freelancers without reason and pressuring them

—Making the terms of a contract opaque and deducting unjust amounts

—Not paying the promised payment for labor while putting forward the name of the church and the gospel

Service offered voluntarily and labor done for rightful wages must be distinguished. God may gladly accept what someone has freely devoted, but wages already promised must not be replaced with the word 'devotion.'

James 5:4 says that the wages that have not been paid themselves cry out before God. It means that even if the hired worker has no power and cannot speak, the wages he has not received are testifying before God.

3. *"You shall not curse the deaf"*

The act of cursing a deaf person is specially mentioned because, since that person cannot hear, it is hard for him to confront the one who cursed him or to defend himself.

The offender may think, "That person did not hear it, so it is all right." But whether something is a sin is not decided by whether the victim knew of it. Even if the other person did not hear, God heard.

Mocking someone without his knowing, laughing at a person who cannot understand in front of him, or gossiping secretly with others is not hidden before God either.

Today it can appear in the following forms.

—Mocking deaf people by imitating their pronunciation or their way of communicating

—Speaking ill of someone to his face, thinking that he will

not understand

—Intentionally not providing the explanations or information that are needed

—Forcing an unfavorable contract or decision on someone by exploiting his difficulty in communicating

—Refusing even the minimum consideration for communication within the community

God does not say to regard a person with a disability merely as an object of pity. He says to treat that person as a precious neighbor who was also made in the image of God.

4. *"Nor put a stumbling block before the blind"*

The primary meaning of this word is literal. It is that one must not deliberately place an object in the path of a person who cannot see, or lead him onto a wrong path and make him fall.

Deuteronomy 27:18, too, says, *"Cursed is the one who makes the blind to wander off the road."* This goes beyond merely failing to help a weak person; it is the wickedness of exploiting his weakness to put him in danger.

God commanded that no stumbling block be put before a person who cannot see. Nor may a disability be judged as a punishment for a personal sin or as spiritual inferiority. Jesus, too, said of the man who was blind from birth that he had not become so because of any particular sin of his own or of his parents (John 9:1–3).

Today, 'a stumbling block before the blind' may not be only a physical obstacle.

—Leaving a dangerous passage as it is

—Providing needed information only in ways that cannot be accessed

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—Deciding one-sidedly without asking the wishes of a person with a disability

—Intentionally turning away even though one knows of a situation where help is needed

—Giving wrong information so that someone makes an unfavorable choice

—Gaining economic profit by exploiting someone's disability or lack of information

Consideration, however, must not become a way of treating the other person as if he were incapable. Respect is asking the person himself what he needs, and helping him so that he can choose and take part for himself.

5. Why God said at the end, "*Fear your God*"

The sins of verse 13 and verse 14 have something in common. They are sins that easily escape the eyes of people.

The hired worker finds it hard to protest to his employer. The deaf person may not hear the curse directed at him. The blind person may not see who put the stumbling block there. Therefore the offender may think that his act will not be exposed.

It is exactly at that point that God speaks.

"Fear your God: I am the LORD" (Leviticus 19:14).

To fear God is not merely a feeling of being afraid of punishment. It is believing that God is watching even when people are not watching, and regarding the judgment of God as more important than one's own interests.

The one who fears God does not ask only, "If I do this, will I be caught?" He asks, "Is this righteous before God? Am I treating this person as a precious neighbor whom God has made?"

6. Our sin that this word reveals

Before this word we cannot easily call ourselves righteous. Even if we have not directly withheld someone's wages, there is within us a heart that seeks to exploit people's weaknesses.

When the other person has no power we take our promises lightly, we ignore people who are of no use to us, and when we think the other person cannot understand we even speak carelessly. Even when we know of another person's difficulty, we sometimes turn away for fear that it might cause us inconvenience.

The law does not merely present a list of outward transgressions. It reveals the greed and mercilessness, the contempt and self-centeredness that are deep in our hearts. Therefore the first purpose of this word is not to make us become righteous by our own efforts, but to make us realize the fact that we need a Savior.

7. The connection with the gospel of the water and the Spirit

We have not kept this commandment fully, but Jesus fulfilled the righteousness of God fully. Jesus did not exploit the weak from the position of the strong. Rather, He drew near to the poor, the sick, and the marginalized, and did not despise them.

When Jesus received baptism from John, He fulfilled *"all righteousness"* (Matthew 3:15). Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus bore the sin of the world and became *"The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world"* (John 1:29). Jesus bore even the sins we committed when we held back wages, despised the weak, and put stumbling blocks before others.

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In the body in which He bore those sins, Jesus went to the Cross and received the judgment, shedding His blood. And Jesus rose again from death. The Holy Spirit testifies that this gospel of the water and the blood is the salvation of God (1 John 5:6–8).

Therefore the one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a person who is made righteous by his own good deeds. He is a person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the righteousness Jesus accomplished. But the fact that one has received the remission of sins is not a permission to treat other people carelessly. Rather, the grace one has received freely must appear as justice and love in one's life.

8. The remission of sins and actual responsibility

If a person who believes in the gospel has unjustly held back someone's wages, he cannot end the matter by saying, "Jesus bore this sin too, so I am all right." The gospel is not a means of hiding sin, but the power that makes one acknowledge sin and come out into the light.

Therefore the following actual turning back is needed.

—One must acknowledge the wrong concretely.

—If there are unpaid wages or payments, one must pay them.

—If there is damage one has caused, one must make restitution as far as possible.

—One must ask forgiveness of the person concerned.

—One must set right the structure of contracts and payments so that the same thing is not repeated.

—One must mend the environment of the community so that people with disabilities and the weak are not excluded.

Restitution and improvement are not the price of the remission of sins. The remission of sins is received through the

salvation Jesus accomplished. But in the one who has received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel, the fruit of seeking to set right his wrongs appears.

When we have done wrong, the Holy Spirit makes us acknowledge that wrong and look again to the baptism Jesus received from John and to the Cross. And He leads us not to remain only in a sense of condemnation, but actually to mend our wrong relationships and our wrong ways of living.

9. When applied to the life of the believer

Leviticus 19:13–14 asks us the following questions.

—Am I not pressuring the weak by using money and position?

—Am I not holding back for my own convenience what I must pay to another person?

—Do I not take a promise lightly because the other person cannot protest?

—Do I not mock people with disabilities or leave them out of the community?

—Are the systems and the environment I have made not becoming an unnecessary stumbling block to someone?

—Am I acting honestly before God even when people do not catch me?

The church, too, is no exception to this word. If, while preaching the gospel, it holds back the rightful payment due to its ministers, staff, workers, and suppliers, its words and its life contradict each other. And if it keeps turning away even though it knows that people with disabilities find it hard to take part in worship and fellowship, that community must take the question of this passage seriously.

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Conclusion

The holiness that Leviticus 19:13–14 speaks of is not a religious appearance that shows only during the hours of worship. Holiness appears in the date on which wages are paid, in the attitude with which a contract is drawn up, in the words with which the weak are treated, and in the path on which people with disabilities walk and the environment in which they can take part in the community.

The one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not try to obtain salvation by good deeds. He believes in the salvation Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection. At the same time, as befits one who has received that salvation, he does not exploit the weaknesses of others, gives what he ought to give, and lays before the weak not a stumbling block but a safe path.

Even if the hired worker cannot speak, his wages cry out to God; even if the deaf person cannot hear, God hears; and even if the blind person cannot see, God is watching. This is the grave meaning of the words *"fear your God."*

Leviticus 19:15–16—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The word of the passage

"You shall do no injustice in judgment. You shall not be partial to the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty. In righteousness you shall judge your neighbor. You shall not go

about as a talebearer among your people; nor shall you take a stand against the life of your neighbor: I am the LORD" (Leviticus 19:15–16).

This word looks like a law given only to judges, but in fact it applies to the whole life of the people of God as they judge, speak of, and treat people. The core is threefold.

First, judge not according to a person's circumstances or position, but according to the truth and righteousness.

Second, do not spread unverified words and slander.

Third, do not endanger even the reputation and the life of your neighbor by your own judgment and words.

2. *"You shall do no injustice in judgment"*

Judgment does not mean only the passing of a verdict by a judge in a court of law. Every matter of deciding who is right and who is wrong, of judging a dispute, and of determining responsibility is included in this principle.

The spirit of this word applies also when parents judge a quarrel among their children at home, when a church handles some problem, when a superior at work deals with a dispute among employees, and when a teacher at school guides students.

Unjust judgment usually begins in the following ways.

—Drawing a conclusion after hearing only one side

—Taking the words of the person who spoke first as the facts

—Regarding the opinion of the majority as the truth

—Judging in favor of those one is close to

—Judging against a person one has always disliked

—Putting feelings or face before the facts

—Applying the standard differently depending on who caused the problem

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Proverbs 18:17 says that the one who states his case first seems right, but that the situation may change when the other party comes and makes the facts clear. Therefore, for righteous judgment, one must first hear the facts sufficiently. One must distinguish claims from evidence, and conjecture from verified facts.

3. *"You shall not be partial to the poor"*

God commanded in many places that the poor be cared for. Yet in judgment He says not to take the side of a poor person unconditionally merely because he is poor.

This word does not mean to treat the poor coldly. It means that giving the poor the help they need and judging the facts of a case must be distinguished.

For example, if a poor person has actually suffered harm, he must be protected fairly and given help. But his lies or wrongs must not be declared right merely because he is poor. It is because sympathy must not change the truth.

Exodus 23:3, too, says, *"You shall not show partiality to a poor man in his dispute."* Despising a poor person is injustice, but bending the facts merely because he is poor is also injustice.

There is an important distinction here.

To be fair is not to treat everyone mechanically in the same way, but to judge by the same standard of truth.

Providing interpretation or explanation to a person who has difficulty communicating is not a privilege, but a condition for fair judgment. Guaranteeing a poor person the opportunity to plead his case is not partiality either. But providing needed support is different from distorting the facts and declaring someone unconditionally right.

4. *"Nor honor the person of the mighty"*

'To honor the person of' someone is to shield him or to protect him to his advantage. Those who have money and power, fame, and connections can move judgment by their influence.

The injustice of honoring the person of the mighty can appear as follows.

—A church covering up a person's wrong because he gives a lot of offerings

—Minimizing a problem because the person is needed by the organization

—Believing the words of a famous person without evidence while ignoring the words of a weak person

—Shielding the wrongs of a superior while holding only subordinates responsible

—Applying a lenient standard to the wrongs of one's family or close friends

—Concealing the facts of harm done on the ground of protecting the honor of the organization

Deuteronomy 1:17 says that because the judgment belongs to God, one must not show partiality in judgment but hear the small as well as the great. Even if a person's position is high, God is above that person. Judges and leaders, too, are under the judgment of God.

Therefore righteous judgment begins with not fearing the powerful. At the same time, one must not be swept along by the pressure of public opinion either. Exodus 23:2 commands not to follow a crowd to do evil, nor to testify contrary to the facts in order to follow the will of the many.

Comments on the internet, view counts, the anger of the public, and the majority opinion within a community cannot take the place of the righteousness of God.

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5. *"In righteousness you shall judge your neighbor"*

Righteous judgment requires at least the following elements.

—Hearing both sides sufficiently

—Distinguishing claims from verified facts

—Excluding a person's position or one's acquaintance with him from the criteria of judgment

—Applying the same principle to the same wrong

—Protecting the person who has suffered harm

—Requiring appropriate responsibility of the person who did wrong

—Giving an opportunity for restoration if there is a way to restore

But the principle that "both sides must be heard" does not mean that truth and falsehood are to be treated alike. If the evidence has been sufficiently confirmed, the wrong must be judged clearly. Fairness is not a neutrality that blurs responsibility.

Jesus, too, said, "*Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment*" (John 7:24). Therefore what the Bible forbids is not all discernment and judgment. Examining the facts and discerning between good and evil is necessary. What is forbidden is judgment according to appearance and prejudice, hypocritical condemnation, and the act of pronouncing conclusively even on the hearts and the ultimate fate of others without knowing the facts.

6. *"You shall not go about as a talebearer"*

Here, being a "*talebearer*" refers not so much to responsible discernment or official confirmation of facts as to the act of

going around among people spreading unfavorable words and accusations about others.

Exodus 23:1 says, *"You shall not circulate a false report. Do not put your hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness."* The one who passes along an unverified rumor is not a mere onlooker. He becomes a participant in the spreading of that rumor.

Gossip can be an interesting story to the one who hears it. But to the person who is its object, it can be a fire that destroys his reputation, his relationships, and his livelihood. James says that the small tongue is like a fire that burns up much wood (James 3:5–6).

Before repeating words, it is necessary to examine as follows.

—Is this a fact I have confirmed directly?

—Am I not speaking conjecture or feelings as if they were facts?

—Can I say this responsibly even where the person concerned is absent?

—Must I really say this to this person?

—Are these words for solving the problem, or for bringing a person down?

—Am I not picking out only part of the facts to put the other person at a disadvantage?

—Have I given the other person an opportunity to explain and answer?

The words "I only repeated what I heard" do not remove one's responsibility.

7. A legitimate report and slander must be distinguished

If the words *"You shall not go about as a talebearer"* are

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wrongly applied, they can become a means of making victims keep silent. But the passage is not a word that says to cover up injustice. It is because in the verse immediately before, God commanded that judgment be done in righteousness.

If one has come to know of something that threatens the life and safety of others, such as a crime, violence, abuse, or financial corruption, it may be necessary to inform responsible persons and the appropriate authorities. That is different from spreading rumors in order to bring a person down.

The difference lies in the purpose and the method.

—Slander spreads to many people to shame the other person, but a legitimate report informs those who are responsible for handling the problem.

—Slander mixes in conjecture and exaggeration, but a legitimate report states accurately the facts one has confirmed.

—Slander delights in the ruin of the other person, but a legitimate report seeks to prevent harm and to reach a righteous resolution.

—Slander and a legitimate report cannot be distinguished by anonymity alone. What matters is whether it is faithful to the facts, and whether it seeks to prevent harm and bring the truth to light.

Love is not covering up sin unconditionally to save the face of an organization. Bringing the truth to light, protecting the victim, and enabling the one who did wrong to turn back is also love.

8. *"Nor shall you take a stand against the life of your neighbor"*

Verse 16 shows that the problem of words may not end

merely at the level of hurting someone's feelings. False rumors and testimony and malicious accusations can bring a person to the point of death.

In the trials of ancient times, false testimony could even bring an innocent person to the death penalty. Today, too, false exposures and distorted rumors can destroy a person's job, home, community, and reputation. Sometimes they even make a person lose the will to go on living.

Therefore the responsibility for the blood of one's neighbor does not rest only on the one who used violence directly. The one who made up the lie, the one who passed it on without verifying it, the one who kept silent though he knew it was not true, and the one who used his influence to drive a person into a corner are not free from responsibility either.

Conversely, turning away with the words "It has nothing to do with me" when someone's life and safety are actually in danger also goes against the spirit of protecting life in this word. We must not only refrain from endangering the life of our neighbor, but must also protect that life as far as we can.

9. Our sin revealed before this word

We are careful with the powerful, but speak easily to the powerless. When someone we like does wrong, we try to understand his circumstances, and when someone we dislike does wrong, we even conjecture the most evil motives.

Within us there are the following sins.

—The heart that wants to make one's own side right rather than the facts

—The heart that secretly enjoys talking about the wrongs of others

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—The heart that makes the other person more evil in order to prove that one is right

—The heart that judges a person's worth by his appearance and position

—The heart that passes a final verdict without knowing enough

—The heart that does not give the other person an opportunity to explain

—The heart that wants to believe only the stories favorable to oneself

The law reveals such a heart. We come to realize the fact that we are not righteous judges, but sinners who judge dragged along by prejudice and self-love. Therefore, before we try to become righteous by ourselves by keeping this commandment through our deeds, we must first know the fact that we need the salvation of Jesus Christ.

10. The unjust trial Jesus received

One of the events that most seriously violated Leviticus 19:15–16 is the trial of Jesus.

The religious leaders first reached the conclusion to kill Jesus and then looked for evidence. They used false testimony and incited the people, and Pilate, though he knew the fact that Jesus had committed no sin deserving death, yielded to the crowd and to political pressure. It was neither taking the side of the poor nor following righteousness. In order to protect their own position and power, they delivered the innocent Jesus over to death.

But within this unjust human trial, God accomplished the righteous work of saving mankind. Jesus, who was without sin,

bore all our sins by receiving baptism from John. Jesus became the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Jesus bore even our sins of unfair judgment, lying, gossip, slander, and murder, and received the judgment on the Cross, shedding His blood. And Jesus rose again from death.

11. In the salvation of God, righteousness and mercy are together

God did not close His eyes to our sins as if they did not exist because He loves us. Because God is the righteous Judge, there must certainly be judgment on sin.

But instead of judging us and destroying us, God had Jesus bear our sins with the baptism He received from John, and had Him receive the punishment of those sins on the Cross. This is the salvation in which the righteousness and the love of God have appeared together.

The water represents the baptism Jesus received from John, and the blood represents the judgment of sin He received on the Cross. The Holy Spirit testifies that this salvation accomplished with the water and the blood is the truth. The one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not become righteous because his deeds are excellent, but is justified by believing the fact that Jesus bore all sins and received the judgment.

This is not unfair partiality on the part of God. It is because the price of sin was actually paid in Jesus that He declares the believer righteous. The Bible says as follows. *"Who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification" (Romans 4:25).*

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12. Why the one who believes in the gospel does not condemn carelessly

The one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit knows the fact that he too has been saved by the mercy of God. So when he deals with the sins of others, he does not act like a final judge in the place of God.

That does not mean, however, that he calls sin not sin. What is warned against here is not righteous judgment, but the hypocritical condemnation that puts forward one's own righteousness.

—Righteous judgment seeks to bring the facts to light and to set right the wrong.

—Hypocritical condemnation seeks to define the other person as a wholly evil person and to get rid of him.

—Righteous judgment protects the victim and seeks restoration.

—Hypocritical condemnation displays one's own righteousness and enjoys the shame of the other person.

—Righteous judgment knows that one is oneself a person who needs grace.

—Condemnation thinks that one is a righteous person, different from the other person.

That Jesus showed grace to the woman caught in adultery does not mean that He acknowledged adultery as good. Jesus exposed the sin of the hypocritical people who sought to condemn that woman and kill her, and on the ground that He had already borne that woman's sins with the baptism He received from John, He opened the way of salvation to her. And He told her to sin no more.

The gospel does not make sin light; while giving life to the sinner, it also makes him turn from sin.

13. The Holy Spirit rules our judgment and our words

The Holy Spirit does not let the believer make his own judgment absolute. When we are about to criticize someone, He makes us first examine ourselves, makes us distinguish feelings from facts, and makes us cast away falsehood and exaggeration and speak what is true.

Ephesians 4:29 says to speak what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. This does not mean to say only pleasant things all the time. Sometimes a wrong must be pointed out clearly. But the purpose of those words must be not to burn the other person up, but to build him up rightly in the truth.

If one has judged someone wrongly or spread a rumor, one must turn back as follows.

—We no longer relay words we have not verified.

—We set right the wrong content we spread, before those who heard it.

—We acknowledge our wrong to the person who suffered harm and ask his forgiveness.

—We act responsibly to restore the reputation and the relationships we damaged.

—We look again by faith to the baptism Jesus received from John and to the Cross.

—We change our habits of speech and judgment, receiving the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The faith that says, “I have already received the remission of sins,” does not mean that one need not set right one’s lies. It is because one is a person who knows the grace of the remission of sins that one can acknowledge and set right one’s wrongs without hiding in fear.

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Conclusion

Leviticus 19:15–16 commands that neither the poor nor the mighty be judged according to appearance, but that judgment be made according to the truth and righteousness. It also warns against endangering the reputation and the life of one's neighbor by going around among people spreading unverified words and slander.

The one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit was not saved because he was originally a righteous person. He was saved because Jesus bore with the baptism He received from John even the sins of judging unjustly, slandering others, and exalting oneself, and received the judgment on the Cross.

Therefore the one who believes in the gospel must live like this.

He must judge according to the truth rather than a person's circumstances and position, must not carelessly spread what he has heard, must deal clearly with sin without becoming a condemner who destroys the sinner, and must seek the life and the restoration of his neighbor with the mercy he himself has received.

Leviticus 19:17–18—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The word of the passage

"You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your neighbor, and not bear sin because of him.

You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD" (Leviticus 19:17–18).

The flow of this word is very tightly knit.

Hatred in the heart grows into hidden resentment, and resentment can appear in the act of slandering someone behind his back or seeking to retaliate directly. In order to break that vicious circle, God says not to harbor hatred, to speak rightly in love if there is a wrong, to cast away retaliation and grudges, and to seek the good of one's neighbor as if it were one's own affair.

2. *"You shall not hate your brother in your heart"*

God does not say that it is enough merely not to harm a person outwardly. He examines the heart before the act.

A person can smile outwardly and yet in his heart wish for the other person to fail. Even if he does not take revenge directly, he can rejoice when the other person meets with difficulty, or nurture hatred by thinking repeatedly about that person's weaknesses.

1 John 3:15 says, *"Whoever hates his brother is a murderer."* This does not mean that an actual murder and hatred in the heart produce the same result socially. But God sees that the root of murder lies in the hatred of the heart.

Hatred in the heart can appear as follows.

—Wishing for the other person to be ruined or put to shame

—Always interpreting the other person's words in an evil sense

—Feeling satisfied when one hears bad news about that person

—Not trying to resolve the wrong, but continuing to be

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hostile inwardly

—Pretending to be at peace outwardly while gossiping behind his back

—Defining the other person completely by a single wrong

—Turning away out of hatred even though one could give the help that is needed

That does not mean, however, that all the anger and sorrow that arise when one has been wounded are in themselves deliberate hatred. When one suffers an injustice, anger and pain can arise. The problem is failing to deal with those feelings by the truth and by faith, and continuing to nurture them with a heart that wishes for the ruin of the other person.

Ephesians 4:26 says, *"Be angry, and do not sin: do not let the sun go down on your wrath."* It is not that we are to deny the fact that anger has arisen, but that we are not to let that anger harden into sin and resentment.

3. The word that says not to hate, and the command *"surely rebuke"*

Verse 17 does not end with the command *"You shall not hate,"* but continues, *"You shall surely rebuke your neighbor."* This means that biblical love is not an unconditional condonation that never points out a wrong.

'To rebuke' is to point out a wrong clearly and to exhort the person to return to the right way. To say nothing even though one knows the other person's wrong, while hating him in one's heart and speaking ill of him behind his back, is not love.

Jesus, too, said:

"If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained

your brother" (Matthew 18:15).

The purpose of exhortation is not to defeat the other person and make him submit, but that *"you have gained your brother."* It is not to break the relationship, but to help him turn from sin and restore the relationship.

Therefore biblical rebuke has the following characteristics.

—Before speaking behind someone's back, one speaks directly to the person concerned as far as possible.

—One does not attack his character vaguely, but speaks of concrete acts.

—One bases oneself not on conjecture but on verified facts.

—One speaks with the humility of one who can also do wrong oneself.

—One seeks to restore the other person rather than to put him to shame.

—If he repents, one does not keep using his past wrongs as a weapon.

—One speaks not in order to pour out one's anger, but for the good of the other person.

The words "That is just the kind of person you are" condemn a person's character. But saying, "The words you said at that time caused this harm, and it must be set right," can be an exhortation that deals with concrete responsibility.

4. The difference between rebuke and an emotional attack

A person can pour out his anger and justify it, saying, "I rebuked him according to the Bible." But raising one's voice, insulting the other person, and dragging out all his weaknesses is not rebuke.

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Exhortation in love speaks clearly of sin, but does not destroy the dignity of the other person. It does not hide the truth, but does not inflict unnecessary shame. It requires responsibility for the wrong, but does not rejoice in the ruin of the other person.

Proverbs 27:5 says that open rebuke is better than love carefully concealed, and verse 6 says that the rebuke of a friend comes from faithfulness. There are times when one must speak because one loves. But a rebuke given without love easily turns into an attack and condemnation.

In the following states, it is necessary first to calm one's heart rather than to speak immediately.

—When the desire to give the wound back to the other person is strong

—When one has no intention at all of hearing the other person's explanation

—When one wants to disgrace him in front of many people

—When one wants to prove that one is right rather than to solve the problem

—When one wants to drag out even all his past wrongs and attack him

A rebuke given in such a state can hardly become a rebuke of love, even if it speaks the truth.

5. *"And not bear sin because of him"*

If one unconditionally covers up a brother's wrong even though one knows of it, that sin can grow greater. The victims can increase, and the whole community can suffer difficulty. Therefore silence is not always love.

But this expression can also be applied to mean that one must not fall into the sin of hatred and retaliation oneself because of

one's neighbor's wrong. The fact that the other person has done wrong does not give me the right to hate, slander, and take revenge on that person.

Therefore we must avoid both of the following sins.

—Covering up a wrong and so letting the other person keep committing sin

—Hating and attacking the other person under the pretext of setting right a wrong

The biblical way is to deal with a wrong according to the facts, while not harboring hatred in one's heart.

6. *"You shall not take vengeance"*

To take vengeance is to try to make the other person suffer as much pain as one has received. Seeking justice and taking personal revenge are different.

Justice seeks to stop the wrong, protect the victim, and establish appropriate responsibility. Revenge seeks to satisfy one's own anger through the suffering of the other person.

Romans 12:19 says not to avenge ourselves, but to give place to the wrath of God. This does not mean to leave a wrong alone carelessly. It means to acknowledge that the final right of judgment lies not with me but with God.

Therefore giving up revenge means the following.

—Not giving the same wound back to the other person

—Not exploiting that person's weaknesses

—Not inciting others to attack him as a group

—Not trying to disgrace him publicly online

—Not obstructing him while wishing for him to fail

—Entrusting the final judgment and recompense to God

But reporting a crime, demanding compensation for harm,

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and going through necessary legal and communal procedures are not always revenge. If the purpose is to prevent harm and to reach a righteous resolution, holding someone responsible is necessary.

7. *"Nor bear any grudge against the children of your people"*

Here a grudge is connected with the attitude of storing up a wound in one's heart and continually demanding it of the other person as if it were a debt. Outwardly one acts as if the matter were over, but in one's heart one ruminates on that person's wrong again and again, and brings it out whenever there is an opportunity.

When one harbors a grudge, the event of the past keeps ruling the present. Whatever the other person does, one comes to interpret it through that wrong. In the end, not only the other person but also the one who harbors the grudge is bound to that event.

Forgiveness is not calling a wrong good. Nor is it dressing up what happened as if it had never happened. Nor does it mean denying the fact of the harm, or that one must immediately return to the same relationship of trust as before.

The following must be distinguished from one another.

—Forgiveness is laying down one's personal right of retaliation.

—Reconciliation is the process in which both sides acknowledge the truth and rebuild the relationship.

—Trust is what is gradually restored as repentance and change are confirmed.

—Responsibility is honestly bearing the consequences that

follow from the wrong.

Having forgiven does not mean that one cannot keep a distance for the sake of safety. In a situation where violence or abuse continues, the victim must not be forced unconditionally to meet the offender directly. In such cases, safety must first be secured, and the problem must be handled through trustworthy protectors and responsible institutions.

8. *"You shall love your neighbor as yourself"*

This word is the central command that sums up the whole law. Jesus, too, together with the commandment to love God, presented the words *"You shall love your neighbor as yourself"* as the great commandment (Matthew 22:37–40). Paul also explained that the other commandments are included in the love of one's neighbor, and that love does no harm to a neighbor (Romans 13:8–10).

To love someone as oneself does not mean to worship oneself. When a person is hungry he eats, when his body is sick he treats it, when he is in danger he avoids it, and when he is wronged he tries to explain his position. It means to give the same actual attention to one's neighbor as well.

Therefore love of one's neighbor does not remain in feelings only.

—Sharing food when one's neighbor is hungry

—Caring for the sick

—Listening to the one who has been wronged

—Exhorting in love when someone is going the wrong way

—Protecting the other person's reputation and privacy

—Treating the other person in the way one wants to be treated

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—Giving the time and the labor the other person needs

—Actually seeking the other person's good

Love is not agreeing with every wrong. If the other person's sin will in the end destroy him and others, helping him to stop it is love.

9. '*Neighbor*' is not limited to the people I like

This passage speaks of one's brother and one's own people, but in verse 34 of the same chapter God commands that the stranger too be loved as oneself. Jesus said to love even one's enemies and those who persecute one.

"But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you" (Matthew 5:44).

In the parable of the good Samaritan, too, Jesus changed the question "Who is my neighbor?" into the question "Who became a neighbor to the man who fell among robbers?" Love of one's neighbor is not picking out people worth loving, but becoming a neighbor oneself to the person who needs help.

To love one's enemy does not mean to approve of that person's evil or to trust him. It is not being ruled by hatred and retaliation, wishing for him to turn from evil and be saved, and doing the good that is needed.

10. Our true selves that this commandment reveals

We do not love our neighbor as ourselves. We are generous to ourselves and strict with others. We think that there are circumstances behind our own wrongs, while we conclude that

the wrongs of the other person are a problem of his character.

When we are wounded we want to retaliate, and we want to tell others of the other person's wrong and win people to our side. When we ought to exhort, we keep silent for fear that the relationship might become uncomfortable, while we speak easily where the person concerned is absent.

The law reveals what we are like. People cannot produce perfect love by their own strength. Before the commandment to love, we come to know that we are not merely lacking in love, but are sinners who have the sin of hatred and retaliation in our hearts.

Therefore this word does not end merely as a moral demand that says, "Try harder and love." It first makes us look to Jesus Christ, who would save us from hatred and sin.

11. The love of God revealed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit

The Bible does not look for the starting point of love in man.

"In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10).

Before we loved God, God first loved us. When we had become enemies of God and were living hating our neighbors, God sent His Son as the peace offering.

Jesus bore all our sins by receiving baptism from John. Even our sin of having hated our brother, our sin of having borne a grudge, our sin of having retaliated, and our sin of having failed to love were passed on to Jesus. Jesus became the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, and received the judgment of sin on the Cross, shedding His blood. And Jesus rose again

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from death.

The water represents the baptism Jesus received from John, the blood represents the judgment of the Cross, and the Holy Spirit testifies that this salvation is the truth. The one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not receive the remission of sins by practicing love perfectly. He receives the remission of sins by believing in the righteousness of Jesus, who bore even the sin of having failed to love.

12. God's remission of sins and our forgiveness

That God remitted our sins is not because He regarded sin as a trifle. It is because our sins were passed on to Jesus, and Jesus bore the punishment of those sins on the Cross, that He declared us to be without sin.

Therefore the ground on which we can forgive a brother is not that the other person's wrong is small either. It is because I myself have first received from God a remission of sins that I can never repay.

Ephesians 4:32 says, *"Forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you."* The love and the remission of sins that God first bestowed become the strength by which we can love and forgive our brother.

But this does not mean that people's wrongs are to be handled lightly. Rather, because we believe in the gospel, we can acknowledge sin without hiding it, and can speak honestly of responsibility even to the one who did wrong. Forgiveness and rebuke are not opposites. When both seek the restoration of the other person, they are carried out together within true love.

13. The restoration of relationships that the Holy Spirit brings about

When we hate someone, the Holy Spirit does not end with simply suppressing us, saying, "You must not hate." He first makes us see the hatred and pride of our hearts, and makes us look to the gospel of the water and the blood, in which Jesus bore even that sin.

Within that faith, we can act like this.

—We honestly acknowledge before God the fact that we have been wounded and the heart that hates.

—We distinguish conjecture from verified facts.

—We do not speak behind someone's back, but speak to the person concerned in a safe way.

—If there is something we have done wrong, we apologize first.

—We speak clearly, within love, of the other person's concrete wrong.

—We lay down personal retaliation, but establish the responsibility that is needed.

—We do not keep using the past of a person who has repented as a weapon.

—Even if our feelings are not restored at once, we do not wish for the ruin of the other person.

—If the restoration of the relationship is difficult, we seek the help of a mediator of faith.

—We look again to the baptism Jesus received from John and to the Cross, and seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not mean that all the feelings of hurt disappear in an instant. But we can refuse to let hatred and the desire for revenge become the master of our hearts, and can go forward step by step on the way

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of truth and restoration, believing in the love we have received.

Conclusion

The love of Leviticus 19:17–18 is not a sentimental love that pretends not to know of wrongs. It is a love that does not hate in the heart, does not gossip behind someone's back, exhorts directly in love when necessary, gives up personal revenge, does not store up grudges, and seeks the good of one's neighbor as if it were one's own affair.

But we have not fulfilled this love perfectly. That is why the love of God came to us first. By receiving baptism from John, Jesus bore our sins of hatred and retaliation, received the judgment on the Cross shedding His blood, and rose again from death, and so reconciled us with God.

The love of neighbor of the one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a condition for obtaining salvation, but the fruit of salvation that a person who was loved and received the remission of sins while still an enemy bears according to the Spirit.

Leviticus 19:19–25—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The word of the passage

"You shall keep My statutes. You shall not let your livestock breed with another kind. You shall not sow your field with mixed

seed. Nor shall a garment of mixed linen and wool come upon you. Whoever lies carnally with a woman who is betrothed to a man as a concubine, and who has not at all been redeemed nor given her freedom, for this there shall be scourging; but they shall not be put to death, because she was not free. And he shall bring his trespass offering to the LORD, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, a ram as a trespass offering. The priest shall make atonement for him with the ram of the trespass offering before the LORD for his sin which he has committed. And the sin which he has committed shall be forgiven him. When you come into the land, and have planted all kinds of trees for food, then you shall count their fruit as uncircumcised. Three years it shall be as uncircumcised to you. It shall not be eaten. But in the fourth year all its fruit shall be holy, a praise to the LORD. And in the fifth year you may eat its fruit, that it may yield to you its increase: I am the LORD your God" (Leviticus 19:19–25).

Three kinds of ordinances appear in this section.

—The ordinance not to mix different kinds

—The punishment and the trespass offering for the case of fornication with a betrothed slave woman

—The ordinance of setting apart the fruit of newly planted fruit trees and offering it to God

The contents look different from one another, but there is a common center. It is that the people of God must not handle the order of creation, sexual relationships, and even labor and its produce according to their own desires, but must live setting them apart according to the word of God.

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2. *"You shall keep My statutes"*

Verse 19 first makes clear who the Master of the ordinances is. The most fundamental reason the people of Israel had to keep these ordinances was not human wisdom concerning agriculture or clothing, but that God had commanded them.

The holiness of Leviticus chapter 19 does not remain only within the tabernacle and the sacrifices. It applies to the whole of life—raising livestock, sowing seed in the field, making and wearing clothes, having sexual relations, and planting trees and eating their fruit.

This means that God is not One who rules only the religious sphere, but the Sovereign who rules even people's bodies and relationships, their labor and their possessions.

3. *"You shall not let your livestock breed with another kind"*

This command is an actual ordinance that, in the raising of livestock in ancient Israel, livestock of different kinds were not to be deliberately bred together.

Genesis chapter 1 records that plants and living creatures were created *"according to its kind."* Therefore it can be seen that this ordinance has the meaning of making them respect the distinctions and the order of creation that God established.

But the passage does not explain all the reasons why God forbade such breeding. Therefore one must not conclude that it was because of some particular biological reason or because of the customs of the pagan religions of that time. What is clear is the fact that God commanded Israel to remember distinction in everyday life as well.

This word must not be used to declare all crossbreeding of animals or improvement of breeds today to be a universal sin. This is an ordinance given to Israel under the Sinai covenant. This command is not repeated to the saints of the New Testament as the same agricultural law.

4. *"You shall not sow your field with mixed seed"*

This ordinance, too, is literally a command not to sow two different kinds of seed mixed together in an actual field. In Deuteronomy 22:9, too, there is the word not to sow a vineyard with different kinds of seed.

The people of Israel had to learn the distinction of God even in the act of sowing seed. It is people who cultivate the field, but it is God who makes the seed grow and bear fruit. Therefore the farmer was not to try to gain more profit by mixing whatever he pleased in his own way, but had to obey the ordinance of God.

The word not to sow with mixed seed teaches, spiritually, the distinction of faith that false teachings must not be mixed into the true gospel.

The saints must distinguish the word of God from teachings that come from human thoughts, and must clearly believe in and preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The truth God has given must not be mixed with a false gospel or with human merit.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is the word that Jesus bore the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment on the Cross shedding His blood, and saved us by rising again from death. If human good deeds or merits are mixed into this salvation as a condition for the remission of sins, the gospel of grace is corrupted.

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Therefore the teaching that it is enough to believe only in the blood of the Cross, leaving out the baptism Jesus received from John, must not be accepted together with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We must believe fully in the salvation in which Jesus bore the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John and paid the price of that sin on the Cross.

5. *"Nor shall a garment of mixed linen and wool come upon you"*

Deuteronomy 22:11 says concretely not to wear a garment woven of wool and linen mixed together. This, too, was an actual ordinance of clothing that expressed the covenant life of Israel.

Today, a saint of the New Testament has not committed sin because he has worn clothes in which cotton and synthetic fibers are mixed. This ordinance must not be applied as a modern law forbidding blended clothing.

Also, using this word as a ground for forbidding marriage between different peoples or races has nothing to do with the passage. Verse 19 is an ordinance of Israel concerning livestock, seed, and fabric, not a word that teaches racial purity. The New Testament says that Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female are all one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28).

What this ordinance repeatedly taught Israel was distinction. Not only through their fields and livestock but also through the clothes they wore on their bodies, God made them remember the fact, "I am one of the people who belong to God."

The saints of the New Testament are not people who are made holy by a particular fabric. They are people who have been made holy by believing in the salvation Jesus accomplished. But the one who has been made holy by faith must not live

indiscriminately mixing truth and falsehood, the will of God and the desires of the flesh.

6. What the three ordinances forbidding mixing say

Livestock, the field, and clothing are each a different area of life.

—Livestock is the area of life and production that people manage.

—The field is the area of labor and produce.

—Clothing is the area of the body and outward life.

God placed the mark of distinction on the whole life of Israel. Holiness was not needed only when offering sacrifices in the tabernacle, but had to appear also in farming and labor, in clothing and economic life.

However, one must not conclude that all mixing is essentially evil. In the Bible there are also cases in which several elements are used together in harmony. What matters here is not extending to every area a 'principle of no mixing' that people have made up arbitrarily, but respecting the distinctions God has appointed.

7. The case of fornication with a betrothed slave woman

Verse 20 is a word that is very unfamiliar and difficult for modern readers. The woman who appears here is a slave woman who is betrothed to another man but has not yet been redeemed or set free. That is, she was not a person who could freely decide her own life, but was of a status that belonged to her master.

The passage does not seek to establish such a system of

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slavery as the eternal ideal of God. It stipulates how a case that occurred within the imperfect society that actually existed at that time was to be handled.

The reason the two were not put to death, unlike a case of adultery in a free marriage relationship, is also given within the passage.

"Because she was not free" (Leviticus 19:20).

Taking into consideration that woman's legal status and restricted circumstances, the same death penalty was not applied. That does not mean, however, that fornication was declared not to be sin. The two were to be punished, and the man had to bring a trespass offering.

8. This passage does not permit sexual exploitation

This word must not be interpreted to mean that a relationship with a slave woman was a light sin. God clearly defined this case as sin and required responsibility and a trespass offering.

In particular, if a free man had relations with a woman of slave status, there could be a considerable difference in power between the two. The passage does not explain in detail whether that relationship was voluntary or forced. Therefore, on the basis of this verse, the same responsibility must not be mechanically laid on a woman in a weak position.

In today's application, the following kinds of sexual exploitation must be clearly guarded against.

—A superior at work making sexual demands by using the employment relationship

—A church leader forcing a relationship by using spiritual authority

—Taking advantage of the circumstances of a person who is

economically dependent

—Pressuring for consent a person who finds it hard to refuse

—Using the victim's status and reputation to make the victim keep silent

—Hiding a power relationship and coercion with the word 'consent'

The sexual holiness God looks at does not end merely with outwardly asking whether one is married. It is not using the other person's body and person for one's own desires.

9. *"He shall bring his trespass offering to the LORD, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, a ram as a trespass offering"*

The man could not end with acknowledging his sin in words, but had to bring a ram as a trespass offering. The trespass offering shows the fact that sin and trespass have actually occurred and that there is responsibility for them.

A sinner cannot remove his own sin by himself. The offering without blemish that God had appointed had to bear that sin and shed its blood. The priest had to make atonement before God with that offering, and as a result the sinner could receive remission.

Two important facts appear together here.

First, God does not take sexual sin lightly.

Second, God prepared the way by which the sinner could receive remission.

The remission of sins is not changing sin into something that is not sin. It was accomplished by the sin being transferred to the sacrificial offering, and by that offering dying in the sinner's place.

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10. The trespass offering and Jesus Christ

The ram of the trespass offering of the Old Testament shows the sacrifice of Jesus Christ who was to come. But the sacrifices of animals had to be offered repeatedly and could not make people perfect forever.

Jesus came to this earth as the sacrificial offering without blemish. By receiving baptism from John, Jesus bore the sin of all mankind and fulfilled *"all righteousness."* That sin includes the sin of using other people out of sexual desire and the sins committed with the body.

John the Baptist testified of Jesus as *"The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."* Jesus went to the Cross bearing the sin of the world He had borne, and received the judgment, shedding His blood. And Jesus rose again from death.

Hebrews chapter 10 says that by offering one eternal sacrifice, Jesus Christ has perfected forever those who are being sanctified. The trespass offering of the Old Testament was repeated, but the sacrifice of Jesus is the perfect atonement accomplished once and for all.

11. The remission of sins does not remove actual responsibility

That one receives the remission of sins by offering the trespass offering in verses 21–22 does not mean that the responsibility toward the people wounded by that incident has disappeared as well.

The one who believes in the gospel must not say, "Jesus bore this sin too, so there is nothing to set right in reality." If there has been harm, he must acknowledge it, put the relationship in order,

and bear the responsibility that is needed. If he used power or position, he may also have to step down from that position or follow protective measures.

Atonement is not a religious rite for evading responsibility. Rather, it is the grace that enables the sinner to return to God without despairing, while honestly acknowledging his sin.

The one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not hide or rationalize sexual sin. He must acknowledge his wrong, believe in the baptism Jesus received from John and in the Cross, and, receiving the guidance of the Holy Spirit, set his body and his relationships right. The New Testament says that the body of the saint is the temple of the Holy Spirit and was bought at a price, and so says to glorify God with the body (1 Corinthians 6:18–20).

12. *"You shall count their fruit as uncircumcised"*

From verse 23 on, the ordinance concerning the fruit of fruit trees appears. When the people of Israel entered the promised land and planted fruit trees, they were not to eat their fruit for the first three years.

It does not mean that circumcision was actually performed on the trees. The expression of counting the fruit as *"uncircumcised"* means that it was not yet in the state of having been set apart and permitted for the people of Israel to eat.

God appointed when the fruit was to be eaten and when it was not to be eaten. The people of Israel had to wait according to that word, and enjoy the fruit after they had set it apart and offered it to God.

The people of Israel did not immediately eat all the fruit as if it were their own possession just because they had planted the

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trees. They had to wait according to the command of God.

13. Waiting, too, is part of faith

When people sow seed and plant trees, they want to obtain the result as quickly as possible. But God said not to eat for the first three years.

This ordinance taught the people of God self-control and waiting. Even if the fruit is before one's eyes, one does not touch it if it is not the time of God. Faith is not the ability to get something from God quickly; it is also waiting, trusting in the time God has appointed.

Today, the saints of the New Testament do not have to refrain from eating the fruit of every fruit tree for three years. But the following principles can be learned.

—Not disregarding the process in order to obtain the result

—Not abandoning the will of God because of immediate profit

—Not using people and relationships out of hasty greed

—Waiting with self-control until God permits

—Not claiming everything as one's own possession because one planted it

14. *"In the fourth year all its fruit shall be holy"*

All the fruit of the fourth year had to be set apart as holy and offered to God, and praise had to be given. It is acknowledging that it is God who gives abundant fruit.

This was an act of confessing that God is the actual owner of the fruit. The farmer planted the tree, watered it, and labored, but

it is God who gave life and made it bear fruit.

The same confession is contained in the ordinance of the firstfruits of Israel as well.

"And now, behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the land which you, O LORD, have given me" (Deuteronomy 26:10).

The farmer did not merely say, "I obtained it by my labor," but confessed, "God has given it." To offer to God first was to acknowledge that God is the Lord of all the rest of one's life.

The saints, too, must remember and give thanks for the grace of salvation the Lord has bestowed, and must value what God has given and use it according to His will.

15. *"A praise to the LORD"*

The purpose of offering the fruit to God was not merely to give up ownership, but to praise God.

Looking at the fruit, the people of Israel had to give thanks to God, who had given the land, the rain, life, and the produce, rather than boast of their own ability. Therefore the firstfruits were a confession of faith in God and of thanksgiving to Him.

The first praise that comes from the one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a boast that he has offered his possessions. It is thanksgiving for the salvation in which God sent His Son, and Jesus removed all sins with the baptism He received from John and the Cross.

The time, the possessions, and the service we offer to God must also come from thanksgiving for this grace of salvation. It is not a matter of buying salvation or bargaining for blessings by giving a lot of offerings. It is a person who has already been saved acknowledging that he himself and all his possessions have come from God.

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16. *"In the fifth year you may eat its fruit"*

When the fifth year came, the people of Israel could eat the fruit. God did not forbid the fruit forever. After first having them set it apart and wait, He let the people enjoy that fruit with thanksgiving.

Offering to God and enjoying what God has given are not opposed to each other. God permitted His people to enjoy the fruit of their labor with thanksgiving.

Only, the order is important.

—One acknowledges that God is the owner of the fruit.

—One waits according to the word of God.

—One sets it apart as holy to God and praises Him.

—When God permits, one enjoys it with thanksgiving.

Greed tries to hold on to the fruit leaving God out, but faith knows it as what God has given, and enjoys it with thanksgiving.

17. *"That it may yield to you its increase"*

This promise is a covenantal promise given to the people of Israel who obey the ordinances of God in the promised land. Therefore it must not be used today as a formula that if someone gives offerings for a certain period, his business profits will certainly increase severalfold.

Nor can one conclude that if one offers the first things to God, one will unconditionally become materially rich. The blessings that the saints of the New Testament receive include not only material provision but also faith, thanksgiving, self-control, and walking with God.

The center of this word is that God cares for the people who trust in Him and exercise self-control over the immediate fruit.

The Sovereign of abundance is not human technique or impatience, but God.

18. When the three ordinances are connected as one

The three ordinances of verses 19–25 are connected in the following flow.

—Verse 19—Distinction: do not mix the order God has appointed according to human greed.

—Verses 20–22—Atonement: when sin occurs in the body and in relationships, do not rationalize it, but acknowledge responsibility and come forward on the way of atonement God has appointed.

—Verses 23–25—Devotion and thanksgiving: do not regard the fruit of your labor as yours alone, but set it apart to God first, and wait for the time of God and enjoy it with thanksgiving.

Holiness does not lie only in the outward ordinances of not mixing something. It lies in the whole of a life that does not use the body according to one's own desires, does not hide sin, and acknowledges that God is the owner of the produce.

19. The life of the one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit

The one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not try to obtain salvation by keeping these ordinances. He receives the remission of sins by believing in the salvation Jesus completed with the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His rising again from death.

But the one who has received the remission of sins must live

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as follows.

—He does not mix his own merit or the ideas of the world into the gospel.

—He does not place the word of God and the desires of the flesh on the same level of authority.

—He does not use the bodies and the weak circumstances of others for his own desires.

—He does not cover up sexual wrongs or rationalize them with spiritual words.

—When he has done wrong, he acknowledges responsibility and sets right the relationships and the harm.

—He respects the time and the order of God over immediate profit.

—He acknowledges that God is the owner of the produce he has obtained.

—He serves God and his neighbor with thanksgiving for having received salvation without paying any price.

The Holy Spirit is not One who merely makes us confess, ‘I have no sin.’ He makes us believe in the salvation Jesus accomplished, and leads us, as befits those who have received that salvation, to use our bodies, our relationships, and our possessions rightly before God.

Conclusion

Leviticus 19:19–25 teaches that livestock, seed, and fabric, sexual relationships, and even the fruit of fruit trees belong to God.

The ordinances forbidding mixing made Israel remember the distinction of God, the case of fornication with a betrothed slave woman shows that sexual sin requires responsibility and

atonement, and the ordinance concerning the fruit of fruit trees taught waiting, and the devotion of the firstfruits, and thanksgiving.

All of this makes us look to Jesus Christ in the New Testament. By receiving baptism from John, Jesus bore all our sins, paid the price of atonement on the Cross shedding His blood, and by rising again from death made believers holy forever.

The holiness of the one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not lie in literally repeating the ordinances about fabric or crops. It lies in a life that believes in the perfect atonement Jesus accomplished, discerns truth from falsehood, keeps the body and relationships clean, waits for the time of God, and acknowledges that God is the owner of all fruit.

Leviticus 19:26–28—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The word of the passage

"You shall not eat anything with the blood, nor shall you practice divination or soothsaying. You shall not shave around the sides of your head, nor shall you disfigure the edges of your beard. You shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor tattoo any marks on you: I am the LORD" (Leviticus 19:26–28).

These three verses deal with a regulation on food, divination, hairstyle, self-harm for the dead, and marks on the body. They look like commands unrelated to one another, but they are

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connected by the following three questions.

—Who is the Lord of life?

—From whom shall we seek the future and guidance?

—To whom do our bodies belong?

The people of Israel had to handle blood and life, anxiety about the future, mourning for the dead, and even the appearance of their bodies according to the word of God, not according to the customs of the surrounding peoples.

2. *"You shall not eat anything with the blood"*

This command is an actual ordinance of food that meat containing blood is not to be eaten. The reason is made clear in Leviticus chapter 17.

"For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul" (Leviticus 17:11).

The reason blood must not be eaten is that blood represents life, and that God gave that blood upon the altar for atonement.

To the people of Israel, blood was not ordinary food. When they killed an animal, they had to shed its blood, pour it out on the ground, and cover it. They could eat the meat, but they were not to take the blood, which represents life, as if it were their own possession.

The ordinance concerning blood teaches two things.

First, the Lord of life is God.

Second, to save the life of a sinner, the sacrifice of another life is necessary.

3. Eating blood and the blood of atonement

The people of Israel were not to eat blood, but God had that blood sprinkled on the altar to make atonement for sin. The same blood was forbidden as something for the human appetite, but in the sacrifice of atonement of God it was used to save the life of the sinner.

The wages of sin is death. Therefore, for a sinner to live, a sacrificial offering was needed that would bear his sin and die in his place. The sinner laid his hands on the offering and passed his sin on to it, and that offering shed its blood in the sinner's place.

It was because, after the sin had been passed on to the offering, that offering gave up its life in the sinner's place, that its blood became the blood of atonement.

This principle was completed through Jesus Christ in the New Testament.

4. The meaning of the blood in the gospel of the water and the Spirit

The blood of Jesus on the Cross must not be thought of separately from the baptism Jesus received from John.

When Jesus received baptism from John, He fulfilled *"all righteousness"* and bore all the sin of mankind. After that, John the Baptist testified of Jesus as *"The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."*

Jesus did not die without any relation to our sins; because He had borne our sins with the baptism He received from John, He went to the Cross bearing those sins. The blood He shed on the Cross is the evidence that Jesus received the judgment of that sin

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of the world and gave up His own life in order to give us life.

—The baptism Jesus received from John is the work of the water by which He bore our sins.

—By dying on the Cross shedding His blood, Jesus received the punishment of that sin in our place.

—The Holy Spirit testifies that this salvation accomplished with the water and the blood is truly the truth.

—The rising again of Jesus from death shows the completion of the salvation that has overcome sin and death.

Therefore, when the command of Leviticus, "You shall not eat anything with the blood," is seen within the gospel of the water and the Spirit, it makes us realize the fact that life is not something people may take carelessly, and that God has saved us with the life of Jesus Christ.

5. Must blood be avoided in the New Testament age as well?

In Acts chapter 15, the church in Jerusalem exhorted the Gentile believers to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood. The same content is repeated in Acts 15:29 as well.

Therefore the saints of the New Testament must not treat the command concerning blood lightly as a meaningless old rite. In particular, it is fitting to refrain from deliberately eating blood itself as a food ingredient, taking seriously the word to abstain from blood.

But this word must not be turned into a regulation under which one is condemned, anxiously investigating even the minute traces that may remain in food. The center is to respect blood as that which represents life, and to refrain from taking

blood itself as food.

Also, since the command not to eat blood concerns food, it cannot be used as a verse that directly forbids blood transfusion or blood donation. The passage does not deal with medical transfusion for treatment.

Above all, one does not receive the remission of sins by the act of not having eaten blood. Salvation is received by believing in the baptism Jesus received from John and in the blood of the Cross. But the saved person does not take lightly the word of God concerning blood and life.

6. *"Nor shall you practice divination or soothsaying"*

Divination is the act of trying to find out the future and one's fortune by interpreting omens or telling fortunes. Soothsaying is the act of trying to produce a desired result by using methods of sorcery or spiritual powers.

In Deuteronomy chapter 18 it is recorded that one who practices divination, a soothsayer, a sorcerer, a shaman, a medium, and one who calls up the dead are not to be tolerated. Isaiah 8:19, too, says not to seek the dead on behalf of the living, but to seek one's God.

The fundamental problem of divination and soothsaying does not lie in simple curiosity. It lies in trying to know and control the future through other spiritual channels or methods rather than trusting in God.

People are anxious because they cannot know the future. So they try to look for the following things.

—Fortune-telling by one's birth date and horoscopes

—Fortune-telling and spirit divination

—Predicting the future through tarot

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—Judging one's destiny by physiognomy or palm reading

—Zodiac signs and astrology

—Going to shamans and mediums

—Relying on talismans and objects of sorcery

—Trying to make contact with the spirits of the dead

—Trying to obtain blessings and success by particular spells or rites

One can say that such acts are "done only for fun," but what the Bible forbids is not only a matter of how seriously one has become absorbed in that act. It warns against the very direction of trying to ascertain the future and blessings by means other than God.

7. The difference between prayer and divination

Prayer is not sorcery that moves God to get the result I want. It is drawing near to God and asking for our needs, while trusting in the will and the sovereignty of God.

Divination tries to know the future beforehand so that I may control it, but faith trusts in God even without knowing all of the future. Divination tries to manipulate spiritual power with methods and rites, but prayer entrusts oneself to God and obeys.

The following attitudes of faith also need caution.

—Unconditionally concluding that a dream or a chance event is a revelation from God

—Asserting one's own feelings with the same authority as the word of God

—Teaching that if one repeats a particular act, one will certainly receive a blessing

—Using offerings or prayer as a bargain for obtaining a desired result

—Going around looking only for prophecies or personal revelations rather than the word of the Bible

Even if one uses Christian terms outwardly, if one tries to control the future rather than trusting in God, one can drift in a direction similar to divination.

8. Why the one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit keeps away from divination

The Holy Spirit dwells in the one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the truth, and testifies of the salvation Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John and with His blood.

Therefore the saints have no need to go to shamans and fortune-tellers, or to fortune-telling by one's birth date and talismans, on the ground that the future is uncertain. A person does not obtain peace by having to know everything beforehand, but obtains peace by believing that the God who saved him is the Lord of his life and his future.

The power of the slave girl who told fortunes in Acts chapter 16 was not a gift of the Holy Spirit but the work of a demon. Paul did not use that power for the spread of the gospel, but cast out that demon in the name of Jesus Christ. In Acts chapter 19, too, those who accepted the gospel threw away the books they had used for magic.

The gospel and fortune-telling cannot be held on to together. As the word says that one cannot partake of the Lord's cup and of the cup of demons together, one must not believe in God and at the same time seek the future and help from other spiritual channels.

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9. Fictional stories and actual fortune-telling must be distinguished

The appearance of magical subject matter in a novel or a film and actually having one's fortune told or asking a spiritual being about the future are not the same act. Not every imaginative story can be called divination.

But if, through such works or games, one's interest in actual fortune-telling and sorcery grows, and one comes to practice or rely on them directly, a clear line is needed. The key is not simply what image one has seen, but whether through it one is actually seeking spiritual help or knowledge of the future.

10. *"You shall not shave around the sides of your head, nor shall you disfigure the edges of your beard"*

This command is not a universal grooming rule that simply says not to cut one's hair short or trim one's beard. It forbade the custom of that time of shaving the edges of the head round in a particular shape and disfiguring the edges of the beard.

In Leviticus 21:5, the priests are commanded not to make any bald place on their heads, nor to shave the edges of their beards, nor to make any cuttings in their flesh. In Deuteronomy 14:1, it says not to cut oneself nor shave the front of one's head for the dead.

This ordinance shows that the people of Israel had to follow the command of God even in the handling of their hair and beards. The passage does not directly explain the historical background of this prohibition or the details of any particular pagan rite.

What is clear is that the people of Israel had to keep, in their

outward appearance as well, the fact that they were a people who belonged to God.

11. Is it a sin today to cut one's hair or shave one's beard?

This verse does not forbid all modern haircuts or shaving. A saint of the New Testament must not be judged to have violated Leviticus 19:27 because he has cut his hair round or trimmed the edges of his beard.

Holiness is not being saved by a particular hairstyle. One is made holy by believing in the gospel of the water and the blood that Jesus accomplished.

But this does not mean that outward appearance has no meaning at all either. If some hairstyle or decoration is a deliberate mark of belonging to idolatry, violence, lewdness, or spiritual rebellion, the saints must examine its meaning seriously.

The important questions are as follows.

—What am I trying to express by this appearance?

—Am I not seeking the approval of a particular culture or group more than that of God?

—Am I not deliberately following an evil and idolatrous meaning even though I know it?

—Is there no desire to provoke others and show myself off?

—Does this choice befit the testimony of a person who belongs to God?

Salvation is not decided by appearance, but the saved person thinks about to whom he belongs through his life, including his appearance.

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12. *"You shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead"*

This forbade the act of injuring one's own body in order to mourn a dead person or to establish a relationship with the spirit of the dead. We can know through the related commands of the Bible that among the funeral or religious customs of the surrounding peoples there was the act of cutting the body for the dead.

God did not let the people of Israel make their own bodies bleed for the dead, seek help from the spirits of the dead, or attempt spiritual contact with them.

The saints may grieve over death. When one loses a loved one, it is natural to weep and mourn. But one must not call up the spirit of a dead person or seek help from him, nor injure one's body or perform rites in order to appease him.

The hope of the one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit lies not in spiritual contact with the dead, but in the rising again of Jesus from death and in the resurrection of the saints.

13. Application to the problem of self-harm

This verse directly forbade religious self-harm for the dead. Therefore it must not be used to condemn a person who harms his own body because of mental pain and despair simply as "an evil person who has broken the law."

Self-harm can be a sign that the person is in serious pain. What he needs is not mockery and condemnation, but safe protection and actual help. At the same time, the saints must remember the fact that their bodies are the possession of God

and not something to be destroyed carelessly.

A person who has the urge to harm himself must not hide it alone, but must seek a trustworthy person and professional help. If his life is in urgent danger, securing safety comes first of all.

14. *"Nor tattoo any marks on you"*

God forbade making cuttings in the flesh for the dead and tattooing marks on the body. The people of Israel had to follow the word of God even in the handling of their own bodies.

The reason they could not injure their own bodies or tattoo marks on them at will was that they were a people who belonged to God. The declaration at the end, *"I am the LORD,"* shows the authority of this command.

15. Then are all tattoos today the same sin?

One must be careful about applying Leviticus 19:28 to all modern tattoos without any distinction. The covenant ordinance given to ancient Israel and modern cultural and cosmetic tattoos cannot be called exactly the same situation.

But passing it over lightly, saying, "It is an Old Testament ordinance, so it is of no relevance," is not the right attitude either. Since it is a matter of leaving a permanent mark on the body, the following must be examined.

—Does the content of the tattoo not represent idols, sorcery, death, violence, or lewdness?

—Is it not meant to express rebellion against God or self-destruction?

—Am I not trying to make a permanent decision out of a

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momentary feeling?

—Am I respecting my body as something God has entrusted to me?

—What effect will it have on the community, the family, and the testimony of the gospel?

—Is the center not a desire to draw the eyes of others or to show myself off?

—Can I decide it with a good conscience before the Holy Spirit?

The New Testament says that the body of the saint is the temple of the Holy Spirit and was bought at a price, and so says to glorify God with the body (1 Corinthians 6:19–20). Therefore the saints must ask not, "It is my body, so I will do as I please," but, "How shall I use the body the Lord bought at a price?"

If a person who already has a tattoo has believed in the gospel, it is not that he cannot be saved because of it. Nor is it that he receives the remission of sins only if he removes the tattoo. Jesus bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John and received the judgment of those sins with the blood of the Cross. We receive the remission of sins by believing in this gospel of the water and the Spirit. Only, if it is a mark that carries an idolatrous meaning, one must cut off that meaning and relationship, and show by one's life from then on that one belongs to Christ.

16. What the three commands have in common

This word teaches the ownership of God through blood, divination, the hair and beard, and the wounds and marks of the body.

—Blood—the Lord of life is God. Life cannot be taken

carelessly for human desires. The life of the sinner has been redeemed with the life of Jesus.

—Divination and soothsaying—the Lord of the future is God. The saints do not look for other spiritual powers out of anxiety, but rely on the word and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

—Marks on the body—the Lord of the body is God. The saints do not give their bodies over as marks of the dead and of idols, of desire and rebellion, but offer them as instruments that glorify God.

In the end, these commands ask, “To whom do you belong?”

17. Our sin that the law reveals

Rather than entrusting the future to God, people want to know it beforehand and control it. While saying that they believe in God, they let their hearts be captivated by horoscopes and omens, and try to obtain blessings through particular objects or rites.

Also, rather than regarding life and the body as belonging to God, they use them according to their own desires. Such a state reveals the sin of relying on oneself and on other spiritual means more than on God.

But a person does not become righteous before God merely by the acts of giving up divination, changing his appearance, and not eating blood. The law first reveals that we are sinners who have not trusted in God alone completely, and so leads us before the Savior.

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18. The true freedom the gospel of the water and the Spirit gives

The ground on which we escape from fortune-telling and fear and from an idolatrous life is not our own will. It is the gospel that Jesus bore all our sins and saved us.

By receiving baptism from John, Jesus bore even our sin of having relied on idols and fortune-telling, our sin of having defiled our bodies, and our sin of having tried to control the future rather than trusting God. On the Cross He shed the blood of life and received the judgment of all those sins, and by rising again from death He gave new life to those who believe.

The Holy Spirit makes us believe in this salvation and drives out fear from our hearts. He makes us not people who can live only if they know all of the future, but people who entrust the future to the Lord and obey the word given today.

Therefore the one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must keep away from divination and soothsaying, respect life, and live offering his body as the temple in which the Holy Spirit dwells. This is not a condition for receiving salvation, but the fruit of faith shown by a person who has been saved and belongs to God.

Conclusion

Leviticus 19:26–28 is not a simple regulation of food and appearance. It is an ordinance of holiness that teaches the people of Israel that life, the future, and the body all belong to God.

The command not to eat blood shows that the Lord of life is God and that blood was given for atonement. The prohibition of divination and soothsaying means not to seek the future and

blessings from other spiritual forces, but to rely on God alone. The commands concerning the hair and beard and the body also show that the people of God must set apart their bodies and their lives according to the word of God.

All these ordinances become clearer within the salvation of Jesus. Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John, gave up the blood of life on the Cross, and by rising again from death saved us from the power of sin, death, and the devil.

The one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must live respecting blood and life, not trying to grasp the future by fortune-telling, and offering his body not as a mark of idols and desire but as a body that belongs to God.

Leviticus 19:29–31—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The word of the passage

"Do not prostitute your daughter, to cause her to be a harlot, lest the land fall into harlotry, and the land become full of wickedness. You shall keep My Sabbaths and reverence My sanctuary: I am the LORD. (Turn ye not unto them that have familiar spirits, nor unto the wizards; seek them not out, to be defiled by them: I am Jehovah your God –ASV)" (Leviticus 19:29–31).

These three verses connect the home, worship, and spiritual life as one.

—Verse 29 does not let parents use the bodies and the dignity of their children as a means of profit.

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—Verse 30 makes them respect the time and the sanctuary set apart for God.

—Verse 31 does not let them seek the future and help from other spiritual forces.

The central question is one.

"To whom does Israel belong as a people?"

A daughter's body, time and worship, the future and the soul all belong to God.

2. *"Do not prostitute your daughter, to cause her to be a harlot"*

Here the word *"harlot"* refers to a prostitute, a woman who is made to obtain money or gain through sexual acts.

This word first holds the father and the home responsible. It is that the parents who ought to protect their daughter must not use her sexually for economic gain or for religious purposes.

It is important that the passage does not merely say, "Do not let your daughter become a harlot," but says, *"Do not prostitute your daughter, to cause her to be a harlot."* It is because it points out the responsibility of the parents and the society that drive the daughter into such a state.

In ancient society, children, and daughters in particular, were easily subordinated to the economic decisions of the family. God says that the right of a father is not the right to dispose of his daughter's body as he pleases.

3. Sexual exploitation does not end as an individual problem

God spoke of its result as follows.

"Lest the land fall into harlotry, and the land become full of wickedness" (Leviticus 19:29).

If a family's use of its daughter as a means of sexual gain is left alone, that evil does not end with one person. It spreads to other families and to the whole of society, and in the end the land becomes full of wickedness.

Sexual sin turns the human body into merchandise and creates a structure in which those who have money and power use the weak. A network of sin is formed in which one person consumes, another gains profit, and yet another suffers harm.

Today it can be applied in the following forms.

—Parents or guardians using their children to make money sexually

—Driving children into prostitution or exploitation on account of poverty and debt

—Filming minors sexually or trading such videos

—A person in power making sexual demands of someone who is economically dependent

—Demanding sexual relations in exchange for opportunities in entertainment, employment, or education

—A church leader forcing sexual relations by using spiritual authority

—Silencing the victim by using the victim's shame

—Taking part indiscriminately in industries that gain profit by consuming people's bodies and images

The focus of the passage is not on condemning the daughter who has been harmed or exploited. It warns the parents and the society that defile her and make her a means of profit.

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4. The body is not merchandise for money or power

The reason God forbids sexual exploitation is that people's bodies and lives belong to God. A person is not a thing that exists for the desires and the profit of another.

The New Testament says that the body of the saint is the temple of the Holy Spirit and was bought at a price (1 Corinthians 6:19–20). Therefore the holiness of the body does not mean only that an individual refrains from sexual acts. It includes not using the bodies and the weak circumstances of others, and protecting those who are in danger.

The home and the church must not shift the responsibility onto a person who has suffered sexual harm, saying, "You have brought shame on the family." They must distinguish the act of the offender from the harm suffered, and think first of the safety and the recovery of the victim.

Covering up sin to protect the honor of the community is not holiness. Holiness is bringing the truth to light, protecting the victim, and holding the offender appropriately responsible.

5. The contagiousness of sin shown by *"lest the land fall into harlotry"*

If one person takes lightly the use of another person's body, others also come to accept it as something normal. The idea spreads that anything is permitted if it makes money, and in the end it becomes a society in which the bodies and the dignity of the weak are traded.

That is why God connected a matter within one family with the wickedness of the whole nation. It is because the choices of individuals make culture and institutions.

The one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not examine sexual sin only to the extent of saying, “I did not do it directly.” He must also examine what he watches and consumes, what he pays money for, and what culture he supports.

6. Sexual sin and the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Before the law, we too cannot say that we are clean. Even if we have not directly exploited another person, we have the sins of having harbored lust, of having evaluated people by their bodies, and of having consumed the shame and the sexual images of others.

But Jesus came to save such sinners. By receiving baptism from John, Jesus bore all the sins we have committed with our hearts and our bodies. Jesus became the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, and received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, shedding His blood. And Jesus rose again from death.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a gospel that makes sexual sin light. While showing on the Cross of Jesus how heavy the price of that sin is, it testifies of the love of God, who has washed away even that sin completely.

The one who believes in the gospel does not make his body clean in order to receive the remission of sins. He receives the remission of sins by believing in the salvation Jesus accomplished. But the one who has received the remission of sins must live respecting his own body and the bodies of others, receiving the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

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7. *"You shall keep My Sabbaths"*

Between the prohibitions of verse 29 and verse 31 is placed an active command concerning the Sabbath and the sanctuary. The people of God must not end with avoiding lewdness and mediums, but must return to the place of rest and worship that God gives.

The Sabbath was an actual ordinance of the seventh day given to Israel. The people of Israel had to work six days and on the seventh day let rest not only themselves but also their children and servants, their livestock, and even the strangers who sojourned with them.

The Sabbath had the following meanings.

—It made them remember that God is the Creator.

—It showed that Israel was the covenant people belonging to God.

—It taught that labor and production are not the final master of man.

—It guaranteed rest to servants and the weak as well.

—It made them remember that God is the One who sanctifies His people.

Exodus 31:13 says that the Sabbath is a sign between God and Israel, and that it makes them know that God is the One who sanctifies them.

8. The saints of the New Testament and the Sabbath

The New Testament does not let anyone judge others by food, festivals, new moons, or Sabbaths, and says that such things are a shadow of things to come and that the substance is of Christ (Colossians 2:16–17).

Therefore the saints of the New Testament do not have to keep the Sabbath ordinance of the Old Testament just as it is in order to be saved. Nor must one simply put Sunday in the place of the seventh-day Sabbath in a legalistic way and say that one receives the remission of sins only by keeping a particular day of the week perfectly.

The substance of the Sabbath has appeared in Jesus Christ.

"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

People try to remove their own sins by keeping the law and piling up good deeds, but by that work they do not obtain true rest. When one believes the fact that Jesus has removed all sins with the baptism He received from John and with the Cross, one obtains rest from the burden of sin and the fear of judgment.

Hebrews chapter 4 says that the one who has entered the rest of God has ceased from his own works as God did from His. This does not mean that a person does nothing at all; it means to stop trying to complete salvation by one's own deeds and to believe in the salvation Jesus has completed.

9. The rest in the gospel is not licentiousness

The faith that Jesus has washed away all sins does not mean that one may live however one pleases.

One rests from the labor of one's own righteousness for obtaining salvation, but the life of serving God and one's neighbor with the thanksgiving of having been saved continues. Rest is not idleness; it is moving the ground of salvation from one's own deeds to the completed work of Jesus.

The one who enjoys the rest in the gospel can live like this.

—He does not pile up new merits to save himself every time

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he fails.

—He believes that sin has been completely settled with the baptism Jesus received from John and the Cross.

—He does not run away from God because of a sense of guilt, but draws near by faith.

—He does not ignore the rest his body and his mind need.

—He does not force endless labor and sacrifice on others.

—He worships and serves the gospel in thanksgiving for the grace he has received.

10. *"Reverence My sanctuary"*

In the Old Testament, the sanctuary was the holy place where God was present among His people, and where the remission of sins and worship were carried out through the priests and the sacrificial offerings.

To reverence the sanctuary does not mean to serve the building itself as if it were a god. It means to respect the order of the word, the sacrifices, and the worship that God appointed there.

The sanctuary showed the people of Israel the following.

—A sinner cannot draw near to God by just any method.

—A sacrificial offering that will bear sin is needed.

—Atonement through the shedding of blood is needed.

—Sacrifices must be offered through the priests God has appointed.

—The way to draw near to the holy God is prepared by God.

11. How the sanctuary was fulfilled in the New Testament

Jesus spoke of His own body as the temple (John 2:19–21). The substance of salvation to which the sanctuary and the sacrifices of the Old Testament pointed appeared in Jesus.

By bearing our sins with the baptism He received from John and shedding His blood on the Cross, Jesus opened the way to draw near to God. Therefore to reverence the sanctuary of the New Testament is, above all, to value and believe in the salvation Jesus accomplished.

The New Testament also says that the saints who have received the remission of sins and received the Holy Spirit are the temple of God (1 Corinthians 3:16). Therefore reverence for the sanctuary must appear as follows.

—Hearing and keeping the word of the gospel as precious

—Not taking worship lightly

—Respecting the bodies of the saints in which the Holy Spirit dwells

—Not carelessly using or despising other saints within the church

—Not defiling the community with falsehood, lewdness, and greed

—Not corrupting the salvation Christ accomplished

12. Reverence for the sanctuary is not the absolutizing of a building or a leader

The word to reverence the sanctuary must not be used as a ground for unconditionally regarding a church building or a particular leader as sacred.

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It is necessary to keep the church building in order and to respect the place of worship. But the building itself is not the temple of the New Testament. Nor is it reverence for the sanctuary to raise no objection to everything a leader says and does.

Even when a leader has committed sexual sin, financial corruption, violence, or abuse, silencing people with the words "You must not oppose the servant of the Lord" or "Do not bring shame on the church" is the opposite of the meaning of the passage. To reverence the sanctuary is not to make the sanctuary a place for concealing sin, but to see that the truth and the holiness of God are kept.

Because one reverences Christ, one must bring falsehood to light, and because one respects the people in whom the Holy Spirit dwells, one must protect the victims.

13. *"Turn ye not unto them that have familiar spirits, nor unto the wizards"*

Here the expression *"the wizards"* refers, in old usage, to male shamans or those who claim to make contact with the spirits of the dead. *"Them that have familiar spirits"* are likewise those who claim to communicate with spiritual beings or with the spirits of the dead.

Therefore this word is a command not to go to mediums or shamans to ask about the future, not to make contact with the spirits of the dead, and not to seek help from them.

Isaiah 8:19 says like this.

"Should not a people seek their God? Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living?"

The people of Israel had the living God. Therefore seeking

help from those who call up the dead and spiritual beings was an act of abandoning God and following another spiritual power.

14. *"Seek them not out"*

The passage forbids not only being directly one of the mediums, but also the act of going to them and relying on them. A person may think that he is all right because he himself is not a shaman or a fortune-teller, but believing their words and entrusting one's decisions to them is in itself seeking after them.

Today, the following forms must be guarded against.

—Going to shamans and spirit divination

—Taking part in rites said to call up the spirits of the dead

—Making important decisions of life by fortune-telling by one's birth date and horoscopes

—Expecting protection and success from talismans or objects of sorcery

—Trying to ascertain the future through tarot or astrology

—Seeking blessings and protection from ancestral spirits or particular spirits

—Even within the church, following personal prophecies or dreams as an authority higher than the Bible

Simple counseling and consulting mediums must be distinguished. Listening to the advice of an expert or consulting a person of faith is not consulting mediums. The problem is trying to obtain supernatural knowledge and power from spiritual beings or from the dead.

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15. *"To be defiled by them"*

Going to a medium is not merely a matter of obtaining wrong information. It is a person who belongs to God defiling himself by establishing a relationship with another spiritual power.

Such acts usually begin from fear about the future.

—One wants to know how one's marriage will turn out.

—One wants to confirm whether one's business will go well.

—One wants to know beforehand whether one's illness will be healed.

—One wants to hear what has become of a dead family member.

—One wants to find a way to avoid misfortune.

But faith is not the ability to know all of the future. It is that a person entrusts himself to the God who saved him, even without knowing all of the future. The one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is a person who has the most important assurance, that the problem of his sins and of eternal judgment has been settled in Jesus.

16. The Holy Spirit and mediums cannot go together

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth who testifies of the salvation Jesus accomplished with the water and the blood. The Holy Spirit leads people to Jesus Christ and to the word.

On the other hand, mediums and fortune-telling exploit people's anxiety and desires and make them rely on spiritual channels other than God. The power that the slave girl who told fortunes in Acts chapter 16 had was not a gift of the Holy Spirit but the work of a demon. Paul did not use that power, but cast out the demon in the name of Jesus Christ.

For the one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit to hold on to fortune-telling and mediums at the same time is not a supplement to faith. It is the same as saying that God alone is not enough.

Even a person who took part in fortune-telling or shamanism in the past is not excluded from the salvation of Jesus. That sin, too, Jesus bore with the baptism He received from John, and He received the judgment for it on the Cross. If one has believed in the gospel, one must cut off one's former spiritual relationships and dependence and return to God.

One must not keep holding on to related objects or practices out of lingering attachment and fear, but must clearly renounce whatever spiritual meaning they had for oneself. What matters is not making yet another rite and falling into fear, but believing the fact that the baptism Jesus received from John and the Cross have overcome all sins and the power of the devil.

17. When the three verses are connected as one

These three commands are connected as follows.

—Verse 29—Do not defile the human body: the bodies of children and of the weak must not be made merchandise for money and desire.

—Verse 30—Respect the rest and the worship God gives: one must not follow only one's own desires and labor, but must rest in the salvation God has accomplished and value the order of the word and worship.

—Verse 31—Do not give the soul over to another spiritual power: one must not seek the future and blessings from mediums, but must rely on God and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

It is that the body, time, and the soul are all the possession of God.

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18. The life that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit

One does not obtain the remission of sins by keeping these commands. We have already committed the sins of sexual thoughts and desires, the sin of taking worship lightly, and the sin of relying on other things rather than God out of anxiety about the future.

By receiving baptism from John, Jesus bore all these sins. He received the punishment of sin on the Cross, shedding His blood, and Jesus rose again from death. On the one who believes in this gospel of the water and the blood the Holy Spirit comes, and God makes him His people and His temple.

Therefore the one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must live as follows.

—He does not take advantage of the bodies and the circumstances of the weak.

—He does not shame the victims of sexual harm, but protects them.

—He stops the labor of trying to accomplish salvation by his own deeds, and rests in the completed salvation of Jesus.

—He values worship, the word, and the fellowship of the saints.

—He does not hide sin under the name of the church.

—Even when the future is uncertain, he does not look for fortune-telling and mediums.

—He does not subordinate the guidance of the Holy Spirit to personal feelings or prophecies, rather than to the word.

—He acknowledges that his body, his time, and his soul belong to God.

Conclusion

Leviticus 19:29–31 does not limit holiness to personal religious feeling. The responsibility of the home to protect its children, the time and worship offered to God, and even one's dependence for the future and for one's soul are all areas of holiness.

The word not to cause one's daughter to be a harlot is a command not to use the human body as a means of profit. The word to reverence the Sabbath and the sanctuary means to put at the center the rest God has given and the order of worship. The word not to seek after mediums and wizards is a command not to seek the future and help from any spiritual power other than God.

All this holiness does not begin from human effort. Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment on the Cross shedding His blood, and by rising again from death made us a people who belong to God.

The one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must live respecting the bodies of others, resting in the salvation Christ accomplished, keeping holy the community in which the Holy Spirit dwells, and entrusting the future not to fortune-telling but to the living God.

Leviticus 19:32–34—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The word of the passage

"You shall rise before the gray headed and honor the

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presence of an old man, and fear your God: I am the LORD. And if a stranger dwells with you in your land, you shall not mistreat him. The stranger who dwells among you shall be to you as one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God" (Leviticus 19:32–34).

This word deals broadly with how two groups of people are to be treated. One is the elderly, who have grown weak with age, and the other is the strangers, who have come to live within the society of Israel but have no bloodline and no foundation there. What they have in common is that, being socially weak, they are easily ignored or used.

God does not limit holiness to the rites of worship. He connects even the attitude with which the elderly are treated and the attitude with which strangers are received to His own holiness.

2. *"You shall rise before the gray headed"*

Here the words *"gray headed"* mean an old person whose hair has turned white. Rising when an old person comes in has a meaning beyond simple manners. It is a bodily expression of respect, of not taking that person's life and character lightly.

The passage does not say to honor the elderly simply because their knowledge or abilities are outstanding. It says to honor them because, even though a person becomes physically weaker with age and his social influence decreases, his dignity does not decrease.

But this must not be interpreted to mean, "The words of an older person are unconditionally right, so obey them absolutely." The Bible requires honor toward people, but sets apart absolute

reverence and obedience as belonging to God.

Even when an old person says something wrong or makes an unjust demand, it is not that one must acknowledge that wrong as right. It is that one is to discern the wrong, but not insult or mock the person or treat him as a useless being. Honor is not giving up the truth, but the attitude of treating the other person's character as precious within the truth.

3. *"Honor the presence of an old man, and fear your God"*

The passage connects honoring the elderly directly with fearing God.

Pretending to honor the elderly only when people are watching is not the fear of God. Treating an old person as precious even though he cannot help me and adds nothing to my success or profit is the attitude that fears God.

God does not look only at how we act before the strong; He looks at how we treat those who are weaker than we are. Regarding the elderly as a nuisance, ignoring them because they speak slowly, and treating them lightly because they have no economic power is not a simple matter of manners, but a matter related to the faith that fears God.

Therefore, in the one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, honor for the elderly must appear as follows.

—Listening to what they say without hurrying

—Helping them with what is physically difficult for them

—Acknowledging their experience and their labors

—Not carelessly leaving them out of important decisions

—Even when one must speak of a wrong, not despising them or trampling on their character

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However, honor for the elderly must not be used as a reason to cover up violence or abuse, false teaching, or the unjust exercise of authority. People are to be honored, but the Master of truth and conscience is God.

4. *"If a stranger dwells with you in your land"*

The stranger spoken of here refers not so much to a traveler briefly visiting the land of Israel as to a person of outside origin who actually resides within the community of Israel. Because he lacked kin, land, and a social safety net, he was easily exploited.

God first commands negatively.

"You shall not mistreat him" (Leviticus 19:33).

Not to mistreat him does not mean only not to use violence. It also includes paying him less by exploiting his weak position, treating him unfavorably in judgment, mocking his language and origin, and forcing unjust conditions on him because he has nowhere to turn for help.

But the command of God does not end at the line of not mistreating him. Verse 34 requires a far more active love.

5. *"Shall be to you as one born among you"*

God goes beyond the level of pitying the stranger and helping him a little, and tells them to regard him *"as one born among you."* This means not to keep him on the margins of the community, but to accept him as the same kind of person.

The stranger is not a being who must forever remain only a guest or a foreigner. If he is dwelling with them, his life, his labor, and his home must be protected just like those of an

Israelite.

This word shows that bloodline or nationality cannot determine the grade of human dignity. The people of God must not live in the way of "loving people because they are on our side and discriminating against people because they are outsiders."

In the New Testament, too, this principle is revealed even more clearly. Those who were originally Gentiles were outside the covenant of God, but through Jesus Christ they were brought near to God and accepted into the family of God (Ephesians 2:12–19). Therefore, for a person who believes in the gospel to treat others as permanent outsiders because of their origin and their ethnicity does not fit the grace of salvation he himself has received.

6. *"You shall love him as yourself"*

In Leviticus 19:18, God said to love one's neighbor as oneself, with regard to one's own people. But in verse 34 He extends that command even to the stranger.

This is very important. The love of neighbor that God speaks of is not a love that applies only to people who are like me, people who are kind to me, and people who are useful to me. It applies in the same way to people whose language, culture, and origin are different.

To "*love him as yourself*" does not mean to grant every demand unconditionally. It means that, just as I do not want to suffer injustice, I do not do injustice to the stranger either; that just as I want to be protected when I am in difficulty, I protect that person too; and that just as I want to be respected as a person, I respect that person.

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This love does not remain in feelings only. It appears in the acts of paying wages rightly, giving fair opportunities, giving actual help in difficulties, and not discriminating against a new person who has come into the church because of his background.

7. *"For you were strangers in the land of Egypt"*

God makes the people of Israel remember their past.

Israel, too, was not a strong nation from the beginning. They were strangers in Egypt, they were oppressed, and they could not escape from there by their own strength. God heard their suffering and saved them.

Therefore, when they saw a stranger, they were not to think first, "That person is different from us," but were to remember, "We too were once strangers like him." It is that the memory of salvation must lead to compassion toward others.

This principle applies just as it is to the one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit as well. We, too, were not originally righteous people belonging to the kingdom of God. We were under sin, far away from God, and could not become the people of God by our own deeds. Yet God had compassion on us.

Jesus bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John, went to the Cross bearing those sins and received the judgment shedding His blood, and saved us by rising again from death. The Holy Spirit testifies in our hearts that this gospel of the water and the blood is the perfect salvation of God.

Therefore the confession of the saved person is as follows.

"I was not originally a person qualified to enter the house of God. The Lord has accepted me by grace."

When we remember this fact, we cannot have an attitude of

superiority toward others. For a person who has himself been accepted by grace to close the door on others after weighing their bloodline, their past, and their social conditions contradicts the spirit of the gospel.

8. The connection between this word and the gospel of the water and the Spirit

God commanded the people of Israel to honor the elderly and to love the stranger as themselves. The saints who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, too, must live according to this word, remembering the love of God they have received.

We can remember the grace of salvation we have received as follows.

First, we were all sinners like strangers before God.

Second, God had compassion on us and loved us first.

Third, Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John and paid the price of those sins on the Cross.

Fourth, by rising again from death, Jesus gave new life to those who believe.

Fifth, the Holy Spirit makes the saved person know the love of God within him, and makes him let the love he has received flow out to others.

Therefore honoring the elderly and loving the stranger is not a price paid to obtain salvation. Nor does it mean that one receives the remission of sins only if one keeps this command well. The remission of sins is received by believing in what Jesus accomplished.

But the fact that salvation is not received by deeds does not mean that this word may be disregarded. Because the one who has received the remission of sins knows the love of God who

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accepted him, he comes to learn a life that does not carelessly reject others. The practice of love is not the price of salvation, but the fruit that grows from saved faith.

9. When applied to our lives today

This word must be applied first in the home and the church. We must not regard our aged parents and aged saints only as a burden, but must look after their needs and respect their personhood. At the same time, age must not be used as power to oppress the conscience and the faith of the young.

Toward strangers, we must not discriminate by country of origin, skin color, language ability, or economic circumstances. We must not exploit the weak position of migrant workers, withhold their wages, mock them, or treat them like permanent guests even within the church.

This word also makes us examine how we treat not only actual foreigners but also the person who has just come into the community, the person who has no connections at all, and the socially marginalized. The direct object of the passage is the sojourning stranger, but the character of God revealed in it leads us in the direction of not treating the powerless carelessly.

Conclusion

The faith that fears God is revealed not so much before the powerful as in the attitude with which we treat the elderly and the stranger, who have no power to repay us. And the one who has been accepted freely through the gospel of the water and the Spirit cannot push others away as permanent outsiders.

Leviticus 19:35–37—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The word of the passage

"You shall do no injustice in judgment, in measurement of length, weight, or volume. You shall have honest scales, honest weights, an honest ephah, and an honest hin: I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe all My statutes and all My judgments, and perform them: I am the LORD" (Leviticus 19:35–37).

This word is a command that the people of God must use one fair standard, from the verdicts of the court to the small transactions of the market. God does not separate worship from economic life. It is that the hand that offers sacrifices and the hand that uses the scales must not have different standards.

2. *"You shall do no injustice in judgment, in measurement of length, weight, or volume"*

In verse 35, two areas that seem different from each other appear together.

—Judgment is the public area of judging people's rights and wrongs.

—Weights and measures are the area of everyday transactions in which length, weight, and volume are measured.

God sees the great injustice in the court and the small trickery in the market as coming from the same root of sin. That root is changing the true standard for one's own profit.

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Changing the standard in judgment so as to favor the powerful is injustice. Reducing the quantity or inflating the price in trade, by taking advantage of what the other person does not know, is injustice as well. People may divide the two into a great sin and a small sin, but before God both are the sin of breaking the fair standard.

The *"measurement of length, weight, or volume"* in the passage does not mean merely the measuring tools of old. The key is not to change the standard according to one's own profit when judging and calculating anything.

3. *"Honest scales, honest weights"*

Scales weigh goods, and the weights become the standard of that weight. In transactions in which weight was measured with weights, a merchant could deceive the other party by secretly using weights of different sizes.

It is the way of using a heavy weight when buying, so as to receive more goods, and using a light weight when selling, so as to give fewer goods. Outwardly it looks like a normal transaction, but the standard itself has been manipulated.

Deuteronomy 25:13–15, too, commands not to have differing weights, a heavy and a light. Proverbs 11:1 says that dishonest scales are an abomination to the LORD, but a just weight is His delight. Amos 8:5 rebukes the act of making the ephah small and the shekel large, and deceiving the poor with false scales.

What is important here is the fact that God looks not only at the result of a transaction, but at the standard used in that transaction.

A transaction does not become honest just because a contract

was outwardly concluded and the other party did not protest. If one has hidden conditions to which the other party would not have agreed had he known the accurate information, that too is the same as unfair scales.

Today it can appear in the following forms.

—Hiding the quality or the defects of goods

—Deliberately not explaining the unfavorable conditions of a contract

—Calculating working hours or wages to one's own advantage

—Falsifying data on taxes, expenses, and income

—Inflating results or statistics

—Attributing the merits or the labor of others to oneself

—Applying different standards to one's own side and to the other side for the same wrong

—Using finances opaquely in the name of the church or missions

Only the technology has changed; the will of God that says to use honest scales does not change.

4. *"An honest ephah, and an honest hin"*

The ephah is a unit for measuring the quantity of dry goods such as grain, and the hin is a unit for measuring the quantity of liquids such as oil or wine.

The passage is a command not to deceive about the actual quantity, whether of dry goods or liquids, and to use the same standard whatever goods one trades and with whomever one trades.

The reason God spoke repeatedly of scales, weights, the ephah, and the hin was so that honesty would not be left as

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merely an abstract state of the heart. If one says, “My heart is honest,” while manipulating the actual quantities, the books, and the contracts, that is not the honesty the Bible speaks of.

The righteousness of God must appear concretely through accurate figures, accurate weights, the promised quality, the promised time, and the rightful payment.

5. The same principle applies to judgment and to trade

When judging people in a court, truth and righteousness must be the standard, and when trading, accurate weight and quantity must be the standard. But when a person harbors greed, he moves that standard to his own advantage.

If one demands strict justice when one has suffered a loss oneself, but speaks of love and forgiveness when one has caused a loss to another, that too is using two sets of scales.

Also, if one greatly condemns the small wrongs of others while handling one’s own great wrongs lightly by pleading circumstances and situations, one has differing weights in one’s heart.

Fairness does not only mean handling everyone unconditionally in the same way. It is examining rightly the truth and the responsibility in each case, while not changing the standard according to blood relations, wealth, position, or feelings.

6. “*Who brought you out of the land of Egypt*”

As the reason honest scales must be used, God speaks of the salvation of the Exodus.

The people of Israel were slaves in Egypt. They were forced into unjust labor, did not receive rightful treatment, and suffered under the power of Egypt. God saw their suffering and saved them out of Egypt.

Yet if Israel, saved out of Egypt, deceives and oppresses those weaker than itself, then though their bodies have come out of Egypt, their way of life still follows the way of Egypt.

It is as if God were saying to Israel like this.

"I have saved you from unjust oppression, so do not become to others a person like Egypt."

Therefore the grace of the Exodus does not end simply as an event of having obtained freedom in the past. It becomes the ground that changes the transactions, the judgments, and the labor relations of the saved person.

7. When connected with the gospel of the water and the Spirit

We, too, lived as slaves of sin. Not only in outwardly visible theft, but also in our hearts, we lived deceiving others for our own profit and changing the standard to our own advantage.

The law brings to light this state of ours. When one stands before the word that says to use honest scales, one can hardly defend oneself, saying, "I have never stolen anyone's goods." It is because, even if one has not directly taken goods, one has taken another person's share through lies, concealment of information, and unfair calculation.

But though the law can bring our sins to light, it cannot remove those sins. To remove sin, the salvation of Jesus Christ is needed.

With the baptism He received from John, Jesus bore all the

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sins we commit throughout our lives. Those sins include the sin of deceiving people, the sin of judging unfairly, the sin of unjustly taking the labor and property of others, and the sin of secretly manipulating the books and the standards.

Jesus went to the Cross bearing the sins He had thus borne, and received the judgment of sin by shedding His blood. And by rising again from death, Jesus gave new life to those who believe. The Holy Spirit testifies of this salvation Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John and with His blood, and leads the hearts of believers on the way of truth.

Here there is something that must be distinguished without fail.

One is not saved because one has used honest scales. Our honest deeds cannot be the price of the remission of sins. Salvation is received by believing in the baptism Jesus received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His rising again from death.

But the fact that salvation is not received by deeds does not mean that one may deceive. Ephesians 2:8–10 makes clear that salvation is not of our works but the gift of God, and at the same time says that the saved person has been created anew for good works.

To sum up, it is as follows.

—One is not saved by living honestly.

—One is saved by believing in the righteousness of Jesus.

—The saved person has now become a person who is no longer a slave of injustice but can walk the way of righteousness.

—Honest scales are not the cause of salvation, but the fruit that saved faith must bear.

8. The Holy Spirit exposes even hidden scales

False scales may not be visible to others. But the Holy Spirit speaks to our conscience.

When we have cheated a little on the price of goods, exaggerated the quality, recorded hours we did not work as if we had worked them, or taken credit for another person's achievements, the Holy Spirit makes us realize that it is not right.

At such a time, the one who believes in the gospel must avoid two wrong paths.

One is rationalizing, saying, "Jesus has removed all sins, so this much trickery is all right." This is the attitude of using grace as a tool of sin.

The other is despairing after realizing the wrong, thinking that one has become a sinner again. This is a thought that makes the eternal atonement Jesus accomplished imperfect.

Right faith is acknowledging one's wrong as a wrong, believing that Jesus bore and removed even that sin, and turning back again to the honest way.

9. The remission of sins and restitution are not opposed to each other

The fact that Jesus has removed all sins does not turn the actual loss caused to a person into something that never happened.

If one has unjustly taken someone's money, one must return it as far as possible, along with believing in the remission of sins. If one made a contract falsely, one must set the facts right; if one did not pay wages, one must pay them; and if one drew up false books, one must correct them.

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After meeting Jesus, Zacchaeus said that if he had taken anything unjustly, he would repay it (Luke 19:8). This was not buying salvation through restitution; it was that salvation changed even his attitude toward his money and his transactions.

Therefore the attitude the one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is to take is as follows.

—He acknowledges his injustice before the word.

—He believes that Jesus has already borne that sin.

—He stops the unjust act.

—If there is someone he has caused a loss to, he sets it right in whatever way is possible.

—He establishes transparent standards so that the same thing is not repeated.

This is not a repentance bound in condemnation, but the actual turning back that comes from the faith that believes in the gospel.

10. *"You shall observe all My statutes and all My judgments, and perform them"*

The word *"all"* in verse 37 is important. People want to choose only the words that are convenient for them.

One can be zealous in sacrifices and praise while deceiving in trade, can speak the gospel while unjustly paying the wages of those one employs, and can speak of love in church while hiding the books that are unfavorable to oneself.

But God does not separate worship from life. Faith in God must appear not only in the confession of the lips but also in contracts, receipts, pay statements, and account books.

The words *"I am the LORD"* mean that the authority of this command does not come from human custom or the atmosphere

of the market. Even if everyone does so, injustice does not turn into righteousness. Nor does one become honest because one was not caught. God sees, and God sets the standard.

Conclusion

Leviticus 19:35–37 binds together the worship offered to God and everyday economic life. Honest scales are not a simple commercial ethic, but an expression of the faith that fears God.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit does not end with simply condemning the sinner who has lived unfairly. Jesus bore that sin with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment on the Cross, and by rising again from death delivered us from the power of sin.

Therefore the one who believes in the gospel must confess like this.

"I was not saved because I was honest, but saved by the righteousness of the Lord. But because I believe in the Lord who saved me from injustice, I will now throw away the two sets of scales and live by the same standard before God and before people."

Honest scales are not the price that buys salvation. They are the fruit of the faith of a person saved out of unjust Egypt, who will no longer live in the way of Egypt. ✉

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Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

God, who has sanctified us with the gospel of the water and the Spirit

< Leviticus 19:1-4 >

"And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them: You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy. Every one of you shall revere his mother and his father, and keep My Sabbaths: I am the LORD your God. Do not turn to idols, nor make for yourselves molded gods: I am the LORD your God."

The word the holy God spoke to all the congregation

Dear beloved saints, God spoke through Moses to all the congregation of the children of Israel. He did not tell only a few priests to be holy. All the people gathered before God had to hear this word. It is because no one who belongs to the people of God can live without any regard to holiness.

But by what standard did God tell them to be holy? Did He say that they would be holy if they lived more uprightly than others? Did He say that they would be holy if they did many religious works? God said, *"You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy" (Leviticus 19:2)*. The standard of holiness

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lies in God Himself.

We easily evaluate what we are like by looking at other people. If there is something we have done better than others, we think of ourselves as all right, and when we see a person who has committed a great wrong, we think that we are not as evil as that. But by comparing person with person, we cannot rightly know what we are like before God. The One who judges us is the holy God.

Even while seeing our uncleanness, God does not speak of it differently and call it holy. Nor does He acknowledge sin as right because we are weak. Therefore, before this word, we must not try to hide our shortcomings, but must first accept the fact that God is right.

And we must know this. The God who told us to be holy has also bestowed the grace of salvation by which a sinner can be made holy. What we need is not to dress up our appearance as holy, but to know and believe how God has washed away our sins and made us His own people.

The word that says to revere one's parents shines a light on the life closest to us

In verse 3, God said, *"Every one of you shall revere his mother and his father."* The word given to all the congregation now enters the life of each person. Holiness does not end as a religious appearance shown only when one is in the midst of the congregation. The heart and the attitude with which we treat our parents are also before God.

To revere one's parents is not to take them lightly but to honor them. It cannot be called right to look down on one's parents, or to treat them carelessly according to one's

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circumstances and moods, while saying that one believes in God. God examines how we speak and act within our close relationships as well.

Set yourself before this word. We may remember the times we spoke politely to our parents, while easily overlooking the times we ignored them in our hearts, got irritated, and put our own will first. But the word God has given does not show us only the appearance we want to remember. It also reveals the wrongs we do not want to admit.

Therefore, when we hear the word that says to honor our parents, along with the resolution to do better from now on, we must also acknowledge the sins we have already committed. Serving our parents well from now on does not make the sins we committed before disappear by themselves. The word we must obey we must clearly obey, and the sins we have already committed must be washed away by the grace of salvation God has given.

When these two are confused, people try to cover their sins with their own good deeds. But the faith that pleases God is not a faith that puts forward what one has done well in order to hide one's wrongs. It is the faith that acknowledges one's sin before the word, and relies on the Lord who has washed away even that sin.

The Sabbath contains the will of God, who makes His people holy

God went on to say, *"Keep My Sabbaths" (Leviticus 19:3)*. The Sabbath was not a day the people of Israel had appointed according to their own thinking. It was a day God had set apart and given, and the people had to keep that day holy.

In Exodus, God spoke of the meaning of the Sabbath like this: *"Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you" (Exodus 31:13).*

In this word, what kind of God does God reveal Himself to be? He makes Himself known as the LORD who sanctifies His people. The One whom the people had to know through the Sabbath was exactly that God.

We must engrave this meaning on our hearts. The sins of the heart do not disappear just because a person strives to make himself holy. Even if one regrets one's wrongs and resolves again, if the sins one has already committed remain, one cannot enjoy true rest before God. The person who tries to obtain the assurance of the remission of sins by holding on to his own conduct has to keep examining what he is like. On a day when he has done well he is at ease, but on a day when he has done wrong he becomes afraid again.

The One who gives us true rest is Jesus Christ. The Lord received baptism from John, died on the Cross shedding His blood, and accomplished our salvation by rising again from death. By believing in the salvation the Lord accomplished, we receive the remission of sins and obtain rest before God.

Therefore, as we face the word of the Sabbath, we must know the grace of God, who makes His people holy. The ground on which our souls can rest does not lie in the religious labors we have piled up. It lies in the salvation of the Lord, who has settled our sins.

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We must cast away the heart that relies on idols and believe in God

Verse 4 says like this: *"Do not turn to idols, nor make for yourselves molded gods: I am the LORD your God."*

God forbade the people of Israel to make images and serve them. It is not that an image can save a person just because a person takes materials, makes an image, and serves it as a god. The One who can save sinners is the living God.

We must not hear this word as merely a story about visible images and pass it by. It is because, even if we have not set up an image before our eyes, there can be something in our hearts that we rely on and serve more than God. We can hold on to wealth and think that it will keep us completely safe. We can also put the approval of people or our own thoughts before the word of God.

The problem does not lie only in what we have. It lies in what we rely on and in whose word we set our hearts. If, even when God speaks, one does not lay down one's own thoughts and tries to accept only what is convenient for oneself, one cannot believe in God rightly.

It is the same in the matter of receiving the remission of sins. God has given the way of salvation through Jesus Christ, and a person cannot make up, by his own thinking, a method of removing sin. One must not think that sin will disappear if one's devotion is sufficient, or that God too will accept one if one becomes good enough to be approved by others.

We must hear what God has actually accomplished. We must believe in the gospel God has given. The God who made us is our Savior, and the way for us to receive the remission of sins also comes from Him.

Jesus settled our sins with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross

Then how can we, who are not holy, stand before the holy God? How can we be washed of the sin of not having honored our parents fully, the sin of having relied on other things more than God, and the sins we committed in our hearts even though they did not appear outwardly?

In order to settle those sins, God sent Jesus Christ into this world. Jesus came in the body of a man to save sinners, and received baptism from John in the Jordan River. *"But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him" (Matthew 3:15).*

In the baptism Jesus received from John is the will of salvation by which He bore our sins. Just as in the Old Testament there was the laying on of hands by which sin was passed on to the offering, Jesus bore the sin of the world in His own body by receiving baptism from John. He fulfilled the righteous will of God to settle our sins.

Among our sins, is there any sin the Lord has overlooked without knowing? The Lord knows even the sins we could not tell people. He knows even the sins we ourselves have forgotten. He knows even the sins we harbored in our hearts though we did not act on them outwardly. The Lord did not bear only a part of our sins, but bore all the sin of the world.

John testified of Jesus. *"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).*

Within this sin of the world our sins are included as well. All the sins we commit from birth until death are included in the sin of the world the Lord bore. Therefore we must not make light of

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the salvation the Lord accomplished on the ground that our sins are great. We must not think of sin lightly, but neither must we think of the salvation of the Lord, who bore our sins, as imperfect.

Jesus, who bore our sins by receiving baptism from John, died on the Cross shedding His blood. He received in our place the judgment of sin that ought to have come down on us. The baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross are connected as one salvation that accomplished the remission of our sins. The Lord bore our sins, and He paid the price of those sins.

And Jesus rose again from death. The Lord who saved us is alive. We can draw near to God not because we have proved our own cleanness, but because we believe in this salvation the Lord accomplished.

Holiness is received by believing in the remission of sins God has given

Dear beloved fellow believers, to say that God has made us holy does not mean that He has called our wrongs not sin. It means that the Lord had our sins transferred to Him and received the judgment in our place, and so made us clean from sin.

That is why we have no need to hide our sins before God. We must acknowledge our uncleanness revealed in the light of the word. And we must believe in Jesus Christ, who bore even that sin. The remission of sins is not obtained by explaining one's sins plausibly, nor is it received in exchange for one's good works. It is the grace received by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has given.

1 John says: "*This is he that came by water and blood, even*

Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three agree in one –ASV" (1 John 5:6–8).

Jesus accomplished our salvation with the baptism He received from John and the blood He shed on the Cross, and the Holy Spirit testifies of this truth. By believing in this gospel, we are washed of sin and become the children of God.

Here we must make clear the ground of our faith. We do not say that we have been made holy on the basis of the assurance that our conduct has become perfect. Nor do we have assurance of salvation on the ground that our hearts never waver. Because the Lord bore our sins completely and received the judgment, we confess that we have received the remission of sins by believing in that salvation.

The God who told us to be holy has Himself accomplished the salvation that makes us holy. Now we must receive that grace by faith.

Let us live with our hearts set on God, who has made us holy

In the passage, God repeatedly said that He is the LORD, the God of Israel. After the command to revere one's parents, after the word to keep the Sabbath, and after the word not to serve idols and images, He made Himself known. The life of the people did not stand apart from God. They had to live knowing who their God is.

It is the same with us, who have received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We

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live knowing God, who has made us holy. That is why we do not take the word of God lightly. Before the word that says to honor our parents we examine our attitude, we turn from the heart that relied on other things more than God, and we set our faith on the salvation the Lord accomplished.

We cannot call what we have done wrong right on the ground that we have received the remission of sins. If we have done wrong, we must admit that we have done wrong. But neither must we deny the salvation the Lord has bestowed every time we discover our wrongs. While acknowledging our uncleanness, we must at the same time believe in the grace of the Lord, who has washed away that sin.

Are you still striving to become holy by your own labor and devotion? Believe in the salvation God accomplished through Jesus Christ. Jesus bore your sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross in your place, and rose again from death. To the one who believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit, God gives the remission of sins.

The holy God did not turn away from us who were in sin. He bestowed the salvation that washes us from sin and makes us His own people. Believing in the Lord, who has made us holy, let us live according to the word of God with hearts thankful for that grace. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

Enjoy today the peace obtained through the gospel of the water and the Spirit

< Leviticus 19:5-8 >

"(And when ye offer a sacrifice of peace-offerings unto Jehovah, ye shall offer it that ye may be accepted –ASV). It shall be eaten the same day you offer it, and on the next day. And if any remains until the third day, it shall be burned in the fire. And if it is eaten at all on the third day, it is an abomination. It shall not be accepted. Therefore everyone who eats it shall bear his iniquity, because he has profaned the hallowed offering of the LORD; and that person shall be cut off from his people."

We must offer the sacrifice of the peace offering that God accepts

Dear beloved saints, today's passage speaks together of offering the peace offering and of eating that offering. Bringing and presenting an offering did not mean that everything was finished. God appointed even when that offering was to be eaten and what was to be done with what remained. Even in enjoying the grace of being reconciled with God, they had to follow the word of God.

Verse 5 says that when a sacrifice of a peace offering is

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offered to the LORD, it must be offered *"that ye may be accepted."* To be accepted means that God gladly receives it. It is not that God receives a sacrifice just because the one who offers it is satisfied with it himself. Since it was a sacrifice offered to God, it had to accord with the will God had appointed.

In our life of faith, we regard as important how much devotion we have put in. We say that we spent much time, offered precious things, and prayed with a sincere heart. But before God, together with that devotion, we must examine what we have believed in as we came. It is because, without knowing the way of salvation God has given, one cannot be reconciled with God according to one's own thinking.

In the peace offering there was a sacrificial offering. For the person who could not draw near to God because of sin, there had to be an offering that was sacrificed in his place. The way of being reconciled with God did not lie in having good feelings toward each other while leaving sin as it was. The sin that stood between God and us had to be settled.

God has opened that way for us as well. He sent Jesus Christ as our peace offering and settled our sins. Here lies the reason we must know the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Only when we know how the Lord bore our sins and reconciled us with God can we receive and enjoy that salvation by faith.

Jesus is the peace offering who bore our sins

Leviticus chapter 3, explaining the procedure of offering the sacrifice of the peace offering, says like this: *"And he shall lay his hand on the head of his offering, and kill it at the door of the tabernacle of meeting; and Aaron's sons, the priests, shall sprinkle the blood all around on the altar" (Leviticus 3:2).*

Together with bringing an offering without blemish, there was the laying on of hands on its head. After the sin had been passed on by the laying on of hands, the offering was killed and its blood was sprinkled. In this sacrifice, in which the offering bears the sin and dies, we can see the salvation Jesus Christ accomplished.

Jesus came into this world as the Son of God without sin. And He received baptism from John in the Jordan River. The baptism Jesus received from John was the act of bearing the sin of mankind in His own body. Just as sin was passed on to the sacrificial offering of the Old Testament by the laying on of hands, Jesus had the sin of the world passed on to Him by receiving baptism from John.

In the sin of the world that the Lord bore, our sins are included as well. Not only the sins others know of, but also the sins only we ourselves know of are included. The sins we committed long ago, the sins that trouble our hearts now, and the sins we commit throughout our lives because of our weakness are all included. In the body in which He bore those sins, the Lord was hung on the Cross and died shedding His blood. He received in our place the judgment of sin that we ought to have received.

Therefore we must believe in the baptism Jesus received from John and in the blood of the Cross together. Because the Lord bore our sins, He received the judgment in our place. The bearing of sin and the paying of the price of that sin are connected as one within our salvation.

Isaiah speaks of the sacrifice of the Lord and the peace we enjoy like this: *"But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5).*

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That we can enjoy peace before God is because the Lord bore our sins in our place and received their punishment. In this peace is the sacrifice of the Lord. It is not a peace we prepared by our good deeds, nor a comfort obtained by forgetting our sins for a while. It is the grace of salvation that Jesus accomplished by giving up His own body.

Jesus rose again from death and became our living Savior. By believing in this Lord, we receive the remission of sins. When we believe in Jesus Christ, whom God has given as our peace offering, the person who could not draw near to God because of sin is reconciled with God.

He said to eat it the same day it is offered and on the next day

Verse 6 says to eat the peace offering the same day it is offered and on the next day, and to burn what remains until the third day. God not only had the offering presented but also had it eaten. But the eating had to take place within the period God permitted.

In understanding this ordinance, we must also know the distinction in Leviticus chapter 7. The flesh of the sacrifice of the peace offering offered for thanksgiving was to be eaten on the day it was offered, and none of it was to be left until the next morning. An offering of a vow or a voluntary offering could be eaten on the next day as well, but what remained until the third day was to be burned. In today's passage appears the regulation of eating it the same day it is offered and on the next day. Therefore we must not think that He had the flesh of every peace offering always eaten over two days.

What matters is the fact that God gave the offering to be

eaten, and the fact that that grace had to be enjoyed according to the word of God. They could not keep the offering and eat it even on the day God had forbidden, on the ground that they valued the offering. The circumstances that they had kept it because it seemed a waste, or that they had wanted to eat it, could not change the command of God.

We must engrave this word on our life of faith as well. If the Lord has given us the remission of sins and peace, we must believe in and enjoy that grace now. If we remember the time when we were saved, but do not rely on the Lord before our weakness revealed today, our hearts come to be pressed down by guilt again.

The salvation of the Lord is not something needed only in the past. The salvation the Lord accomplished is perfect, and even the sin revealed before us today has been settled within that salvation. We must acknowledge our wrong now, and believe in the Lord, who bore even that sin. We must not keep the peace God has given at a distance, but must receive and enjoy it by faith today.

The hallowed things of God must not be handled according to one's own thinking

The warning of verses 7 and 8 is grave. It says that if it is eaten at all on the third day, it becomes an abomination and is not accepted, and that the one who eats it bears the guilt of having profaned the hallowed offering of the LORD. He also gave the warning that that person would be cut off from among his people.

The passage does not speak of this matter simply as a problem of having stored food wrongly. It calls it profaning the

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hallowed offering of the LORD. It is because the sacrificial offering presented to God was handled in a way God had forbidden. It was not that one had to follow the will of God when offering the sacrifice, but could do as one pleased when eating it.

The fact that one had offered the sacrifice at first did not make the later disobedience right. Even an offering that had been presented to God was not to be eaten at the time God had said not to eat it. The one who enjoyed the grace of the peace offering needed the faith that respects the word of God, who had given that grace.

We, too, must not understand the remission of sins according to our own thinking. We must not think that the Lord bore only some of our sins when He bore all of them, or regard the remaining sins as something we must remove by our own efforts. Conversely, we must not say that the wrongs we have done are no longer wrongs because we have received the remission of all sins. Sin must be acknowledged as sin, and the remission of sins must be believed in according to the salvation the Lord accomplished.

Nor must we think of the period for eating the offering as if it were the period of validity of the remission of sins. It does not mean that the salvation of the Lord loses its effect after two days. Nor does it mean that a new salvation must be made every day. While believing in the salvation the Lord has already accomplished, we must not change the grace God has given according to our own thinking or take it lightly.

Let us draw near to God today as well with the faith that has received the remission of sins

Even the one who has received the remission of sins does wrong as he lives. He may hurt people's feelings with hasty words, and may harbor hatred and evil thoughts in his heart. When those wrongs are revealed, he may become ashamed even to draw near to God.

What must we do at such a time? We must not hide our wrongs or merely wait for them to be forgotten with time. We must acknowledge before God what we have done wrong. And we must believe the word of the gospel that the Lord bore that sin too.

"Lord, I have done this wrong. My thoughts and my actions were not right. But I believe that when You received baptism from John, You bore this sin too, and that You received the judgment of this sin on the Cross."

This is not a prayer of passing on to Jesus anew the sin committed today so as to receive atonement again. It is a confession that acknowledges one's wrong before the Lord, who has already saved us, and believes in that salvation. Nor is the act of confessing in itself the paying of the price of sin. The One who has washed away sin is the Lord, and we believe in what the Lord has accomplished.

The Holy Spirit does not lead us to insist that our wrongs are right. He makes us acknowledge our wrongs and look to the Lord, who saved us with the water and the blood. When the heart that acknowledges sin and the heart that believes in the salvation of the Lord are together, we can draw near by faith without being held captive by our weakness and avoiding God.

The Apostle Paul says: "*Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"*

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(Romans 5:1).

He says that we first obtained justification by faith, and tells the one who has received that grace to enjoy peace with God. Receiving the remission of sins and living within the grace of that remission of sins are connected in this way. We, who have been made righteous by believing in the Lord, draw near to God today as well, relying on the same Lord.

This faith does not give us the heart that says there is no need to correct our wrongs. Wrongs must be set right. But even while we set right our wrongs, the ground on which we draw near to God lies in the salvation the Lord accomplished. When we rely on the grace of the Lord, we do not remain in discouragement but can walk again according to the will of God.

Believe in the peace offering given for us

Dear beloved fellow believers, if you want to be reconciled with God, you must know the peace offering God has sent. Our devotion or our resolutions cannot take its place. God sent His own Son in order to give us life. *"In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10).*

It is not that we first offered something to God and so obtained this love. God loved us first, and gave Jesus Christ as the peace offering for our sins. Therefore the one who seeks to receive the remission of sins must not try to put forward his own merits, but must receive the salvation God has given.

Believe that Jesus bore your sins with the baptism He received from John. Believe that the Lord, who bore those sins, received the judgment on the Cross shedding His blood and rose again from death. By believing in this gospel of the water and

the Spirit that the Lord accomplished, you receive the remission of sins and are reconciled with God.

You who already believe in this gospel, do not turn your hearts away from the grace of the Lord because of your weakness revealed today. While acknowledging your wrongs, rely on the Lord, who has settled even those sins. Giving thanks to the Lord, who gave Himself up in order to give us peace, let us draw near to God today as well by faith. ✉

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Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

The gospel of the water and the Spirit that washes away the sins of greed and deceit

< Leviticus 19:9-14 >

"When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. And you shall not glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather every grape of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger: I am the LORD your God. You shall not steal, nor deal falsely, nor lie to one another. And you shall not swear by My name falsely, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I am the LORD. (Thou shalt not oppress thy neighbor, nor rob him: the wages of a hired servant shall not abide with thee all night until the morning –ASV). You shall not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling block before the blind, but shall fear your God: I am the LORD."

Dear beloved saints, in today's word appear fields and vineyards, and the words exchanged between people and the wages of a hired worker. God examines not only how we worship, but also how we reap our grain, how we treat people, and how we pay for work that has been done. Our faith is

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connected in this way with concrete life.

When we read this word, we must not think only of the wrongs of others. We must look back on the heart with which we acted when profit and authority were in our own hands. God reveals sin even within the actions we took for granted. And He wants us, who acknowledge that sin, to be washed with the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

He said to leave something for the poor neighbor

In verses 9 and 10, God said that when they reaped their grain, they were not to reap all the way to the corners of the field, nor to gather the fallen ears of grain. He also said not to pick all the fruit of the vineyard, but to leave the fallen fruit. The reason is clear. It was for the poor and the stranger.

The one who has a field looks at the harvest and thinks of how much he will gather. But God, looking at that harvest, also thought of the poor who seek food. Those who could not gather enough from their own fields, and those who had come from another land and were living there, needed food as well. God had the people who had fields and vineyards leave a place for them.

The ears and the fruit left behind were, for the owner, a harvest he could have gathered further, but for the poor neighbor they became food. Therefore, to keep this command, one had to lay down the heart that seeks to grasp everything that could come into one's hands. One had to think of the neighbor whom God thinks of.

We easily think that there is nothing wrong with us because we have not taken what belongs to others. But this passage, before the word not to steal what belongs to others, commands us to leave something for our neighbor out of our own harvest.

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The heart that calculates only its own profit and turns away from the circumstances of the poor must also be examined before God.

Proverbs says: *"He who oppresses the poor reproaches his Maker, But he who honors Him has mercy on the needy" (Proverbs 14:31).*

A person cannot be taken lightly because he is poor. That person, too, was made by God. The heart that honors God must appear also in the attitude with which we treat the neighbor God has made.

The truth must not be thrown away for one's own profit

In verse 11, He forbids stealing, deceiving, and lying. It is not only taking another's goods secretly that we must examine. Gaining profit by deceiving the other person, and hiding one's wrong by speaking contrary to the facts, are also sins God has forbidden.

Even if it looks outwardly as if both sides agreed, if one side deceived the other with a lie, it cannot be an honest matter. That one was not caught by people does not make it right before God either. God knows not only the words we spoke but also what we tried to gain by those words.

In verse 12, He forbids swearing falsely by the name of God. If one puts forward the name of God to make people believe that one's words are true, while actually speaking falsehood, one profanes the name of God. It is because one uses even the name of God in deceiving people.

Saying that one believes in God does not automatically guarantee one's honesty. The one who takes that name on his lips must examine his words all the more. He must look back on

whether he has tried to win trust by putting forward his faith while hiding the facts, and whether he has added word to word because he did not want to admit his wrong.

What we need is not to defend ourselves with plausible words. It is to acknowledge as falsehood what God calls falsehood. Only when we acknowledge our sin before the word can we rightly rely on the Lord, who gives the remission of sins.

He said not to hold on to the wages that should go to the one who worked

Verse 13 says not to oppress or rob one's neighbor, and not to keep the wages of a hired worker all night until morning. To oppress is to press down the other person by one's own power, and to rob is to take away what belongs to another. God did not let them handle their neighbor's share as they pleased on the ground that they had power.

Wages are the payment the one who worked ought to receive. They are not a favor the employer bestows according to his mood. If one needs the labor when having the work done, but holds on to the money to be paid after the work is finished, one is keeping in one's own hands what should go to the other person.

The circumstances of the one who pays and the one who waits can be different. The one who pays may think that a slight delay is no great matter, but the one who is to receive is waiting for that money. God gave His word exactly within that relationship. It is that one must not put off the share one's neighbor is to receive while thinking only of one's own situation.

We say that there is wrong in the act of taking money away, and yet we easily attach reasons to not giving what we ought to give. But before God, the command of God comes before our

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explanations. Our responsibility does not disappear just because the other person cannot protest strongly.

Even if the other person does not know, God sees

In verse 14, He said not to curse a person who cannot hear, and not to put a stumbling block before a person who cannot see. It means that one must not do harm by taking advantage of the other person's difficulty.

A person who cannot hear may not notice what words are being exchanged about him. A person who cannot see finds it hard to avoid a stumbling block placed before him. God forbade the act of taking advantage of that situation. Such an act does not become a light prank just because the other person cannot notice at once or stand up against it.

Following this command, God said, *"Fear your God" (Leviticus 19:14)*. He connected the acts with which we treat people to the heart that fears God. Even if the other person cannot hear, God knows our words. Even if the other person cannot see, God sees what we have placed there.

Therefore our hearts are revealed all the more clearly when we treat those who have little power. Have we not been careful before those who can put us at a disadvantage, while treating carelessly those who find it hard to protest? If we fear God, we must not calculate only whether the other person can restrain us. We must examine whether it is right before God.

Today's word shines a light even on our hidden attitude toward our neighbor. God does not judge us only by the reputation shown before people.

Greed and deceit come out of our hearts

When we gather these words together, we come to know that our sin is not limited to a few acts. The heart that wants to have more, the heart that does not want to suffer loss, and the heart that wants to hide its own wrongs appear in the acts of turning away from and deceiving one's neighbor.

When our wrongs are pointed out, we easily say that our circumstances were hard. We explain that we could not look into it because we were busy, that the other person also did wrong, and that there was no great harm. But such explanations do not remove the greed and deceit within us. Sin is in the outwardly revealed act, and also in the heart that gave birth to that act.

Jesus said that out of the heart of man come thefts, covetousness, deceit, and other evil things, and then said like this: *"All these evil things come from within and defile a man" (Mark 7:23).*

Therefore we must not think that we can become righteous people by ourselves if we correct a few wrongs. Wrong acts must be corrected, but that alone does not make the sins already committed disappear. There are sins we harbored in our hearts even though we did not act on them outwardly, and there is weakness that appears again even after we have resolved to correct it.

Before the word of God, we come to know that we are people who need the remission of sins. We cannot cover other sins by putting forward how much we have helped our poor neighbors, nor can we remove the lies we have told by citing the times we lived honestly. We need a Savior who will completely wash away the sins we have committed with our hearts and our acts.

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Jesus bore the sins we committed with our hearts and our deeds

God knew the sin within us and sent Jesus Christ. The Lord is not One who knows only the sins we have openly acknowledged. He knows also the sins we have hidden away and the sins we ourselves regarded as trifles. And He came into this world to save us from all those sins.

In the Old Testament, the person who realized his sin brought the sacrificial offering God had appointed, laid his hands on it, and offered the sacrifice of atonement with the blood of that offering. It did not end with realizing sin; an offering to bear the sin, and its sacrifice, were needed.

In order to accomplish that salvation, Jesus received baptism from John in the Jordan River. In Matthew 3:15, He said that it was fitting to fulfill all righteousness, and received baptism from John. The baptism Jesus received from John was the act of bearing the sin of mankind in His own body.

Our greed and deceit, too, are included in the sin of the world the Lord bore at that time. The sin of causing loss to others, the sin of hiding the truth for one's own profit, and the sin of looking down on the weak were also borne by the Lord. He bore the sins harbored in the heart and the sins carried into action, all the sins we commit throughout our lives.

John testified of Jesus. *"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).*

Jesus, who bore the sin of the world, died on the Cross shedding His blood. Because He had borne our sins, He received the judgment of those sins in our place as well. God did not give the remission of sins by pretending not to see our wrongs. Jesus accomplished salvation by having our sins transferred to Him

and paying their price.

And Jesus rose again from death. The Lord who delivered us from sin and judgment is alive. We receive the remission of sins by believing in the salvation Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His rising again from death.

1 John says that Jesus Christ came by water and blood, and that the Holy Spirit testifies. Receive into your hearts the truth of salvation to which the Holy Spirit testifies. The ground on which our sins are washed away does not lie in the resolution to become righteous by ourselves. It lies in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Lord accomplished.

The one who has received the grace of the remission of sins does not turn away from his neighbor

Dear beloved fellow believers, to have received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not mean that we no longer need to examine our wrongs. Because the Lord has washed away our sins, we have no need to hide our wrongs and dress ourselves up as righteous. We can acknowledge and set right our wrongs before the word.

If there are wages we ought to pay, we must pay them. If we deceived our neighbor with a lie, we must set the facts right. If we ignored a poor person, we must cast away that attitude and look into his circumstances. We do not buy the remission of sins by these acts. Because we know what pleases God, who saved us, we follow that word.

We, too, are people who received the grace of the Lord because we could not settle our sins by ourselves. Therefore,

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seeing the difficulties of our neighbor, we cannot boast of the power and the circumstances we have. Remembering that God had compassion on us, we must examine how we use what is in our hands and with what words we treat people.

If you are still trying to cover your sins with your own good deeds, believe in the salvation the Lord accomplished. Acknowledge your greed and deceit, and receive Jesus Christ, who bore even those sins. The gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a teaching that makes only the outward appearance look right, but the truth of salvation that washes away our sins.

We give thanks to the Lord, who knows even our hearts and bore all our sins. Believing in this gospel, let us receive the remission of sins, and, fearing God who saved us, live before our neighbor as well with honest and compassionate hearts. ✉

Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

Share with your neighbor the love received through the gospel of the water and the Spirit

< Leviticus 19:15-18 >

"You shall do no injustice in judgment. You shall not be partial to the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty. In righteousness you shall judge your neighbor. You shall not go about as a talebearer among your people; nor shall you take a stand against the life of your neighbor: I am the LORD. You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your neighbor, and not bear sin because of him. You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD."

Dear saints, as we deal with people, we discover what is in our own hearts. Even when we see the same wrong, we are generous to those close to us, and sometimes become strict with those we dislike. There are times when we say the right things with our mouths while in our hearts we wish for the other person to get into trouble.

Today's word makes us examine everything from the place where we judge people to the hatred within our hearts. God said

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to judge in righteousness, not to harm our neighbor, and to love him as ourselves. Before this word we must realize our sin, and know the love of the Lord, who saved us as we are.

Do not change right and wrong according to a person's circumstances

Verse 15 commands us to do no injustice in judgment. It says not to be partial to someone because he is poor, and not to shield someone because he is mighty. In judgment, one must examine righteously what is right and what is wrong, rather than the person's circumstances.

It is fitting to care for the poor. But one cannot call even a poor person's wrong right because he is in a pitiful position. It is the same with a mighty person. A wrong does not disappear just because someone's influence is great. God did not let the one who judges bend his judgment out of sentiment or fear.

In the light of this word, we must examine our own hearts as well. When someone close to us does wrong, do we not take his circumstances into account, while easily condemning another person who does the same wrong? Do we not accept the words of a person who is useful to us, while ignoring the words of a powerless person without even looking into them?

We easily think that we are fair. But when we set the word of God in our hearts, we come to know that private feelings and interests were mixed into our judgments as well. Realizing sin does not begin with finding many wrongs in others. It begins with setting our own hearts before the word of God.

There is no love in words that harm one's neighbor

Verse 16 says not to go about as a talebearer among the people, and not to take a stand against the life of one's neighbor. Harming a person is not only a matter of violence inflicted with the hands. The words one spreads about one's neighbor can also put him in danger.

One may repeat unverified words, or pick out and tell only the parts unfavorable to the other person, while thinking that one is only letting people know the facts. But if in the heart that speaks those words there is the intention of dragging the other person down, one must examine oneself before God. Slander that passes through the mouths of many people can drive a person into a corner and destroy his life.

Even so, this word must not be taken to mean that nothing at all is to be said about wrongs. In verse 15 before it, He said to judge in righteousness, and in verse 17 that follows, He said to surely rebuke one's neighbor. Discerning right from wrong must be distinguished from slandering in order to harm a person.

We must examine our hearts before we speak. We must look back on whether we speak with the heart that wishes for that person to become right, or speak in order to make others hate him as well. God looks at the words we use, and also at the heart that sends those words out.

Do not hate in your heart, but set right the wrong

Verse 17 says not to hate one's brother in one's heart, and says to surely rebuke one's neighbor. To rebuke is to point out a wrong and exhort the person to become right. While forbidding hatred, God said not to avoid the exhortation that is needed.

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Harboring hatred in one's heart while only pretending outwardly that nothing is wrong is not love. Nor can it be called love to take no notice while the other person goes the wrong way, or to go along with that wrong. Instead of their becoming entangled in the wrong of their neighbor and committing sin together, God had them set him right so that he might turn back.

But neither may one pour out one's own anger on the ground of exhorting. If, while speaking so that a wrong may be corrected, one insults and hates the other person, one is oneself breaking the word. The wrong must be pointed out clearly, but the heart that seeks to harm the person must be cast away.

The one who receives exhortation must also examine himself. He must not deny even his own wrong merely because he does not like to hear what the other person says. The one who has received the remission of sins has no need to hide his shortcomings and try to look like a righteous person. Because he knows what kind of person he was when the Lord saved him, he can acknowledge and set right his wrong.

We must also remember the fact that every person has weaknesses. Pointing out a wrong that must be corrected and hating that whole person are different things. If we build a wall in our hearts because of one shortcoming and oppose him endlessly, we come to nurture our own hatred under the pretext of setting our neighbor right.

Stand before the word that says to love your neighbor as yourself

Verse 18 says not to take vengeance, not to bear a grudge against one's own people, and to love one's neighbor as oneself. When we have been harmed by someone, the thought of paying

him back arises in our hearts. Even if we do not retaliate directly, we can hold on to a grudge against that person for a long time.

But God set the standard for treating one's neighbor at a love like that for oneself. As for our own wrongs, we want our circumstances to be understood. We do not want everything about us to be denied just because we have made a mistake. We also want to have the opportunity to set things right again. Before the word that says to love one's neighbor, we must have this same heart toward that person as well.

Here our own sin is revealed. While wanting understanding for ourselves, we gave our neighbor no room for understanding. We regarded our own faults as small while speaking of the faults of the other person as great. We regarded ourselves as right on the ground that we had not retaliated outwardly, but in our hearts there was the hatred that wished for that person to come to harm.

The word of God reveals even such a heart as sin. Therefore, when we hear the command to love our neighbor, we cannot stop at merely resolving to do better from now on. We must know how we are to receive remission for the sin of having already failed to love, the sin of having hated in our hearts. The sins of the past cannot be erased by the good deeds of the future. We need a Savior who washes away sin.

Jesus bore even our hatred and injustice

God did not wait for us to become people worth loving first and then save us. He sent His Son Jesus Christ to save us, who fail to love and commit sin. The love of God did not stop at the heart of pitying sinners. He gave us life by having His Son bear our sins and receive the judgment of those sins.

Matthew 3:15 says like this: *"But Jesus answered and said*

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to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him."

By receiving baptism from John, Jesus bore the sin of mankind. Just as sin was passed on to the sacrificial offering of the Old Testament by the laying on of hands, through the baptism Jesus received from John all our sins were passed on to Jesus. Included here are the sin of judging people with partiality, the sin of slandering our neighbor, and the sin of harboring hatred in our hearts and seeking to retaliate.

We easily feel ashamed only of the acts revealed to others. But the Lord knew even the sins we had hidden away in our hearts. In order to bear all those sins He received baptism from John, and in the body in which He bore the sin of the world He was hung on the Cross and died shedding His blood. Jesus received in our place the punishment of sin that we ought to have received.

And Jesus rose again from death and became the living Savior who saved us. The gospel of the water and the Spirit that we believe in tells of the salvation Jesus accomplished in this way by bearing our sins and receiving the judgment.

Therefore the one who seeks to receive the remission of sins must not try to draw near to God only after he has completely removed hatred from his heart. He must acknowledge his sin, and believe the fact that Jesus has already settled that sin with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross. The remission of sins is not obtained as a reward for our having loved our neighbor. It is the grace received by believing in the salvation accomplished by the Lord, who loved us first.

The one who believes in this gospel receives the remission of all sins and becomes a child of God. God gives the Holy Spirit to the one who has received the remission of sins, and makes him live within the love of God.

Share with your neighbor the love received
through the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Treat your neighbor with the love you have first received

1 John 4:19 says: *"We love, because he first loved us –ASV."*

Here lies the ground on which we live loving our neighbor. The Lord first loved us, who are lacking in love. He washed away even our sin of having regarded ourselves as right while harboring hatred in our hearts. It is the one who has believed in and received this love who now goes forward into a life of loving his neighbor.

It is not that all our attitudes in dealing with people become right by themselves just because we have received the remission of sins. We must still examine ourselves by the word. We must look back on whether the judgments we passed on the other person were fair, and whether the words we spoke did not harm that person. If we have done wrong, we must acknowledge it; if we have wounded someone, we must apologize; and if there is something to set right, we must set it right. The remission of sins we have received from the Lord cannot become an excuse for hiding our own wrongs.

When you exhort the other person about his wrong, too, remember the Lord who loved us. We cannot call a wrong right, but neither may we make it a reason to hate that person endlessly. We must wish for him to become right, take his weak points into account, and help him so that we may follow the word together.

Dear saints, when your shortcomings are revealed before the word that says to love your neighbor, believe in the love the Lord has bestowed. There is the remission of sins accomplished by Jesus, who bore our sins once and for all with the baptism He received from John and received the judgment of those sins on the Cross. Receive that salvation by faith. And with the grace of God, who loved us first, set in your hearts, let us judge righteously, speak words that give life to our neighbor, and live loving one another. ✉

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Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

The remission of sins received through the way of atonement God has appointed

< Leviticus 19:19-25 >

"You shall keep My statutes. You shall not let your livestock breed with another kind. You shall not sow your field with mixed seed. Nor shall a garment of mixed linen and wool come upon you. Whoever lies carnally with a woman who is betrothed to a man as a concubine, and who has not at all been redeemed nor given her freedom, for this there shall be scourging; but they shall not be put to death, because she was not free. And he shall bring his trespass offering to the LORD, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, a ram as a trespass offering. The priest shall make atonement for him with the ram of the trespass offering before the LORD for his sin which he has committed. And the sin which he has committed shall be forgiven him. When you come into the land, and have planted all kinds of trees for food, then you shall count their fruit as uncircumcised. Three years it shall be as uncircumcised to you. It shall not be eaten. But in the fourth year all its fruit shall be holy, a praise to the LORD. And in the fifth year you may eat its fruit, that it may yield to you its increase: I am the LORD your God."

Dear saints, in today's passage appear ordinances concerning

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livestock, fields, and clothing, followed by the word about the person who has transgressed offering a trespass offering, and the ordinance concerning the fruit of fruit trees. They deal with different parts of life, but together they show the fact that the people of Israel had to live according to the word of God.

In particular, God made known the way of atonement to the person who had committed sin. He did not leave the sinner to settle his sin according to his own thinking, but had him come with the offering God had appointed. Through this word we will look at Jesus Christ, who became the trespass offering for us, and at the remission of sins received through Him.

Do not mix, according to your own thinking, what God has distinguished

In verse 19, God said not to let livestock breed with another kind, not to sow a field with mixed seed, and not to wear a garment woven of two materials. The people of Israel had to keep the ordinances God had given even in raising livestock, farming, and wearing clothes. They could not change that word on the ground that something was convenient for them or looked good.

In our faith, too, there is something that must be clearly distinguished. It is the word of salvation God has given and the thoughts people have made up. One cannot hold on to the wrong faith one had before, just as it was, even after hearing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and call both of them right.

If we believe the word that Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John, we must cast away the thought that that baptism has nothing to do with salvation. We must fully accept the fact that Jesus bore our sins and received the judgment

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of those sins on the Cross.

We must not keep a wrong thought merely because we have grown accustomed to believing it. We must discern by the word what the truth is that actually washes away our sins. The faith that receives into the heart the salvation God has accomplished is important. If, while believing in the baptism of the Lord and the blood of the Cross, one holds on at the same time to the thought that regards that salvation as imperfect, one must examine one's faith again.

One must acknowledge the sin one has committed and come forward on the way of atonement

Verse 20 deals with the case in which a man commits fornication with a betrothed slave woman who has not yet been redeemed or set free. While saying that the two are punished, the passage stipulates that they are not put to death because that woman was not yet free. Mentioning that woman's circumstances, God appointed the punishment to be applied in this case.

Here, the whole explanation does not end with the word about punishment. In verse 21, He said that the man must bring a ram as a trespass offering to the LORD, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting. Receiving punishment among people and receiving atonement for sin before God are recorded together.

The person who had committed the sin had to acknowledge the fact that his act was sin before God. He could not conclude by himself that, having received the punishment, there was now no problem at all. He had to come with the trespass offering as God had commanded.

We, too, when we go through painful things because of our

wrongs, easily think that we have sufficiently paid the price of sin by that pain. But the pain or the regret we have suffered cannot take the place of the atonement God has appointed. To receive the remission of sins, one must proceed along the way God has opened.

Verse 22 says that when the priest makes atonement before the LORD with the ram of the trespass offering, the sin he has committed is remitted. The ground of the remission of sins did not lie in how plausibly the sinner explained himself. It lay in the offering God had appointed and in the sacrifice of atonement offered with that offering. While dealing clearly with the sin committed, God opened the way for that sin to be remitted.

Jesus is the trespass offering who bore our sins

Atonement is not a matter of simply overlooking sin. It is a matter of bearing sin in the sinner's place and paying the price for that sin. Just as the ram of the trespass offering was offered as the offering for the sinner, Jesus Christ came into this world to bear our sins and to receive the judgment of those sins.

Then how were our sins passed on to Jesus? Mark 1:9 says like this: *"It came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan."*

God sent John the Baptist before Jesus. As the representative of mankind, John carried out the work of passing on the sin of the world by baptizing Jesus. By receiving baptism from John, Jesus bore all our sins in His own body.

We must know the meaning of the atonement of the Old Testament, in which sin was passed on to the offering and that offering was sacrificed in the sinner's place. When we believe the fact that Jesus died on the Cross, we must also know together

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what sins He bore and how He bore them. Jesus bore the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, and in the body in which He bore that sin He was hung on the Cross.

In John 1:29, John testified of Jesus, saying, *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"* In the sin of the world that Jesus bore, our sins are included as well. The sins committed by following the lusts of the flesh, the sins of going against the word of God while knowing it, and even the sins we ourselves did not properly realize—the Lord bore them.

And the Lord, who bore our sins with the baptism He received from John, received the punishment of those sins by dying on the Cross shedding His blood. The One who became our trespass offering is Jesus Christ, who is God. Because He Himself bore our sins and gave up His own life, the price of our sins was paid without any lack. Jesus rose again from death and became the Savior who saved us.

This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit that we believe in. For us who have sinned, there is the atonement the Lord accomplished. Therefore do not keep away from the word of salvation just because you are ashamed of your sins. Acknowledge those sins, and believe the fact that Jesus settled all sins with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross.

God did not tell the sinner to come after making himself clean by his own righteousness. He told the very person who had committed the sin to come with the trespass offering. Today, we too cannot put forward our own merits. We receive the remission of sins by believing in Jesus Christ, who paid the price of sin in our place.

Even when the fruit is obtained, one must follow the word of God

From verse 23, He speaks of the ordinance the people of Israel were to keep when they entered the land and planted fruit trees. He said that for the first three years they were to count the fruit as uncircumcised and not eat it. They could not immediately make it their own food just because fruit had come on the trees. It was because there was a period God had appointed in which they were not to eat.

When fruit comes on a tree one has planted and tended oneself, one will want to taste it. It is natural for the one who labored to want to enjoy that fruit. But for the people of Israel, there was the word of God to be followed before their own wishes. Even when the fruit was visible before their eyes, they had to believe that word and wait.

He said that in the fourth year all its fruit was holy, and was to be offered to the LORD as a praise. It was not an ordinance to offer only a part to God and use the rest as one pleased. He had them set apart all the fruit of that year and offer it to God. He had them first praise God with the produce obtained from that land.

And He said that in the fifth year they were to eat its fruit. God did not keep them from eating the fruit forever. He appointed the time to wait, the time to offer to God, and the time to eat, and along with that word He also gave the promise that the produce would be abundant.

As we face this word, we must examine our hearts as well. When we obtain something, does not the heart that wants to use it at once as we please come first? While saying that we give thanks to God, do we not in fact take care of what we want first? The people of God must remember God, who gave it, even in enjoying what they have obtained.

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So it is with life after receiving the remission of sins. We must be thankful for the salvation we have received from the Lord, and must now live with the will of God in our hearts. The faith that the Lord has saved us is not a knowledge detached from our lives. It is following the word of the Lord with a heart that believes in that grace, and offering ourselves to the things that please the Lord.

Let us live praising the Lord with the grace of having received the remission of sins

Today's passage closes with the words *"I am the LORD your God."* The One who gives the ordinances, opens the way of the remission of sins, and lets them enjoy the produce is their God. The people of Israel had to believe in that God and follow His word.

We, too, have a clear ground on which we can serve the Lord. It is the fact that Jesus paid the price of our sins. The Lord opened the way of salvation to us, who could not draw near to God because of sin. That we can praise and serve the Lord is because of the grace of the remission of sins He has bestowed.

Therefore do not change the salvation the Lord accomplished according to your own thinking. Believe fully in the baptism Jesus received from John and in the blood of the Cross. Even after receiving the remission of sins, when your shortcomings are revealed, acknowledge those shortcomings and rely on the Lord, who bore our sins. You must not remain only in fear, as if the price of sin the Lord paid were insufficient.

Dear saints, believe in Jesus Christ, who became our trespass offering. Receive the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit that He accomplished. And valuing the life and the life we live that the Lord has given us, let us live serving and praising Him according to the word. ✉

Sermon 6 by Paul C. Jong

Receive life and rest through the gospel of the water and the Spirit

< Leviticus 19:26-30 >

"You shall not eat anything with the blood, nor shall you practice divination or soothsaying. You shall not shave around the sides of your head, nor shall you disfigure the edges of your beard. You shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor tattoo any marks on you: I am the LORD. Do not prostitute your daughter, to cause her to be a harlot, lest the land fall into harlotry, and the land become full of wickedness. You shall keep My Sabbaths and reverence My sanctuary: I am the LORD."

Dear saints, in today's word God speaks of what the people of Israel eat and what they rely on, and even of how they treat their own bodies and their children. And He commands them to keep the Sabbath and to reverence the sanctuary. The people of God must not forget, in any part of their lives, the God who saved them.

Before this word we must look back on what we have believed in as we have lived. While saying that we believe in God, there are parts of our lives in which our hearts have relied on other things and we have lived following our own greed. What we, being such people, need is the remission of sins the

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Lord accomplished. We must know who it is that gives us life and gives us true rest.

We must know the meaning of life and atonement contained in the blood

In verse 26, God said not to eat anything with the blood. This command has to do with life. Leviticus 17:11 makes its meaning clear like this: *"For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul."*

God said that the life of the flesh is in the blood, and that He had that blood sprinkled upon the altar to make atonement for the lives of people. The people of Israel were not to regard blood merely as something to eat. They had to follow the will that God, the Lord of life, had appointed concerning blood.

In particular, the blood of the offering had to do with atonement for the sinner. For a person who had sin to come before God, a sacrifice to bear that sin was needed. Through the death and the shed blood of the offering that had borne the sin in the sinner's place, atonement for the sinner was accomplished. God had them obtain the remission of sins through a sacrifice that gave up its life.

The one who knows this word cannot take life lightly. Nor must he think lightly of harming other people to satisfy his own greed, or of leaving a soul to go the wrong way. God values life. We, too, must value human life, and must treasure the work of preaching the gospel so that the souls that are dead in sin may be saved.

Cast away divination and soothsaying, and rely on God

Verse 26, together with the command not to eat anything with the blood, says not to practice divination or soothsaying. He forbade the way of telling fortunes to find out the future and of relying on the power of sorcery. The people of Israel had God, who led them. They had to believe and follow the word God had given.

People are anxious because they do not know the future. When things do not go as they wish, they want to get a sure answer as to what went wrong and what they should do from now on. At such times, the heart arises that wants to hold on to words pleasant to one's own ears rather than to the word of God.

But sin is not settled just because one has heard the words one wanted to hear. Nor does one's relationship with God become right just because one has heard that things will go well from now on. What we need first is to know God, who made us, and to believe in the salvation He has bestowed.

If we believe the fact that God loves us and has saved us from sin, we can entrust to the Lord even the tomorrow we do not yet know. With a heart that will believe in God only if everything goes as we wish, it is hard to follow the Lord. We must know and believe what God has already done for us.

Even the one who has received the remission of sins can waver in heart when he meets difficulties. At such a time, remember the Lord who saved us. We must go forward according to the word, relying on God, who has settled our sins. To pray with the salvation received from the Lord in our hearts, and to keep doing the things that please God, is the life of faith.

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Do not give our bodies and our children over to wickedness

Verse 27 says not to shave around the sides of the head and not to disfigure the edges of the beard. Then verse 28 says not to make any cuttings in the flesh for the dead, nor to tattoo any marks on the body. God gave the people of Israel ordinances to keep concerning the body as well.

They were not to cut their own bodies just because they had a heart that grieved for a dead person. Even in expressing grief, they had to follow the command of God. The life of the people who serve God could not take as its standard only their own feelings or the acts of the people around them.

Also, the act of leaving some mark on the body does not wash away sin. Nor does one become a clean person before God by inflicting pain on one's own body. The One who remits our sins is the Lord. We cannot produce salvation by how we handle our own bodies.

Verse 29 commands not to prostitute one's daughter, to cause her to be a harlot. Here God is speaking to the person who drives his daughter onto such a path. Even a parent cannot give his children over to wickedness as he pleases. The body and the life of a daughter must not be made a means for one's own greed or for the pleasure of others.

God did not speak of this matter only as a problem within one family. He warned that harlotry would spread throughout the whole land and it would become full of wickedness. When giving a person over to wickedness is tolerated, its influence reaches other people as well.

We must treasure the people entrusted to us. What children need is the faith that knows God and values the life He has given. Parents who have received the remission of sins must preach the

gospel of the water and the Spirit to their children, and teach them to live with the word of God in their hearts.

The Lord has washed away even our sin of having left God

When we read these words, we first discover our own wrongs. We relied on other things more than on God, put our own greed before the word, and failed to value the life we received from God. The sins we have already committed do not disappear just because we have corrected a few outwardly visible acts.

God sent Jesus Christ to save such sinners. By receiving baptism from John, Jesus bore the sin of the world in His own body. The sin of leaving God and relying on other things, and the sins committed by following the lusts of the flesh, are also included in the sin of the world the Lord bore.

And in the body in which He bore that sin, Jesus was hung on the Cross and died shedding His blood. The Lord received in our place the punishment of sin that we ought to have received. Here we must think deeply on the word that blood has to do with life and with atonement. Jesus bore our sins and gave up His own life, and so saved us from judgment.

We must believe in the baptism of Jesus and in the blood of the Cross together. The baptism Jesus received from John is the work by which He bore our sins, and His death on the Cross is the work by which He received the judgment of those sins. The Lord accomplished this work of salvation, rose again from death, and became our Savior.

Therefore the one who seeks to receive the remission of sins must believe in what the Lord has done. Instead of striving to wash away sin by his own suffering or religious acts, he must

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receive into his heart the salvation Jesus accomplished with the water and the blood. By believing in this gospel, that the Lord has settled our sins, we receive the remission of all sins.

Ephesians 1:13 says: *"In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise."*

God gives the Holy Spirit to the one who hears and believes the gospel of salvation. There is no need to look for the ground of the remission of sins in one's own feelings. One must believe the word of salvation the Lord accomplished. By this faith we become the children of God and live receiving the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Enjoy the rest obtained through the remission of sins, and reverence God

In verse 30, God says, *"You shall keep My Sabbaths and reverence My sanctuary."* He had His people keep the Sabbath and value the sanctuary in which God is served. He did so that they would not become a people who leave God and live relying on other powers.

The true rest our hearts enjoy is also in the Lord. In Matthew 11:28, Jesus said: *"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."*

A heart whose sin has not been settled cannot rest in peace. One may forget one's worries for a while, but the problem of sin that remains before God is still heavy. The Lord calls the person who is bearing that burden of sin. In the Lord, who bore our sins and received even their judgment, there is true rest.

This rest does not come from regarding oneself as having

become a person who no longer does any wrong. It is obtained from believing the fact that the Lord has settled all the sins of us who are weak. Even after receiving the remission of sins, when a wrong is revealed, we must acknowledge it and turn back. At that time, too, we must rely on the gospel of the water and the Spirit that has made us clean.

We must also keep in our hearts the word that says to reverence the sanctuary. To the people of Israel, the sanctuary was the place where the sacrifices God had appointed were offered, and where the word of God was delivered through the priests. They were not to take lightly the matter of drawing near to God.

Today we, too, must treasure hearing the gospel and learning the word in the Church of God. We must treasure the work of preaching the salvation of the Lord and serve it together. The faith that reverences God appears as we are thankful for the salvation received from Him, keep the word in our hearts, and live according to the will of God.

Dear saints, the One who has given us life and washed away our sins is Jesus Christ. Believe in the salvation the Lord accomplished with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross. By that faith, obtain the remission of sins and true rest. And let us live preaching this gospel to the souls the Lord treasures. I hope that you will be people who believe in the grace of God, who gave us life, and who devote their hearts to the work of giving life. ✉

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Sermon 7 by Paul C. Jong

God, who gives the remission of sins without distinction

< Leviticus 19:31-34 >

"(Turn ye not unto them that have familiar spirits, nor unto the wizards; seek them not out, to be defiled by them: I am Jehovah your God –ASV). You shall rise before the gray headed and honor the presence of an old man, and fear your God: I am the LORD. And if a stranger dwells with you in your land, you shall not mistreat him. The stranger who dwells among you shall be to you as one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God."

Dear saints, in today's word, faith toward God and the attitude of treating people appear together. While saying not to trust in mediums and wizards, God commands that the elderly be honored and the strangers who live with them be loved. The people of God must know clearly whom they are to rely on, and must also learn how they are to treat the people beside them.

In particular, while telling them to love the stranger, God made the people of Israel remember their own past. They, too, were people who had lived as strangers in the land of Egypt. When one remembers what circumstances one was in, one can also take into account the circumstances of the stranger beside one now. We, too, must stand before this word remembering the grace of the remission of sins we have received from the Lord.

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The One to whom we are to entrust our faith is God

Verse 31 says not to trust in mediums and wizards, and not to seek them out to be defiled by them. This command makes us examine whom our faith is directed toward. God did not permit His people to leave God and rely on another spiritual authority.

One must not entrust one's heart and one's life to a person just because he seems to have some special power. Before asking whether that person's words sound amazing, one must first look back on whether one believes in God and follows His word. In giving this command, God made clear again that He is the LORD their God.

Psalm 121:2 says like this: *"My help comes from the LORD, Who made heaven and earth."*

Jesus Christ, who saved us with the gospel of the water and the Spirit, is God. Therefore, when we need help, we can pray to the Lord. When there are things we do not know, and things too hard to handle by our own strength, we must ask God for wisdom and help.

Prayer is telling God our circumstances and asking for help. It is not that one can pray only if one can speak difficult words well. One has only to believe in the Lord who saved us and tell Him what is on one's heart. And one must go on doing what one has to do according to the word of God. The faith that relies on God continues from the remission of our sins to the life we live day by day.

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In the attitude of honoring the elderly, too, the faith that fears God appears

Verse 32 says to rise before the gray headed and honor the presence of an old man. Here the gray head refers to hair that has turned white with age. God did not let them stop at thinking that they respected the elderly only in their hearts, but had them show honor by the concrete act of rising.

People easily change their attitude according to how useful the other person is to them. While listening attentively to the words of a person who has power and does his work well, they may treat hastily a person who has grown old and become slow in speech and action. But God commands that the elderly be honored. A person's worth cannot be judged only by how quickly and skillfully he works now.

We must not cut off the words of the elderly as if they were a nuisance, or speak carelessly to them because it takes time for them to understand. Our hearts are revealed in giving up our seat, in listening to them, and in looking into the help they need. The honor God commanded must appear in this way, in the actual attitude with which we treat people.

After this word follows the command to fear God. We cannot say that we fear God, whom we cannot see, while looking down on the old person before our eyes. Treating as precious the person God has told us to honor is the attitude that respects that word.

We must examine ourselves as well. When we were young and strong, did we not boast of our abilities and ignore others? God sees the pride within our words and our actions. If we have realized our wrong through this word, we must acknowledge it and set it right rather than make excuses.

He said to love the stranger who lives with you as yourself

In verse 33, God said that when a stranger stays in the land of Israel and lives with them, they must not mistreat him. A person who has left his hometown and lives in another land can suffer difficulties amid unfamiliar language and ways of living. God commanded that that person not be harassed on the ground that he is a stranger.

But the command of verse 34 is even more active. He said to regard the stranger who is with them as one born among them, and to love him as themselves. He did not let them stop at merely not doing harm, but had them accept him as a neighbor living together with them.

We easily open our hearts to people with whom we communicate well and whose way of living is similar to ours. On the other hand, there are times when we first keep our distance from a stranger. We may close our hearts on the ground that he is different from us, even before finding out what he needs.

God makes us examine such an attitude of ours. We must not regard a person who is with us as less precious just because his origin is different. That person, too, wants his circumstances to be understood, and wants to get help when he is in difficulty. Just as I want to be respected, I must respect that person.

If there is someone who has just come among us, we can speak to him first and listen to what is difficult for him. Without ignoring him because he speaks an unfamiliar language, we can explain step by step the things that need explaining. The word that says to love the stranger as ourselves must not remain merely a beautiful thought far away. It must become our actual attitude toward the people who live with us.

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He said to remember the time when you too were strangers

As the reason they must love the stranger, God spoke of the experience of the people of Israel themselves. They, too, had been strangers in the land of Egypt. They were not people who had lived comfortably in their own land from the beginning and welcomed others. They were a people who knew what it was to live in a foreign land.

When people's circumstances improve, they easily forget their former difficulties. Once they forget the time when they had to receive help, they may rebuke a person who needs help now, asking why he cannot solve things by himself. If one regards the position one has gained as something achieved by one's own ability alone, one comes to look down on others.

So that Israel would not live that way, God made them remember their past. It is that, keeping in their hearts the fact that they too had been strangers, they were to love the strangers who were with them now.

We, too, must remember the salvation we have received from the Lord. We were not originally people who could wash away our own sins. We could not stand before God by our own righteousness, and we needed a Savior who would settle our sins. Yet the Lord came to us and opened the way of the remission of sins.

We who have received that grace must not act as if we had originally been better people than others. Before the word that says to honor the elderly and love the stranger, too, we discover our shortcomings. But we must not try to obtain the remission of sins by covering those shortcomings with good deeds. We must come to Jesus Christ, who has washed away our sins.

Jesus bore the sin of all peoples

The word of atonement God gave to the people of Israel is a word we need as well. Whatever people a person belongs to, if he has sin he must settle that sin before God. A person's origin or religious career cannot remove that sin.

Jesus came to this earth to save the sinners of the world. And by receiving baptism from John, He bore all the sin of mankind in His own body. The sin passed on to Jesus was not only the sin of the people of one nation. The Lord bore our sins and the sins of all the people of this world.

Jesus, who bore that sin with the baptism He received from John, was hung on the Cross and died shedding His blood. The Lord received in the sinner's place the judgment the sinner ought to have received. And He rose again from death and became the Savior who saved us. The gospel of the water and the Spirit that we believe in tells of the salvation Jesus accomplished in this way.

Romans 10:12 says: *"For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him."*

The Jew needs Jesus Christ, and the Gentile needs Jesus Christ. Whoever it may be, he must believe in the salvation Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross. God does not look at a person's origin and give different ways of salvation. He has given the same Savior to all people, and has had them receive the remission of sins by believing in the righteousness that Savior accomplished.

Therefore do not think that you cannot come to the Lord because of the country in which you were born or the environment in which you grew up. Whatever you relied on as you lived before, acknowledge your sins and believe in Jesus Christ. When the Lord received baptism from John, He bore our sins too, and on the Cross

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He received the punishment of those sins as well.

Romans 10:10 also says: *"For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."*

We are not made righteous because we have treated people well. We are made righteous by believing with the heart in the salvation Jesus accomplished. It is the one who has received the remission of sins by this faith who now lives honoring and loving others according to the word of the Lord.

As one who has received grace, welcome your neighbor

Dear saints, we have not been raised above others just because we heard the gospel of the water and the Spirit first. We have come to know the grace we received from the Lord, and have become able to preach the gospel to the people who need that grace.

The elderly, too, need this remission of sins. The strangers who live among us also need this salvation. We must not close our hearts even to preaching the gospel on the ground that there is an unfamiliar language and culture. We must take care that that person, too, may know and believe in Jesus Christ, in whom we have believed and received the remission of sins. At the same time, we must actually follow the word that says to honor and care for him.

Rely on God, who saved us. Honor the elderly, and love the strangers who live with you as yourselves. Remember the fact that we are people who received grace first. Believing in the Lord, who bore the sin of all peoples and gives the remission of sins without distinction, let us live a life that brings that love to the people beside us. ✉

Sermon 8 by Paul C. Jong

Live honestly before God, who has given us the remission of sins

< Leviticus 19:35-37 >

"You shall do no injustice in judgment, in measurement of length, weight, or volume. You shall have honest scales, honest weights, an honest ephah, and an honest hin: I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe all My statutes and all My judgments, and perform them: I am the LORD."

God examines even the scales we use

Dear beloved saints, as God brought Leviticus chapter 19 to a close, He commanded that no injustice be done in judgment or in weights and measures. It is a word that teaches how concretely fairness must appear in the life of the people who believe in God.

The weights and measures of verse 35 refer to the standards by which length, volume, and weight are measured. Just as one must judge right and wrong correctly in judgment, one must also measure quantities correctly when buying and selling goods. The command of God applies in the same way to the place where people's rights are decided and to the place where grain is weighed out.

In verse 36, He speaks one by one of scales, weights, the

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ephah, and the hin. Scales weigh, and weights become the standard by which that weight is judged. The ephah is a unit for measuring the quantity of things such as grain or flour, and the hin is a unit for measuring the quantity of liquids such as oil or wine. To each of them God attached the word *"honest."*

Even if the scales look fine, if the weight that serves as the standard is wrong, one cannot measure the exact weight. Even if there is a vessel for holding the goods, if one gives less than the appointed quantity while claiming to have given it properly, one deceives the other person. God examines not only the words of the one who trades, but also whether those words agree with the actual quantity.

This word applies concretely to us today as well. We must look back on whether we fill the promised quantity, whether what we explained and what we actually provide are the same, and whether we do not hide what is lacking on the ground that the other person finds it hard to check. A small difference does not become a fair transaction just because the other person did not notice it. God knows even that difference and the heart that seeks to hide it.

Even when weighing our own wrongs, we must be honest before the word

Before the word that commands honest scales, we must examine our own hearts as well. People easily try to receive exactly what they are to receive, while thinking it is all right if what they are to give to others is a little lacking. When the other person breaks a promise, they make a great issue of it, but when they themselves break a promise, they explain that there were circumstances.

The heart that sets up a standard favorable to oneself in this way keeps us from acknowledging our wrongs. If we take the same attitude before God, we cannot see our sins rightly. It is because we try to cover the injustice revealed now with the thought that we have done less wrong than others, or with the memory of having done good in other matters.

But the word of God does not change the standard of sin according to our circumstances. My deceiving does not become an honest act just because another person has committed a greater wrong. Nor does a wrong I have hidden disappear just because I have usually been well regarded.

For us to receive the remission of sins, we must first acknowledge ourselves before this word. We must accept that we are people who cannot be called righteous before God by our own deeds. While we are making our wrongs look small, it is hard to rely on the grace of the Lord, who settles sin.

That God has given us a word that reveals our sins means that He makes us know the fact that we need salvation. If we have realized our sin, we must now turn our hearts to Jesus Christ, who bore that sin.

Jesus received baptism from John and bore our sins

God is righteous. The will of God that judgment follows sin does not change. Yet this God had compassion on sinners and also prepared the way for them to receive the remission of sins. Jesus Christ bore our sins and received the judgment for those sins.

Matthew 3:15 says: *"But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him."*

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Jesus received baptism from John in the Jordan River. Just as sin was passed on to the offering of the Old Testament by the laying on of hands, Jesus had the sin of mankind passed on to Him by receiving baptism from John. This is how He fulfilled the righteous will of God to save sinners.

In John 1:29, John testified of Jesus, saying, *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"* Jesus went to the Cross as the Lamb of God who bore the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John. There, by shedding His blood and dying, He received in our place the judgment of sin we were to receive, and He rose again from death and became our Savior.

Dear fellow believers, in the sin of the world the Lord bore, our injustice is included as well. The sin of deceiving others to gain profit, the sin of making excuses to hide our own wrongs, and the sin of trying to take care only of our own share inwardly while pretending to be fair outwardly were also borne by the Lord. The Lord bore not only the sins we remember but even the sins we have not yet realized.

Therefore the assurance of the remission of sins must be placed on the salvation Jesus accomplished. The resolution to live honestly from now on cannot take the place of the price of the sins already committed. The baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross are the ground of the remission of our sins. The one who believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit is washed from all sins and becomes righteous. God gives the Holy Spirit to this believer.

Having one's heart put at ease by taking sin lightly, and obtaining peace by believing that the Lord has completely settled that sin, are different things. Even while knowing the heaviness of sin, we can give thanks because the salvation the Lord accomplished is perfect.

God, who saved us, commands us to live honestly

In verse 36, after commanding honest weights and measures, God said like this: *"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt"*

Why did He speak of having brought them out of Egypt together with the word commanding honest trade? It was to remind the people who heard this command by whose grace they were living. Israel was the people God had delivered out of Egypt. God, who saved them, now rules their lives.

We must engrave this order on our hearts. God commanded the people He had brought out of Egypt to live fairly. Today we, too, as people who have received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, live according to the word of God. Honesty cannot be the price that buys the remission of sins, but the will of God, who commands honesty of the one who has received the remission of sins, is clear.

Even after being saved, we are tempted to put our own profit first. At exactly that time we must remember who it is that saved us. God, who delivered me from sin, is watching this transaction too, and tells me to give rightly what I ought to give to the other person.

A heart that tries to be honest only when people are watching is not enough. We need the faith that we live before God, who saved us. It is choosing the way God calls right, even if the other person does not recognize it.

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Let us not hide our wrongs, but set them right by faith

Then what must the one who has received the remission of sins do when he discovers his own injustice? He must acknowledge what he has done wrong, believe in the salvation of the Lord, who bore even that sin, and actually set right what was wrong.

If we gave less than the promised quantity, we must make up what is lacking. If we received more through a miscalculation, we must make that fact known and return it. If we explained something contrary to the facts on the ground that the other person did not know the details well, we must explain it correctly. This is following the command of God in our lives.

We do not newly produce the remission of sins by these acts. The remission of sins was accomplished by the Lord. As people who believe in that grace, we have no reason to keep holding on to unjust acts. Acknowledging sin, and admitting our wrong to the other person, are things we can also carry out relying on the salvation the Lord has given.

Doing the work of serving the gospel does not mean that one may be unjust in everyday transactions. One must not reduce the share one ought to give to the other person while putting forward a good purpose. The gospel we preach is the news that God bore sin and received the judgment and so saved us. The one who believes in this precious gospel must apply the word to the injustice he himself commits as well.

With hearts thankful to the Lord, let us explain honestly, faithfully provide what we promised, and set things right when a wrong is revealed. It is with the faith that has received the remission of sins that we learn such a life.

Let us live with all the words of God in our hearts

Verse 37 says: *"You shall observe all My statutes and all My judgments, and perform them: I am the LORD"*

As God brought Leviticus chapter 19 to a close, He said to observe and perform all His ordinances and judgments. We must lay down the attitude of picking out and hearing only the commands we like, or of trying to obey only when there is no loss to us. God, who rules us in the place of worship, is our God also in the place where we buy and sell goods and make promises with people.

Dear beloved saints, our righteousness was accomplished by the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross. We who have received the remission of sins by believing in this salvation must now live according to the will of God, who saved us.

Casting away the heart that used to change the standard to its own advantage, let us stand honestly before the word of God. Firmly believing in the remission of sins the Lord has given, let us act fairly. I hope that in our small transactions and promises, too, the faith that fears God, who saved us, will be revealed. ✉

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Questions and Answers on Leviticus Chapter 19

[Question] 1. Leviticus 19:3—what is God's intent in giving the Sabbath, and what rest does He teach through that day?

The Sabbath is the day God set apart for remembering that He rested after finishing the work of creation, and for enjoying the rest He gives. By stopping the work they were doing and keeping that day holy, Israel had to acknowledge that their lives and everything they had belonged to God. This rest was given not only to themselves but also to their children and servants and to the strangers who dwelt with them (Genesis 2:2–3; Exodus 20:8–11).

The meaning of the Sabbath does not remain only in the outward act of not working. What matters is to believe in what God has done and to obtain rest in Him. Spiritually, this rest is connected with the salvation Jesus Christ accomplished. Jesus bore our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose again from death.

By believing in this salvation, we receive the remission of sins and enjoy true rest. It means leaving behind the mindset of striving to solve the problem of sin by one's own efforts, and living in a peaceful relationship with God, relying on the salvation the Lord accomplished.

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[Question] 2. Leviticus 19:3—what can we learn from the fact that He commanded honoring one's parents and keeping the Sabbath together?

We can learn that the faith that fears God must appear together with the attitude of treating people in the home. The word that says to revere one's parents means not to take them lightly but to respect them, and the word that says to keep the Sabbath is a command to respect the day God has set apart and His will.

One must not look down on one's parents while worshiping God, nor neglect serving God on the ground of honoring one's parents. God commanded the two things together. This means that faith and life are not separate from each other.

Therefore the people of God must value the labors of their parents and honor them in word and deed, and must also remember the grace God has bestowed. The heart that fears God must be revealed beginning with how one treats one's close family.

[Question] 3. Leviticus 19:4—what do the *'idols'* that God said not to serve refer to?

The *"idols"* refer to the idols served in the place of God. When we look at the word that follows, not to make molded gods, we can see that it is a command concerning the objects people make and serve as gods. Even if its outward form is grand or it is made of precious materials, it cannot become the true God or save people.

The One whom Israel was to believe in and serve was the LORD God, who had saved them. Therefore they were not to

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leave God and set their hearts on idols made by people. This word makes us today, too, examine whether we are not relying on possessions or our own desires more than on God. What matters is not what we have, but what we believe in and follow as if it were God.

[Question] 4. Leviticus 19:5—how must the peace offering be offered in order to be a peace offering that God accepts?

It must be offered according to the ordinance God has appointed. To offer it *"that ye may be accepted"* means to offer it so that it becomes a sacrifice God gladly receives. A sacrifice was not offered rightly by the mere fact that an offering had been brought; from offering the sacrifice to eating that offering, they had to follow the command of God.

In verses 6–8 that follow, He appoints the period within which the flesh could be eaten, and says that if it is eaten on the third day, that sacrifice is not accepted. The ordinance of God could not be changed on the ground that a person's devotion was great or that the offering seemed a waste.

This word teaches that in serving God, we must first know His will. We, too, rather than putting forward our own merits, must draw near to God with thankful hearts, believing in the salvation of Jesus Christ, who sacrificed Himself for us and reconciled us with God.

[Question] 5. Leviticus 19:6–8—until when could the flesh of the sacrifice of the peace offering be eaten, and what had to be done with what remained?

In this passage, it could be eaten on the day the offering was presented and on the next day, and what remained until the third day had to be burned. On the third day none of it was to be eaten at all. He said that eating it would be profaning the hallowed offering of the LORD, that one would bear guilt for it, and that that person would be cut off from his people.

However, the same period does not apply to every kind of peace offering. According to Leviticus 7:15–18, the peace offering offered for thanksgiving had to be eaten on the day it was offered, and an offering of a vow or a voluntary offering could be eaten until the next day. The two-day period in Leviticus chapter 19 must not be applied in the same way to the thanksgiving offering.

This ordinance gives the lesson that people must not handle the hallowed things offered to God as suits their own convenience. Even the enjoyment of them in thanksgiving to God had to take place while respecting the word God had appointed.

[Question] 6. Leviticus 19:9–10—what does His having them leave part of the grain and grapes at harvest teach about love for one's neighbor?

It is the lesson to take care that the poor and the stranger may obtain food. God said not to reap all the way to the corners of the field and not to gather the fallen ears of grain. The fruit of

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the vineyard, too, was not to be picked without leaving any, nor was the fallen fruit to be gathered; it had to be left for the neighbors who needed help.

This command made them think of their neighbor from the very stage of harvesting. They were not to set their hearts only on increasing their own income as much as possible, but had to take care, through what they had, that people in difficulty could live. That He included the stranger among those to be cared for shows the meaning that love must not be limited only to one's own people or those close to oneself.

We, too, while enjoying what God has given, must look after the people in difficulty around us. Love of neighbor must not stop at sympathy in the heart, but must appear in the act of actually sharing food and the help that is needed.

[Question] 7. Leviticus 19:11–12—why, while forbidding stealing and lying, did He say not to profane the name of God?

It is because stealing, deceiving, and lying are sins that take away what belongs to one's neighbor and break the trust between people. God said that His people were not to do these things, and then commanded them not to swear falsely by the name of God.

In particular, making a falsehood believed to be true by putting forward the name of God is using the name of God for one's own deception. Because it puts forward the truthful God as if He were the guarantor of a lie, it profanes His name. Therefore acting honestly toward one's neighbor and respecting the name of God are connected with each other.

The people of God must examine their words and their

actions together. Knowing the fact that falsehood and deceit begin in the heart, they must acknowledge their wrongs rather than hide them, and turn back honestly. The confession of believing in God must lead to a truthful life in dealing with one's neighbor.

[Question] 8. Leviticus 19:13—what does the command not to oppress one's neighbor and to pay a worker's wages on time teach?

It is the lesson that a person who has power or wealth must not take advantage of the weak position of his neighbor, but must honestly give him what is rightly due to him. He forbade oppressing one's neighbor or robbing him by force, and said not to keep until morning the payment a hired worker had earned.

For a person who lived on a day's wages, putting off payment could be something that made his immediate livelihood difficult. Deuteronomy 24:14–15 also explains that the poor hired worker waits anxiously for his wages, and so says to give them on the same day. The one who held the money to be given to the one who had worked had to think of the other person's circumstances rather than his own convenience.

This word teaches that the faith that fears God must appear also in the attitude with which one handles work and money. One must not take lightly the labor of others or oppress people through economic power, but must give on time what one ought to give, and respect the lives of one's neighbors.

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[Question] 9. Leviticus 19:16—what kind of words does the command not to *'go about as a talebearer'* here and there among people tell us to refrain from?

In this context, *"You shall not go about as a talebearer"* means not to go around among people spreading words that speak ill of others or harmful rumors. Words that expose and slander another person's faults harm that person's reputation and relationships, and can sometimes even endanger his life. That is why the passage also gives the command not to act against one's neighbor so as to bring him to the point of death.

This does not forbid everything that discerns right from wrong or exhorts someone about a wrong. In verse 15, He said to judge fairly, and in verse 17, He exhorted them to set right the wrongs of their neighbor. Spreading words in order to harm someone must be distinguished from truthfully exhorting that person so that he may go the right way.

Therefore, before speaking, one must examine whether those words are true, with what heart one passes them on, and what effect they will have on one's neighbor. One must not carry the hatred and the evil thoughts of the heart straight into words, but must value the life and the reputation of one's neighbor.

[Question] 10. Leviticus 19:32—what does the word that says to rise before a gray-headed elder tell us about how to treat the elderly?

It means to respect the aged and to show that honor in action. The *"gray headed"* refers to the elderly, and rising before them is a sign that one regards the other person as precious. God gave

the command to honor the presence of an old man together with the command to fear God.

Therefore honoring the elderly does not end with outward politeness. One must not speak carelessly to them or ignore them because they are old, but must look into what is uncomfortable for them and the help they need. Small acts such as considerately offering a seat and helping an elder whose body is weak are also concrete forms of honor.

The one who fears God does not treat the person before him carelessly. Through a life of respecting and caring for the elderly, he must actually follow the word of God. ✉

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CHAPTER

20

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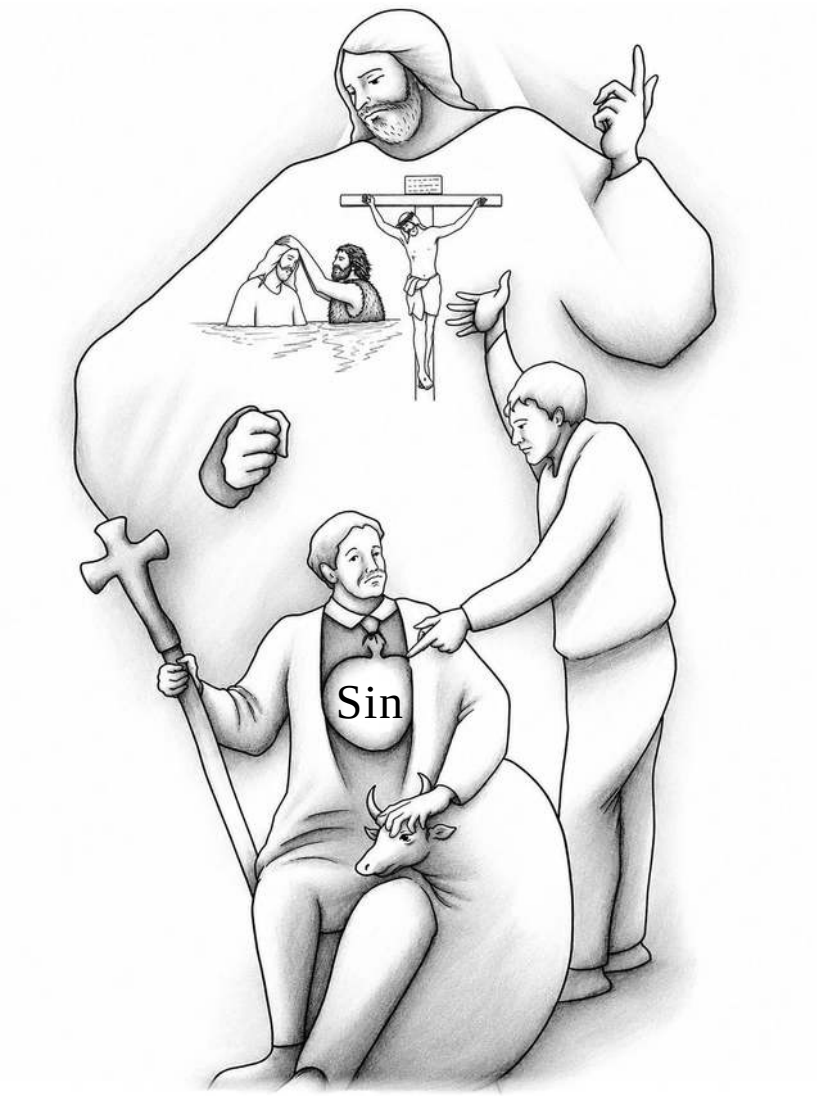

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Leviticus Chapter 20 seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Leviticus 20:1–9—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The word of the passage

"Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, Again, you shall say to the children of Israel: Whoever of the children of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell in Israel, who gives any of his descendants to Molech, he shall surely be put to death. The people of the land shall stone him with stones. I will set My face against that man, and will cut him off from his people, because he has given some of his descendants to Molech, to defile My sanctuary and profane My holy name. And if the people of the land should in any way hide their eyes from the man, when he gives some of his descendants to Molech, and they do not kill him, then I will set My face against that man and against his family; and I will cut him off from his people, and all who prostitute themselves with him to commit harlotry with Molech. (And the soul that turneth unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto the wizards, to play the harlot after them, I will even

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set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people –ASV). Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am the LORD your God. And you shall keep My statutes, and perform them: I am the LORD who sanctifies you. For everyone who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death. He has cursed his father or his mother. His blood shall be upon him" (Leviticus 20:1–9).

If Leviticus chapter 18 centers on the prohibition not to practice the abominable customs of Canaan, Leviticus chapter 20 shows how the covenant community was actually to deal with such sins. Very severe punishments appear in the passage, but at their center are the holiness of God, the dignity of human life, and the covenant loyalty by which God alone is to be served.

2. *"Of the children of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell in Israel"*

Verse 2 forbids the act of giving one's child to Molech not only to the Israelites but also to the strangers dwelling among Israel.

The standard by which God protects life does not change according to nation or status. It is not that the child of an Israelite is protected while the child of a stranger is of no concern. The act of sacrificing a child to an idol, whoever it occurs among, is equally a sin that destroys life and blasphemes the name of God.

This word shows the fact that the righteousness of God is universal. A person who lived close to the people of God and received the protection of that community had to respect life regardless of bloodline.

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3. *"Gives any of his descendants to Molech"*

Molech is connected with the idols served by the nations around Israel. When we read Leviticus 18:21 and Deuteronomy 12:31 together, giving a child to Molech refers to the abominable idolatry of making the child pass through the fire or offering the child as an actual sacrifice.

To offer the life of a child to an idol is a cruel act. Today, too, we must examine a life that serves money or success more than God and sacrifices children and neighbors.

This act contains at least three sins at the same time.

First, it is the sin of serving an idol instead of God.

Second, it is the sin of treating the life of a child, which God has given, as the parent's possession and destroying it.

Third, it is the sin of sacrificing the life of a powerless child in the name of a religious act.

Parents are people entrusted with the life of their children and responsible for protecting it, not people who have the right to use the life of their children to fulfill their own desires. God never accepts the destruction of life carried out in the name of the religious zeal of parents either.

4. "Shall surely be put to death… shall stone him"

This punishment must be understood against the background that Old Testament Israel was a theocratic community under the direct covenant rule of God. Idolatry and child sacrifice were not merely a personal religious choice but crimes that destroyed the covenant and the order of life of the community.

However, this word must not be interpreted as grounds for Christians or the church today to stone or kill idolaters or

unbelievers.

The church of the New Testament is not a community that has received the judicial authority of a state like Old Testament Israel. The discipline the church can carry out is to bring sin to light by the word, to exhort repentance, and, when a person persists in evil to the end, to separate him from the community. In 1 Corinthians 5:13, too, the discipline of the church appears in the form of putting the evil person out of the community. Criminal punishment for crimes must be handled by legitimate judicial institutions of the state.

Therefore what must be taken directly from this penal provision today is not private execution but the following facts.

—Idolatry is not a light matter of taste.

—Destroying the life of children and the weak is an extremely grave sin before God.

—Sin cannot be rationalized in the name of faith or tradition.

—God does not acknowledge a religion that destroys life as holy faith.

5. *"To defile My sanctuary and profane My holy name"*

God says that giving one's child to Molech is a sin that defiles His sanctuary and profanes His holy name.

This means that the life of worshiping God and the life outside the sanctuary cannot be separated. If a person offers sacrifices to God in the tabernacle while offering his child to an idol elsewhere, that person's idolatry comes to defile even the sanctuary of God.

When a person who calls on the name of God destroys life, the name of God is profaned. If, while saying that one serves God, one makes one's children the tools of one's own ambition

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at home, sacrifices the weak, and covers violence with religious authority, one is not hallowing the name of God but profaning it.

If the words that preach the gospel and one's actual life are completely opposite, people come to misunderstand not only that person but even the God he says he believes in.

6. *"The people of the land should in any way hide their eyes"*

Verse 4 rebukes not only the person who offered his child to Molech but also the community that hides its eyes while seeing it.

God says not to leave the destruction of life alone as a personal matter. Especially if the victim is a child who cannot protect himself, the community must intervene all the more responsibly.

To "hide their eyes" does not mean simply that they happened not to see. It is the attitude of looking away while knowing, for fear that some disadvantage might come to oneself, keeping silent lest a relationship become uncomfortable, and condoning on the ground of custom.

If we apply this word today, we must guard against covering up, while knowing of them, such clear violations of life as child abuse, domestic violence, human trafficking, and religious exploitation. Silencing the victim on the ground of protecting the honor of the church is not protecting the holy name of God. Rather, by hiding one's eyes from sin, one can profane the name of God even more.

However, it is not right either to call every mistake in child-rearing or every strictness of parents Molech worship. The Molech worship of the passage is the actual destruction of life.

The modern application must lie in discerning its essence, namely the structure in which a powerless child is sacrificed for the benefit of the parents or the community.

7. *"I will set My face against that man and against his family"*

Verse 5 says that God will set His face against that man and against his family, and will cut off from among the people that man and all who follow his example in serving Molech.

Here it speaks of the wrath and the judgment God Himself brings. This must not be changed into a command for people to punish other family members as well merely because they are family. Deuteronomy 24:16 commands that in human judgment parents and children are not to be put to death for each other's sin, but each person is to be dealt with according to his own sin.

What is emphasized here is the fact that Molech worship does not end as one person's secret act but pollutes the whole family and group and spreads to other people. Verse 5, too, particularly points out those who serve Molech *"with him,"* following his example.

Sin begins as a personal choice, but if it is left alone, it becomes a culture, a tradition, and a structure. If one generation serves an idol, the next generation learns it as something normal. Therefore God sternly prevents sin from hardening into the customs of the whole community.

8. *"To commit harlotry with Molech"*

Here the word *"harlotry"* does not necessarily mean sexual

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acts only. It likens the act of the people who made a covenant with God leaving Him and serving another god to the fornication that breaks the covenant of marriage.

Israel was a people who belonged to the LORD God. Yet if, while receiving life and protection from God, they sought blessing from Molech, that was spiritual betrayal.

Even a person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit can believe in God with his lips only while seeking his actual security and future in fortune-telling, possessions, power, or the recognition of people. Of course, earning money and making plans are not in themselves idolatry. But if one trusts them more than the word of God, and sacrifices people, conscience, and the gospel in order to obtain them, one has seated another master on the throne of one's heart.

9. The sin of seeking after mediums and wizards

The mediums of verse 6 refer to those who claim to make contact with the spirits of the dead or other spiritual beings, and here "*the wizards*" is an old expression that refers to male shamans or spirit mediums.

The people of Israel had to seek from God the future, their destiny, and the solution to their problems. Yet to seek after mediums and wizards is to leave the word of God and try to obtain guidance and information from another spiritual power.

Today this can continue in the form of trying to find out the future by relying on shamans, the calling up of the dead, fortune-telling by one's birth date, fortune-telling, and spirit mediumship. One may say lightly that it was merely cultural play, but if in one's heart one trusts it, fears it, and entrusts one's decisions to it, one is relying not on God but on another spiritual channel.

The Holy Spirit is not a spirit of fortune-telling. The Holy Spirit testifies of the salvation Jesus Christ accomplished and leads people into the word of God. The guidance of the Holy Spirit is not secret information to satisfy curiosity, but the work that leads one to believe in Jesus Christ and to live in truth, love, and holiness.

10. *"Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy"*

If verse 7 is taken by itself, it can look like a word telling people to make themselves clean by their own efforts and be saved. But immediately afterward, in verse 8, God says like this.

"I am the LORD who sanctifies you"

Verse 7 speaks of human responsibility, and verse 8 speaks of the fact that the One who sanctifies is God. The two words do not conflict with each other.

For a person to consecrate himself does not mean that he erases his sins by his own merit and becomes a righteous person. It is the responsibility to acknowledge an idol as an idol and cut it off, to separate oneself from fortune-telling and evil customs, and to follow the word of God.

But no one can wash away all the sins of the heart by human resolve and effort alone. Fundamentally, the One who sanctifies the sinner is God. God appointed the law of sacrifice for atonement for the sinner, and has sanctified the one who believes in the salvation Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross.

Therefore the order of holiness is as follows.

—God says what sin is.

—A person acknowledges his sin before the word.

—He receives by faith the atonement God has prepared.

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—The person who has received the remission of sins casts away idols and lives according to the word of God.

11. Judgment seen within the gospel of the water and the Spirit

In Leviticus chapter 20, the heavy words *"shall surely be put to death," "I will set My face against,"* and *"will cut him off"* are repeated. This shows the fact that the wages of sin is death.

A person does not become a perfectly righteous person before God just because he has not offered his child to Molech. In our hearts, too, there was the idolatry of relying on other things more than on God; we made other people the tools of our own desires; and there was the sin of hating and cursing our parents.

Therefore this word first reveals that all of us are under the judgment of God. But God did not end with destroying the sinner; He established the law of salvation.

Jesus bore all the sins of the world with the baptism He received from John. The sin of serving idols like Molech, the sin of relying on other spiritual powers, the sin of cursing one's parents, and even the sin of hiding one's eyes from evil while knowing of it were passed on to Jesus.

Bearing that sin, Jesus was hung on the Cross and shed His blood, and so received the judgment of death and curse that the law demands. And by rising again from death, Jesus became the Savior of those who believe.

Therefore the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not lower the seriousness of sin. Rather, it shows why Jesus had to receive baptism from John and die on the Cross. The punishment of death that appears in the passage shows how heavy our sins

are, and the Cross shows the fact that Jesus Himself bore the judgment of those heavy sins.

12. *"You shall keep My statutes, and perform them"*

In the ordinances of God, there are both the law of atonement that sanctifies the sinner and the rules for life that the people of God must follow. We believe in the salvation God has appointed and receive the remission of sins, and live following God, who has sanctified us. It is not that we obtain salvation by making our own works perfect.

Here there is a very important order.

It is not the obedience that tries to pay the price of salvation by one's own works, but the obedience that believes in and follows the salvation God has accomplished.

The person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the baptism Jesus received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His rising again from death does not ask about the future from any being other than God. He does not sacrifice children and the weak for his own success, and he does not hide his eyes from evil for convenience while knowing of it.

Of course, even a saved person has the flesh and can fall short. But he does not change a wrong into something that is not wrong. He acknowledges that the word of God is right, acknowledges his own sin, looks to Jesus, who bore even that sin, and turns back again to the right way.

13. The sin of cursing one's parents

Verse 9 deals very sternly with the sin of cursing one's

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parents. Here, cursing must not be reduced to the degree of having disagreed once with the opinion of one's parents or having expressed a momentary hurt. It refers to the rebellious attitude of despising one's parents, speaking evil of them, and deliberately destroying the basic order of life between parents and children.

Jesus, too, mentioned this word in Matthew 15:4 and rebuked the hypocrisy of not caring for one's parents on the pretext of religious tradition. Honoring one's parents must appear not in merely saying with words that one respects them, but in actual care and responsibility.

However, honoring one's parents does not mean obeying unconditionally everything they say. If parents demand idolatry or a crime, one must obey God. If parents abuse their child, the victim may keep a safe distance and ask for legitimate help.

Discerning the wrongs of one's parents must be distinguished from hating and cursing them. There is no need to call the sin of one's parents right, but neither is it the will of God to give oneself over to hatred and a vengeful heart.

14. *"His blood shall be upon him"*

This expression is a legal declaration that the responsibility for the death that came upon that person lies in his own sin. It does not mean that God arbitrarily causes a person without sin to die, but that he himself destroyed the covenant order of life and brought the judgment upon himself.

Before this word we must not look only at the sins of others. We, too, have wounded our parents and other people with our lips, hated them in our hearts, and relied on other things more than on God. Therefore there is no one who can claim his own

righteousness.

But here the gospel shows an amazing fact. Jesus bore the judgment of sin that originally had to come back upon us. Because Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John, He shed His blood and died on the Cross in our place.

The one who believes relies on this salvation and escapes from condemnation. At the same time, because he knows the love of Jesus, who died for him, he seeks not to return to the way of idols, hatred, and the destruction of life.

15. Application for today

Leviticus 20:1–9 asks us as follows.

—Am I not relying on money, success, and the recognition of people more than on the word of God?

—Am I not sacrificing my children for my own dreams and reputation?

—Am I not hiding my eyes, while knowing of it, from the abuse and exploitation that take place in the home or the church?

—When I am anxious, am I not seeking fortune-telling, horoscopes, and other spiritual channels rather than praying to God?

—Am I not cursing and hating my parents in my heart on the ground of discerning their wrongs?

—Am I not using the words “I have received the remission of sins” as a pretext for disregarding the holy ordinances of God?

If your shortcomings are revealed before these questions, it is not a matter of despairing, saying that you have become a sinner again. Nor, however, may you rationalize them as not being sin.

You must honestly acknowledge the wrong, and believe the

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fact that Jesus has already borne that sin with the baptism He received from John and received its judgment on the Cross. And following the help of the Holy Spirit, you must cut off idols, protect the victims, honor your parents, and turn to the way of giving life.

Conclusion

Leviticus 20:1–9 shows the fact that the holiness of God is not an abstract religious feeling. Serving God in holiness appears in the actual life of casting away idols, protecting the lives of children and the weak, refusing fortune-telling, and honoring one's parents.

But no one can keep this word perfectly and become holy by his own strength. That is why God Himself has sanctified us.

Jesus bore all our sin with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and saved us by rising again from death. The one who believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a person who lives bound by the fear of judgment, but a person who, because of the grace of God, who has sanctified him, casts away idols, preserves life, and lives preaching and serving the gospel of the water and the Spirit together with the church.

Leviticus 20:10–16—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The central meaning of Leviticus 20:10–16

If Leviticus chapter 18 listed the forbidden sexual relations, chapter 20 stipulates the punishment to be received within the covenant community of Israel when such sins were committed. God dealt sternly with these actual sins and commanded the people to depart from them.

At the same time, seen in the light of the New Testament, such severe punishments show how serious sin is before God and that people cannot become righteous by themselves. The gospel of the water and the Spirit is the salvation of God that removes the judgment of this sin, but it is not a gospel that changes sin itself into something good or harmless.

—Verse 10—Adultery is a sin that betrays the covenant of marriage and one's neighbor at the same time. The expression *"he who commits adultery with his neighbor's wife"* shows that adultery does not end as a personal sexual choice. It is a sin that breaks the covenant of marriage made before God and destroys the lives of one's spouse, children, and neighbor.

That the passage mentions *"the adulterer and the adulteress"* together means that when a man and a woman took part in adultery voluntarily, both were responsible. One must not put the responsibility on the woman alone or take the sin of the man lightly. However, this provision must not be applied to the victims of assault, coercion, or sexual exploitation by power so as to condemn the victims as well. Deuteronomy 22:25–27, too, distinguishes the man who raped from the woman who was

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harmed, and says that there is in the woman who was harmed no sin deserving of death.

Jesus did not limit the problem of adultery to outward acts only, but shone light even on the lust of the heart (Matthew 5:27–28). Therefore, before this word, not only those who have actually committed adultery but all who harbor lust and secret desires must examine themselves.

—Verses 11–12—Incestuous relations tear down the boundaries of the family that God has established. The words of verse 11, *"Has uncovered his father's nakedness,"* include the meaning that a relationship with one's stepmother does not merely mean a sexual relationship with a person close by blood, but that one has violated the marriage relationship and the authority of one's father.

It is the same with the relationship with one's daughter-in-law in verse 12. A father-in-law is an elder of the family who must protect his daughter-in-law, not a person who is to make her a sexual object. Such relationships destroy the order of marriage and the trust within the family at the same time.

Today this word makes us guard all the more sternly against the sexual exploitation, grooming, and abuse of power that take place within the home. To force the silence of the victim in the name of family, or to cover up the matter on the ground of protecting the honor of the community, is contrary to the spirit of this word.

—Verse 13—The passage forbids sexual acts between a man and a man. Verse 13 defines as *"an abomination"* the act of a man having sexual relations with another man as he has sexual relations with a woman. If we respect the literal meaning of the passage, this prohibition cannot be turned into some other meaning.

But to apply this word rightly, the following two things must

be held together.

First, what the passage directly stipulates is a sexual act. The concept of sexual orientation in the modern sense, or the mere fact of feeling some temptation, must not be immediately identified with the punishable act of the passage.

Second, this sin must not be treated as if it were unique or a sin for which the remission of sins cannot be received. The same paragraph deals equally sternly with adultery, incestuous relations, and bestiality. 1 Corinthians 6:9–11, too, after listing together various kinds of sexual sins and covetousness and so on, testifies that such people have been washed, sanctified, and justified by the gospel.

Therefore this verse is not grounds for insulting or hating homosexuals. It is a word that reveals all people as sinners and demands of all sinners equally the gospel and repentance.

—Verse 14—Taking a wife and her mother together is wickedness that destroys the whole family. The passage calls this not mere impropriety but *"wickedness."* It is because for one man to take a woman and her mother together tears down the boundaries of marriage and kinship and makes one family the object of sexual desire.

The expression *"They shall be burned with fire"* is an extremely grave punishment given in the covenant law of ancient Israel. But it must not be claimed that the church today must carry out this punishment.

—Verses 15–16—Bestiality damages the boundaries of creation and human dignity. A human being is a being made in the image of God, and an animal is a creature entrusted to human beings to rule over and care for. Bestiality tears down the boundary between human beings and animals that God has appointed, corrupts the human body and sexuality, and uses an animal as a sexual object. Because an animal cannot give

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personal consent equal to that of a human being, bestiality also has the character of exploitation.

The passage commands that not only the person who committed bestiality but also the animal be killed. However, the concrete reason for having the animal killed as well is not separately explained in the passage. One cannot conclude that it is a matter of holding the animal to the same moral guilt as a human being.

2. The meaning of *"Their blood shall be upon them"*

This expression is a legal declaration that the responsibility for the punishment lies with the offender himself. It does not mean that God laid the responsibility for bloodshed on an innocent person, but that the person himself bears the consequences of the sin he deliberately committed.

This is connected with the New Testament declaration that the wages of sin is death. Sin is not a mere mistake or imperfection; it goes against the holy order of God and surely brings judgment.

3. Then must the church of the New Testament also carry out this punishment?

No. The provision of the death penalty in Leviticus chapter 20 is a judicial punishment given in the age when Israel formed a covenant community and a state at the same time. The church of the New Testament is not a theocratic state like ancient Israel, and it has not received the authority to execute people.

That does not mean, however, that this word has lost all

meaning in the age of the New Testament.

—In the moral sense, it teaches that sexual sin is still sin.

—In the sense of the gospel, it shows how severe the judgment the sinner must receive is.

—In the sense of the church, it teaches that sin must not be covered up or normalized, but repentance and turning back must be exhorted.

—Sexual violence, abuse, and exploitation that are crimes in society must be handled by protecting the victims and entrusting these matters to legitimate judicial procedures.

The discipline of the church is for repentance and restoration, not for reenacting the death penalty of ancient Israel.

4. The connection with the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Before this word, no one can say, "I have not committed such sins, so I am righteous." The law of God reveals not only outward acts but also the lust, covetousness, falsehood, and disobedience of the heart. The law makes sin known as sin and declares that there is judgment for sin, but it cannot by itself make the sinner righteous.

It is at exactly this point that the gospel of the water and the Spirit appears.

Jesus bore the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, and received the judgment of that sin on the Cross. And by rising again from death, He showed that that atonement had been accomplished perfectly. The Holy Spirit testifies that this gospel is true, and causes those who believe to be born again as children of God.

If in Leviticus chapter 20 it was declared of the offender,

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"Their blood shall be upon them," within the gospel Jesus bore in the sinner's place the curse and the punishment the sinner had to receive. This is not because He regarded sin lightly, but because He actually paid the price of sin.

Therefore the gospel of the water and the Spirit proclaims two things at the same time.

—No sexual sin can be justified before the holiness of God.

—There is no sinner whose sin is greater than the atonement Jesus accomplished.

To believe in the gospel does not mean, "I will now not be judged, so I may live as I please." Because one has been saved from sin, one now lives using one's body and relationships according to the will of God.

5. The actual life of the one who believes in the gospel

The one who believes this word must live in the following direction.

—One must be faithful to one's spouse in body and heart.

—One must cut off the channels that can grow into adultery, such as pornography, secret sexual conversations, and emotional infidelity.

—One must clearly keep the physical and emotional boundaries between family members and relatives.

—One must protect minors and the weak from sexual exploitation.

—One must not silence the victim or put forward the honor of the community in order to hide one's own sin.

—One must call sin sin, but must not mock or hate particular people.

—When one has fallen, one must not rationalize the sin but

acknowledge it, cut off the evil relationship, and receive the help that is needed and responsible guidance.

—Before condemning the sin of others, one must examine one's own heart and life before the gospel.

Conclusion

Leviticus 20:10–16 exposes the seriousness of sexual sin, but the gospel of the New Testament shows Jesus Christ, who bore that judgment. Therefore the one who believes in the gospel neither takes sin lightly nor abandons the sinner in despair. One must bring sin clearly to light in the truth, believe in the perfect salvation Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection, and live a holy life according to the Spirit.

Leviticus 20:17–27—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The overall flow of the passage

Leviticus 20:17–21 deals with incestuous relations and sexual relations during the monthly period, and verses 22–26 explain why Israel had to keep these ordinances. The last verse, verse 27, sternly forbids mediums and male shamans, namely spirit mediumship, the calling up of the dead, and fortune-telling.

The center of this paragraph is verse 26.

"And you shall be holy to Me, for I the LORD am holy, and

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have separated you from the peoples, that you should be Mine."

Therefore each command is not a scattered prohibition of its own. They are connected in one flow: that the people who belong to God must be separated from the customs of the world in their bodies, their family relationships, their food, and even the object of their religious reliance.

2. Keep the sexual boundaries between brothers and sisters

Verse 17 forbids sexual relations between a brother and a sister who have the same father or the same mother. The words *"sees her nakedness and she sees his nakedness"* do not mean that they happened to see each other's bodies, but refer to having sexual relations.

God established the family not as an object of sexual desire but as a community of protection and trust. If the relationship between brothers and sisters turns into a sexual relationship, the order and safety of the family collapse. In particular, because coercion, enticement, and grooming due to differences of age and power can take place within the family, when applying this word today one must not condemn the victim as well. The responsibility of the one who coerced and of the one who was harmed is not the same.

The word *"they shall be cut off in the sight of their people"* is a declaration of stern judgment on this sin. The concrete manner of execution cannot be determined from this expression alone, but the meaning that God does not take this matter lightly as a private problem is clear.

3. Sexual relations with a woman in her monthly period

Verse 18 forbids deliberately having sexual relations with a woman in her monthly period. What is important here is the fact that the monthly period itself is not defined as a moral sin of the woman. The monthly period is a natural bodily phenomenon. The laws of cleanness in Leviticus do not always treat moral sin and ceremonial uncleanness the same way.

If we apply this ordinance to faith and life today, we can examine the following lessons.

—The meaning that blood and life are not to be handled carelessly

—The meaning that even human desires have boundaries God has appointed

—The meaning that one must respect the body and the condition of the other person

—The meaning that the people of God must place even their sexual life under the word of God

The saints of the New Testament do not carry out the ceremonial laws of cleanness of Israel as they are. Therefore a woman in her monthly period must not be treated like a sinner who cannot worship God, nor be socially isolated. But the lesson that physical desire is not unconditionally justified in every situation, and that consideration and self-control are needed even between husband and wife, is still important.

4. Relations with one's mother's sister, father's sister, or father's brother's wife

Verse 19 forbids sexual relations with one's mother's sister

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or father's sister. The expression *"uncover his near of kin"* means that one has violated not merely the body of one individual but the kinship boundaries of the whole family.

"His uncle's wife" in verse 20 refers to the wife of one's father's brother. Having relations with that woman is defined as having uncovered *"his uncle's nakedness."* This means that a relationship formed by marriage, too, must be respected as an actual family relationship.

The word *"they shall die childless"* is the covenant judgment of ancient Israel. But today one must not judge, merely from the fact that a person has no children, that that person has a hidden sexual sin or has received the curse of God. The passage is a verdict under the covenant law on a particular crime, not a word explaining the cause of all infertility and childlessness.

5. The problem of taking one's brother's wife

To take one's brother's wife is an act that violates the marriage covenant of one's brother and the order of the family. John the Baptist, too, rebuked Herod for having taken his brother's wife, saying it was not right (Mark 6:18).

On the other hand, Deuteronomy 25:5–6 lays down the provision of levirate marriage, that when brothers dwell together and one of them dies without a son, the husband's brother is to take the wife and raise up an heir for the dead brother. This separate provision must be examined together with the prohibition of Leviticus. In Leviticus 20:21 itself, there is no phrase limiting it only to the case where the brother is alive.

In 1 Corinthians chapter 5 appears the incident in which a person who had taken his father's wife was in the church. Paul does not command the church to carry out the death penalty of

Leviticus, but commands that the person be put out of the community so that he may repent. This shows the fact that the church of the New Testament inherits the moral sternness of Leviticus, but is not a community that carries out the death penalty system of the state of Israel.

6. *"The land … may not vomit you out"*

The expression in verse 22 that the land *"may not vomit you out"* shows that the land of Canaan is a covenant land under the rule of God. Because the nations who had lived there before had defiled that land with evil customs, they were judged, and if Israel committed the same sins, they could not escape the same judgment.

Therefore this word does not mean that the nation of Israel is essentially superior to other nations. God said that just as He had judged the sins of the nations of Canaan, He would judge Israel, too, if Israel committed the same sins.

Israel was not a people for whom anything was all right because they had been chosen. Rather, because they had been chosen, their responsibility to reveal the character of God was greater. The saints who have received the remission of sins through the gospel, too, cannot say, "We have been saved, so we may live however we like."

7. Separation begins from the grace of God

God first delivered Israel from Egypt and promised to give them a land flowing with milk and honey as their inheritance. Then He commanded them a separated life.

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The order is important.

It is not holy conduct in order to be saved, but a holy life lived because He saved them and made them His own people.

It is the same in the New Testament. It is not that a person first makes his own conduct clean and becomes one of the people of God. It is the person who has believed in the salvation Jesus accomplished, received the remission of sins, and become one of the people of God who lives a separated life following God, who saved him.

Therefore a holy life is not the price of salvation but the fruit the saved person bears.

8. Distinguish between clean animals and unclean animals

The people of Israel had to distinguish between the animals they could eat and the animals they could not eat according to the standard recorded in Leviticus chapter 11. Through this distinction between the clean and the unclean, God teaches the faith and the life of the saints as well.

This ordinance made the daily life of Israel itself a sign of the covenant. It made them remember, every time they ate, the fact that they were a people separated to God.

The New Testament teaches that no food in itself defiles the heart of a person (Mark 7:18–19). Also, the whole of the food ordinances of Israel was not laid as a burden on Gentile believers (Acts 15:19–29). Therefore the saints today do not become sinners before God by eating pork or certain seafood.

Chewing the cud refers to the life of faith that ruminates on the word of the remission of sins already received, and the split hoof refers to the life of the saints who live separated according

to the will of God. The saints, while acknowledging their shortcomings, must ruminate on the gospel that Jesus has washed away even those sins with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross. They must also believe in God without relying only on their own strength and gain, and live a life of serving the gospel together with the church.

9. Holiness speaks of both belonging and life

In verse 26 God says that He has *"separated you from the peoples."* The starting point of holiness lies not in Israel having made themselves holy, but in God having separated them as His own possession.

In the New Testament this word is fulfilled in Christ. 1 Peter 2:9 calls those who believe in the gospel a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people. This speaks not of national superiority but of salvation and belonging.

Holiness has two aspects.

—Holiness of status: having had one's sins washed away by the redemption of Jesus Christ and having come to belong to God

—Holiness of life: living as befits a person who belongs to God, discerning the desires of the flesh and the customs of the world

Holiness of life does not wash away our sins. But the faith that one has received the remission of sins surely turns the direction of one's life toward God.

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10. Why mediums and male shamans were forbidden

Mediums and male shamans refer to people who claim to make contact with the souls of the dead or other spiritual beings and tell fortunes or try to find out the future and hidden things.

The reason God sternly forbade this is not simply because it is strange behavior. It is because it is idolatry that seeks from other spiritual powers the guidance and protection that must be sought from God. Fortune-telling and the calling up of the dead are also attempts by people to control the future without trusting God.

The church of the New Testament has no authority to carry out the punishment of stoning in verse 27. But the act of making fortune-telling, shamanism, spirit mediumship, the calling up of the dead, and fortune-telling by one's birth date or fortune-telling results an object of religious reliance must be clearly refused. In Acts chapter 19, too, those who believed in the gospel are shown throwing away of their own accord the books they had used for magic.

At the same time, mental illness or neurological symptoms must not be unconditionally concluded to be demons or a phenomenon of spirit mediumship. A person who needs treatment must be enabled to receive appropriate medical and psychological help.

11. The connection with the gospel of the water and the Spirit

This paragraph shows how easily human beings cross the boundaries of God in their bodies, their desires, and the object of their religious reliance. The law makes known what sin is, and

declares that there is judgment for that sin. But knowing the law does not make a person holy by himself.

In the earlier part of Leviticus chapter 20, God said, *"I am the LORD who sanctifies you."* God did not only command them to be holy, but Himself also prepared the way of salvation that sanctifies the sinner.

By receiving baptism from John, Jesus bore not only our incestuous adultery and fornication, our idolatry and fortune-telling, but even all the sin committed in the heart. And bearing that sin, He was hung on the Cross and received the judgment of sin, and rose again from death. The Holy Spirit testifies in the heart of the one who believes that this gospel is true.

Therefore the gospel of the water and the Spirit teaches the following two facts together.

—Before the word of God, we do not speak of sin as if it were not sin.

—We believe that all those sins have been completely borne and judged through the baptism and the Cross of Jesus.

The law declares, "You must bear your own sin," but the gospel proclaims that Jesus has borne that sin. That does not mean, however, that the gospel gives the freedom to keep enjoying sin. The person saved from the judgment of sin lives as the possession of God, who saved him.

12. The actual life of the one who believes in the gospel

The one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not hide his sin in order to make himself look righteous when his shortcomings are revealed. He acknowledges the sin, but he ruminates on the word that Jesus has already washed away even that sin with the baptism He received from John and the

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blood of the Cross, and makes his heart firm. And he actually puts in order the wrong channels of his life.

—He thoroughly keeps the sexual boundaries within the family.

—He protects the victims of sexual abuse and grooming and does not cover up the matter.

—He does not make his spouse and family the objects of his own desires.

—He does not depend on fortune-telling, the selling of prophecies, or spirit mediumship in the name of faith.

—When the future is uncertain, he relies on God through the word of God and prayer rather than on fortune-telling results.

—He does not follow the trends of the world unconditionally, but discerns good and evil according to the word.

—When he has committed sin, he does not rationalize it with the gospel as an excuse, but comes out of the relationships that lead him to take part in sin and turns back from the wrong way.

—He does not exalt himself by condemning the sins of others, but remembers that he, too, has received the remission of sins only by the grace of the Lord.

Conclusion

The conclusion of Leviticus 20:17–27 is not simply, “Do not do the forbidden things.” It is a word that says, since God has separated us as His own possession, live as befits people who belong to God. The gospel of the water and the Spirit is the gospel that not only saves the sinner from judgment but also turns the direction of that person’s body, relationships, and faith toward God. ✉

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

Cast away Molech and believe in the love of God, who has given us life

< Leviticus 20:1-5 >

"Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, Again, you shall say to the children of Israel: Whoever of the children of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell in Israel, who gives any of his descendants to Molech, he shall surely be put to death. The people of the land shall stone him with stones. I will set My face against that man, and will cut him off from his people, because he has given some of his descendants to Molech, to defile My sanctuary and profane My holy name. And if the people of the land should in any way hide their eyes from the man, when he gives some of his descendants to Molech, and they do not kill him, then I will set My face against that man and against his family; and I will cut him off from his people, and all who prostitute themselves with him to commit harlotry with Molech."

He sternly forbade giving one's child to Molech

Dear beloved saints, Leviticus chapter 20 begins with a stern word about the sin of giving one's child to Molech. God commanded that the person who committed this sin surely be put to death. Whether one of the children of Israel or a stranger

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staying among them, there was no exception before this command.

God had already said in Leviticus 18:21 as well: *"And you shall not let any of your descendants pass through the fire to Molech, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I am the LORD."*

Giving one's child to Molech was connected with the idolatry of making children pass through the fire. God said never to do that, and now in chapter 20 He clearly speaks even of the judgment that follows that sin.

Here we must know the fact that not everything is pleasing to God just because it is a religious act. Even if a person serves a god by offering something, if he does what God has forbidden, it is sin. No matter how great the devotion one claims to have put in, one cannot make holy a deed that harms the life of a child.

In faith, what matters is whom one serves and whose word one follows. A heart that leaves God, decides by its own thinking whom to serve, and is willing to put forth anything for that object cannot be true faith. It is from exactly that wrong way that God turns His people back.

Idolatry profanes the name of God

In verse 3, God says that the person who gave his child to Molech defiled His sanctuary and profaned His holy name. The holy name is the holy name of God. God did not deal with this sin as merely something that happened within one family. He dealt with it as something that went against His holiness in the midst of His people.

In the midst of Israel there were the sanctuary and the sacrifices God had appointed. God had prepared the way for the

people who had sin to come before Him and receive the remission of sins. Yet the people left that God and gave their children to Molech. They abandoned the word God had given and the way of serving Him.

If those who claim to be the people belonging to God do what God hates, that profanes His name. Calling on God with the mouth and believing in and following God with the heart must go together.

Before this word we, too, must examine our own faith. We must look back on whether we are learning from the word who God is, and whether we are believing in the salvation God has prepared. We must also examine whether we are not regarding what looks good to our own thinking as the will of God. Those who call on the name of God must all the more keep in their hearts what He has said.

He also holds responsible the community that looks the other way

Verse 4 speaks of the case in which the people of the land look the other way from a person giving his child to Molech. God did not stop at speaking only of the person who committed the sin. He dealt even with the attitude of those who knew of it and closed their eyes.

People easily think that it has nothing to do with them on the ground that they did not directly take part. But if one looks away while knowing that something harmful is happening, one lets that thing continue. In particular, keeping silent while seeing a powerless child being harmed is a problem that cannot be taken lightly.

In verse 5, God says that He will set His face against that

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man and against his family, and will cut off from among the people all who follow his example in serving Molech. He shows how fearful it is for one person's idolatry to spread to the family and the community. Just because people look the other way does not mean that God also does not see.

Also, the expression *"to commit harlotry with Molech" (Leviticus 20:5)* reveals the betrayal of giving to another object the heart that ought to be given to God. Here He is speaking of idolatry as an abandoning of one's relationship with God.

The punishment in this passage is a command given to the community of Israel at that time. Today we do not obtain the authority to harm other people by saying that we are following this word. What we are to do is to refuse to acknowledge sin as right, to protect those who are being harmed, and to deliver the truth so that those on the wrong way may return to God.

We must distinguish between having compassion for a person and justifying that person's sin. Leaving sin as it is cannot be love. What is needed is to make known the way to escape from sin and to exhort the person to return.

God sent His Son to give us life

When we read such a stern word, we come to think of the wrath of God. God does not take lightly idolatry and the sin of harming life. Then where can a person who left God and lived in sin obtain salvation?

We must know how God loved us. 1 John 4:9 says: *"In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him."*

The purpose for which God sent His Son was to give us life.

He sent Jesus Christ to give life to us, who were to be judged because of sin. Verse 10, which follows, speaks of that love even more clearly: *"In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."*

The remission of sins does not begin from what and how much we have offered. It begins from God first loving us and sending the Savior who would settle our sins. Jesus Christ became the propitiation that removes the sin that stood between us and God.

God, who forbade the act of giving one's child to Molech, Himself prepared the way to save sinners. We cannot produce a method of salvation by religious zeal. We must know the salvation God appointed and accomplished through Jesus Christ. We must receive that salvation by faith.

Jesus remitted sin with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross

Then how did Jesus remove our sins?

In the sacrifices of the Old Testament, sin was passed on to the sacrificial offering by the laying on of hands, and that offering died in the sinner's place. Through these sacrifices God showed the way of salvation in which sin is passed on to the offering and the offering receives the judgment of that sin vicariously.

Jesus, who came to this earth, received baptism from John at the Jordan River. We can read in Matthew 3:15 what Jesus said to John: *"But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him."*

By receiving baptism from John, Jesus bore all the sin of

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mankind. All the sin of the world was passed on to Him, including the sin of not knowing God and serving idols, the sin of putting one's own will before the will of God, and the sin of doing harm to other people.

Jesus, who had borne that sin with the baptism He received from John, was hung on the Cross and shed His blood and died. The Lord received in our place the judgment of sin we ought to have received. And He rose again from death and became our Savior. This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has given us.

Here is the reason we must believe in the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross together. It is because by being baptized the Lord bore our sins, and because of those sins He shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment. God did not leave sin as it was and say it was all right; He settled sin and its judgment through Jesus Christ.

The one who believes in this gospel receives the remission of sins. Even a person who lived without knowing God in the past, and even a person who relied on idols, is washed from all sins if he acknowledges his sins and believes in the salvation the Lord accomplished. God gives the Holy Spirit to this person who believes and makes him His child.

Let us believe in the grace of the remission of sins and treasure life

Dear beloved saints, if you have heard the word that God sternly judges sin, you must not try to hide or excuse sin. You must return to Jesus Christ, who came to give us life. You must believe in your heart the fact that when the Lord received baptism from John He bore my sins as well, and that on the Cross

He was judged in my place.

The act of having cast away idols does not in itself wash away past sins. The One who washed away our sins is Jesus Christ. Therefore to turn one's heart to God is to accept the remission of sins He accomplished and to follow His word.

We who have received this grace must treasure the lives of our children and our neighbors. What we must hand down to our children above all is the gospel of how God loved them. We must let them know the fact that Jesus received baptism from John and shed His blood on the Cross and so bore their sins as well. Our children, too, must be seen as souls who need the salvation of the Lord.

Within the community, too, we must not try to keep our comfort by looking the other way from sin. We must discern what is wrong by the word, care for the weak, and help those in sin to hear the gospel of salvation. Even when delivering the truth, we must have the heart that wishes for that person to return to the Lord and live.

Let us turn from the way of serving Molech. Let us set our hearts on God, who saved our lives. Believing in the remission of sins Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross, let us live within the love of God, who has given us life. ✉

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Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

Believe in the Lord, who has sanctified sinners, and follow His word

< Leviticus 20:6-9 >

"(And the soul that turneth unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto the wizards, to play the harlot after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people—ASV). Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am the LORD your God. And you shall keep My statutes, and perform them: I am the LORD who sanctifies you. For everyone who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death. He has cursed his father or his mother. His blood shall be upon him."

God sanctifies us

Dear beloved saints, in today's passage two words appear together. God commands the people to consecrate themselves and be holy. And immediately afterward He points to Himself and says that He is the LORD who sanctifies them.

We must receive these two words into our hearts together. We must not hear the command to be holy and think that we can remove sin by our own efforts. Nor may we take His commands lightly just because God makes us holy. God saves us from sin, and He also tells us, the saved, the way we are to follow.

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Today's passage shows that way concretely. He forbids following mediums and spiritists, commands that His ordinances be kept and performed, and deals sternly with the sin of cursing one's parents. He is teaching us that faith toward God and our life are not separate from each other.

Even when we are anxious, we must set our hearts on God

The mediums and wizards spoken of in verse 6 are those who practice such arts as calling up spirits and inquiring of them. God said that He would set His face against the person who seeks after them. He holds responsible not only the person who practices such arts but also the person who entrusts his heart to them and follows them.

People become anxious when they cannot know the future. When things do not go as they wish, they want someone to tell them clearly the reason and the solution. But one must not enter the way God has forbidden because of the desire to obtain such an answer.

The words *"to play the harlot after them"* in the passage reveal the betrayal of placing elsewhere the faith that ought to be given to God. It is calling God one's own God, yet when a difficulty arises, going to another spiritual authority and entrusting oneself to its words.

By what standard are we to live? We must take as our standard what God has said. God has told us how He saves us and what we are to believe. Even if our circumstances or our feelings change, the truth of the salvation God has accomplished does not change.

Therefore, when we are anxious, we must come to God and

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pray. We must ask for the help we need, examine the word, and seek the way that pleases God. Even without knowing all of the future right now, I can believe in God, who saved me from sin, and follow His word today. This is the faith that lives with one's heart set on God.

The command to be holy reveals our sins

In verse 7, God says: *"Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am the LORD your God."*

It means that the people who belong to God must not live accepting as they are the things that go against God. They must keep far from what He has called unclean and live according to His will.

But what happens when we set ourselves before this command? Can we say that we have kept even our hearts clean? Have we never believed our own thoughts more than God, or followed our own greed while knowing what God wants?

The word of God teaches us the good way, and at the same time it also reveals our sins that have strayed from that way. Therefore we must not hear the word to be holy and be satisfied with merely making our outward appearance neat. God knows our hearts and the sin within them.

If we had been able to wash away our sins by ourselves, there would have been no need for the Savior to come. We must acknowledge our sins and receive the way of the remission of sins God has prepared. Look at how God speaks of Himself in the very next verse: *"And you shall keep My statutes, and perform them: I am the LORD who sanctifies you" (Leviticus 20:8).*

The One who sanctifies us is God. While demanding holiness

from sinners, God also gave the way of salvation that would sanctify those sinners. We must go forward on the way He has appointed.

Even our words toward our parents are before God

Verse 9 speaks of the sin of cursing one's parents: *"For everyone who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death. He has cursed his father or his mother. His blood shall be upon him."*

This is a penal provision given to Israel at that time. God did not regard cursing one's parents as merely a quarrel that arose in the home. He held the offender responsible for that sin with his life.

The word *"His blood shall be upon him"* means that that person bears the responsibility for his own sin. The sin of having cursed one's parents does not disappear on the ground that one was angry or had complaints against them. Even a person's words are under the judgment of God.

When we think of holiness, we easily think first of special religious acts. But God speaks even of the words we say to our parents. If, while saying that we honor God when we worship, we speak abusively to our parents at home and trample on their dignity, we must apply the word of God to that life as well.

This word must not be used only for finding out the faults of others. We ourselves must look back on whether we have not regarded our parents as a nuisance, carelessly said words that wound their hearts, or insulted them in the thought that we were right. The one who fears God sets himself before the word even in the attitude with which he treats his close family.

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Then what must a person who has already committed sin with his mouth do? He must acknowledge that sin and come to the Lord, who gives the remission of sins. Just because God speaks sternly of sin does not mean that the way to receive the remission of sins has also disappeared.

We have obtained holiness through the baptism and the blood of Jesus

God showed through the sacrifices of the Old Testament the way He would save sinners. He had the sinner's sin passed on to the sacrificial offering by the laying on of hands, and had that offering die in the sinner's place. To save a person who had sin, that sin and the judgment of that sin had to be settled.

Jesus Christ came into the world to accomplish this. And He received baptism from John at the Jordan River. The baptism Jesus received from John was His bearing of all the sin of mankind. All our sins of going against the will of God were passed on to the Lord without omission.

The sin of relying on other things more than on God, the sin of speaking carelessly to one's parents, and the evil thoughts harbored in the heart are all included in the sin of the world the Lord bore. Even the sins we remember and the sins we have not yet realized—Jesus bore them all.

Jesus, who had borne that sin with the baptism He received from John, shed His blood and died on the Cross. He received in our place the judgment we were to receive. And He rose again from death and became our Savior. This is the remission of sins that the gospel of the water and the Spirit proclaims.

Hebrews 10:10 says: *"By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."*

Where did our holiness come from? It came from Jesus Christ offering His own body once and for all. Because the Lord received baptism from John and shed His blood on the Cross and so removed our sins, we who believe in this gospel have obtained holiness.

Verse 14 of the same chapter says even more clearly: "*For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.*"

Dear fellow believers, believe this word. Do not make the fact that your conduct has improved a little the ground of the remission of sins. Believe in the salvation the Lord accomplished. The one who believes in the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross is washed from all sins and becomes one of the holy people of God. God gives the Holy Spirit to that person.

This is not a matter of pretending to be a person who has not sinned. It is the faith that accepts the fact that the Lord has saved us, who are sinners. Our holiness is grounded in the perfect atonement of the Lord.

The person who has been made holy lives according to the ordinances of the Lord

Then how are we, who have received the remission of sins, to live? We must live according to the word of God, who has sanctified us. We must not take our hearts away from His commands on the ground that we have been saved.

The ordinances of God are what He has appointed. It is grace that the Lord has let us know what we are to believe and how we are to live. We have no need to live changing right and wrong according to our own feelings. We can learn the word and live

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by aligning our hearts with that word.

Even if the future is uncertain, let us not go back to the way of relying on the words of mediums. Let us pray to God, who saved us, and trust Him. If we have wounded our parents, let us acknowledge our wrong and apologize. Let us not stop at saying with words that we honor them, but practice our faith also in listening to our parents and looking into what they need.

It is not that we complete the remission of sins by such obedience. The remission of sins was accomplished by the Lord. As people who have received that salvation, we learn and follow the way the Lord calls right. When a wrong is revealed, we must not hide it but acknowledge it, believe in the Lord, who bore even that sin, and go forward again according to the word.

God has sanctified us, and He wants the gospel of the remission of sins to be delivered to other people as well through our lives. Let us offer to this precious work the lives the Lord has saved at a price.

Dear beloved saints, the One who sanctifies us is God. Let us firmly believe in the remission of sins Jesus has given with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross. And let us live keeping in our hearts the word of God, who has made us His own people. ✉

Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

Jesus Christ, who has saved us who stood before the judgment of sin

< Leviticus 20:10-16 >

"The man who commits adultery with another man's wife, he who commits adultery with his neighbor's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress, shall surely be put to death. The man who lies with his father's wife has uncovered his father's nakedness; both of them shall surely be put to death. Their blood shall be upon them. If a man lies with his daughter-in-law, both of them shall surely be put to death. They have committed perversion. Their blood shall be upon them. If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination. They shall surely be put to death. Their blood shall be upon them. If a man marries a woman and her mother, it is wickedness. They shall be burned with fire, both he and they, that there may be no wickedness among you. If a man mates with an animal, he shall surely be put to death, and you shall kill the animal. If a woman approaches any animal and mates with it, you shall kill the woman and the animal. They shall surely be put to death. Their blood is upon them."

Dear beloved saints, today's passage speaks concretely of the sins in which human sexual desire violates the relationships of

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marriage and family. God did not take these sins lightly. In several verses He commanded the punishment of death and declared that the person who committed the sin must bear the responsibility for his own sin.

When we read this word, our hearts grow heavy. But we must neither avoid the word on the ground that it is uncomfortable, nor use it only for finding out the sins of others. We must learn what God calls sin, and examine ourselves before that word. And we must know what Jesus accomplished in order to save the people under the judgment of sin.

The sin that breaks the relationship of marriage

Verse 10 forbids committing adultery with one's neighbor's wife and commands punishment for the man and the woman who took part in it. God called it sin to make another man's wife the object of one's own desire. It is something that cannot be justified by the feelings between the two people alone. It is because in that marriage there is already the faithfulness that must be kept toward one's spouse.

People easily put forward the circumstances favorable to themselves. They give the reason that their hearts were drawn, or make the difficulties of their own home an excuse. But the word of God does not change just because there are circumstances. Breaking another person's marriage cannot be made righteous in the name of love.

We must also examine the point that the passage speaks of the responsibility of both the man and the woman. The attitude of exposing only one side's wrong and hiding the other does not fit this word. Before God we must honestly acknowledge our own conduct. With a heart that tries to cover its own sin by

blaming others, one cannot rightly look at the grace of the remission of sins.

The boundary that cannot be crossed on the ground of being family

Verse 11 deals with lying with one's stepmother, and verse 12 with lying with one's daughter-in-law. A stepmother is the wife of one's father, and a daughter-in-law is the wife of one's son. God made clear the relationships that must be kept between family members.

That verse 11 says of the one who lies with his stepmother that he *"has uncovered his father's nakedness"* is because that act violates the relationship between the father and his wife. The sin of verse 12, too, is a matter of tearing down the marriage of one's son and daughter-in-law. Being close does not become the authority to treat the other person's body as one pleases.

Verse 14 forbids taking a wife and her mother together. God called this wickedness and commanded even the punishment of burning. It is that the family relationship formed by marriage to one's wife must not be changed according to one's own desire. This verse states its purpose as *"that there may be no wickedness among you" (Leviticus 20:14).*

There is responsibility for what is done with the body as well

Verse 13 forbids the act of a man lying with a man as he lies with a woman. Verses 15 and 16 forbid the acts of a man and of a woman respectively mating with an animal, and command that

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not only the person but also the animal be killed. The passage deals sternly with these acts.

Also, we have not been given the authority to insult or harm certain people on the ground of this word. The punishment in the passage is a provision given to the community of Israel at that time. Today, through this word, we must discern sin, acknowledge our own sins, and preach to sinners the gospel of salvation they need.

We cannot change into something right the acts God has called sin. At the same time, we must not conclude that there is no way of salvation for the person who has committed those sins. Knowing sin clearly and clearly preaching the way of the remission of sins must be done together.

"Their blood shall be upon them"

In verses 11 and 12, and in verses 13 and 16, the word *"Their blood shall be upon them"* appears. It means that the responsibility for the death that comes from one's own crime lies with the offender himself. Before the judgment of God, one cannot escape by hiding sin or shifting the responsibility onto others.

Reading this word, we easily think that we are righteous before God because we ourselves have not done the acts in question. But the fact that we have not committed a few sins does not make our whole life righteous. The word of God makes us realize not only the acts revealed outwardly but even the sin of the heart that gives birth to those acts.

That does not mean, however, that every person has actually done all the acts listed in the passage. What each person has done differs. But no one can stand perfectly righteous before God by

putting forward his own works. We must acknowledge that we, too, have a heart and actions that go against the will of God.

The law reveals sin, but it does not wash away our sins. Nor does the sin already committed disappear merely by realizing the wrong and being distressed. Therefore, before the word of judgment, instead of excusing our sins, we must look to the Savior who would bear our sins.

The grace bestowed on the woman caught in adultery

In John chapter 8 it is recorded that a woman caught in adultery was brought before Jesus. The scribes and the Pharisees put forward the law of Moses and tested Jesus. Then Jesus said, *"He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first" (John 8:7).*

The people, convicted by their conscience, left one by one. After they had left, Jesus said to the woman, *"Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more" (John 8:11).*

Jesus did not say that adultery was not sin. He said to sin no more. Yet to the woman who had sinned He bestowed the grace of salvation instead of condemnation.

This grace must not be understood as merely a leniency that overlooks a wrong. Jesus came to save sinners, and He is the Savior who Himself bore even that woman's sins. Before the law that declares judgment on the sinner, Jesus opened the way of the remission of sins.

We, too, like this woman, have no ability to settle our own sins. We may be able to say words that judge the sins of others, but we cannot remove even one of our own sins. The One we need is Jesus Christ, who bore our sins and received even their judgment in our place.

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He bore sin with the baptism He received from John and the Cross

Then how did Jesus bear our sins? Let us look at what Jesus said when He received baptism from John: *"But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him" (Matthew 3:15).*

In the sin offering of the Old Testament, the sinner passed his sin on to the sacrificial offering by laying his hands on it, and that offering shed its blood and died. In the way of the remission of sins God appointed, there were the transfer of sin and the vicarious death for that sin.

By receiving baptism from John, Jesus bore the sin of mankind. He bore not only the sins we revealed outwardly but also the sins we have hidden from people. The sin of having broken a marriage, the sin of having wounded one's family, and the sin of having gone against the will of God with body and heart are also included in the sin of the world the Lord bore.

And bearing that sin, Jesus shed His blood and died on the Cross. Because the Lord, who had no sin, had our sins transferred to Him, He received the judgment in our place. Here is the reason we must believe in the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross together. With the baptism He bore sin, and on the Cross He paid the price of that sin.

Jesus rose again from death. The Lord is the living Savior who saved us from sin and death. The gospel of the water and the Spirit is not the news that we must wash away our sins by ourselves, but the blessed news that we receive the remission of sins by believing in the salvation Jesus accomplished.

Do not exclude yourself from this grace on the ground that your past is shameful. One is not saved by regarding one's sins

as small. One receives the remission of sins by acknowledging one's sins and believing in the baptism and the vicarious atonement of the Cross of the Lord, who bore even those sins.

The person who has received the remission of sins treasures relationships

To believe in the remission of sins is not to rename the evil one has done as a good deed. Nor may one keep maintaining a wrong relationship while making the gospel one's excuse for it. The one who believes that the Lord shed His blood because of our sins cannot take those sins lightly.

We must be faithful to our spouse, respect our family, and not make other people the objects of our own desires. If there is something we have done wrong, we must not hide it or blame the other person, but turn from it and bear the responsibility we must bear. This is not paying a price to obtain the remission of sins, but the person who has received the grace of salvation living according to the word.

Dear beloved saints, today's passage shows how severe the judgment of God on sin is. Before that word we lay down our own righteousness. And we believe in Jesus, who received baptism from John to bear our sins and died in our place on the Cross.

Do not hide your sins, but come before the Lord. Do not try to wash away sin by your own works, but believe in the salvation the Lord accomplished. Within the grace that delivered us from sin, let us now live treasuring people and following the word of God. ✉

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Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

The Lord, who bore our iniquities in our place

< Leviticus 20:17-21 >

"If a man takes his sister, his father's daughter or his mother's daughter, and sees her nakedness and she sees his nakedness, it is a wicked thing. And they shall be cut off in the sight of their people. He has uncovered his sister's nakedness. He shall bear his guilt. If a man lies with a woman during her sickness and uncovers her nakedness, he has exposed her flow, and she has uncovered the flow of her blood. Both of them shall be cut off from their people. You shall not uncover the nakedness of your mother's sister nor of your father's sister, for that would uncover his near of kin. They shall bear their guilt. If a man lies with his uncle's wife, he has uncovered his uncle's nakedness. They shall bear their sin; they shall die childless. If a man takes his brother's wife, it is an unclean thing. He has uncovered his brother's nakedness. They shall be childless."

Dear beloved saints, when people hide a shameful deed, they easily think that they have escaped the responsibility for that deed as well. They think that if no one knows and time passes, it will be all right. But the word of God concretely reveals even the relationships and acts people want to hide.

In today's passage appear the prohibitions concerning relations with one's sister, lying with a woman in her monthly

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period, one's mother's sister and father's sister, one's father's brother's wife, and one's brother's wife. And in that word the declaration is repeated that the person who has committed sin must bear his own sin. It means that responsibility follows sin.

From this word we must learn the order of relationships God has appointed, and examine the state of human beings, who cannot save themselves when they have committed sin. Further, we must know the way to receive the remission of sins by believing in Jesus Christ, who bore our iniquities in our place.

It is not permitted just because they are close

Verse 17 forbids taking one's own sister. Because it specifies the daughter of one's father or the daughter of one's mother, a sister who shares only one parent is also included in this prohibition. The expression of seeing each other's nakedness is here within the context of taking one's sister and having sexual relations.

God called this a shameful thing and said that they would be cut off in the sight of their people and bear their own sin. It is not something that ends with the feelings of the two people alone or with secret circumstances, but a sin that God judges.

In verse 19 He says not to uncover the nakedness of one's mother's sister or father's sister. The reason is that they are near of kin. One's mother's sister is the sister of one's mother, and one's father's sister is the sister of one's father. God did not allow close relationships formed by blood to be changed into sexual relationships.

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We must respect the time God has forbidden

Verse 18 deals with lying with a woman during her sickness. Her sickness here refers to the monthly period. In Leviticus chapter 18, too, God commanded not to approach a woman to uncover her nakedness as long as she is in her customary impurity. Today's passage speaks of the responsibility that follows the act of breaking that prohibition.

Here, the monthly period itself must not be understood as a moral transgression committed by the woman. What the passage rebukes is the act of having sexual relations at the time God has forbidden. The phenomenon that occurs in the woman's body and the act of breaking the command of God must be read as distinct.

God did not mention the man only, but spoke of the woman together with him, and said that both of them would be cut off from among their people. This provision, given to the people of Israel at that time, shows that even the time of sexual relations is under the command of God.

When their own desire is urgent, people regard waiting as a loss. But the attitude of putting forward only one's own desire without considering the body and the circumstances of the other person is not right. We must exercise self-control all the more in close relationships, and must not take the word of God lightly in order to have our own way.

The responsibility for having violated the marriage of a family member

The uncle's wife of verse 20 refers to the wife of one's father's brother. God said of lying with one's uncle's wife that

it is uncovering one's uncle's nakedness. It is because the relationship one has with that woman is itself a violation of the marriage of one's father's brother.

Verse 21, too, shows the same principle. To take one's brother's wife is to uncover one's brother's nakedness. One must not think only of oneself and the other person. One must see whose wife that person is, and whose marriage one is violating.

In verse 20 appears the word that they shall die childless, and in verse 21 the word that they shall be childless. It is a stern warning concerning the state of having no children. However, this must not be applied in reverse so as to judge that every person who has no children has committed such sins. The passage speaks of the punishment for a particular crime, and it does not teach us to guess at hidden sins by looking at the circumstances of other people.

The salvation needed by those who must bear their own sin

The passage says that the person who has committed sin shall bear his sin. The fact that one has sinned and the fact that one is responsible for that sin are not separate. Responsibility does not disappear because others do not know, and the sin already committed does not vanish because one regrets it by oneself.

Reading these prohibitions, one may think that none of them applies to oneself. But the mere fact that one has not done these few acts does not make one a person without any sin before God. We, too, have a heart and acts that go against the will of God. The people who need the remission of sins are not only the few whose great sins have been exposed.

People acknowledge their wrongs to some degree, yet in the

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end they try to solve them by their own strength. They resolve to live better from now on, and think that if they suffer long enough it will count as having paid the price of sin. But our resolve or our suffering cannot become the offering of atonement.

God prepared another way to save sinners. In Leviticus chapter 16, Aaron laid his hands on the head of the live goat and put on its head all the iniquities and sins of the children of Israel. And the goat, bearing their iniquities, was sent away into the wilderness. God showed the offering that bears in their place the sins of the people who had sinned.

Through this sacrifice we learn that the remission of sins is not simply a matter of forgetting a wrong. A sacrificial offering that would bear the sin was needed. People had sins they could not remove by themselves, and God appointed the offering that would bear those sins in their place.

Jesus bore our iniquities

Isaiah 53:6 says: *"All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all."*

We have turned, every one, to his own way. We went against the will of God following our own thoughts and desires. Yet God laid those iniquities on Jesus Christ. This is the grace of salvation bestowed toward sinners.

By receiving baptism from John, Jesus had the sin of mankind passed on to Him. Just as in the Old Testament sin was passed on to the offering through the laying on of hands, Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John. It was not a baptism the Lord received because He had sinned. It was a

baptism the sinless One received in order to save sinners.

John testified of Jesus like this: *"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).*

Jesus went to the Cross bearing the sin of the world He had borne with the baptism He received from John. Because He had our sins transferred to Him, He also received the judgment of those sins in our place. The blood He shed on the Cross is the blood of life He gave up to redeem our sins. Jesus rose again from death and became the living Savior who saved us.

Therefore to believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is to accept as my own salvation the baptism Jesus received from John and the vicarious atonement of the Cross. It is not to think of the sins I have committed as smaller, but to believe in the salvation of the Lord, who bore those sins.

Even the shameful sins we could not tell people were not left out of the sin of the world the Lord bore. So it is with the sins committed long ago, and with the sins that trouble our hearts whenever we remember them. We must not set the range of salvation by our own memory or feelings, but believe the word that He bore the sin of the world.

From a life of hiding sin to a life of believing in the gospel

The way to receive the remission of sins does not lie in explaining one's wrongs plausibly. It lies in acknowledging as sin what God has called sin, and believing that Jesus bore that sin. It is not that salvation is completed only when we add our own asceticism or merit to the atonement the Lord accomplished.

The one who believes in that grace does not rationalize a

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wrong relationship with the gospel. If one has broken the word because of one's own desire, one must turn from it. One must not turn away from the wounds one has caused and the responsibility for them, but live respecting those close to one all the more. The remission of sins is not permission to keep hiding sin.

Nor is there any need to remain only a person who is held captive by his past and cannot serve the Lord. Jesus bore our sins in order to deliver us from the burden of sin. The one who has believed in this gospel and received the remission of sins can deliver the news of salvation to his neighbors, who need the same grace.

Dear beloved saints, the Lord came for us, who had to bear our own sins. By receiving baptism from John He had our sins transferred to Him, and on the Cross He received their judgment in our place. Receive this salvation into your hearts. Believing in the Lord, who bore our sins, let us live according to the word with the freedom and the thanksgiving the Lord has given. ✉

Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

God, who has made us His own people through the gospel of the water and the Spirit

< Leviticus 20:22-27 >

"You shall therefore keep all My statutes and all My judgments, and perform them, that the land where I am bringing you to dwell may not vomit you out. And you shall not walk in the statutes of the nation which I am casting out before you; for they commit all these things, and therefore I abhor them. But I have said to you, 'You shall inherit their land, and I will give it to you to possess, a land flowing with milk and honey.' I am the LORD your God, who has separated you from the peoples. You shall therefore distinguish between clean animals and unclean, between unclean birds and clean, and you shall not make yourselves abominable by beast or by bird, or by any kind of living thing that creeps on the ground, which I have separated from you as unclean. And you shall be holy to Me, for I the LORD am holy, and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be Mine. A man or a woman who is a medium, or who has familiar spirits, shall surely be put to death; they shall stone them with stones. Their blood shall be upon them."

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Dear beloved saints, after speaking many prohibitions to the people of Israel, God let them know why they had to live separated. At the center of today's passage there is the word saying that God has made them His own possession: *"And you shall be holy to Me, for I the LORD am holy, and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be Mine" (Leviticus 20:26).*

God brought Israel out of Egypt and promised to give them a land to dwell in. And He gave them the word so that they would live as the people of God in that land. Whose people they were had to determine their lives.

We, too, after believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receiving the remission of sins, must know this fact clearly. The Lord has washed away our sins and made us His own people. Therefore, while believing in the grace of salvation, we must at the same time live with our hearts set on God, who saved us.

Even a people who have received grace cannot take the word lightly

In verse 22, God commands them to keep all His ordinances and judgments and perform them. He said that only then would the land where He was bringing them to dwell not vomit them out.

The expression of the land vomiting out people represents the judgment of being driven out of that land. In Leviticus chapter 18, too, He said that the land had been defiled by the sins of the inhabitants of Canaan and that the land would vomit out its inhabitants. If Israel followed the same sins, they could not be an exception to that warning.

The promise that God would give them the land was not permission to do any evil whatever there. Rather, they had to live in the land received by grace the life that pleases God. The God who gave the grace and the commands that God gave cannot be set apart from each other.

We, too, must not disregard the will of God on the ground that we have received the remission of sins. The fact that the Lord has saved us does not make even our wrong actions right. When a part in which we have gone against the word is revealed, we must acknowledge it and turn back.

That does not mean, however, that we obtain the remission of sins by piling up the merit of obedience. Salvation was accomplished by the Lord. Because we believed in that salvation and became people belonging to God, we now treasure His word.

Follow the word of God rather than familiar customs

Verse 23 commands them not to follow the customs of the nation God was casting out. It is because they had done the evil things spoken of before.

When Israel entered Canaan, they would see how the people there lived. Customs handed down for a long time look natural, and what many people do can feel as if it were right. But the fact that something is old, or the fact that many people follow it, does not make sin righteous.

This word is a command not to follow the example of the wickedness pointed out before. Israel had to remember what God had commanded, not merely look at what the people around them took for granted.

So it is with our faith. We must not judge the content of

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salvation merely on the ground that we have learned it familiarly. We must know from the word what Jesus actually did and what salvation God has given. We must believe together in Jesus, who received baptism from John to bear our sins, and in the vicarious atonement of the Cross, by which He received the judgment of those sins in our place.

We must not remain in believing according to human habit, but know and believe what God has accomplished. That faith sets our hearts free from sin, and makes us follow the will of God in our lives as well.

Do not forget God, who gives the inheritance

In verse 24, God says that He will give them a land flowing with milk and honey as an inheritance. And He reveals Himself as the God who has separated them from the peoples.

That land was the inheritance God had promised to give. Even after obtaining the land, Israel had to remember God, who gave it. If, while enjoying its abundance, they forgot God and followed the idols and customs of that land, they would be abandoning the grace they had received.

People seek help when they are in difficulty, yet when their circumstances improve they easily think that they have achieved everything themselves. The heart that sought God may, before one knows it, turn only toward one's own possessions and plans. Therefore, when we have received grace, we must remember all the more the One who gave that grace.

The remission of sins, too, is not something we produced by ourselves. We had no ability to wash away our own sins. The Lord loved us and accomplished the work of salvation, and we heard and believed that gospel and received the remission of sins.

Even after obtaining peace in our hearts, we must not leave the Lord, who gave that peace.

Among the blessings God gives, the most precious is to be saved from sin and become a child of God. We must not forget the eternal inheritance God has given us in Christ by looking only at what we obtain on earth.

The standard for distinguishing the clean and the unclean

In verse 25 He commands them to distinguish between clean and unclean animals and birds. He said not to defile their bodies by the living things God had separated as unclean.

Here the standard of judgment lies with God. What people regard as good to look at and what God has called clean are not necessarily the same. Israel had to learn the distinction God had appointed, before their own taste or the customs of the people around them.

Leviticus chapter 11 teaches this distinction concretely. He made them remember the word of God even in the repeated routines of life, such as eating. The life of the people belonging to God was not something revealed only in the time of worship.

We, too, must not stop at hearing and knowing the word, but examine our own lives by that word. We must look back and ask ourselves, “Are the thoughts I now follow pleasing to God? Am I not pushing the word aside in order to fulfill my own greed?”

If we try to carry out this discernment trusting only our own ability, we easily grow weary. We must think of the word again, ask God for help, and follow by faith. Even though we have shortcomings, what matters is to acknowledge as right what God has called right, and to set our hearts in that direction.

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The act of having kept the distinction of foods well does not wash away our sins. The One who cleanses us is the Lord. We who have received the remission of sins learn, within that grace, what we are to follow as we live.

He washed away sin and made us His own possession

In the words of verse 26, *"That you should be Mine,"* is contained the purpose for which God separated the people. God wanted to make them His own people and be with them. Therefore that people had to live as befits the holy God.

But how can a person who has sin belong to the holy God? No one can remove all the sins of heart and conduct by his own efforts. The salvation by which God washes away sin is needed.

Jesus came to accomplish that salvation. By receiving baptism from John He bore the sin of mankind, and bearing that sin, He shed His blood and died on the Cross. His having our sins passed on to Him and His receiving the judgment of those sins in our place are contained in the baptism and the Cross of Jesus. And Jesus rose again from death.

Ephesians chapter 1 says that God has made us holy and without blame in Christ and has made us His sons. The grace by which God makes us His own people is within the salvation Jesus Christ accomplished.

It is not that we first completed a blameless life and became children of God. We received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, by which Jesus bore our sins and made atonement for them in our place. The salvation the Lord accomplished is the ground on which we belong to God: *"In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the*

gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise" (Ephesians 1:13).

God gives the Holy Spirit to the one who believes in the gospel. The Holy Spirit becomes the guarantee of our inheritance. We do not place the assurance of salvation in the feeling that our hearts have grown warm for a moment. We believe in the salvation the Lord accomplished and in the word that testifies of that salvation.

The person who belongs to God does not rely on other spirits

The last verse, verse 27, sternly forbids a man or a woman becoming a medium or a male shaman. God commanded the community of Israel the punishment of stoning and made the responsibility clear.

This verse shows that the people who belong to God cannot take lightly the matter of leaving God and relying on other spiritual objects. The word that forbids mediums and male shamans in verse 27, after telling them to be His possession in verse 26, makes us ask again on whom we are to set our hearts as we live.

This penal provision must not be applied today as a command to harm people. What we are to follow is the faith that sets its heart on God and does not seek out and rely on a spiritual authority to take the place of God.

When the future is uncertain, what do we look for? Are we not going around looking for some other authority outside the word in order to obtain words that will hold up our hearts? We must pray to God, who saved us from sin, and walk according to His word.

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Dear beloved saints, God did not call us in order to leave us in sin as we were. With the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross, He washed away our sins and made us His own people.

Let us believe in this grace and give our hearts to God. When a wrong is revealed, let us acknowledge it and turn back, and rely on the Lord, who saved us. Let us discern our lives by the word, and preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to those who do not yet know this salvation. Giving thanks to God, who has made us His own people, let us live as people who belong to Him. ✉

Questions and Answers on Leviticus Chapter 20

[Question] 1. Leviticus 20:2—what kind of idolatry does offering one's children to Molech mean?

It means the act of giving one's children as a sacrifice to the idol called Molech. Leviticus 18:21 forbids giving one's children to Molech and making them pass through the fire, and Jeremiah 32:35 also speaks of making one's children pass through the fire of Molech as an abominable act that God did not command. This is not a simple expression of entrusting one's children to a god, but an expression connected with a sacrifice that offers even the life of the child to an idol. Deuteronomy 12:31, too, makes clear that the Gentiles burned their children and offered them to their gods.

God regarded this as a sin that defiled His sanctuary and profaned His holy name. It was because, abandoning God, who gave life, and serving an idol, they sacrificed the children they ought to have protected. That is why He sternly forbade this act not only to the Israelites but also to the strangers dwelling among them.

This word shows that neither the pretext of serving God nor religious zeal can make an act that harms human life legitimate. The people of God must cast away idols and treasure the life God has given and the children He has entrusted to them.

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[Question] 2. Leviticus 20:4–5—what did God say He would do if the people saw children being offered to Molech and yet looked the other way?

He said that if the people of the land knew of the crime and looked the other way, not carrying out the appointed punishment, God would Himself be angry and execute judgment. Verse 5 says that He would set His face against that man and against his family, and cut him off from among the people, along with all who followed his example in serving Molech. Even if people covered up the sin, that did not mean the judgment of God could be escaped.

Here He did not say that the punishment of stoning was to be uniformly imposed on all the witnesses. The passage speaks of what God would do in the situation where the community condoned the crime, and specifically states who would be the object of His wrath and who would be cut off from among the people. The punishment of verse 2, imposed on the person who directly committed the crime, and the warning of verses 4–5 must be read as distinct.

This ordinance makes one guard against the attitude of seeing evil and yet turning away, saying that it is not one's own business. In particular, the community was not to condone the sacrificing of the lives of children. The people of God must respect the will of God and must not allow sin to be tolerated and spread.

[Question] 3. Leviticus 20:8—who is the One who sanctifies us, and how is that holiness given?

The source of holiness is the LORD God. While

commanding them to keep His ordinances and perform them, God made clear that He is the One who sanctifies the people. Holiness is not a qualification that people produce by themselves and have acknowledged by God, but something the holy God gives to His own people. In verse 26, too, God says that He separated Israel from the peoples in order to make them His own possession.

Together with the law that makes sin known, God also appointed the sacrifice that would atone for sin. He did so in order that the sinner would not remove sin by his own method, but would go forward on the way of salvation God had prepared. This salvation was accomplished by Jesus Christ. Jesus bore our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose again from death. By believing in this gospel of the water and the Spirit, we receive the remission of sins and become the holy people who belong to God.

Therefore the fact that God has done the sanctifying does not mean that we may live as we please. It is fitting to believe and follow the word of the One who has sanctified us. Piling up one's own merit in order to obtain the remission of sins must be distinguished from living, as a people who have received the remission of sins, respecting the ordinances of God.

[Question] 4. Leviticus 20:9—what punishment was appointed for the person who cursed his father or his mother?

The punishment appointed was that he must surely be put to death. The passage did not take lightly even cursing one of the two, the father or the mother, and says, *"His blood shall be upon him."* This means that the responsibility for that death lies in his

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own crime.

To curse one's parents is to wish harm upon them and to insult them gravely. Because God regarded as important the order of honoring one's parents within the home, He did not treat this sin as a mere slip of the tongue. Through this ordinance we learn that even the heart and the words with which we treat our parents are accountable before God. We must not take our parents lightly or curse them, but respect them.

[Question] 5. Leviticus 20:10–21—what must we learn from the ordinances that sternly punished sins concerning sexuality?

We obtain the lesson that we must respect the order of marriage and family that God has appointed, and must not tear down that order because of our own desires. This chapter forbids adultery, sexual relations between close relatives, the act of a man lying with a man, mating with an animal, and so on, and speaks of the responsibility and the punishment that follow each act. These are ordinances given to the community of Israel at that time.

However, the same punishment was not appointed for every act that appears in this chapter. Being put to death, being cut off from among the people, bearing one's sin, not obtaining descendants, and the like are distinguished. That He held them responsible so sternly shows that sins concerning sexuality are grave matters that harm not only a person's body but also the relationships with one's spouse, family, and community.

We must not use this word only for condemning others, but must first examine our own hearts and actions. We must discern sin by the ordinances God has given, and must not justify our

desires or hide our wrongs. The faith that treasures the grace of the Lord, who saved us from sin, must lead to a life that follows the will of God in the relationships of the body and the home as well.

[Question] 6. Leviticus 20:22—what does it mean that the land 'vomits out' the people, and what did Israel have to be careful of?

It is a figurative expression for no longer being able to live in that land and being driven out. Just as a person vomits out what he cannot take in, it is an expression that the land, too, sends out the inhabitants who have defiled it with sin. The One who actually judges is God; it does not mean that the land itself judges like a god.

God said that if Israel kept all His ordinances and judgments and performed them, the land where He was bringing them to dwell would not vomit them out. It is a warning that just as the nations who had lived there before were driven out because of sin, Israel, too, could not live safely in that land if they followed the same evil (Leviticus 18:24–28).

The fact that they had received the promised land was no guarantee that they could commit sin as they pleased. Israel had to remember the grace God had given and not live following the wrong customs of that place. It gives the lesson that rather than feeling secure because they are called the people of God, they must actually live respecting the word of God.

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[Question] 7. Leviticus 20:22–23—why were the inhabitants of Canaan driven out of that land?

It was because they kept committing the evil acts God abhors. Verse 23 says that because they committed all these things, God abhorred them. With idolatry, the sins concerning sexuality, and the like that He had forbidden before, they defiled themselves and the land where they dwelt, and God judged that evil.

The reason Israel received the land of Canaan must not be sought in their own righteousness or national superiority. Deuteronomy 9:4–6, explaining it by the wickedness of those nations and by the oath God had sworn to the fathers, says clearly that it was not because of Israel's own righteousness that they obtained that land.

Therefore the judgment on the nations of Canaan became a warning to Israel as well. Rather than exalting themselves by looking at the sins of other nations, they themselves, too, had to be careful not to follow the customs God had forbidden. What mattered was to live as befits His people in the land God had given.

[Question] 8. Leviticus 20:27—what punishment did He command for the person who was a medium or a male shaman?

He commanded that any such person, whether man or woman, must surely be stoned to death. Mediums and male shamans refer to those who claim to make contact with spiritual beings and practice fortune-telling or sorcery. God forbade His people to rely on them or to practice such things (Deuteronomy 18:9–14).

Verse 27 is the punishment imposed on the person who practices such things, and verse 6 warns of the wrath of God and being cut off for the person who seeks after mediums and male shamans. Both practicing and following are connected with the problem of leaving God and relying on another spiritual authority.

The people of God must not entrust their hearts to other spiritual powers in order to deal with their fear of the future or fulfill their own wishes. They must believe in God, who saved them, and live according to the word He has given.

[Question] 9. Who are the people in the Bible who were punished for the sin of killing a person?

There is the incident in which David caused Uriah to die. David sent the order to set Uriah in the forefront of the fiercest battle and then withdraw from him. The ones who directly wielded the sword were the enemy troops, but God sent Nathan and rebuked David for the sin of having killed Uriah and taken his wife. He also said that the sword would not depart from the house of David. When David acknowledged his sin he received the remission of sins, but the grave consequences brought by that sin did not disappear as though they had never existed (2 Samuel 11:14–17; 12:7–14).

There is also the incident in which Joab killed Abner and Amasa. Joab did not kill enemy troops in the midst of war; he killed the two commanders of the army in a time of peace. David told this to Solomon, and later Solomon held Joab responsible for the blood he had shed without cause. Joab fled to the tabernacle of the LORD and took hold of the horns of the altar, but he did not escape responsibility by that act and was put to

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death (1 Kings 2:5–6, 28–34).

The two incidents show that one cannot escape the responsibility for bloodshed just because one's position is high or one used the hands of another person. The sin of harming life is not something to hide or to cover with religious acts. One must acknowledge that sin before God, and must treasure the life God has given. ✉

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CHAPTER

21

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Leviticus Chapter 21 seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Leviticus 21:1–9—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The center of Leviticus 21:1–9

This word is not a general ordinance given equally to all the people of Israel, but an ordinance given especially to *"the priests, the sons of Aaron."* Because the priest was the person who offered the sacrificial offerings in the tabernacle and stood before God on behalf of the people, a stricter holiness was demanded of him in matters of death, mourning, marriage, and family life as well.

The core of the passage lies in verses 6 and 8.

"They shall be holy to their God and not profane the name of their God"

"He shall be holy to you, for I the LORD, who sanctify you, am holy"

The fundamental reason the priest had to be holy is not that the person was originally perfect. It is because the holy God set him apart and entrusted His work to him.

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2. Why the priest was not to defile himself by a dead body

In the laws of cleanness of the Old Testament, contact with a human dead body made a person ceremonially unclean (Numbers 19:11–13). This does not mean that the act of loving or grieving for a dead person is sin. It is an ordinance that teaches the fact that death is a result that came into the world through sin, and a state that stands in contrast to the God of life.

Because the priest served the living God and held the office that represented life and atonement, in ordinary cases he was not to come into contact with a dead body. It was because if he became unclean, he could not perform the duties of the sanctuary for a certain period.

However, an exception was permitted in the case of his parents, children, and brothers, and of his own sister who was not yet married. This means that the holiness of the priest did not completely abolish love and responsibility for his family. While demanding a high holiness from the priest, God acknowledged his responsibility to attend to the death of close family members and to hold the funeral.

In verses 10–12 that follow, an ordinance even stricter than this is given to the high priest. The high priest could not defile himself even by the dead body of his parents. The higher the office, the heavier was the responsibility toward the sanctuary.

3. Why, in the New Testament, Jesus could touch dead people

Jesus took hold of the hand of the dead daughter of Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue, and He also touched the coffin in

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which the son of the widow of Nain was being carried. Under the law, a person who touched a dead body became unclean, but Jesus was not ruled by the uncleanness of death. Rather, when Jesus touched them, the dead came to life (Mark 5:41–42; Luke 7:14–15).

This shows that Jesus is not merely one priest of the line of Aaron but the Lord of life who overcomes death, the eternal High Priest who is holy, harmless, and undefiled.

The priests of the Old Testament could be defiled by death, and because they themselves died, they had to pass the priesthood on to their descendants. But because Jesus lives forever, His priesthood does not change. He completely saves those who come to God through Him (Hebrews 7:24–28).

Therefore this word must not be applied as a command that the saints today may not attend a funeral or attend to a dead body. The saints of the New Testament can care for a grieving family and help with the funeral. Only, spiritually, they must not lightly accept the culture of death and sin, but must serve the gospel of life.

4. The life of the priest was connected with the name of God

In Leviticus 21:4, the Bible describes the priest as *"a chief man among his people."* He was not a person who lived only as an individual, but a person who stood before God representing the people. Therefore the uncleanness and corruption of a priest did not end as a personal matter, but affected the name of the God he served and the honor of the sanctuary.

This gives an important principle to pastors and workers of the gospel today as well. The private life and the public work of

a minister cannot be completely separated. If one preaches the gospel with words while living corruptly in matters of money, sex, and power, one can profane the name of God.

However, pastors must not be exalted as absolute beings on the basis of the priestly ordinances of the Old Testament. That verse 8 says to consecrate the priest means to respect his office; it does not mean to cover up his wrongs or to obey him unconditionally. The priest is not higher than God, and pastors today, too, must undergo legitimate examination by the word and the community.

5. Do not follow the funeral customs of the Gentiles

Verse 5 forbids the priests the following things.

—Shaving the head to make it like a bald head

—Marring the edges of the beard

—Cutting the body as a sign of mourning

This is not a word that declares all ordinary haircuts or shaving to be sin. Leviticus 19:28 and Deuteronomy 14:1, too, forbid cutting the body or shaving the front of the head for the dead. Even when mourning, the priests had to keep the holy distinction God had appointed.

The priests of God were not to follow the methods God had forbidden even in the midst of grief. Without following the customs of marring their own bodies, they had to rely on God, the Lord of life.

The saints of the New Testament, too, may grieve over the death of a loved one. Weeping and mourning are not unbelief. But one must not try to call up the dead, pray to the souls of the dead for blessing, or try to make contact with the dead through fortune-telling and the calling up of the dead. Our hope lies not

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in such rites but in Jesus Christ, who rose again from death.

6. Those who offer *"the bread of their God"*

The priests offered to God *"the offerings of the LORD made by fire, and the bread of their God."* This does not mean that God, like a person, gets hungry and eats food. It is an expression that calls the sacrificial offerings burned on the altar the bread offered to God. It is a covenant expression that God gladly receives that sacrifice and the faith contained in it.

The priest could not offer just any sacrifice in his own way. He had to offer the sacrifice according to the offerings and the procedures God had appointed. Because through that sacrifice the people obtained atonement and reconciliation, the office of the priest was a work of serving life.

The preachers of the gospel in the New Testament, too, must not deliver their own thoughts or experiences as if they were the word of God. They must deliver in full the gospel of salvation God has appointed, namely the baptism Jesus received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His rising again from death.

7. The ordinance concerning the marriage of the priest

The priest was not to marry a harlot, a defiled woman, or a woman divorced from her husband. This ordinance shows that the marriage and the home of the priest, too, could not be separated from his holy office. Because the home and the descendants of the priest were within the covenant order that carried on the priesthood, a stricter standard of marriage was applied to him than to the ordinary people.

However, this word must not be used as grounds for judging that every divorced woman today has moral responsibility. In ancient society a woman could be cast off by her husband regardless of her own wrong. Leviticus chapter 21 is not a word judging the possibility of salvation or the human worth of particular women, but a word stipulating the marriage of the priests of the line of Aaron and the cleanness of the priestly family.

In the New Testament, the family life and sexual faithfulness of a pastor are dealt with as important. A bishop must be blameless, the husband of one wife, one who cares well for his own household, and one who has a good testimony even from those outside the church (1 Timothy 3:2–7). But this does not mean that the family of a pastor must be perfect; it means that he must not leave sexual unfaithfulness and irresponsibility toward his household unattended.

8. The One who sanctifies is God

In verse 8 the command and its ground appear together.

First, the people must hallow the priest and respect his office.

Second, its ground lies in the fact that God Himself, who sanctifies the priest and the people, is holy.

The priest was not made holy by his bloodline or his works alone. He performed the holy office because God chose him, set him apart, and established him as a priest.

This fact becomes even clearer in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We, too, do not first become holy by our own pious conduct and then come to God. God washes away our sins and sanctifies us through the salvation of Jesus Christ.

There is an order in holiness.

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—God saves the sinner.

—He sets the saved person apart as His own possession.

—The person set apart lives as befits a person who belongs to God.

Therefore holy conduct is not the condition of salvation, but the result that comes from the faith of the saved.

9. The harlotry of a priest's daughter and the heavy responsibility

It says that if the daughter of a priest plays the harlot, she *"profanes her father,"* not only herself. Because the home of the priest was connected with his public office, the public fornication of a family member was treated as something that damaged even the honor of the priestly family and the holiness of the sanctuary.

"She shall be burned with fire" is an extremely stern provision of the death penalty given to the covenant community of ancient Israel. This shows the seriousness of sexual sin and the special responsibility of the priest's home.

However, the church of the New Testament has not received the authority to carry out this punishment. The church of the New Testament must not leave unrepented public fornication unattended but must discipline it, yet it must not kill people or inflict physical punishment. The purpose of discipline lies not in revenge or the preservation of honor, but in bringing a person to realize his sin and return.

Also, Deuteronomy 22:25–27 does not hold the victim of sexual violence responsible for the sin of the offender. The victims of sexual violence, coercion, or human trafficking must not be condemned as "persons who played the harlot." The

victim must be protected, and the responsibility for the sin must be laid on the offender. Silencing the victim or covering up the matter on the ground of protecting the honor of a priest or a pastor is the exact opposite of the holiness of the passage.

10. The difference between the priests of Aaron and Jesus Christ

The priests of Leviticus chapter 21 had to be holy without fail, but in reality they were weak human beings.

—They became unclean when they touched a dead body.

—They had to first offer a sacrifice for their own sins.

—When they died, another priest had to succeed to their office.

—Their office could be profaned by the conduct of their family and children.

But Jesus is the eternal High Priest.

—He is without sin and without defilement.

—He needs no sacrifice for His own sins.

—He offered not another animal but His own body as the offering.

—Because He rose again from death, He does not pass the priesthood on to another person.

—With the atonement He accomplished once and for all, He completely saves those who believe.

The priestly ordinances of Leviticus chapter 21 show the high responsibility of the human priests and, at the same time, their limitations, and finally reveal the fact that the eternal High Priest without blemish, Jesus Christ, is needed.

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11. The connection with the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Although Jesus had no sin, He bore all the sin of mankind by receiving baptism from John. This does not mean that Jesus Himself became morally defiled. As the sacrificial offering without blemish, He bore all our sins in His own body.

Bearing the sin He had taken on, Jesus was crucified and received the judgment of sin, and He rose again from death. The Holy Spirit testifies of the fact that this salvation, which Jesus completed with the water and the blood, is true.

The priests of the Old Testament had to avoid death, but Jesus entered into our death and overcame death. The priests of the Old Testament kept away from dead bodies so as not to become unclean, but Jesus drew near to the dead and gave them life. And finally, by Himself dying in our place and rising again from death, He broke the power of sin and death.

Therefore the ground on which we become holy is as follows.

Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John → He received the judgment of sin on the Cross → He rose again from death → The Holy Spirit confirms salvation in the heart of the one who believes in this gospel

12. The saints of the New Testament are all spiritual priests

1 Peter 2:5 and 9 call the saints who believe in the gospel a holy priesthood and a royal priesthood. This does not mean that all the saints have the same office as the pastor in the church, but that through Jesus Christ they have come to be able to come directly to God and offer spiritual sacrifices.

The sacrifices the saints of the New Testament offer are not the sacrifice of animals.

—Believing in and preaching the baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection of Jesus

—Offering thanksgiving and praise to God

—Loving and serving one's neighbors and brothers and sisters

—Sharing one's possessions and time

—Offering one's body as an instrument of righteousness, not as an instrument of sin

—Preaching the gospel of life to dying souls

None of these sacrifices is offered in order to obtain the remission of sins. They are the sacrifices of faith that the person who has received the remission of sins offers with thanksgiving.

13. Practical lessons for the one who believes in the gospel

Leviticus 21:1–9 can be applied today as follows.

—We do not treat our bodies and our sexual lives carelessly on the ground that we have been saved.

—Even in grief, we do not rely on such methods as superstition, the calling up of the dead, or self-harm.

—Pastors and workers of the gospel must have a heavier sense of responsibility in matters of family, sex, and finances.

—We do not cover up sin or the facts of harm on the ground of protecting the honor of a leader.

—We respect pastors, but we do not absolutize them or condone sin.

—We do not treat the family merely as a tool for the work of the gospel, but care for them with love and responsibility.

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—We do not try to become holy by our own works, but believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished.

—As befits people who have received the remission of sins, we live in a way that is set apart from the sin of the world.

—When our shortcomings appear, we do not rationalize sin, but acknowledge the wrong and reflect on the word that Jesus settled even that sin with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross. With that faith we renew our hearts and turn from the wrong conduct.

Conclusion

The conclusion of Leviticus 21:1–9 is not, “The priest is a special person, so exalt him unconditionally.” It is a word that says the person entrusted with the work of the holy God must reveal the name of God with his whole life. And it is a word that says to believe, beyond the limitations of human priests, in the eternal High Priest Jesus Christ, who perfectly sanctifies us.

Leviticus 21:10–15—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

Leviticus 21:10–15 deals with the ordinances for the high priest, who had to be set apart even more strictly than the ordinary priests. If verses 1–9 spoke of the holiness of the priests as a whole, verses 10–15 speak of the special responsibility of the one person among them who was anointed with the anointing oil and consecrated by being clothed with the priestly garments,

namely the high priest.

The center of these ordinances is not mere asceticism or outward strictness. It lies in the fact that the high priest was specially set apart to perform the office of atonement between God and the people. In the New Testament, this system of the imperfect human high priest is fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the eternal and perfect High Priest.

1. *"The high priest … on whose head the anointing oil was poured and who is consecrated to wear the garments"*

Verse 10 describes the high priest by three signs.

"The high priest … on whose head the anointing oil was poured and who is consecrated to wear the garments"

The first is that he was anointed with the anointing oil, the second is that he was consecrated, and the third is that he wore the priestly garments of the high priest.

The anointing oil was the holy oil that was poured on his head at the consecration ceremony of the high priest. The anointing oil was a sign showing that the person had not become the high priest by his own will, but had been set apart according to the command of God as the possession of God and for the office of God.

In the New Testament, Jesus Christ is the anointed Savior, and He came as King, Prophet, and the heavenly High Priest. God anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit and with power (Acts 10:38). According to the will of the Father, Jesus offered His own body as the sacrificial offering and accomplished our salvation.

The garments, too, were not mere ornaments. The high priest

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was not a person who came before God merely as a private individual. He had to come forward representing the people, wearing the clothes God had appointed, with the offering God had appointed, in the manner God had appointed.

This shows the fact that human beings cannot come to God by their own zeal or good deeds. The sinner must follow the way of salvation God has appointed. In the New Testament, that way is Jesus Christ. Jesus bore the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of that sin by shedding His blood on the Cross, and accomplished eternal salvation by rising again from death. We come to God by believing in this gospel.

2. *"Shall not uncover his head nor tear his clothes"*

Letting the hair hang loose and tearing the clothes were acts that expressed deep grief and wailing in ancient Israel. Therefore this word does not mean that the high priest was to have no feelings, or that he was not to grieve over the death of a family member.

The point is that even the personal grief of the high priest was not to tear down the office of the sanctuary and the holy status entrusted to him. He was an individual and at the same time a public office-holder who represented all Israel before God. Therefore he could not tear the holy garments according to his feelings, stop the office entrusted to him, or depart from the order God had appointed.

This ordinance is revealed even more perfectly in Jesus Christ. Jesus was not One who did not know grief. He shed tears in the face of death, and had compassion on those who suffered. But He did not abandon the mission of salvation because of

human suffering and the fear of death. Even knowing the suffering of the Cross, He obeyed the will of the Father and went forward to the end.

Therefore the one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, too, does not become a person who does not grieve. Faith is not the removal of feelings, but holding on to the salvation of God even in the midst of grief. The saints may weep in the face of the death of a loved one, but they do not weep in the despair that death is the end. Because Jesus rose again from death, the hope of the resurrection accompanies the grief of the saints.

3. *"Nor defile himself for his father or his mother"*

Verse 11 commands that the high priest not defile himself even by the dead body of his parents.

For the ordinary priests, going near the dead body was permitted within a certain range when close family members such as parents, children, and brothers and sisters died. But the high priest was not to come into contact with a dead body even in the death of his parents. This does not mean not to honor one's parents. It is an ordinance that shows how grave the office of the sanctuary entrusted to the high priest was.

In the laws of cleanness of the Old Testament, a dead body was connected with death, the result of sin, and brought ceremonial uncleanness. It is not that the dead person himself was morally evil, but that, before the holy God of life, death represented the state of the world into which death had entered through sin.

Yet Jesus Christ did not keep His holiness in the manner of keeping away from death, like the high priest of the Old

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Testament. Rather, He entered directly into the realm of death. He touched the dead and raised them, touched the sick who were regarded as unclean and made them clean, and finally bore death Himself.

But Jesus entered into death not in order to be conquered by death but in order to conquer death. Jesus has no sin, but by receiving baptism from John He bore the sin of the world. And after receiving on the Cross the judgment of death, which is the wages of that sin, He rose again from death.

The high priest of the Old Testament had to keep ceremonial cleanness by not going near death, but Jesus, by bearing death and overcoming it, saved those who believe from the power of death. This is the important difference between the type and the fulfillment.

4. *"Nor shall he go out of the sanctuary"*

The word of verse 12, *"Nor shall he go out of the sanctuary,"* does not mean that the high priest could not take a single step outside the sanctuary for his whole life. In context, it means that even in a situation such as the death of a close family member, he was not to abandon the holy office and leave because of mourning.

The high priest was a person consecrated with the anointing oil and belonging to God. Therefore, however great a personal event might be, he was not to defile the order of the sanctuary God had entrusted to him.

This word must not be applied in the sense that a pastor today may not attend the funeral when a member of his family dies. The pastor of the New Testament is not a high priest of the line of Aaron, and the church building is not identical with the

sanctuary of the Old Testament. Above all, in the church of the New Testament there is no separate class of human high priests. The only and eternal High Priest of the church is Jesus Christ.

But the spiritual principle remains. The person entrusted with the gospel must not put forward his personal circumstances and feelings and change the truth of God or take his mission lightly. At the same time, this principle does not mean to disregard or sacrifice one's family either. The minister of the New Testament, while loving and caring for his family, must not defile the gospel and the church because of his own private desires.

5. The ordinance concerning the marriage of the high priest

Verses 13–14 stipulate that the high priest must take as his wife a virgin from among his own people, and must not take as his wife a widow, a divorced woman, a defiled woman, or a harlot.

The primary purpose of this ordinance was to preserve the lineage of the family of the high priest of the line of Aaron and the cleanness of the priestly office. Because the high priesthood of the Old Testament was a hereditary office passed down through a particular family, the matter of his marriage and children was not a mere personal affair but a public matter connected with the priesthood of the next generation.

However, on the basis of this ordinance, widows or divorced women must not be treated as essentially inferior or more sinful people. Among the divorced there may be those who were harmed not by their own wrong but by the sin of the other party. This passage is not a word evaluating the human worth or the possibility of salvation of all women, but a word stipulating the

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special office and the hereditary order of the high priest of the Old Testament.

In the New Testament, Jesus Christ did not become the High Priest by carrying on the bloodline of Aaron. Jesus is the High Priest established according to the power of an endless life. Therefore the high priesthood of Christ is not handed down to another person through marriage and physical bloodline.

Because Jesus rose again from death and lives forever, He needs no successor. Because the high priests of the Old Testament died, another person continually had to succeed to that office, but the high priesthood of Jesus is eternal and unchangeable.

6. The pure bride and the Church made clean by the gospel

The word that the high priest had to take a virgin as his wife can be considered in the light of the relationship between Christ and the Church in the New Testament. The New Testament describes the Church as the bride of Christ, and says that Christ sanctifies and cleanses the Church.

But here there is a very important point. The Church did not become the bride of Christ because people who had no sin and were clean from the beginning gathered together. It became the pure bride because Jesus Christ washed away the sins of the Church and made it clean.

Our cleanness does not come from physical virginity or marital history. Nor is it something we obtained by keeping the law without blemish. We receive the washing away of sins by believing the fact that Jesus bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John and was judged by shedding His blood

on the Cross. The Holy Spirit testifies of the truth of this gospel and seals those who believe as the people of God.

Therefore the purity of the Church is, first, doctrinal purity. It is believing fully in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has accomplished, without leaving out the baptism Jesus received from John, denying the blood of the Cross, or adding human works as a condition of the remission of sins.

Second, it is purity of life. The person who has received the remission of sins does not make that grace a pretext for taking sin lightly. Thankful for the grace of God, who has already sanctified him, he seeks to fight against fornication, falsehood, and greed, and to live following the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

7. *"Nor shall he profane his posterity among his people"*

That verse 15 says not to profane his posterity is because the descendants of the high priest could succeed to the priesthood. His marriage was not a matter of himself alone but affected the priestly qualification of his descendants and the holy order of the community.

This does not mean that a particular bloodline is humanly superior to other people. God set the family of Aaron apart as the priestly family in order to preserve the type of redemption.

In the New Testament, the priesthood is not passed down by physical bloodline. Those who have been born again by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit are the people of God in Jesus Christ and are called a royal priesthood. This does not mean that all the saints become mediators of the church. The only Mediator of salvation between God and man is Jesus Christ alone.

The saints are called priests because they come to God

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through Jesus Christ and offer the spiritual sacrifices of praise, thanksgiving, the spread of the gospel, and the service of love.

8. *"I the LORD sanctify him"*

The conclusion of the passage shows the grace of God, which comes before human effort.

"I the LORD sanctify him" (Leviticus 21:15).

The high priest did not make himself the high priest or make himself holy. God chose him, washed him, clothed him, poured the anointing oil on him, and consecrated him through the sacrifices. Even the strict ordinances the high priest had to keep came from the fact that God had first set him apart as holy.

It is the same in the gospel. It is not that God washed away our sins because we had first lived holy lives. God sent His only begotten Son, and Jesus sanctified us by bearing our sins with the baptism He received from John, being judged with the blood of the Cross, and rising again from death.

Therefore the holy life of the saints is not the condition of salvation but the result of having been saved.

—It is not that one receives the remission of sins by living a holy life.

—Because one has received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, one pursues a holy life.

—It is not our works that make us the people of God.

—Because God has made us His own people through the gospel, we live as befits that status.

9. Lessons for the saints today

This word does not command Christians today to reenact literally the ordinances for the high priest of the Old Testament. It must be received in Christ as follows.

First, we must believe that Jesus Christ alone is our eternal High Priest. Pastors or church leaders must not be identified with the high priest of the Old Testament and given absolute authority.

Second, the person called by God must not take his life lightly. In particular, the sexual, family, and moral life of the person who preaches the gospel affects the credibility of the gospel and the community. That does not mean, however, that perfection may be forced on the family of a leader, or that they may be treated as appendages of the office-holder.

Third, the attitude toward death and grief must change. The saints do not deny grief, but neither are they ruled by death. It is because Jesus, the eternal High Priest, rose again from death.

Fourth, widows and divorced people must not be discriminated against. The marriage ordinance for the high priest in Leviticus is a special provision for the hereditary priesthood of the Old Testament, not a declaration denying their human worth or their possibility of salvation.

Fifth, the holiness received through the gospel must be revealed in life. The one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must, thankful for the grace of having already had his sins washed away, not give his body and heart over to fornication and falsehood, but live serving the gospel following the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

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Conclusion

The high priest of Leviticus 21:10–15 was consecrated with the holy anointing oil and the priestly garments, but he was still a person who could not but die. He himself first needed a sacrifice of atonement, and when he died, another person had to succeed to his office.

But Jesus Christ is the eternal High Priest who has no sin. He did not stop at preserving His own cleanness by avoiding death, but entered into our sin and death in order to bear them. Jesus made those who believe clean forever by bearing our sins with the baptism He received from John, being judged by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rising again from death.

Therefore the final focus of this word is not the strict life of the human high priest itself. It lies in Jesus Christ, who completed all those types and Himself sanctified us.

Leviticus 21:16–24—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

This passage is the ordinance by which God did not allow a person among the descendants of Aaron who had a defect in his body to perform the office of a priest at the altar. Because, when read from the perspective of today, it can feel like a word that discriminates against people with disabilities, we must distinguish accurately between what the passage restricts and what it does not restrict.

The passage does not say that a physical disability is sin. Neither does it expel the priest with a defect from the community of Israel or from the priestly family. He could still eat the holy

things. What was restricted was not his personhood and his salvation, but the symbolic and representative office performed at the altar and inside the veil.

This ordinance ultimately makes us look beyond the imperfect priesthood of man to Jesus Christ, the eternal High Priest who is perfect without blemish.

1. "Any of the descendants of Aaron in succeeding generations who has a defect in his body"

Verse 17 says as follows.

"Speak to Aaron, saying: No man of your descendants in succeeding generations, who has any defect, may approach to offer the bread of his God."

The office of priest was not one that a person came to hold by personal choice or zeal. The priest was appointed from among the descendants of Aaron according to the ordinance God had established. But it was not that everyone born as a descendant of Aaron could perform the same office at the altar.

Here the expression *"the bread of his God"* does not mean that God actually needs food and eats it. It is a sacrificial expression that refers to the offerings made by fire that were burned on the altar and offered up to God. The priest handled the sacrificial offerings offered to God and drew near to the altar representing the people.

Therefore this office was not mere labor. It was a representative office that administered the sacrifice of atonement between God and the sinner. Through this office, God wanted to show His own perfect holiness and the perfect Savior who was to come.

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2. A defect of the body does not mean moral sin

Verses 18–20 list visual impairment, impairment in walking, deformity of the body, fracture of the hands and feet, disabilities of the spine and of growth, diseases of the eyes and the skin, damage to the reproductive organs, and so on.

When reading this list, the first thing that must be made clear is that a disability of the body must not be identified with moral sin.

That a person cannot see or cannot walk does not mean that he has more sin than other people. Nor is a disease or a congenital disability evidence that one has received the curse of God. Jesus, too, made it clear concerning the man blind from birth that it was not because of a particular sin of that man or of his parents that he had become so.

The *"defect"* of Leviticus 21 is not a verdict that the soul of that person is unclean or that his personhood is inferior. It is a condition of ceremonial and symbolic wholeness for performing a particular office within the sacrificial system of the Old Testament.

In holiness there are dimensions that must be seen distinctly from one another.

—Moral holiness is being set apart from sin and evil.

—Ceremonial holiness is being set apart according to the laws of cleanness and the law of sacrifice of the Old Testament.

—Holiness of office is being set apart by God to perform a particular mission.

Leviticus 21:16–24 deals mainly with ceremonial holiness and holiness of office. Having a defect in the body does not mean being morally evil.

3. The reason God required wholeness of the body

The tabernacle and the sacrificial system of the Old Testament were a type that taught the invisible salvation of God so that it could be seen with the eyes. The tabernacle, the altar, the offerings, the blood, the anointing oil, the priestly garments, and the body of the priest all played the role of showing the holiness of God and the perfection of salvation.

The sacrificial offering, too, had to be without blemish. That the offering offered to God had to be without blemish shows that Jesus Christ, who has no sin, would become our sacrificial offering.

That God required wholeness of the body of the priest as well, for his office, does not mean that the person was the same as the sacrificial offering. It means that because the priest had been entrusted with the office of drawing near to God representing the people, his body, too, had to show visibly the wholeness and order God required.

This ordinance is not a general principle that "people with disabilities cannot draw near to God." It was a symbolic condition attached to the particular office of administering the sacrifices in the tabernacle of the Old Testament.

Even when explaining a spiritual lesson from a defect of the body, an actual disability must not be made the standard for judging the sin or the faith of that person. For example, if one judges that a person who cannot see is necessarily spiritually ignorant and that a person who cannot walk is necessarily a person whose faith is shaken, one ends up condemning people who actually have disabilities.

The overall symbolism of the passage lies in the fact that there is no wholeness in man, and that in order to come before God, a perfect priest and a perfect sacrificial offering are needed.

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4. The office at the altar was restricted, but he could eat the holy things

A very important word in this passage is verse 22.

"He may eat the bread of his God, both the most holy and the holy;"

A descendant of Aaron who had a defect in his body, too, could eat the most holy and the holy things. He was not driven out of the priestly family, nor was he removed from the covenant community of God. He could partake of the holy food given to the family of the priests. Only, when eating the holy things, he had to keep the ordinances of cleanness just like the other priests (Leviticus 22:3–7).

Therefore, in the passage, restriction and grace are together.

—The office of drawing near to the altar and the veil and administering the sacrifices was restricted.

—But his status of belonging to the priestly family and his right to eat the holy things were acknowledged.

This distinction is important. It is because a difference of office does not mean superiority or inferiority of personhood. One does not become a less precious person before God just because one cannot perform a certain office.

The priest who had a defect in his body could not serve at the altar, but he partook of grace, eating the food God had given to the priests. He was not a person who had been cast away, but a person who was within the covenant and was restricted in a particular office.

5. *"He shall not go near the veil or approach the altar"*

Verse 23 mentions two areas.

"He shall not go near the veil or approach the altar"

"The veil" refers to the veil that set apart the holy area of the sanctuary, and *"the altar"* refers to the altar on which the sacrificial offerings were offered. These two places were the core places of the priestly office of drawing near to God.

God is not One who can be approached carelessly. The sinner cannot come to God carrying his own zeal and goodness. He had to come without fail through the law of sacrifice and the mediator God had appointed.

Therefore this restriction shows the holiness of God visibly. It is that wholeness is needed in order to draw near to God.

But the problem lies in the fact that among human beings there is no one who is whole by himself. Even if there is no conspicuous defect in the body, there is no one whose heart, thoughts, and deeds are perfect before God. Even the person who could outwardly perform the office of a priest had sin, and so he first had to offer a sacrifice of atonement for himself.

In the end, the priestly system of the Old Testament was not a system that made men boast of human wholeness, but a system that exposed the limits of the human priest and taught the necessity of the perfect High Priest.

6. Having no defect in the body does not mean having no sin

Among the priests of the Old Testament, even the person who, having no defect in his body, served at the altar had sin in his heart. Conversely, neither was a person who had a disability in his body a greater sinner.

This shows the fact that outward wholeness and spiritual wholeness are different.

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The descendant of Aaron, even if he looked whole in body, was a human being who could not but die, and he needed a sacrifice for his own sins. Though he repeatedly offered sacrifices for the people, those sacrifices could not make the conscience of man perfect forever.

Therefore, if one reads the ordinance of Leviticus 21 simply in the sense that "God uses only people who are healthy and whole in appearance," one takes the direction of the passage wrongly. Even the priest who had no defect in his body needed a sacrifice for his own sins. We must look beyond their limits to Jesus Christ, the eternal High Priest who has no sin.

7. Jesus Christ, the High Priest without blemish

The priests of the Old Testament had to meet the physical conditions, but they were still under sin and death. But Jesus Christ is the eternal High Priest who has no sin, no evil, and no uncleanness.

The 'being without blemish' of Jesus means first of all that He has no sin. It does not mean that Jesus had the appearance the people of the world prefer. What the Bible emphasizes is not outward beauty but His sinlessness and perfect obedience.

Jesus had no sin, but He received baptism from John. That was not in order to wash away His own sins, but in order to fulfill the righteousness of God and to bear all the sin of mankind on His own body.

The baptism Jesus received from John is connected with the principle of salvation in which one passed on his sins by laying his hands on the sacrificial offering in the Old Testament. Jesus bore the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John, went to the Cross bearing that sin, and died shedding His blood.

And He rose again from death and overcame sin and death, and as the eternal High Priest He makes intercession for us.

The priest of the Old Testament, because he himself was weak, first had to offer a sacrifice for his own sins. But Jesus did not need a sacrifice for His own sins. He offered Himself, who has no sin, as our eternal sacrificial offering.

8. The perfect High Priest saved us with a wounded body

Here is the amazing paradox of the gospel. Jesus was the High Priest without blemish, but in order to save us, He accepted His own body being wounded.

On the head of Jesus a crown of thorns was put, into His hands and feet nails were driven, and His side was pierced with a spear. The perfect One was wounded because of our transgressions.

Therefore the ordinance of Leviticus is not a word that leads one to despise people who are physically weak. Rather, it leads to the gospel that Jesus, who is truly perfect, gave His body in order to save us, who are weak and full of transgressions.

In the Old Testament, the priest who had a defect in his body could not enter inside the veil. But Jesus accomplished eternal atonement with the baptism He received from John and with His own blood, and entered the heavenly sanctuary. And He opened to those who believe in Him the way by which they can come before God.

That we can draw near to God is not because our body, our deeds, and our personhood are perfect. It is because Jesus Christ, the High Priest who represents us, is perfect.

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9. The gospel of the water and the Spirit makes people with many spiritual defects whole

Though a disability of the body and sin must not be identified with each other, we must acknowledge the fact that no one can achieve wholeness before God by his own deeds.

We do not see the will of God perfectly, nor do we walk straight according to His word. In our thoughts, judgments, and deeds there are countless flaws. Man cannot become a perfect priest before God by his own deeds.

But Jesus bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John, and received the judgment of those sins on the Cross. And by rising again from death, He showed the fact that that salvation is perfect.

The one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not come to God by his own perfection. He comes by believing in the perfect salvation of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit testifies with the word that all our sins have been washed away by the baptism of Jesus and the blood of the Cross.

The one who believes in this gospel may still have weaknesses in his body and life, but before God he is a righteous person who has received the remission of sins and one of the holy people. Our salvation does not depend on physical health, intellectual ability, social success, or religious achievements.

10. *"I the LORD sanctify them"*

The conclusion of verse 23 is as follows.

"I the LORD sanctify them."

This word shows that the subject of holiness is God. It is not that the priest makes himself holy by his own strength. God

established the sacrificial system, set the priests apart, and sanctified them through the sacrifice of atonement.

It is the same in the New Testament. It is not that a person becomes one of the people of God after he has corrected all his shortcomings and become perfect. God sent Jesus Christ, and Jesus bore our sins by receiving baptism from John and sanctified us by paying the price of sin with the blood He shed on the Cross.

Therefore holiness in the gospel begins from what God has done.

—God sanctifies us.

—Jesus Christ bore our sins.

—The Holy Spirit testifies of this truth of salvation.

—We accept by faith the salvation God has accomplished.

—A holy life is not the price for obtaining salvation, but the fruit of thanksgiving borne by the person who has already been saved.

11. This ordinance must not be applied to people with disabilities today

The restriction of the priestly office in Leviticus 21 must not be applied as it is to people with disabilities in the church today.

In the church of the New Testament there is no system in which the priesthood is inherited along the bloodline of Aaron. The church building is not the tabernacle of the Old Testament, nor is the pastor the high priest of the Old Testament. Therefore this passage cannot be used as a biblical ground for barring pastoral ministry, the spread of the gospel, service in worship, and participation in the church community on the ground that one has a disability in the body.

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In the New Testament, the important standards for judging a minister are not physical perfection but faith in the gospel, calling, the fruit of character and life, and the gifts God has given. Disability itself is not a disqualification for the work of the gospel.

Rather, the church must actively help so that saints with disabilities can worship, have fellowship, and serve according to their gifts. Places of worship that cannot be accessed, ways of delivering messages from which it is hard to obtain information, and an attitude that sees people with disabilities only as objects of pity do not fit the spirit of the gospel.

Jesus did not keep away from people who were sick and had disabilities. Neither did He treat them as people lower than sinners. He called them near, touched them, let them hear the word, and received them into the grace of the kingdom of God.

12. The pattern of the gospel found in verse 22

The word that even the priest who had a defect in his body could eat the holy things is very important from the perspective of grace.

It is not that he obtained the qualification to eat the holy things by fixing his body. Because he belonged to the family of Aaron, he partook of the holy food according to the ordinance God had appointed.

When this is seen in the light of the gospel of the New Testament, it is not that the saints enjoy the grace of God only after they have removed all their weaknesses. Because they have come to belong to Christ by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, they eat the word of God, have fellowship in the church, and enjoy the hope of the kingdom of God.

We have shortcomings, but our High Priest has no shortcoming. In our bodies and deeds there is weakness, but in the salvation accomplished by the baptism and the blood of Jesus there is no blemish. Therefore the assurance of salvation does not come from looking at ourselves, but from looking at Jesus Christ, who is perfect.

13. The life of the one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit

This word teaches the saints today several important attitudes of life.

First, we must not doubt the gospel because of our own weaknesses. Our salvation is based not on our own perfection but on the perfect salvation of Jesus Christ.

Second, we must not make the physical condition of other people the measure of their spiritual level. It is not that one has good faith because one is healthy, nor that one lacks faith because one has a disease or a disability.

Third, we must not confuse office and salvation in the church. Not everyone takes on the same office, but a difference of office does not mean a difference of worth before God.

Fourth, the person entrusted with the gospel must keep spiritual honesty. The wholeness required in the New Testament is not the outward form of the body, but a life of believing in and preaching the gospel rightly, casting away falsehood, lewdness, and greed, and following the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Fifth, we must not exclude weak people but share the grace of God together with them. If even the priest with a defect ate the holy things, the community saved by the gospel must all the more not push the weak members out of the body of Christ.

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Conclusion

Leviticus 21:16–24 is not a word that declares that the worth of people with disabilities is low. It is a word that set the conditions of the sacrificial office within the tabernacle system of the Old Testament in order to prefigure the perfect holiness of God and the perfect High Priest who was to come.

The priest who had a defect in his body could not draw near to the altar and the veil, but he still belonged to the priestly family and ate the holy food. He was not a person who had been cast away.

All the priests of the Old Testament, even if they were whole in body, had the limits of sin and death. But Jesus Christ is the High Priest without blemish who has no sin. Jesus bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John, was judged by shedding His blood on the Cross, and by rising again from death opened a new and living way of coming to God.

Therefore the one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not rely on the perfection of his own body and deeds. He believes in Jesus Christ, the perfect High Priest, and the salvation He has completed. In that faith, whether one has a disability or not, whether one is sick or healthy, all the saints alike receive the grace of God and can come to God. ✉

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

Those who hallow the name of God through the grace of the washing away of sins

< Leviticus 21:1-9 >

"And the LORD said to Moses, Speak to the priests, the sons of Aaron, and say to them: None shall defile himself for the dead among his people, except for his relatives who are nearest to him: his mother, his father, his son, his daughter, and his brother; also his virgin sister who is near to him, who has had no husband, for her he may defile himself. Otherwise he shall not defile himself, being a chief man among his people, to profane himself. They shall not make any bald place on their heads, nor shall they shave the edges of their beards nor make any cuttings in their flesh. They shall be holy to their God and not profane the name of their God, for they offer the offerings of the LORD made by fire, and the bread of their God; therefore they shall be holy. They shall not take a wife who is a harlot or a defiled woman, nor shall they take a woman divorced from her husband; for the priest is holy to his God. Therefore you shall consecrate him, for he offers the bread of your God. He shall be holy to you, for I the LORD, who sanctify you, am holy. The daughter of any priest, if she profanes herself by playing the harlot, she profanes her father. She shall be burned with fire."

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Dear beloved saints, the office of serving God is not separated from our lives. If we say that we exalt God when we worship but take His word lightly in daily life, we must look back on that service.

In Leviticus chapter 21, God speaks to the priests, the sons of Aaron. He gives the ordinances concerning the uncleanness caused by a dead person and the manner of mourning, and concerning marriage and family life. The priest had to remember the God he served not only at the moment of offering the offerings but also in his life.

The word that runs through these ordinances is in verse 6. He said: *"They shall be holy to their God and not profane the name of their God, for they offer the offerings of the LORD made by fire, and the bread of their God; therefore they shall be holy."*

The holiness of the priest was connected with the name of God. Through this word we intend to learn the responsibility of the person who serves God, and to look together at the grace of the washing away of sins, which sanctifies us.

Remember the word of God even in the midst of grief

Verse 1 commands the priest not to defile himself for the dead among the people. It is an ordinance to avoid the ceremonial uncleanness that arises in connection with a dead person. The uncleanness spoken of here must not be read to mean that the heart itself that loves or grieves for the deceased is sin.

Right after this, God speaks of an exception. He said that he may defile himself for his father or mother, his son or daughter, his brother, or his virgin sister who has had no husband. While

making the priest keep cleanness for his office, He made an exception concerning the death of close kin.

Therefore we must not think that, since one has become a priest, one must act like a person who has nothing to do even with the death of a family member. We must read together the range God forbade and the range He permitted. Our zeal must not go so far as to forbid even what God has permitted.

Verse 4 makes clear that the priest is a chief man among his people, and says that he shall not defile himself and so profane himself. A person who is in the position of serving others must think of the influence his actions have. Even at a time of great grief, he had to act within the word without forgetting the work God had entrusted to him.

Today we must not turn this word into a regulation that uniformly forbids attending a funeral or grieving. While examining the range of the ordinance God gave to the priests of that time, we must learn the faith that respects the word even at the moments when our feelings run deep.

Discernment is needed in the manner of expressing grief as well

In verse 5, He says not to make any bald place on the head, nor shave the edges of the beard, nor make any cuttings in the flesh. This word must be read together with the preceding ordinance concerning the dead. In Leviticus chapter 19 and Deuteronomy chapter 14, too, He forbade cutting the body or shaving the hair for the dead.

God did not say not to feel grief. He says not to follow, because of grief, even the actions God has forbidden. The priest could not unconditionally follow the example of the people

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around him in their manner of mourning.

We, too, when our hearts are distressed, feel as though we must do something, whatever it may be. We sometimes think that if we torment ourselves severely, our sincerity will be revealed, and that if we suffer more pain, God will accept us. But an act that harms one's own body cannot become the faith that fears God or a way of the remission of sins.

What God wants is a heart that acknowledges His word. We must tell the Lord our grief and fear, but must not be led by those feelings and leave the way God has appointed. The power that washes away our sins, too, does not lie in the size of the pain we suffer, but in the Lord, who accomplished salvation for us.

The person who offers the offerings must think of the name of God

Verse 6 explains, from the work he was entrusted with, the reason the priest must be holy. The priest is the person who offers the offerings of the LORD made by fire, that is, the bread of God. Here the bread of God refers to the offerings offered to God.

The priest was entrusted with the work of offering, according to the ordinance of God, the offerings the people brought. He was not to change that work at his own convenience or neglect it. The person who was to show the people the holiness of God and the way of the remission of sins was not to profane the name of God instead.

Verse 8 commands the people, too, to hallow the priest. It is because he is the person who offers the bread of God. The office of the priest was a work that the community had to treasure together. The priest himself had to carry out that office rightly,

and the people had to respect the work God had entrusted.

Malachi 2:7 speaks of that responsibility in this way. He said: *"For the lips of a priest should keep knowledge, And people should seek the law from his mouth; For he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts."*

On the lips of the person who serves God there must be the word of God. Rather than words that hold people fast to himself, words that make known the salvation God has accomplished are needed. We, too, when we preach the gospel, must not put forward our own experience or zeal as the ground of salvation, but must clearly tell what Jesus did for sinners.

Marriage and family life, too, are not separated from the office

In verse 7, He gives the ordinance concerning the marriage of the priest. He says not to take a harlot or a defiled woman, or a woman divorced from her husband, and makes clear the reason: because the priest is holy to the LORD.

This is the marriage regulation given to the priests, the sons of Aaron. On the basis of this verse, one must not say that the women in the situations mentioned here cannot receive the remission of sins. The passage teaches that the priest must follow the command of God in marriage as well, so as to be worthy of his office.

In verse 9, it says that if the daughter of a priest profanes herself by playing the harlot, she profanes her father. Even the sin that occurred in the home of the priest was not treated lightly before God. The office of the father did not become a shield that covered the sin of the child.

The passage commands even the punishment of burning with

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fire for that matter. It is a stern regulation given to the community of Israel at that time. This must not be applied today as an authority for a family member or a church member to use violence against another person.

What we must examine is whether we are separating the name of serving God from our actual lives. If we show a godly appearance before people but act carelessly toward our close family, we must look back on ourselves. We must not stop at making the home look good on the outside, but learn the word together with our family and honestly acknowledge our wrongs.

The One who sanctifies us is God

Thus the ordinances given to the priests are stern. But we must not miss the last word of verse 8. He said: *"I the LORD, who sanctify you, am holy."*

God not only demands holiness, but says that He Himself is the One who sanctifies the people. The fact of having been born in the family of the priests, or the office of offering sacrifices itself, does not remove a person's sins. The priest, too, needed the remission of sins that God grants.

It is the same with us. It is not that our sins are washed away because we have many responsibilities in the church or have learned the Bible for a long time. Even the person who preaches the word to others has no ability to solve his own sins. He must first receive the remission of sins himself by believing in the salvation the Lord has accomplished.

In the Old Testament, the sinner passed on his sins by laying his hands on the sacrificial offering God had appointed, and that offering died shedding its blood. The priest offered that sacrifice according to the word of God. In this law of sacrifice is revealed

the way in which sins are transferred to the offering and the remission of sins is received through the offering dying in one's place.

Jesus came in order to accomplish this salvation. By receiving baptism from John, He had the sin of mankind transferred to Him, and bearing that sin, He died shedding His blood on the Cross. He accomplished the work of bearing our sins and the work of receiving that judgment in our place. And Jesus rose again from death.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is the gospel of receiving the remission of sins by believing in this salvation. It is not that we first become perfect people and are then accepted by God. We obtain holiness by believing in the baptism Jesus received from John and the vicarious atonement of the Cross. The ground that sanctifies us is not our office or merit, but the salvation the Lord has accomplished.

Serve God relying on the grace of the washing away of sins

Even after receiving the remission of sins, we come to see our own shortcomings. There are times when we hurt others with words, harbor wrong thoughts in our hearts, and neglect the work God has entrusted to us. At those times we must not put forward our office and cover up the wrong.

Conversely, we must not look only at our own shortcomings and deny even the salvation of the Lord. We must acknowledge together the facts that God is holy, that what I did wrong is sin, and that Jesus bore even that sin.

1 John 2:1 says: *"My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an*

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Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

The Lord tells us not to sin. And at the same time, He lets us know that the Advocate on whom the person who has sinned may rely is Jesus Christ. We must acknowledge our wrong and look to the Lord, who has already borne our sins. We must confirm again through the word the washing away of sins the Lord has accomplished, and come before God with a clean faith.

Dear beloved saints, the Lord has given us, who have received the remission of sins, the grace of serving God and preaching the gospel. The person entrusted with this work must think of the name of the God he serves. He must respect the word of the Lord in his words and actions, and even in his attitude toward those close to him.

Let us not hide our uncleanness, but rely on the grace of the Lord, who has made us whole. Let us clearly preach the gospel that Jesus received baptism from John and shed His blood on the Cross and washed away our sins. Let us live as people who believe in God, who sanctifies sinners, and exalt His name. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

The High Priest, who has accomplished the eternal remission of sins through the water and the Spirit

< Leviticus 21:10-15 >

"He who is the high priest among his brethren, on whose head the anointing oil was poured and who is consecrated to wear the garments, shall not uncover his head nor tear his clothes; nor shall he go near any dead body, nor defile himself for his father or his mother; nor shall he go out of the sanctuary, nor profane the sanctuary of his God; for the consecration of the anointing oil of his God is upon him: I am the LORD. And he shall take a wife in her virginity. A widow or a divorced woman or a defiled woman or a harlot—these he shall not marry; but he shall take a virgin of his own people as wife. Nor shall he profane his posterity among his people, for I the LORD sanctify him."

Dear beloved saints, what kind of person was the high priest, who offered the sacrifices for the people before God? He was a person anointed by God and entrusted with the holy office. God clothed him with the priestly garments and entrusted him with

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the work of coming before God for the sins of the people. Therefore the life of the high priest was not separated from the office he was entrusted with.

Today's passage contains ordinances concerning the demeanor of the high priest, dealing with the dead, keeping the sanctuary, and marriage. God made the high priest keep holiness in all these matters. It is because the person set up for the atonement of the people was not to handle that office according to his own will.

Through this word we learn how holy a thing it is to come before God. And we come to examine what kind of High Priest is needed for us, who have sin and weakness. The One who solves our sins completely and makes us stand before God is Jesus Christ.

God anointed him and entrusted him with the office

Verse 10 explains the high priest in this way. He said: *"He who is the high priest among his brethren, on whose head the anointing oil was poured and who is consecrated to wear the garments, shall not uncover his head nor tear his clothes;"*

That he was anointed with the anointing oil means that God set him apart for the holy office. That he was commissioned means that he was entrusted with the responsibility to perform that office. The priestly garments he wore, too, revealed that he was a person who performed the work God had entrusted.

In Exodus chapter 29, God said to wash Aaron and his sons with water, clothe them with the appointed garments, and pour the anointing oil on the head of Aaron. The office of the priest was entrusted according to the procedure God had appointed. It was not that a person could exalt himself and stand between God

and the people.

But it is not that, just because he wore the priestly garments and was anointed, Aaron himself no longer needed atonement. If we look at Leviticus chapter 16, Aaron, too, had to offer the sin offering for himself and his family before making atonement for the people. Even the person entrusted with the holy office needed the remission of sins that God gives.

This fact gives a clear teaching to us as well. The office of teaching the word or a long career of faith cannot wash away sin. The person who preaches the gospel, too, must first know and believe how Jesus removed his sins. All the work of serving God must stand on the grace of the remission of sins the Lord has given.

There was a holy responsibility to uphold even in the face of death

God did not let the high priest uncover his head or tear his clothes. Then in verse 11, He commanded him not to go near any dead body, nor defile himself even for his father or his mother.

Earlier, for the ordinary priests, the case of becoming unclean because of the death of a close family member was permitted. But for the high priest, that exception was not given even in the death of his parents. That is how gravely God regarded the holy office entrusted to the high priest.

The focus of this ordinance is not on removing the heart that loves one's family. God knew that the high priest, too, had parents and had grief. Nevertheless, the person who served God representing the people had a responsibility to keep even in the midst of grief. Personal grief was not to tear down the holy office entrusted to him.

Here we must think of how precious the way of coming to

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God is. The people needed a high priest who would offer the sacrifice for sin. God did not take lightly the person entrusted with that work becoming unclean and being unable to carry out the office.

Yet the high priest himself, who was commanded not to go near a dead person, in the end could not escape death. When one person died, another person had to succeed to his office. The high priest of this earth had this limit. Therefore we need a High Priest who lives forever, whose office does not end with death.

He gave the command not to profane the sanctuary

Verse 12 says: *"Nor shall he go out of the sanctuary, nor profane the sanctuary of his God; for the consecration of the anointing oil of his God is upon him: I am the LORD."*

God connected the reason the high priest had to keep the sanctuary with the anointing oil on his head. Because God had commissioned him, he had to keep the office in a manner worthy of that calling. He was not to leave the holy service following only his own circumstances, or profane the sanctuary of God in an unclean state.

The sanctuary was not a place for displaying the authority of the high priest. It was the place where the sins of the people were atoned for through the sacrifices God had appointed. Therefore keeping the sanctuary holy was connected with faithfully carrying out the office entrusted for the people.

This word cannot be turned into a regulation that a minister today must not attend the funeral of a family member. The passage speaks of the office of the high priest of the Old Testament, who was consecrated with the anointing oil. What we must learn is the fact that we must not change by our own

thinking the holy work God has entrusted.

In particular, when preaching the gospel of the remission of sins, we must preach the salvation God has accomplished as it is. We must not leave out the baptism Jesus received from John, or treat lightly the judgment of sin He received on the Cross. It is because the way for the sinner to come before God lies in the salvation the Lord has accomplished.

Marriage and descendants, too, were connected with the holy office

From verse 13 on, the command concerning the marriage of the high priest follows. He had to take a virgin from among his own people as his wife. He was not to take as his wife a widow or a divorced woman, one the passage calls a defiled woman, or a harlot. And in verse 15, He said not to profane his posterity.

God did not speak only of the work the high priest performed in the sanctuary. He spoke even of his home and the descendants to be born from him. Within the system in which the office of the priest was passed down to the descendants of Aaron, the marriage of the high priest was not a matter belonging to personal choice alone. He had the responsibility to keep the distinction God had appointed even in forming a family.

Therefore, when reading this ordinance, we must consider the point that it is a command given to the particular office of the high priest. We must not draw from here the meaning that the people restricted here as objects of marriage are excluded from the grace of the remission of sins as well. Jesus is not One who discriminated by people's past and situation and bore only some sins. He is the Savior who bore the sin of the world.

Finishing this ordinance, God said, *"I the LORD sanctify him"*

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(Leviticus 21:15). The holiness of the high priest belonged to God. The One who set him up was God, and the One who appointed the way he had to follow was also God. Therefore he had to put himself and his home under the word of God.

Jesus atoned for our sins with His own body

Dear saints, even the high priest, who had to keep such strict ordinances, needed a sacrifice for his own sins. Then what kind of High Priest must the One be who will save us completely from all sins? He must be One who has no sin Himself, and who can actually bear and solve our sins. That One is Jesus Christ.

Jesus never sinned. That the Lord received baptism from John was not in order to wash away His own sins. It was in order to have our sins transferred to Him. Just as one passed on his sins by laying his hands on the offering in the Old Testament, Jesus bore the sin of mankind by receiving baptism from John.

Therefore the blood Jesus shed on the Cross is not separated from the baptism He received from John. Because the Lord had our sins transferred to Him, He received the judgment of those sins in our place. The sinless One gave His life for sinners. And He rose again from death and became our eternal Savior.

Aaron had to offer the offering for himself and offer the offering for the people. But Jesus did not need to offer a sacrifice for His own sins. The Lord offered His own body for us. Without relying on the sacrifice of another offering, He Himself became our sacrificial offering and accomplished the remission of sins.

To believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is to receive this salvation in the heart. It is to believe that Jesus bore my sins with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose again from death.

Our remission of sins is based on this perfect salvation.

Let us draw near through the High Priest who lives forever

Hebrews 7:24–25 says: "*But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.*"

Our High Priest is alive even now. The remission of sins Jesus accomplished is not something that ended with the death of the Lord. The Lord rose again from death, and He is the guarantee of the eternal salvation of those who come to God through Him.

That the Lord makes intercession for us does not mean that the atonement is insufficient and He keeps supplementing it. It means that on the perfect salvation He has already accomplished with His own body, He is before God for us. We believe in that Lord and come to God.

At times, our hearts may be shaken when we see our weakness. But we must not look for the ground for standing before God only in what we ourselves are. There is a fact clearer than how bold I feel today. It is the fact that Jesus bore my sins and received that judgment. Faith relies on this salvation the Lord has accomplished.

Dear saints, God entrusted the high priest with the holy office and made him keep it. And Jesus Christ became our eternal High Priest and accomplished the remission of sins completely. Let us believe in the Lord, who saved us with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross and rose again from death. Let us come to God through Him, who always lives for us. ✉

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Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

Those who enjoy the food of grace through the Lord without blemish

< Leviticus 21:16-24 >

"And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to Aaron, saying: No man of your descendants in succeeding generations, who has any defect, may approach to offer the bread of his God. For any man who has a defect shall not approach: a man blind or lame, who has a marred face or any limb too long, a man who has a broken foot or broken hand, or is a hunchback or a dwarf, or a man who has a defect in his eye, or eczema or scab, or is a eunuch. No man of the descendants of Aaron the priest, who has a defect, shall come near to offer the offerings made by fire to the LORD. He has a defect; he shall not come near to offer the bread of his God. He may eat the bread of his God, both the most holy and the holy; only he shall not go near the veil or approach the altar, because he has a defect, lest he profane My sanctuaries; for I the LORD sanctify them. And Moses told it to Aaron and his sons, and to all the children of Israel."

Dear beloved saints, in today's word comes the ordinance concerning the person among the descendants of Aaron who has a defect in his body. God restricted his coming to the altar and offering the offerings. But He permitted him to eat the bread of

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God. We must look at these two words together. It is because having a restriction in the office of offering the sacrifices and not being able to eat the food God gives are not the same thing.

While having the holiness of the sanctuary kept, God gave food to the descendant of Aaron who could not carry out the office. Through this word we come to think of the way of coming before the holy God and the grace God grants. Our remission of sins, too, does not come from any condition we could put forward. It is the grace received by believing in the salvation accomplished by Jesus Christ, who is without blemish.

God appointed the conditions for the person who offers the sacrifices

God gave Moses the word that Aaron and his descendants had to keep. He said: *"Speak to Aaron, saying: No man of your descendants in succeeding generations, who has any defect, may approach to offer the bread of his God" (Leviticus 21:17).*

Here, offering the bread of God refers to the work of offering the offerings to God. Verse 21 explains this work again as offering the offerings of the LORD made by fire. God did not say that anyone could come to the altar and do that work merely by the fact of being a descendant of Aaron. For the person who offered the sacrifices, too, there were conditions God had appointed.

The sacrifice was not a matter of serving God in the way a person wanted. The offering God had appointed had to be offered by the person He had appointed, in the way He had appointed. The zeal or good intentions of the person offering the offering could not take the place of that ordinance.

Our receiving the remission of sins, too, must follow the way

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of salvation God has accomplished. It is not that, if each person makes sincere efforts, those efforts themselves wash away sin. We must know how God dealt with our sins, and believe in that salvation. The ground of the remission of sins lies in what God has done, before our zeal.

We must look rightly at the word concerning the defect of the body

Verses 18 to 20 list concretely various conditions of the body, such as the eyes and the walk, the nose and the limbs, the build of the body and the skin. The case of a broken hand or foot is also included. And in verse 21, it says again that a descendant of Aaron who has such a defect shall not offer the offerings of the LORD made by fire.

What God regulated in this passage is the qualification for the office performed in the sanctuary and at the altar. The passage does not explain that the person came to have a disability in his body because he had committed some evil deed. A disability of the body must not be judged to be the sin or the lack of faith of that person.

Also, it is not that a person who has no disability in his body is whole without sin even in his heart. A person can be proud even if his body is healthy, and even if his hands and feet are whole, he can sin with those hands and feet. The problem of sin that must be solved before God is in every person.

Therefore we must not make this word a yardstick for evaluating the appearance and body of other people. While examining the ordinance God appointed for the priests of the Old Testament, we must learn the fact that we cannot boast of human qualification and ability before the holy God. The way of coming

to God must be opened by God.

Even though he could not come to the altar, he ate the bread of God

Verse 22 is a word that must be read together with the preceding restriction. He said: *"He may eat the bread of his God, both the most holy and the holy;"*

God permitted even the descendant of Aaron who had a defect in his body to eat the holy things. He said clearly that he may eat both the most holy and the holy. He did not take away even the food given to him just because he could not do the work of offering the offerings at the altar.

This person was among the descendants of Aaron. God spoke of the office he could not carry out, and at the same time spoke of the portion He permitted him. We must not read only the word that he may not come near and think that that person was excluded from all the grace of God. The word God gave, that he should eat, must be accepted with the same weight.

Verse 23, which follows, makes clear again the range of that restriction. He could not enter inside the veil or come near the altar. Eating and offering the sacrifices were distinguished. Also, the ordinances of cleanness concerning an unclean state, dealt with in the next chapter, had to be kept separately. The mere fact of having a defect in the body did not make even the qualification to eat the holy things disappear.

This word makes us think of grace. Receiving what God has given and what work I can accomplish must be distinguished. We easily calculate the grace of salvation we have received from God by the size of what we have done. But the remission of sins is not wages paid to the person who has accomplished many

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works. It is a gift given to the person who believes in the salvation the Lord has accomplished.

Grace depends on the One who grants it rather than on the merit of the one who receives it

In 2 Samuel chapter 9 comes the account of David showing kindness to Mephibosheth. Mephibosheth had a disability in both feet, but he ate food at the table of the king like the king's sons. It is because David showed kindness to him, remembering his father Jonathan.

Mephibosheth did not sit at the table of the king by proving his own ability. He received the kindness David showed. Even after he came to eat at the table of the king, the condition of his two feet is recorded as it was. The kindness given to him was not the result of the condition of his body having changed.

We, too, are not people who obtained the remission of sins by our own merit before God. God accepts us, who believe, through the salvation Jesus Christ has accomplished for us. Because the Lord removed our sins, we have come to live as the children of God.

Romans 4:5 says: *"But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness,"*

This word is not a permission that one may live in any way one pleases. It speaks of where the ground on which the sinner is justified lies. It is that one must turn from trying to pay for sin by one's own works and believe in God, who remits sins. The One who accomplished our remission of sins is the Lord.

Jesus, who is without blemish, saved us with His baptism and blood

Then how did the Lord sanctify us, who have sin? Hebrews 9:14 says: *"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"*

Jesus is the One who has no sin. He is not One who has to solve His own sins as we do. Such a Lord offered His own body to God in order to save us, who have sin. Our salvation lies in the sinless Savior having borne our sins in our place.

Jesus received baptism from John at the Jordan River. Just as one passed on his sins by laying his hands on the sacrificial offering in the Old Testament, Jesus had the sin of mankind transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John. It was not a baptism He received because Jesus Himself had sins to wash away. He bore our sins in order to save us, who have sin.

And the Lord bore that sin through the baptism He received from John and shed His blood on the Cross. Because He had our sins transferred to Him, He received in our place the judgment we had to receive. In the blood the Lord shed is the meaning that the price of our sins has been paid. Jesus rose again from death and became our Savior.

To believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is to receive this salvation in the heart. It is to believe that Jesus bore my sins with the baptism He received from John and received the judgment of those sins on the Cross. It is not that I become a sinless person by myself and come to the Lord. Because the Lord has removed sin, I believe in that grace and come.

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Let us enjoy the grace of the Lord, who has sanctified us

In verse 23, God said, *"I the LORD sanctify them."* The One who appointed the holiness of the sanctuary is God, and the One who sanctifies His people is also God. And verse 24 records that Moses told this word to Aaron and his sons and to all the children of Israel as it was.

Moses did not permit by his own thinking what God had restricted. Neither did he take away what God had permitted to be eaten. We, too, must believe both in the holiness of God and in the grace God has granted.

The person who believes in the grace of the remission of sins does not hide his wrongs or take sin lightly. While acknowledging what he did wrong, he looks to the Lord, who bore even that sin. Neither does he deny the salvation the Lord has accomplished because of his own weakness. It is because God has sanctified us not by our merit but by the perfect atonement of Jesus Christ.

Dear saints, do not push away by your own judgment the grace God has granted. Do not think that because you cannot work as much as others and have many shortcomings, you cannot enjoy the joy of the remission of sins either. Our salvation does not depend on the size of the work we have accomplished. It depends on the salvation Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross.

The Lord, who is without blemish, gave Himself for us. Let us believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit and enjoy the grace of the remission of sins. And let us serve God, giving thanks for the grace we have received. We give thanks to the Lord, who has sanctified us and made us live in grace. ✉

Questions and Answers on Leviticus Chapter 21

[Question] 1. What does Leviticus chapter 21 deal with concerning the priests, and what is the most important thing it teaches?

Leviticus chapter 21 deals with the ordinances of holiness that the priests who offered the sacrifices to God had to keep. It can be divided into the regulations concerning the life of the ordinary priests (verses 1–9), the regulations the high priest had to keep (verses 10–15), and the regulations concerning the sacrificial office of the person among the descendants of Aaron who had a defect in his body (verses 16–24). Its main subjects are contact with the dead, mourning practices, marriage and family life, and priestly service in the sanctuary.

The central lesson is that the person who serves the holy God must live set apart as befits that office. Because the priest was the person who offered the offerings to God on behalf of the people, he was not to profane the name of God not only in his conduct before the altar but also in his daily life. The office of drawing near to God carried a correspondingly heavy responsibility.

The person who serves God must first believe in the remission of sins God has given, and respect the word He has appointed. Rather than merely putting forward the fact of having been entrusted with an office, it is important to live in accordance with the will of God, who has sanctified him.

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[Question] 2. Leviticus 21:1–9—what ordinances of cleanness did the ordinary priests have to keep in their lives and homes?

The ordinances given to the ordinary priests are as follows.

• They had to avoid the uncleanness caused by a dead person. However, an exception was permitted in the case of the close family members specified in the passage, such as parents, children, brothers, and a virgin sister who had had no husband.

• They had to refrain from acts of mourning that damaged the body. He said not to make a bald place on the head, shave the edges of the beard, or make cuttings in the flesh.

• They had to keep the holiness of the priest in marriage as well. He said not to take as a wife a harlot or a defiled woman, or a woman divorced from her husband.

• They were not to profane the name of God in their homes either. A priest's daughter playing the harlot was regarded as not only defiling herself but also profaning her father, and the ordinance of that time commanded the punishment of burning with fire for her.

The reason for these regulations was that the priests were the people entrusted with the bread of God, that is, the offerings offered to God. The holiness of the priest was not a matter that remained only in personal godliness. Because it was an office that revealed the holiness of God before the people, their lives and homes, too, could not be separated from that office.

[Question] 3. Leviticus 21:1—what does it mean that the priest was not to defile himself because of a dead person?

It means not to come into a ceremonially unclean state by contact with a dead body. Numbers 19:11–13 explains that the person who touched a dead body was unclean for a certain period and had to go through the procedure of becoming clean. Because the priest was the person entrusted with the sacrifices before the holy God, he had to be especially careful concerning this uncleanness as well.

This word must not be read to mean that a dead person is more evil than a living person, or that the grief itself of the bereaved family is sin. To the ordinary priests, an exception for close family members was also given. Here, 'defiling' refers first of all to the ceremonial state related to coming near to the sanctuary.

Spiritually, it makes us think of the fact that a person who is under sin and death needs the cleanness God gives in order to come to the holy God. The priest, too, did not serve God because he was a holy person by himself, but had to follow the ordinances of cleanness and atonement God had appointed.

[Question] 4. Leviticus 21:13–15—how is the ordinance that the high priest was to marry a virgin from among his own people connected with the church of the New Testament?

The high priest had to take a virgin from among his own people as his wife, and had to keep the holiness of the office set apart for God in the ordinances concerning marriage and

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descendants as well. The passage does not speak of the appearance or the physical perfection of the wife as a condition, but speaks of the conditions God appointed concerning the marriage of the high priest.

The holiness of this ordinance makes us think of Jesus Christ, our High Priest, and His church. Ephesians 5:25–27 says that Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her, and that He cleanses her with the washing of water by the word and establishes her as a holy church without blemish. The holiness of the church did not arise because its people had no sin at all from the beginning. It comes from the grace by which Christ loved and cleansed her.

Jesus bore our sins by receiving baptism from John, and received the judgment of those sins on the Cross. The church must believe in this salvation, rely on the word of the Lord, and live as the faithful people who belong to Him. The marriage ordinance for the high priest must not be applied as it is to the past marriage history of the saints today, judging that a certain person cannot become a member of the church.

[Question] 5. Leviticus 21:10—what does it mean that the high priest was anointed with oil, clothed with the priestly garments, and entrusted with the office?

It means that God set that person apart and set him up as the high priest, and entrusted him with the office through the ceremony He had appointed. *"The anointing oil"* is the oil set apart for holy use, and pouring that oil showed that he had been set apart for the work of serving God. Being *"consecrated"* is the entrusting of the office of the priest, and *"the garments"*

refers to the clothing God appointed for performing that office (Exodus 29:1–9; 30:30).

Aaron was first washed with water and clothed with the appointed garments, and was entrusted with the office through the anointing and the sacrifices (Leviticus 8:6–13). This shows that the office of the priest could not be taken according to one's own will, but had to be set up in the way God had appointed. The person who offered the sacrifices for the people, too, first had to be made clean before God and receive atonement.

Therefore the anointing and the priestly garments were not marks for boasting of one's own position. They showed the responsibility that, as a person belonging to God, he had to follow His will and faithfully carry out the work entrusted to him.

[Question] 6. In what sense does the Old Testament explain the death of a person?

The Old Testament explains death in connection with the problem of the sin of man and his disobedience to God. God told Adam that he would die if he broke His command, and after he sinned, God pronounced that he would return to the dust (Genesis 2:17; 3:19). Therefore death shows the fact that a person cannot maintain life forever by his own strength, and the situation of man placed under sin.

The death of the body is the end of life on earth, but it does not mean that the whole existence of a person disappears and he comes to have no relationship at all with God. Ecclesiastes 12:7 says that the dust returns to the earth and the spirit returns to God who gave it. This means that the beginning and the end of life depend on God.

In the Old Testament there is also the hope of looking to God,

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who will deliver from the power of death. Psalm 49:15 confesses that God will redeem the soul from the power of Sheol. Therefore the word of the Old Testament concerning death makes us realize sin and the limits of man, while leading us to rely on God, who gives life and saves.

[Question] 7. How does the New Testament teach about death and the hope after it?

The New Testament makes clear the fact that death came through sin, and proclaims that Jesus Christ has brought salvation from sin and death. Jesus bore our sins by receiving baptism from John, died on the Cross, and rose again from death. To the person who believes in this salvation, God gives the remission of sins and eternal life (Romans 5:12, 17–21; 6:23).

The saints, too, undergo the death of the body, but that death does not end in eternal destruction. That Jesus rose again from death is the ground of the hope that He will raise again those who belong to Him as well. 1 Corinthians chapter 15 says that the dead will be raised incorruptible and be changed, and 1 Thessalonians chapter 4 calls those who have died in the Lord *"those who have fallen asleep"* and exhorts us to comfort one another with the hope of meeting again and always being with the Lord.

The New Testament also teaches that there is judgment after death. Revelation 20:12–15 speaks of the last judgment and the second death. The death of the body and the last judgment must not be lumped together as the same event. The hope of the saints is not a vague expectation that one goes to a good place when one dies, but is based on the salvation Jesus accomplished and the promise of the resurrection.

Therefore, even when the saints grieve over losing a loved one, they do not need to remain in despair like people who have no hope. Even in the midst of grief, they can believe in the eternal life the Lord has given, comfort one another, and live the rest of their lives giving thanks to the Lord.

[Question] 8. Leviticus 21:11–12—what restriction did the high priest have to keep even when his parents died?

The high priest was not to go near a dead body and make himself unclean even because of the death of his parents. In verse 12, which follows, He commanded him not to go out of the sanctuary nor profane the sanctuary of God. Therefore it was not permitted to leave the holy office in the sanctuary on the ground of mourning for one's parents and become unclean by contact with a dead body.

The reason was that the anointing oil with which God had consecrated him was upon him. The high priest was entrusted with the special responsibility of standing before God for all the people, and had to keep the holiness of that office even in the grief of losing his parents. This is not a word to be understood as a command not to love one's parents, or as a general regulation not to take a single step outside the sanctuary for one's whole life. It must be read in the context that deals together with the uncleanness caused by death and the office of the high priest.

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[Question] 9. Leviticus 21:16–24—which people among the descendants of Aaron could not officiate at the sacrifices?

Even a descendant of Aaron, if he was a person who had a defect of the body as spoken of in the passage, could not draw near to offer the offerings to God. In verses 18–20 are listed a person who cannot see or who is lame, a person with a marred face or any limb too long, a person with a broken hand or foot, a person with an abnormality in the condition of his back or his height, a person with a defect in his eye, a person with eczema or scab, and a person with damage to the reproductive organs.

These people could not take on the office of entering inside the veil or coming near the altar and offering the sacrifices. But as members of the priestly family, they were permitted to eat the holy things and the most holy things. God distinguished the restriction of the office from the right to receive the portion that went to the priests.

Therefore it must not be explained that, on the ground of having a defect in the body, even the status of being a descendant of Aaron disappeared, or that God drove that person out from among His people. The passage is an ordinance that placed a restriction on a particular sacrificial office for the holiness of the sanctuary.

[Question] 10. Leviticus 21:16–24—what was the meaning of restricting the sacrificial office of a person with a defect in his body, and how must it be understood in the New Testament?

This ordinance shows that wholeness was required for drawing near to the holy God and offering the sacrifices. The conditions concerning the body of the priest were conditions given to the office of serving God in the sanctuary of the Old Testament. This must not be changed into the meaning that people with a disability or disease of the body have more sin than others, or are of lower worth before God. God also permitted them a portion of the holy things to eat.

The office of the priest of the Old Testament makes us look to Jesus Christ, the perfect High Priest. Hebrews 7:26–28 says that Jesus is holy and harmless, and that He is the Son who has been perfected forever, who accomplished atonement by offering Himself once and for all. The perfection that makes us come to God is not obtained from the body or the deeds of man, but lies in Jesus Christ, who bore our sins and accomplished salvation.

The New Testament calls the saints who believe in Jesus Christ a holy priesthood and God's own special people (1 Peter 2:5, 9). The saints come to God through Christ, proclaim His praises, and offer spiritual sacrifices. Therefore the physical conditions of the Old Testament must not be brought over as they are to exclude the worship and service of saints who have a disability of the body. The church must treasure the remission of sins and the faith Christ has given, and serve God together. ✉

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CHAPTER

22

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Leviticus Chapter 22 seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Leviticus 22:1–9—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

Leviticus 22:1–9 gives the ordinances of cleanness the priests had to keep when handling and eating the holy things. The priest was a person set apart for God, but that did not mean that he could go near the holy things in any state whatsoever. When he had become unclean, he had to withdraw from the holy things and follow the ordinances of cleanness appointed for each case. In particular, verses 6–7 stipulate that the person who has touched an unclean thing is to wash his body and eat the holy things after the sun goes down.

This word teaches two things together to the saints who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

First, it is the perfect salvation that Jesus Christ has washed away all our sins once and for all.

Second, it is the holy life of not taking one's own wrongs and uncleanness lightly even after receiving the remission of sins, but examining them before the word.

These two must not be confused. It is not that the salvation of Jesus becomes imperfect just because the life of the saints is

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lacking. But neither is it that one may regard sin and uncleanness as nothing on the ground that salvation is perfect.

1. *"Separate themselves from the holy things"*

Verse 2 says as follows.

"Speak to Aaron and his sons, that they separate themselves from the holy things of the children of Israel, and that they do not profane My holy name by what they dedicate to Me: I am the LORD."

Here the holy things refer to the offerings and gifts the people of Israel set apart and offered to God. Among them, the priest ate what God had permitted as the portion of the priests. But that was not ordinary food. It was the holy food God gave to the priest after the people had offered it to God.

The word *"separate themselves"* does not mean that the priest was to keep away from the holy things forever. It means that when he himself was in an unclean state, he was not to handle or eat the holy things carelessly, but to stay withdrawn.

The status of priest was not a privilege that could disregard the ordinances of cleanness. Rather, because he was a person who served close to God, he had to be more careful. It is because if the person who handles holy things takes holiness lightly, he profanes the name of God.

Today, too, if a person who preaches the gospel or serves the church uses the words "I have already received the remission of sins" as a pretext to cover his own falsehood and greed, lewdness and violence, he can profane the name of God. The gospel is not a word that makes sin light, but a word that delivers from sin and makes one serve the holy God.

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2. The status of priest and one's present state are distinguished

Verse 3 warns that the one who goes near the holy things with an unclean body shall be cut off from the presence of God.

The priest, as a descendant of Aaron, already belonged to the priestly family. But having the status of priest and being at present in a clean state in which he could eat the holy things were distinguished.

It was not that he became a person who was not a descendant of Aaron because he had temporarily become unclean. But neither was he to disregard his unclean state and go near the holy things.

This distinction is important for understanding the life of the saints who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Because Jesus bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John and received the judgment of sin on the Cross, the person who believes this fact receives the remission of sins and becomes one of the people of God. It is not that the salvation Jesus accomplished is canceled or that one returns to the status of a sinner just because one has done wrong out of weakness.

But if a person who has received the remission of sins has actually lied, hated, harbored lewd thoughts, or harmed another person, that conduct is clearly wrong. That conduct does not become right because of the fact that one has been saved.

Therefore the saints must acknowledge the following two things at the same time.

—The fact that Jesus Christ has already washed away all my sins completely

—The fact that the wrong I have now done is clearly sin before God

One must not say, "I am a righteous person who has received

the remission of sins, so everything I do is fine," nor, conversely, "I have sinned again, so the salvation of Jesus has become void and I have become a sinner again."

3. The various causes of becoming unclean

Verses 4–5 list the various cases that make a priest unclean.
—The case of having a skin disease or a discharge
—The case of having touched a corpse
—The case of having had an emission of semen
—The case of having touched an unclean creeping thing
—The case of having touched an unclean person

Included here are disease, contact with death, natural phenomena of the body, and ceremonial uncleanness arising from contact.

Therefore the *"uncleanness"* of Leviticus must not all be identified with moral transgressions. It does not mean that an emission of semen or a disease is in itself a moral sin. It means that, within the laws of cleanness of the Old Testament, a person has come into a temporary ceremonial state in which he cannot handle the holy things or approach the sanctuary.

This ordinance shows how easily human beings, who live under the influence of sin and death, come into contact with uncleanness. The priest did holy work in the tabernacle, but outside the tabernacle he had to live in a world in which there were death, disease, and weakness. Even if he did not want to, he could come into contact with unclean things.

The saints, too, have received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, but they still live in a world in which sin is at work. In the workplace, the home, human relationships, and culture, they encounter

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falsehood and greed, lewdness and anger. Seeing and hearing these, they themselves are influenced, and at times they actually do wrong.

What matters is not to deny that reality. The person who knows the fact that he is weak and can fall relies all the more on the grace of Jesus Christ.

4. *"Unless he washes his body with water"*

Verse 6 says as follows.

"The person who has touched any such thing shall be unclean until evening, and shall not eat the holy offerings unless he washes his body with water."

When the priest had touched an unclean thing, he had to wash his body with water. When this washing is connected with the life of faith, it shows the saints acknowledging their own uncleanness and cleansing their hearts with the word of God, who has already washed away their sins.

The saints commit wrongs even after receiving the remission of sins. At that time, they must not hide the wrong or cover it with their own righteousness, but believe the word that Jesus bore even that sin with the baptism He received from John and paid its price on the Cross. When they confirm again through the word the salvation He has already accomplished, their hearts become clean.

The ground of this faith is the perfect washing away of sins that Jesus Christ accomplished. Jesus bore the sins of all the people of the world once and for all by receiving baptism from John. And in the body in which He bore those sins, He was judged by shedding His blood on the Cross, and completed salvation by rising again from death.

The priest of the Old Testament had to wash his body repeatedly, but the atonement Jesus accomplished does not need to be repeated. There is no need for Jesus to receive baptism from John again or to be hung on the Cross again. The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the eternal remission of sins by believing in this completed salvation. Therefore washing one's heart with the word every day is not a matter of obtaining a new atonement, but the life of believing in the eternal remission of sins He has already accomplished and coming boldly before God.

5. The washing for salvation and the washing in daily life

Here there is something that must be distinguished without fail.

—The washing for salvation: it is that Jesus removed all our sins once and for all with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross. This is not repeated. He bore all the sins of the world, not only the sins of the past but even the sins to be committed in the present and the future.

—The washing in daily life: it is that when the saints who have received the remission of sins do wrong as they live, they acknowledge that wrong before the word and look again to Jesus Christ, who has already borne even that sin.

This is not being saved again. Nor is it making Jesus shed His blood again. Nor does it mean that a new atonement is accomplished at the moment we confess our sins, and only then.

The saints can come before God in this way.

"God, the words and actions I did today were clearly wrong. I will not justify them. But I believe that Jesus bore even this sin

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when He received baptism from John and paid its price on the Cross. Giving thanks for the grace You have already granted, I will turn from this wrong."

In this way, one does not take sin lightly, and yet one is not bound by condemnation. While acknowledging one's own wrong, one believes in the perfect atonement of Jesus.

6. The meaning of washing the heart with the word

When the saints have become defiled in daily life, they must examine themselves by the word of God. It is because the word sheds light on what is right and what is wrong.

But washing with the word does not mean that the act of reading the Bible itself automatically removes sin. It is acknowledging the following three facts through the word.

First, God is holy.

Second, the wrong I have done is actually wrong.

Third, Jesus Christ has already borne even that sin and washed it away completely.

Through this word, the Holy Spirit makes us realize our wrongs and makes us see clearly again the salvation accomplished by the baptism of Jesus and the Cross. And He renews our hearts so that we turn from that sin and live rightly.

The work of the Holy Spirit does not mean only vague feelings or mystical experiences. It is the work of making us realize and believe the word of the gospel Jesus accomplished, and leading us to live as befits that word.

7. *"When the sun goes down he shall be clean"*

Verse 7 says as follows.

"And when the sun goes down he shall be clean; and afterward he may eat the holy offerings, because it is his food."

In verses 6–7, the priest who had touched an unclean thing did not eat the holy things by his own judgment immediately after washing his body. Only after the time God had appointed had passed and the sun had gone down was he acknowledged to be in a clean state and able to eat the holy things.

In the passage, the going down of the sun is the actual boundary in time at which the ceremonial uncleanness of a day ends. The important point is that the standard and the time of cleanness were appointed not by the feeling of the priest himself but by the word of God.

The priest could not think, "I seem to be clean," and eat the holy things at will. He ate after God had declared him clean.

It is the same in the gospel. We do not assure ourselves of the remission of sins on the ground of our own mood. It is not that one is righteous when one's feelings are bright and becomes a sinner again when one's heart is heavy. We believe in the remission of sins on the ground of the word that God has washed away our sins with the baptism and the blood of Jesus Christ.

8. After becoming clean, he ate the holy things again

In verses 6–7, the priest who had touched an unclean thing did not remain in a state of continually being unable to eat the holy things. After he washed his body and the time God had appointed had passed, he ate the holy things again. The holy things were *"his food"* for the priest, that is, the portion God had

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given for his living.

Here cleanness and restoration appear together.

—In an unclean state, he cannot eat the holy things.

—But after becoming clean, he eats them again.

—God did not give the ordinances of cleanness in order to starve him or cast him away forever.

—It was so that he might enjoy the provision of God in a holy manner.

The saints cannot enjoy right fellowship with God while keeping sin and the qualms of conscience covered up. When they acknowledge their wrongs and look to the word of the gospel, their hearts are renewed, and they can serve God with thanksgiving and boldness.

9. *"He shall not eat, to defile himself"*

Verse 8 says not to defile oneself by eating whatever dies naturally or is torn by beasts.

In verses 4–5 come the cases of becoming unclean by contact. Verse 8 commands not to defile oneself by eating whatever dies naturally or is torn by beasts. The priest had to keep the word by not eating what God had forbidden.

The important principle here is not to enter deliberately into a defilement one can avoid.

Because the saints live in the world, they can be exposed to evil things even if they do not want to be. But that is different from the act of deliberately defiling oneself. If one seeks out lewd things, plans false gain, and repeatedly harms other people while saying, "Jesus has washed away all my sins, so it is fine," one is profaning grace.

The person who believes in the gospel can fall out of

weakness, but he does not want to live in the direction of loving and planning sin. The Holy Spirit puts within us a heart that hates sin and longs for a holy life.

10. *"Die thereby"*

Verse 9 is very stern.

"They shall therefore keep My ordinance, lest they bear sin for it and die thereby, if they profane it."

For the priest to profane the holy things was not a mere violation of a rule about eating. It was a matter of blaspheming the holy name of God by treating what had been set apart for God as if it were ordinary and trivial.

The word *"die thereby"* warns of the covenant judgment that could actually come under the sacrificial system of the Old Testament. This must not be carried over into the meaning that a New Testament saint immediately loses salvation and perishes forever if he does wrong once.

But in the New Testament, too, deliberately profaning the gospel and the church is not a light matter. God disciplines His own children, and if one stubbornly holds on to sin, one's fellowship becomes dark, one wounds other people, and one damages the testimony of the gospel.

In particular, the person who preaches the gospel and serves the church must be careful of the following.

—Using the gospel as a means for one's own honor or money

—Using the holy office as if it were power

—Using the name of the church and the gospel in order to hide sin

—Regarding one's own position and reputation as more important than the souls of people

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—Claiming only grace without repenting

That the grace of God is great does not mean that using the gospel for one's own gain or hiding sin is tolerated.

11. *"I the LORD sanctify them"*

The end of the passage does not end with the command of God alone.

"I the LORD sanctify them" (Leviticus 22:9).

God did not say only, "Become perfectly holy by yourselves." He said that He Himself is the One who sanctifies them.

In the Old Testament, God prepared the sacrifices, the sacrificial offerings, the blood, and the water of cleansing. The priest did not become clean by his own method, but became clean following the method God had appointed.

In the New Testament, God the Father sent His own Son. Jesus bore our sins by receiving baptism from John, and received the judgment of those sins by shedding His blood on the Cross. And by rising again from death, He became the eternal High Priest.

Therefore, in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the subject of holiness is God.

—God the Father planned salvation.

—Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John.

—Jesus paid the price of sin by shedding His blood on the Cross.

—Jesus rose again from death.

—The Holy Spirit makes us believe this truth of salvation.

—God makes those who believe the holy people of God.

The holy life of the saints is not an effort to save themselves,

but a response to the grace of God, who has already sanctified them.

12. How the saints today apply this word

First, we must examine ourselves before worship. We must not think that merely sitting in the place of worship is enough, but examine before the word whether we are harboring hatred, falsehood, and greed in our hearts.

Second, we must acknowledge our wrongs concretely. We must not gloss over them with vague words such as "I am lacking by nature," but acknowledge specifically what wrong we did and to whom. If we have caused loss to another person, we must apologize and set it right as far as possible.

Third, we must not remain only in guilt, but look to Jesus Christ. Sin is not washed away by condemning oneself for a long time. We must believe in the baptism of Jesus and the blood of the Cross, by which He bore even that sin.

Fourth, we must acknowledge that we have sinned, but not conclude that we have become sinners again. The deeds of the saints can go wrong, but the perfect atonement of Jesus does not become imperfect.

Fifth, we must avoid environments in which we deliberately defile ourselves. Knowing the channels through which we repeatedly fall, we must not leave them unaddressed, but cut off what must be cut off and get the help we need.

Sixth, disease and natural phenomena of the body must not be treated as spiritual uncleanness or a curse. The ceremonial ordinances of cleanness of Leviticus belong to the tabernacle system of the Old Testament. Today, people must not be excluded from worship or the church community because of a

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disease or a bodily phenomenon.

Seventh, we must not use the gospel and the church for our own gain. Making the name of God, the word, worship, and the devotion of the saints into tools for private desires is the same attitude as profaning the holy things.

Conclusion

Leviticus 22:1–9 sternly warns against going near the holy things in an unclean state, and requires that the ordinances of cleanness God has appointed be kept. In particular, verses 6–7 also show the way of restoration, by which the person who has touched an unclean thing washes his body and eats the holy things again after the sun goes down.

This word teaches the life of faith in which the saints acknowledge their own uncleanness and cleanse their hearts with the word of the salvation the Lord has already accomplished. Jesus bore all our sins once and for all with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins by shedding His blood on the Cross, and completed the eternal washing away of sins by rising again from death.

The saints who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit do not seek a new atonement every day in order to be saved again. They believe in the perfect atonement that has already been accomplished. At the same time, they do not hide the wrongs they have done, but acknowledge them before the word, look to Jesus, who has washed away even those sins, and turn back.

This is holiness that accords with the gospel, which is neither licentiousness nor self-condemnation.

It is not, “I have already received the remission of sins, so

sin does not matter," but

the faith that says, "Because I have completely received the remission of sins by the baptism and the blood of Jesus, I will live serving the holy God without profaning that grace."

Leviticus 22:10–16—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

Leviticus 22:10–16 distinguishes the people who may eat the holy things given to the priests from those who may not. The central question is, "Who belongs to the priestly family?"

When this ordinance is seen in the light of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we discover the fact that the life and grace God gives are not something one automatically enjoys merely by being near the church or by being born in a family of faith. The person who has come to belong to Christ by believing in the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross, and has become one of the family of God by being born again of the Spirit, partakes of grace.

This ordinance distinguishes the partaking of the holy things and the responsibility of those who belong to the priestly family. While examining this, we will look together at the truth of the gospel that the person whom Jesus Christ has redeemed by paying the price belongs to the Lord and lives by that grace.

1. *"No outsider shall eat the holy offering"*

Verse 10 says as follows.

"No outsider shall eat the holy offering; one who dwells with

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the priest, or a hired servant, shall not eat the holy thing."

Here *"outsider"* refers not only to people of Gentile nations but to people outside the priestly family. The ordinance that follows permits the partaking of a person bought with money and of a person born in the priest's house, while restricting the partaking of a daughter who has married outside the priestly family.

It was not that anyone could eat the holy things assigned to the priests just because he was one of the people of Israel. Some of the offerings offered to God were the holy portion given for the priests and their families. Therefore eating the holy things was not merely a meal to satisfy hunger, but was connected with membership in the priestly family that God had appointed.

The sojourner and the hired servant, too, were close to the house of the priest.

—The sojourner could stay in the house of the priest.

—The hired servant could work for the priest.

—But they did not belong to the priestly family merely because they stayed or worked in that house.

This gives an important lesson when we think of the salvation of the New Testament. A person does not automatically become a born-again person just because he attends church often, works in the church, keeps close company with the pastor, or takes part in church events.

Being near the church and belonging to Christ can be different. Doing work for the gospel and believing the gospel in one's heart can also be different. In order to partake of the life of the kingdom of God, one must believe in one's heart the fact that Jesus bore one's sins with the baptism He received from John and received the judgment of those sins on the Cross.

2. An environment of faith cannot take the place of salvation

The sojourner and the hired servant were close to the house of the priest, but they could not eat the holy things. This shows that the fact of being physically close does not decide membership.

Today, too, the following things cannot in themselves be evidence of salvation.

—Having grown up in a family of faith

—Having parents who are pastors or church leaders

—Having served in the church for a long time

—Having much theological knowledge

—Working in the church for a salary

—Having gone through the rite of baptism or religious procedures

—Having had a moving experience of faith

This does not mean that these things are meaningless. But they cannot take the place of the faith that believes in the salvation Jesus Christ has accomplished.

The remission of sins is not received as the reward of bloodline or occupation, acquaintance or service. It is received by believing the fact that Jesus bore the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, paid the price of sin by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death.

3. *"If the priest buys a person with his money"*

Verse 11 says as follows.

"But if the priest buys a person with his money, he may eat it; and one who is born in his house may eat his food."

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Two kinds of people appear here.

—A person whom the priest bought with money and who thus came to belong to his house

—A person born in the house of the priest

These people were different from the sojourner or the hired servant who stayed temporarily in the house of the priest. Within the system of servitude of that time, they were people who belonged to that house, and they could eat the food of the priest.

Here the expression “buys a person with his money” has the system of servitude of ancient society as its background. This ordinance does not justify modern slavery or command that one may own a person like a thing. The passage is a word that stipulates the range of partaking in the holy things within the family system that existed at that time.

Rather, what is to be noted in this verse is not that the servant was inferior to the sojourner or the hired servant, but the point that he could partake of the holy things because he belonged to the priestly family. The standard for eating the holy things was not the degree of social freedom but membership in the family.

4. The person bought with a price and the redemption of Christ

From the picture of buying a person with a price and making him belong to one’s house, we can think of the life that belongs to the Lord, who has redeemed us. Jesus gave His own life and paid the price of our sins.

In the Bible, redemption has the meaning of ransoming by paying a price. We were bound under sin and could not escape death, the wages of sin. Yet Jesus Christ gave His own life as the price of our sins.

The price of redemption Jesus paid does not refer merely to the physical suffering of the Cross. Jesus first actually bore our sins on His own body by receiving baptism from John. And in the body in which He bore those sins, He was judged by shedding His blood on the Cross.

Therefore the death of Jesus on the Cross was not a death without bearing sin. Because Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross became the blood of atonement that paid the price of our sins. That this salvation was completed was also shown by Jesus rising again from death.

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is no longer the possession of sin and the devil. Because Jesus Christ paid the price with His own life and redeemed us, we have become people who belong to Christ.

5. *"One who is born in his house"*

Verse 11 says that a person born in the house of the priest, too, may eat the food of the priest.

The passage lets not only the person bought with money but also the person born in the house of the priest and belonging to that house eat the food. When we examine the life of the saints who belong to the house of God, we can think of the fact that they have become the children of God by being born again of the word of the gospel and of the Spirit.

A person does not automatically become one of the people of the kingdom of God just because he was born physically as the child of Christians. Nor does the faith of the parents wash away the sins of the children in their place. Each person must hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit and believe it in his heart.

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To be born again of the Spirit is not merely to have one's feelings warmed or to make a religious resolution. It is to obtain new life by knowing and believing through the word how God removed one's sins by the baptism of Jesus and the Cross.

In this sense, the family of God in the New Testament is not a house formed by physical bloodline.

Those who believe that their sins were passed on to Jesus through the baptism He received from John, believe that the judgment of sin was ended with the blood of the Cross, believe in Jesus, who rose again from death, as their Savior, and accept in their hearts this word to which the Holy Spirit testifies—these become the family of God.

In the Old Testament, the person born in the house of the priest ate the holy things, but in the New Testament, the person who has been born again of water and the Spirit and belongs to the house of God enjoys the life and grace of heaven.

6. Two pictures of the gospel: being bought with a price and being born anew

The two groups in verse 11 show two pictures that help in understanding the gospel.

—The person bought with a price: it makes us think of the fact that Jesus Christ redeemed us by paying the price of our sins with the baptism He received from John and the Cross. We are not people who belong to ourselves but people who belong to the Lord, who saved us.

—The person born in the house: it makes us think of the fact that the saints have become the children of God by being born again of the word of the gospel and of the Spirit. They have become not sojourners staying near the church but family who

have received the life of God.

These two are not different methods of salvation. They are two aspects of the same salvation. Jesus paid the price and redeemed us from sin, and the Holy Spirit made us believe that gospel and made us be born again as the children of God.

7. The daughter of the priest and membership in the family

Verse 12 says as follows.

"If the priest's daughter is married to an outsider, she may not eat of the holy offerings."

When the daughter of a priest married a man outside the priestly family, she came to belong to the family of her husband. Therefore she could no longer eat the holy things of the heave offering assigned to her father's priestly family.

This does not mean that the woman became morally unclean by marrying. Nor is it a word that calls marrying a man outside the priestly family itself a sin. It is an ordinance that set the range of the distribution of the holy things according to which family one belonged to and whose support one received.

Therefore this word must not be used to claim that a woman is spiritually lowered when she marries, or that the faith of a woman must necessarily be subordinate to her husband. The system of distributing the holy things of the priestly family in the Old Testament cannot be applied as it is to all marriage relationships today.

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8. When a widowed or divorced daughter has returned

Verse 13 says as follows.

"But if the priest's daughter is a widow or divorced, and has no child, and has returned to her father's house as in her youth, she may eat her father's food; but no outsider shall eat it."

If the daughter of a priest had become a widow or a divorced woman, had no child, and had returned to her father's house and come to receive the support of her father again, she could eat the holy things of the priest.

In this ordinance there is the meaning of restoration and protection. That woman could have had difficulty making a living after losing her husband or after her marriage was broken. God permitted her to eat the portion of her father together with the household when she returned to her father's priestly family.

Therefore this word is not an ordinance for condemning widowed or divorced women. Rather, it is a regulation that lets a woman who has returned without children partake again of the protection and food of the priestly family.

The church today, too, must not treat people who have experienced widowhood or divorce as failures or unclean people. The causes and responsibility of divorce differ in each case, and there may be people who were abandoned through the sin of the other party. The church must not use rumors and stigma to push out people who have gone through suffering, but protect and care for them in the gospel.

9. Returning to the family and restoration in the gospel

A daughter who had returned to her father's house and met the stipulated conditions could eat her father's food again. The

saints who believe in the gospel, too, must not remain bound to their own wrongs, but believe in the grace of the Lord, who has already saved them, and come before God.

The saints can have their hearts captured by the world and drift away from the fellowship of the gospel. But when they realize their wrongs and return to God, God does not starve them to death. It is because Jesus Christ has already paid the price of all those sins.

The person who has returned must believe in this way.

"I loved the world more than God and went the wrong way, but Jesus bore even this sin with the baptism He received from John and paid its price on the Cross. Now I will believe in that grace and return to God."

Restoration is not denying one's own wrongs. It is believing, while acknowledging one's own sins, in the atonement of Jesus Christ, which is greater and more abundant than those sins.

10. *"Eats the holy offering unintentionally"*

Verse 14 says as follows.

"And if a man eats the holy offering unintentionally, then he shall restore a holy offering to the priest, and add one-fifth to it."

Even if a person outside the priestly family ate the holy things without knowing that they were holy things, it could not be treated as if nothing had happened. He had to repay the value of the holy things he had eaten and give it to the priest, adding one-fifth, that is, twenty percent, to it.

There are two important principles here.

First, even if it was not deliberate, the responsibility for having violated a holy thing remains.

Second, in order to set a wrong right, not only an apology in

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words but actual restitution is needed.

In the ordinance of the trespass offering in Leviticus chapter 5, not only was the trespass against the holy things to be repaid with one-fifth added, but a ram without blemish was to be offered as the trespass offering. This shows that in sin there are together the judgment to be received before God and the loss that must actually be restored.

11. The restitution with one-fifth added and the atonement of Jesus

The person who had eaten the holy things unintentionally had to repay the priest the value of those holy things with one-fifth added. He had to acknowledge his wrong concerning the holy things and bear the responsibility of restitution God had appointed.

The word about repaying with one-fifth added also appears in the ordinance of the trespass offering in Leviticus chapter 5. This word of the trespass offering shows that Jesus paid the price of our sins abundantly.

Our sins do not disappear merely by saying, “I am sorry.” Because the wages of sin is death, the price of life must be paid. Jesus bore our sins by receiving baptism from John, and paid that price completely by giving up His own life on the Cross.

Therefore the gospel is not the news that God pretended not to know our sins. It is because all our sins were passed on to Jesus and He actually received the judgment of those sins that God declares us righteous.

12. Since Jesus paid the price of sin, is human restitution unnecessary?

It is not so. The fact that Jesus paid all the eternal price of our sins before God does not mean that we may pretend not to know even the loss we have caused to other people.

If one has stolen another person's money, one must return it. If one has damaged someone's honor with lies, one must set the facts right. If one has caused loss at the workplace, one must take responsibility in whatever way possible. If one has misused the finances of the church, one must not merely say that one repents, but disclose it transparently and repay it.

The gospel does not remove responsibility, but gives a new heart that can take responsibility. The person who believes in the atonement of Jesus does not hide his wrongs out of fear of judgment, but can acknowledge and set right his wrongs with the faith that he has already received the remission of sins.

13. *"They shall not profane the holy offerings"*

In verse 15, *"They"* can be seen in context as referring to the priests who managed the holy things. The priests were not to let just anyone eat the holy things the people of Israel had offered to God, or blur the boundaries of the holy things and thus profane them.

It was not enough for the priest merely to eat the holy things rightly himself. He also had the responsibility to manage and teach well so that others would not violate the holy things unknowingly.

Those entrusted with the gospel today, too, have a similar responsibility.

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—They must not make the gospel a product for gaining popularity with people.

—They must not use the offerings and the finances of the church like private property.

—They must teach clearly the new birth and the remission of sins.

—They must not teach that one is saved merely by registering with a church or performing religious rites.

—Nor must they give only a religious title to a person who does not believe the gospel and let him be regarded as a born-again person.

Keeping what is holy is not rejecting people or making the church a closed group. It is keeping the door open so that anyone may hear and believe the gospel and become one of the family of God, while not blurring the truth of salvation.

14. *"Bear the guilt of trespass"*

Verse 16 warns that if they let people eat the holy things carelessly, those who eat them will come to bear sin and punishment.

"Or allow them to bear the guilt of trespass when they eat their holy offerings; for I the LORD sanctify them."

The act of eating the holy things did not in itself give magical power. They had to be eaten within the relationship and order God had appointed. If one ate them disregarding qualification and membership, one came to bear guilt instead.

In the New Testament, too, one does not obtain life by taking only the outward form of the gospel. One is not automatically born again by taking part in the Lord's Supper, receiving the rite of baptism, holding a church office, or using Christian terms. If

one does not know and believe what Jesus accomplished, there is only outward participation.

But neither must this word be used to keep people who do not yet have faith from entering the church. The church is the place where sinners come to hear the gospel. What the person who has not yet been born again needs is not rejection, but being told accurately how Jesus removed his sins with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross.

15. *"I the LORD sanctify them"*

The conclusion of the passage is not that human beings must create their own holy qualification by themselves. It is that God is the One who sanctifies.

In the Old Testament, God set apart the priestly family and the holy things, and commanded restitution from the person who had eaten the holy things unintentionally. In Leviticus 5:14–16, He had the trespass against the holy things repaid and the trespass offering offered. In the New Testament, God sent Jesus Christ and had Him bear all our sins and be judged.

In the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the process by which God sanctifies us is clear.

—Jesus came to this earth clothed in the body of a man.

—Jesus bore all the sins of the world by receiving baptism from John.

—He completely paid the judgment and the price of those sins by shedding His blood on the Cross.

—He completed eternal salvation by rising again from death.

—The Holy Spirit testifies in the heart of the person who believes this word of the gospel.

—God makes the person who believes a righteous person

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without sin, a child of God, and one of the holy people.

That we belong to the house of God is not because of bloodline or merit, but because we believed in the salvation God has accomplished.

16. Practical lessons for the saints today

First, we must not make our outward relationship with the church the assurance of salvation. We must examine not church attendance, service, office, and the faith of our family, but whether we ourselves believe in our hearts the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Second, we must not rely on the bloodline of being the child of a pastor or a believer. Becoming a child of God is not handed down automatically along the physical family line.

Third, we must remember that Christ paid the price and redeemed us. The saved person is not a person who lives only for his own desires, but a person who seeks the will of the Lord, who bought him.

Fourth, we must accept the person who returns into the family of God. Rather than stigmatizing a person who has failed or whose relationships have broken and whose life has collapsed, we must help him to stand up again in the gospel.

Fifth, we must take actual responsibility for our wrongs. The fact of having received the remission of sins must not be used as a pretext for avoiding restitution and apology.

Sixth, we must handle the gospel and the finances of the church in a holy manner. The devotion and the gifts of the saints must not be used for personal power or gain.

Seventh, we must eat and share the grace of God together. The born-again person must not enjoy the joy of salvation alone,

but preach the gospel to those who are still outside and invite them into the family of God.

Conclusion

In Leviticus 22:10–16, the standard for eating the holy things was not merely whether one was near the house of the priest, but whether one actually belonged to that house. The sojourner and the hired servant were near but could not eat, while the person bought with a price and the person born in the house could eat because they belonged to that family.

In the New Testament, the physical bloodline of Aaron is not the standard for partaking of the life of the kingdom of God. What matters is believing in the price of redemption Jesus Christ paid for us, and becoming one of the family of God by being born again through the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Jesus bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John, paid that price completely by shedding His blood on the Cross, and led us into the house of God by rising again from death.

Therefore the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is no longer a sojourner staying for a while in the house of God. He is a child of God, redeemed with the price of Christ and born again of the Spirit. And the person who has received that grace must live not profaning the holy things, actually setting right his own wrongs, and preaching the gospel of life to those who are still outside.

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Leviticus 22:17–25—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

Leviticus 22:17–25 stipulates what kind of offering must be offered when offering a burnt offering or a peace offering to God. The key expressions repeated in this passage are *"to be accepted," "without blemish,"* and *"perfect."*

God did not look only at the fact that one had brought an offering. He received it only if it was an offering that met the conditions He had appointed. It was not enough that the person offering had sincerity, nor was it enough that the priest had religious zeal.

From the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, this word shows the fact that the sinner must come to God not with his own zeal and good deeds, but by believing in Jesus Christ, the sacrificial offering without blemish that God Himself prepared.

1. The ordinance given equally to the Israelite and the sojourner

Verse 18 says as follows.

"Speak to Aaron and his sons, and to all the children of Israel, and say to them: Whatever man of the house of Israel, or of the strangers in Israel, who offers his sacrifice for any of his vows or for any of his freewill offerings, which they offer to the LORD as a burnt offering—"

This ordinance did not apply only to the Israelites. The same standard applied also when a foreigner residing among Israel wanted to offer an offering to God.

This shows that the way of coming to God does not differ according to nation. It was not that an Israelite might offer an offering with a defect, nor that a separate, lower standard applied to a foreigner.

In the New Testament, too, the way of salvation for coming to God is the same for everyone.

—The Jew is not saved on the ground of having the law.

—The Gentile is not saved through his own culture and religious devotion.

—Nor is one automatically saved for being the child of a pastor.

—Nor are one's sins washed away by themselves for having attended church for a long time.

Everyone must believe the gospel that Jesus bore his sins with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose again from death.

2. The vow offering and the freewill offering

The passage speaks of the vow offering and the freewill offering.

The vow offering is a sacrifice offered in connection with some promise or vow. If one had vowed something to God, one had to offer the appointed offering without taking that promise lightly.

The freewill offering is a sacrifice offered not as a fixed obligation but out of thanksgiving and a willing heart. It was offered to God with a glad heart by the person offering, not because someone compelled him.

In both cases, willingness and thanksgiving were important, but it was not that one might offer just any offering as long as

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the heart was sincere. The conditions of the offering God had appointed had to be kept.

It is the same in salvation. However sincere and zealous a person may be, he cannot solve sin in a way he has made himself. The confession, "I sincerely believe in God," is important, but what one believes and how must be clear together with it.

If one leaves out the baptism Jesus received from John and believes vaguely only in the blood of the Cross, or adds human good deeds and prayers of repentance to the salvation of Jesus as conditions of the remission of sins, one misses the whole content of the gospel God has appointed.

3. *"To be accepted"*

Verse 19 says as follows.

"You shall offer of your own free will a male without blemish from the cattle, from the sheep, or from the goats."

To be *"accepted"* means that God gladly receives that offering. It was not that God received an offering merely by the fact that it had been burned on the altar. An offering meeting the conditions God had appointed had to be offered in the way God had appointed.

Therefore the standard of acceptance was not the feeling or self-assurance of the person offering. Even if one thought, "I did my best," or "My heart is sincere," one could not be accepted if one departed from the standard God had appointed.

In the New Testament, too, the ground of being accepted by God does not lie in ourselves. There are many defects in our deeds. Our hearts and thoughts, too, are not whole. However hard we try, we cannot stand before God with our own righteousness.

That we are accepted by God is because of Jesus Christ, who is without blemish. To believe in Jesus is not merely to acknowledge His existence, but to believe how He removed our sins with the baptism He received from John and the Cross.

4. Why it had to be a male without blemish

The burnt offering was a sacrifice in which the whole offering was burned and offered to God. Cattle, sheep, or goats could be offered, but it had to be a male without blemish.

The offering without blemish represents the perfection of the sacrifice. If the sacrificial offering itself, which died in place of the sinner, had a defect, it could not be a type showing the perfect salvation of God.

This offering points to Jesus Christ, who was to come. Jesus is the Son of God, who has no sin. The 'being without blemish' of Jesus does not mean that His appearance was beautiful or that He was physically strong. It means that He had no sin and obeyed the will of God perfectly.

Jesus had no sin, but He received baptism from John. The baptism Jesus received from John was not in order to wash away His own sins, but in order to bear the sins of all the people of the world on His own body. Jesus received our sins through the baptism He received from John, but He did not become a sinner by nature. The righteous One who has no sin bore our sins in our place.

5. The reason an offering with a defect is not accepted

Verse 20 says firmly.

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"Whatever has a defect, you shall not offer, for it shall not be acceptable on your behalf."

That an offering with a defect is not accepted is not simply because God liked animals of good appearance. It is because the offering was a life that died in place of the sinner and had to represent the perfect Savior who was to come.

Here the regulation concerning the defect of an animal must not be applied to human disability. One must not liken a person with a disability to an offering with a defect and say that he is a person who cannot be used by God. The defect of an offering concerns the symbolic perfection of the sacrifice, not a verdict on the worth of people with disabilities.

The saints of the New Testament, too, are not accepted by God because they themselves are without blemish. We are weak and lacking, but we are accepted in Jesus Christ, who is without blemish.

Therefore the gospel is not a word that says only perfect people can come to God. It is a word that says sinners with many defects should come to God by believing in Jesus Christ, who is perfect.

6. The offering of the peace offering, too, had to be perfect

Verse 21 says as follows.

"And whoever offers a sacrifice of a peace offering to the LORD, to fulfill his vow, or a freewill offering from the cattle or the sheep, it must be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no defect in it."

The peace offering is a sacrifice that represents reconciliation with God, thanksgiving, and fellowship. Unlike the burnt

offering, part of the offering could be eaten by the priest and the person who offered it together.

But the peace offering, too, required an offering without blemish. It is because true reconciliation with God cannot be achieved unless the problem of sin is completely solved.

Human beings cannot form a good relationship with God while keeping sin as it is. Reconciliation is not God pretending not to see sin because He is full of love. Sin must actually be dealt with and the price of its judgment must be paid.

Because Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John and was judged by shedding His blood on the Cross, true reconciliation was achieved between God and us. The gospel of the water and the Spirit is not merely a doctrine for obtaining peace of mind, but the truth of salvation that has actually reconciled God and sinners through the transfer of sin and its judgment.

7. The defects listed in verse 22

In verse 22, the conditions of offerings that cannot be offered to God are listed concretely.

"Those that are blind or broken or maimed, or have an ulcer or eczema or scabs, you shall not offer to the LORD, nor make an offering by fire of them on the altar to the LORD."

This list includes the following defects.

—The state of not being able to see

—The state of the body being broken or injured

—The state of a limb being maimed

—Ulcers and skin diseases

—Lesions expressed as eczema or scabs

—The state of health and wholeness being damaged

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This shows concretely the principle that the offering must have no defect at all. One was not to dispose of an animal that was sick and dying or an animal that had no value in the market by bringing it to God.

The sacrifice offered to God was not an act of throwing away what was not needed. It was a holy sacrifice in which a life died in place of the sinner.

8. What is worship with a defect?

When applying this passage spiritually, one must not interpret it as, “If one gives a small offering, one is offering an offering with a defect.” Nor must it be used as a ground for demanding excessive offerings or devotion from people in financial difficulty.

In other sacrificial ordinances, there are also cases in which God permitted turtledoves or young pigeons, or fine flour, according to the circumstances of the poor (Leviticus 5:7, 11). What God required was not unconditionally an expensive and large offering, but the right offering God had appointed for each sacrifice.

What must first be examined in the worship offered to God is not the size of the offering, but whether one has received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. One must not try to present oneself to God with offerings and service without having received the remission of sins. Also, the saints must guard against the following attitudes.

—Offering only religious acts without believing the gospel

—Serving in order to gain the praise of people rather than of God

—Using devotion and offerings in order to hide sin

—Being zealous only, while changing the truth of the gospel

—Offering to God what was unjustly taken from other people

—Offering to God only as a formality the time one does not need and what is left over

But even this must not be understood as the perfectionism that says, "God accepts me only if I serve perfectly." The ground on which God accepts us is not our service but Jesus Christ. The sincere service of the saints is the fruit offered in thanksgiving by a person who has already been accepted in Christ.

9. The devotion of a person who has not been born again cannot take the place of salvation

A person can offer many things to God without having received the remission of sins. He can build church buildings, donate property, do missionary activities, and even sacrifice for religion.

Such acts can be socially beneficial and can also help people. But those acts themselves cannot wash away sin or make that person a righteous person before God.

One must first believe in Jesus Christ, the sacrificial offering without blemish. One must accept in one's heart the gospel God appointed in order to remove our sins.

One must believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit, that Jesus bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John and paid the price of those sins on the Cross. One must not, while saying that one believes in the Cross, fail to believe in that remission of sins and try to replace it with devotion and service. One must know why Jesus received baptism from John and what sins He bore as He went to the Cross.

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God does not receive our religious merits as an offering, but looks at the faith that believes in Jesus Christ, who is without blemish.

10. The limited exception in verse 23

Verse 23 says somewhat differently.

"Either a bull or a lamb that has any limb too long or too short you may offer as a freewill offering, but for a vow it shall not be accepted."

The case of a limb too long or too short is distinguished from the diseases or serious injuries listed in verse 22. The passage permits such animals to be used for the freewill offering, but does not permit them as an offering for fulfilling a vow.

The passage does not explain the reason in detail. But the following differences are clear.

—The freewill offering was a gift offered voluntarily in addition.

—The vow offering was an offering that fulfilled what had been promised to God.

—If a bull or a lamb with a limb too long or too short was offered as an offering to fulfill a vow, it was not accepted.

—A bull or a lamb with a limb too long or too short could be used as a freewill offering.

This also shows that God did not treat all defects alike. Verse 23 does not make void the prohibition of verse 22, but distinguishes a very limited case.

Spiritually, too, what one has vowed to God must not be taken lightly. Making a great promise emotionally and later replacing it with something shabby, or changing a promise made before God and people according to convenience, is not a right

attitude.

For that reason, not making vows rashly is also wisdom. God wants small obedience kept sincerely rather than big words spoken emotionally.

11. The reason He forbade offerings with damaged reproductive organs

Verse 24 says not to offer to God an animal whose reproductive organs are bruised or crushed, or torn or cut. It also commands not to do such a thing in the land of Israel.

This ordinance, too, shows that He regards as important the life of the sacrificial offering and the wholeness of the created body. An animal whose function of continuing life was damaged was not acknowledged as a perfect offering to be offered on the altar of God.

This verse must not be connected directly with human reproductive ability or having or not having children and interpreted to mean that a person who has no children cannot be used fully by God. The passage does not speak of a person's qualification for salvation, but stipulates the conditions of the animal offered on the altar.

Verse 24 forbids not only offering such animals as offerings, but also doing such a thing in the land of Israel. As for the question of applying this command as it is to all modern veterinary procedures, one must examine it by distinguishing the sacrificial ordinance of the passage from the range of the command given to Israel at that time.

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12. The same standard applies to offerings received from a foreigner

Verse 25 says as follows.

"Nor from a foreigner's hand shall you offer any of these as the bread of your God, because their corruption is in them, and defects are in them. They shall not be accepted on your behalf."

The priest could not lower the standard on the ground that the offering was brought by a foreigner. Whether the offering came from an Israelite or from a foreigner, as long as it was offered on the altar of God, it had to follow the same standard of holiness.

This keeps the priest from exploiting loopholes in the regulations.

—One cannot say it is fine because it is not an animal one raised oneself.

—Nor can one apply a different standard because it was brought from a foreign land.

—Nor can one say one will offer it even with a defect because one received it for free.

—Nor can one ignore a defect looking only at the good intention of the person offering.

The standard for coming to God does not change according to a person's origin or feelings.

In the New Testament, too, the standard of the gospel does not differ according to country and culture. It is not that in one country the baptism Jesus received from John is needed and in another it is not. Everyone must believe the same gospel, that Jesus bore the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John and was judged by shedding His blood on the Cross.

13. How Jesus became the offering without blemish

Jesus is by nature the Son of God, who has no sin. Though He came clothed in a human body, He had no sin and obeyed the will of God perfectly.

When Jesus received baptism from John, all the sin of mankind was passed on to Him. At this time, Jesus did not become a sinner defiled because of His own sins, but as the sinless sacrificial offering He bore the sins of others in their place.

After that, Jesus went to the Cross as the Lamb of God who bore the sin of the world. The blood He shed on the Cross was not blood that had not borne sin, but the blood of judgment for the sin of mankind that had been passed on to Him with the baptism He received from John.

And by Jesus rising again from death, the following facts were revealed.

—All our sins were passed on to Him.

—The judgment of those sins was ended on the Cross.

—Death, the wages of sin, was conquered.

—The sacrifice of Jesus was fully accepted by God.

—The person who believes that gospel has become a righteous person without sin before God.

14. We are accepted through Jesus, the offering without blemish

People try to make themselves accepted by offering something to God. They think that if they pile up good deeds, offerings, prayers, fasting, service, and sacrifice, God will accept them.

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But there is always a defect in what we offer. There are times when we boast of ourselves even while doing good, hope to be recognized even while serving, and ask for what we selfishly desire even while praying.

Therefore our salvation does not depend on what we have offered to God. It depends on the offering without blemish that God has given for us.

Before the question, “How good a thing have you offered to God?” the gospel of the water and the Spirit asks, “What offering has God given for you?”

The offering God has given is Jesus Christ. Because Jesus completed eternal atonement with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross, we are accepted by believing in Him.

15. Devotion after being saved

Then are service and devotion after receiving the remission of sins unimportant? It is not so. Only, the order must not be reversed.

The wrong order is this: I will offer perfect service and offerings, be recognized by God, and be saved.

The order of the gospel is this: because I have already received the remission of sins and been accepted by God through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which is without blemish, I will offer my life to God in thanksgiving.

The devotion of the saints is not an offering that pays the price of salvation. Jesus has already paid the price. The devotion of the saints is the fruit of thanksgiving for that grace.

For that reason, the person who has received the remission of sins does not serve God carelessly. This does not mean that

one must do perfect service without any mistakes at all, but that one carries out the work entrusted to oneself with an honest and willing heart.

16. Practical lessons for the saints today

First, we must first believe the gospel clearly. We must not try to replace the remission of sins with devotion and service, but first believe how the baptism of Jesus and the Cross removed our sins.

Second, we must not use what we offer to God as a means for our own gain. Devotion for obtaining the praise of people, honor, office, and influence must have its motive examined.

Third, we must not take lightly the promises we have made to God. Rather than emotionally making promises we cannot keep, we must carry out our promises by faith, however small they may be.

Fourth, we must cast away the attitude of offering only leftovers and useless things. This does not necessarily mean giving large sums of money, but not regarding as trivial our heart, time, and service toward God.

Fifth, people with disabilities or the sick must not be likened to an ‘offering with a defect.’ The passage speaks of the conditions of animal sacrifice, and is not a standard for judging the dignity of a person or his qualification for the work.

Sixth, we must preach the content of the gospel in full. We must not speak only of the Cross while leaving out why Jesus received baptism from John, or speak only of the baptism while weakening the judgment of the Cross and His rising again from death.

Seventh, we must look to the perfection of Jesus rather than

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our own shortcomings. There are shortcomings in our faith and life, but there is no blemish at all in the baptism and the blood of Jesus, who saved us.

Conclusion

In Leviticus 22:17–25, God had the people offer offerings that met the conditions He had appointed. That He required an offering without blemish was not because He wanted only expensive animals, but because the sacrificial offering that would save sinners represents Jesus Christ, sinless and perfect, who was to come.

There is a defect in the zeal and good deeds human beings offer. However sincere a religious act may be, it cannot wash away sin. The only ground of being accepted by God is the sacrificial offering without blemish that God has prepared.

Jesus came as the Son of God, who has no sin. He bore all our sins by receiving baptism from John, paid the price of those sins completely by shedding His blood on the Cross, and accomplished eternal salvation by rising again from death.

Therefore the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not come to God carrying his own deeds without blemish. He believes in Jesus Christ, who is without blemish, and comes to God. And giving thanks for the grace of having already been accepted in Christ, he lives offering his life, time, possessions, and gifts honestly to God.

Leviticus 22:26–33—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

Leviticus 22:26–33, carrying on the ordinance of the 'offering without blemish' of the preceding section, shows that God appointed even the time and manner of offering the offering.

It was not that an offering could be offered right away merely because it was healthy and without blemish. A newborn animal had to be with its mother for seven days, and a mother and her young could not be killed on the same day. The thanksgiving offering had to be eaten within the time God had appointed.

These ordinances show the fact that the sacrifice offered to God is not mere slaughter or a religious transaction. While receiving the offerings, God did not let the life He had created be handled carelessly, and He required exact obedience from the person offering the sacrifice.

Verses 31–33, the end of the passage, make clear the ground on which all these ordinances had to be kept. It was not that Israel was saved from Egypt by obeying; because God had first saved them from Egypt, they had to live keeping the commandments of God.

1. A newborn offering could not be offered right away

Verse 27 says as follows.

"When a bull or a sheep or a goat is born, it shall be seven days with its mother; and from the eighth day and thereafter it shall be accepted as an offering made by fire to the LORD."

A calf, a lamb, or a kid could not be brought as an offering immediately just because it had been born. It had to be with its

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mother for at least seven days, and could be offered as an offering from the eighth day on.

In this ordinance appears the care of God for life. A newborn animal needs the care and milk of its mother. God did not permit taking a newborn away from its mother as soon as it was born and offering it on the ground of sacrifice.

The offering had to pass the period God had appointed. A newborn could not be offered immediately as an offering, and not only the condition of the offering but also the time of offering had to follow the word of God.

2. We must obey the word that commanded the offering to be made from the eighth day

God had the young be with its mother for seven days, and set it apart to be offered as an offering from the eighth day. The person offering was not to shorten this period by his own thinking or offer the offering before the appointed time had come.

The primary meaning of the passage is clear.

—Do not use a newborn life immediately as an offering.

—Respect the order of creation and the care of the mother.

—Do not offer hastily before the time God has appointed has come.

—Even offering to God must follow the method and the time of God.

3. The standard of acceptance is not zeal but the word of God

Verse 27 says that only if it is offered from the eighth day on, *"It shall be accepted."*

Even if a person brought a five-day-old young animal without blemish and said, "I am truly offering this with all my heart," it could not be accepted. It is because not only the outward form of the offering but also the time God had appointed had to be met.

This shows that in coming to God, human zeal and sincerity alone are not enough. People judge by their own thinking, "God will probably accept this much," but God has spoken of the way of salvation He has appointed.

It is the same in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. However sincerely a person may say that he believes in Jesus, if he does not know how Jesus removed his sins, it is hard to obtain the assurance of the remission of sins.

The way of salvation God has appointed is as follows.

—Jesus, who has no sin, came clothed in the body of a man.

—Jesus bore the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John.

—In the body in which He bore that sin, He was judged by shedding His blood on the Cross.

—He overcame sin and death by rising again from death.

—The Holy Spirit testifies of the remission of sins to the person who believes this word of the gospel.

If one leaves out either the baptism Jesus received from John or the Cross, or adds human works as a condition of the remission of sins, one misses the whole order of salvation God has appointed.

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4. The ordinance not to kill the mother and her young on the same day

Verse 28 says as follows.

"Whether it is a cow or ewe, do not kill both her and her young on the same day."

Even for animals that could be used as offerings, God did not let the mother and her young be killed on the same day. Created life could not be destroyed without limit by putting forward the holy purpose of sacrifice.

This ordinance shows the fact that God governs life and sets boundaries so that human beings cannot consume life cruelly and greedily.

This command is a concrete restriction not to kill the mother and her young on the same day. The person offering the sacrifice, too, had to keep the boundaries God had appointed for handling life.

Therefore the sacrifices of the Bible do not encourage merciless slaughter. While teaching the fact that the wages of sin is death and the sacrifice of life for vicarious atonement, they restrict human greed and cruelty.

5. Life must not be trampled in the name of serving God

Verse 28 gives an important principle for the life of faith today as well. Serving God must not be used as a pretext for treating people, families, and vulnerable lives carelessly.

If one does not care for one's family while saying one serves the gospel, or treats weak people like expendables while saying one does the work of the church, or forces excessive offerings

and labor on people while saying it is for the work of God, that goes against the spirit of this ordinance.

God receives sacrifices, but He does not accept cruelty. A holy purpose does not justify wrong means.

The saints must respect animals and nature, too, as the creation of God. Though this verse does not forbid all use of animals, it clearly shows the fact that unnecessary abuse and greedy exploitation cannot be justified.

In particular, because the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit knows how precious a sacrifice of life the sacrifice of Jesus was, he must not take lightly the life and dignity of other people either.

6. The sacrifice of Jesus was not a sacrifice taken by force

The sacrificial offering of the Old Testament did not decide by itself to bear sin. The sinner's sin was passed on to it, and it died in his place. Jesus Christ willingly obeyed the will of God to save us.

Jesus knew the will of God, and willingly gave Himself in order to save us. When He received baptism from John, too, He obeyed in order to fulfill all the righteousness of God, and when He went to the Cross, too, He gave His own life as the offering for us.

The Cross is the event in which, within the plan of salvation of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the Son bore our sins in love and gave His own life.

The sacrifice of Jesus reveals the righteousness and the love of God at the same time.

—It is righteousness in that He judged sin.

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—It is love in that the Son bore that judgment in place of sinners.

—It is a righteous transfer in that Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John.

—It is the complete payment of the price of sin in that He shed His blood on the Cross.

—It is the victory of life in that He rose again from death.

7. *"When you offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving"*

Verse 29 says as follows.

"And when you offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the LORD, offer it of your own free will."

The thanksgiving offering is a form of the peace offering, offered in thanksgiving for the grace and salvation God has granted. Thanksgiving is not a transaction for getting something from God. It is a response that acknowledges and rejoices in the grace already received.

What matters is that the thanksgiving offering, too, had to be offered *"to be accepted."* One could not disregard the law of sacrifice God had appointed on the ground of having a thankful heart.

Today, too, thanksgiving is not merely a good mood or positive words. In true thanksgiving, what one is thankful for must be clear.

The saints who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit give thanks because of the following facts.

—God sent Jesus to us, who were sinners.

—Jesus bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John.

—He paid all the judgment and the price of sin with the blood

of the Cross.

—He gave eternal life by rising again from death.

—He made us righteous people without sin and the children of God.

—The Holy Spirit testifies of this truth of salvation in the heart.

There is a difference between giving thanks because one's circumstances have improved without knowing the gospel, and the thanksgiving offered knowing the grace of having been saved from sin.

8. The thanksgiving offering had to be eaten on the same day

Verse 30 says as follows.

"On the same day it shall be eaten; you shall leave none of it until morning: I am the LORD."

The offering offered as a thanksgiving offering was to be eaten that day and not left until the next day. This is connected with the ordinance of the thanksgiving offering given earlier in Leviticus chapter 7.

What must first be confirmed in this ordinance is the fact that God appointed not only the manner of offering but also the time limit for eating.

The sacrifice had to be completed within the time God had appointed. The person offering the offering could not change the period of keeping it according to convenience.

The word of the thanksgiving offering God appointed leads to the life of faith in which one believes in the Lord, who has solved even the wrongs of today, and comes before God in thanksgiving and reconciliation.

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9. The life of offering the peace offering by faith every day

The word not to leave the thanksgiving offering until the next day must not be interpreted to mean that "the grace of salvation is valid only today." The atonement Jesus Christ accomplished is not a salvation that disappears after a day passes, but an eternal atonement.

Nor must it be turned into a command that all thanksgiving must be expressed in material things on that very day. The passage is an ordinance that set the time limit for consuming the offering of the thanksgiving offering of the Old Testament.

When the hearts of the saints have become dark because of a wrong committed today, they must acknowledge that wrong before God. And they must believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit, that Jesus bore even that sin with the baptism He received from John and paid its price by shedding His blood on the Cross. It is not obtaining a new atonement, but confirming again the salvation He has already accomplished and enjoying reconciliation with God. From this faith comes the following life of thanksgiving.

—Do not take the grace you have received for granted.

—Do not keep putting off what you know you should give thanks for.

—Do not store up the grace of God for yourself alone, but share it.

—Do not separate the words of thanksgiving from actual life.

—Do not carelessly neglect what you have offered to God.

The person who has received the gospel must be not a person who keeps the joy of salvation stored away for a long time, but a person who shares it with others.

10. *"Keep My commandments, and perform them"*

Verse 31 sums up the whole passage.

"Therefore you shall keep My commandments, and perform them: I am the LORD."

God did not say that He looks only at the heart of the person offering the offering. He said to keep the word of God and actually perform it.

Sincerity of heart and obedience to the word do not stand against each other. If the heart is sincere, one must respect the word God has appointed.

It is the same with believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. One must believe the salvation of God exactly as He has spoken, without changing it according to one's own thinking. And after being saved by believing the gospel, that faith must appear in actual life.

—We must cast away lies and live honestly.

—We must respect the life and dignity of other people.

—We must not use the gospel as a means for personal honor and gain.

—We must care for our family and the weak members.

—We must share the grace we have received from God.

—We must guard against the heart that loves money, success, and pleasure more than God.

It is not that such obedience saves us. But the faith that has been saved leads us in the direction of obedience.

11. *"You shall not profane My holy name"*

Verse 32 says as follows.

"You shall not profane My holy name, but I will be hallowed

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among the children of Israel."

Profaning the name of God does not necessarily mean only insulting God with the mouth. Taking His word lightly while claiming to be the people of God, offering sacrifices at one's own convenience, and justifying greed and cruelty are also matters of profaning the name of God.

Conversely, that God "will be hallowed" does not mean that people make God a holier being. God is by nature perfectly holy. It means that the people of Israel respect the word of God, acknowledge that He is the holy One, and reveal it in their lives.

Today, too, the name of God can be honored or insulted through the lives of the saints.

If a person lies while preaching the gospel, uses the offerings privately, abuses power, and tramples weak people, the world comes to revile not only that person but even the name of God that he preaches.

Therefore the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must not stop at preaching the gospel with the mouth only, but reveal the grace and holiness of that gospel in his life.

12. *"I am the LORD who sanctifies you"*

The latter half of verse 32 is the central word of the gospel in the passage.

"I am the LORD who sanctifies you."

When God gave the commandments to the people of Israel, He did not say only that they should make themselves holy by themselves. He said that He Himself is the One who sanctifies them.

This order must be made clear.

—It is not that a person first obeys perfectly and thus becomes holy.

—God first saves and sets apart as holy.

—The saved people live keeping the commandments as befits that grace.

In the New Testament, God has sanctified us through Jesus Christ. Jesus bore our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and made us perfect forever by rising again from death.

That we are holy is not because there has never been a single mistake in our lives. It is because Jesus Christ has washed away all our sins. At the same time, the person who has been sanctified does not live loving sin with his own weakness as an excuse, but pursues a holy life following the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

13. *"To be your God"*

"Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I am the LORD" (Leviticus 22:33).

The purpose for which God led Israel out of Egypt was not merely to end their life of slavery. It was to be their God, to make them His own people, and to be with them.

The Exodus has the purpose of relationship.

—From slaves of Egypt to the people of God

—From under the rule of Pharaoh to under the rule of God

—From a life of serving idols to a life of serving the holy God

—He moved them from the fear of death to the life of the covenant.

Israel did not earn the qualification to come out of Egypt by keeping the commandments well. God first saved them by the

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blood of the Passover lamb and by His own power. After that, He gave the commandments and the law of sacrifice at Mount Sinai.

Therefore the order is salvation, then obedience.

14. The Exodus and the gospel of the water and the Spirit

While examining the event of coming out of the slavery of Egypt, we can think together of the grace of the Lord, who saved us from the power of sin. We will look at the flow in which God first saves and then makes those He has saved live as His own people.

We were born under sin and committed sin, and could not escape death and judgment, the wages of sin. By our own strength and good deeds we could not get out from under the rule of sin.

God sent Jesus in order to deliver us from sin.

The baptism Jesus received from John is the event in which He bore all the sin of mankind on His own body. His dying by shedding His blood on the Cross is the event in which He received the judgment for the sins He had borne and paid that price with His own life. His rising again from death is the event in which He overcame the power of sin and death and opened new life.

The Holy Spirit confirms the remission of sins in the heart of the person who believes this gospel, and causes him to be born again as a child of God.

The purpose for which God saved us from sin, too, does not end merely at keeping us from going to hell. It is to be our God and to have us walk with Him as His people.

15. The right relationship between salvation and the holy life

Leviticus 22:31–33 shows accurately the relationship between salvation and obedience.

The wrong understanding is this: if I keep the commandments well and offer good sacrifices, God will save me.

The order of the passage is this: because God saved me from Egypt and made me one of His people, I live keeping His commandments and hallowing His name.

It is the same in the New Testament. It is not that Jesus washes away my sins only if I live a holy life. Because Jesus has completely washed away my sins with the baptism He received from John and the Cross, I live a holy life in thanksgiving for that grace.

The obedience of the saints is not the cause of salvation but the fruit of salvation. But being a fruit does not mean it is unimportant. It is because one of the purposes for which God saved us is to make us live as befits His people.

16. Practical lessons for the saints today

First, we must not treat life carelessly on the ground of serving God. We must not say that we are doing the work of God while using people, animals, and nature greedily.

Second, we must not wear out our family and the saints under the pretext of being for the church and the gospel. A holy purpose does not justify violence and coercion.

Third, we must not let our thanksgiving to God become a transaction. Offering money or service and demanding success and health in return is different from the spirit of the

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thanksgiving offering.

Fourth, we must share the grace we have received. We must not store up the gospel, possessions, time, and love for ourselves alone, but share them with neighbors in difficulty and with people who do not yet know the gospel.

Fifth, we must put the word of God before our own haste. Just as God appointed even the time of offering the offering, in serving God, too, we must not insist on our own thinking but obey the word.

Sixth, we must hallow the name of God with our lives. If one rationalizes falsehood, greed, and lewdness while saying one believes the gospel, one profanes the name of God.

Seventh, we must not make our own obedience the merit of salvation. The One who has sanctified us is God, and that holiness was accomplished by the baptism and the blood of Jesus.

Eighth, we must not doubt the gospel because of our own shortcomings. There are shortcomings in our lives, but there is no shortcoming in the salvation Jesus accomplished. When we have done wrong, we must acknowledge it and turn back, looking to Jesus, who has already borne even that sin.

Conclusion

Leviticus 22:26–33 shows the fact that even in the sacrifice offered to God, there is need for the order of life, for mercy, and for exact obedience. A newborn offering could not be offered hastily, nor could the mother and her young be killed on the same day. The thanksgiving offering, too, had to be eaten within the time God had appointed.

But the conclusion of all these ordinances is not the perfect obedience of human beings.

"I am the LORD who sanctifies you" (Leviticus 22:32).

God first delivered Israel from Egypt and made them His own people. And He told the saved people to live hallowing His name.

In the New Testament, Jesus bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John, was judged by shedding His blood on the Cross, and delivered us from sin and death by rising again from death. The Holy Spirit makes the person who believes this word of the gospel be born again as a child of God.

Therefore the life of the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not forced obedience for obtaining salvation. It is the life in which a person who has already been delivered from sin and become one of the people of God respects life in thanksgiving, shares grace, obeys the word, and reveals the name of God as holy in the world. ✉

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Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

Be washed by the gospel of the water and the Spirit and serve the holy God

< Leviticus 22:1-9 >

"Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to Aaron and his sons, that they separate themselves from the holy things of the children of Israel, and that they do not profane My holy name by what they dedicate to Me: I am the LORD. Say to them: Whoever of all your descendants throughout your generations, who goes near the holy things which the children of Israel dedicate to the LORD, while he has uncleanness upon him, that person shall be cut off from My presence: I am the LORD. Whatever man of the descendants of Aaron, who is a leper or has a discharge, shall not eat the holy offerings until he is clean. And whoever touches anything made unclean by a corpse, or a man who has had an emission of semen, or whoever touches any creeping thing by which he would be made unclean, or any person by whom he would become unclean, whatever his uncleanness may be—the person who has touched any such thing shall be unclean until evening, and shall not eat the holy offerings unless he washes his body with water. And when the sun goes down he shall be clean; and afterward he may eat the holy offerings, because it is his food. Whatever dies naturally or is torn by beasts he shall not eat, to defile himself with it: I am the LORD. They shall therefore keep My ordinance, lest

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they bear sin for it and die thereby, if they profane it: I the LORD sanctify them."

Dear beloved saints, what should a person who serves God do when the uncleanness of his own heart has been revealed? Today's passage teaches how one must deal with one's own uncleanness before the holy God.

Those who receive this word are Aaron and his sons. They were the priests entrusted with the work of offering sacrifices to God. God entrusted the holy things to them, but He did not permit them to go near the holy things in an unclean state. At the same time, He also let them know the way by which they could wash and eat the holy things again. Through this word we must know the holiness God requires, and believe in the salvation of the Lord, who has sanctified us.

Even those entrusted with the holy things had to separate themselves

God said to Moses in this way: *"Speak to Aaron and his sons, that they separate themselves from the holy things of the children of Israel, and that they do not profane My holy name by what they dedicate to Me: I am the LORD" (Leviticus 22:2).*

The holy things were what the children of Israel had set apart and offered to God. It was not that the priest could treat them as he pleased just because he was entrusted with handling them. Because they had been offered to God, he had to follow the word God had appointed. The attitude toward the holy things was connected with how one treated God, who received those holy things.

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In verse 3, He warned that the one who goes near the holy things while his body is unclean shall be cut off from before God. The mere fact of being a descendant of Aaron could not make one an exception to this command. The office of priest was not a position in which uncleanness was condoned. The closer one served God, the more one had to examine in what state one was standing before God.

We, too, easily take our own wrongs lightly on the ground that we are doing the work of serving God. We may think that, since we have preached the gospel and helped with the work of the church, the hatred harbored in our hearts or our wrong actions may simply be overlooked. But the service we have rendered does not turn our wrongs into right deeds. God looks not only at what we have done, but also at the heart with which we are treating Him.

They had to discern their unclean state, not hide it

Verses 4 and 5 speak concretely of the uncleanness that could arise for a priest. He said that a person among the descendants of Aaron who was a leper or had a discharge was not to eat the holy things until he was clean. Then He spoke also of the case of having become unclean by a corpse, the case of having had an emission of semen, and the case of having touched an unclean person or a creeping thing that makes a person unclean.

Here there are conditions that arose in one's own body, and there is uncleanness incurred by touching another object. It was not that the priest never experienced such things because he was a priest. God knew the fact that they could become unclean in daily life, and let them know what they were to do at that time.

Reading this ordinance, we must not say that every disease

or condition of the body that appears in the passage is straightaway the same as a morally evil deed that person committed. We must first read the fact that God distinguished and appointed the state in which a priest could go near the holy things. What we today are to learn from that word is that we must not judge our own state to be fine at will, but expose ourselves before the word God has spoken.

Acknowledging one's own wrong is not denying the salvation of the Lord. Rather, it is knowing clearly why we need the grace of the Lord. The faith that God has sanctified us and the acknowledgment that we have done wrong in daily life do not contradict each other. Only when one knows these two rightly does one neither hide sin nor cast away the assurance of salvation because of one's own weakness.

They ate the holy things after washing and after the appointed time had passed

God also spoke of what the priest who had touched an unclean thing was to do. He said: *"The person who has touched any such thing shall be unclean until evening, and shall not eat the holy offerings unless he washes his body with water" (Leviticus 22:6)*. He also said: *"And when the sun goes down he shall be clean; and afterward he may eat the holy offerings, because it is his food" (Leviticus 22:7).*

Here, washing the body with water and waiting until evening are together. It is not a word that says one need not wash if time passes, nor a word that says one may disregard the appointed time because one has washed one's body. The priest could not pick and follow only the one that was convenient for him. He had to accept the procedure God had appointed.

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Also, the state of disease spoken of in verse 4 must not be read as though anything whatsoever becomes clean by itself when the sun goes down. That person could not eat the holy things until he was clean. We must read together the cases the passage distinguishes and speaks of, but must not mix different conditions into one.

The food of verse 7 refers to the portion appointed for that priest. The holy things were the food that a priest who had become clean could eat. God did not say only that the one who had become unclean could never eat the holy things again. He let him eat them again after he had washed and become clean. In this word there are together the sternness that does not let holiness be taken lightly, and the care that brings the priest back to the food of his own portion.

In Exodus chapter 30, too, God had a laver placed between the tabernacle of meeting and the altar, and had Aaron and his sons wash their hands and feet. Washing was needed for the person who performed his office before God. God not only pointed out uncleanness, but also prepared the way to wash it.

That we believe this word today is not a matter of trying to remove the sin of the soul by putting water on the body. We must know Jesus Christ, who actually bore our sins. Just as the priest needed water to wash with, we need the salvation of the Lord, who washes away the sin of the heart. The gospel of the water and the Spirit tells us how that salvation was accomplished.

Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John

Jesus came to this earth as our Savior. The Son of God, who has no sin, came clothed in the body of a man and saved us, who

were to be judged because of sin. To us, who could not remove sin by ourselves, the Lord did not say only to try to live good lives, but He Himself bore our sins.

In Matthew chapter 3, Jesus came to the Jordan River and sought to receive baptism from John. When John tried to prevent this, the Lord said: *"But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him" (Matthew 3:15).*

Jesus had no sins of His own to wash away. Yet He received baptism from John in order to have the sin of mankind passed on to Him. Just as one passed on his sins by laying his hands on the sacrificial offering in the Old Testament, Jesus bore the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, the representative of mankind. He fulfilled the righteous will of God to save sinners.

Our sins, too, are included in the sins the Lord bore at that time. He bore not only the sins we had already committed, but all the sins we commit as we live our whole lives. The Lord knew the sins people know about and the sins never told to anyone, the sins revealed in action and the sins harbored in the heart. He did not leave those sins for us to wash away separately, but had them passed on to His own body.

John saw Jesus and testified in this way: *"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).*

Jesus went to the Cross bearing the sin of the world, which He had borne with the baptism He received from John. Because He had our sins transferred to Him, He also received the judgment for those sins in our place. By dying and shedding His blood, the sinless Lord bore the punishment of sin we were to receive. And He rose again from death and became our Savior.

Therefore, in the faith that receives the remission of sins, the baptism Jesus received from John and the vicarious atonement

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of the Cross must be together. We must believe together the fact that the Lord had our sins passed on to Him and the fact that He paid the price of those sins with His own life. We must not speak of the blood of the Cross while leaving out how Jesus had our sins passed on to Him.

The Holy Spirit testifies of this truth of salvation. 1 John chapter 5 says that Jesus Christ came by water and blood, and that the Spirit testifies. Our believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a matter of regarding ourselves as having no sin by our own feelings. It is accepting as our own salvation the salvation of the Lord to which God testifies through the word. The person who believes this gospel in his heart receives the remission of sins.

Even the wrongs after receiving the remission of sins must be acknowledged before the word

Then must the person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit become a sinner again and be saved from the beginning every time he does wrong afterward? It is not so. The atonement the Lord accomplished does not remain only on the sins we committed before we believed. The Lord bore all our sins and accomplished eternal atonement. It says: *"For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14).*

The person who believes this word holds more clearly to the salvation the Lord accomplished than to his own weakness. But with that faith, he must not deny even the wrongs he has committed. That one has received the remission of all sins does not mean that whatever we do now is right. The fact that the Lord paid the price of sin does not change the sins we have committed

into good deeds.

Even after speaking harsh words to others, we easily think that the other person was wrong first. If we hold on only to our own position like that, we miss the opportunity to acknowledge our wrong. What is needed at that time is to examine our own conduct before the word. If I hated, failed to love, and put my own greed first, I must acknowledge that before God.

And we must believe that Jesus bore even that sin with the baptism He received from John. We must accept in our hearts the fact that the Lord received even the judgment of that sin on the Cross. This is not completing with our confession an atonement that has not yet been accomplished. It is confirming by faith the remission of sins that has already been accomplished, and washing the qualms of our hearts with the word of the Lord.

Just as the priest had to wash when he incurred uncleanness, we, too, must look to the salvation of the Lord when we have done wrong and our hearts have become dark. If one only repeats the words that one has received the remission of sins while turning away from one's own wrongs, the life of faith becomes burdensome. Conversely, when one acknowledges one's own wrongs and believes in the Lord, who bore those sins, the heart that was bound to one's insufficient self turns again toward the grace of the Lord.

The Lord washed even the feet of the disciple who had already bathed

In John chapter 13, Jesus washed the feet of His disciples. Peter at first could not accept this. But the Lord said that if He did not wash him, he had no part with the Lord. Then Peter asked Him to wash not only his feet but also his hands and his head.

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At that time the Lord said: *"Jesus said to him, 'He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you'" (John 13:10).*

The Lord washed the feet even while saying that the whole body of the person who had already bathed was clean. Through this word we learn that even the person who has received the remission of sins needs to believe in the grace of the Lord every day. It is not that, since we have been saved, we no longer need to think of what the Lord did. The more our own shortcomings are revealed as we live, the more we must rely on the Lord, who bore even those shortcomings.

The baptism Jesus received from John is not knowledge that ends at knowing about something that happened long ago. It is the truth of salvation that we must believe even today, when our own sins are revealed. If the Lord bore the sins of my whole life, then the sin that troubles my heart now is also within the sins the Lord bore. We confirm this fact through the word and believe it.

Looking to the Lord is not a matter of struggling to forget one's own conduct. It is acknowledging a wrong as a wrong, and believing salvation exactly as the Lord accomplished it. Therefore the person whose heart has been washed by faith does not avoid apologizing for the wrongs he has done to others either. Because he believes in grace, he can speak honestly instead of hiding himself. Giving thanks to the Lord, who knew our sins and yet saved us, we gain the strength to live according to the word again.

Treasure the food that the holy God gives

Verse 8 commands not to defile oneself by eating whatever dies naturally or is torn by beasts. Earlier, God let the priest who

had become clean eat the holy things of his own portion. But that did not mean that the priest could eat anything whatsoever. Both receiving the food He had permitted and refraining from what He had forbidden were under the word of God.

We, too, must treasure the grace we have received from God. While knowing the fact that the Lord has washed us, is it fitting to keep holding on to what defiles the heart? The Lord saved us from sin and made us serve God. The person who believes in that grace treasures what God has called right, and must turn back when something wrong is revealed in himself.

Even as we live in this way, the One we rely on is Jesus Christ. The apostle John said that for the person who has sinned, we have an Advocate with the Father, and that He is the righteous Jesus Christ. He goes on to testify of the Lord in this way: *"And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world" (1 John 2:2).*

The person who knows his sins and is afraid must come to this Lord. If you have not yet believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, believe in your heart that the Lord bore even your sins and atoned for them in your place. If you have already received the remission of sins, acknowledge the wrongs revealed in daily life and rely on the grace of the Lord, who has washed away even those sins. The Lord, who is our propitiation, is the One we must believe in and serve not only when we are saved but also after we have been saved.

Stand by faith before God, who has sanctified us

The passage ends by sternly telling the priests to keep the command of God. It treats profaning the command of God as a matter related to life. And God reveals Himself in this way. He

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said: *"I the LORD sanctify them" (Leviticus 22:9).*

The One who sanctifies us is God. We are not people who stand before God putting forward our own wholeness. We are people who have obtained holiness by believing in Jesus Christ, who received baptism from John in order to bear our sins, died shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death.

Therefore, when you serve God, do not hide your own uncleanness. God is holy, and His word is right. We are weak and commit wrongs, but Jesus bore all the sins of exactly such people as us. Believe this fact in your heart and come before God.

Just as the priest entrusted with the holy things washed and ate the food of his own portion again, we, too, must serve God believing in the word of the salvation the Lord has accomplished. Let us neither draw back from the Lord because of our shortcomings, nor cover up our wrongs with grace as an excuse. Let us acknowledge our wrongs, obtain the washing of the heart by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and offer thanksgiving and praise to God, who has sanctified us. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

Those who have become children of God through the gospel of the water and the Spirit

< Leviticus 22:10-16 >

"No outsider shall eat the holy offering; one who dwells with the priest, or a hired servant, shall not eat the holy thing. But if the priest buys a person with his money, he may eat it; and one who is born in his house may eat his food. If the priest's daughter is married to an outsider, she may not eat of the holy offerings. But if the priest's daughter is a widow or divorced, and has no child, and has returned to her father's house as in her youth, she may eat her father's food; but no outsider shall eat it. And if a man eats the holy offering unintentionally, then he shall restore a holy offering to the priest, and add one-fifth to it. They shall not profane the holy offerings of the children of Israel, which they offer to the LORD, or allow them to bear the guilt of trespass when they eat their holy offerings; for I the LORD sanctify them."

Dear beloved saints, who is the person who enjoys as his own the grace God gives? Is it a person who keeps close company with those who believe in God? Is it a person who has labored

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much in the work of serving God? Today's passage distinguishes, even among the people in the house of the priest, those who may eat the holy things from those who may not. It was not that the same portion was given to everyone just because they stayed in the same house and worked for that house.

Not everyone who stayed in the house of the priest could eat the holy things

Verse 10 speaks first of those who may not eat the holy things. He said: "*No outsider shall eat the holy offering; one who dwells with the priest, or a hired servant, shall not eat the holy thing.*"

The sojourner of the priest was a person who stayed in his house, and the hired servant was a person who worked for wages. The sojourner would have been able to meet the priest closely. The hired servant would have actually labored for that house. But God commanded that they were not to eat the holy things. The right to the holy things did not arise merely from the fact of being close or from the merit of having worked.

The holy things were not something the master could distribute as he pleased, like ordinary food. They were what the children of Israel had set apart and offered to God, and the priest, too, had to handle them within the range God had permitted. The fact of having been entrusted with what God had given and the thought that one could dispose of it according to one's own will were not to be confused.

Before this word we, too, must look back on our own faith. We cannot think that we have received the remission of sins merely by the fact that we have attended church for a long time, the fact that we live with a believing family, or the fact that we

have helped with the work of the church. Such things can be in our lives, but they are not the sacrificial offering that bore our sins. Being near someone who believes the gospel and hearing that gospel must be distinguished from believing it in one's own heart.

God permitted food to those who belonged to that house

Verse 11, unlike the preceding prohibition, speaks of those who may eat the holy things. He said: *"But if the priest buys a person with his money, he may eat it; and one who is born in his house may eat his food."*

The person bought with money and the person born in that house appear here. The hired servant of the preceding verse also worked, but could not eat the holy things, while the people of this verse could eat the holy things. The difference did not lie in how much work they had done. God permitted those who belonged to the house of the priest to eat the food of the priest.

Now we must think of how we ourselves become the children of God today. The New Testament clearly speaks of the way to become a child of God. It also said: *"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name" (John 1:12)*. It says: *"Who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:13).*

The condition of having been born in the house of a priest in the Old Testament cannot be carried over into the meaning that today one is saved automatically by being born of believing parents. The Gospel of John says that one does not become a child of God by blood. Even if the parents believe the gospel,

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the children themselves must believe in the salvation of the Lord. Even if one's husband or wife has received the remission of sins, one must receive Jesus Christ in one's own heart.

The person born of God is the person who believes in the salvation God has accomplished. He is the person who has received the remission of sins by believing that Jesus bore his sins and received the judgment of those sins. What made us the children of God is not our family or our resolution, but the grace of the Lord, who saved us. We know and believe this grace through the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

For the daughter of the priest, too, there was a distinction according to the word

Verse 12 says that if the daughter of the priest is married to an outsider, she may not eat the holy things of the heave offering. It was not that she could always eat the holy things merely by the blood relationship of being the daughter of a priest. God distinguished and spoke of the case in which she had married and come to belong to another house.

Then what about the case in which that daughter became a widow or was divorced and returned to her father's house? He said: *"But if the priest's daughter is a widow or divorced, and has no child, and has returned to her father's house as in her youth, she may eat her father's food; but no outsider shall eat it" (Leviticus 22:13).*

In this verse several conditions are together. It is the case of having become a widow or having been divorced, and the case of having returned to her father's house without children and having become as in her youth. At that time, He said, she could eat the food of the portion appointed for her father. He did not

speak merely of the reason that she had gone through hardship, but made clear concretely in what state that daughter had returned to her father's house.

This ordinance shows that the daughter of the priest was not excluded forever from the food of her father on the ground that she had lost her husband or that her marriage had ended. God looked at the circumstances in which she had returned, and permitted her to eat the portion of her father within the conditions He had appointed. Within the command to keep the holy things, too, there was the will of God, who cared for those who could eat.

We must not make this word a standard for judging whether widowed or divorced people today are saved. Here it speaks of the ordinance concerning the holy things of the priestly household. Today the way for a person to receive the remission of sins does not lie in changing his marital status. Whatever circumstances a person may be in, he must believe in Jesus Christ, who bore his sins. When we preach the gospel, too, we must not put a person's circumstances first and close the door of salvation, but clearly tell of the salvation the Lord has accomplished.

The Lord saved us from sin with His own life

If we have become the children of God, who paid what price to save us from sin? We are not people who paid money to God and bought the remission of sins. For us, who had to be judged because of sin, the Lord gave His own body.

A person can regret his wrongs and resolve to live a better life than before. But such a resolution cannot bear in one's place the punishment for sins already committed. The problem of sin

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needs an actual solution. We needed a Savior who would bear our sins and receive even that judgment in our place. So Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came to this earth in the body of a man.

Jesus came to the Jordan River and sought to receive baptism from John. When John tried to prevent this, the Lord said: *"But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him" (Matthew 3:15).*

Jesus did not receive baptism from John because He had sin. He was baptized in order to have our sins passed on to Him. Just as the sinner passed on his sins by laying his hands on the sacrificial offering in the Old Testament, Jesus bore the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, the representative of mankind. He fulfilled the righteous will of God to save mankind from sin.

In the sin of the world that the Lord bore at this time are the sins of our whole lives. The Lord bore the sins we committed openly and the sins we hid, the sins we committed knowingly and the sins we committed without realizing it. He did not bear only the sins people remember, picking them out. The Lord, who knows the whole of our lives, had all sins passed on to His own body.

John testified, pointing to Jesus, that He was the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Jesus went to the Cross bearing that sin. Because He had our sins transferred to Him, He also received the judgment for those sins in our place. The blood He shed on the Cross is the blood of the life the Lord gave in order to atone for our sins in our place. To us it is a salvation given freely, but the Lord gave His own life.

And Jesus rose again from death. The Lord is the living Savior who bore our sins and died, and rose again from death. The gospel of the water and the Spirit tells of exactly this

salvation. We must believe together the fact that Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John and paid the price of those sins on the Cross.

1 John chapter 5 says that Jesus Christ came by water and blood, and that the Spirit testifies. When we believe this salvation to which the Holy Spirit testifies, we receive the remission of sins. It is not making the moment our hearts were warmed the ground of salvation, but believing what the Lord actually accomplished. God has made the person who has accepted that salvation in his heart His own child.

Therefore faith is not regarding the price the Lord paid as imperfect. If Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John, then those sins have passed on to the Lord. If the Lord, who bore those sins, was judged on the Cross, then the price of sin has also been paid. We must believe what the Lord did as the solution of our own sins. Then the person who feared God because of sin comes to call God Father.

Even if one ate the holy things unknowingly, the responsibility remained

Verse 14 speaks of the case of eating the holy things wrongly. He said: *"And if a man eats the holy offering unintentionally, then he shall restore a holy offering to the priest, and add one-fifth to it."*

To eat unintentionally is to eat without knowing. Even if one had not intended to seize and eat the holy things deliberately, the fact of having wrongly eaten what had been set apart and offered to God remained. God did not say that there was no responsibility at all on the ground that one did not know. He commanded to add one-fifth to that holy thing and give it to the priest.

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One-fifth is one part out of five parts of the original. Therefore it is adding twenty percent of its value to what corresponds to the holy thing wrongly eaten. He did not say that it was enough to restore only the original, but had it repaid with an addition. He made them take actual responsibility so that what belonged to God would not be handled lightly.

In connection with this, in Leviticus chapter 5, too, He spoke of the ordinance in which a person who had trespassed in error concerning the holy things offered the trespass offering. There He speaks together of repaying the trespass and adding one-fifth to it and giving it to the priest, and of making atonement with a ram without blemish. He also said: *"And he shall make restitution for the harm that he has done in regard to the holy thing, and shall add one-fifth to it and give it to the priest. So the priest shall make atonement for him with the ram of the trespass offering, and it shall be forgiven him" (Leviticus 5:16).*

Here we see that setting right the responsibility for the holy things and making atonement with the sacrificial offering are together. He did not end it merely with a feeling of being sorry, nor did He speak of paying more money alone as the whole of the remission of sins. The person who had committed sin needed the atonement God had appointed.

We, too, must not judge by our own intention alone when we think of sin. We may be able to say that we did not do it deliberately, but those words alone do not make the wrong we did disappear. When we come to realize a wrong we did not know of, it is not that the sin came into being only then, but that we have come to know a sin already committed. When one knows this fact, one does not come to think that one can become whole before God by solving only the few wrongs one has realized. We need the salvation of the Lord, who bore both the sins we know and the sins we do not know.

The grace of the Lord, who atoned for our sins in our place, is not lacking

The word of the trespass offering makes us look to the Lord, who bore our sins in our place. The Lord solved our sins, and did not leave any part that a person must supplement by his own strength. The holy Son of God became our sacrificial offering and paid the price of all sins. Even when we feel that our sins are great, we must not regard the vicarious atonement the Lord accomplished as insufficient to solve those sins.

Reading the ordinance to repay with one-fifth added, we must not think that the remission of sins is completed only if we add a little more in offerings of money or good deeds to the salvation Jesus accomplished. The One who accomplished our salvation is Jesus Christ. The Lord bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John and received the judgment of those sins on the Cross. What we must hold on to is the sufficient price of vicarious atonement the Lord paid.

Hebrews says: *"Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin" (Hebrews 10:18).*

We do not need to offer a sacrificial offering again or fill up the price of sin with our own suffering in order to receive the remission of sins. We must believe in the salvation the Lord accomplished. It is not that unsolved sins remain so that we must produce a new atonement. The salvation of God is a whole salvation that includes all the sins the Lord bore.

At the same time, the person who believes in grace does not avoid setting right what he has handled wrongly. If one has wrongly taken what belongs to another, one must return it, and if one has used carelessly what was entrusted to one, one must acknowledge that responsibility. Doing these things does not mean that the atonement of Jesus is insufficient. It is that the

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person who believes in the grace received from God acts honestly in the work entrusted to him as well.

Paying a price in order to obtain the remission of sins and setting right what one has done wrong must be distinguished. We are not people who make restitution in order to buy salvation. We are people who, because the Lord has saved us, do not take sin lightly and seek to carry out faithfully the responsibility entrusted to us. The grace of the Lord does not leave us in excuses, but makes us serve God with thanksgiving.

Treasure the holy grace as befits the children of God

Verses 15 and 16 say not to profane the holy things the children of Israel offer to God, and warn that the responsibility of sin and punishment can follow eating the holy things. The person entrusted with the holy things had to let people know who could eat them, and keep the distinction God had appointed. He could not handle them carelessly on the ground that it was work familiar to him.

This word makes us examine our hearts, too, as we preach and serve the gospel today. We must not blur the way of the remission of sins in order to say only comfortable words to people. We must not say that one is saved automatically just by coming to church, or teach as though sin disappears in proportion to one's labor. We must clearly preach how Jesus solved our sins through the baptism He received from John and the vicarious atonement of the Cross.

The gospel must be preached to everyone who needs the remission of sins. But the hearer must accept that salvation in his own heart. What God has given us is not merely a religious sense

of belonging, but the remission of sins and the grace of becoming the children of God. We must believe that grace ourselves, and serve so that others, too, may know and believe it rightly.

At the end of the passage, God said that He is the LORD who sanctifies them. The One who appointed the rights concerning the holy things is God, and the One who sanctifies His people is also God. We live in the grace of Him who has sanctified us.

Dear beloved saints, do not be satisfied with staying beside those who believe. Believe in your heart in Jesus Christ, who received baptism from John for you, died on the Cross bearing your sins, and rose again from death. The Lord bore all our sins and paid their price completely. The person who believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of sins and becomes a child of God.

Now enjoy as your own portion the grace God has given. Come out from the place of struggling to solve the burden of sin by your own strength to the place of believing in the salvation the Lord has accomplished. Giving thanks to God, who has saved us and made us His own people, let us treasure the holy grace we have received from Him and live serving the gospel. ✉

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Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

The remission of sins received by believing in Jesus, who became the offering without blemish

< Leviticus 22:17-25 >

"And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to Aaron and his sons, and to all the children of Israel, and say to them: Whatever man of the house of Israel, or of the strangers in Israel, who offers his sacrifice for any of his vows or for any of his freewill offerings, which they offer to the LORD as a burnt offering—you shall offer of your own free will a male without blemish from the cattle, from the sheep, or from the goats. Whatever has a defect, you shall not offer, for it shall not be acceptable on your behalf. And whoever offers a sacrifice of a peace offering to the LORD, to fulfill his vow, or a freewill offering from the cattle or the sheep, it must be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no defect in it. Those that are blind or broken or maimed, or have an ulcer or eczema or scabs, you shall not offer to the LORD, nor make an offering by fire of them on the altar to the LORD. Either a bull or a lamb that has any limb too long or too short you may offer as a freewill offering, but for a vow it shall not be accepted. You shall not offer to the LORD what is bruised or crushed, or torn or cut; nor shall you make any offering of them in your land. Nor from a foreigner's hand shall you

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offer any of these as the bread of your God, because their corruption is in them, and defects are in them. They shall not be accepted on your behalf."

The fact that one has offered a gift to God and that God has received that gift are not the same thing. In today's passage, the gifts God receives and the gifts He does not receive are distinguished. People think of what they have offered, but God looks at whether that gift is fitting according to the word He has appointed. It was not that any offering whatsoever could be offered just because it had been brought to the altar.

This word teaches an important fact to us, too, who seek the remission of sins. Having a heart that wants to come to God does not mean that we can solve sin in the way we have thought of. There must be a sacrificial offering that God receives, and sin must be dealt with as God has appointed. Through today's word we must meet Jesus, who became the offering without blemish, and receive the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit He accomplished.

He spoke of the conditions of the gift God receives

If we look at verses 17 and 18, God spoke to Moses and had him tell that word to Aaron and his sons and to all the children of Israel. It was not an ordinance that only the priests needed to know. The people who brought the gifts, too, had to know the will of God. Also, not only the children of Israel but also those residing among them had to offer their gifts according to this word. Whoever came to God had to follow the conditions He had appointed.

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Verse 18 speaks of the burnt offering offered as a vow offering or a freewill offering. Whether one offered according to a vow or offered with a willing heart, there was an appointed offering for the burnt offering offered to God. God said in this way: *"You shall offer of your own free will a male without blemish from the cattle, from the sheep, or from the goats" (Leviticus 22:19).*

To be accepted means that God gladly receives it. The purpose of offering a gift did not lie in showing one's devotion to people. It lay in offering a sacrifice that God receives. Therefore it was not enough merely to match the kind, cattle, sheep, or goats. For this burnt offering, a male without blemish had to be offered.

Right after this, verse 20 commands not to offer anything with a defect, and says that such a thing is not accepted. Whether the person offering was reluctant to part with it or had made a great resolution did not remove the defect of the offering. The One who received the offering was God. Only when one keeps this fact in mind does one not change the word of God to fit one's own circumstances.

The peace offering, too, had to be offered with the perfect thing God had appointed

Verse 21, following the burnt offering, speaks of the sacrifice of the peace offering. He said: *"And whoever offers a sacrifice of a peace offering to the LORD, to fulfill his vow, or a freewill offering from the cattle or the sheep, it must be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no defect in it."*

Even for the sacrifice by which one is reconciled with God, a perfect offering was required. Even if a person has the wish to

be close to God, that wish alone does not remove the sin between him and God. There must be a sacrifice that solves sin. God did not leave that offering for the people to decide at will.

Verse 22 makes clear concretely the offerings that cannot be offered. He says not to offer to the LORD those that are blind, broken, maimed, or have various diseases. He also forbade making an offering by fire of them on the altar. It was not that an animal with a defect became a fitting offering to God by being put on the altar and burned with fire. The problem of the offering could not be covered by having the form of a sacrifice.

When reading the ordinances of the burnt offering and the peace offering, the conditions of each must also be examined. Verse 19 requires a male without blemish for the burnt offering, but in the ordinance of the peace offering in Leviticus 3:1 He said to offer it without blemish, whether male or female. The detailed conditions of all the sacrifices must not be lumped together as one. We must know according to the word what God permitted and what He forbade.

The difference between the freewill offering and the vow offering, too, must be received according to the word

In verse 23 comes a distinction that must be examined together when reading the preceding ordinance. He said: *"Either a bull or a lamb that has any limb too long or too short you may offer as a freewill offering, but for a vow it shall not be accepted."*

Here God said that a bull or a lamb with a limb too long or too short may be used as a freewill offering, while if offered as a gift to fulfill a vow it is not accepted. Even for the same animal, the use He permitted and the use He did not permit are

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distinguished in this verse.

Therefore we must neither erase this permission on the ground that He forbade defects earlier, nor say that all animals with defects may be offered freely on the ground that He permitted the freewill offering here. Verse 23 specifies and speaks of the case of a limb too long or too short. On this basis one cannot widen it to say that even the diseased offerings forbidden in verse 22 were permitted.

Through this distinction we learn the attitude of treating the word of God. It is not that one serves God better by adding, out of one's own thinking, an interpretation that seems stricter. Conversely, neither can one hold on to one thing He permitted and loosen even the other commands. What God permitted must be received as permitted, and what He forbade must be received as forbidden.

This attitude is needed in believing the gospel of the remission of sins as well. We must hear what Jesus accomplished in order to save us and believe it as it is. We must not add conditions of salvation by our own thinking, or leave out what the Lord did on the ground that it is cumbersome to understand. The standard of faith always lies in what God has spoken and accomplished.

The same standard applied to offerings brought from a foreigner

Verse 24 commands not to offer to the LORD an animal whose reproductive organs are bruised or damaged. He also said not to do such a thing in that land. It was not a word merely to the extent of examining the outward form when putting it on the altar. One could not do what God had forbidden and offer an

animal so damaged under the name of a gift.

In verse 25, He says not to receive such things from a foreigner either and offer them as the bread of God. The defect does not disappear on the ground that the offering was brought from another person. What God looked at was the fact of whether that offering had a blemish. The standard of acceptance did not change according to who supplied it.

In verse 18, He said that the one residing among Israel, too, may offer a gift. Therefore, what is central in the prohibition of verse 25 is not one's foreign origin itself. It is not to receive and offer such offerings that have corruption and defects. He opened the way to come to God, but did not let people change the conditions of that way.

In the book of Malachi, too, God rebuked the sacrifice of offering the blind, the lame, and the sick. It did not become a right sacrifice just because the priests and the people did so together. Even if it is a manner that many people are accustomed to practicing, if it does not agree with the word of God, they must turn back. We must examine not whether it is a faith familiar to us, but whether it is a faith fitting to the word of salvation God has given.

The sinless Son of God became our offering

Then who is the offering without blemish on which we sinners rely when we come to God? It is Jesus Christ, the Son of God. God did not leave our salvation to the righteousness of sinful people. He sent His sinless Son and made Him our sacrificial offering.

When we look at ourselves, we are people who cannot bring forth an offering of salvation without blemish. We sin with the

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heart and do wrong in action as well. We have not only transgressions revealed to others but also evil thoughts hidden away. How can a person who must solve his own sins save even others with his own righteousness? There is no power in human righteousness to remove sin.

But Jesus is not a sinner born under sin like us. The sinless Son of God came in the body of a man. That Jesus sacrificed Himself was not because of His own transgressions. It was that He gave Himself, who is without blemish, in order to save us sinners. It says: *"But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:19).*

That the blood of Christ is the precious blood that redeems us is because He is the Lamb of God without blemish. We do not believe in Jesus as one among many excellent people. We believe in Him as the Savior who bore our sins and paid the price of those sins in our place. Only when we know who He is can we know the salvation His sacrifice gives us.

Seeing that God spoke of an offering without blemish, do not think that you can be saved only after you have made your deeds perfect. The perfection on which the sinner relies is in Jesus. The way of salvation God has given us is to believe what His Son accomplished.

Jesus, who is without blemish, received baptism from John and bore our sins

It was not that the whole process of the sacrifice ended merely with the offering without blemish being prepared. There was the passing on of sins to that offering. Leviticus 1:4 says to lay one's hand on the head of the burnt offering, and Leviticus 3:2 also commands to lay one's hand on the head of the peace

offering and then kill it at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. God made known through the law of sacrifice how the sacrificial offering and the sins of the person offering it are related.

This laying on of hands is connected in the New Testament with the baptism Jesus received from John. Jesus went to the Jordan River and sought to receive baptism from John. When John tried to prevent Him, saying that he himself rather needed to be baptized by Jesus, the Lord answered: *"But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him" (Matthew 3:15).*

Why did the sinless Jesus receive baptism from John? It was not in order to wash away His own sins. It was in order to bear the sin of mankind on His own body. Just as one passed on his sins to the sacrificial offering by laying his hands on it in the Old Testament, Jesus had the sin of the world passed on to Him by receiving baptism from John, the representative of mankind. He fulfilled the righteous will of God to save sinners.

That Jesus bore sin does not mean that He Himself committed sin. It means that the sinless One bore our sins in our place. The blemishlessness of the offering and the receiving of sins passed on must not be confused. Because He was the sacrificial offering without blemish, He could die in place of the sinner, and because He had the sins passed on to Him, that death becomes a sacrifice for the sinner.

The next day John testified, pointing to Jesus: *"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).*

Jesus did not appear only as One who stood clean by Himself with no relation to sin. He appeared as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Our sins, too, are included in that sin of the world. The Lord bore not only the sins we know

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about but even the sins we have not yet realized. The Lord, who knows our whole lives, had all the sin of mankind passed on to Him.

Therefore do not regard the baptism Jesus received from John as something separate from our salvation. It is the word of salvation that tells us how the Lord bore our sins. When we believe this fact, our faith moves beyond vague expectation and is united in heart with Jesus, who bore our sins.

He paid the price of sin with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross, and rose again from death

The sacrificial offering of the Old Testament, after receiving the laying on of hands, was killed and shed its blood. If sin had passed on to the offering, the judgment for that sin, too, had to be carried out. God did not gloss over sin as if it were nothing, but dealt with sin through the sacrifice that took the place of the sinner.

The reason Jesus shed His blood on the Cross also lies here. Jesus, who bore the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, went to the Cross bearing that sin. And He received in our place the judgment we were to receive. That Jesus suffered and died was in order to pay the wages of our sins. The blood of the Cross is the evidence of salvation that the Lord actually bore our judgment.

The baptism Jesus received from John and the blood He shed on the Cross are connected in this way. With the baptism He had our sins passed on to Him, and on the Cross He paid the price of those sins. If the baptism is left out, how the Lord bore our sins is obscured, and if the blood of the Cross is left out, the judgment

for those sins is missing. We must believe fully this salvation God has accomplished.

After dying on the Cross, the Lord rose again from death. He became the living Savior who has delivered us from sin and death. The Son of God came in the body of a man, received baptism from John, died shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death, and thus saved us. This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit that we believe.

This salvation is not a salvation that fixes only a part of us. The Lord did not hand over to us a remaining price of sin to repay by ourselves. He bore our sins and received that judgment. We receive the remission of sins by believing in that salvation, which has already been accomplished. Our resolution cannot take the place of the sacrificial offering, nor do our good deeds add a lacking price to the sacrifice of the Lord.

Let us serve God with the faith that has received the remission of sins

In facing today's word, we must not think only of what more to offer. We must first examine whether we believe in the remission of sins God has given. If the sin of the heart has not been solved, that sin does not disappear by increasing service and enlarging devotion. Only when we believe in the salvation the Lord accomplished for us are we reconciled with God.

Through the law of sacrifice, God wanted to give life and peace to sinners. He made the person who harbored sin and was afraid obtain the remission of sins by relying on the sacrifice God had appointed, and live fearing God. Jesus fulfilled that will with His own body. Now we serve God harboring in our hearts the remission of sins we have received through the gospel of the

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water and the Spirit.

That we have received the remission of sins does not mean that all our conduct has changed to be without blemish. It means that Jesus, who became the offering of salvation, is perfect, and that He solved our sins. Therefore, while acknowledging a wrong as a wrong, do not look for the ground of salvation in your own deeds. The person who believes in the salvation the Lord accomplished has no need to hide his shortcomings, and has no reason to regard even the salvation of the Lord as imperfect because of those shortcomings.

When preaching the word to others, too, we must make this fact clearly known. The way of the remission of sins cannot be taught by vaguely exhorting people to be devoted. We must tell why an offering without blemish was needed, what Jesus bore with the baptism He received from John, and what judgment He received with the blood of the Cross. We must help the hearer know what the Lord accomplished and believe it in his heart.

The offering without blemish God prepared for our salvation is Jesus Christ. He bore our sins, died in our place, and rose again from death. Believe in this Lord. Receive the remission of sins relying on the perfect sacrifice God receives. And giving thanks to the Lord, who has given us life and peace, let us live with the faith that preaches this gospel of the water and the Spirit. ✉

The remission of sins received by believing in Jesus,
who became the offering without blemish

Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

The thanksgiving of those who have obtained holiness through the gospel of the water and the Spirit

< Leviticus 22:26-33 >

"And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: When a bull or a sheep or a goat is born, it shall be seven days with its mother; and from the eighth day and thereafter it shall be accepted as an offering made by fire to the LORD. Whether it is a cow or ewe, do not kill both her and her young on the same day. And when you offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the LORD, offer it of your own free will. On the same day it shall be eaten; you shall leave none of it until morning: I am the LORD. Therefore you shall keep My commandments, and perform them: I am the LORD. You shall not profane My holy name, but I will be hallowed among the children of Israel. I am the LORD who sanctifies you, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I am the LORD."

While speaking to the people of Israel of the ordinances of sacrifice, God let them know who He is. After appointing the day for offering a gift and the time limit for eating that offering, He said that He is the LORD who sanctifies them. He also said that He brought them out of Egypt in order to be their God. When

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we read these words together, the relationship between God, who gave the ordinances of sacrifice, and the people who received those ordinances is revealed.

God is the One who delivered Israel. And He is the One who sanctifies them. The people, as those who had received that salvation, had to live according to the word of God. If one forgets this relationship, the sacrifices come to look only like rites with many things to do and demanding conditions to keep. But when one knows God, who saved him, one also comes to know the meaning of the thanksgiving and obedience offered to Him.

For us today, too, there is something we must know first. Who saved us from sin, and with what did He sanctify us? We must know this fact clearly through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Then thanksgiving for the remission of sins does not remain in words but leads to the faith of living together with God.

God appointed even the time for offering a gift

Verse 26 records that the LORD spoke to Moses. The ordinance that follows was not a custom people had made for the convenience of sacrifice. It was the word God gave to His own people. He said: *"When a bull or a sheep or a goat is born, it shall be seven days with its mother; and from the eighth day and thereafter it shall be accepted as an offering made by fire to the LORD" (Leviticus 22:27).*

Earlier He spoke of the conditions concerning the defect of the offering, and here He speaks of when a newborn animal may begin to be offered as a gift. It was not that it was taken and offered right away as soon as it was born. It had to be with its mother for seven days, and be offered as a gift from the time

God permitted. The person who wanted to offer an offering had to examine also when that animal was born and the period it had to be beside its mother.

It was not that one could use an animal for sacrifice at any time according to one's own will just because one had it. From the preparation of the offering to the time of offering it, one had to follow the word of God. The resolution to offer could not take the place of the command to wait. Because it was a matter of offering to God, the time God had appointed had to be respected.

He said not to kill the mother and her young on the same day

In verse 28 follows another concrete command. He said: *"Whether it is a cow or ewe, do not kill both her and her young on the same day."*

Verse 27 speaks of the period the young must be kept beside its mother, and verse 28 says not to kill the mother and her young on the same day. Each of the two commands had to be kept. It was not that the mother and her young might be killed on the same day just because the young had reached the time when it could be offered as a gift.

God gave together the permission to offer sacrifices and the limits to be kept in that process. This command could not be skipped on the ground of preparing what was needed for the sacrifice. Together with what one offers, how one prepares it also had to be within the word.

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A thankful heart follows the ordinances God has given

Verses 29 and 30 speak of the sacrifice of thanksgiving. He said: *"And when you offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the LORD, offer it of your own free will."* He also said: *"On the same day it shall be eaten; you shall leave none of it until morning: I am the LORD" (Leviticus 22:30).*

For the sacrifice of thanksgiving, too, there were ordinances God had appointed. Though it was a sacrifice offered with a thankful heart, not even the way of expressing that heart was all left to people. It had to be offered so that God would gladly receive it, and the offering had to be eaten on that day. Leaving it until the next day was not permitted.

Leviticus 7:15, too, says that the flesh of the sacrifice of the peace offering offered for thanksgiving is to be eaten on the day it is offered, and none of it left until the next morning. For the gifts of a vow or a freewill offering that follow, there is an ordinance by which they may be eaten on the next day as well, but that ordinance cannot be applied as it is to the sacrifice of thanksgiving here. For the sacrifice of thanksgiving, the command to eat it on that day was given.

The people could not choose a time limit more convenient for themselves. Nor could they handle the matters that followed as they pleased on the ground that they had given thanks to God. Offering the sacrifice of thanksgiving and keeping the word concerning that offering were not separated. If they gave thanks to God, who had granted grace, they had to treasure the word He had spoken as well.

The One who sanctifies us is the LORD

After commanding in verse 31 to keep His commandments and perform them, God said in verse 32 in this way: *"You shall not profane My holy name, but I will be hallowed among the children of Israel. I am the LORD who sanctifies you."*

In this word appear together the responsibility of the people to treat God as holy, and the work of God, who sanctifies those people. God must be hallowed among His own people. At the same time, the One who sanctifies the people is also God. We must not erase either side.

When people hear the word to be holy, they think first of how much they can correct their own conduct. Of course, wrong conduct must be turned from. But can even the judgment of the sins already committed be removed by the effort to correct one's conduct? Can the resolution not to sin wash away past sins? For us to obtain holiness, sin itself must be solved.

God did not say to sinners only to remove their sins by themselves and then come to Him. He gave the way to receive the remission of sins through the sacrificial offering, and sent Jesus Christ and accomplished that salvation. God, who judges sin, at the same time did the work of saving sinners. He sanctifies us. It says: *"By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Hebrews 10:10).*

Where does the ground on which we have obtained holiness lie? It lies in Jesus Christ offering His body once and for all. It does not mean that one trained oneself for a long time and finally sin disappeared. It means that we have obtained holiness through the sacrifice Jesus offered for us. The person who seeks the remission of sins must know how the Lord removed his sins, before looking at the degree of his own change.

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Distinguish rightly what God has done and what we must do. The One who accomplished the work of salvation is the Lord. We must hear that word of salvation and believe it in our hearts. As people who have received by faith the holiness God has given, we must live following His will.

Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John

Within the word that Jesus offered His body is the matter of His bearing our sins. Jesus is not One who was sacrificed because of His own sins. The sinless Son of God came to this earth in order to take the place of us sinners. The will of God, who sanctifies us, was fulfilled through that Son.

In the Old Testament, the person who had committed sin brought a sacrificial offering, laid his hands on its head, and passed on his sins. On the Day of Atonement, Aaron, representing the people, laid both his hands on the head of the live goat and confessed the iniquities and sins of the children of Israel. God appointed the method of passing sins on to the sacrificial offering, and made the people receive the remission of sins according to that method.

Jesus came to the Jordan River in order to fulfill this promise. And He sought to receive baptism from John. When John tried to prevent this, the Lord said: *"But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him" (Matthew 3:15).*

That Jesus received baptism from John was in order to bear the sin of mankind. Just as one passed on his sins to the sacrificial offering by laying his hands on it in the Old Testament, when John, the representative of mankind, baptized Jesus, the

sin of the world passed on to Jesus. The sinless Jesus bore that sin as the Lamb of God who took our place.

We must not think only vaguely that the Lord must have removed our sins, without knowing how He took them away. God has given us a concrete word we can believe. The baptism Jesus received from John is exactly the matter of His bearing our sins. He had all the sins of the world, including the sins I will commit throughout my whole life, passed on to Him.

John testified, pointing to Jesus, that He was the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. We, too, are included in this testimony. It is not that the Lord took away the sins of other people but I must still bear my own sins. Each of us belongs to that world, and our sins, too, are included in that sin of the world.

Accept this fact in your heart. The word that God sanctifies me does not mean that He calls me a good person while leaving sin as it is. It means that Jesus actually bore my sins by receiving baptism from John. The Lord is not One who says we are holy while not having solved our sins.

We believe in the salvation He accomplished with the baptism He received from John, the judgment of the Cross, and the resurrection

Jesus, who bore our sins, was hung on the Cross, shed His blood, and died. Because He bore sin, He received the judgment for that sin. Jesus received in our place the judgment we were to receive, and paid with His own life the price of sin that we could not pay.

When we think of the Cross of Jesus, we must not look at it merely as a sad death. That death was a death of vicarious

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atonement for us. When Jesus received baptism from John, He had our sins passed on to Him, and on the Cross He paid the wages of those sins. So we believe together in the baptism of the Lord and the blood of the Cross. The bearing of sin and the being judged for that sin make up one salvation.

After dying on the Cross, Jesus rose again from death. He is not One who remains in death, but the living Lord who has saved us. The Son of God came in the body of a man, received baptism from John, died shedding His blood in our place, and rose again from death, and became our Savior. This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The remission of sins is received by believing this gospel. It is not that the sacrifice of the Lord is completed only if we pile up more labor. Nor is it that Jesus bears our sins again each time we confess them, dividing them up a few at a time. The Lord bore the sin of the world and received the judgment for that sin. We believe in that salvation, which has been accomplished.

Therefore do not wait for your feelings to become warm enough in order to receive the remission of sins. Do not hang the assurance of salvation on whether you have shed many tears or become better than before. The sure ground God has given is what Jesus did. When we believe in our hearts the word that the Lord bore my sins and was judged, we receive and enjoy that salvation as our own.

He delivered us from the place where we were slaves of sin, in order to be our God

In verse 33, God speaks of Himself in this way. He said: *"Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I am the LORD."*

The people of Israel were not to forget from what place they had come out. They had lived as slaves in Egypt. The One who brought them out was the LORD. The One now giving the ordinances of sacrifice was the very God who had saved them.

In Deuteronomy chapter 6, too, Moses urged the people not to forget the LORD, who had brought them out of Egypt, when they obtained good cities, houses, wells, and vineyards and ate and were full. He also had them, when their children asked what the ordinances of God meant, first let the children know the fact that they had been slaves in Egypt and that God had brought them out with a mighty hand. Even when teaching the commandments, they had to make known together the God who had saved them.

Our faith, too, must be like that. We were people who lived as slaves of sin. With our own righteousness we could neither wash away sin nor escape judgment. Such people as us the Lord delivered through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Now we know God, who saved us, and live as people who belong to Him.

If one thinks that, since one has received the remission of sins, one may now live without God, one has forgotten the will of God, who saved us. God saved us in order to be our God and to be with us. We are not people who only receive salvation and turn away, but people who live relying on the Lord, who granted that grace.

Even when the circumstances of life have improved and the heart has become at ease, do not forget this grace. Do not put your own greed before the Lord, who saved you. Rather than having your heart captured by boasting of what you have received, you must love God, who gave it, and set your heart on His will.

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Let us enjoy the remission of sins we have already received as the thanksgiving of today

Let us think of the ordinance to eat the sacrifice of thanksgiving on the same day in the light of our faith. That word must not be received as meaning that the effect of the remission of sins lasts only a day. The time limit for eating the flesh of the sacrificial offering and the effect of the salvation Jesus accomplished must be distinguished. The remission of sins the Lord has given does not disappear after a day passes.

We must give thanks to God today, believing the fact that we have received the eternal remission of sins. It must not become a life that rejoices only at the time one was saved and forgets that grace afterward. The Lord, who sacrificed Himself for me, is my Savior today as well. Therefore, the joy of believing in that grace must also be in our hearts today.

To give thanks every day does not mean to make salvation anew every day. It is to accept again in the heart the salvation the Lord has already accomplished, and to live relying on that grace. If your heart has become dark because of your own shortcomings, acknowledge the wrong and look to the salvation the Lord accomplished. Enjoy reconciliation with God by believing in the sacrifice of the Lord, who bore our sins and was judged.

That faith leads us to obedience. The word of verse 31 to keep the commandments and perform them is not separated from the grace of salvation. Since God has sanctified us, we must now live treasuring His word. One cannot justify one's own wrongs with the confession of having received the remission of sins. Knowing the will of the Lord, who saved us, and following that will is the life fitting to the grace received.

The thanksgiving we can give today is clear. It is to believe

in our hearts the salvation God has accomplished, to ask Him for help, and to live following His will in the place entrusted to us. It is also to join our hearts in the work of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit to those who do not yet know the remission of sins. It is to serve so that this salvation, which has become our joy, may become the joy of others as well.

The One who has sanctified us is the Lord. The One who delivered us from the place where we were slaves of sin and became our God is also the Lord. Believe in the salvation Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His rising again from death. Giving thanks today, too, for that grace of the remission of sins, let us live according to the word of God, who saved us. ✉

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Questions and Answers on Leviticus Chapter 22

[Question] 1. What ordinances does Leviticus chapter 22 deal with, and what do those ordinances teach?

Leviticus chapter 22 teaches how to treat the holy things offered to God, and what offerings must be offered to God. The central lesson is that both the priests and the people must respect the holiness of God and serve Him in the way God has appointed.

Verses 1–16 keep the priest from going near the holy things or eating them in an unclean state, and set the range of those in the household of the priest who may eat the holy things. Verses 17–25 explain the conditions the offering offered to God must meet. Verses 26–30 speak of the time when a newborn animal may be offered as an offering, the ordinance not to kill the mother and her young on the same day, and the time limit for eating the thanksgiving offering.

The last verses, 31–33, command to keep the commandments and not to profane the holy name of God. The One who gives this command is the LORD, who delivered Israel from Egypt and sanctified them. Therefore the people had to remember the grace of having been saved, and not handle what belongs to God at their own convenience. The saints, too, must believe in the salvation God has granted, and treasure His word in worship and in daily life (Leviticus 22:1–33).

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[Question] 2. Leviticus 22:2–3—when the priest handles the holy things, what conduct profanes the holy name of God?

For the priest to go near and handle or eat the holy things set apart and offered to God while he himself is in an unclean state is conduct that profanes the holy name of God. One could not disregard the commands concerning cleanness just because one held the office of priest.

Because the holy things were holy things the people had offered to God, the priest entrusted with them, too, had to separate himself. Treating the holy things in an unclean state was a matter of taking lightly God, the owner of the holy things, and His command. So God sternly warned against such conduct.

This word teaches that the person who serves God, too, needs the attitude of examining himself. One must not cover up wrongs by relying on an office or on familiar religious activities. One must acknowledge the holiness of God, honestly examine one's own wrongs before the word, and come to God (Leviticus 22:2–9).

[Question] 3. Leviticus 22:2—if the conduct that profanes the name of God is explained with concrete examples, what is it?

To profane the name of God is to take lightly God and the holy things that belong to Him, or to go against His will while putting forward the name of God. The Bible warns against the following conduct.

• Treating the holy things carelessly: it is the conduct of eating the holy things in an unclean state, or defiling the holy things by disregarding the appointed qualifications and

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ordinances.

• Swearing falsely by the name of God: it is a matter of using the name of God in order to make people believe one's own lie. This is putting forward the God of truth as if He were the guarantor of one's own falsehood.

• Leaving God and serving idols: Leviticus chapter 18, while forbidding the act of offering one's children to Molech, says that it is a matter that profanes the name of God.

• Offering a gift that disregards the command of God: it is the attitude of bringing an offering with a defect, which God said He would not receive, while regarding oneself as serving God well.

The heart that respects the name of God must appear in words and worship, in the gifts offered to God, and in the choices of life. One must not regard the mere fact of calling on God as enough, but believe and follow the word He has spoken (Leviticus 22:2–3, 14–16, 20–22, 32; 19:12; 18:21).

[Question] 4. Leviticus 22:4–9—in what state could the holy things given to the priest be eaten, and what does this ordinance teach?

The descendants of Aaron who had been permitted to eat the holy things that went to the priest could eat them when they were clean. Even the portion appointed for the priest could not be eaten while he was unclean.

A person who had leprosy or a discharge could not eat the holy things until he became clean. In cases such as having touched a corpse or an unclean thing, too, the applicable ordinances of cleanness had to be kept. Verses 6–7 speak of the procedure of washing the body with water and eating the holy

things after the sun has gone down. It does not mean that every kind of uncleanness is resolved by itself as soon as the sun goes down. Also, they were not to defile themselves by eating an animal that had died naturally or one torn by beasts.

This ordinance teaches that God is holy, and that the person who serves God, too, must treasure holiness. Spiritually, when the saints realize a wrong, they must not justify the sin, but acknowledge that sin and look to the Lord, who saved them. It is believing the word that Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John and the sacrifice of the Cross, and serving God with a clean heart. This does not mean obtaining salvation anew repeatedly, but living while confirming again by faith the grace of the remission of sins He has already granted (Leviticus 22:4–9; Numbers 19:11–12).

[Question] 5. Leviticus 22:10–16—for whom were there restrictions on eating the holy things of the priestly household?

In the passage, the holy things that went to the priest and his household could not be eaten at will by a person who did not belong to the priestly household. The sojourner who stayed in the house of the priest and a person who worked for wages could not eat them either. The *"outsider"* in this context must be understood not merely in the sense of a person from another country, but as a word referring to a person outside the priestly household who was not qualified to eat the holy things.

Even the daughter of a priest, if she married a man outside the priestly household, could not eat the holy things of the heave offering. But if, after losing her husband or being divorced, she returned to her father's house without children and lived as part

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of her father's household as before, she could eat the portion of her father.

On the other hand, under the system of that time, a servant whom the priest had bought with money and brought into his household, and a person born in that house, could eat the holy things. Therefore what mattered was not simply whether one stayed in that house or worked there, but whether one fell within the scope and qualifications of the household God had appointed. Even in the case of being qualified to eat, the regulation that one had to be clean had to be kept as well.

If someone ate the holy things unintentionally, he had to add one-fifth to the holy things he had eaten and return them to the priest. It is an ordinance that kept what had been offered to God from being treated carelessly like ordinary food (Leviticus 22:10–16; Numbers 18:11–13).

[Question] 6. Leviticus 22:20—why did God not receive an animal with a defect as an offering?

It is because the offering offered to God had to meet the conditions God had appointed. God said that if one offered something with a defect, it would not be accepted. To be 'accepted' means that God gladly receives it. The judgment or convenience of the person bringing the offering could not take the place of the standard God had appointed.

This ordinance teaches that one must regard God as precious and worship according to His word. One cannot serve Him rightly with the attitude of handing over to God what is of little use to oneself or hard to dispose of. However, since verse 23 has a separate permissive regulation for the case of offering a bull or a lamb with a limb too long or too short as a freewill offering,

the distinction according to the kind and purpose of the offering must be examined together.

The New Testament describes Jesus Christ as a lamb without blemish and without spot. The One who saves us is Jesus, who became the perfect sacrificial offering. Therefore the saints must not try to obtain the remission of sins by their own devotion or the size of their gifts, but come to God believing in the salvation the Lord has accomplished. In the worship God receives, there must be the faith that believes in the salvation He has given (Leviticus 22:19–25; 1 Peter 1:18–19).

[Question] 7. Leviticus 22:25—what does it mean to call the offering *'the bread of your God'*?

Here *"bread"* means provisions or food to eat, and *"the bread of your God"* refers to the offering offered to God. Verse 25 commands not to make an animal with a defect the offering to be offered to God, even if it was received from a foreigner.

It does not mean that God must eat food like a person in order to maintain life. It is an expression that likens the offering offered to God to food, and shows that it belongs to God and is a gift God receives. Psalm 50, too, makes clear that the whole world is God's, and that God is not One who needs the flesh of bulls or the blood of goats.

Spiritually, we can think of the meaning that God gladly receives the worship offered believing the word of salvation He has appointed. God is pleased with the heart that sincerely believes in the remission of sins the Lord has granted and gives thanks. Therefore, when we offer gifts, we must reflect not only on what we have brought, but also on with what faith we are coming to God (Leviticus 22:25; 3:11, 16; Psalm 50:12–13).

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[Question] 8. Leviticus 22:28—what is the meaning of not having the mother and her young killed together in one day when slaughtering livestock?

God commanded that when killing a cow or a ewe, the mother and her young were not to be killed together on the same day. In the preceding verse 27, too, He had a newborn animal be with its mother for seven days, and be offered as an offering from the eighth day on. Even in offering livestock as offerings, there were limits God had appointed.

From this ordinance we can learn the attitude of not handling life carelessly and of considering the relationship between the mother and her young. In Deuteronomy chapter 22, too, He had them, when taking the young or the eggs, not take the mother bird together with them but let her go. Such commands make us reflect that, just because people may use animals, it does not follow that they may handle them without any restraint.

Zeal in serving God cannot be a reason for permitting even what God has forbidden. The saints must obey the command of God rather than trying to offer in the way they want, and must have a heart that treasures life in daily life as well (Leviticus 22:27–28; Deuteronomy 22:6–7).

[Question] 9. Leviticus 22:32–33 and 1 Peter 2:9—what does Peter explain that we have been called to do as the people of God?

Leviticus 22:32–33 closes this chapter by making clear that God is the One who sanctifies His own people and brought them out of the land of Egypt. Peter goes on to explain this calling to the saints of the New Testament.

Peter explains that God called us out of darkness into His marvelous light, and had us proclaim the praises of God, who saved us. Here to ‘proclaim’ means to make widely known the goodness of God and the grace of salvation.

God has made the saints a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people. With this status comes the mission of making known to others the grace received from God and serving Him. The people of God must, rather than boasting of their own status, testify of who saved them and what love He granted.

Jesus received baptism from John and thereby bore our sin, died shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death. The saints, as people who have received the remission of sins by believing in this salvation, preach the gospel so that others, too, may know and believe that grace. This is the way of living as befits the purpose for which God called us as His own people (Leviticus 22:32–33; 1 Peter 2:9). ✉

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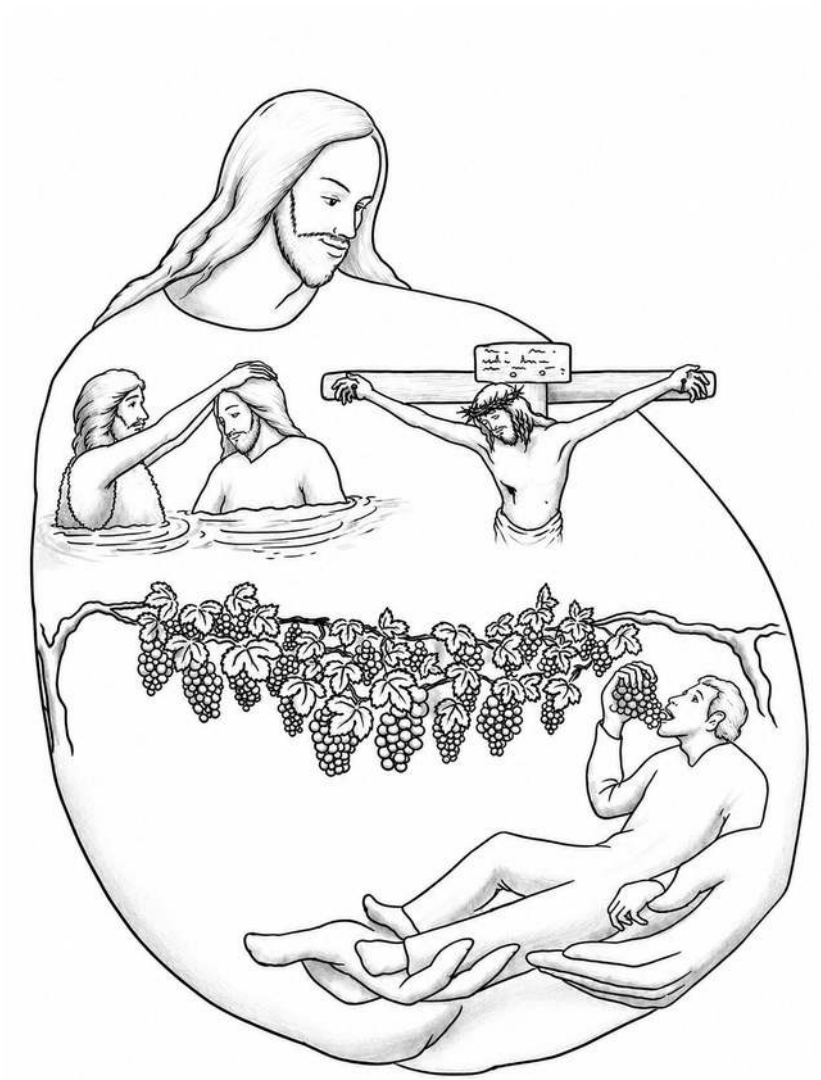

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Leviticus Chapter 23 seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Leviticus 23:1–3—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The word of the text

"And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: The feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are My feasts. Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work on it; it is the Sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings" (Leviticus 23:1–3).

Leviticus chapter 23 is the chapter that regulates the various feasts of Israel, from the Passover to the Feast of Tabernacles. But before God speaks of the annual feasts, He first sets forth the Sabbath, which is repeated every week.

This shows that the worship of Israel was not to take place only at special feasts, but had to begin from setting apart the time that belongs to God within the life of every week.

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2. The holy God set apart even time

In Leviticus, the things that are set apart as holy appear one after another.

The tabernacle is the holy place where God comes down, the priest is the person set apart to serve God, and the sacrificial offering is the gift set apart to be offered to God. And in chapter 23, time is now set apart as holy to God.

Therefore holiness is not something needed only when offering the sacrifices inside the tabernacle. The whole week and the whole year of the people of Israel had to be under the rule of God. God is the One who rules not only the worship of the people but also their labor and rest, their gatherings and their daily lives.

3. "*The feasts of the LORD*" are the times God has appointed

In verse 2, God calls the feasts *"the feasts of the LORD."* It means that the owner of the feasts is not man but God.

It was not that the people of Israel chose convenient days and made feasts. God appointed the times, and He also appointed the meaning of those days and the way of worship. Therefore the feasts were not events in which human beings made something and offered it to God, but times of remembering what God had done and entering into that grace.

The starting point of faith is also like this. It is not that a person believes in God in his own way; he must hear and believe the way of salvation God has appointed. Just as the people of the Old Testament had to come according to the law of sacrifice God had appointed, the people of the New Testament, too, must come

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to God by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God accomplished through Jesus Christ.

4. *"Holy convocations"* means gathering together before God

God did not call the feasts mere holidays, but called them *"holy convocations."* The Sabbath did not end as a day on which an individual did nothing at home; it was a day on which the people of God came together before God.

Two meanings are contained together in a holy convocation.

The first is stopping from the work of the world, and the second is gathering to God. The purpose of the Sabbath was not fulfilled merely by not working. The place where work had stopped had to be filled as a place of remembering God, hearing the word, giving thanks, and having fellowship with the community.

In the New Testament, too, the life of faith does not end only with the conviction in an individual's heart. Those who have received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit gather together to hear the word, give thanks for the salvation God has accomplished, look after one another, and serve the gospel.

5. The word to work six days and rest on the seventh day

Verse 3 first says, *"Six days shall work be done."* The Bible does not regard labor itself as evil. God gave man both a time to work and a time to rest.

But on the seventh day, He said, *"You shall do no work on it."* This is the command not to think that a person maintains everything by his own labor and ability, but to stop working and trust in God.

For the people of Israel, stopping work was to confess as follows.

"The One who feeds us and keeps us alive is God. We do not live by our labor alone. Our lives and our future are in the hand of God."

Therefore the Sabbath was not a day that permitted idleness, but a day of laying down human self-reliance and acknowledging the provision and rule of God.

6. In the Sabbath are the meanings of both creation and salvation

In Exodus chapter 20, the fact that God created the heavens and the earth in six days and rested on the seventh day is presented as the ground of the Sabbath. The Sabbath makes one remember God the Creator.

On the other hand, Deuteronomy 5:15 connects the event of the Exodus with the Sabbath.

"And remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day."

The people of Israel were originally slaves in Egypt who could not rest. But because God set them free from slavery, they were now able to rest.

Therefore the Sabbath is a day of remembering creation and at the same time a day of remembering salvation. It was a day of

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confessing with the body the fact that “we are no longer the slaves of Pharaoh but the people of God.”

Here there is an important order of the gospel. Israel was not saved from Egypt by keeping the Sabbath well. They were first protected by the blood of the Passover lamb, and after they had come out of Egypt by the power of God, they received the commandment of the Sabbath. Salvation came first, and the life of keeping the commandments was the response to that salvation.

7. The commandment of the Sabbath reveals the limits and the sin of man

The commandment of the Sabbath God gave is holy and good. But the sinner cannot keep that commandment perfectly. It is because, even though he can stop working physically, he cannot make the greed, the anxiety, the hatred, the self-righteousness, and the unbelief in his heart all stop as well.

The law does not prove that man can become holy by his own efforts. Rather, it reveals how much man fails to trust God and relies on his own strength and works.

If a person keeps the Sabbath yet boasts that he is more righteous than others, he has stopped the work of the flesh but is continuing the work of his own righteousness. The moment the act of keeping the Sabbath strictly becomes the ground of salvation, the rest God has given turns into another heavy burden.

Therefore, before the commandment of the Sabbath, a person must realize the fact that “I cannot become perfectly holy by my works. I need a Savior who will save me from sin and judgment.”

8. Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath

Concerning the Sabbath, Jesus said as follows.

"The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27–28).

The Sabbath was not given in order to condemn and oppress man, but in order to give man rest and life. But the legalists put the outward regulations of the Sabbath ahead of God, the Lord of the Sabbath.

Jesus' healing the sick on the Sabbath was not an act of disregarding the Sabbath. Rather, it revealed the original meaning of the Sabbath. To set free those pressed down by sin and the curse and to restore their lives is the meaning of the rest God gives.

Jesus also said this.

"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

True rest does not come simply from stopping work; it is obtained when one comes to Jesus.

9. The true rest accomplished in the gospel of the water and the Spirit

The most fundamental rest that man must obtain is not the rest of getting free from the weariness of the body, but the rest of the soul that gets free from the fear of sin and judgment.

Whenever a person sins, he tries to wash away his sin by his own works. Checking whether he has repented enough, whether he has done enough good deeds, and how well he has kept the commandments, he tries to become righteous by his own

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strength. But by such efforts the conscience cannot obtain perfect rest.

God sent Jesus Christ in order to give us true rest. Jesus bore all the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John. And in the body in which He bore those sins, He went to the Cross and received the judgment of sin by shedding His blood and dying, and He completed salvation by rising again from death.

Therefore the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit comes to stop the work of trying to remove his sins by his own works. This does not mean giving up a good life. It means resting from trying to repeat by one's own works the work of accomplishing the remission of sins, and believing in the salvation Jesus has completed.

Hebrews 4:3 says as follows.

"We who have believed do enter that rest"

The way to enter the true rest is not human merit but faith. When one believes the fact that Jesus bore all our sins and received the judgment, the conscience gets free from the fear that asks, "What more must I do for my sins to disappear?"

10. Entering the rest does not mean doing no work at all

Hebrews 4:10 says this.

"He who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His"

Here, ceasing from one's works does not mean discontinuing all the life of faith and all good works. It means stopping the work of trying to complete salvation by one's own works and merit.

Salvation has been completed by Jesus. But the life of the saved person does not stop there. The person who has received the remission of sins does not work in order to save himself, but serves God with thanksgiving because he has already been saved.

Therefore the order within the gospel is clear.

—It is not that one is saved by keeping the commandments; one follows the will of God because one has been saved.

—It is not that one obtains the remission of sins by worshiping; one worships because one has received the remission of sins.

—It is not that one becomes a child of God by serving; one serves because one has become a child of God.

—It is not that one becomes righteous by keeping the day of rest perfectly; one enters the true rest by believing in the righteousness of Jesus.

The rest of the gospel is not doing no work at all; it leads to a life of stopping the work of trying to be saved by one's own works, giving thanks for the salvation already received, and serving God following the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

11. The Sabbath and the feasts are a shadow pointing to Christ

Colossians 2:16–17 says as follows.

"So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ" (Colossians 2:16–17).

The Sabbath and the feasts of the Old Testament were not the substance, but a shadow pointing to Christ, who was to come. This does not mean that the shadow is worthless. Before the

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substance comes, the shadow shows what work Christ would do.

If the Sabbath was the day of stopping labor and enjoying the rest God gives, its substance is laying down the burden of sin and obtaining eternal rest within the salvation Jesus Christ has accomplished.

Therefore the saints of the New Testament must not make the act itself of keeping a particular day the condition of the remission of sins. One cannot say that one is saved only by keeping Saturday, or that one becomes righteous only by keeping the outward regulations of the Lord's Day perfectly. Nor is Leviticus 23:3 a word that directly establishes a regulation concerning the Lord's Day.

But this does not mean that one may take lightly worship and the gathering of the community. The person who has obtained rest in Christ rather sets apart time with thanksgiving to hear the word, have fellowship with the saints, and serve the gospel. Only, he does all these things not as the condition of salvation but as the fruit of the faith of the saved.

12. The meaning of keeping it *"in all your dwellings"*

God said to keep this Sabbath *"in all your dwellings."* The Sabbath was not kept only by those who lived near the tabernacle. Wherever the people of Israel lived, they had to remember the fact that they were the people of God.

This word shows the fact that holiness is not limited to a particular place of worship. Today, too, the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must not be a Christian only inside the church building.

At home, at the workplace, and when alone, too, one must remember the salvation God has accomplished. One must show

the peace obtained in the gospel to one's family and neighbors, cast away the greed and oppression that keep people from resting, and respect the lives and the rest of others as well.

In the Sabbath of the Old Testament there was the meaning of letting not only oneself but also one's children, servants, livestock, and sojourners rest. Therefore the faith of rest is not a matter of my becoming comfortable alone. It must appear as a life of not using others as if they were expendable, looking after the weak, and being considerate so that all may enjoy rest together.

13. The actual life of the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Leviticus 23:1–3 teaches us today the following life of faith.

First, we must lay down the toil of trying to become righteous by our own works, and believe in the remission of sins Jesus has completed.

Second, we must not make work and achievement into idols, but trust in God, who provides our lives and our needs.

Third, we must set apart time for worship and the word. This is not merit for being saved, but the response of thanksgiving offered to God, who has saved us.

Fourth, we must value gathering together with the saints. It is because a holy convocation does not stop at individual rest, but is a gathering in which the people of God remember the word and salvation together.

Fifth, we must give rest to others as well. The person who believes in the gospel must not become a person who oppresses and wears out his family or colleagues in order to satisfy his own greed.

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Sixth, we must not ignore actual wrongs on the ground that we have received the remission of sins. If there is something we have done wrong, we must acknowledge it and turn from it, but we must not think that we have become sinners again and try to produce the remission of sins by our own works. We must believe in the gospel that Jesus bore even that sin, and live rightly following the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Conclusion

The Sabbath of Leviticus 23:1–3 is not merely a rule of life to rest one day out of the week. It is a word to acknowledge that God is the Creator and the Savior, to stop human labor and merit, and to receive the life and rest God gives.

This rest has been completed in Jesus Christ. Jesus bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and saved us by rising again from death.

Therefore the true rest of the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the following confession of faith.

“By my works I cannot make myself righteous, but Jesus bore all my sins and completed salvation. I believe in that completed salvation, and now I worship and serve God not with fear but with thanksgiving.”

To rest from the burden of sin by this faith, and to serve God and one’s neighbors with the new strength obtained from that rest—this is the life that the Sabbath of Leviticus chapter 23 teaches the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Leviticus 23:4–8—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The word of the text

"These are the feasts of the LORD, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at their appointed times. On the fourteenth day of the first month at twilight is the LORD's Passover. And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD; seven days you must eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it. But you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD for seven days. The seventh day shall be a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it" (Leviticus 23:4–8).

In this word come two feasts closely connected with each other.

—On the evening of the fourteenth day of the first month, the Passover is kept.

—From the fifteenth day of the first month, the next day, the Feast of Unleavened Bread is kept for seven days.

The Passover is the day of remembering the event in which they escaped the judgment by the blood of the lamb and were saved from Egypt, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread is the period of remembering that the people thus saved leave the old life and live a new life belonging to God.

Therefore the relationship between the two feasts can be understood as follows.

The Passover shows the ground of salvation, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread shows the new life of the saved people.

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2. The feasts of God that must be kept *"at their appointed times"*

In verse 4, God says to keep the feasts *"at their appointed times."* It was not that the people of Israel changed the dates according to their circumstances, or made feasts in their own way and kept them.

At the time God had appointed, in the way God had appointed, they had to remember the salvation God had accomplished.

This shows an important principle concerning salvation. Salvation is not something a person produces by his own thinking. God appointed the time and the way of salvation and the sacrificial offering. The people of Israel had to believe that word and obey.

The salvation of the New Testament is the same. It is not that a person makes the remission of sins by his own feelings or merit; he must know and believe the work of salvation God accomplished through Jesus Christ. The baptism Jesus received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His rising again from death are the work of salvation God appointed.

3. What the Passover is a feast to remember

Verse 5 says, *"On the fourteenth day of the first month at twilight is the LORD's Passover."* The Passover began from the event of salvation that took place just before the people of Israel came out of Egypt.

When God judged all the firstborn of Egypt, He commanded the people of Israel to kill a lamb without blemish and put its blood on the two doorposts and the lintel of the door.

"Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats" (Exodus 12:5).

"And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it" (Exodus 12:7).

It was not that the people in that house were saved because they were better than others. The ground on which the judgment of God passed over that house was the blood of the lamb.

"When I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you" (Exodus 12:13).

God did not say, "When I see your works," but said, *"When I see the blood."* Because the lamb died in place of the firstborn and its blood was presented as the price of life, the judgment passed over.

Therefore the Passover is the feast of vicarious atonement, in which God gave a sacrificial offering in place of the person who had to be judged, and so preserved his life.

4. The Passover lamb points to Jesus Christ

In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul makes clear the One to whom the Passover lamb points.

"Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us" (1 Corinthians 5:7).

Jesus is the Lamb of God without blemish, who has no sin. John the Baptist, too, testified of Jesus as follows.

"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).

Here the blood of the Passover and the gospel of the water and the Spirit are connected.

The death of Jesus on the Cross is not a death unrelated to

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any sin. Jesus first bore all the sins of the world by receiving baptism from John at the Jordan River. And in the body in which He bore those sins, He went to the Cross and received the judgment of sin by shedding His blood and dying.

Arranged in order, this is as follows.

—Jesus came as the Lamb of God, who has no sin.

—Jesus bore all the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John.

—In the body in which He bore the sin of the world, He went to the Cross and died shedding His blood.

—With that blood He bore the price and the judgment of sin.

—By rising again from death, He overcame sin and death and completed salvation.

—The Holy Spirit testifies that this salvation of the water and the blood is the truth.

In the ordinance of the Passover in Exodus, not only the blood of the lamb but also the circumcision of the person who would take part in the Passover appears together with it. Just as the circumcised person took part in the Passover relying on the blood of the lamb, in the New Testament we believe in the salvation Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross.

When we look at this sacrifice and its fulfillment in the New Testament together, the baptism Jesus received from John makes clear why He, though He had no sin, shed His blood in the place of the sinner. Because He bore sin with the baptism He received from John, He received the judgment of that sin on the Cross.

Therefore the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not weaken the blood of the Cross. Rather, it clearly explains whose sins the blood of Jesus was shed for, and why that blood saves us from judgment.

5. The blood of the lamb made the judgment pass over

In the word "Passover" is contained the meaning that the judgment passes over. But it is not that the judgment disappeared without any ground. Because death, the price of sin, had already been executed on the lamb, the judgment did not come upon the firstborn of that house.

This does not mean that God carelessly closed His eyes to sin. According to the righteousness of God, the price of death was paid. Only, the sinner did not die; the sacrificial offering that took his place died.

In the New Testament, too, God did not simply treat our sins as if they had never been. Jesus bore our sins and received the judgment of those sins on the Cross.

Therefore the ground on which the believer escapes the judgment is not his own goodness. It is the gospel that Jesus bore sin with the baptism He received from John and paid the price of that sin with His blood on the Cross.

6. The Passover shows that salvation is not human merit

The people of Israel who were in Egypt were not, by nature, people more righteous than the Egyptians. They, too, were people who had sin and weakness. But the judgment did not enter the house that believed the promise of God and put the blood of the lamb on the doorposts and the lintel.

Even after they had applied the blood, they had no need to look at their own conduct and be anxious, asking, "Am I good enough?" What they had to rely on was not their own state but the word of God and the blood of the lamb.

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Today, too, the person who has believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must not make the changes in his feelings the ground of salvation. If he feels saved on the day his heart is at peace and thinks he has become a sinner again on the day he makes a mistake, he is looking at his own state.

The ground of salvation is not changing feelings but the unchanging work Jesus has accomplished. We must believe the word that Jesus bore all our sins, was judged with His blood, and rose again from death.

7. The Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread are distinguished but not separated

The Passover was kept on the evening of the fourteenth day of the first month, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread was kept for seven days from the fifteenth day of the first month. Strictly speaking, the two feasts are distinguished, but because they followed one another directly in time, they are connected like one great event of salvation.

This order is important.

Leviticus chapter 23 says to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days from the fifteenth day, following the Passover on the evening of the fourteenth day of the first month. At the time of the Exodus, they ate unleavened bread together on the very night they ate the Passover lamb. What matters is not that the people obtained salvation by the act of eating unleavened bread, but that they escaped the judgment by relying on the blood of the lamb God had appointed.

Applied to the faith of the New Testament, this is as follows.

It is not that a person is saved by casting away sin and living cleanly. He first receives the remission of sins by believing in

the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished. After that, as befits a saved person, he casts away sin and falsehood and lives a sincere life.

A holy life is not the cause of salvation but the result of the faith of the saved.

8. The literal meaning of unleavened bread

In verse 6, God commanded them to eat unleavened bread for seven days. Unleavened bread is, literally, bread made without putting in leaven.

At the time of the Exodus, because the people of Israel had to come out of Egypt in haste, they could not wait for the dough to rise. They had to eat the Passover meal in haste, with a belt on their waist, sandals on their feet, and a staff in their hand.

"And thus you shall eat it: with a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. It is the LORD's Passover" (Exodus 12:11).

Unleavened bread is the food that makes Israel remember the urgent event of the Exodus. God made the saved people remember, as they kept the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the grace that had saved them.

The New Testament explains the sin and the evil influence spreading within the community as leaven, and teaches that the saved person must live sincerely and truthfully. Through the word of 1 Corinthians, we can examine the lesson of faith contained in the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

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9. The Feast of Unleavened Bread shows the new life after salvation

After speaking of the sacrifice of Christ, the Passover Lamb, the Apostle Paul immediately speaks of a life without leaven.

"Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Corinthians 5:7–8).

We must look carefully at the order of this word. Paul does not only say, "Cast out the leaven and become unleavened," but first says, *"You truly are unleavened."*

Because Christ was sacrificed as the Passover Lamb, the believer is a person who has already received the remission of sins and been made clean. Therefore, it says, now cast away the old leaven in actual life as well.

This shows the relationship between status and life.

—Having received the remission of sins through the gospel and become righteous is the salvation God has accomplished.

—Casting away malice and falsehood and living sincerely is the fitting life of the person who has received that salvation.

It is not that one casts away the leaven in order to be saved; one casts away the old leaven because one has already become unleavened in Christ.

10. What it is to cast away the old leaven

In the direct context of 1 Corinthians, leaven refers to the serious sin and evil influence that are tolerated and spread within

the church. Paul calls this *"the leaven of malice and wickedness."*

Therefore casting away the old leaven means the following life.

—It is not taking actual sin lightly on the ground that one has received the remission of sins.

—It is not rationalizing lies, lewdness, greed, hatred, or ill will.

—It is acknowledging one's wrong and taking the necessary responsibility when one has done wrong.

—It is not inflating one's own merit and service in order to be recognized by people.

—It is not mixing human thoughts into the gospel and corrupting it into a different gospel.

—It is discerning by the word so that evil influence does not spread within the church.

In particular, leaven makes the whole dough rise. Therefore, in the spiritual application, we can also be on guard against the pride and showing off that try to make oneself appear greater than one really is. If a person exalts himself and tries to fulfill his own desires while doing the work of serving God, even though he may appear greatly puffed up on the outside, it cannot be called sincere service.

But the words "casting away the leaven" must not be understood as the flawlessness of the flesh either. Even a born-again person is weak and can commit actual wrongs. At that time he must honestly acknowledge his wrong and turn from it, but he must not think that the remission of sins Jesus completed has been canceled because of that wrong.

To acknowledge one's wrong as wrong and, at the same time, to believe in the salvation of Jesus, who bore even that sin, is the faith that lives within the gospel.

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11. The meaning of eating unleavened bread *"seven days"*

God commanded them to keep eating unleavened bread throughout the seven days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

The saved saints, too, must not remain in a momentary feeling, but must keep believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and live a sincere life.

Believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not something that ends with one acquisition of knowledge. The believer must keep the gospel in his heart continually and live with sincerity and truth.

It is not that, because one believed the gospel yesterday, one may harbor falsehood and ill will today. Remembering every day the fact that Jesus, the Passover Lamb, has saved us, we must follow the word and the guidance of the Holy Spirit so that the old leaven does not rule our lives again.

12. The reason they gathered in a holy convocation on the first day and the seventh day

On the first day and the seventh day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, they had to gather in a holy convocation. The community remembered together before God the beginning of salvation and the end of the feast.

The salvation of Israel was not preserved only as an individual experience. The people had to gather together, proclaim the work of salvation God had done, and teach it to the next generation.

In the New Testament, too, the faith of the gospel must not be isolated as a faith of one's own alone. The saints must gather

together and do the following things.

—They hear and confirm the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished.

—They give thanks and praise to God.

—They hold up one another's faith.

—They discern wrong teachings and the leaven of sin.

—They preach the gospel to those who do not yet know the remission of sins.

A holy convocation is not merit for obtaining salvation, but a gathering in which the salvation already received is remembered and testified of together.

13. The word *"you shall do no customary work on it"*

He said to do no customary work on the first day and the seventh day. Literally, this is the regulation of rest for the feast given to the people of Israel. Therefore this word must first be understood as an actual law of the feast.

Applied spiritually, we can think of the meaning of stopping the work of trying to produce salvation by human labor and merit. The salvation of the Passover was not accomplished by the labor of the people of Israel, but by the sacrifice of the lamb.

In the same way, the remission of sins, too, is not accomplished by our fasting, our tears, or our good works.

"By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Hebrews 10:10).

Because Jesus accomplished salvation once and for all, the believer must stop trying to complete the remission of sins again by his own efforts.

But this must not be accepted as the idleness of doing nothing at all. Human merit for obtaining the remission of sins stops, but

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the life of serving God and one's neighbors with the thanksgiving of the saved begins.

14. The meaning of offering an offering made by fire for seven days

The people of Israel not only ate unleavened bread, but also offered an offering made by fire to God for seven days. The saved people worshiped God while remembering the grace of God.

In the New Testament, because Jesus Christ offered His own body once and for all and completed the eternal atonement, there is no need to offer animals repeatedly. What the saints offer is not a sacrifice that completes the atonement of Jesus again, but the worship of thanksgiving and faith for the salvation already completed.

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit lives offering the following sacrifices.

—He offers thanksgiving and praise to God.

—He uses his body and his time for the gospel.

—He preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit to other souls.

—He looks after and serves those in difficulty.

—He exalts the salvation of Jesus rather than displaying himself.

—He serves the church and his neighbors with sincerity and truth.

Such service is not a transaction for obtaining salvation. It is the fruit of thanksgiving that appears because Jesus first loved us and saved us.

15. The order of the gospel shown by the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread

The two feasts can be understood within the gospel of the water and the Spirit in the following flow.

—The Passover: salvation from sin and judgment. Jesus bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John, and received the judgment of those sins by shedding His blood on the Cross. For the person who believes this fact, the judgment of sin passes over.

—The Feast of Unleavened Bread: the new life of the saved person. The person who has received the remission of sins through the salvation of Jesus casts away the malice, the falsehood, and the self-boasting of the old man, and lives with sincerity and truth.

—The holy convocation: the fellowship of the saved community. The saints gather together, remember the gospel, hear the word, give thanks to God, and build up one another's faith.

—The stopping of labor: rest from one's own merit. A person stops the work of trying to accomplish the remission of sins by his own works, and accepts by faith the salvation Jesus completed once and for all.

—The offering made by fire: service offered with thanksgiving. The person who has already been saved serves the gospel and his neighbors, not in order to exalt himself, but out of thanksgiving for the love of God.

Conclusion

Leviticus 23:4–8 shows both salvation and the life after

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salvation.

The Passover shows that a person did not escape the judgment by his own strength, but was saved by the blood of the lamb that died in his place. The Feast of Unleavened Bread shows that the person thus saved must leave the old life of Egypt behind and live as a new people belonging to God.

In the New Testament, our Passover Lamb is Jesus Christ. Jesus bore all the sins of the world with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and completed salvation by rising again from death.

Therefore the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit can confess like this.

"I am not a person who has escaped the judgment by my good works, but a person who has received the remission of sins through the salvation Jesus accomplished. Now I do not live a good life in order to obtain salvation; because I have already been saved, I cast away the old leaven and live serving God with sincerity and truth."

This is the life of the saints of the New Testament, who have been saved under the blood of the Passover Lamb and live by the faith of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Leviticus 23:9–14—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

"And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest. He shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted on your behalf; on

the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it. And you shall offer on that day, when you wave the sheaf, a male lamb of the first year, without blemish, as a burnt offering to the LORD. Its grain offering shall be two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil, an offering made by fire to the LORD, for a sweet aroma; and its drink offering shall be of wine, one-fourth of a hin. You shall eat neither bread nor parched grain nor fresh grain until the same day that you have brought an offering to your God; it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings" (Leviticus 23:9–14).

1. The Feast of Firstfruits, given after the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread

If Leviticus 23:4–8 dealt with the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, verses 9–14 are the ordinance of the Feast of Firstfruits, in which the first harvest is offered to God.

There is an important meaning in this order.

—The Passover shows being saved from death by the sacrifice of the lamb.

—The Feast of Unleavened Bread shows the saved people living a new life without leaven.

—The Feast of Firstfruits shows the new life that began by overcoming death, and the hope of the resurrection to be completed in the future.

Therefore the Feast of Firstfruits is not merely a feast of giving thanks for an abundant harvest in farming. Seen in the light of the New Testament, it is a shadow pointing to the fact that Jesus Christ rose again from death and became the firstfruits of those who believe.

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2. *"The land which I give to you"*—the harvest is the gift of God

In verse 10, God calls the land of Canaan *"the land which I give to you."* The people of Israel farmed and reaped the grain, but the One who gave the land, the sunlight, the rain, life, and the harvest was God.

Therefore the act of offering the firstfruits was the following confession of faith.

"This harvest is not something we obtained entirely by our own ability. God gave the land, gave life, and made it bear fruit. Therefore we return the firstfruits to God."

This principle applies just as it is to the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Our remission of sins and new life are not an achievement we obtained by being godly. They are the gift of God, received freely by believing in the righteousness Jesus accomplished.

We must not put forward our own works and merit first, but first acknowledge what God has accomplished.

3. *"A sheaf of the firstfruits"*—it represents all the harvest that would follow

It was not that the people of Israel reaped and ate all the grain of the field and then offered what was left. Before the harvest had begun in earnest, they brought a sheaf of the firstfruits to God.

The firstfruits are the beginning of the harvest and at the same time represent the whole harvest to be reaped afterward. That the firstfruits have ripened is the evidence that the rest of the grain, too, will ripen and be reaped when the time comes.

The New Testament connects this meaning directly with the resurrection of Jesus.

"But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Corinthians 15:20).

That Jesus became *"the firstfruits"* does not end with the fact that Jesus alone rose again from death. Just as the whole harvest follows the firstfruits, it means that those who belong to Jesus, too, will rise again from death in the future.

"But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming" (1 Corinthians 15:23).

Therefore the Feast of Firstfruits contains the following promise.

The rising again of Christ from death is not an isolated event that happened once and ended. It is the firstfruits that guarantee the future resurrection of all who believe in Christ.

4. The reason the priest waved the firstfruits

The priest received the sheaf of the firstfruits and waved it *"before the LORD, to be accepted."* This is called the wave offering. Literally, it is the act of sacrifice in which the offering is presented before God and offered.

In particular, the text says that the priest waves the sheaf *"on your behalf."* As the sheaf of the firstfruits was accepted by God, the whole harvest of the people of Israel that would follow was also acknowledged and accepted as the gift of God.

Seen from the New Testament, this can be understood in connection with the event in which Jesus Christ rose again from death and was accepted before the Father. Christ did not rise

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again from death only for Himself; He rose again from death as the representative of those who belong to Him.

Therefore the rising again of Christ from death is the sure evidence that we can be accepted by God.

"Who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification" (Romans 4:25).

The priest waved the sheaf of the firstfruits before God so that it would be accepted. The New Testament testifies of Christ, who rose again from death, as *"the firstfruits"* of those who have fallen asleep. Therefore, through this word about offering the firstfruits, we can examine the hope of salvation, that Jesus rose again from death.

5. *"The day after the Sabbath"*—the new life opened after death

The priest had to wave the firstfruits on the day after the Sabbath. The primary meaning of this word is to offer the firstfruits according to the date and the order of the feast God had appointed.

From the perspective of the fulfillment in the New Testament, it makes us think of the event in which Jesus rose again from death on the first day after the Sabbath. It seemed as though everything had ended with the death on the Cross, but on the first day after the Sabbath, new life began.

Just as they offered the firstfruits to God and enjoyed the joy of the harvest, the saints believe that Jesus, the firstfruits, rose again from death, and enjoy the hope of life. Jesus did not remain in the tomb, but rose again from death. Because of this, for the believer, death is no longer the final conclusion.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Peter 1:3).

The Feast of Firstfruits is the feast of *"a living hope"* that lies beyond death.

6. The male lamb without blemish offered together with the firstfruits

The people of Israel did not only wave the firstfruits. On the same day, they offered a male lamb of the first year, without blemish, as a burnt offering.

This ordinance shows the fact that the resurrection must not be separated from the sacrifice. On the day the sheaf of the firstfruits was waved, a male lamb without blemish was offered together as a burnt offering. In the New Testament, too, the rising again of Jesus from death cannot be rightly understood apart from the baptism He received from John and the Cross.

Jesus is the Lamb of God without blemish, who has no sin. Jesus fulfilled all righteousness through the baptism He received from John and bore the sin of mankind, and in the body in which He bore that sin, He shed His blood and was judged on the Cross. And by rising again from death, He overcame sin and death.

John the Baptist testified of Jesus like this.

"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).

Therefore the gospel of the water and the Spirit makes us believe three events as one salvation.

—Jesus bore the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John.

—Bearing that sin, He received the judgment of sin by

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shedding His blood on the Cross.

—By rising again from death, He showed that salvation had been completed.

One must not speak only of the Cross, leaving out the baptism Jesus received from John, nor emphasize only the resurrection without the death on the Cross. The fact that the firstfruits and the male lamb without blemish of the Feast of Firstfruits were offered together on the same day makes us look at both the death of atonement and the life of the resurrection.

7. The meaning of the grain offering and the drink offering being offered together

Verse 13 says to offer together fine flour mixed with oil, and wine. The fine flour is the grain offering, and the wine is the drink offering.

God also appointed the materials and the quantities to be used for the grain offering and the drink offering.

—The oil is actual oil mixed into the grain offering.

—The fine flour is the offering prepared by grinding grain.

—The wine is the actual drink offering poured out to God.

—Two-tenths of an ephah and one-fourth of a hin are the actual quantities God appointed.

What these offerings show as a whole is the thanksgiving and devotion offered to God, who gave the firstfruits. The saved person does not offer himself in order to obtain salvation. Because he has already been saved, he offers his body, his heart, his time, and his possessions to God with thanksgiving.

This order is important.

It is not service for being saved but the service offered by the saved person, and not devotion for becoming righteous but the

devotion of thanksgiving offered by the person who has already been made righteous.

8. Do not eat before first offering to God

In verse 14, God said not to eat bread, parched grain, or fresh grain until the day they brought the offering.

This is the command that teaches that the owner of the first harvest is not man but God. The people of Israel were not to fill their own stomachs first and then offer to God what was left. They had to offer the firstfruits to God and then enjoy the harvest.

But this must not be turned into a law that today one is saved only by first offering a particular sum of money or farm produce. The application in the New Testament does not mean to offer the price of salvation first. It means to believe that every good thing in life has come from God, and to put God ahead of one's own desires.

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit confesses as follows.

"It is not that I sought God first and was saved; God loved me first. It is not that I bought salvation by offering something; the Lord offered His own body and saved me. Therefore I now offer the life I have to the Lord with thanksgiving."

9. The rising again of Jesus from death guarantees our resurrection

The greatest comfort the Feast of Firstfruits gives is the whole harvest to come in the future. It is not that the harvest has ended just because only a sheaf of the firstfruits has been offered

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to God and the rest of the grain remains in the field. Rather, the firstfruits are the sign announcing that the harvest has already begun.

In the same way, we still live clothed in a weak body. We become sick and grow old, and we also die physically. But by the resurrection of Christ, the final harvest has already been guaranteed.

"But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you" (Romans 8:11).

If a person believes the fact that Jesus rose again from death yet thinks that his own resurrection is uncertain, he does not fully believe the meaning of the firstfruits. If Christ, the firstfruits, rose again from death, those who belong to Him, too, will surely rise again.

The hope of the believer does not end with the soul alone being comforted. It is the hope that waits for the redemption of the body, in which the corruptible body lives again, death is swallowed up, and one lives forever with Christ.

10. How *"a statute forever"* must be kept today

Verse 14 calls this *"a statute forever throughout your generations."* This was the ordinance of God that the people of Israel had to keep continually within the covenant.

But it does not mean that the saints of the New Testament must perform the ceremony of the Feast of Firstfruits again in order to make salvation complete. It is because the feast was a shadow that showed beforehand the work of Christ, who was to come, and its substance is Jesus Christ.

"So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ" (Colossians 2:16–17).

Keeping the truth of the Feast of Firstfruits today is not repeating the ceremony and making it the condition of salvation. It is believing that Jesus Christ, the firstfruits, rose again from death, and living as befits a person who will take part in that resurrection.

11. The life of the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit

The faith of the Feast of Firstfruits changes our actual lives.

First, we acknowledge our salvation as the grace of God.

We believe the fact that it was not my act of repentance or my good deeds that saved me, but the baptism Jesus received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His rising again from death that saved me.

Second, we do not regard death as the final defeat.

It is not that we take suffering, disease, and death lightly; we believe that the final conclusion has already been settled by the resurrection of Christ. Because the firstfruits have appeared, the whole harvest, too, will surely come.

Third, we offer the first place in life and the most precious things to God.

It is not that we serve God with the time and strength left over; acknowledging that our lives have come from God, we set our hearts on the work of serving the gospel and souls.

Fourth, we do not make our devotion the merit of salvation.

The grain offering and the drink offering are not a price for

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buying salvation but thanksgiving for the grace already received. Because God saved us first, we serve with joy.

Fifth, we live looking to the fruit of the gospel.

Just as a grain of wheat dies and bears much fruit, the toil of offering oneself for the gospel is not in vain. It is not that we save the souls of people by our own ability, but God brings people to the remission of sins through the word of the gospel that has been preached.

Conclusion

The Feast of Firstfruits of Leviticus 23:9–14 was an actual feast of giving thanks to God, who gave the first harvest, and offering the firstfruits. At the same time, seen in the light of the New Testament, it makes us look to Jesus Christ, who rose again from death and became the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

Jesus bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and completed salvation by rising again from death. Now the person who believes in Him is not only a person who has received the remission of sins, but a person who will rise again from death in the future.

The firstfruits have already been offered to God. Therefore the harvest that follows will surely come to pass as well. This is the surest hope that the Feast of Firstfruits conveys to the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Leviticus 23:15–21—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

"And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be completed. Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the LORD. You shall bring from your dwellings two wave loaves of two-tenths of an ephah. They shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven. They are the firstfruits to the LORD. And you shall offer with the bread seven lambs of the first year, without blemish, one young bull, and two rams. They shall be as a burnt offering to the LORD, with their grain offering and their drink offerings, an offering made by fire for a sweet aroma to the LORD. Then you shall sacrifice one kid of the goats as a sin offering, and two male lambs of the first year as a sacrifice of a peace offering. The priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits as a wave offering before the LORD, with the two lambs. They shall be holy to the LORD for the priest. And you shall proclaim on the same day that it is a holy convocation to you. You shall do no customary work on it. It shall be a statute forever in all your dwellings throughout your generations" (Leviticus 23:15–21).

1. The flow of salvation leading from the Feast of Firstfruits to the Feast of Weeks

Leviticus 23:15–21 is the feast commonly called the Feast of Weeks, the Feast of Harvest, or Pentecost.

This feast is not detached from the preceding Feast of

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Firstfruits. The people of Israel counted seven Sabbaths from the day they offered the sheaf of the firstfruits as a wave offering, and on the fiftieth day, the day after the seventh Sabbath, they offered a new grain offering to God. The name “Pentecost” also came precisely from the meaning “the fiftieth day.”

The flow of the feasts is as follows.

—The Passover shows salvation through the sacrifice of the lamb.

—The Feast of Unleavened Bread shows the new life of the saved people.

—The Feast of Firstfruits shows Christ, who rose again from death and became the firstfruits.

—The Feast of Weeks shows Christ, who rose again from death and ascended into heaven, sending the promised Holy Spirit and establishing the church.

Therefore the Feast of Weeks does not end as a mere agricultural feast of thanksgiving. Seen in the light of the New Testament, it points to the Holy Spirit coming upon those who believe in the gospel of the remission of sins that Jesus accomplished, and to their becoming one community and beginning to preach the gospel.

2. *“Count fifty days”*—the time God appointed

God commanded the people of Israel to count exactly fifty days from the day the first sheaf was waved. The Feast of Weeks was not a day people appointed arbitrarily, but a feast kept at the time God had appointed.

In the New Testament, too, the descent of the Holy Spirit was not an event produced by the zeal or the feelings of people. After Jesus suffered and rose again from death, He went up into

heaven, and at the time the Father had appointed, He sent the promised Holy Spirit.

The disciples did not try to pull the Holy Spirit down by force. Believing the word of the Lord, who had risen again from death, they stayed in Jerusalem. And when the time of God came, the Holy Spirit came upon them.

"When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:1–4).

This is the fulfillment of the Feast of Weeks in the New Testament. In the Old Testament, the first bread made from the new grain was offered to God, and at the Pentecost of the New Testament, those who believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit were established as the new people of God.

3. *"A new grain offering"*—the beginning of a new harvest

Verse 16 says to offer *"a new grain offering"* to the LORD. This was an offering made from the grain newly harvested that year. It was not the previous grain that had long been stored, but the fruit of the harvest God had newly given.

If at the Feast of Firstfruits a sheaf of the firstfruits was offered, at the Feast of Weeks bread made from the harvested grain was offered. The harvest that began with the first sheaf now appeared as actual fruit.

Seen from the New Testament, this flow is as follows.

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Jesus rose again from death and became the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. And at Pentecost, those who believed in the gospel of Christ received the remission of sins and received the Holy Spirit, and formed a new community called the church.

In Acts chapter 2, when Peter preached the gospel, those who received that word were baptized, and on that day about three thousand were added to the disciples. Just as the one sheaf of the Feast of Firstfruits led to the abundant harvest of the Feast of Weeks, the rising again of Christ from death led to the fruit of countless souls receiving the remission of sins and becoming the people of God.

4. The work of Jesus had to be completed first

The descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost is not a separate event of salvation that takes the place of the baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection of Jesus. The descent of the Holy Spirit is the event that testifies of the salvation Jesus had already accomplished and confirms it in the hearts of those who believe.

We must see the order of salvation clearly.

—Jesus bore all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John.

—Bearing that sin, He received the judgment of sin by shedding His blood on the Cross.

—By rising again from death, He overcame sin and death and completed salvation.

—After ascending into heaven, He sent the promised Holy Spirit.

—The Holy Spirit dwells in the heart of the person who has received the remission of sins by believing in this completed

gospel, and testifies of the fact of salvation.

—Those who have received the Holy Spirit form the church and become witnesses who preach the gospel to the end of the earth.

Therefore the Holy Spirit cannot be understood apart from the work of salvation of Jesus. To seek only a special experience of the Holy Spirit without believing that Jesus bore sin with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and rose again from death is to depart from the order the Bible shows.

5. The Holy Spirit is the gift given together with the remission of sins

At Pentecost, Peter said this to those who had heard the word and were cut to the heart.

"Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call" (Acts 2:38–39).

Here the Holy Spirit is not a reward a person obtains at the end of long ascetic practice, but a gift God gives. That gift is connected with the gospel of the remission of sins.

To believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not merely to believe the fact that "the Holy Spirit exists." It is to accept in the heart the word that Jesus actually removed all my sins with the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His rising again from death.

The Holy Spirit comes upon the heart of the person who has received the remission of sins by believing this gospel. The Holy

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Spirit testifies of the remission of sins Christ accomplished and makes one believe it, and leads the saved person to live within that faith.

6. What the two loaves mean

In verse 17, God said to make two loaves of fine flour, wave them before the LORD, and offer them as the first wave offering.

First of all, the literal meaning is clear. These loaves were actual bread made from the newly harvested grain, and they were the gift offered to God representing the firstfruits of the new harvest.

There are cases in which the two loaves are interpreted as the Jews and the Gentiles. The fact that in the New Testament the Jews and the Gentiles became one body in Christ is clear. But Leviticus chapter 23 itself does not explain that the two loaves necessarily mean the Jews and the Gentiles. Therefore this must not be concluded to be the definite meaning of the text.

The fact that the Jews and the Gentiles are saved together can be confirmed in the spread of the gospel in the New Testament.

At Pentecost, the Jews first heard the gospel and entered the church, and afterward the same gospel and the same work of the Holy Spirit appeared to the Samaritans and the Gentiles as well. God gathered people of different backgrounds into one church within the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

7. Why bread baked with leaven was offered

In verse 17 comes a very unusual command.

"They shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven."

In Leviticus chapter 2, it was said, as a general rule, not to burn leaven as an offering made by fire. Yet for the two loaves of the Feast of Weeks, He commanded that leaven be put in.

First, these loaves were not an offering made by fire, burned on the altar of burnt offering, but a wave offering that went to the priest after being waved before God. Therefore this does not contradict the regulation of Leviticus chapter 2 forbidding leaven in the offering made by fire.

For the bread offered as the first wave offering of this feast, God commanded that it be baked with leaven put in. Distinguishing this from the command to remove leaven at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, we must follow the word appointed for each sacrifice.

On the level of gospel application, we can think as follows. The church established at Pentecost was not, from the beginning, a community gathered of perfect people without blemish. It is the community of people who were sinners but received the remission of sins by the righteousness of Jesus and were accepted by God.

It must not be interpreted that "because leaven went in, sin remains in the church," or that "even the person who has received the remission of sins still has the sin in his heart as it was." The person who has believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is a person who has received the remission of sins in his conscience by believing that Christ bore all sins. Only, because the flesh is still weak, he must live following the guidance of the word and the Holy Spirit.

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8. The sacrificial offerings without blemish offered together with the bread

At the Feast of Weeks, not only the two loaves were offered. Seven lambs without blemish, one young bull, and two rams were offered as a burnt offering, one kid of the goats was offered as a sin offering, and two male lambs were offered as a peace offering. The grain offering and the drink offering were also offered together.

God appointed the kinds and the number of the offerings to be offered together at this feast. The people had to offer the gifts not in the way they wanted, but according to the order of sacrifice God had appointed.

The central point shown by each sacrifice is as follows.

—The burnt offering is the offering given wholly to God, and it emphasizes being accepted by God.

—The sin offering shows that one cannot come to God without solving the problem of sin.

—The peace offering shows that the barrier of sin has been removed and God and man have been reconciled and come to have fellowship together.

—The grain offering and the drink offering express thanksgiving and devotion for the grace received from God.

All these sacrifices are fulfilled within the one work of salvation of Jesus Christ. Jesus became the offering without blemish and bore our sins with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of sin on the Cross, and rose again from death.

Therefore the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost is not an event of mysterious power apart from the atonement. First there was the sacrificial offering that bore sin and was judged, and to the people reconciled to God through that sacrifice, the

fellowship of the Holy Spirit was given.

The fact that the sin offering was in the midst of the joy of the Feast of Weeks shows that the church and the work of the Holy Spirit always stand on the remission of sins accomplished by Christ.

9. The wave offering and the holy things that go to the priest

In verse 20, the priest waved the bread of the firstfruits and the two lambs before the LORD as a wave offering. And they went to the priest as the holy things offered to the LORD.

The wave offering is the act of showing the offering to God and offering it. The offering was first set apart as belonging to God, and then given to the priest.

God had the bread of the firstfruits and the two lambs given to the priest. The people offered the gifts giving thanks for the harvest God had given, and the priest received the holy things God had appointed. In this way, thanksgiving offered to God and provision for the priest were accomplished together.

In the church of the New Testament, too, the fruit of the gospel is not the possession of an individual. When God saves one soul, that person is not a person who lives isolated and alone; he is added to the church, learns the word, has fellowship with others, and serves other souls.

Acts chapter 2 records as follows the appearance of those who received the word at Pentecost.

"Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:41–42).

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The fruit of Pentecost was not simply that people experienced a momentary power. A community was established that received the word, was baptized, was added to the church, and lived within the apostles' doctrine, fellowship, and prayer.

10. The work of the Holy Spirit makes people witnesses of the gospel

Jesus clearly spoke of the purpose for which the Holy Spirit comes.

"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

The center of the power the Holy Spirit gives does not lie in making a person show off or exalting him as a special religious figure. It lies in making him testify of the salvation of Jesus Christ.

The disciples' speaking with other tongues at Pentecost, too, was not for boasting of their own ability. It was a sign so that people who had come from various regions might hear the great works of God in their own languages. The work of the Holy Spirit was manifested in testifying to the gospel of Christ so that people could understand it.

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not judge the fact that he has received the Holy Spirit by sensory experience alone. Through the word of God, he believes that Jesus bore all his sins with the baptism He received from John and received the judgment of those sins on the Cross. The Holy Spirit testifies of this salvation, and leads the saved person to live preaching the gospel to others as well.

The Holy Spirit reveals the salvation Jesus accomplished rather than revealing Himself.

11. *"Proclaim on the same day that it is a holy convocation"*—a calling not to be alone but to be the church

In verse 21, God commanded them to proclaim a holy convocation on that day. The people were not only to enjoy the harvest each in his own field, but also to gather together before God.

At the Pentecost of the New Testament, too, the disciples were gathered *"all with one accord in one place."* After the Holy Spirit came upon them, a church was established in which about three thousand people received the apostles' doctrine, had fellowship with one another, broke bread, and prayed.

The person born again through the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a person who holds on to his individual remission of sins alone and lives by himself. The Holy Spirit gathers the saved into the church and makes them live the following life.

—They hear the word of God together.

—They confirm and keep with one another the gospel they have received.

—They serve and hold up the weak saints.

—They join their hearts, their material means, and their toil to preach the gospel.

—They pray for the souls who have not yet received the remission of sins.

The holy convocation of the Feast of Weeks shows the fact that the fruit of the gospel is offered to God within the community.

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12. *"You shall do no customary work on it"*—the rest enjoyed in grace

At the Feast of Weeks, they had to stop their everyday labor and gather in a holy convocation before God. Literally, this was an actual ordinance forbidding labor, in order to keep the feast holy.

From the perspective of the gospel, it makes us think of the faith that lays down the toil of trying to complete salvation by human works and rests in the salvation Christ has accomplished.

It is not that we polish our hearts and make them clean in order to receive the Holy Spirit. Nor is it that we obtain the Holy Spirit by piling up many prayers of repentance, fasts, and good deeds. When we believe the fact that Jesus removed all sins with the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and His rising again from death, we receive the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit as a gift.

Salvation is not a harvest produced by human labor. It is grace received and enjoyed by believing in what God has accomplished.

But it does not mean that one does nothing after being saved. One rests from the toil of one's own righteousness for obtaining salvation, but takes part in the work of serving the gospel with the strength the Holy Spirit gives. It is not working in order to be saved, but working with thanksgiving because one has already been saved.

13. The New Testament meaning of *"a statute forever"*

The Feast of Weeks was an ordinance of God that the people of Israel had to keep throughout their generations. But it is not that the saints of the New Testament today must count the days

and repeat the same sacrifices in order to be saved.

It is because the substance to which the Feast of Weeks pointed has already come. Jesus accomplished the remission of sins with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross, rose again from death, and at Pentecost sent the promised Holy Spirit.

Therefore keeping the true meaning of this feast today is not repeating the ceremony of the Old Testament, but believing the following truths and living by them.

—The work of salvation of Jesus has been accomplished perfectly.

—The Holy Spirit comes as a gift upon the one who believes in the remission of sins.

—The person who has received the Holy Spirit belongs to the Church of God.

—The church must preach the gospel of Christ to the end of the earth.

—The souls saved through the gospel are the new harvest offered to God.

14. The practical lessons for the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit

First, we must not separate the Holy Spirit from the gospel of the remission of sins.

The way to receive the Holy Spirit does not lie in pursuing special sensations or phenomena. We must believe the word that Jesus bore all my sins with the baptism He received from John, was judged on the Cross, and rose again from death.

Second, the work of the Holy Spirit makes one testify of Christ.

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The person who has received the Holy Spirit does not become a person who boasts that he is special, but a person who testifies of the righteousness of Jesus, who saved him.

Third, the saved person values the church.

Those who received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost did not scatter and each live the life of faith on his own; they remained within the apostles' doctrine and fellowship. The Holy Spirit makes the saints one within the truth.

Fourth, we must look to the harvest of the gospel.

God did not reap only the firstfruits and end there. The gospel that began in Jerusalem had to be spread to Judea, Samaria, and the end of the earth. The saints today have the same mission.

Fifth, we must not make service the merit of salvation.

The devotion of the saints is not a price for obtaining the Holy Spirit, but the thanksgiving of the person who has received the Holy Spirit as a gift. We must not reverse the condition of salvation and the fruit after salvation.

Conclusion

The Feast of Weeks of Leviticus 23:15–21 was a feast of offering the first bread of the new harvest to God and rejoicing together. In the New Testament, its meaning was revealed in the event in which the Holy Spirit came and the church was established at Pentecost, the fiftieth day after Jesus rose again from death.

If the Feast of Firstfruits shows Christ, who rose again from death, the Feast of Weeks shows the harvest of souls produced through the salvation of Christ. Jesus completed the remission of sins with the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His rising again from death, and gave the Holy Spirit

as a gift to those who believe this.

Therefore the core of the Feast of Weeks is not a mere experience of the Holy Spirit. It is to receive the remission of sins by believing in the completed gospel, to receive the Holy Spirit and form the Church of God, and to preach that gospel to the world so that more souls may be offered to God as His firstfruits.

Leviticus 23:22—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

"When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field when you reap, nor shall you gather any gleaning from your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the stranger: I am the LORD your God" (Leviticus 23:22).

1. The love of neighbor contained in the midst of the ordinances of the feasts

Leviticus 23:15–21 is the ordinance of the Feast of Weeks, that is, the Feast of Harvest and Pentecost. The people of Israel had to make bread from the newly reaped grain and offer it to God, offer various sacrifices, and gather in a holy convocation.

Yet right after speaking of the ordinance of the Feast of Weeks, God suddenly speaks of the way of harvesting.

—Do not wholly reap the corners of the field.

—Do not go back and gather the heads of grain that have fallen while harvesting.

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—Leave them for the poor and the sojourner.

This arrangement is very important. It means that worship offered to God and looking after one's poor neighbors cannot be separated from each other. If one offers the firstfruits to God while gathering up even all the food of the poor person beside him, he has not kept the meaning of the feast properly.

Thanksgiving toward God must without fail appear as love toward one's neighbor.

2. *"When you reap the harvest of your land"*—the true owner of the land is God

God says *"your land,"* but the One who gave that land to Israel is God. The people of Israel were stewards entrusted with the land to cultivate it.

The grain grows by the toil of the farmer, but the One who gave the land, the seed, the rain, the sunlight, and life is God. Therefore the person who harvested could not claim, "This is entirely mine alone."

God did not forbid the farmer to enjoy the harvest. Only, He said not to clutch everything as one's own down to the last head of grain. Within the abundance received from God was included the portion for one's poor neighbors as well.

This word does not deny the possession of property itself. But neither does it permit making ownership absolute. Even if there is something I own and manage, its ultimate owner is God, and God has the right to command that it be shared with neighbors.

3. *"You shall not wholly reap the corners of your field"*—leave a margin on purpose

The farmer's not reaping all the way to the corners of the field is not because he lacks farming skill. It is leaving part of the harvest on purpose according to the command of God.

By the standard of worldly efficiency, gathering even one more grain may seem wise. But God did not regard maximizing one's own profit as the only wisdom. Restraining one's own rights so that others can live is also the wisdom of God.

Leaving the corners of the field is leaving a margin for one's neighbors in one's own life.

—One does not use all one's material means only for oneself.

—One does not fill all one's time only with one's own plans.

—One does not use all one's abilities only for one's own success.

—One leaves room in one's home, at one's table, and in one's church for the weak to come in.

This does not mean copying the agricultural ordinance of the text exactly as it is today. It is because not everyone farms today. Only, the principle of not reaping to the very end, for myself alone, the possessions God has given is still important.

4. *"Nor shall you gather any gleaning from your harvest"*—not a loss but a portion left for God

The heads of grain that fell to the ground while harvesting could have been gathered again by the farmer. But God said to leave them as they were.

This is not irresponsible waste. It is intentional sharing for the poor and the sojourner. In the eyes of the farmer it might look

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like a loss that had slipped out of his income, but in the eyes of God it was the portion that gave life to the weak.

This word makes us think again about what we regard as a loss. Not everything that does not come back to me immediately is waste. Helping the poor, looking after the lonely, and using time and material means for the spread of the gospel are not things that disappear, but things used according to the will of God.

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not think of his possessions as absolutely his own. Because Jesus gave up everything in order to save him, he, too, following the love of the Lord, willingly lays down part of his own portion for others.

5. Actual food for the poor

God commanded them to leave the heads of grain for the poor, who lacked food to eat and a basis for living. The saints who believe in the gospel must look after their neighbors in need, following this word.

God is not One who looks after only the soul. He also looks into people's hunger, housing, clothing, and everyday difficulties. Therefore one must not turn away from actual need on the ground that one believes in the gospel.

The Book of James says as follows.

"If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,' but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead" (James 2:15–17).

Preaching the gospel to the poor and helping with their actual

needs do not compete with each other. The hungry person needs food, and the soul separated from God because of sin needs the gospel of the remission of sins. The church must see both of these needs, within the range of what it can do.

6. A place for the sojourner

The "*stranger*" refers to a foreigner or a sojourner who resided within the society of Israel but had no land of his own or strong protection of kin. He was in a very vulnerable position socially.

God did not say to show mercy only to the Israelites. He said to leave part of the harvest also for the sojourner, whose lineage, homeland, and social standing were different.

This shows that the love of the people of God must not stay only with their own family or their own nation. As an application for today, it can be connected with looking after foreigners, migrants, people who have newly entered the community, people with weak social ties, and people who have nowhere to ask for help.

The sojourner of the text was a person who stayed among Israel and needed protection for his livelihood. The saints must preach the gospel to their neighbors beyond differences of nation and status, and also look after their difficulties in living. It is doing together the service for souls and the care for neighbors in need.

7. The way that protects the dignity of the poor

God did not merely tell the farmer to reap all the grain and

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then line up the poor and hand out a little to each. He said to leave the heads of grain so that they could go into the field themselves and glean.

This way does not make the poor merely passive objects of relief. They could go out to the field, toil to glean the heads of grain, and prepare food with them. Even while receiving help, they could keep their own labor and dignity.

The representative event in which this principle actually appeared is the Book of Ruth. Ruth the Moabitess, who had lost her husband and come to Israel, says to Naomi.

"Please let me go to the field, and glean heads of grain after him in whose sight I may find favor" (Ruth 2:2).

Boaz did not stop at the minimum level the law required.

"And when she rose up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, 'Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her. Also let grain from the bundles fall purposely for her; leave it that she may glean, and do not rebuke her'" (Ruth 2:15–16).

Boaz did not insult Ruth. He had his workers not rebuke Ruth, so that she could glean the heads of grain. He opened a generous way so that Ruth could glean the heads of grain herself.

True love does not dominate the other person while giving help. Nor does it use the poor in order to display one's own good deeds. It lets the other person obtain what he needs while protecting his dignity.

8. *"You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt"*

An ordinance like Leviticus 23:22 is repeated in Deuteronomy chapter 24 as well. There God explains more

clearly the reason for this command.

"And you shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I command you to do this thing" (Deuteronomy 24:22).

The people of Israel, too, were originally slaves of Egypt. They had no land of their own, and they could not freely enjoy what they had reaped by their own labor. They were set free by the grace of God and received the land and the harvest.

Therefore, when they saw the poor and the sojourner, they had to think like this.

"We, too, were originally slaves who had nothing, but God saved us. Therefore it is fitting that we share what He has given us with those who need help."

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit needs the same memory. We were originally slaves of sin, people who had no qualification whatsoever for the kingdom of God. But Jesus came to us and saved us.

When a person forgets grace, he comes to condemn and despise others. When he remembers grace, he comes to share what he has received.

9. Our poverty seen from the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Leviticus 23:22 is a word to look after the poor and the sojourner. While looking after the needs of our neighbors, we can also examine, in the light of the gospel, our own appearance as we stood before sin.

We were the spiritually poor, who had no righteousness to put forward before God. We had no right to the kingdom of God, and no ability to solve sin by ourselves. We were people who

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tried to obtain the remission of sins by our own works but could not keep the law perfectly until the day we died.

For such people as us, Jesus came.

"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich" (2 Corinthians 8:9).

Jesus bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John. Bearing those sins, He received the judgment of sin by shedding His blood on the Cross, and saved us by rising again from death.

It was not because we had abundant righteousness to offer before God that we were saved. It was because we acknowledged that we were poor sinners without any righteousness and believed in the righteousness Jesus accomplished.

Therefore the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit cannot despise the poor. It is because he knows that he himself was one who could not live before God unless he received grace.

10. Giving to the poor is not the condition of the remission of sins

When explaining this word, there is something that must be distinguished without fail. The good deed of helping the poor does not wash away our sins.

It is not that one is saved by the merit of leaving the corners of the field or giving much to the poor. Human good deeds cannot take the place of the baptism and the Cross of Jesus.

A person can try to make his own name known even while doing good deeds. He can also give to the poor wanting to be

praised by people, wanting to cover his own guilt, or with a heart that demands a reward from God. Even though outwardly it may look like the same act, at its center one's own righteousness can be sitting.

The order of salvation is clear.

—One acknowledges that one is a sinner before God.

—One believes that Jesus bore all one's sins with the baptism He received from John.

—One believes that Jesus received the judgment of those sins on the Cross.

—One believes that Jesus rose again from death and completed salvation.

—One receives the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit by believing this gospel.

—After that, one serves one's neighbors out of thanksgiving for the love of God.

It is not that one is saved by good deeds; one does good because one has been saved. Giving to the poor is not the price of salvation, but the fruit of love borne by the saved person.

11. Nevertheless, actual good deeds must not be taken lightly

That good deeds are not the condition of salvation does not mean that one may ignore the love of neighbor. The faith that Jesus has removed all sins cannot justify selfishness and indifference.

1 John says this.

"But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word or

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in tongue, but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3:17–18).

When the Holy Spirit dwells in the person who has received the remission of sins, the Holy Spirit makes him see the needs of others. There is the desire of the flesh that wants to monopolize everything of one's own, but He makes him lay down that greed according to the word of God and leave a portion for his neighbors.

The remission of sins sets our hearts free from a self-centered life and enables us to serve God and our neighbors.

12. The connection between the Feast of Weeks and verse 22

The preceding Feast of Weeks makes us look to the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and the church established by the gospel. Then it is all the more meaningful that the word for the poor and the sojourner comes right after that ordinance.

In Acts chapter 2, the saints who had received the Holy Spirit did not only preach the gospel in words. They had fellowship with one another, broke bread, and shared their material means so that there would be no one in need. This was not a system that took away property by force; it was the saved people looking after one another voluntarily, out of thanksgiving for the love of God.

Therefore being filled with the Holy Spirit does not appear only as praying in a loud voice or experiencing special phenomena. The Holy Spirit makes the saints live the following life.

—He makes them preach the gospel.

—He makes them look after the difficulties of others.

—He makes them lay down their greed for their own

possessions.

—He makes them serve the weak within the community.

—He makes them receive with love even people of a different nation and status.

If the church of Pentecost turns away from the poor and the sojourner, it has missed the spirit of verse 22, given after the Feast of Weeks.

13. The heads of grain of the gospel, too, must not be monopolized

Verse 22 is a word about actual grain and giving to the poor. But on the level of application, we can also think of sharing with others the gospel we have received.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is not the possession of a particular nation, a denomination, or a few people. God wants all people to hear the news of the remission of sins Jesus accomplished.

Around us there are many people who are spiritually starving. There are people who say they believe in Jesus, yet, not knowing the fact that Jesus bore their sins with the baptism He received from John, still live with sin in their hearts.

If the person who has abundantly received the food of the remission of sins keeps that gospel only within himself, it is like putting the harvest into his own storehouse down to the last head of grain. The saved person must give his time, his material means, and his toil, and serve so that others, too, may hear the gospel.

The saints must look after their neighbors who are actually in need, and also preach the gospel of life to souls. It is serving both material sharing and the spread of the gospel together.

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14. What are the corners of our field today

The saints of today can practice this word in the following ways.

—When planning income and expenses, they leave room to help neighbors in difficulty.

—They do not look after only their own families, but look after the people left alone and the weak within the community.

—They do not discriminate against foreigners, migrants, and strangers, but provide the help that is needed.

—When hiring or doing business, they do not take unjust profit by using the desperation of the other party.

—They do not give as if disposing of leftover things, but look into what the other person actually needs.

—While giving help, they do not control the other person or boast of their own good deeds.

—They provide those who do not know the gospel with opportunities and materials to hear the word.

—They do not use all their time and abilities only for their own success, but leave a place for the gospel and for souls.

Because God did not appoint what percentage to leave as the corners of the field, a particular ratio cannot be forced on everyone like a law. What matters is a heart that does not keep entirely to oneself what one has received from God.

15. *"I am the LORD your God"*

The text does not end simply with the words "If you help the poor, society will become better."

"I am the LORD your God" (Leviticus 23:22).

The most fundamental reason Israel had to look after the poor

and the sojourner is that the LORD is their God. Because God is the One who looks after the fatherless, the widow, and the sojourner, the people of God, too, had to live following His character.

It is the same for the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It is not that we become the children of God by good deeds; because we have become the children of God by believing in the gospel, we show the love of God the Father.

The word *"I am the LORD your God"* shows that the love of neighbor is not an optional hobby, but the holy way of life given to the people of God.

Conclusion

In Leviticus 23:22, God commands them not to reap to the very end, for themselves alone, the harvest He has given, but to leave a portion for the poor and the sojourner.

This word is an actual word commanding material giving to the poor. At the same time, it makes the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit remember the grace he has received.

We were originally slaves of sin, people who had no righteousness to put forward before God. But Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John, was judged on the Cross, and saved us by rising again from death.

Therefore the saints do not try to obtain salvation by good deeds. Because they have already been saved, they serve their neighbors with thanksgiving. They share food with those who are actually hungry, make room for the lonely sojourner, and preach the gospel of the remission of sins to those who are spiritually starving.

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The harvest God delights in is not only the harvest that fills the storehouse. It is the harvest in which the poor and the sojourner, too, take part in the joy of that harvest.

Leviticus 23:23–25—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

"Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the children of Israel, saying: In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall have a sabbath-rest, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work on it; and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD" (Leviticus 23:23–25).

1. The sound of the trumpet that opens the seventh month

Leviticus 23:23–25 is the feast generally called the Feast of Trumpets. On the first day of the seventh month, the people of Israel had to stop their everyday labor, gather in a holy convocation, blow the trumpets, and offer an offering made by fire to God.

In the seventh month, important feasts came one after another.

—On the first day, they blew the trumpets and gathered in a holy convocation.

—On the tenth day, they kept the Day of Atonement.

—From the fifteenth day, they kept the Feast of Tabernacles.

Therefore the sound of the trumpet on the first day of the

seventh month was not simply a sound announcing the beginning of a new month. It was a sound that woke the people, gathered them before God, and made them prepare for the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles that would follow.

Seen in the flow of the feasts, the trumpet is the calling of God that is heard first. Hearing that sound, the people had to stop in their daily lives and remember the day God had appointed and the grace of salvation.

2. The Bible first calls this *"a memorial"*

Verse 24 calls the Feast of Trumpets *"a memorial of blowing of trumpets."* On the day God had appointed, the people of Israel had to rest from work, gather in a holy convocation, and offer an offering made by fire. It was a day of hearing the sound of the trumpet, remembering the command of God, and gathering before Him.

In the Bible, the words "God remembers" do not mean that God had forgotten something and thinks of it again. They mean that God looks after and saves His people according to His covenant.

Numbers chapter 10 explains the blowing of the trumpets at the feasts as follows.

"Also in the day of your gladness, in your appointed feasts, and at the beginning of your months, you shall blow the trumpets over your burnt offerings and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; and they shall be a memorial for you before your God: I am the LORD your God" (Numbers 10:10).

The sound of the trumpet was, for the people, a sound that made them remember the grace of God, and before God, a sound of memorial for the people within the covenant.

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The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, too, must continually remember the salvation Jesus has accomplished. It does not mean that one must receive a new remission of sins repeatedly; it means that one must not forget the remission of sins already completed, but confirm it by faith.

3. The sound of the trumpet is a sound that wakes the people

The trumpet makes a loud, clear sound that is heard far away. When the trumpet sounded, the people had to stop what they were doing and hear what that sound commanded.

In the Bible, the trumpet had several functions.

—It called the congregation together before God.

—It announced the departure when the camp had to move.

—It warned of danger when war was approaching.

—It announced the beginning of the feasts and of worship.

—It made them remember the covenant that God saves His people.

Therefore the trumpet of the Feast of Trumpets must not be thought of merely as beautiful music. It was a public signal that woke the hearts of the people.

The gospel is like this too. The gospel is not a sound that gives only pleasant religious comfort. It tells people that they have sin and judgment, and clearly proclaims what God has accomplished in order to save them from that sin.

4. The trumpet of the gospel must make a clear sound

The Apostle Paul says this.

"For if the trumpet makes an uncertain sound, who will prepare for battle?" (1 Corinthians 14:8).

The direct context of this word is that in the church one must speak clearly so that people can understand. But it also becomes an important principle for the spread of the gospel. The trumpet of the gospel must let people hear clearly what they must believe.

The trumpet of the gospel of the water and the Spirit makes a clear sound as follows.

—All people are sinners who are born as the descendants of Adam and cannot but sin until they die.

—Jesus came to this earth in the body of a man in order to save sinners.

—Jesus bore all the sin of mankind on His own body with the baptism He received from John.

—Bearing the sin of the world, Jesus received the judgment of sin by being hung on the Cross and shedding His blood.

—By rising again from death, Jesus overcame sin and death and completed salvation.

—The person who believes this word in his heart receives the remission of all his sins and receives the Holy Spirit as a gift.

If one preaches only the blood of the Cross, leaving out the baptism Jesus received from John, it is not clear how Jesus came to have sin passed on to Him. Conversely, if one speaks only of the baptism Jesus received from John, leaving out the judgment of the Cross and His rising again from death, that is not the complete gospel either.

The trumpet of the gospel must clearly preach the baptism Jesus received from John, the Cross, and His rising again from death as one work of salvation.

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5. The trumpet is a call to repentance

In the Old Testament, the trumpet was also a sound warning of the approaching day of God.

"Blow the trumpet in Zion, And sound an alarm in My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; For the day of the LORD is coming, For it is at hand" (Joel 2:1).

Repentance does not mean merely grieving over one's wrongs and shedding tears. It is turning from the thoughts one wrongly knew and believed concerning God and salvation, and accepting the truth God has accomplished.

If a person has tried to solve sin by his own good deeds, prayers of repentance, fasting, and religious zeal, he must turn from that thinking. He must return to the word that Jesus bore all that person's sins with the baptism He received from John and was judged on the Cross.

The sound of the trumpet cries out like this.

"Wake up from sleep. Do not rely on your works. Hear the salvation God has accomplished. The way to escape sin and judgment lies in believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus Christ has completed."

6. The trumpet is not a sound announcing only judgment, but a sound announcing salvation

That the sound of the trumpet contains a warning does not mean that it arouses only fear. God had the trumpet blown before the coming of the judgment so that the people would hear and prepare.

The trumpet of the gospel is the same. It tells people that they have sin and judgment, but at the same time it proclaims that the

way of salvation to escape that judgment has already been opened.

The law makes a person realize the fact that he is a sinner. But the gospel tells him how Jesus has removed that sin. If the trumpet only announced danger and did not tell the way of escape, it would be a sound of despair, but the trumpet God has given is a calling to give life to the people.

For us, who had to be judged, Jesus received baptism from John and bore all sins. And bearing those sins, He was judged on the Cross and rose again from death. Therefore the trumpet of the gospel does not cry out only, "There is judgment because of your sins."

It proclaims, "Jesus has received your sins passed on to Him, and He has received the judgment, and now if you believe this fact, you obtain the remission of sins and eternal life."

7. *"A holy convocation"*—the trumpet gathers the people before God

The Feast of Trumpets was not a day an individual commemorated alone in his own house. God commanded them to gather in *"a holy convocation."*

Numbers 10:2–3 speaks of the function of the two trumpets like this.

"Make two silver trumpets for yourself; you shall make them of hammered work; you shall use them for calling the congregation and for directing the movement of the camps. When they blow both of them, all the congregation shall gather before you at the door of the tabernacle of meeting."

The sound of the trumpet called the scattered people together before the tabernacle of meeting. This was a gathering for

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hearing the word of God, worshiping God, and confirming together the direction of the community.

In the New Testament, too, the gospel does not let a person end with individual salvation. It gathers the person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel into the Church of God.

In the church, the saints enjoy the following grace.

—They keep hearing and confirming the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

—They examine their own thoughts and faith in the light of the word.

—They have fellowship with other saints and receive the help of faith.

—They pray together and praise God.

—United with the church, they blow the trumpet of the gospel to the world.

The trumpet both gathered the people and made them move. The purpose of gathering in the church and hearing the word is not to stay only inside the church. It is to go out into the world again and preach the gospel.

8. The priests who blow the trumpet and the saints who preach the gospel

In Numbers 10:8, it is commanded that the priests, the descendants of Aaron, blow the trumpets. The priest had to deliver to the people the sound God had appointed.

In the New Testament, the person who has received the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit has the responsibility, as a spiritual priest belonging to Christ, to preach the gospel. This does not mean that every saint must

necessarily become a pulpit preacher. It means that each, in his own place, must preach to others the gospel he has received, and serve together in the church's spread of the gospel.

The trumpet of the gospel is not a sound that preaches human wisdom or philosophy. Nor is it a sound promising only worldly success, health, and material blessings. It is the sound that preaches the righteousness Jesus Christ accomplished for sinners.

Binding people to one's own denomination or one's own leader is not the trumpet of the gospel. Leading people to the truth of the baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection of Jesus so that they receive the remission of sins is the trumpet of the gospel.

9. *"You shall have a sabbath-rest"*—stop your own works and look to the work of God

The people of Israel had to stop their everyday labor on the Feast of Trumpets. This is an actual command for setting that day apart to God, gathering in a holy convocation, and worshiping.

Applied in terms of the gospel, it makes us think of the faith that stops the toil of trying to accomplish salvation by one's own works and rests in the salvation God has accomplished.

People constantly try to remove sin by their own strength.

—They think that if they live more virtuously, sin will disappear.

—They think that if they offer many prayers of repentance, sin will be washed away.

—They try to be recognized by God with fasting, service, and offerings.

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—They try to make their own changed conduct the evidence of salvation.

But sin cannot be removed by human labor. Jesus has already completed salvation with the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and His rising again from death. The rest of faith is accepting that fact.

Stopping one's own works does not mean doing nothing after being saved. One rests from the toil of trying to obtain the remission of sins by one's own works, but after being saved, one serves God and the gospel with thanksgiving.

10. *"You shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD"*—the offering God appointed

The Feast of Trumpets did not end only with gathering in a holy convocation and resting. They had to offer an offering made by fire to God. Looking at Numbers 29:1–6, not only the burnt offering, the grain offering, and the drink offering but also the sin offering was offered together.

The people who received the call of the trumpet and came before God needed a sacrificial offering. It is because a sinner could not come before the holy God with only his own works.

This sacrifice makes us look to Jesus Christ. The true offering God gladly accepts is Jesus, who has no sin. Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John, died shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death.

Therefore, when the trumpet of the gospel is blown, what we must bring and come with is not our own good deeds and religious merit. It is faith that believes in the salvation Jesus has accomplished.

The sound of the trumpet and the sacrificial offering must

not be separated. The trumpet is not a sound that simply calls, “Be zealous”; it is a sound that calls, “Believe in the sacrificial offering God has appointed.”

11. After the Feast of Trumpets comes the Day of Atonement

The Feast of Trumpets is on the first day of the seventh month, and the Day of Atonement is on the tenth day of the same month. In the order of the feasts, the sound of the trumpet wakes the people and makes them prepare for the Day of Atonement.

Seeing this order in terms of the gospel, we can think of the flow in which a person who hears the proclamation of the gospel and realizes his sin and the judgment of God comes to believe in the work of atonement of Jesus Christ.

On the Day of Atonement of the Old Testament, the high priest entered the Most Holy Place with the blood of the goat of the sin offering for the people and made atonement. He also laid both his hands on the head of the live goat, put the sins of the people on its head, and sent it away into the wilderness. In the New Testament, Jesus bore the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John and paid the price of that sin on the Cross.

Therefore the Feast of Trumpets is not so much a day that accomplishes the remission of sins itself as a day that wakes the people to hear the word of God and look to the grace of atonement. The power that accomplishes the remission of sins lies not in the sound of the trumpet itself, but in the sacrificial offering God appointed.

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12. The last trumpet and the second coming of the Lord

The New Testament uses the image of the trumpet in explaining the second coming of the Lord and the resurrection of the saints.

"Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 Corinthians 15:51–52).

1 Thessalonians also says this.

"For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17).

While examining the word of the Feast of Trumpets, we can also remember the resurrection of the saints and the second coming of the Lord that the New Testament promises together with the last trumpet.

—The trumpet gathers the scattered people of God.

—The trumpet announces that the time God has appointed has come.

—The trumpet announces the resurrection of the saints, like waking those who are asleep.

—The trumpet is joy to the saved, but a warning of judgment to those who are not prepared.

But it must not be concluded that Leviticus 23:23–25 is a code given for calculating the date of the second coming of the Lord. The Feast of Trumpets can be a shadow that makes us look

to the second coming and the resurrection, but on that basis one cannot claim that the Lord will come on the Feast of Trumpets of a particular year.

Jesus said clearly.

"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only" (Matthew 24:36).

The saints who read this word must, rather than calculating the date of the second coming, believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and stay awake so that they can meet the Lord at any time.

13. The sound of the trumpet is different for the person who has received the remission of sins and the person who has not

Even the same sound of the trumpet has a different meaning according to the state of the person who hears it.

For the person who does not believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and still has sin remaining in his heart, the last trumpet becomes a sound of judgment. It is because, although one must be without sin to enter the kingdom of God, he remains a sinner, relying only on his own works and prayers of repentance.

But for the person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the baptism Jesus received from John, the Cross, and His rising again from death, the last trumpet is not a sound that gives only fear. It is a sound of the joy of meeting the Lord, of the dead saints rising again, and of coming to live with the Lord forever.

Therefore preparing for the second coming is not knowing many dates and timetables of events of the end times. One must

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first ask whether sin has actually disappeared from one's own heart.

"Did Jesus bear all my sins with the baptism He received from John? Did He receive all the judgment of those sins on the Cross? Did He complete my salvation by rising again from death? Do I truly believe this word?"

One must be able to answer these questions clearly by faith.

14. How to live today following the word of the Feast of Trumpets

It is not that the saints of today must keep the ceremony of the Feast of Trumpets of the Old Testament again in order to be saved. They must believe in and live by the substance of the gospel to which that feast points.

First, we must stay awake from spiritual sleep.

We must not sink only into the worries of the world and the desires of the flesh and forget who we are and what we live for.

Second, we must keep remembering the completed remission of sins.

When we have done wrong, we must acknowledge that wrong, but instead of trying to produce a new atonement, we must confirm again by faith the baptism and the Cross of Jesus, who bore even that sin.

Third, we must value the gatherings and the word of the church.

Just as the trumpet gathered the people into a holy convocation, the saints must hear the word of the gospel in the church, have fellowship, and set right the direction of their faith.

Fourth, we must preach the clear gospel.

We must fully preach not only the Cross, but that Jesus bore

sin with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and rose again from death.

Fifth, we must live hoping for the second coming of the Lord.

Faith in the second coming is not a faith that gives up daily life. It is a faith that faithfully carries out the work entrusted to one, yet does not make the world alone its final destination, but lives for the gospel and for souls.

Sixth, we must preach the warning and the hope together.

We must not hide the judgment of God on sin, but neither must we cry out only judgment and drive people to despair. We must clearly tell them the way of salvation God has already opened.

Conclusion

The Feast of Trumpets of Leviticus 23:23–25 was a day that woke the people of Israel from their daily lives and called them together before God, and made them remember the covenant and the salvation of God and prepare for the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles that would follow.

From the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, this trumpet makes us think, above all, of the trumpet of the gospel that clearly proclaims the word of salvation. That sound proclaims that Jesus bore the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and completed salvation by rising again from death.

At the same time, the Feast of Trumpets makes us look to the last trumpet that will sound in the future. When the last trumpet sounds, the dead in Christ will rise again, and the living saints, too, will be changed and meet the Lord.

Therefore, through the word of the Feast of Trumpets, we

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must learn the faith of gathering before God and hearing His word. We must receive the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, stay awake and be united with the church, and blow the clear trumpet of the gospel to those who have not yet heard.

Leviticus 23:26–32—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The text of Leviticus 23:26–32

"And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: Also the tenth day of this seventh month shall be the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. And you shall do no work on that same day, for it is the Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before the LORD your God. For any person who is not afflicted in soul on that same day shall be cut off from his people. And any person who does any work on that same day, that person I will destroy from among his people. You shall do no manner of work; it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. It shall be to you a sabbath of solemn rest, and you shall afflict your souls; on the ninth day of the month at evening, from evening to evening, you shall celebrate your sabbath" (Leviticus 23:26–32).

This word is a word that regulates the Day of Atonement, kept on the tenth day of the seventh month. If Leviticus chapter 16 explains in detail how the high priest offers the sin offering on the Day of Atonement, Leviticus chapter 23 shows with what

heart and attitude the whole people had to take part on that day.

Four things are repeated in the text.

—This day is the day on which God grants atonement.

—The people must afflict their souls.

—They must do no work and rest.

—A grave judgment follows the one who takes this word lightly.

These four things clearly show what the gospel of the water and the Spirit is and how a person must accept that gospel.

2. *"The tenth day of this seventh month shall be the Day of Atonement"*

The Day of Atonement was the day of making atonement for all the sins of the people of Israel accumulated over a year. Leviticus 16:34 says this.

"This shall be an everlasting statute for you, to make atonement for the children of Israel, for all their sins, once a year. And he did as the LORD commanded Moses."

In ordinary times, whenever an individual realized a sin, he brought an offering without blemish, laid his hands on its head, killed it, and offered a sin offering. But a person does not remember all the sins he has committed. There are sins one commits without knowing it, and there are also cases in which one has sinned but does not realize that it is sin.

Therefore God gave the Day of Atonement, on which, once a year, atonement was made for the sins of the whole people of Israel all together. On this day, it was not that each individual offered his own offering; the high priest offered the sacrifice representing the whole people of Israel.

What is important here is the fact that the way of atonement

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was not devised by man but appointed by God. It is not that the sinner erases his sin by his own good deeds, fasting, or tears. God prepared the high priest and the sacrificial offering, had the sins passed on to the offering, and had the offering bear the price of those sins.

3. What the two goats of the Day of Atonement show

In Leviticus chapter 16, Aaron the high priest took two goats. One goat he killed and brought its blood inside the Most Holy Place, and the other goat he set alive before the people.

Aaron laid both his hands on the head of the live goat and confessed all the sins of Israel.

"Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man. The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to an uninhabited land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness" (Leviticus 16:21–22).

This word shows that sin was not merely ignored or regarded as covered over; the offering received the sin passed on to it. Through the laying on of hands by the high priest, the sins of the people were put on the head of the goat, and that goat, bearing all their iniquities, disappeared into the wilderness outside the camp.

The blood of the one goat shows that the wages of sin were paid before God, and the sight of the live goat departing into the wilderness shows the fact that the sin of the people was actually transferred from them and disappeared far away. The two goats do not speak of two different salvations; they show the two sides

of one atonement.

Sin must be passed on to the offering, and the offering that has received the sin must die shedding its blood. This is the law of atonement God established.

4. *"You shall afflict your souls"*

"Afflicting one's soul" does not stop at the meaning of simply making the body suffer. In the tradition of Israel this was connected with fasting, but it was not fasting or suffering itself that washed away sin.

While the people afflicted themselves, the actual work of atonement was carried out by the high priest with the offering. Therefore the core order of the text is as follows.

—The people acknowledge that they are beings who must be judged because of sin.

—The high priest passes the sins on to the offering, representing the people.

—The offering bears the price of sin in place of the people.

—The people accept by faith the fact that the offering has received their sins passed on to it and atonement has been made.

Therefore "afflicting one's soul" is not an act by which a person pays the price of sin with his own suffering. It is a humble heart that honestly acknowledges its own sin and inability, lays down its own righteousness, and looks to the grace of atonement God has prepared.

In the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, this order is the same. True repentance does not lie in presenting one's own resolution, saying, "I will live virtuously from now on, so please remit my sins." It is first acknowledging before the law of God that one cannot but sin all one's life and

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is a being who must be judged because of that sin.

But it must not end with looking only at one's own sin and despairing either. Just as the people of Israel looked at the goat departing into the wilderness, one must believe the fact that Jesus Christ has received all one's sins passed on to Him.

5. The baptism Jesus received from John and the laying on of hands on the Day of Atonement

On the Day of Atonement, Aaron laid his hands on the head of the goat representing Israel. In the New Testament, John the Baptist baptized Jesus representing mankind.

When Jesus received baptism from John, He said this.

"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15).

From the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the baptism Jesus received from John is connected with the laying on of hands of the Old Testament. Just as in the Old Testament the offering received the sins of the people passed on to it through the laying on of hands, Jesus bore all the sins of the world by receiving baptism from John.

John the Baptist testified of Jesus as follows.

"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).

Jesus was the Lamb of God, who had no sin at all. But by receiving baptism from John, He bore the sin of the world, and in the body in which He bore that sin, He went to the Cross. The blood of the Cross is the result of Jesus, who had received the sin of the world passed on to Him, receiving the judgment of that sin.

Therefore the baptism and the Cross of Jesus cannot be

separated from each other.

—The baptism Jesus received from John is the event in which He bore the sin of the world.

—His dying shedding His blood on the Cross is the event in which He paid the wages of the sin He had borne.

—His rising again from death is the event in which He overcame sin and death and completed salvation.

—The Holy Spirit testifies that this salvation is the righteous work of God, and dwells in the heart of the person who believes it.

This is how the type of the Day of Atonement has been fulfilled in the New Testament as the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

6. *"You shall do no work on that same day"*

The text repeats the command to do no work as many as three times. In verse 32, it calls this day in particular *"a sabbath of solemn rest."*

Literally, it is the command to stop all livelihood and labor on the Day of Atonement. But seen in terms of the gospel, there is a deeper meaning here. It is that atonement is not a work the people produce by their own labor.

The people had to stop their work and look to the atonement the high priest carried out. This shows that the sinner must stop the work of trying to become righteous by his own works, and accept by faith the salvation Jesus Christ has accomplished.

Hebrews 9:12 testifies of Jesus as follows.

"Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption."

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Also, Hebrews 10:10 and 14 say this.

"By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

"For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14).

The high priest of the Old Testament had to repeat the sacrifice every year. But Jesus bore the sin of the world once and for all with the baptism He received from John, and accomplished the eternal atonement by shedding His blood once. Therefore there is now no sacrifice that a person must add for the remission of sins.

"Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin" (Hebrews 10:18).

The rest of the gospel does not mean that one may live any way one pleases. It means that there is nothing more I must do in order to wash away sin. Good deeds, prayer, fasting, service, and devotion are not works that pay the price of salvation, but the fruit of faith that the person already saved bears with thanksgiving.

7. *"Shall be cut off," "I will destroy"*

He said that the person who does not afflict his soul shall be cut off from among the people, and that the person who does work on that day God will destroy. This means that the Day of Atonement was not a light religious event in which one might take part optionally.

Not afflicting one's soul expresses the attitude of not acknowledging the fact that one is a sinner and the necessity of atonement. Doing any work is the attitude of relying on one's own work and strength even on the day God makes atonement

through the high priest.

Only, this penal regulation of the Old Testament must not be applied as it is to people today who do not fast or do not keep a particular feast. First of all, this word is an actual ordinance given to the covenant community of Israel. In the New Testament, Christ has completed its substance.

Nevertheless, the warning of the gospel is still grave. The person who does not acknowledge his sin, rejects the atonement Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John and the Cross, and tries to become righteous by his own works is refusing the only way of atonement God has prepared. It is not that he perishes because salvation is lacking; he remains under judgment by not believing in the salvation already completed.

8. *"From evening to evening"*

Israel had to keep the rest of the Day of Atonement from the evening of the ninth day to the evening of the tenth day. This expression clearly fixed the beginning and the end of this feast.

Drawing from here a rule that the day of worship of every New Testament church or the way of counting a day must necessarily begin from the evening is not the center of the text. The emphasis lies on stopping other work during the whole time God has appointed and remaining before the grace of atonement.

Applied in terms of the gospel, the remission of sins is not an imperfect rest that one enjoys for a moment, after which one becomes a sinner again. Because the salvation Jesus accomplished is the eternal atonement, the believer must keep remaining within that perfect salvation.

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9. How *"a statute forever"* is fulfilled today

One must not think, on the basis of the words *"a statute forever,"* that even today the sacrifice of the Day of Atonement must be repeated with the blood of animals. The Day of Atonement of the Old Testament was a shadow of the eternal atonement Jesus Christ would accomplish in the future.

Hebrews 10:1 calls the sacrifices offered year by year *"a shadow of the good things to come."* The shadow testifies of the substance until the substance comes. Because Jesus, the substance, has come and completed the eternal sacrifice, we now take part in the essence of that everlasting ordinance not by the way of offering the blood of animals again, but by the way of believing in the salvation Christ has accomplished.

Therefore the Day of Atonement has not been abolished and become meaningless; it has been perfectly fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

10. The lessons for the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit

First, we must not take sin lightly. The solemnity of the Day of Atonement shows the fact that the wages of sin are surely death. God did not close His eyes to sin as if it did not exist; He had it borne on the body of Jesus and judged it on the Cross.

Second, we must not make our own repentance and suffering the price of atonement. Sin is not washed away because one has shed many tears, because one has fasted, or because one has been tormented by guilt. Such a heart may be an attitude of acknowledging sin, but the power to remove sin lies only in the baptism and the blood of Jesus.

Third, we must lay down our own righteous works. As the word says to do no work, we must stop the work we try to add in order to be saved. Fully believing in the atonement God has accomplished is the rest of the gospel.

Fourth, when we discover sin after being born again, we must not doubt the eternal atonement again. We must acknowledge what we did wrong and turn from it, and if we have caused harm, we must set it right. But it is not that each time Jesus must receive baptism from John again and be hung on the Cross again. We must believe again in the eternal atonement He has already accomplished, and walk the right way with thanksgiving.

Fifth, the rest of the gospel must lead to service. Hebrews 9:14 says that the blood of Christ cleanses the conscience so that one may serve the living God. The labor for salvation has ended, but the life of preaching the gospel, loving one's neighbors, and doing righteousness with the joy of having been saved has only now begun.

Conclusion

The center of Leviticus 23:26–32 is not human asceticism but the atonement God has prepared. The people had to acknowledge that they were beings who must die because of sin, humble themselves, and, stopping their own work, look to the atonement the high priest carried out.

All this has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Jesus bore all the sins of the world by receiving baptism from John, paid the wages of those sins with His blood on the Cross, and completed eternal salvation by rising again from death.

Therefore the true faith of the Day of Atonement today is not trying to wash away sin by afflicting oneself, but laying down

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one's own righteousness and works and believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus has accomplished. Within that faith, the sinner becomes righteous, fear turns into peace, and the conscience that toiled enters eternal rest.

Leviticus 23:33–36—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The text of Leviticus 23:33–36

"Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the children of Israel, saying: The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days to the LORD. On the first day there shall be a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work on it. For seven days you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. On the eighth day you shall have a holy convocation, and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. It is a sacred assembly, and you shall do no customary work on it" (Leviticus 23:33–36).

Leviticus 23:33–36 regulates the date and the period of the Feast of Tabernacles and the basic order of its worship. The Feast of Tabernacles is also called the Feast of Booths or the Feast of Ingathering. It was kept for seven days from the fifteenth day of the seventh month, and on the eighth day they gathered in a separate sacred assembly.

The text emphasizes four things.

—To keep the feast to the LORD

—To gather in a holy convocation on the first day and the eighth day

—To stop everyday labor and rest

—To offer an offering made by fire to the LORD for seven days

This was not a mere agricultural festival, but a feast in which the saved people remembered the grace of God, dwelt with God, and worshiped with thanksgiving and joy.

2. After the Day of Atonement comes the Feast of Tabernacles

The Feast of Tabernacles begins on the fifteenth day of the seventh month. The Day of Atonement, right before it, was on the tenth day of the seventh month. Therefore, in the order of the feasts, the Feast of Tabernacles begins five days after the Day of Atonement has passed.

This order shows an important meaning in terms of the gospel.

—First, sin is solved.

—Next come rest and thanksgiving.

—The people who have received the remission of sins rejoice before God.

—At last they enjoy the blessing of dwelling with God.

On the Day of Atonement, the high priest laid both his hands on the head of the live goat and passed on all the sins of the people of Israel, and the goat went into the wilderness bearing those sins. The people saw the sins that had bound them being passed on to the offering and disappearing. After that, the joy of the Feast of Tabernacles followed.

Therefore the joy of the Feast of Tabernacles is not a religious excitement forced out while leaving the problem of sin covered over. It is the joy that comes from the fact that sin has

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been solved in the way God appointed.

It is the same in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. For a person to enjoy true peace and joy, the sin of his heart must first be solved. Only when he believes the fact that Jesus bore the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and completed salvation by rising again from death does true rest come to his conscience.

3. *"The Feast of Tabernacles for seven days to the LORD"*

The Feast of Tabernacles was not a festival the people of Israel made arbitrarily. It was a feast kept *"to the LORD"* on the date God had appointed.

The words *"to the LORD"* show that the center of the Feast of Tabernacles lies not in the enjoyment of people or in the abundant harvest itself, but in God, who gave all those things.

Leviticus 23:39 says to keep this feast after gathering in all the fruit of the land. So the Feast of Tabernacles was also a feast of thanksgiving offered after finishing the harvest of the year. But Israel was not to look only at the harvest. They had to look to God, who had saved them from Egypt, fed and protected them in the wilderness, and made them obtain the fruit in the land of promise.

It is the same for the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The most fundamental reason we rejoice is not only that our circumstances have become better. It is that Jesus bore all our sins and gave us the eternal remission of sins, and made us the children of God.

The joy of the gospel does not depend on circumstances alone. It is not giving thanks only when one has many

possessions; it is rejoicing over the fact that God has saved me from sin and judgment and given me eternal life.

4. The reason He made them dwell in booths

Leviticus 23:42–43 explains the purpose of the Feast of Tabernacles more clearly.

"You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All who are native Israelites shall dwell in booths, that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God."

During the Feast of Tabernacles, the people of Israel made temporary dwellings with branches and stayed in them. This was to make them remember that their ancestors had lived in the wilderness without fixed houses after coming out of Egypt.

In the wilderness, the booth was a weak and imperfect dwelling. But the reason they survived was not that the booths were sturdy, but that God protected them. God led them with the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire, gave them manna and water, and dwelt among His covenant people.

Therefore the Feast of Tabernacles is the following confession.

"It is not by our own strength that we have come this far. God saved us, protected us, and led us."

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, too, must not bind his heart to the things of the earth as if he were a person who would live in this world forever. Our bodies and our lives in this world are a dwelling in which we stay for a while, like a booth. Wealth, position, and health are not eternal either. But the remission of sins and eternal life God has given, and the status of being a child of God, are eternal.

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This does not mean to neglect the present reality. It means to attend faithfully to one's home, one's occupation, and the responsibilities entrusted to one, but not to regard them as one's eternal homeland. The eternal homeland of the saints is the new heaven and the new earth, where God Himself is with them.

5. *"On the first day there shall be a holy convocation"*

On the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles there was a holy convocation. A holy convocation is a holy gathering God has set apart. The people of Israel did not each scatter and rejoice only in their own way; they gathered together and remembered the salvation and the grace of God.

This shows that the joy of the gospel must not remain only in individual experience. The people saved by God must gather together, hear the word, give thanks to God, and build up one another's faith.

Deuteronomy chapter 16 says that at the Feast of Tabernacles, not only one's children and one's male and female servants, but also the Levite, the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow are to rejoice together. The blessing received from God was not something to be enjoyed only among one's own family or those close to one. Even the marginalized and the sojourner had to be made to take part in that joy.

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, too, does not shut up the joy of salvation only within himself. He must live a life of preaching the gospel to those still pressed down under sin, embracing the weak, and sharing the grace he has received.

6. *"You shall do no customary work on it"*

God said to do no labor on the first day and the eighth day. What is emphasized here is to stop one's everyday livelihood and remember the salvation God has accomplished and the provision He has given.

When the people of Israel keep the Feast of Tabernacles after finishing the harvest, it is easy for them to boast only of their own labor and ability. But stopping labor and gathering before God was an act of confessing that all the harvest and all the results of life ultimately came from God.

Seen in terms of the gospel, this rest shows the faith that stops the work of trying to complete salvation by one's own works. A person cannot wash away his own sins by good deeds, fasting, devotion, or keeping the law. The remission of sins is the work Jesus has accomplished.

Jesus bore all our sins by receiving baptism from John, paid the price of those sins by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death. Therefore there remains no act of atonement that the believer must add for salvation.

But the rest of the gospel does not mean idleness. The labor for receiving the remission of sins has ended, but the life in which the saved person serves God and his neighbors with thanksgiving begins. Service is not the condition of salvation but the fruit of the faith of the saved.

7. *"For seven days you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD"*

"An offering made by fire" is the sacrifice in which the offering is burned and offered to the LORD. God commanded

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them to keep offering the sacrifices and the gifts He had appointed during the feast.

The joy of the Feast of Tabernacles did not end simply with eating and enjoying. The people offered an offering made by fire to God. In other words, they worshiped God, giving thanks for the salvation and the harvest God had granted.

The ultimate fulfillment of this offering made by fire can be found in Jesus Christ, who offered Himself as the perfect offering. The offerings of the Old Testament had to be offered repeatedly, but Jesus offered His own body once and accomplished the eternal atonement.

Therefore the saints of the New Testament are not saved by offering animal offerings made by fire again. They believe in the perfect sacrifice Jesus accomplished, and offer thanksgiving, praise, and their lives to God. Our material means, our time, and our service, too, are not offerings that pay the price of sin, but gifts of faith offered in thanksgiving for the salvation already received.

8. The Feast of Tabernacles and the Holy Spirit of living water

Jesus went up to Jerusalem at the Feast of Tabernacles. And on the last great day of the feast, He cried out like this.

"If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water" (John 7:37–38).

The Gospel of John directly explains the meaning of this word.

"But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive" (John 7:39).

That Jesus revealed Himself as the source of living water at the Feast of Tabernacles is very important. Just as God gave water to the people of Israel in the wilderness, the One who gives true life to the spiritually thirsty is Jesus.

Here the connection of the gospel of the water and the Spirit becomes clear. The Holy Spirit is not One who comes because a person shows religious zeal or heightens his emotions. God gives the Holy Spirit as a gift to the heart of the person who has received the remission of sins by believing the gospel that Jesus bore the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John and was judged by shedding His blood on the Cross.

The person who believes in the baptism Jesus received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His rising again from death has the sin of his heart washed away and receives the Holy Spirit. That Holy Spirit gives life to the dry spirit, makes one understand the word of God, and makes one let the gospel flow out to other souls as well.

"Rivers of living water" shows that the person who has received grace does not end with satisfying himself alone. From that person's heart the gospel and the word of life flow out and come to give life to other thirsty souls.

9. *"On the eighth day you shall have a holy convocation"*

The Feast of Tabernacles continued for seven days, but on the eighth day there was a holy convocation again. This eighth day was connected with the seven days, yet was set apart separately as *"a sacred assembly."*

The eighth day, following the seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles, was a sacred assembly on which they gathered in a

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holy convocation and offered an offering made by fire. Examining the word of the Feast of Tabernacles, the saints must enjoy the grace of the Lord on this earth and look forward to the eternal dwelling place God has prepared.

The booths of Israel were temporary dwellings. This world in which we live and our bodies are not our eternal home either. But for the saved saints there is an eternal dwelling place where God Himself is with them.

"Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them" (Revelation 21:3).

The perfect fulfillment of the Feast of Tabernacles does not lie merely in receiving many material blessings on this earth. It lies in the new heaven and the new earth, where sin and death have disappeared and God dwells with His people forever.

10. The three stages of dwelling that the Feast of Tabernacles shows

When we examine the word of the Feast of Tabernacles and the salvation of the New Testament together, the grace of God being with His people can be summed up as follows.

First, God dwelt among the people of Israel in the wilderness.

The people lived in weak booths, but God came down in the midst of the tabernacle and protected them.

Second, God dwells in the hearts of the saints born again by the Holy Spirit.

The person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit becomes the temple of the Holy Spirit. God is not One who is far away; He dwells within that person by the word and the Holy Spirit.

Third, God dwells with His people forever in the new heaven and the new earth.

At that time, temporary dwellings like booths come to an end, and the eternal kingdom of God, in which there is no death, sorrow, or pain, appears.

Therefore the Feast of Tabernacles is a feast remembering the life in the wilderness of the past, and at the same time it makes us look to the grace of the Holy Spirit dwelling in the saints at present and the hope of living with God forever in the future.

11. How the Feast of Tabernacles must be kept today

It is not that the saints of the New Testament must make booths according to the Jewish calendar and live in them for seven days in order to be saved. If one makes the form of the feast the condition of salvation, one adds the works of the law again to the gospel Christ has completed.

The substance of the Feast of Tabernacles appears in faith and life as follows.

First, we must believe in the remission of sins Jesus has accomplished and rejoice.

It is not giving thanks by force while believing that sin still remains as it is; we must believe that all sins have been solved by the baptism and the Cross of Jesus, and rejoice.

Second, we must not regard the things of the world as our eternal home.

Wealth, health, and honor are gifts from God to be thankful for, but they are not our eternal homeland. The saints live as sojourners on this earth and look to the kingdom of God.

Third, we must remember the provision of God.

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God, who fed Israel in the wilderness, looks after the lives of the saints today as well. We must trust in God even when our circumstances are lacking, and not boast of our own ability when we have plenty.

Fourth, we must share the joy of the gospel with our neighbors.

The sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow also took part in the joy of the Feast of Tabernacles. The saved person must share the grace and the material means he has received, and preach the gospel of life to the souls thirsty in sin.

Fifth, we must live following the Holy Spirit.

That rivers of living water flow out means that the Holy Spirit accomplishes the work of life through that person. The saints must become not people who live only for their own greed, but people who live for the will of God and the salvation of souls.

Conclusion

The Feast of Tabernacles of Leviticus 23:33–36 is the feast in which the saved people rest, give thanks, and rejoice before God. That joy comes after the Day of Atonement. First, sin is passed on to the offering and solved, and next the people rest before God and enjoy the Feast of Tabernacles.

In the New Testament, Jesus bore all the sins of the world with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins by shedding His blood on the Cross, and accomplished the eternal atonement by rising again from death. The person who believes this gospel receives the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit, and enters the true rest in which God is with him.

Therefore the core of what the Feast of Tabernacles conveys

to us today is this.

"We are sojourners passing through this world for a while, but in Jesus Christ we have received the remission of all our sins, the Holy Spirit dwells in us, and a homeland where we will live with God forever has been prepared."

This is the faith, the hope, and the joy that the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must enjoy, looking to the Feast of Tabernacles.

Leviticus 23:37–38—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The text of Leviticus 23:37–38

"These are the feasts of the LORD which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, to offer an offering made by fire to the LORD, a burnt offering and a grain offering, a sacrifice and drink offerings, everything on its day—besides the Sabbaths of the LORD, besides your gifts, besides all your vows, and besides all your freewill offerings which you give to the LORD" (Leviticus 23:37–38).

These two verses are the word that binds together and sums up the Sabbath and the Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Firstfruits, the Feast of Weeks, the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles explained in Leviticus chapter 23.

The core is that at every feast God appointed, the people had to gather in a holy convocation and offer the offerings belonging to that feast. And the offerings of the feasts did not take the place

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of the offerings offered on the ordinary Sabbath or of the gifts, vow offerings, and freewill offerings an individual offered.

The word *"besides"* repeated in the text means that the sacrifices do not replace one another. There had to be the public sacrifices God had appointed, and there also had to be the gifts an individual offered with thanksgiving and faith.

2. *"These are the feasts of the LORD"*

Before being festivals for people, the feasts were *"the feasts of the LORD."* The One who appointed the dates, the meaning, and the way of sacrifice of the feasts is also God.

The people of Israel could not make or change the feasts according to their circumstances or feelings. They had to come at the time God had appointed, with the offering God had appointed, in the way God had appointed.

This fact shows that man cannot appoint the way of salvation either. Not every way that seems godly and moving in the eyes of people is faith God accepts. One must follow the way God has appointed for the salvation of sinners.

In the Old Testament, the offering without blemish, the laying on of hands, and the shedding of blood were the center of the sacrifice of atonement. In the New Testament, Jesus came as the substance of that law of sacrifice.

Jesus came as the Lamb of God without blemish, bore all the sins of the world by receiving baptism from John, and received the judgment of those sins by shedding His blood on the Cross. And He completed salvation by rising again from death.

Therefore the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a way of salvation people made up, but the way of salvation God showed beforehand through the law of sacrifice of the Old

Testament and fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

3. *"You shall proclaim to be holy convocations"*

"To proclaim" means to declare the feast to the people and make it known. The people of Israel had to know the time God had appointed and gather together in a holy convocation.

A holy convocation is a gathering set apart as holy. It was not that each person offered sacrifices at home in his own way; they gathered together at the place God had appointed, heard the word, and offered the sacrifices.

The gospel, too, must not remain only as hidden individual knowledge. The word that Jesus removed the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross must be proclaimed to all people.

The purpose of the church gathering together does not lie only in religious socializing either. It must be a holy gathering for hearing the word of God, confirming the salvation already accomplished, and preaching the gospel to those who have not yet received the remission of sins.

The reason a holy convocation is holy is not that the conduct of those gathered is perfect, but that God has called them and the word of God and the gospel of salvation are at the center of that gathering.

4. *"A burnt offering and a grain offering, a sacrifice and drink offerings"*

Verse 37 speaks together of the burnt offering, the grain offering, the sacrifice, and the drink offerings offered at the

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feasts. God had each offering offered on the day He had appointed.

—The burnt offering: the burnt offering is the sacrifice in which the offering is burned and offered to God. In that the whole offering is offered to God, it expresses complete devotion and acceptance.

But the burnt offering does not mean that a person is saved by first sacrificing himself. A human being who has sin cannot pay the price of sin by offering himself to God. An offering without blemish must first take the place of the sinner.

Jesus obeyed the will of the Father completely and offered His own body. Through the complete obedience and sacrifice of Jesus, the believer has come to be able to be accepted by God.

Therefore the saints' offering themselves to God is not a condition for being saved, but the devotion of thanksgiving offered by people already accepted in Jesus.

—The grain offering: the grain offering is the sacrifice in which grain or fine flour, oil, frankincense, and the like are offered. It was a bloodless sacrifice, and it was usually offered together with other sacrifices.

The grain offering has the meaning of returning with thanksgiving to God the food and the life received from Him. In terms of the gospel, it shows the life in which the person who has received the remission of sins serves God and the gospel with his body, his time, his material means, and his toil.

Here there is an important order. It is not that service like the grain offering first saves a person. The person saved by believing in the atonement Jesus accomplished serves God with thanksgiving.

If a person presents his own service, his offerings, and his good deeds as the price of the remission of sins, that overturns the order of the gospel. Because God first loved us and saved us,

we offer ourselves with thanksgiving.

—The sacrifice: *"A sacrifice"* in the text refers to the sacrifice in which an animal is killed and offered. Because the wages of sin are death, the offering that had borne sin had to die and shed its blood.

The countless sacrificial offerings of the Old Testament pointed to Jesus Christ, who was to come. But the blood of animals could not remove forever the sins of all the people of the world. So the sacrifice had to be repeated continually.

Jesus bore the sin of the world on His one body by receiving baptism from John, and paid the wages of that sin on the Cross. Therefore the death on the Cross is not the accidental death of One who had not borne sin. It is that Jesus received on the Cross, by shedding His blood, the judgment of the sin of the world He had borne with the baptism He received from John.

Hebrews 10:10 declares that completion as follows.

"By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

—The drink offering: the drink offering is the sacrifice in which wine or intoxicating drink is poured out before God. Looking at Numbers chapter 28, the drink offering was offered together with the burnt offering and the grain offering. Therefore the drink offering, too, is not a sacrifice that washes away sin independently, but a part of the worship offered wholly to God.

Seen in terms of the gospel, the drink offering makes one think of the devotion of pouring out one's life and one's living to God without reserve. But this devotion, too, does not complete or supplement the atonement of Jesus.

Jesus first gave up His life for us. Because the saints believe in that love and salvation, they use their lives for God and the gospel.

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5. *"To offer an offering made by fire"*

"An offering made by fire" refers to the way in which the offering is burned in fire and offered to God. In the text it speaks of the sacrifice in which the burnt offering, the grain offering, and part of the sacrificial offering are offered with the fire of the altar.

The fire shows the gravity of the offering being offered completely to God and passing through judgment. The offering that had borne sin had to receive the judgment of fire and death.

This is connected with the fact that Jesus received the judgment of sin on the Cross after bearing the sin of the world. Jesus took on our sins with the baptism He received from John, and bore the curse and the judgment of those sins on the Cross.

Therefore the sacrifice of salvation God gladly accepts is not human religious zeal, but the perfect sacrifice Jesus Christ accomplished. The sweet-smelling offering we must rely on when we come to God is not our own good deeds, but the righteousness of God completed with the baptism and the blood of Jesus.

6. *"Everything on its day"*

God appointed that at each feast, the offering suited to the meaning of that feast be offered. The Passover, the Feast of Firstfruits, the Feast of Weeks, the Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles made them remember different events of salvation and different graces.

The words *"everything on its day"* mean that there was the order and the time of God in the sacrifices. The people could not fix a convenient day and offer all of them together on that day

instead, or choose only the sacrifices they liked.

In the fulfillment of salvation, too, there is the order of God.

—Jesus came clothed in the flesh of a man.

—He bore all the sins of the world by receiving baptism from John.

—Bearing those sins, He died shedding His blood on the Cross.

—By rising again from death, He overcame sin and death.

—The Holy Spirit testifies that all this salvation is true.

One must not take only one of these and cast away the others. The Cross of Jesus is important, but to know why Jesus, who had no sin, had to die on the Cross, one must believe together in the baptism Jesus received from John.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is the gospel that believes in the baptism of Jesus, His blood, and the testimony of the Holy Spirit as one perfect salvation, without dividing them.

7. *"Besides the Sabbaths of the LORD"*

Verse 38 says that the offerings of the feasts had to be offered separately from the sacrifices of the Sabbath kept every week.

Numbers 28:10, too, says this concerning the offering of the Sabbath.

"This is the burnt offering for every Sabbath, besides the regular burnt offering with its drink offering."

In the sacrifices of Israel there was the regular burnt offering offered every day, there was the sacrifice offered every Sabbath, and there was the sacrifice offered at each feast. No one of them automatically took the place of another.

This word shows the fact that the relationship with God cannot be replaced by a one-time event. It was not that, just

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because they had offered many sacrifices at a great feast, the life of remembering God in ordinary times became unnecessary.

The saints of the New Testament, too, cannot replace the whole life of faith with one special meeting or one great act of devotion. The salvation of Jesus was completed once and for all, but the life of remembering that gospel and walking with God must continue.

Only, this does not mean that one must receive a new atonement every day. The atonement has already been completed.

"Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin" (Hebrews 10:18).

The saints do not repeat becoming sinners each time and being saved again; they keep believing in the eternal atonement already accomplished and live within that grace.

8. *"Besides your gifts"*

The gifts refer to the various offerings the people brought to God. The public offerings offered obligatorily at the feasts and the gifts an individual offered were distinguished.

This shows that both the worship of the community and the faith of the individual are important. It is not that individual faith and thanksgiving arise automatically just because one has taken part in the worship the community offers. Conversely, it is not that one may take lightly the worship of the community God has established just because one prays and devotes oneself individually.

Today, too, the public worship of the church and individual prayer, meditation on the word, and devotion do not compete with or replace one another. All are the response of faith to the

grace received from God.

9. *"Besides all your vows"*

A vow offering is an offering a person offers according to his promise after vowing to God that he would offer something. At first he promised voluntarily, but once he had vowed, he had to fulfill that promise faithfully.

The person who believes in the gospel must not make vows as if making a transaction with God.

One must not try to exchange one's devotion for the blessing of God in the manner of "If You accomplish this for me, I will offer this." God is not One who gives salvation because He is short of people's offerings.

If we have promised something to God, it must be not a condition for buying salvation, but a promise offered in thanksgiving for the grace already received. Also, rather than making a rash vow emotionally, one must make it carefully, with faith and responsibility.

10. *"Besides all your freewill offerings"*

A freewill offering is an offering offered voluntarily from the heart, not because one was forced to. It is offered with a glad heart out of thanksgiving for the grace received from God.

But it was not that one might disregard the way God had appointed just because one offered voluntarily. A willing heart and obedience to the word had to be together.

The devotion of the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is like this too. It is not offered out of

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compulsion and fear, but out of thanksgiving for the love received from Jesus. Serving the gospel, sharing material means, giving time, and looking after other souls are not acts that pay the price of salvation.

Because one has first received love and salvation from God, one offers voluntarily.

11. The public command and the willing faith

In verses 37–38, two kinds of offerings appear together.

One is the public offerings that had to be offered at every feast without fail. The other is the individual's gifts, vow offerings, and freewill offerings.

These two are in harmony within the grace of God. While God gave the people a fixed order of worship, He also accepted the thanksgiving and the devotion that came voluntarily from their hearts.

True faith is neither a faith that has only the outward command and no heart, nor a faith that says only the heart matters and disregards the word and the order of God. It is believing the word of God and obeying with a willing heart out of thanksgiving for that grace.

12. The sacrifices of the Old Testament and the spiritual sacrifices of the New Testament

All the sacrifices of the Old Testament pointed to the perfect salvation Jesus would accomplish. Because Jesus has completed their substance, the saints now do not kill animals and offer them for the remission of sins.

Instead, 1 Peter 2:5 says this to the saved.

"You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

A very important expression here is *"through Jesus Christ."* It is not that God accepts our prayer, service, and devotion because they are perfect in themselves. Because they are offered within the righteousness and the salvation of Jesus Christ, God gladly accepts them.

Romans 12:1 also says.

"Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service."

The whole life after salvation becomes a living sacrifice offered to God. But this living sacrifice is not a sacrifice of atonement for making us holy. It is the life offered with thanksgiving by the person who has already obtained holiness through Jesus.

The order must not be reversed.

—Jesus accomplished the eternal atonement with the baptism He received from John and the Cross.

—We received the remission of sins and received the Holy Spirit by believing that gospel.

—After receiving the remission of sins, we offer ourselves to God with thanksgiving.

—Led by the Holy Spirit, we serve the gospel and our neighbors.

13. The lessons for us today

First, the center of all worship must be Jesus Christ.

Rather than events or forms, the salvation Jesus

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accomplished with the baptism He received from John and the Cross must be proclaimed.

Second, we must not try to buy the remission of sins with offerings and service.

Our devotion can add nothing to the eternal atonement of Jesus.

Third, we must not let public worship and individual devotion take the place of each other.

We must neither neglect individual faith and life on the ground that we attend worship, nor take lightly the gatherings of the church and the work of the gospel on the ground that we believe individually.

Fourth, when we offer to God, there must be thanksgiving and a willing heart.

We must offer not with a heart that wants to be seen by people or to obtain a reward, but because of the love the Lord first granted.

Fifth, the saved person must offer himself to the work of the gospel.

Using time, material means, and talents to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to those still under sin is a precious spiritual sacrifice offered to God.

Conclusion

Leviticus 23:37–38 shows that in the sacrifices offered to God there must be both public order and individual thanksgiving. The sacrifices of the feasts, the sacrifices of the Sabbath, the gifts, the vow offerings, and the freewill offerings did not take the place of one another. Each had the meaning and the place God had appointed.

But all these sacrifices met their substance in Jesus Christ. Jesus bore all the sins of the world by receiving baptism from John, accomplished the eternal atonement by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death.

Therefore the saints no longer offer sacrifices in order to wash away sin. The person who has already received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit offers his body, his heart, his time, and his material means to God with thanksgiving.

If the sacrifices of the Old Testament were "sacrifices offered looking forward to salvation," the spiritual sacrifices of the saints of the New Testament are "sacrifices offered in thanksgiving for the salvation already completed." This is the center we must hold on to when understanding Leviticus 23:37–38 from the perspective of believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Leviticus 23:39–44—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The text of Leviticus 23:39–44

"Also on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruit of the land, you shall keep the feast of the LORD for seven days; on the first day there shall be a sabbath-rest, and on the eighth day a sabbath-rest. And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of beautiful trees, branches of palm trees, the boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the LORD

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your God for seven days. You shall keep it as a feast to the LORD for seven days in the year. It shall be a statute forever in your generations. You shall celebrate it in the seventh month. You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All who are native Israelites shall dwell in booths, that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God. So Moses declared to the children of Israel the feasts of the LORD" (Leviticus 23:39–44).

This word explains the meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles broadly in three ways.

—Thanksgiving for having gathered in the fruit of the year

—The remembrance of the history of being saved from Egypt and receiving the protection of God in the wilderness

—The rest enjoyed before God and the joy of the community

Seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the Feast of Tabernacles shows the present joy enjoyed by the person who has received the remission of sins in Jesus Christ, and the hope of the new heaven and the new earth, where he will dwell with God forever in the future.

2. *"When you have gathered in the fruit of the land"*

The Feast of Tabernacles was a feast kept after finishing the farming of the year and gathering in and storing the grain, the grapes, and the various kinds of produce. So in Exodus, the Feast of Tabernacles is also called *"the Feast of Ingathering."*

Looking at the abundant produce, the people of Israel were not to boast only of their own toil. It was they who sowed the seed, plowed the field, and harvested, but the One who sent the rain, gave the sunlight, and made life grow was God.

The Feast of Tabernacles was a feast that made the people confess like this.

"We toiled, but the One who gave the harvest is God. That we have lived until now is also the grace of God."

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, too, must not think of what he has obtained only as the result of his own ability. He must acknowledge that the One who gave life and health, the strength to work, family and church, the opportunity to hear the gospel, and faith is God.

But the greatest fruit of which the Feast of Tabernacles speaks does not lie only in material abundance. That the souls that have received the remission of sins through the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross enter the kingdom of God is the spiritual harvest God delights in.

The saints who give thanks for the fruit of the land God has given also long for the fruit of souls hearing the gospel of the water and the Spirit and returning to God. They are not satisfied only with their own material produce, but preach the gospel and serve souls.

3. The Feast of Tabernacles, which begins after the Day of Atonement

The Feast of Tabernacles begins on the fifteenth day of the seventh month. The tenth day of the seventh month, five days before that, was the Day of Atonement.

On the Day of Atonement, the high priest, representing Israel, laid both his hands on the head of the live goat and passed on all the sins of the people. The goat that had received the sins passed on to it was sent away into the wilderness, and the people saw their sins departing far away.

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After that, the joy of the Feast of Tabernacles began. This order of the feasts is very important in terms of the gospel.

There can be no true rest before sin is solved. One can rejoice only outwardly while sin remains in the heart and one fears the judgment of God, but that does not become deep joy.

When one believes the fact that Jesus bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John, paid the wages of those sins on the Cross, and accomplished eternal salvation by rising again from death, the sin of the conscience is washed away. Only then can one enjoy true rest and joy before God.

The joy of the Feast of Tabernacles is not a joy for forgetting sin, but a joy enjoyed because sin has been solved.

4. *"On the first day there shall be a sabbath-rest, and on the eighth day a sabbath-rest"*

The Feast of Tabernacles continued for seven days, and on the first day and the eighth day they stopped labor and rested. The eighth day was a closing day connected with the seven days of the feast, yet set apart as a separate holy convocation.

The rest of the first day shows the fact that the feast begins not with human toil but with the grace of God. The rest of the eighth day is the rest that concludes the whole course of the feast before God.

The rest of the gospel, too, begins not with human works but with the salvation God has accomplished. While a person tries to wash away his sins with good deeds, prayer, and fasting, his conscience cannot rest. It is because he must keep checking whether he has repented enough and whether he has lived rightly enough.

But the gospel of the water and the Spirit proclaims that Jesus

has completed the work of salvation. Because Jesus bore sin with the baptism He received from John and paid its price in full on the Cross, the believer can stop the work of setting up his own works as the ground of salvation.

God commanded them to rest on the first day and the eighth day of the Feast of Tabernacles. Through the word of the Feast of Tabernacles, the saints must enjoy rest within the salvation of the Lord, and look to the eternal kingdom God will give, beyond the temporary life of this earth.

5. The fruit of trees and the various branches

In verse 40 are recorded the things to be taken at the Feast of Tabernacles.

—The fruit of beautiful trees

—Branches of palm trees

—The boughs of leafy trees

—Willows of the brook

God commanded them to take the fruit of beautiful trees, branches of palm trees, the boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook, and rejoice before Him.

The people of Israel took the fruit and the branches obtained in the land of promise and rejoiced before God for seven days. Also, dwelling in booths, they remembered the grace of God, who had brought their ancestors out of Egypt and looked after them in the wilderness.

But they were not to forget the grace of the wilderness just because they had settled in the abundant land of Canaan. Even in the midst of abundance, God made them remember the life in booths of the past.

This is a very important lesson for faith. It is easy for people

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to seek God when they are in difficulty and then forget the grace of God when their circumstances improve. The Feast of Tabernacles made them dwell in temporary booths at the very time they had gathered in an abundant harvest.

At the time of greatest plenty, He made them remember the time when they were weakest.

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, too, must not forget—the more his life of faith becomes stable and the more blessings he receives—the fact that he was originally a person under sin and judgment, and the grace that he was saved only by the baptism and the blood of Jesus.

6. *"You shall rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days"*

God did not only tell the people of Israel simply to observe the regulations of the feast; He commanded, *"You shall rejoice."*

But this joy is not a command to produce a feeling by force. There was a clear ground for rejoicing.

—God had saved them from slavery in Egypt.

—He had fed and protected them in the wilderness.

—He had led them into the land of promise.

—He had let them gather in the fruit of the year.

—He had washed away their sins through the sacrifice of the Day of Atonement.

Therefore the joy of the Feast of Tabernacles comes from the faith that remembers what God has done.

Even a born-again person cannot always rejoice if he looks only at the circumstances of the flesh. There can be disease and poverty, conflicts in relationships, and failures. But the fact that Jesus bore all the sins of the world and made me a child of God

does not change.

The joy of the gospel is not denying suffering. It is the faith that looks to the eternal salvation received from God even in the midst of suffering. One can grieve when sad and groan when in difficulty, but at the bottom there is the joy of faith that God has saved me and does not forsake me.

7. The joy enjoyed before God

The text does not simply say *"you shall rejoice"*; it says to rejoice *"before the LORD your God."*

The pleasures of the world sometimes make people forget God, but the joy of the Feast of Tabernacles makes them remember God all the more. At the center of all the joy of eating, drinking, and singing is God.

The true joy of the gospel, too, is different from the joy of satisfying one's own desires. It is rejoicing over the fact that God has washed away my sins, given me the Holy Spirit, and made me live together with the people of God.

Also, this joy was not limited to the individual alone. Deuteronomy 16:14 says this.

"And you shall rejoice in your feast, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant and the Levite, the stranger and the fatherless and the widow, who are within your gates."

Not only the master of the household was to rejoice; the children and the servants, the Levite and the sojourner, the fatherless and the widow, too, had to rejoice together. The grace received from God was not the possession of the powerful and the rich alone.

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the

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Spirit, too, does not shut up the blessing he has received within himself. He must look after the marginalized, share his material means, and preach the gospel to those still bound by sin and fear. The more the joy of the gospel is shared, the more it flows to other souls as life.

8. The Feast of Tabernacles and the living water Jesus gives

Jesus went up to Jerusalem at the Feast of Tabernacles, and on the last great day of the feast, He cried out like this.

"If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water" (John 7:37–38).

The Gospel of John explains what this living water is.

"But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive" (John 7:39).

The Feast of Tabernacles is the feast that remembers the grace by which God fed Israel in the wilderness and gave them drink. Yet in the midst of that feast, Jesus proclaimed that He is the One who gives eternal living water.

In the gospel of the water and the Spirit, this living water does not mean simply an emotional fullness or a mysterious experience. The Holy Spirit, who is holy, cannot dwell in a heart that has sin. The problem of sin must be solved first.

Jesus bore the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and completed salvation by rising again from death. God gives the Holy Spirit to the person who has received the remission of sins by believing this gospel.

The Holy Spirit works within the saved person as follows.

—He makes him believe in the salvation Jesus has accomplished.

—He makes him understand the word of God.

—He makes him discern sin and wrong and turn from them.

—He makes him rely on God in the midst of difficulty.

—He makes him preach the gospel and the word of life to other souls.

The promise of living water proclaimed at the Feast of Tabernacles shows that the life of dwelling with God in Jesus Christ begins by the Holy Spirit.

9. *"You shall dwell in booths for seven days"*

Whoever was born in Israel had to dwell in booths for seven days. Even a person who ordinarily lived in a good house dwelt in a temporary booth during this period.

A booth is not a permanent building. It is weak against wind and rain and does not last long. God made the people of Israel leave the sturdiness of their own houses for a while and experience the inconvenience and the frailty of the booth.

This teaches that the safety of man does not depend only on buildings and property. What kept the people of Israel in the wilderness was not the sturdiness of the booths but the protection of God.

The body of the saints and their life in this world are also like a booth. 2 Corinthians 5:1 says.

"For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

Our bodies grow old, become sick, and finally collapse. The houses, the property, and the positions we have are not eternal

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either. But for the person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, there is an eternal house God has prepared.

Therefore the saints must not live in this world irresponsibly, but neither must they hold on to this world as if it were their eternal homeland. While living faithfully the life entrusted to them, their hearts must be turned toward the kingdom of God.

10. The reason all the Israelites dwelt in booths

Verse 42 says, *"All who are native Israelites shall dwell in booths."* It did not distinguish between the rich and the poor, or between the person of high position and the person of low position.

Inside the booths, all were the same people of salvation. No one could boast of his own large house or his many possessions. Their common identity was that they were the people God had saved from Egypt.

It is the same within the church. Before God, worldly property, education, office, and social position do not decide the worth of a person. All people were sinners, and all are saved by the same grace through the baptism and the blood of Jesus.

The person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel cannot boast of his fleshly conditions. It is because salvation was not obtained because someone's works were more excellent. All are people who have received the grace of God.

11. *"When I brought them out of the land of Egypt"*

The most important purpose of the Feast of Tabernacles was

to let the descendants know the salvation of the Exodus. God did not make them remember only the fact that their ancestors had suffered hardship.

The center to be remembered is the salvation of God: "I brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt."

It was not that Israel escaped from Egypt by its own strength. They escaped the judgment under the blood of the Passover lamb, and God parted the Red Sea and made them cross over. In the wilderness, too, God led the way and provided food and drink.

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, too, must remember his salvation repeatedly.

"It is not that I overcame sin by myself; Jesus bore my sins. It is not that I became righteous by making my works perfect; I received the remission of sins through the baptism and the Cross of Jesus."

When this memory grows dim, a person comes to rely on his own works again or to have his heart captivated by the things of the world. Conversely, when he remembers the gospel clearly, he can give thanks even in the midst of difficulty and not be proud even when he has plenty.

12. *"I am the LORD your God"*

The end of verse 43 is the declaration *"I am the LORD your God."* The center of the Feast of Tabernacles is not the booths or the branches, but God Himself.

God saved Israel, protected them in the wilderness, and led them into the land of promise. Therefore Israel was a people belonging to God.

In the New Testament, God dwells by the Holy Spirit in the person who has received the remission of sins through the

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baptism and the Cross of Jesus. The Holy Spirit is the guarantee that the saved person will receive the eternal kingdom in the future.

"Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee" (2 Corinthians 5:5).

We still live in the tent of a weak body, but the fact that the Holy Spirit is in us is the guarantee that God will not forsake us and will lead us to the eternal dwelling place.

13. *"That your generations may know"*

The Feast of Tabernacles was not to end as the individual experience of one generation. Parents had to explain to their children why they stayed in booths.

"Our ancestors were slaves of Egypt, but God saved them. In the wilderness they had neither house nor land, but God fed and protected them."

Faith, too, must not be handed down to the next generation as a mere religious form. Rather than only telling one's children to attend worship, one must teach them how God has saved sinners.

One must clearly preach why Jesus received baptism from John, why He died shedding His blood on the Cross, how He rose again from death, and why the person who believes this gospel has no sin and the Holy Spirit dwells in him.

There was the form of building booths, but if the memory of salvation to which that form points is lost, the purpose of the feast also disappears. Today, however many the traditions and events of the church may be, if the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not clearly preached within them, the next generation

cannot know the substance of salvation.

14. The New Testament meaning of *"a statute forever"*

God called the Feast of Tabernacles a statute forever, to be kept throughout their generations. This was an ordinance the covenant community of Israel had to keep remembering.

But it does not mean that the saints of the New Testament must build actual booths in the seventh month of the Jewish calendar every year and live in them for seven days in order to be saved. The feast was a shadow of Christ, who was to come, and of the salvation He would accomplish.

The Day of Atonement has been fulfilled in the eternal remission of sins Jesus accomplished, and the Feast of Tabernacles shows the rest and the joy that the person who has received the remission of sins enjoys while dwelling with God, and the eternal kingdom of God he will enter in the future.

The form was a shadow, but its essence is eternal.

—God saves sinners.

—He dwells with the saved people.

—He dwells in us at present by the Holy Spirit.

—In the end, He is with His people forever in the new heaven and the new earth.

Revelation 21:3 shows the ultimate fulfillment to which the Feast of Tabernacles looked.

"Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them"

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15. *"So Moses declared to the children of Israel the feasts of the LORD"*

The end of Leviticus chapter 23 closes with the word that Moses declared the feasts of the LORD to the children of Israel.

The salvation of God was not to remain a secret known only to a few people. The whole people had to hear it, remember it, and pass it on to their children.

The gospel is the same. The news that Jesus washed away the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John and the Cross must be clearly proclaimed. To the person suffering because of sin, one must not only say to repent of sin more; one must tell him how God passed that sin on to Jesus and judged it.

Just as Moses declared the feasts, the church must declare the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the world. This is the most precious fruit of thanksgiving the saved people can offer to God.

16. The Feast-of-Tabernacles life of the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Today the faith of the Feast of Tabernacles appears in the following life.

First, we remember the grace of salvation.

We do not forget the fact that Jesus bore all my sins with the baptism He received from John and paid their price on the Cross.

Second, we are all the more humble when we have plenty.

Like Israel, who dwelt in booths after finishing the harvest, the more our circumstances improve, the more we acknowledge that everything has come from God.

Third, we do not make the world our eternal home.

We use the things of this earth responsibly, but we do not bind our hearts to wealth and honor, and we look to the homeland God has prepared.

Fourth, we rejoice before God.

We rejoice not only in our feelings or our circumstances, but in the unchanging, eternal remission of sins.

Fifth, we share the blessing we have received.

We look after the poor and the marginalized, and preach the gospel, which is like living water, to those thirsty in sin.

Sixth, we are led by the Holy Spirit.

We do not pursue only our own greed, but live for the work God delights in and the work of giving life to other souls.

Seventh, we hope for the eternal tabernacle of God.

We believe that the present suffering is not everything, and that there is the new heaven and the new earth, where God Himself is with His people.

Conclusion

The Feast of Tabernacles of Leviticus 23:39–44 shows the past, the present, and the future together.

In the past, God saved Israel from Egypt and protected them in the midst of the life in booths in the wilderness. At present, we believe in the salvation by which Jesus washed away our sins with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross, and God dwells by the Holy Spirit in those who believe. In the future, God will dwell with His people forever in the new heaven and the new earth.

The booth is a weak and temporary house, but God, who is present in its midst, is eternal. Our bodies and our life in the world also pass away after a short while, but the remission of

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sins and the eternal life received through the gospel of the water and the Spirit do not disappear.

Therefore the central confession of the Feast of Tabernacles is this.

"I am a sojourner staying in this world for a while, but in Jesus Christ I have received the remission of sins, the Holy Spirit dwells in me, and God leads me to the eternal homeland. Therefore I give thanks and rejoice before God." ✉

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

The remission of sins and the true rest given by the Passover Lamb

< Leviticus 23:1-8 >

"And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: The feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are My feasts. Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work on it; it is the Sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings. These are the feasts of the LORD, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at their appointed times. On the fourteenth day of the first month at twilight is the LORD's Passover. And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD; seven days you must eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it. But you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD for seven days. The seventh day shall be a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it."

There are times when a person stops working and rests, yet cannot rest in his heart. Even if his body is in a comfortable place, if unsolved sin presses down on his heart, he cannot enjoy peace. It is because he does not know what has become of his sins

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before God. Together with the rest of the body, we need the rest of a heart saved from sin.

Leviticus chapter 23 speaks of the feasts God appointed for the people of Israel. In today's passage come the Sabbath, the Passover, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. God let the people know when to stop working, made them remember the grace of salvation, and made them gather together according to the word He had appointed. Through this word we must examine the salvation God has granted, and receive the remission of sins and true rest by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus Christ has accomplished.

They are the feasts at which God calls His own people

God said to Moses: *"Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: The feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are My feasts" (Leviticus 23:2).*

The passage calls these feasts the feasts of the LORD. They were not days the people appointed by themselves and made known to God, but days God appointed and had the people proclaim and keep. At the center of the feasts was God, who had given those days. Therefore, before the people knew what they were to do on that day, they had to know whose word they were gathering by.

A holy convocation is a holy gathering, set apart before God. God did not leave the people to live bound each only to his own work. He made them gather together and follow His word. In verse 4, too, He says to proclaim the feasts at their appointed times and make them holy convocations. The appointed time is made known, and the people gather according to that word.

The salvation God had granted was a grace the people had to

remember together. He made them live without forgetting where the life and the freedom given to them had come from, knowing that they were a people belonging to God. In our gathering to hear the word, too, there must be this faith. We gather in order to know the Lord, who has saved us, and to receive into our hearts what He has done.

The Sabbath is the day of enjoying the rest the LORD has given

Before explaining the feasts that return every year, verse 3 speaks of the Sabbath: *"Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work on it; it is the Sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings."*

God said to work six days and rest on the seventh day. This command is not a word that does away with labor. He distinguished the day to work and the day to stop working. Also, this Sabbath was not an ordinance given only to those who lived in one particular place. It was the Sabbath of the LORD, to be kept in all the places where the people dwelt.

On the Sabbath, not working and gathering in a holy convocation are spoken of together. It was not simply a day of resting because there was nothing to do, but a day of accepting the rest God had given. Instead of continually pushing on with their own work, the people had to stop that work and keep holy the day God had given.

Think of this rest within the salvation Jesus has accomplished. The sinner struggles to remove his sin by his own strength, but by effort alone he cannot end the judgment of sin. Even if he tries harder today to make up for what he did wrong

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yesterday, the sin he has already committed does not disappear by itself. Clinging to one's own works like this, one cannot obtain the true rest of the heart.

Jesus came to deliver us from this burden of sin. By receiving baptism from John, He bore our sins; He received the judgment of those sins on the Cross; and He rose again from death and gave us new life and rest. The spiritual rest we enjoy comes from believing in the salvation the Lord has accomplished. It is getting free from the fear that we ourselves must deal with our own sins, and relying on the Lord, who has solved those sins.

Therefore one cannot say that one has obtained the remission of sins merely by the fact of having rested one day on the calendar. The One who gives us rest from sin is Jesus Christ. Reading the word about the Sabbath, we must know the Lord, who sacrificed Himself in order to give us that rest.

The Passover makes us remember the salvation of escaping the plague of death through the blood of the lamb

Verse 5 speaks of the time of the Passover: *"On the fourteenth day of the first month at twilight is the LORD's Passover."*

The Passover is connected with the salvation God granted when the people of Israel came out of Egypt. Looking at Exodus chapter 12, before the plague in which He would strike the firstborn of Egypt, God had the people prepare a lamb. He had them kill that lamb, put its blood on the two doorposts and the lintel of the house, and that night roast the meat in fire and eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.

That blood was the sign of the promise God had given. He

also said: *"Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt" (Exodus 12:13).*

God said that when He saw the blood, He would pass over. He did not speak of how large and fine that house was, or what position the people inside it held in the world. The people had to believe the word God had given and be under that blood. The death of the lamb and the promise God had given became for them the sign of salvation that preserved their lives.

What Israel had to remember when keeping the Passover every year was not the boast that they had escaped from Egypt by themselves. It was the grace that God had delivered them in the midst of judgment. Apart from the sacrifice of the lamb, the salvation of that day could not be explained.

We, too, cannot put forward our own righteousness when we speak of having been saved from sin and judgment. At the center of salvation is Jesus, who sacrificed Himself in our place. We have come to live not because our sins were light, but because the Lord bore the cost of those sins for us.

Our Passover Lamb is Jesus Christ

The Apostle Paul speaks of the sacrifice of the Passover in connection with Jesus Christ: *"Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us" (1 Corinthians 5:7).*

Jesus is our Passover Lamb. The sinless Son of God came to this earth in the body of a man and became the sacrificial offering in our place. Then how did Jesus enter into a

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relationship with us, who are sinners? It is not that He only spoke the word that He loves us and stayed far away. He bore our sins on His own body.

What lets us know this fact is the baptism Jesus received from John. In the law of sacrifice of the Old Testament, there was the passing on of sins by laying hands on the head of the sacrificial offering. Jesus came to the Jordan River and received baptism from John in order to fulfill the plan of God the Father. When John tried to prevent this, the Lord said: *"But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him" (Matthew 3:15).*

Jesus was not baptized in order to wash away His own sins. The sinless One received baptism from John in order to receive the sin of mankind passed on to Him. When John, the representative of mankind, baptized Jesus, the sin of the world passed on to Jesus. Just as the sacrificial offering received sins passed on to it in the Old Testament, Jesus bore all our sins.

The next day, John testified of Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Jesus is not One who was sacrificed without knowing the sin of the world. He is the Lamb who went bearing that sin. In that sin of the world, the sins of each one of us are included. Not only the sins others know of but also the sins only oneself knows of, not only the sins of the past but also all the sins one will commit in one's whole life—the Lord bore them.

Therefore, when we believe in the blood of the Passover in connection with the Cross of Jesus, we must know together the baptism Jesus received from John. It is because we must know what sin the Lord bore as He went to the Cross, and how He bore that sin. Jesus, who had received our sins passed on to Him, went to receive the judgment for those sins.

The remission of sins accomplished with the baptism and the Cross gives us rest

After receiving baptism from John and bearing the sin of the world, Jesus was hung on the Cross, shed His blood, and died. Because the wages of sin are death, He received that judgment in our place. The blood Jesus shed is the blood of vicarious atonement, by which He paid the price for our sins.

The fact that sin passed on to Jesus and the fact that Jesus received the judgment of that sin must be believed together. He bore sin with His baptism, and He paid the price of that sin on the Cross. Leaving out either one, our salvation cannot be explained completely. The Lord neither only received sin passed on to Him and left the judgment to us, nor died on the Cross without any relation to our sins.

After dying on the Cross, Jesus rose again from death. He solved our sins and became the living Savior who gives new life. God came in the body of a man, received baptism from John, died shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death, and so saved us. This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit that we believe.

The person who believes in this salvation has no need to prepare another sacrifice for his own sins. Nor does he need to struggle to complete the sacrifice of the Lord by adding his own suffering. He receives the remission of sins by believing in his heart what Jesus has accomplished for us. Because the ground of salvation lies not in the zeal of my heart or a change in my conduct but in what the Lord has done, we can enjoy rest within that word.

True rest is not the attitude of covering over one's own wrongs as if they had never happened. It is acknowledging one's own sin, yet believing in Jesus, who bore that sin, and in the

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Cross, on which He received that judgment in our place. It is not that the heart is at ease because it thinks lightly of sin; it is relying on Him because it knows the price of salvation the Lord paid.

Even when our hearts waver, the ground of salvation does not change. It is not that the salvation Jesus accomplished becomes smaller than yesterday just because today we have seen our own shortcomings. Set in your heart again the word that the Lord bore my sins with the baptism He received from John and received that judgment on the Cross. By that faith we come to God and obtain true rest.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread makes us think of the life of the saved people

Following the Passover, God spoke of the Feast of Unleavened Bread: *"And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD; seven days you must eat unleavened bread" (Leviticus 23:6).*

The Passover is on the evening of the fourteenth day of the first month, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread begins on the fifteenth, the next day. For seven days the people had to eat unleavened bread, that is, bread made without putting in leaven. At the feast that commemorated the salvation God had given, He appointed by His word even the food to be eaten.

On the night of the Exodus, too, the people ate the meat of the lamb with unleavened bread. Also, in Joshua chapter 5, it is recorded that Israel, having entered the land of Canaan, kept the Passover and ate unleavened bread and parched grain from the produce of that land. Even in a new place, the saved people had to remember what God had done and live according to His word.

The Apostle Paul, saying that Christ has become our Passover Lamb, urged that the old leaven be cast out. He goes on to say to cast away the leaven of malice and wickedness and keep the feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. It is that in the life of the person who believes in the sacrifice of Christ, there must be a direction fitting for the salvation he has received.

Even after receiving the remission of sins, we must not persist in our own wrongs or justify an evil heart. To think that, since we have been saved, it is all right to live with any kind of heart is not an attitude that values the grace the Lord has given. If the One who accomplished the remission of sins is Jesus, then now our hearts, too, must be turned toward His will.

We must also examine the heart that tries to exalt itself while serving God. It is easy to inflate how much I have toiled and how much I have given, and put forward my own righteousness. But we are people who serve because the Lord first loved us and saved us. Rejoicing over the fact that we have received the remission of sins, and serving so that others, too, may obtain that salvation, is fitting for our faith. Do not bring your own boasting into the place where you have received salvation.

Holy convocations and sacrifices filled the seven days of the feast

Verse 7 says to gather in a holy convocation on the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread and do no customary work. Verse 8 says to offer an offering made by fire to the LORD for seven days, and on the seventh day, too, to gather in a holy convocation and do no customary work. He set apart the first day and the last day as holy convocations, and had them offer

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sacrifices to God for the seven days, including the days in between.

Therefore the Feast of Unleavened Bread cannot be understood only as a dietary regulation of eating bread without leaven. Gathering in a holy convocation, stopping labor, and offering sacrifices to God were there together. The salvation God had given was related even to the people's gathering, their eating, and their working hours.

Reading this word, we learn the faith that relies on the sacrifice Jesus has accomplished. Because the Lord gave His body for us, we can come to God. It is not the number of times we have attended meetings or the amount of gifts we have offered that removes our sins. It is that those who believe in the Lord, who accomplished the remission of sins, gather together, rejoice in that grace, and serve God.

The word of God becomes the food of the people gathered like this. We are not people who no longer need to hear the word just because we have already received the remission of sins. Hearing the word, we come to know more clearly the salvation the Lord has given, lay down our own thoughts, and learn the faith that relies on God. In hearing the word, praying together, and praising the Lord, we enjoy the grace He has given.

On the Sabbath, think of the rest the Lord has given; at the Passover, look to the Lamb who was sacrificed in our place; and at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, think of the way to live as the saved people. Before all these words, what we need is faith that believes in the salvation the Lord has accomplished. Jesus saved us with the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His rising again from death. Let us receive the remission of sins by believing in that gospel of the water and the Spirit, and live within the true rest the Lord has given. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

The people who offer the firstfruits and the grace of the remission of sins

< Leviticus 23:9-14 >

"And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest. He shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted on your behalf; on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it. And you shall offer on that day, when you wave the sheaf, a male lamb of the first year, without blemish, as a burnt offering to the LORD. Its grain offering shall be two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil, an offering made by fire to the LORD, for a sweet aroma; and its drink offering shall be of wine, one-fourth of a hin. You shall eat neither bread nor parched grain nor fresh grain until the same day that you have brought an offering to your God; it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings."

For the person who reaps grain, the first harvest is a joyful thing. It is because the days of sowing seed and waiting have passed and food to eat has come. Now he can make bread with that grain, parch it and eat it, and share the joy with his family.

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Yet God told the people of Israel what they had to do before eating the new grain. It was to bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of the grain to the priest and offer it before God.

In today's passage, the joy of reaping grain and the sacrifice offered to God appear together. The people reap grain in the land God has given, and the priest waves and offers the firstfruits on behalf of the people. On that day, the burnt offering of a male lamb without blemish, the grain offering, and the drink offering also had to be offered together. God taught the people not only about obtaining the harvest, but even about coming before God with that harvest.

Through this word, we must know the grace of God, who makes us live, and learn the way to be accepted before God. In particular, examining the word about the burnt offering offered together, we must receive into our hearts how Jesus has remitted our sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

It is the firstfruits reaped in the land God gives

God spoke to the children of Israel through Moses: *"Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest" (Leviticus 23:10).*

This command is an ordinance the people had to keep when they entered the land God was giving them and reaped its grain. Speaking beforehand of a harvest they had not yet enjoyed, God made clear who it is that gives that land. The people would enter the land, farm, and reap grain, but the basis of that livelihood was what God was giving.

It does not mean that there was no toil of the people. The

passage, too, says "when you reap its harvest." They actually had to farm and reap the grain. But they were not to forget even the grace received from God just because they had reaped with their own hands. Before God, who gave the land, they had to look at their own toil and its fruit.

God said to bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of that grain. It was not a matter of eating all that had been harvested and then deciding after checking whether anything was left. From the very beginning of the harvest, what was to be offered to God had to be set apart. When food came, He made them remember God first.

We, too, easily forget the Giver while looking at what we have received. When life is busy and there is much to do, we come to grasp only the results before our eyes. But the person who has received the remission of sins must see his life within the grace God has granted. He must think about where it has come from—that today I am alive, hear the word of God, and have come to be able to serve the Lord. In our lives there is the love of God that we first received and enjoyed.

The priest waved and offered the sheaf on behalf of the people

After the firstfruits were brought, there was something the priest had to do: *"He shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted on your behalf; on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it" (Leviticus 23:11).*

The people brought the firstfruits to the priest, and the priest waved that sheaf before the LORD. This way of waving and offering is called the wave offering. God appointed not only the gift to be offered but also the person, the way, and the time of

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offering that gift. The priest had to wave that sheaf on the day after the Sabbath, not choosing another day as he pleased.

The word we are to examine here is that the priest does that work on behalf of the people. The priest was not a person who stood there to boast only of his own personal harvest. According to the office God had entrusted to him, he offered the gift before God on behalf of the people. The people kept this ordinance through the service of the priest God had established.

Also, He said to wave the sheaf so that it would be accepted. To be accepted means that God gladly receives it. It was not that everything was finished by the mere fact of having brought a gift. It had to be offered as He had said, so that God would receive it. The zeal of the one who offers and the faith that follows the will of God, who receives, must not be separated from each other.

Before this word, we too must examine the faith by which we come to God. Instead of deciding what I want and only asking God to receive it, we must know the way God has opened to us. In a sinner's coming before the holy God lies the problem of sin. Therefore, before the thought of what and how much to offer, we must know how God has solved our sins for us.

On the day the firstfruits were offered, a male lamb without blemish was offered as a burnt offering

Look at verse 12: *"And you shall offer on that day, when you wave the sheaf, a male lamb of the first year, without blemish, as a burnt offering to the LORD."*

The sacrifice of that day did not end with waving a sheaf of the firstfruits. God said to offer on the same day a male lamb of the first year, without blemish, as a burnt offering. The gift of

grain and the burnt offering of an animal appear together in the passage, but they are not the same gift. Offering the male lamb could not be omitted just because the firstfruits had been brought. God spoke of each gift and of offering it.

Here the male lamb had to be without blemish. This was the condition the sacrificial offering offered before God had to meet. It is not that the people coming to God claim that they have no sin; they offer the offering without blemish that God has appointed. We must keep this difference in mind. The hope of the sinner to be saved lies not in his becoming a person without blemish, but in the Savior without blemish whom God has given.

To know what kind of sacrifice the burnt offering is, we must also examine the word of Leviticus chapter 1. God said to lay hands on the head of the burnt offering. He also said: *"Then he shall put his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him" (Leviticus 1:4).*

The person who had sinned laid his hands on the sacrificial offering and passed his sins on to it, and that offering was killed and shed its blood. The priest offered that blood and burned the offering, offering it to God as a burnt offering. Here there were the transfer of sin and the judgment for that sin. The person who had sin did not come to God as if nothing had happened; he came through the sacrifice in his place.

Leviticus chapter 23 does not spell out again all the procedure of this burnt offering. But when we read the word to offer a male lamb without blemish as a burnt offering, we must not forget the meaning of the burnt offering God had already made known. Even in the midst of the joy of the harvest, the people offered a sacrificial offering to God. We, too, while rejoicing in the blessings we have received, must know the sacrifice of the Lord, who has made us come to God.

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Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John

The Savior without blemish for us is Jesus Christ. Jesus, as the Son of God, who has no sin, came to this earth clothed in the body of a man. It is not that God found a person among us who had no sin at all and set him up as savior. God Himself came to be our Savior.

A sinner can grieve for another sinner and help him. But a person who cannot even solve the judgment of his own sins cannot remove all the sins of another. The One who bears our sins and saves us is the sinless Jesus Christ. God accomplished, through His Son, the salvation we could not prepare.

Jesus came to the Jordan River and received baptism from John. When John tried to prevent Jesus, the Lord said: *"But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him" (Matthew 3:15).*

The baptism Jesus received from John was the work of fulfilling the righteousness of God, which saves mankind from sin. Just as the offering received sins passed on to it by the laying on of hands in the Old Testament, Jesus received the sin of the world passed on to Him by receiving baptism from John, the representative of mankind. The sinless One bore our sins on His own body in order to become the sacrificial offering in place of sinners.

Therefore we must know together the fact that Jesus is without blemish and the fact that He bore our sins. It was not because of His own sins that Jesus was judged. Because He had received the sins that were on us passed on to Him, He was judged in our place. This is also why John testified of Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Do not set your sins apart from this sin of the world. It is not that Jesus bore only the sins of others and left your sins behind. He bore our revealed sins and our hidden sins, the sins committed in the past, the sins of the present, and even the sins we will commit throughout our lives. The Lord knew even the sins we cannot fully remember, and He received all those sins passed on to Him with the baptism He received from John.

He accomplished salvation with the baptism He received from John, the judgment of the Cross, and His rising again from death

If Jesus bore our sins, there also had to be the judgment for those sins. It is not that God left sin as it was and said that we have no sin. Jesus received baptism from John and bore our sins, and by being hung on the Cross, shedding His blood, and dying, He paid the price of those sins. The Lord received in our place the judgment we had to receive.

The blood of Jesus shed on the Cross is not the blood of a death unrelated to us, who are sinners. It is the blood of vicarious atonement, by which the One who bore our sins gave up His life in our place. Just as the offering of the Old Testament received sins passed on to it by the laying on of hands and died, Jesus bore the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John and received the judgment of that sin on the Cross. Only when we believe in the baptism and the blood of the Cross together can we know clearly how we have received the remission of our sins.

Jesus did not remain in death, but rose again from death. The Lord, who came in the body of a man to save us, solved the problem of sin with His baptism and the Cross and rose again from death. We believe in this Savior, who is alive even now.

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This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which makes us, who are sinners, righteous.

When we believe this gospel, we receive the remission of sins the Lord has accomplished. It is not that some experience that makes the heart burn removes sin, nor does one become righteous by piling up more toil than others. One receives the remission of sins by the faith that believes in the salvation God has given. The Apostle Paul says this: *"But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness" (Romans 4:5).*

This word tells us that one cannot put forward one's own works before God as the price of the remission of sins. The work of accomplishing salvation was done by the Lord. We believe the fact that the Lord has removed our sins with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross. In the heart of the person who believes this, the Holy Spirit dwells and makes him enjoy the life God has given.

The person who wants to receive the remission of sins must not endlessly calculate what qualification he has, but must look at what salvation the Lord has accomplished. The ground on which God accepts us lies in the sins Jesus, who is without blemish, bore for us and the judgment He underwent. When we receive that salvation into our hearts, we get out of the place where we only feared God and avoided Him, and come forward as His children.

The grain offering and the drink offering, too, were offered together according to the word of God

Verse 13 speaks in detail of the gifts to be offered together

with the burnt offering: *"Its grain offering shall be two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil, an offering made by fire to the LORD, for a sweet aroma; and its drink offering shall be of wine, one-fourth of a hin."*

The grain offering offered together with the sheaf of the firstfruits was fine flour mixed with oil. Its quantity was fixed at two-tenths of an ephah. For the drink offering, He had them use one-fourth of a hin of wine. The ephah is a unit expressing the quantity of grain, and the hin a unit expressing the quantity of liquid. God spoke concretely not only of what to offer but also of how much to offer.

We must read the sheaf of grain brought earlier and the fine flour mixed with oil spoken of here as distinct. There was the waving and offering of the firstfruits, and there was the offering of the grain offering and the drink offering together with the burnt offering. The worship God commanded was not a matter of the people picking out and offering only a part as they pleased. Each gift He had spoken of had to be prepared and offered according to His will.

In Exodus chapter 29, too, when they offered the burnt offering of a lamb morning and evening, He had them offer the grain offering and the drink offering together. Speaking of that sacrifice, God promised that He would meet the people. Offering the sacrificial offering and coming to God were connected like this.

When we look at the word about the grain offering in the light of our faith, we come to think of the life of serving God with the joy of having received the remission of sins. We are not people who produce the salvation of Jesus by our own service. Because we have first been saved, we offer our bodies and hearts and serve the Lord. The toil we offer cannot bear our sins in our place, but it can be used to help others hear the gospel of the

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remission of sins.

It is giving the time needed for the work of preaching the gospel, taking on work that needs hands, and preaching that word to those who do not yet know the word of salvation. We can use in this way the life God has entrusted to us. When the person who believes in the salvation Jesus accomplished for us serves so that others, too, may know that salvation, a clear purpose arises in our daily lives as well.

He had them bring a gift to God before eating the new grain

Finally, let us look at verse 14: *"You shall eat neither bread nor parched grain nor fresh grain until the same day that you have brought an offering to your God; it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings."*

God did not say never to eat the new grain. He had them wait until the day they brought the gift. Whether it was made into bread, parched, or left as fresh grain, that order could not be skipped by changing the form in which it was eaten. He had the harvest that would come to the people's table first be accepted before God.

This ordinance had to be kept in all the places where the people dwelt, throughout their generations. It was not that the duty of all generations was finished by the firstfruits having been offered once. The next generation, too, had to follow this word when reaping grain. Remembering the land God had given and His command when food came had to continue within the life of the people.

We, too, must not leave the grace received from God as a story detached from life. The remission of sins is not a subject

spoken of only during the hour of worship. It is the grace that tells us to whom we belong and on what we rely for our living. Because we believe in the Lord, who saved us through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we value His word in our daily lives as well.

The people who kept the ordinance of the firstfruits came before God, who had given them food, bringing a gift. We come to God believing in Jesus Christ, who gave His body for us. The Lord bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John, received that judgment by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death and saved us. Receive this grace of the remission of sins into your heart. And I hope that you will live the life God has given you in the joy of that salvation and serve the gospel of the water and the Spirit. ✉

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Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

God, who has given the Holy Spirit as a gift to the people who have received the remission of sins

< Leviticus 23:15-21 >

"And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be completed. Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the LORD. You shall bring from your dwellings two wave loaves of two-tenths of an ephah. They shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven. They are the firstfruits to the LORD. And you shall offer with the bread seven lambs of the first year, without blemish, one young bull, and two rams. They shall be as a burnt offering to the LORD, with their grain offering and their drink offerings, an offering made by fire for a sweet aroma to the LORD. Then you shall sacrifice one kid of the goats as a sin offering, and two male lambs of the first year as a sacrifice of a peace offering. The priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits as a wave offering before the LORD, with the two lambs. They shall be holy to the LORD for the priest. And you shall proclaim on the same day that

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it is a holy convocation to you. You shall do no customary work on it. It shall be a statute forever in all your dwellings throughout your generations."

After having the people of Israel offer the firstfruits of the grain, God had them count the days from that day and gather before Him again. When fifty days had come, they had to offer a new grain offering, and offer two loaves and several sacrificial offerings together. In the midst of the joy of the people reaping the harvest were the gift offered to God, the sacrifice that makes atonement for sin, and the sacrifice of reconciliation.

When we read today's word, we must not pass by remembering only the dates and the names of the offerings. We must know what kind of people God gathers, and how those people are reconciled to God. God did not leave us in sin, but accomplished the remission of sins through Jesus Christ. Also, He gave the Holy Spirit as a gift to those who believe in that salvation, and made them live as the people of God. Let us examine this grace within the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

He had them count fifty days and offer a new grain offering

Verse 15 clearly speaks of the time to begin counting the days: *"And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be completed."*

The people had to count the days from the day they brought the sheaf of the firstfruits as a wave offering. It was not that each decided for himself after looking at which day was convenient.

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From the starting point God had made known, they had to complete seven Sabbaths and count to the day after that. He also said: *"Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the LORD" (Leviticus 23:16).*

Adding the next day to the forty-nine days of seven weeks makes fifty days. God said to offer a new grain offering on that day. The offering of the firstfruits earlier and the new grain offering now to be offered are connected like this. The people offered the beginning of the harvest before God, and even after time had passed, they had to offer a gift again according to His word.

What the people were to bring at this time was bread baked from fine flour. The form of the gift was different from the time they brought the sheaf of the firstfruits. The grain becomes bread and is offered before God. God had the people make the food they reaped and enjoyed into a gift offered to Him.

Through such ordinances, the people lived remembering what they had received from God. They were not to live a life of seeking God only when a joyful thing first happened and then soon forgetting Him. Waiting for the day God had appointed and preparing the gift for that day, they had to keep in their hearts that they were a people belonging to God.

They waved and offered two loaves baked with leaven

Verse 17 speaks of how to prepare the new grain offering: *"You shall bring from your dwellings two wave loaves of two-tenths of an ephah. They shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven. They are the firstfruits to the LORD."*

The people had to make two loaves of fine flour in their own dwellings and bring them. The quantity of flour, too, was fixed at two-tenths of an ephah. Here He said specifically to bake them with leaven put in. It is preparing loaves with leaven as God commanded, and waving and offering them.

A person who has been reading Leviticus may recall the earlier ordinance of the grain offering at this part. In Leviticus chapter 2, He said that leaven or honey must not be burned as an offering made by fire to the LORD. Yet here He said to offer loaves with leaven put in. We must examine closely what He commands in each passage.

Leviticus 2:12 distinguishes between offering the firstfruits to God and putting something on the altar for a sweet aroma. As for the two loaves of today's passage, too, He did not say to burn them in fire, but to wave and offer them. And in verse 20 He says to give them to the priest. Not every gift offered to God was handled in exactly the same way.

Therefore these loaves must be understood according to the way of offering and the use appointed in the passage. One cannot think, from the word that He permitted loaves with leaven, that God tolerates sin as it is. It is because in the word that immediately follows there is the sin offering for the sins of the people. That He speaks of a gift He accepts does not make the need for the remission of sins disappear.

Our faith, too, grows from listening closely to the word of God. Rather than judging all other words by one familiar verse, we must see what God is saying in that place. The command of God came before the thoughts of the one offering. The people of Israel had to prepare the loaves and offer them according to that command.

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Together with the new grain offering, they offered the burnt offering, the sin offering, and the peace offering

In verse 18 come the burnt offerings to be offered with the bread. They are seven lambs of the first year, without blemish, one young bull, and two rams. He had these offerings offered to the LORD together with the grain offering and the drink offering as a burnt offering. And in verse 19 He spoke of other sacrifices: *"Then you shall sacrifice one kid of the goats as a sin offering, and two male lambs of the first year as a sacrifice of a peace offering."*

We must read these offerings as distinct. The two rams of verse 18 are included in the burnt offering, and the two male lambs of the first year of verse 19 are the sacrifice of the peace offering. The one kid of the goats is offered as a sin offering. It was not a sacrifice in which several animals were gathered together and offered without any distinction. God appointed each offering and the purpose of each sacrifice.

Think about the fact that He had the sin offering offered as well at the feast of offering the new grain offering. Together with thanksgiving for the harvest, the people needed the problem of sin to be resolved. It is not that a person's sins disappear by themselves just because he has received good things from God. Even if food is abundant and there are joyful things in life, in the relationship with the holy God the remission of sins is needed.

It is the same with the peace offering. One cannot enjoy true reconciliation while leaving as it is the sin that blocks the way between God and man. In the ordinance of the peace offering in Leviticus chapter 3, there is the laying on of hands on the head of the offering and the killing of that offering, and the priest sprinkles its blood all around on the altar. In reconciliation there

was a sacrifice in one's place.

Through these several sacrifices, we learn how God deals with sin. God did not only tell the person who had sin to pay the price of sin by himself and then come. He gave a sacrificial offering to take his place and made him come to God through that sacrifice. In the New Testament, the One who accomplished this salvation is Jesus Christ.

We have received the remission of our sins through the baptism and the Cross of Jesus

The sacrificial offering without blemish that God has given for us is Jesus Christ. Jesus, as the Son of God, who has no sin, came to this earth clothed in the body of a man. He came to save us, who had become far from God because of sin, and to reconcile us to God.

In the Old Testament, the person who had sinned laid his hands on the head of the sacrificial offering and passed his sins on to it. The offering that had received the sins passed on to it was killed, and its blood was offered before God. In this way, the passing on of sin to the offering and the judgment for that sin were there together. The work by which Jesus saved us is not detached from this promise either.

Jesus came to the Jordan River and received baptism from John. When John tried to prevent this, Jesus said: *"But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him" (Matthew 3:15).*

The baptism Jesus received from John was a baptism for bearing the sin of mankind. Just as sin passed on to the sacrificial offering by the laying on of hands in the Old Testament, Jesus

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received the sin of the world passed on to Him by receiving baptism from John, the representative of mankind. He fulfilled the righteous will God had appointed in order to save sinners.

In that sin of the world are the sins of each one of us. It is not only the sins committed in the past that are in it. The Lord bore even the sins of the present and the sins we will commit throughout our lives. Both the wrongs revealed to others and the sins hidden in one's own heart, Jesus received passed on to Him with the baptism He received from John. The sins the Lord took on in order to save us are all our sins.

Jesus was hung on the Cross bearing those sins. Because the price of sin is death, He received the judgment for sin by shedding His blood and dying in our place. The blood of the Cross is the blood of vicarious atonement, by which Jesus, who bore our sins, paid the price of those sins. We must believe together His receiving sin passed on to Him with His baptism and His receiving the judgment on the Cross.

After dying, Jesus rose again from death. He who was baptized for us and died shedding His blood on the Cross overcame death and rose again, and became our Savior. God came in the body of a man, bore our sins, received that judgment, and rose again from death, and so saved us. This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit that we believe.

We receive the remission of sins by believing this gospel. The ground on which we are reconciled to God lies in this salvation Jesus accomplished. It is not that sin disappears by the mere fact that one earnestly desires it in one's heart; one must know and believe how the Lord has remitted our sins. The person who has received that word comes to God relying on the Lord, who bore his sins in his place.

He gives the Holy Spirit as a gift to the person who has obtained the remission of sins

In Acts chapter 2 of the New Testament, it is recorded that the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples when they were gathered together on the Day of Pentecost. The disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit, and Peter testified of Jesus Christ to the people. He preached that God had raised Jesus from death and made Him both Lord and Christ—the One whom the people had crucified and who had borne the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John.

When those who heard that word and were cut to the heart asked what they should do, Peter answered like this: *"Then Peter said to them, Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).*

In this word we must see the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit together. God gives the Holy Spirit to the person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the holy God. He dwells in the heart of the person who believes in the washing away of sins Jesus has accomplished.

Here we must distinguish between the baptism a person receives in the name of Jesus Christ and the baptism Jesus received from John. The baptism Jesus received from John is the work of salvation in which He bore the sin of the world. The baptism the believer receives is the confession that he believes in that salvation the Lord has accomplished. It is not that we remove our sins by ourselves through the act of going into the water and coming out. It is believing the fact that Jesus washed away our sins with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross.

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Repentance, too, must go forward from turning away from what one wrongly believed to accepting the salvation the Lord has accomplished. If a person only repeats that sin torments him and does not believe in the Lord's washing away of sins, his heart cannot get free from that sin. One must acknowledge sin and turn one's heart to Jesus, who has already borne that sin. One must believe that the salvation the Lord has accomplished is my salvation.

The word that we receive the Holy Spirit as a gift is a great comfort to us. The Holy Spirit is not One we receive as wages for our toil. Because Jesus accomplished the remission of sins, the Holy Spirit is the gift God gives to the person who believes in that salvation. Do not think that the Holy Spirit is present only when some special sensation arises. The ground of the faith that receives the Holy Spirit lies in the remission of sins the Lord has accomplished and in the promise of God.

The grace by which Jesus saved us has given us a new belonging and a new life. We who have received the remission of sins are the children of God and people in whom the Holy Spirit dwells. The Lord has set us in the place of those who have received the remission of sins, and made us live as people who believe the word of God and testify of that gospel.

The holy things offered to God were given to the persons He appointed

Let us return to the passage in Leviticus and look at verse 20: *"The priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits as a wave offering before the LORD, with the two lambs. They shall be holy to the LORD for the priest."*

The priest waved the bread of the firstfruits and the two

lambs before the LORD and offered them. Here the two lambs are the sacrifice of the peace offering that appears in the preceding verse. God called these the holy things and had them given to the priest. From the preparation of the gift to the way of offering it and its use afterward, God appointed everything.

The holy things are what has been offered to the LORD and set apart. Even bread made by human hands, once it had been offered as God appointed, could not be handled carelessly. Nor did He leave it to each person's greed to decide who would receive it. God gave that portion to the priest who served Him.

This word shows that offering to God is connected with the service He has established. The gifts the people brought were related to the office of the priest. Worship before God and the work of serving it were not separated from each other.

We, too, after receiving the remission of sins and receiving the Holy Spirit, must value the work God has entrusted to us. Having been entrusted with the gospel is not something to boast of as having become higher than others. It is having received the responsibility to preach the salvation the Lord has accomplished to those who do not yet know the remission of sins. Through the person who has first received grace, He lets others, too, hear that grace.

The people who have received the Holy Spirit hear the word together and testify of the gospel

Verse 21 says to proclaim a holy convocation on that day and do no customary work. This ordinance had to be kept in all the places where the people dwelt, throughout their generations. God did not let them only offer their gifts and scatter each to his own work. He called the people to a holy gathering, and made

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them stop the work they were doing and stand before Him.

In Acts chapter 2, too, those who accepted the gospel began the life of faith together. They devoted themselves to receiving the apostles' doctrine, having fellowship with one another, breaking bread, and praying. In the life of the people who had received the Holy Spirit, there were learning the word of God, having fellowship with those who had received the same salvation, and praying to God.

If the Holy Spirit dwells in us, we come to value what the Lord has done. We cannot preach the gospel leaving out Jesus' receiving baptism from John and His shedding His blood on the Cross. It is because by that salvation I have received the remission of sins and become a child of God. It is preaching the word that gave us life, so that others, too, may hear and believe.

In the place where we gather together, too, this gospel must be clear. More important than the fact that we have gathered for a long time is what salvation we believe together. Among us there must be the faith that believes in the baptism of Jesus, who bore sin, in the blood of the Cross, on which He received that judgment, and in the Lord, who rose again from death. Through the work of testifying of this salvation, the Holy Spirit makes us preach the word of life to people.

God gave Jesus Christ as the sacrificial offering for us, who are sinners. Jesus received baptism from John and bore all our sins, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose again from death and saved us. Receive the remission of sins by believing in this gospel of the water and the Spirit. Believe the promise of God, who gives the Holy Spirit as a gift to the person who has received the remission of sins. And I hope that you will live testifying of this gospel of life together with the people of God, who have received the same grace. ✉

God, who has given the Holy Spirit as a gift
to the people who have received the remission of sins

Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

Believe in the eternal atonement accomplished with the baptism and the Cross

< Leviticus 23:23-32 >

"Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the children of Israel, saying: In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall have a sabbath-rest, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work on it; and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: Also the tenth day of this seventh month shall be the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. And you shall do no work on that same day, for it is the Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before the LORD your God. For any person who is not afflicted in soul on that same day shall be cut off from his people. And any person who does any work on that same day, that person I will destroy from among his people. You shall do no manner of work; it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. It shall be to you a sabbath of solemn rest, and you shall afflict your souls; on the ninth day of the month at evening, from evening to evening, you shall celebrate your sabbath."

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God set apart two days of the seventh month and spoke of them to the people of Israel. The first day of the seventh month is the day of blowing the trumpets as a memorial and gathering in a holy convocation, and the tenth day of the seventh month is the day of making atonement for the people. The people had to stop their work and gather before God, and on the Day of Atonement in particular, they received the command to afflict their souls.

On the Day of Atonement, two things were there together: humbling one's heart while thinking of one's own sins, and accepting the atonement God had appointed. There had to be a heart that acknowledged sin, and one also had to believe in the grace of God, who remits that sin. Only when we see these two together can we rightly understand the meaning of today's word.

We, too, are people who cannot hide our sins before God. But God did not leave us to be tormented forever because of sin. He remitted our sins with the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross, and made us come to God by believing in that salvation. Through today's passage, let us examine the atonement the Lord has accomplished and the faith that receives that grace.

It is the day of blowing the trumpets as a memorial and gathering before God

God spoke to the children of Israel through Moses: *"Speak to the children of Israel, saying: In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall have a sabbath-rest, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation" (Leviticus 23:24).*

On the first day of the seventh month, they had to blow the trumpets as a memorial and gather in a holy convocation. In

verse 25, He said to do no labor and to offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. On this day, blowing the trumpets and gathering in holiness, stopping labor and offering sacrifices to God were there together.

Hearing the sound of the trumpets, the people welcomed the day God had set apart. It was not a day that could pass while they simply went on with their own work as usual. God did not leave either the time for working or the time for gathering to the judgment of the people; He appointed and made known the day to gather before Him.

The people lived each in a different dwelling, but they belonged to one God. They had to follow together the word of God, who had called them to a holy convocation. We, too, when we hear the word of God, must not regard it only as a story that others need, but must accept it as the word that I must hear and believe.

The Day of Atonement is the day of remitting sins for the people

From verse 26, the command concerning the tenth day of the seventh month follows: *"Also the tenth day of this seventh month shall be the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire to the LORD" (Leviticus 23:27).*

The people who had blown the trumpets as a memorial on the first day of the seventh month had to keep the Day of Atonement on the tenth day of the same month. Each of the two days was a day God had appointed. On the tenth day in particular there was the sacrifice that made atonement for the sins of the people, and the people had to afflict their souls and do no work.

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God also spoke of the reason: *"And you shall do no work on that same day, for it is the Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before the LORD your God" (Leviticus 23:28).*

It means that it is the day of making atonement for you. God appointed this day in order to cleanse the people who had sin. When we think of the Day of Atonement, we must not look only at the affliction of the people. On that day there was the atonement carried out for the people. It was not a day on which the people gathered after having solved all their sins themselves, but a day on which they received the remission of sins through the sacrifice God had appointed.

How that sacrifice was carried out is spoken of in detail in Leviticus chapter 16. Aaron the high priest first made atonement for himself and his household, and then offered the sin offering for the people. For the sins of the people, he entered the Most Holy Place with the blood of the goat and sprinkled it on and before the mercy seat. He also laid both his hands on the head of the live goat, confessed all the iniquities of the children of Israel and all the sins they had committed, and put those sins on the head of the goat. That goat was sent away into the wilderness bearing the iniquities of the people.

It was not a matter of each person of the people remembering all his own sins and dealing with them one by one. The high priest God had established offered the sacrifice for all their sins on behalf of the people. God spoke of the grace of this day like this: *"For on that day the priest shall make atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the LORD" (Leviticus 16:30).*

This is the promise given on the Day of Atonement. It was not because the people had no sin that He said they were clean. Because there was the atonement for those sins, they were made clean. We, too, need this grace of salvation. Rather than the

person who claims that his sins are small, the person who knows the fact that he needs atonement can rightly accept the salvation God has given.

Before the word to afflict our souls, we must acknowledge our own sins

God said to afflict one's soul on the Day of Atonement. In this word is the meaning of acknowledging one's own sins before God and humbling one's heart. The people had to think of the sins they had committed and the judgment they had to receive for those sins. They had to keep in their hearts the fact that what the sacrificial offering bore in their place was none other than their own sins.

When a person's wrong is revealed, it is easy to look first for a reason. He says it was because his circumstances were hard, or because someone else did wrong first. While explaining this way, he also justifies the sin he committed. But when I stand before God, my sin is the sin I committed. Speaking of the wrongs of others does not make my sin disappear.

The heart the people had to have on the Day of Atonement was the acknowledgment that they were people who had to receive the judgment of sin. They had to know the fact that I have sinned against God, that I am the one who must die, and that God has given an offering to take my place. Only then is the remission of sins through the sacrificial offering accepted as grace for oneself.

Nevertheless, the affliction of the people did not take the place of the sacrificial offering of atonement. Nor was it that sin disappeared little by little according to how deeply they had afflicted themselves. Sin passed on to the sacrificial offering,

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and there was the judgment for that sin. Humbling themselves, the people had to believe in that atonement God had given.

We, too, when we realize our sin, must not stop at regret. If we regret yet do not try to know how Jesus bore that sin, our hearts keep looking only at our own sin. The person who has acknowledged his sin must now look to Jesus, who received that sin passed on to Him. We must receive into our hearts both the fact that I have sinned and the fact that the Lord has borne that sin.

Jesus bore the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John

On the Day of Atonement of the Old Testament, Aaron the high priest laid his hands on the goat on behalf of the people of Israel. Through that laying on of hands, the sins of the people passed on to the goat. In the New Testament, God sent John the Baptist and had him do the work of passing the sin of the world on to Jesus Christ. John was born a descendant of Aaron, and he baptized Jesus on behalf of mankind.

Jesus, as the Son of God, who has no sin, came in the body of a man to save us. It is not that He entrusted to us the work of continually bringing and offering the animals of the Old Testament; the Lord Himself came to be the sacrificial offering for us. Jesus came to the Jordan River and sought to receive baptism from John. When John tried to prevent this, He said this: *"But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him" (Matthew 3:15).*

The baptism Jesus received from John was the work of fulfilling all righteousness. In order to accomplish the salvation

God had promised in the Old Testament, Jesus received the sin of mankind passed on to Him. Just as the high priest passed the sins of the people on to the offering, John baptized Jesus and passed the sin of the world on to Him. Jesus became the Lamb of God who bears that sin.

The Day of Atonement of the Old Testament was kept every year for the sins of the people of Israel of one year. But the sins Jesus bore when He received baptism from John are all the sins of the world. They are not sins committed only in one particular year, nor are they limited to the sins of one nation. The Lord bore all the sin of mankind.

The sins each of us commits throughout our whole lives are also included in that sin of the world. The sins committed long ago and the sins of today, even the sins we will commit as we go on living—Jesus bore them. The Lord knows not only the sins we remember but also the sins we have forgotten. Even a sin hidden before people is exposed before God. The Lord knew all those sins and received them passed on to Him with the baptism He received from John.

Only when we believe this fact can we know how we have received the remission of our own sins. If, while hearing that Jesus loves me, I still think that my sins must be dealt with by myself, I must look again at what the sins are that the Lord bore with His baptism. Within the sin of the world that the Lord received passed on to Him are none other than all my sins.

He received the judgment on the Cross and accomplished the eternal atonement

After receiving baptism from John and bearing our sins, Jesus went to the Cross bearing those sins. The One who bore

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sin also received the judgment of that sin. His being nailed to the Cross and dying shedding His blood was His paying in our place the price of sin we had to pay. The Lord suffered in our place death, the price of sin.

Therefore, when we believe in the Cross of Jesus, we must also believe together in the baptism He received from John. Because He received our sins passed on to Him with His baptism, He received the judgment of our sins on the Cross. He is not One who died without any relation to our sins, but the Savior who bore all our sins and died in our place.

After dying, Jesus rose again from death. God, who came in the body of a man, bore our sins and received the judgment, and then rose again from death and became our living Savior. We receive the remission of sins by believing in this gospel of the water and the Spirit. Our salvation depends on what the Lord accomplished with His baptism, the Cross, and His rising again from death.

Hebrews speaks of the atonement of Jesus Christ like this: *"Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption" (Hebrews 9:12).*

Jesus accomplished the eternal atonement with His own blood. The sacrifices offered every year in the Old Testament showed the salvation Jesus would accomplish in the future. Jesus fulfilled that promise with His own body, bore the sin of the world, and accomplished the eternal atonement with one sacrifice.

This does not mean that our remission of sins ends after a year. The atonement the Lord has accomplished is eternal. Nor is it that we must prepare another sacrifice to remove sin. By believing in the sins the Lord bore and the judgment He received, we come to stand before God as people who have received the

remission of sins.

The truer the heart that afflicts itself, the more we must value the atonement of the Lord. It is because I have come to know how heavy the sins were that I was bearing. It was not I who took off those heavy sins; Jesus removed them with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross. Therefore, in the heart of the person who acknowledges his sins, there must also be thanksgiving toward the salvation of the Lord.

See the command to do no work and the grace of atonement together

God said repeatedly to do no work on the Day of Atonement. In verse 28, He said that the reason is that it is the day of making atonement for the people, and in verse 31, too, He repeated the command to do no manner of work. The people had to stop their own work and accept the atonement God had appointed.

While the people rested from work on that day, the high priest carried out his office for the people. In Leviticus chapter 16, it is written that no one was to be in the tabernacle of meeting until the high priest had gone into the Most Holy Place, made atonement, and come out. It was not that all the people went inside and completed the atonement together. The high priest God had established offered the sacrifice for them.

Here we learn the faith that accepts the atonement accomplished for oneself. It is not that sin disappears only when human merit is added to the salvation Jesus accomplished for us. Nor is it that we fill up what is lacking in the Cross by doing many good deeds. In the atonement of the Lord there is no lack that we must fill.

Therefore we must lay down the heart that tries to put

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forward our own suffering or toil as the price for obtaining the remission of sins. We receive salvation by believing in what the Lord has accomplished. When God says that He has remitted our sins, accepting that word is faith. Instead of doubting the atonement of the Lord while examining only our own feelings, we must rely on Jesus, who bore sin, and on the Cross, on which He received the judgment of that sin.

This faith is different from the attitude of taking sin lightly. The person who knows what sacrifice the Lord paid for my sins values that grace. He lays down the work of trying to be saved by his own righteousness, and serves God with thanksgiving for the salvation already received. Our service is the life of rejoicing in that grace after having received it by believing in the atonement of the Lord.

The atonement God appointed must not be taken lightly

In verses 29 and 30 come grave words. He said: *"For any person who is not afflicted in soul on that same day shall be cut off from his people."* He also said: *"And any person who does any work on that same day, that person I will destroy from among his people" (Leviticus 23:30).*

God did not give the command of the Day of Atonement as a rule that could be broken lightly. The people had to acknowledge their sins and value the atonement God had appointed. To persist in one's own work even on that day and disregard the command of God was to turn away from the grace of God, who wanted to cleanse the people.

The Day of Atonement shows how gravely God regards sin. At the same time, it also shows the love that prepared a way to

make sinners live. The very God who spoke of the judgment of sin appointed the sacrifice so that the people could receive the remission of sins. Therefore, when we hear the word of judgment, we must go forward to the way of salvation God has given.

Today, we too must not regard lightly the salvation Jesus has accomplished. One cannot refuse to acknowledge one's sins, or turn away from the Lord's remitting of sins with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross, and say that it is fine according to one's own thinking. The remission of sins is obtained by the faith that receives into the heart the salvation God has accomplished. We must listen to the word telling us to believe in the atonement He has given us, and treasure it.

From evening to evening, they kept the rest of the Day of Atonement

Verse 32 speaks concretely of the beginning and the end of that day: *"It shall be to you a sabbath of solemn rest, and you shall afflict your souls; on the ninth day of the month at evening, from evening to evening, you shall celebrate your sabbath."*

The Day of Atonement is the tenth day of the seventh month, but its rest had to be kept from the evening of the ninth day until the evening of the next day. The people were not to pick out and keep only a few hours convenient for themselves; they had to set apart wholly the day God had appointed. Verse 31 calls this a statute forever, to be kept in all the places where the people dwelt, throughout their generations.

This day was a day of afflicting one's soul and at the same time a sabbath of solemn rest. The heart that acknowledges its sins and the rest obtained through atonement were there together.

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It means accepting the grace of God, who remits those sins, while not taking one's own sins lightly. Acknowledging sin must lead us to the salvation of the Lord.

Dear fellow believers, Jesus bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose again from death and saved us. He accomplished the eternal atonement for us. Do not hide your sins, but believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit. And receive into your heart the word that the Lord has remitted my sins. I hope that you will come to God by the faith that believes in that atonement He accomplished for us, and live within the grace of the remission of sins the Lord has given. ✉

Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

The people who gather before God by the grace of the remission of sins

< Leviticus 23:33-38 >

"Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the children of Israel, saying: The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days to the LORD. On the first day there shall be a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work on it. For seven days you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. On the eighth day you shall have a holy convocation, and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. It is a sacred assembly, and you shall do no customary work on it. These are the feasts of the LORD which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, to offer an offering made by fire to the LORD, a burnt offering and a grain offering, a sacrifice and drink offerings, everything on its day—besides the Sabbaths of the LORD, besides your gifts, besides all your vows, and besides all your freewill offerings which you give to the LORD."

It is a feast kept to the LORD

Dear beloved saints, in today's passage God tells the people of Israel to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. When we examine this

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feast, the days on which the people gather and the days on which they must rest are fixed, and there are also gifts that must be offered to God. God did not give the feast merely as an event for spending an enjoyable time. He made the people gather before God, know the grace by which He had saved them and made them His own people, and serve Him. He said: *"Speak to the children of Israel, saying: The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days to the LORD" (Leviticus 23:34).*

God spoke to Moses and had him deliver that word to the children of Israel. The One who made them begin the Feast of Tabernacles is God, and the owner of that feast is also God. The people had to come before Him at the time God had appointed. Rather than deciding the meaning of the feast by their own circumstances or thoughts, they had to learn through the word what God delights in.

In the word to keep it for seven days to the LORD is contained the purpose of the feast. The people had to know the grace God had granted and give their hearts to Him.

Our worship is like this too. At the center of worship must be God, who has saved us from sin. We must know what salvation we have received through Jesus, and praise God with hearts that believe in that salvation. When the fact that God has delivered me from sin becomes clear, worship becomes a time of giving thanks to the Savior. Through today's word, let us examine what the people who have received the remission of sins believe as they gather before God.

He called the people who had received the remission of sins to a holy convocation

He said: *"On the first day there shall be a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work on it" (Leviticus 23:35).*

On the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles, the people had to gather in a holy convocation. A holy convocation is the gathering of the congregation that God has set apart as holy and made to assemble. A gathering does not become holy merely by gathering many people. God, who called them, and the word He has given must be set at its center. The command to stop labor, too, clearly set apart the gathering God had appointed within the daily life of the people.

Here, think of the time when the Feast of Tabernacles begins. The tenth day of the seventh month is the Day of Atonement, and the fifteenth day of the seventh month is the beginning of the Feast of Tabernacles. On the Day of Atonement, the high priest offered the sacrifice of atonement for the people. There was the laying on of hands that passed the sins of the people on to the offering, and there was the blood of the offering that bore the sins in their place. God prepared the way of remitting the sins of the people, and made them come before Him.

Therefore the joy of the Feast of Tabernacles cannot be thought of apart from the grace of the remission of sins. A pleasure that briefly excites the heart while leaving sin as it is before God is different from the joy enjoyed in knowing that God has remitted my sins. The people of Israel could believe in the atonement God had appointed and welcome the feast within that grace. Because God had dealt with the sins that had bound them, they could give thanks.

Today, we too must know clearly the ground on which we come to God. The fact that we have attended worship for a long

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time does not mean that those years remove our sins. Nor does looking godly before people cover the sin that is before God. We need a salvation that actually washes away sin. God accomplished that salvation in Jesus Christ.

Those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit gather before God with the faith that the Lord has washed away their sins. When we look at the brothers and sisters gathered with us, too, we think of the grace of the Lord, who has called us to the same salvation. Though our personalities and the circumstances we have lived in differ, because we believe together in the remission of sins Jesus has accomplished, we can have fellowship as the people of God. What makes our gathering precious is not the boasting of each of us, but the grace of the Lord, who has saved us all.

The people who came to God had offerings

Verse 36 of the passage commands them to offer an offering made by fire to God for seven days. Gathering in a holy convocation and offering sacrifices to God are there together. The people were not to gather, talk only of their own affairs, and go back; they had to serve God by offering the gifts He had commanded. He said: *"These are the feasts of the LORD which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, to offer an offering made by fire to the LORD, a burnt offering and a grain offering, a sacrifice and drink offerings, everything on its day" (Leviticus 23:37).*

Here appear the names of several sacrifices. The burnt offering is the sacrifice in which the sacrificial offering is burned and offered up to God, and the grain offering is the sacrifice offered with grain gifts such as fine flour and oil. The drink

offering is the gift of pouring out wine. The passage also speaks of the sacrifice, and teaches that the offerings to be offered at the feasts are to be offered each on its appointed day. In the worship God appointed there was concrete content that followed His word.

For the people who came to God there was the sacrifice God accepts. Among those sacrifices, we must see the way of the remission of sins that the sacrificial offering reveals. For a sinner to stand before the holy God, the problem of sin must be solved. God taught that way through the sacrifices.

In Leviticus chapter 1, God said to lay hands on the head of the burnt offering: "*Then he shall put his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him" (Leviticus 1:4)*. The laying on of hands is passing sin on to the offering. The sacrificial offering that had received the sin passed on to it died and shed its blood, and so bore the price of sin. In the sacrifice God accepts, there were the transfer of sin and the judgment for that sin.

In Exodus chapter 29, too, God had them offer a lamb morning and evening and offer the grain offering and the drink offering together, and said that He would meet the children of Israel there. It is not that God pretended not to know their sin and met the people. He gave the way of remitting sin, and dwelt among them by that grace. When we read the ordinances of sacrifice, we must see the salvation God prepared in order to meet sinners.

These sacrifices point to the salvation Jesus Christ would accomplish. The true sacrificial offering God has given us is Jesus. We cannot take the Lord's place by offering many things. The person who wants to come before God must first know Jesus, who offered Himself in our place. He must believe how Jesus bore our sins.

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Jesus bore our sins by receiving baptism from John

Jesus is the Son of God, who has no sin. He came to this earth clothed in the flesh of a man in order to save us, who were bound by sin. God did not make us, who are sinners, pay the price of salvation ourselves; He sent Jesus, the Lamb without blemish. And He fulfilled through Jesus the promise of the remission of sins He had shown through the sacrifices of the Old Testament.

In Matthew chapter 3, Jesus came to the Jordan River and sought to receive baptism from John. When John tried to prevent this, Jesus said: *"But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him" (Matthew 3:15).*

The baptism Jesus received from John was not a matter of His having sin and washing away His own sins. It is the baptism He received in order to bear the sin of mankind. Just as the high priest in the Old Testament laid his hands on the head of the offering on behalf of the people, John the Baptist, as the representative of mankind, baptized Jesus and passed the sin of the world on to Him. By receiving that baptism, Jesus fulfilled the righteous will of God, who saves sinners.

Our sins are in this sin of the world. Not only the sins already committed, but all the sins we commit as we live our whole lives are in it. The sins revealed before people and the sins we could tell no one, the sins committed in action and the sins committed in the heart—all are included. The Lord did not pick out only a few great sins and bear them. By receiving baptism from John, He received all the sin of mankind on His own body.

Therefore the person who wants to receive the remission of sins must know the baptism Jesus received from John. While I hold on to my sins and struggle to solve them by myself, my

heart cannot be free. Nor is it solved by hiding sin or taking it lightly. Acknowledging one's own sins, one must believe the word that those sins passed on to Jesus with the baptism He received from John.

Just as the remission of sins cannot be spoken of leaving out the laying on of hands on the offering of the Old Testament, one cannot explain how our sins passed on to Him leaving out the baptism Jesus received from John. Jesus, who was hung on the Cross, is the Lamb of God who had already borne the sin of the world. We must believe together the fact that the Lord received our sins with His baptism and the fact that He bore the judgment of those sins on the Cross. This is the faith that believes in the salvation God has prepared.

The Lord, who offered His own body, has sanctified us

Jesus, who received our sins, went to the Cross bearing those sins. Because the price of sin is death, the Lord, who bore the sin of the world, received the judgment in our place. In the blood the Lord shed is the sacrifice of giving up His own life in order to save us from sin. Jesus bore on His own body the punishment of sin we had to receive, and died.

And on the third day Jesus rose again from death. The Lord, who was baptized for us and died shedding His blood on the Cross, rose again from death and became our living Savior. We must not remain in grieving as we think of the sufferings of the Lord, but believe in the salvation He has completed. The Lord has given the remission of sins and life to us, who were bound by sin and judgment. It says: *"By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once*

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for all" (Hebrews 10:10).

In this word, see the ground on which we have obtained holiness. It is because Jesus Christ offered His body once and for all. It is not that we must polish our conduct for a long time and wait until sin disappears. Because the Lord bore our sins and ended that judgment, we obtain holiness by believing in that salvation. To say that we are holy is not to boast that we have no weakness at all. It is the confession that believes the grace of the Lord's having remitted all my sins.

In the Old Testament, the offerings were offered repeatedly. Those sacrifices in themselves could not put an end forever to the sin of all mankind. But Jesus accomplished the eternal atonement with His own body. He actually completed the salvation God had promised through the system of sacrifice. We are saved from all sins by believing in the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His rising again from death.

This very gospel of the water and the Spirit is our faith by which we come before God. It is not that we dress ourselves up as people worthy of being loved by God and come forward. We come forward relying on Jesus, who loved us and washed away our sins. The assurance that we have received the remission of sins does not come from forcibly reassuring our own hearts. It comes from the word of salvation God promised and Jesus accomplished. The person who believes that word can stand before God with thanksgiving.

They gathered before God until the end of the feast

He said: *"For seven days you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. On the eighth day you shall have a holy*

convocation, and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. It is a sacred assembly, and you shall do no customary work on it" (Leviticus 23:36).

God had them keep the feast for seven days, and on the eighth day, too, gather in a holy convocation and offer an offering made by fire. He did not say that, since they had gathered on the first day, they might spend the remaining days as they pleased. God appointed the sacrifices of the seven days and even the sacred assembly of the eighth day. The people served God from the beginning of the feast until its close.

Then must we, too, offer a new sacrifice every day today in order to obtain the remission of sins? When we think of the salvation Jesus has accomplished, the answer is clear: *"Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin" (Hebrews 10:18)*. Because the Lord has already remitted sins, we do not start again a sacrifice for removing sin. The atonement Jesus accomplished does not lose its effect because days have passed.

Our worshiping repeatedly and hearing the word is the life of having fellowship with God within the grace of this completed salvation. But this does not mean that, since we have received the remission of sins, we no longer need to hear the word. As we live, we come to see our own weakness. Each time, we must return to the gospel of the water and the Spirit and believe the fact that the Lord bore even that sin. While honestly acknowledging the sin we have committed and turning from it, we keep the ground of salvation unchangingly in the Lord.

The person who worships with this faith does not try to make salvation anew each time. He comes to God giving thanks for the grace already received. In the praise and prayer offered to God, in the time of hearing the word, and in the fellowship of brothers and sisters, we learn the love of the Lord, who has saved

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us. Through the word that made the people gather before God even on the closing day of the feast, we, too, come to think that we must keep the grace of salvation we have received in our hearts and continue to serve God.

Let us offer every gift as thanksgiving for the remission of sins

He said: *"Besides the Sabbaths of the LORD, besides your gifts, besides all your vows, and besides all your freewill offerings which you give to the LORD" (Leviticus 23:38).*

Verse 38 lets us know that the offerings offered at the feasts were distinguished from the Sabbaths and the other gifts, the vow offerings, and the freewill offerings. A vow offering is a gift offered according to what one has vowed to God, and a freewill offering is a gift offered voluntarily. The people could not regard the offerings appointed for the feast as having been replaced just because they had already offered other gifts. Each gift had to be offered in the place God had appointed.

Reading this word, we must not calculate how much more we must offer in order to obtain salvation. The price that removes our sins has already been paid by Jesus with His own body. The gifts and the toil we offer cannot take the place of the baptism and the Cross of Jesus. If one makes one's own devotion the ground of the remission of sins, one is not rightly believing in the grace of salvation God has given.

The person who has received the remission of sins can give thanks because he knows the love the Lord has shown him. When he offers his time and material means, too, that grace is the foundation of his heart. Whether he takes on some work and serves in it, or prays and helps with the work of the gospel, he

does it with a heart of thanksgiving to the Lord, who saved him. The very fact that we can serve the Lord is grace given to us, who have been delivered from sin.

We must not try to prove our own righteousness through worship and service. If we remember what we have offered and think ourselves better than others, we come to forget the grace of the Lord, who called us all to the same remission of sins. Think of how precious the salvation received from the Lord is. For us, who were sinners bound to perish, Jesus received baptism from John, died shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death. From the heart that believes that grace come thanksgiving and service.

Dear beloved saints, the holy convocation and the gifts of the Feast of Tabernacles show the appearance of a people who have set God at the center. For that people there was the way of atonement God had given. For us today there is Jesus Christ, who has completed that promise. If you are still afraid to come before God because of sin, believe in your heart the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Lord has accomplished. Jesus bore even all your sins and accomplished salvation.

Let us all come before God by this grace of the remission of sins. Let us praise together the Lord, who has sanctified us, and serve with thanksgiving for the salvation He has accomplished. I hope that our gatherings, our worship, and our gifts will become true thanksgiving offered to God, who has saved us. ✉

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Sermon 6 by Paul C. Jong

Rejoice, remembering the grace of the Lord, who has delivered us from sin

< Leviticus 23:39-44 >

"Also on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruit of the land, you shall keep the feast of the LORD for seven days; on the first day there shall be a sabbath-rest, and on the eighth day a sabbath-rest. And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of beautiful trees, branches of palm trees, the boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days. You shall keep it as a feast to the LORD for seven days in the year. It shall be a statute forever in your generations. You shall celebrate it in the seventh month. You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All who are native Israelites shall dwell in booths, that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God. So Moses declared to the children of Israel the feasts of the LORD."

He had the people who had gathered in the fruit keep the Feast of Tabernacles

Dear beloved saints, God had the people of Israel keep the

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Feast of Tabernacles and dwell in booths after they had gathered in the fruit of the land. Why did He give such a command to a people who had obtained abundant fruit? It was to make them remember God, who had brought them out of Egypt. While they looked at what they were now enjoying, He kept them from forgetting the One who had let them enjoy it. He said: *"Also on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruit of the land, you shall keep the feast of the LORD for seven days; on the first day there shall be a sabbath-rest, and on the eighth day a sabbath-rest" (Leviticus 23:39).*

The passage speaks of the time to keep the feast together with the gathering in of the fruit of the land. The people of Israel were not to think that they had obtained the fruit of the land by their own strength alone. The One who gave freedom to them, who had been slaves in Egypt, and made them live in the land He had promised is God. At the beginning of the life in which they came to be able to cultivate the land and gather in its fruit was the salvation of God.

In Deuteronomy chapter 6, too, God speaks of the time when the people would obtain good houses, wells, and vineyards and eat and be full. And He teaches what they had to be careful of at that time: *"Then beware, lest you forget the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage" (Deuteronomy 6:12)*. More important than becoming well off is remembering God even in the midst of it. If one rejoices in what one has received and forgets the Giver, one turns grace into one's own boasting.

We, too, easily forget the grace of salvation after receiving the remission of sins from the Lord and having our hearts become at peace. At first we are so thankful to the Lord, who washed away our sins, but as time passes we sometimes pour our hearts only into the affairs before our eyes and our own plans.

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God makes us remember the grace we have received. Before we reckon up today's circumstances, we must look back at how I was delivered from sin. The remission of sins is the grace of the Lord that we must keep treasuring in our hearts as long as we live.

He said to rejoice before the LORD God

He said: *"And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of beautiful trees, branches of palm trees, the boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days" (Leviticus 23:40).*

God had the people take the fruit of beautiful trees and various branches. And He said to rejoice before the LORD God for seven days. The fruit the people had obtained and the things they took were placed together in the feast of joy God had permitted. What is clearly revealed in this word is the fact that God made His own people rejoice before Him.

In the seventh month, in which the Feast of Tabernacles falls, there was also the Day of Atonement. They welcomed the Feast of Tabernacles after the sacrifice that remitted the sins of the people had been offered. In the joy enjoyed by the people who have received the remission of sins is the thanksgiving of having been released from the sin that pressed down on their hearts. Becoming merry for a moment while the problem of sin is unsolved is not the same as rejoicing in the belief that God has remitted one's sins. The joy enjoyed before God is connected with the grace of salvation received from Him.

We, too, need this joy. If we can rejoice only when everything in the world goes as we wish, our thanksgiving will keep wavering according to our circumstances. But the fact that

Jesus bore all my sins and accomplished salvation does not disappear even in the midst of difficulty. The toil and the weakness a believer experiences cannot make the salvation of the Lord void. Believing in the remission of sins received through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we can give thanks before God even now.

He made them dwell in booths and know the One who had saved them

He said: *"You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All who are native Israelites shall dwell in booths" (Leviticus 23:42).*

God said that all who were born in Israel were to dwell in booths. It was not a feast in which some did that and others only watched. Dwelling in booths together, the people had to remember what road their nation had passed through to come this far. The reason God gave that command is also recorded clearly in the very next verse. He also said: *"That your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God" (Leviticus 23:43).*

The history of the people of Israel did not begin with their building sturdy houses and obtaining abundant grain. They were a people who had been slaves in Egypt. God brought them out, and they passed along the wilderness road while dwelling in booths. The Feast of Tabernacles was the feast that kept the descendants from forgetting that beginning. It is telling them not to look only at the foundation they now have, but to know God, who has led them along.

The booth itself was not the power that saved the people. The One who saved the people is God. Their staying in booths was

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an ordinance that made them remember what He had done. Nor did sin disappear in proportion to how much they endured the inconvenience of living in booths. God did not tell the people to produce salvation by suffering on their own; He made them know throughout their generations the grace by which He had already brought them out.

Here is a teaching that humbles our hearts. When a person remembers only what he himself has achieved, he easily becomes proud. But when he knows from where he was delivered, he comes to confess grace. Were we saved because we were people capable of overcoming sin? Did we become His children because we had much righteousness to put forward before God? We had no ability to remove our own sins. The Lord had compassion on us and saved us.

God, who spoke of bringing them out of Egypt, made Himself known as their God. Salvation was not a matter of leaving the people alone. God became their God. We, too, must not think of the remission of sins merely as the remission of a few wrongs of the past. Through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the Lord delivered us from sin and made us live as the people of God. The One on whom we rely and live now is also that God, who saved us.

Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John

Then how did God deliver us from sin? For us to remember the grace of salvation, we must know what the Lord actually did. The faith of the remission of sins does not become clear merely by thinking vaguely that we have received help from God. We must know how my sins passed on to Jesus, and how the

judgment of those sins was ended.

God made known the way of the remission of sins through the sacrifices of the Old Testament. The person who had sinned laid his hands on the head of the sacrificial offering and passed his sins on to it, and the offering that had received those sins died and bore the price of sin. On the Day of Atonement, the high priest passed the sins of the people on to the offering on their behalf. Through these sacrifices, God showed the salvation Jesus Christ would accomplish in the future.

When the time came, Jesus, the Son of God, who has no sin, came to this earth. Before Jesus, God sent John the Baptist. Luke chapter 1 says of the work John would do, *"To give knowledge of salvation to His people by the remission of their sins" (Luke 1:77)*. The work of John was connected with letting people know the salvation of the remission of sins.

Jesus came to the Jordan River and received baptism from John. When John tried to prevent Him, Jesus said this: *"But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him" (Matthew 3:15).*

The baptism Jesus received from John is the event in which He received the sin of mankind on His own body. Just as the sins of the people passed on to the offering by the laying on of hands in the Old Testament, when John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, baptized Jesus, the sin of the world passed on to Jesus. Jesus bore all those sins according to the will of God the Father, who wanted to save us from sin.

In this sin of the world, the sins that you and I commit throughout our lives are also included. The sins we remember and the sins we have forgotten, the sins revealed to people and the sins we have hidden, the sins committed in heart and in action—all are in it. Jesus did not receive only our past sins and

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leave our future sins for each of us to solve. He bore all the sins we commit while living in this world by receiving baptism from John.

This is the very fact of salvation that we must remember. It is not holding on to how much I agonized or how hard I tried to remove sin. We must believe the word that, when Jesus received baptism from John, He received even all my sins passed on to Him. The remission of sins is given to the person who believes in the salvation the Lord has granted. When we receive into our hearts what God has done, our faith, too, becomes clear.

We believe in the Lord, who bore sin with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment on the Cross, and rose again from death

Jesus went to the Cross bearing the sin of the world He had received with His baptism. Because the price of sin is death, the Lord, who bore our sins, died in our place. The blood shed on the Cross is the life the Lord gave up as He received the judgment for sin. Jesus bore on His own body the punishment we had to receive.

Therefore, when we look at the Cross of Jesus, we must know together the baptism He received from John. Why did the sinless Jesus die on the Cross? It is because He had already borne our sins. The Lord's receiving sin with His baptism and His receiving the judgment of that sin on the Cross are within the one salvation of God, who saved us. We must believe without leaving out either of them.

Jesus died on the Cross in the body in which He bore our sins with the baptism He received from John, was buried, and on the third day rose again from death. The Lord does not remain in

death. He who bore our sins and ended the judgment rose again from death and became our eternal Savior. The salvation we believe in is not a matter of reducing sin little by little by our own efforts, but of accepting the salvation Jesus has completed. It says: *"For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:10).*

Believe in your heart the fact that Jesus bore all my sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of my sins on the Cross, and rose again from death and saved me. The person who believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of sins. He obtains the righteousness God has given and becomes His child. Because the ground of salvation lies in the Lord, we can be assured of the salvation He has accomplished even while seeing our own weakness.

What the people of Israel had to remember at the Feast of Tabernacles was that God had brought them out of Egypt. The salvation we must treasure in our hearts today is the remission of sins Jesus accomplished by bearing our sins with His baptism and the Cross and rising again from death. When we believe this gospel, we come to know clearly how I became one of the people of God. Here also lies the reason we give thanks to the Lord.

Let the next generation, too, know the grace of salvation

He said: *"You shall keep it as a feast to the LORD for seven days in the year. It shall be a statute forever in your generations. You shall celebrate it in the seventh month" (Leviticus 23:41).*

God had them keep the Feast of Tabernacles every year and made it known throughout their generations. Even the

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descendants who had not personally experienced coming out of Egypt had to learn that God's salvation was present in the life they enjoyed.

In the command to dwell in booths is contained a teaching. As the children do that, they come to hear the reason for it. They learn the fact that the people to whom they belong were originally slaves, and that God delivered them. Before telling their children how great their family was, parents had to let them know how God had granted grace.

Deuteronomy chapter 6 teaches what to say when a child asks the meaning of the ordinances and judgments of God. Parents had to tell them that God had brought out the people who had been slaves in Egypt and made them enter the land He had promised. When they taught the commands of God, He had them deliver the work of salvation together with them. The life of obeying the word was connected with the faith that knows God, who had saved them.

We, too, must clearly let our children and those who come after us know the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Merely handing down the habit of going to church, or telling them to live virtuously, does not solve their problem of sin. We must let them know why Jesus received baptism from John, why He shed His blood on the Cross, and what salvation the Lord, who rose again from death, has given.

That parents have received the remission of sins cannot take the place of the faith of their children. The children, too, must know that they are people who sin, and believe in their hearts in Jesus, who bore all those sins. We must set the word of salvation clearly in our own hearts as well, so that we can explain it when they ask. Together with teaching which actions are wrong, we must also let them know how those sins are remitted.

The person who teaches must himself remember the grace he

has received. If he only puts forward his own righteousness and rebukes others, the salvation of the Lord that he really must proclaim grows dim. We, too, are people who could not remove sin by ourselves. Because the Lord saved us, we proclaim that grace. What we proclaim is not our own excellence but Jesus Christ, who has completely saved sinners.

Let us remember the grace we have received and follow the word of God

The last verse of Leviticus chapter 23 records that Moses declared the feasts of the LORD to the children of Israel. The ordinances God had spoken were delivered to the people. Now the people had to keep the feasts according to the word they had heard, and remember the salvation God had granted. Knowing the grace of God must lead to a life of listening to His word and following His will.

We who have received the remission of sins, too, can forget the Lord and follow our own greed. When we have obtained what we needed and our hearts have become at ease, we can rely on those things more than on God. Therefore we must not make the fact that we have been saved a reason for living as we please. We must turn our hearts to the Lord, who delivered us from sin, and follow the will He delights in.

When a wrong is revealed before the word, acknowledge it. And look by faith to the baptism Jesus received from John and to the Cross. We must believe that the Lord has already borne even that sin and received the judgment. Rather than hiding sin and continuing to follow the same greed, we must rely on the grace of salvation and turn from the wrong way. The assurance of the remission of sins makes us come nearer to the Lord.

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God told His own people to dwell in booths and rejoice. It is a word that makes us think that the ground of joy does not lie only in the size of one's house or the comfort of one's life. God, who delivered the people from the place where they had been slaves, was their God. For us today, too, there is the Lord, who gave Himself and washed away sins. Believing in that grace, we can live the life God has entrusted to us.

Dear beloved saints, from where have we been delivered? We were people who could only be judged because of sin. Yet Jesus received baptism from John, died shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death, and so saved us. To us, who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, He has given the remission of sins and made us live as the people of God.

Let us not forget this salvation. When we enjoy what we have received, and when we toil and pass through a hard road, let us remember the Lord, who delivered us. And let us proclaim that grace to those who come after us as well. I hope that we will rejoice before God, believing in the remission of sins the Lord has granted, and live following the will of Him who loved us. ✉

Rejoice, remembering the grace of the Lord, who has delivered us from sin

Questions and Answers on Leviticus Chapter 23

[Question] 1. Leviticus 23:2—who appointed the days called *'the feasts of the LORD,'* and how did the people have to keep those days?

"The feasts of the LORD" refers to the holy days God appointed for His own people. They were not anniversaries the people of Israel made by themselves, but days for which God appointed the time and the way of keeping them and commanded that they be made known to the people. Therefore at the center of the feasts are God, who gave those days, and the grace He granted.

The people had to gather in a holy convocation at the time God had appointed. A holy convocation is a gathering set apart as holy before God. According to the ordinance of each feast, the people rested from work and offered gifts, and remembered God, who had brought them out of Egypt, given them food, and washed away their sins.

Therefore keeping the feasts did not stop at remembering the dates; it was acknowledging that their time and their lives belonged to God and obeying His word. It was also an opportunity to remember together the grace God had given and to pass it on to the next generation (Leviticus 23:2–4, 37–43).

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[Question] 2. Leviticus 23:3—what did the people of Israel of the Old Testament have to remember as they kept the Sabbath?

The Sabbath is the day of resting from work on the seventh day after working six days, and keeping it holy before God. Through this day the people had to remember that God created the heavens and the earth and all things and rested on the seventh day. It was a day of acknowledging that their lives and the world they lived in had come from God the Creator.

The Sabbath also made them remember that they had been saved from slavery in Egypt. Because God had delivered Israel from the place of slaves, they, too, had to rest together with the servants of their households. The ordinance requiring their children and servants, their livestock, and even the sojourners staying among them to rest contained the intention that they all enjoy together the rest God had given.

The Sabbath was also the sign of the covenant between God and Israel. Because it was a day that let them know that the One who sanctifies the people is the LORD, the people had to stop the work of their livelihood and rely on God, who had made them and saved them. In this way the rest and the holy convocation of the Sabbath made them remember together creation and salvation, and the fact that they were a people belonging to God (Leviticus 23:3; Exodus 20:8–11; 31:12–17; Deuteronomy 5:12–15).

[Question] 3. Leviticus 23:3 and Matthew chapter 12—how did Jesus teach the purpose of the Sabbath and what is to be done on that day?

Leviticus 23:3 commands them to work six days, make the seventh day a Sabbath of rest, and gather in a holy convocation. Jesus made clear the true meaning of this Sabbath as follows.

Jesus taught that the Sabbath is a day given for man. When the disciples were criticized for plucking heads of grain and eating them on the Sabbath, Jesus, having regard for the needs of people, made clear the original meaning of the Sabbath. To condemn hungry people while claiming to keep the Sabbath God had given was not an attitude that rightly knew the mercy of God.

Jesus also said that He Himself is the Lord of the Sabbath. The standard for judging the meaning of the Sabbath lies not in the rules people had added, but in the will of God, who gave that day, and in the authority of Jesus. By healing a man with a withered hand, Jesus showed that it is right to do good and save life on the Sabbath.

Therefore the teaching of Jesus does not mean that no good work at all may be done on the Sabbath. Honoring God and showing mercy to people are not at odds with each other. Jesus corrected the attitude that oppressed people in the name of the Sabbath, and revealed the meaning of the rest and the life God gives (Leviticus 23:3; Matthew 12:1–14; Mark 2:23–28; 3:1–6; Luke 6:1–11).

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[Question] 4. Leviticus 23:5–8—when were the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread kept, and how did they gather in a holy convocation at the Feast of Unleavened Bread?

The Passover was kept on the evening of the fourteenth day of the first month by the calendar of Israel. It is the feast commemorating that, when God brought the plague on Egypt, He made it pass over the houses where the blood of the sacrificial offering was, and delivered Israel from slavery. Keeping the Passover, the people remembered the grace of God, who had saved them.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread was kept for seven days from the fifteenth day of that month. During this period they ate unleavened bread, that is, bread made without leaven, and offered an offering made by fire to the LORD every day. On the first day and the seventh day they gathered in a holy convocation and did no labor. Because the days specified as holy convocations in Leviticus 23:5–8 are the first day and the seventh day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the date of the Passover and the dates of the holy convocations must be read as distinct.

The Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, as feasts that follow one another, made the people not forget their salvation from Egypt and commemorate it in the way God had appointed. Through the feasts He had them remember the grace of salvation and hand down that grace to their descendants as well (Leviticus 23:5–8; Exodus 12:12–20; 34:18).

[Question] 5. Leviticus 23:15–22—how was the date of the Feast of Weeks fixed, and what did the people remember through this feast?

The Feast of Weeks was kept on the fiftieth day, the day after seven Sabbaths had been completed, counting from the day a sheaf of the firstfruits of the grain was offered as a wave offering. Because it is kept by counting seven weeks, it is called the Feast of Weeks, and it is also called the Feast of Harvest in the sense that it is the feast of the time of reaping grain. In the New Testament it appears under the name Pentecost.

On this day the people offered a new grain offering to the LORD and gathered in a holy convocation, resting from labor. They did not regard the grain they had harvested as obtained by their own toil alone, but received it as the grace of God, who had given the land and its produce, and gave thanks. In Deuteronomy, He had them offer a freewill offering according to the blessing received from God, and rejoice together not only with their families but also with the Levite, the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow.

Following the ordinance of this feast, Leviticus chapter 23 commands them to leave the corners of the field and the fallen heads of grain for the poor and the sojourner. It shows that thanksgiving offered to God must lead to a life of looking after neighbors in difficulty.

In the New Testament, at Pentecost the Holy Spirit came, and the work appeared in which the apostles preached the gospel and those who believed gathered together. When we examine the harvest feast of the Old Testament, we learn the meaning of giving thanks for the grace received from God, and in the event of Pentecost in the New Testament we can also examine the fact that the Holy Spirit leads the testimony of the gospel and the life

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of the church (Leviticus 23:15–22; Exodus 23:16; 34:22; Deuteronomy 16:9–12; Acts 2:1–4, 41–47).

[Question] 6. What are the three great feasts the people of Israel kept every year, and what is their meaning?

The three great feasts of Israel are the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Tabernacles. They are also usually grouped and explained as the Passover, the Feast of Harvest, and the Feast of Ingathering: the Passover is connected with the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks with the Feast of Harvest, and the Feast of Tabernacles with the Feast of Ingathering. The Bible commands that all the men of Israel come before the LORD every year at these three feasts.

• The Feast of Unleavened Bread: it is the feast, following the Passover, of eating bread without leaven and remembering the coming out of Egypt. It teaches that they must not forget God, who saved them from slavery, and must live according to His ordinances.

• The Feast of Weeks: it is the feast of offering gifts in thanksgiving for the grace of the grain harvest. It made them acknowledge that the produce they had reaped was a blessing received from God, and share that joy with their families, their neighbors, and those in difficult circumstances.

• The Feast of Tabernacles: it is the feast kept after the harvest has been gathered in and stored, dwelling in booths for seven days. It made them remember God, who led Israel in the wilderness, and give thanks for His grace in still caring for their food and their lives.

The three feasts have the common meaning of remembering salvation, giving thanks for the grace of provision, and rejoicing together before God. The people had to offer gifts according to the blessing and the circumstances God had given each person (Exodus 23:14–17; 34:18, 22, 23; Deuteronomy 16:9–17; Leviticus 23:42, 43).

[Question] 7. Leviticus 23:18–21—what gifts were offered at the Feast of Weeks, and what do those sacrifices express?

At the Feast of Weeks, together with the bread made from the new grain, the burnt offering, the sin offering, and the peace offering were offered. Even on the day of enjoying the joy of the harvest, God had the people come before Him with the sacrifices He had appointed.

• Two loaves made from the first grain: they brought two loaves of two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour, baked with leaven, and waved them before the LORD. By first offering the newly reaped grain to God, they acknowledged that the One who gave the harvest is God. These loaves are not explained as being burned entirely on the altar; together with the lambs of the peace offering, they went to the priest as holy things offered to the LORD.

• The burnt offering with the grain offering and the drink offering: seven lambs of the first year without blemish, one young bull, and two rams were offered as a burnt offering. The appointed grain offering and drink offering were offered together with these, and they were offered to the LORD as an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma. It was worship in which not only the harvest but also the sacrifices and gifts God had

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appointed were offered together.

• The sin offering: one kid of the goats was offered. It shows that even the people who rejoice in having reaped grain are people who must have their sins washed away before God. Material abundance does not solve the problem of sin.

• The peace offering: two male lambs of the first year were offered. The priest waved these lambs together with the bread of the firstfruits and offered them to the LORD. The peace offering contains the meaning of coming before God while reconciled with Him.

On this day the people proclaimed a holy convocation and rested from labor. The sacrifices of the Feast of Weeks show together thanksgiving for the harvest and atonement and reconciliation before God. Today, we too must regard with thanks what we have received from God, and come before God believing in the remission of sins Jesus Christ has accomplished (Leviticus 23:16–21; Romans 5:1).

[Question] 8. Leviticus 23:23–44—what feasts were kept in the seventh month, and when did they gather in a holy convocation for each?

In the seventh month by the calendar of Israel, the day of blowing the trumpets as a memorial, the Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles were kept. The holy convocations and the rest appointed for each feast are as follows.

• The day of blowing the trumpets as a memorial—the first day of the seventh month: it was a day of blowing the trumpets as a memorial, gathering in a holy convocation, and resting from labor. They kept it holy, offering an offering made by fire to the LORD, and it is usually called the Feast of Trumpets.

• The Day of Atonement—the tenth day of the seventh month: it was the day of making atonement before God for the people. The people gathered in a holy convocation, afflicted their souls, and did no work. The time of rest was from the evening of the ninth day to the evening of the tenth day. It reveals that one must not take one's own sins lightly before God, and must receive the grace of atonement God has prepared.

• The Feast of Tabernacles—seven days from the fifteenth day of the seventh month: it was kept after the fruit of the land had been gathered in, and for seven days they dwelt in booths and rejoiced before God. On the first day they gathered in a holy convocation and rested from labor, and on the eighth day, after the seven days of the feast, they also gathered in a sacred assembly and rested from labor. Therefore the days on which the holy convocation and the rest were kept are the first day and the eighth day.

These feasts made the people gather before God, receive the grace of atonement, and remember with thanksgiving His bringing them out of Egypt and His looking after them in the wilderness. The sabbaths of the feasts should be understood, as distinct from the weekly Sabbath of the seventh day, as the days God appointed for rest during the respective feasts (Leviticus 23:23–44).

[Question] 9. What rest do the saints today enjoy in Jesus Christ?

The center of the rest the people of God enjoy today is the remission of sins and the peace of heart received by believing in the salvation Jesus Christ has accomplished. It is the rest of dwelling within the salvation the Lord has accomplished, set free

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from the burden of having to pay the price of sin and complete salvation by one's own strength.

Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose again from death and became our Savior. The saints obtain the remission of sins and new life before God by believing this word of salvation the Lord has accomplished. True rest is not a reward earned by piling up one's own works, but the grace enjoyed by the one who believes in the salvation the Lord has given.

This rest does not mean that all the work to be done in living in the world disappears, or that one experiences no difficulty at all. Even while working and serving people, the saints rely on the Lord, who saved them, and enjoy rest of heart within His word. They also live looking to the eternal rest God has promised. Therefore the core of rest lies not only in outward actions on a particular day, but in believing in Jesus Christ, who has completely saved us (Hebrews 4:1–11; Matthew 3:13–17; 1 Corinthians 15:3, 4; Romans 8:1).

[Question] 10. What lessons for our faith and life does the meaning contained in each feast of the Old Testament give?

The feasts of Leviticus chapter 23 make us reflect on the fact that God saves His people, feeds them, washes away their sins, and makes them rejoice together. Together with knowing the dates and the gifts of the feasts, we must examine what God made them remember.

• The Sabbath: it makes us remember that God gave rest to the people He created and saved. The saints of the New Testament believe in the salvation Jesus accomplished with the

baptism He received from John, His death on the Cross, and His rising again from death, and enjoy true rest.

• The Passover: it commemorates that, when the plague came on Egypt, God protected the houses where the blood of the sacrificial offering was and saved the people. It teaches that salvation is given through the way God has prepared, and that the saved people must not forget that grace.

• The Feast of Unleavened Bread: eating bread without leaven, it makes us remember the coming out of Egypt. The people were not to stop at remembering the history of their salvation; they had to live according to the word commanded by God, who led them.

• The day of offering the firstfruits: before eating the new grain, a sheaf of the firstfruits was offered to God. It shows that one must first remember God, who gave the harvest, and receive with thanks the food given to oneself.

• The Feast of Weeks: it is the feast of giving thanks for the grace of the harvest and sharing that joy with one's neighbors. The command to leave heads of grain for the poor and the sojourner teaches that thanksgiving offered to God must lead to care for one's neighbors. At the Pentecost of the New Testament, the Holy Spirit came, and the testimony of the gospel and the common life of the church appeared.

• The day of blowing the trumpets as a memorial: it made the people stop their everyday labor, gather in a holy convocation, and worship God. It shows that we must not neglect gathering together according to the calling God has appointed and remembering Him.

• The Day of Atonement: it shows that God prepared the way of atonement for the people who had sin. The sacrifice offered with the laying on of hands by the high priest and the blood of the sacrificial offering is connected with the salvation in which

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Jesus bore our sins by receiving baptism from John and was judged on the Cross. The saints come before God believing not in their own merit but in the remission of sins the Lord has accomplished.

• The Feast of Tabernacles: it is the feast of remembering God, who led the people in the wilderness, and giving thanks and rejoicing for the grace that enabled them to gather in their produce. It teaches that even when life has become stable and the harvest abundant, one must not forget God, who led and looked after one, but rely on Him.

In this way the feasts are a teaching that makes us remember the grace of salvation and provision and come before God. The saints must examine their meaning, believe in the salvation the Lord has accomplished, give thanks for the grace they have received, and live a life of sharing with their neighbors (Leviticus 23:1–44; 16:21, 22; Exodus 12:12–20; Deuteronomy 16:9–17; Matthew 3:13–17; Acts 2:1–4, 41–47; Hebrews 4:1–11). ✉

◇ About the Next Series

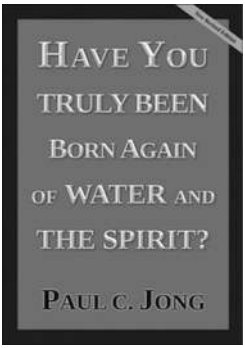
The ***'Biblical Exposition & Sermon Series from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit'*** will continue to be published following this book.

We sincerely hope that the books by Pastor Paul C. Jong, which will continue to be published, will serve as spiritual nourishment to strengthen your faith.

News about newly released books, as well as various ways to access them—including eBooks (PDF, EPUB), audiobooks (M4A, MP3), and online reading—can be found at **www.bjnewlife.org.**

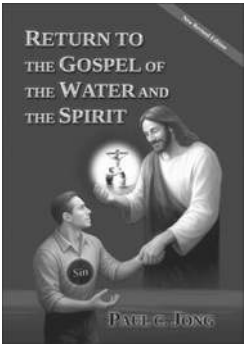
Paul C. Jong's Sermons

HAVE YOU TRULY BEEN BORN AGAIN OF WATER AND THE SPIRIT? [New Revised Edition]



Among many Christian books written about being born again, this is the first book of our time to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit in strict accordance with the Scriptures. Man can't enter the Kingdom of Heaven without being born again of water and the Spirit. To be born again means that a sinner is saved from all his lifelong sins by believing in the baptism of Jesus and His blood of the Cross. Let's believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and enter the Kingdom of Heaven as the righteous who have no sin.

RETURN TO THE GOSPEL OF THE WATER AND THE SPIRIT [New Revised Edition]



Let's return to the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Theology and doctrines themselves can't save us. However, many Christians still follow them, and consequently have not been born again yet. This book clearly tells us what mistakes theology and doctrines have made and how we can believe in Jesus in the most accurate and certain way.

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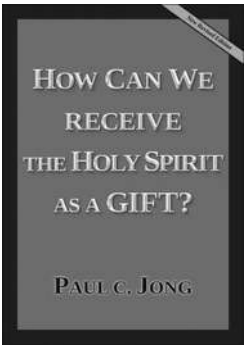
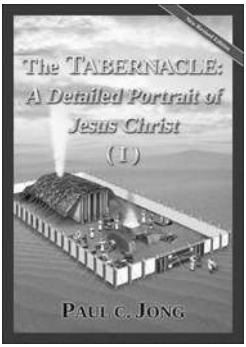
HOW CAN WE RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT AS A GIFT? [New Revised Edition]



In Christianity, the most significantly discussed issue is salvation from sins and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. However, few people have the exact knowledge of these two topics. Nevertheless, in reality people say that they believe in Jesus Christ while they are ignorant of true redemption and the Holy Spirit.

Do you know the true gospel that makes you receive the Holy Spirit? If you want to ask God for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, then you must first know the gospel of the water and the Spirit and have faith in it. This book will certainly lead all Christians worldwide to receive the Holy Spirit through the washing away of all their sins.

The TABERNACLE : A Detailed Portrait of Jesus Christ (I) [New Revised Edition]



How can we find out the truth hidden in the Tabernacle? Only by knowing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the real substance of the Tabernacle, can we correctly understand and know the answer to this question.

In fact, the blue, purple, and scarlet thread and the fine woven linen manifested in the gate of the Tabernacle's court show us the works of Jesus Christ in the New Testament's time that have saved the mankind. In this way, the Old Testament's Word of the Tabernacle and the Word of the New Testament are closely and definitely related to each other, like fine woven linen. But, unfortunately, this truth has been hidden for a long time to every truth seeker in Christianity.

Coming to this earth, Jesus Christ was baptized by John and shed His blood on the Cross. Without understanding and believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, none of us can ever find out the truth revealed in the Tabernacle. We must now learn this truth of the Tabernacle and believe in it. We all need to realize and believe in the truth manifested in the blue, purple, and scarlet thread and the fine woven linen of the gate of the Tabernacle's court.

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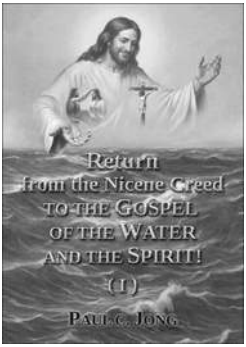
Return from the Nicene Creed TO THE GOSPEL OF THE WATER AND THE SPIRIT! (I)



-Why must we return from the Nicene Creed to the gospel of the water and the Spirit? –

The gospel that the early church preached was precisely the gospel of the water and the Spirit. That gospel was the gospel that Jesus actually shouldered and washed away the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John.

The baptism Jesus received from John was to fulfill the law of the sacrificial system found in Leviticus. That is, just as sin was transferred to the sacrificial offering through the laying on of hands, the substance of that sacrificial law was fulfilled through Jesus's baptism.

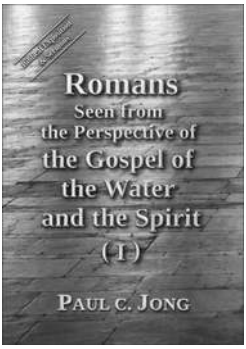
However, in the process of the Nicene Creed's formation, the ministry of Jesus having the sin of the world transferred to Him by being baptized by John was deleted from the creed's contents. As a result, this truth has been passed down in a hidden state within Christianity for about 1,700 years, reaching the present day.

Today, many people are struggling to receive the removal of their sins without knowing when their sins were transferred to Jesus. Because of this, even while saying they believe in the gospel of the cross, they fail to reach true assurance of salvation and live amidst repetitive repentance and the pangs of conscience.

The reason we must return to the gospel of the water and the Spirit is clear. This is because only this gospel allows us to meet the Jesus who became the sacrificial offering as the sin of the world was transferred to His body, and thereby have assurance of salvation.

Paul C. Jong's Biblical Exposition & Sermons

Romans seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (2-Volume Series)



When Looking at Romans from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit,

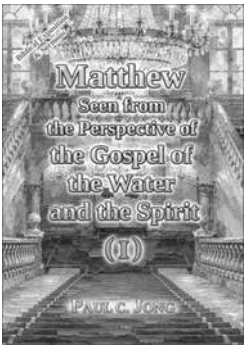
A person who embraces the gospel of the water and the Spirit in their heart comes to read Romans completely differently. The moment one opens this letter holding onto the gospel that Jesus had the sins of the world transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John, completely received the judgment of those sins on the cross, and resurrected, it finally begins to be seen why Paul introduced himself as a "debtor to the gospel" and so boldly declared, "I am not ashamed of the gospel."

The Apostle Paul, after revealing the sins of the Gentiles and the hypocrisy of religious people in turn, proclaims the righteousness of God manifested apart from the law. That righteousness is not a righteousness built up by human moral effort, but the righteousness completed by the baptism Jesus received from John, the blood of the cross, and the resurrection. The righteousness Abraham received when he was uncircumcised is the evidence of it, and the "blessing of not imputing sin" that David sang of is the result of it.

A person who believes this gospel knows that he is one who has already been justified. Only upon that conviction does peace with God reside, and the path opens where even tribulation leads to perseverance, character, and hope. This mystery—that a life which was placed under the reign of death over sin through one man, Adam, has received the removal of sins through one person, Jesus Christ, and has been transferred under the reign of righteousness—takes its place within us.

Salvation has already been completed at once. Now, what remains is the matter of receiving that gospel with the heart and living as a righteous person.

Matthew seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (6-Volume Series)



Why does sin still remain in your heart, even after believing in Jesus, reading the Bible for years, and attending church faithfully? Through Matthew chapters 1–4, this book answers clearly from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Tracing Jesus' birth and the wise men's worship, the ministry of John the Baptist as the last high priest, the saving work Jesus began with His baptism in the Jordan, the temptation in the wilderness, and the proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom of heaven, this book testifies that through His baptism by John the Baptist, Jesus took the sins of mankind upon Himself, was judged and died on the cross, and rose from the dead, overcoming sin and death.

If you know the blood of the cross but not when and where your sins were passed on to Jesus, look to the unchanging word of salvation rather than your feelings. In the Bible-based gospel of the water and the Spirit, see what the 'all righteousness' God fulfilled truly is.

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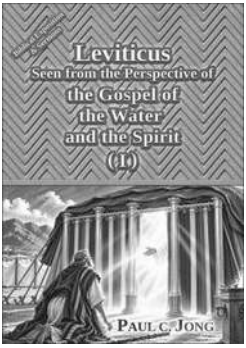
Leviticus seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (4-Volume Series)

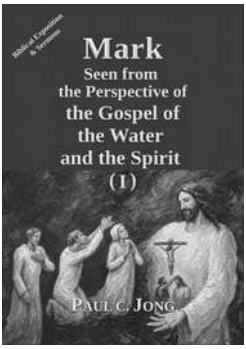


Leviticus seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (I) examines how the Old Testament law of sacrifice prefigures the salvation of Jesus Christ, looking at the burnt offering, the grain offering, the peace offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering, as well as the consecration ceremony of the priests, Aaron's first sacrifice, and the incident of Nadab and Abihu.

The author, Pastor Paul C. Jong, has long preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and in this book, he also explains the eternal atonement Jesus completed with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross, connecting it to the sacrifices of Leviticus.

How can a sinner be made sinless? This book gives a clear answer to that question through the Bible.

Mark Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (4-Volume Series)



Who do you believe Jesus to be? Through Mark chapters 1–4, this book testifies to the beginning of the gospel, the Lord's authority to remit sins, and the ground of the heart that hears the Word.

Through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus had all the sins of the world passed onto Him, bore the punishment for those sins in our place on the Cross, and rose from the dead and gave us eternal life. Whoever believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of all his sins at once and the Holy Spirit as a gift.

Do not read this book merely to add to your knowledge. Examine what kind of ground your own heart is, and lay down your own righteousness and religious stubbornness. Receive the Word of life just as it is and enjoy true rest, and relying on the Lord even in the storms of life, bear the fruit of faith.

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John Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (4-Volume Series)



John seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (I) is a book that examines, through the entire Gospel of John, how the Word, who is God, came to this earth clothed in flesh and saved sinners from sin.

The author, pastor Paul C. Jong, has long preached, through the word of the Bible, "the gospel of the water and the Spirit" that Jesus Christ completed with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the Cross, and the resurrection. This book does not explain the signs and words of the Gospel of John as mere knowledge of the Bible or records of miracles, but guides readers to the faith by which they are saved from sin and obtain everlasting life by believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

May everyone who opens this book meet Jesus Christ, of whom the Bible testifies, and obtain true life.

Luke Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (6-Volume Series)



"Luke Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (I)" expounds the Word from Luke chapters 1 through 6 from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Each chapter is composed of three parts: Biblical Exposition, Questions and Answers, and Sermons. The central message conveyed by this book is clear. Salvation is not accomplished by human goodness or merit. Rather, Jesus, who is God, received the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, died on the Cross to pay the price for those sins, and rose from the dead, thereby giving complete salvation from all sins to those who believe in this truth.

Pastor Paul C. Jong of The New Life Mission is a servant of God who has devoted his life to preaching the true gospel. Through the Word he preaches, this book will lead souls held captive by sin to the joy of the remission of sins and to eternal life in Jesus.

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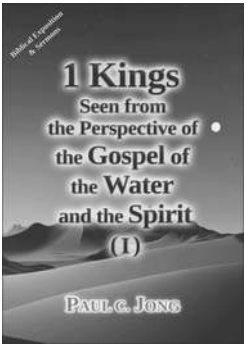
1 Kings seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (4-Volume Series)

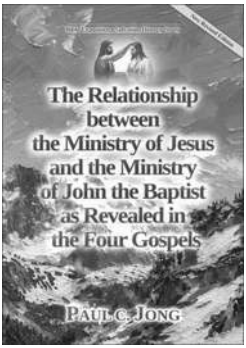


Why did Solomon, who received great wisdom from God, spend more time building his own palace than the Temple? Through David's old age and Adonijah's fall, and Solomon's accession and the building of the Temple, 1 Kings chapters 1–7 show that the glory of man fades, but the faith that fears God endures forever.

This book reveals the gospel of the water and the Spirit contained in the Temple and its furnishings. Jesus took the sins of the world upon Himself through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, was judged and died on the Cross, and rose again to complete salvation.

Do not rely on your own wisdom and your own kingdom. Use the wisdom, wealth, and time you have received for the gospel and for souls, and serve Jesus Christ as the King of your heart, building the house of God.

The Relationship between the Ministry of Jesus and the Ministry of John the Baptist as Revealed in the Four Gospels [New Revised Edition]



The Ministry of Jesus and John the Baptist — Preparation and Fulfillment: The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit, Believed in the Order the Bible Records It

Why do the four Gospels introduce John the Baptist before speaking of Jesus' public ministry? Matthew records the baptism by which He fulfilled all righteousness; Mark, the messenger who prepared the way; Luke, the birth into a priestly family; and John, the testimony of the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world. These four books of the Bible—the four Gospels—together shed light on the ministry of Jesus and the ministry of John the Baptist.

This book makes clear that we receive the remission of sins not by human zeal, but by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Just as sins were passed on to the sacrificial offering through the laying on of hands in the Old Testament, so Jesus took upon Himself the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, was judged and died on the Cross, and rose again to complete our salvation.

We must believe in the ministry of Jesus and the ministry of John the Baptist exactly as the Bible records them, receive the remission of sins, abide in the assurance of this completed salvation, and live as witnesses to it.

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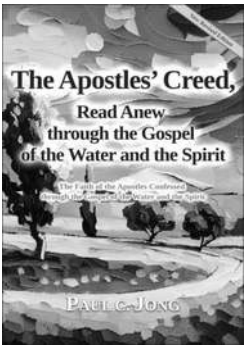
Paul C. Jong's Special Features

The Apostles' Creed, Read Anew through the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit [New Revised Edition]

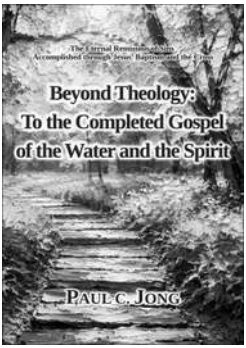


As you recite the Apostles' Creed every week, have you ever asked whether its statements are consistent with the gospel of the water and the Spirit proclaimed in the Bible? Countless Christians recite the Apostles' Creed, yet live without assurance as to whether they themselves have received the remission of sins and been born again.

This book examines this confession of faith, shaped and refined by people, article by article in the light of the "gospel of the water and the Spirit" to which Scripture testifies. In the light of this gospel—the gospel in which Jesus took upon Himself all the sins of the world by being baptized by John, bore the judgment for sin in our place by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and completed salvation by rising from the dead on the third day—this book points out what the Apostles' Creed leaves out.

The aim of this book is not to help the reader recite the Creed more skillfully. "Have I truly been born again through the gospel of the water and the Spirit?" When we come to answer this question through the Word, we will at last offer a living confession as those who have received the remission of sins and been born again.

Beyond Theology: To the Completed Gospel of the Water and the Spirit



Even as we confess that we have been saved, why does the weight of sin still remain in one corner of our hearts?

Countless saints live carrying this question. Each denomination has a different answer, but the Bible testifies to one story from beginning to end.

This book does not belong to any denomination. It sets out what each tradition—Calvinism, Lutheranism, Methodism, Catholicism, and others—teaches, acknowledges their contributions, and then brings them all before the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It is the gospel by which Jesus bore the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John, was judged on the Cross, and completed our eternal salvation through His resurrection from death.

This book does not condemn any church. It only invites you to lay down your familiar theology for a moment and to discover anew, before the gospel of the water and the Spirit, where unshakable assurance begins.

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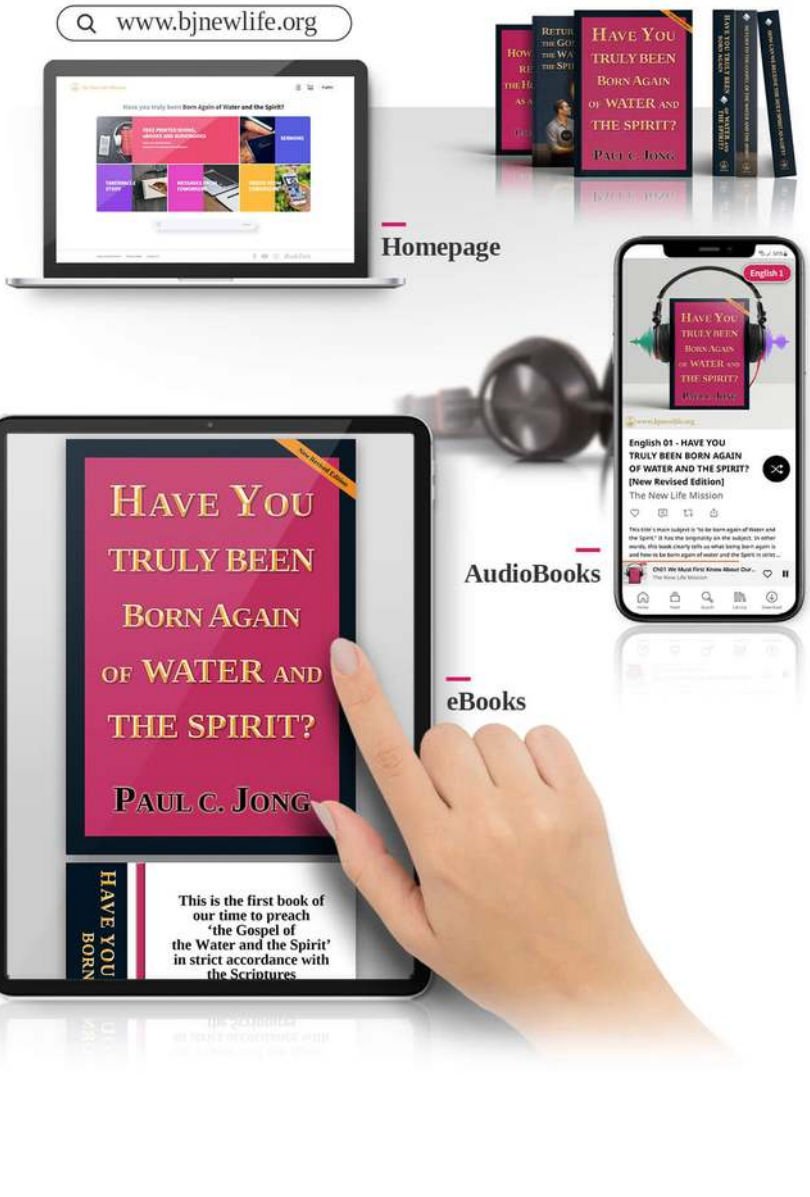

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Please help us spread the true gospel of Jesus Christ through our books so that more people can be born again of the water and the Spirit. We would also be grateful if you could introduce our website and books to many people and invite them to visit.

THE NEW LIFE MISSION
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E-mail: newlife@bjnewlife.org



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Sincerely,
The New Life Mission



Pastor PAUL C. JONG

Currently, Pastor Paul C. Jong leads 'The New Life Mission', where he and his fellow workers are spreading the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Although he believed in the crucified Jesus, he suffered for a long time because his problem of sin remained unresolved. In the midst of this agony, he came to believe that Jesus took upon Himself the sins of the world through His baptism by John the Baptist, and subsequently bore the judgment in our place on the cross.

For the past 40 years since then, he has been preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit to those who only believe in the cross, documenting his actual sermons in writing. The compilation of these manuscripts has given rise to today's 'Biblical Exposition Series from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit.'

His works, comprising an ongoing 110-volume series, have been translated into more than 110 languages and are read in over 160 countries. E-books and audiobooks are available for free at www.bjnewlife.org, while physical books can be purchased on Amazon.

You can download Rev. Paul C. Jong's Christian Books to Computer, Tablet or Smartphone.

Leviticus, seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

“And you shall keep My statutes, and perform them: I am the LORD who sanctifies you.” (Leviticus 20:8)

Together with the command to live holy lives, God revealed that He Himself is the One who makes His people holy. When a priest touched anything unclean, he had to wash his body with water and could eat of the holy things only after the sun had set, and the offerings presented to God had to be without blemish. The feasts running from the Passover to the Feast of Tabernacles led the people, who had been saved by the blood of the lamb, to remember God's grace and to rest and rejoice before Him.

All these words point to Jesus Christ, who became the offering without blemish. Jesus bore all the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John, received the judgment for those sins on the Cross, and rose again from the dead, thereby accomplishing eternal atonement.

The basis for our assurance of the remission of sins lies not in our own deeds or feelings, but in the fact that the Lord has blotted out all our sins and in the Word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that testifies to this. Through the Word conveyed in this book, may you enjoy true rest in the assurance of the remission of sins, and go forward into a life of serving God in gratitude for that grace.

You can download Rev. Paul C. Jong’s Christian Books to Computer, Tablet or Smartphone.