Biblical Exposition & Sermons

Leviticus

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



Paul C. Jong



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

Biblical Exposition & Sermons



Hephzibah

“And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a Jubilee for you; and each of you shall return to his possession, and each of you shall return to his family”
(Leviticus 25:10)

The Sabbath year and the Jubilee in Leviticus are not merely institutions for letting the land rest and restoring lost inheritances. God opened for His people the way to rest, liberty, and restoration. No one can escape the burden of sin by human effort alone, but Jesus Christ took upon Himself all our sins through His baptism, paid the full price of those sins on the Cross, and rose again from the dead, and so He has given us true rest and liberty.

Therefore, those who have been made sinless no longer try to achieve salvation by their own deeds. They receive by faith the salvation that has already been completed, and in gratitude for that grace they serve God alone and live according to His Word.

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as this world is heading toward destruction.

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Leviticus

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

PAUL C. JONG

Hephzibah Publishing House

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SEOUL, KOREA

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

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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 way by which sinners receive the remission of sins and come before the holy God, and the ordinances the people of God need in order to live serving Him. As we read the words about keeping the lamps of the sanctuary burning continually, returning to one's possession in the Jubilee, and making vows and offering gifts to God, we come to wonder why God appointed such ordinances 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 (IV), I intend to deliver that word by looking at Leviticus chapters 24 through 27 in order.

The word of Leviticus read 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

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the Cross, and then accomplished our salvation by rising again 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 God gives to the people who have received the remission of sins, we learn the faith and the life that serve 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 look into the commands and promises of God recorded in Leviticus, and learn the life of serving the Lord 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

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Spirit in more detail, I recommend reading Have You Truly 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 He has saved.

The faith and life of the people who belong to God

To understand the ordinances of Leviticus, we must first look at what people God gave this word to. God delivered the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt and became their God. He also appointed the law of sacrifice so that the people who had sinned could receive the remission of sins and come before God. God, who had saved them, taught them to believe and act according to His word, from the worship offered at the tabernacle to the life they would live in the land of Canaan.

In Leviticus chapters 24–27 are recorded the words about the lamps and the showbread of the sanctuary, the law concerning how to treat the name of God and the life of one's neighbor, the sabbatical year and the Jubilee, the blessings and the discipline that follow obedience and disobedience, and vows and offerings. The matters each ordinance deals with and the procedures to be kept differ, but all of them are words given to the people who belong to God. In this book I intend to look into God's will in appointing these ordinances, and to explain the faith and service by which the saved people believe the promises of God and live fearing Him.

Let us look at the ordinance concerning the lamps in Leviticus chapter 24. The people of Israel had to bring pure oil of pressed

olives, and Aaron had to tend the lamps from evening until morning outside the veil of the Testimony in the tabernacle of meeting. God commanded: *"He shall be in charge of the lamps on the pure gold lampstand before the LORD continually" (Leviticus 24:4)*. The work of the people bringing the oil and the priest tending the lamps had to continue according to the word of God.

Through the word that commanded the lamps of the sanctuary to be kept burning continually, we learn the lesson that the saints who have received the remission of sins must believe and continually preach the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. What gives light to our hearts and saves other souls from sin is the word of truth that Jesus has removed all our sins. Therefore we must not rely on our own thoughts or deeds, but must believe, according to the word, in the salvation the Lord has accomplished, and preach that gospel. We must keep in our hearts the word that Jesus has removed our sins with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross, and clearly testify of this fact to other people as well.

This word of the gospel is the word we must continue to believe and rely on even after receiving the remission of sins. As we live, we discover our own shortcomings and faults, but the eternal atonement the Lord has accomplished does not change. Jesus bore the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John and removed our sins by offering Himself as the sacrificial offering. The ground that assures us of the remission of our sins lies in the work of salvation the Lord has done and in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that testifies of it. When we believe this word, we come before God with thankful hearts and can preach the gospel of the remission of sins to other souls as well.

The ordinances concerning the sabbatical year and the Jubilee, and vows and offerings, teach how the people who

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belong to God are to believe in and serve Him. God had the people believe in His provision, care for their poor fellow countrymen, and offer gifts according to the word He had appointed. While warning against disobedience, He also said that He would remember the covenant He had made with their ancestors for the sake of the people who confess their sins and humble their hearts. Therefore we who have received the remission of sins must also lay down our own stubbornness, believe the promises of God, and obey His word. In thanksgiving for the grace of salvation, we must serve the Lord by 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 that by believing the fact that Jesus has borne and removed all our sins, you will 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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Leviticus Chapter 24 seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Leviticus 24:1–4—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 text

"Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: Command the children of Israel that they bring to you pure oil of pressed olives for the light, to make the lamps burn continually. Outside the veil of the Testimony, in the tabernacle of meeting, Aaron shall be in charge of it from evening until morning before the LORD continually; it shall be a statute forever in your generations. He shall be in charge of the lamps on the pure gold lampstand before the LORD continually" (Leviticus 24:1–4).

This word is the ordinance concerning the oil needed to light the lamp of the sanctuary and the responsibility of the priest who looked after that lamp. The children of Israel had to bring pure oil, and Aaron had to light the lamp with that oil and keep tending it.

When we look at this word from the perspective of believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, at its center is the life

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that keeps in the heart the word of the pure gospel that has given the remission of sins, and with that word keeps shining the light of salvation on oneself and on other people.

2. *"Command the children of Israel"*—the people also took part in lighting the lamp

God had Aaron manage the lamp, but He had the children of Israel bring the oil to be used for that lamp. The people brought the oil, and the priest looked after the lamp. The roles they were given were different, but it was a work of serving together so that the lamp would keep burning before God.

When we connect this to the life of a person who believes in the gospel today, we can learn that the work of preaching the gospel must not be thought of as the responsibility of only a few people. There are those who preach the word directly, and there are also those who serve by helping the people who learn the word, by praying, and by taking on the work needed for the spread of the gospel.

What is important is that such service is not an attempt to obtain the remission of sins. Because we have received the remission of sins by believing in the salvation Jesus has already accomplished, we serve together so that other people, too, may hear and believe that word of salvation.

Therefore, before this word we can examine ourselves like this: "Do I keep the gospel of the water and the Spirit to myself alone, or am I taking part so that this gospel is spread to other people as well?"

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3. *"Pure oil of pressed olives"*—what lights the lamp is the word of the pure gospel

In the text, the oil used for the lamps is the pure oil obtained by pressing olives. God commanded that this oil be brought and the lamp be lit with it.

When we connect this oil to the life of faith, what we must hold on to is not the good works of man or one's own righteousness, but the pure word of God. The resolutions and feelings of people change, but the word of the gospel, which testifies how Jesus bore our sins and saved us, does not change.

The saints cannot maintain the assurance of the remission of sins only by the thought that they have lived admirably. If they do so, they gain confidence on the days they do well, and on the days they do wrong they come to doubt even their salvation. It is because they make their own conduct the ground of salvation.

But the gospel of the water and the Spirit turns our eyes from ourselves to Jesus. It makes us believe the word that Jesus bore the sin of the world once and for all with the baptism He received from John, received the punishment of that sin on the Cross, rose again from death, and became our Savior.

The oil that lights the hearts of the saints is not satisfaction with their own righteousness, but the word of the gospel of the remission of sins that Jesus has accomplished.

4. To preach the pure gospel is to preach clearly how Jesus has accomplished salvation

To shine the light of the gospel does not end merely with urging people to live good lives or with handing them religious comfort. It is to let them know clearly what a sinner must believe

in order to obtain the remission of sins.

In Matthew 3:15, Jesus spoke as follows about receiving baptism from John.

"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness."

Also, in John 1:29, John testified of Jesus as follows.

"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

The faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit believes together in the work of Jesus bearing the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John, and in His work of receiving the judgment of that sin on the Cross. By also believing that Jesus rose again from death, this faith confesses that He is our Savior.

Therefore, when we preach the gospel, the fact that Jesus bore sin and the fact that He paid the price of that sin must be conveyed clearly. Only then can the one who hears know and believe how his own sins have been resolved.

The Holy Spirit is not one who leads people apart from this word of salvation. He dwells in the person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and leads him to believe and testify of the truth of salvation. The life that lights the lamp of the gospel is not a life that relies only on the momentary heat of emotion, but a life that believes and follows the word of salvation the Holy Spirit testifies of.

5. *"To make the lamps burn continually"*—we must keep holding on to the word of the completed salvation

God did not finish with lighting the lamp once. Aaron had to

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keep looking after it so that the lamp would burn from evening until morning. Exodus 30:7–8 also speaks of the service of tending the lamps in the morning and lighting the lamps in the evening.

This does not mean that after the saints first hear the gospel and rejoice, they may forget that word. Even after receiving the remission of sins, they must live continually hearing and believing that word of salvation.

That does not mean, however, that Jesus must keep repeating the work of removing our sins. Hebrews 10:14 says:

"For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified."

The salvation Jesus has accomplished is perfect. It is not that this salvation must be accomplished again; it is that we keep believing in and relying on the salvation that has already been accomplished.

Our hearts can grow dark when we discover our own shortcomings or go through hardships. Each time, we must not accept our feelings as if they were the verdict on our salvation, but must confirm again through the word how Jesus bore the sin of the world and paid its price.

To keep the lamp burning is connected in this way to the life that lights one's own heart with the unchanging word of the gospel and keeps preaching that word to other people as well.

6. *"Before the LORD continually"*—we must make the word God has given our standard, rather than the evaluation of people

The text repeatedly says that the work of tending the lamp is a work done before the LORD. The lamp was in the tabernacle

of meeting, in the sanctuary outside the veil that covered the ark of the Testimony. Aaron carried out the work God had commanded in the place God had appointed.

A person who serves the gospel must also remember before whom he is serving. If receiving a good evaluation from people becomes the greatest purpose of faith, one is tempted to emphasize the contents people like and to hide the contents that make them uncomfortable.

But the standard that decides the contents of the gospel is not the reaction of people but the word of salvation God has given. One may refine the expression so that the hearer understands easily, but one must not blur how Jesus bore sin and accomplished salvation.

Also, the work of serving the gospel does not become meaningless just because there is little praise from other people or no result visible right now. The saints carry out by faith the work entrusted to them before God.

7. "*Be in charge of the lamps… continually*"—one's own heart must first be made bright by the word

The lamps needed continual care. One could not expect the lamp to keep burning brightly while neglecting the work of preparing the oil and tending the lamp.

The faith of the saints, too, is not kept healthy only by their own thoughts and feelings while they stay away from the word. Even if they think they already know the gospel, in actual life they can come to rely more on their own works or on the evaluation of people before they know it.

Therefore we must hear and read the word, and examine what we are relying on. We must examine whether we are

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placing the ground of the remission of sins on our own faithfulness, or, on the contrary, whether we have forgotten the salvation Jesus accomplished while looking only at our own shortcomings.

When one's own heart is made bright by the word of the gospel, one can preach that word by faith to other people as well. One breaks away from only telling other people to have the assurance of salvation while one is always pressed down by condemnation and anxiety oneself, and comes to testify of the remission of sins that one believes in and enjoys.

This care goes together with hearing and learning the word, praying, and having fellowship with the saints who believe the same gospel and encouraging one another.

8. We must not put out the lamp because of our own shortcomings

If one takes the word to bring pure oil to mean, "I can serve God only after I have become perfect in every respect," one comes to stop serving every time one discovers one's own shortcomings.

Of course, the saints must live honestly and in holiness. They must not rationalize their wrongs but acknowledge them and turn from them, and if they have done wrong to other people, they must apologize and set it right. But such a change of life does not take the place of the atonement Jesus accomplished.

The salvation Jesus accomplished does not become imperfect just because the shortcomings of the saints have been exposed. Rather, at that time they must lay down the heart that relied on their own righteousness, and hold on more clearly to the word of the remission of sins Jesus has given.

A person who believes in the gospel is not a person who says, "I serve God because I am without blemish." He is a person who confesses, "Because I believe in Jesus, who has saved me, I too, though lacking, serve with thanks for the grace He has given."

The lamp of the gospel is not a light that boasts of one's own perfection, but a light that reveals the grace of Jesus, who has saved sinners.

9. *"It shall be a statute forever in your generations"*—we must pass on the same gospel of salvation to the next person

The ordinance of tending the lamp was not a work that ended with the lifetime of Aaron alone. Israel had to carry on that work from generation to generation.

When we apply this word to the life of spreading the gospel, we come to think of the responsibility that the word of salvation we believe today must be passed on to the next person and the next generation as well. It is not merely handing down religious customs; we must let them know and believe how Jesus saved sinners.

2 Timothy 4:2 says:

"Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching."

The work of preaching the gospel requires longsuffering and teaching. It is not that everyone understands immediately just because it has been explained once. We must listen to what the other person finds difficult, explain the word of salvation step by step, and help him accept it by faith.

This work can continue at home, in the fellowship of the saints, and when we meet a person who hears the gospel for the first time. What is more important than the size of the work one

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is given is to take part by faith so that the same gospel of salvation is passed on without being cut off.

Conclusion

Leviticus 24:1–4 says to prepare pure oil and to keep tending the lamp before God.

Through this word, the saints who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit can examine what they live by and what they must preach. What lights our hearts is not our own righteousness but the word of salvation Jesus has accomplished. It is the gospel that Jesus bore the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, rose again from death, and became our Savior.

It is to keep this word in one's heart, to rely on that word even when discouraged because of one's shortcomings, and to preach the same salvation to other people as well.

To light one's own heart with the word of the pure gospel God has given, and to keep shining that light of salvation on other people as well—this is the life of faith we can learn through this text.

Leviticus 24:5–9—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The whole flow of Leviticus 24:5–9

Leviticus 24:5–9 is the word concerning the twelve loaves of

the showbread that had to be placed at all times on the pure table of the sanctuary.

"And you shall take fine flour and bake twelve cakes with it. Two-tenths of an ephah shall be in each cake. You shall set them in two rows, six in a row, on the pure gold table before the LORD. And you shall put pure frankincense on each row, that it may be on the bread for a memorial, an offering made by fire to the LORD. Every Sabbath he shall set it in order before the LORD continually, being taken from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant. And it shall be for Aaron and his sons, and they shall eat it in a holy place; for it is most holy to him from the offerings of the LORD made by fire, by a perpetual statute."

The core of this word does not lie simply in the fact that bread was displayed in the sanctuary. It lies in the fact that God always remembered the people of Israel before Him, supplied them with the food of life, and had the priests eat that holy food and serve God.

Seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, this showbread shows Jesus Christ, who came to give life to the world, and the word of salvation He has accomplished. The saints must believe that gospel in their hearts and live eating it every day as the food of life.

2. The showbread is 'the bread placed before God'

In Exodus 25:30, God had already commanded as follows concerning the showbread.

"And you shall set the showbread on the table before Me always."

The showbread was placed in the sanctuary, on the pure table opposite the lampstand. To *"set it in order"* means to lay it out

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before God according to a fixed order. Therefore the showbread can commonly be understood as ‘the bread placed before the presence of God’ or ‘the bread of the presence.’

It is not that God required this bread because He needed food. God is not one who must eat the food people offer in order to live. Rather, this bread showed the fact that the life and the food of Israel came from God.

Just as the people of Israel lived eating manna in the wilderness, even after they came to farm and eat bread in the promised land, the One who gave and sustained life was God. Therefore the showbread was not bread by which people fed God, but a sign of the covenant that God feeds His own people.

3. The reason the bread was made of fine flour

Verse 5 says to make the showbread of *“fine flour.”*

Fine flour is, literally, wheat flour that has been ground well and refined. They did not use just any flour mixed with dregs and coarse bits, but flour prepared with care so as to be fit to be offered before God.

Each loaf was made with two-tenths of an ephah, that is, an amount equal to twenty percent of an ephah. This means that they did not make very small, symbolic pieces, but made loaves of a fixed and sufficient quantity. By setting even the ingredients and the quantity of the bread, God kept the priests from making it arbitrarily according to their individual thinking.

The faith that eats this bread is the faith that believes that Jesus, the bread of life, has saved us. Jesus actually came clothed in the flesh of a man, yet He was without blemish, and He obeyed the will of God the Father.

We must believe in our hearts the gospel of the water and the

Spirit, that Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John and received the judgment of those sins by shedding His blood on the Cross. The saints who have eaten this food of life serve God with thanks for the remission of sins the Lord has given.

4. The twelve loaves represent the whole of Israel

God said to make twelve loaves. Seeing that verse 8 says this bread is *"being taken from the children of Israel,"* it is natural to see the twelve loaves as representing all twelve tribes of Israel.

Not just one tribe was placed before God. It was not only the tribe of Judah, nor only the tribe of Levi. All twelve tribes were being remembered before God.

Each tribe of Israel differed in character and role, and at times they even quarreled with one another. Some tribes were strong, and some were small and weak. But all twelve loaves were placed on the same table.

This shows the fact that God embraces His people as a whole. They were before God not because of the conditions or abilities of people, but because of the covenant of God.

It is the same for those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It is not our good works and abilities that make us stand before God. We can stand before God because Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John, paid the price of those sins on the Cross, and, by rising again from death, established us as the people of God.

5. The meaning of placing them in two rows, six in a row

Verse 6 says not to pile up the twelve loaves haphazardly,

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but to set them in two rows, six in a row.

Above all, this means that the work of serving God must be carried out in an orderly way. The priests did not place the bread according to their own mood and convenience, but had to follow the arrangement God had set.

This word can also be applied to the church. Those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must stand in an orderly way before the Lord, even though they differ from one another in character and office. One must not exalt oneself as if one alone were specially recognized by God, nor exclude weak saints from the people of God.

1 Corinthians 10:17 says as follows.

"For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread."

One cannot assert that the twelve loaves of the showbread and the one bread of 1 Corinthians are exactly the same symbol. But they point in the same direction, that the people of God are accepted together in Christ, eat the one food of life, and form one body.

6. The pure table shows the holy fellowship before God

The showbread was not placed in just any place. It was placed on *"the pure gold table before the LORD."* This table is the table that was made according to the command of God in Exodus chapter 25 and overlaid with pure gold.

Therefore, the *"pure gold table"* here refers first of all to the holy article that was actually set apart and placed inside the sanctuary. God had the showbread placed on that table so that it would be before Him at all times.

But the fact that bread was placed on this table and that the

priests ate that bread shows the holy fellowship between God and His people. It is because in the Bible, the act of eating food together carries the meaning of reconciliation and fellowship, not merely the taking in of nourishment.

A sinner cannot have fellowship with the holy God by himself. Only when sin has been resolved can he stand before God and eat the food of life that God gives. The One who has actually opened this relationship is Jesus Christ.

Because Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John and, bearing those sins, received the judgment on the Cross, we have been reconciled with God. By Jesus rising again from death, a new and living way of drawing near to God has been opened.

7. What does the frankincense mean?

Verse 7 says to put *"pure frankincense"* on each row.

Frankincense is an actual spice that gives off fragrance. Here it was placed before God together with the bread and then burned as *"a memorial"* and offered to the LORD as an offering made by fire. Instead of burning the whole of the bread, the frankincense was offered to God as a memorial, and the bread became the portion of the priests.

The *"memorial"* does not mean that God had forgotten something and then remembered it again when He smelled the fragrance of the frankincense. It is a sacrificial sign that officially commemorates the covenant people and their offering before God.

The frankincense here is distinguished from the olive oil put into the lamps. The frankincense is a memorial burned and offered to God, and the bread was given for Aaron and his sons

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to eat in a holy place.

In the words of the New Testament concerning the sweet-smelling offering that God receives, we can think of the sweet-smelling sacrifice in which Jesus Christ offered Himself in complete obedience to the Father.

"Given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma" (Ephesians 5:2).

The whole life of Jesus and His work of salvation were a sweet-smelling offering that the Father gladly received. That Jesus fulfilled all righteousness by receiving baptism from John and gave up His own life on the Cross was complete obedience to the will of the Father.

8. The reason new bread was placed every Sabbath

Verse 8 says to set this bread in order before the LORD *"every Sabbath … continually."*

Two things are important here.

First, the showbread had to be before God at all times. The table was not to be left neglected as an empty table without bread. It shows that the people of Israel were always being remembered before God, and that the supply of life also continued to come from God.

Second, the bread was replaced with new bread every Sabbath. They did not keep leaving the bread of the previous week, but placed new bread. 1 Samuel 21:6 also records that the former showbread was taken away and *"hot bread"* was newly offered.

This does not mean that the work of salvation of Jesus is repeated every week. The salvation Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John, His death on the Cross, and His

rising again from death was completed once and for all. It is not that Jesus must receive baptism from John again or be hung on the Cross again every time the saints commit sin.

But the completed gospel must keep being remembered and believed in the hearts of the saints. It is not that the gospel itself grows old and is exchanged for a new one; it is that our hearts must accept that gospel anew every day.

If the heart grows distant from the gospel while saying, "I already know it," the knowledge may remain but the soul can dry up. Every time one's own shortcomings are exposed, one must believe again the word that Jesus bore even that sin, and renew one's thanks and faith.

9. The substance of the showbread is Jesus, the bread of life

Jesus said in John 6:35:

"I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst."

The showbread was material bread placed in the sanctuary, so one could not obtain eternal life by eating it. But that bread makes one look to the true bread that would come down from heaven and give life to the world.

Jesus said again:

"I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world" (John 6:51).

That Jesus gave His flesh for the life of the world means that He came in the actual flesh of a man and accomplished the work of salvation with that body.

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—Jesus came to this earth clothed in the flesh.

—Jesus bore all the sins of the world with the baptism He received from John.

—Bearing the sin of the world, He was hung on the Cross and was judged by shedding His blood.

—By rising again from death, Jesus gave new life to those who believe.

This is the concrete content of how Jesus, the bread of life, gave us life.

10. The meaning of eating the flesh of Jesus and drinking His blood

In John chapter 6, Jesus said that the person who eats His flesh and drinks His blood obtains eternal life. This does not mean literally eating the flesh of Jesus.

Jesus made clear the meaning of that word as follows.

"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63).

To eat the flesh of Jesus is to accept in one's heart the fact that Jesus bore our sins in His own body with the baptism He received from John. To drink the blood of Jesus is to believe that with the blood He shed on the Cross, He paid in full both the judgment for our sins and the price of life.

To eat the gospel of the water and the Spirit with the heart is to believe and accept the following facts.

—I was a person who had to die before God because of sin.

—Jesus bore all my sins with the baptism He received from John.

—Bearing those sins, Jesus was judged by shedding His

blood on the Cross.

—By rising again from death, Jesus gave me new life.

—Jesus, who accomplished this work, is my Savior.

Knowing the gospel as a mere doctrine and eating it with the heart are different. Just as food does not become nourishment for the body by looking at it with the eyes and memorizing its ingredients, if one knows the gospel only as knowledge and does not believe it in the heart, it cannot become the life of the soul.

11. The water, the blood, and the Spirit testify of one salvation

1 John 5:6–8 says as follows.

"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

The showbread shows Jesus, the bread of life, and His word of salvation. The faith that eats that bread is the faith that accepts in the heart the work of salvation Jesus has accomplished.

It is not that one thinks of the blood of the Cross separately by itself; one must believe together the fact that Jesus bore sin with the baptism He received from John, the fact that, bearing that sin, He shed His blood on the Cross, and the fact that the Holy Spirit testifies that this salvation is true.

The water, the blood, and the Spirit do not speak of three different salvations. They testify of the one perfect salvation Jesus Christ has accomplished.

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12. Why did only Aaron and his sons eat it?

Verse 9 gave to Aaron and his sons the showbread that had been taken away, and had them eat it in a holy place.

This bread was not an ordinary meal. Because it was the portion allotted to the priests out of the most holy offerings offered to God, the priests whom God had set apart had to eat it in a holy place.

There is an important spiritual principle in this word. It is that the priest who serves God must first eat the food God gives. Just as a person who has not eaten cannot gather strength and serve, a person who does not believe the gospel in his heart and receive its supply cannot rightly serve other souls.

In the New Testament, those who have received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit are called *"a royal priesthood."*

"But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people" (1 Peter 2:9).

Therefore, today the privilege of eating the bread of life must not be interpreted as something monopolized by pastors or certain clergy alone. All the saints who have received the remission of sins by believing in Jesus Christ must eat the bread of life by faith and live the life of priests who preach that gospel to other people.

13. What does the event of David eating the showbread show?

Originally, only the priests could eat the showbread. But in 1 Samuel chapter 21, when David, who was fleeing, and his company were starving, the priest gave them the showbread he

had taken away while replacing it with new showbread.

Jesus also spoke of this event to those who were condemning His disciples over the matter of the Sabbath.

"Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God and ate the showbread which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests?" (Matthew 12:3–4).

The same event is also recorded in Mark 2:25–26 and Luke 6:3–4.

This does not mean that the holiness of the showbread had disappeared. Rather, it shows the fact that the holy ordinance of God was not given to kill people but to give life.

Jesus spoke of David eating the showbread, and said that if they had known the meaning that God desires mercy, they would not have condemned His innocent disciples. He also made clear that He Himself is Lord of the Sabbath (Matthew 12:3–8).

14. The lesson learned by the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit

—We must not stop at "knowing" the gospel. The showbread had to be before God at all times. The gospel, too, must not be pushed out from the center of our hearts. We must not store away the gospel of the remission of sins as a doctrine heard once in the past, but accept it with present faith.

—It is not that we look for a new gospel, but that we believe the completed gospel anew. It is not that the content of the gospel keeps changing just because new bread was placed every Sabbath. The gospel accomplished by the baptism Jesus received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His rising again

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from death is the same forever. Only, our hearts must acknowledge that gospel anew every day and give thanks.

—The one who has eaten first must share with others. The priests ate the showbread and carried out the office of the sanctuary. The saints, too, must eat the gospel sufficiently with the heart and share the food of life with the souls starving from sin and condemnation.

—We must regard all the people of God as precious. Just as all twelve loaves were placed before God, the person born again by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not excluded from the people of God because of his character, ability, or circumstances. Both the strong saints and the weak saints are in the same salvation.

—We must keep holiness and love together. The showbread was most holy bread, but in the event of David it was used to give life to starving lives. Love without truth is wrong, but truth without love easily becomes legalism. We must serve in the direction of giving life to people while keeping the holiness of the gospel.

Conclusion

The showbread of Leviticus 24:5–9 shows the fact that God always places the twelve tribes of Israel before Him, remembers them within the covenant, and supplies them with the food of life.

The true bread of life to which that showbread points is Jesus Christ. Jesus came clothed in the flesh of a man, bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John, paid the price of sin by shedding His blood on the Cross, and gave us new life by rising again from death.

Therefore, the faith that eats the showbread is not simply piling up knowledge about Jesus. It is to accept in the heart the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus has accomplished, to obtain the remission of sins and eternal life through that gospel, and to confirm that grace every day and share it with other souls.

What gives life to the souls of the saints is not a new religious stimulation. Like the showbread that was always placed before God, it is the gospel, placed unchangingly before us, that Jesus Christ accomplished with the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His rising again from death.

Leviticus 24:10–23—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The whole flow of Leviticus 24:10–23

This text begins with a fight that broke out in the camp. When one of the men who were fighting blasphemed the name of the LORD and cursed, the people did not execute him immediately but put him in custody and waited for the command of God. As God judged the sin of that man, He also spoke together of the standard of righteousness concerning murder, injury, and damage to property, and even of the law that applies equally to the stranger and to the native.

Therefore the center of this text does not lie simply in the point, “Whoever insults the name of God must be stoned.” It shows the following things together.

—The name of God and His holiness

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—The seriousness of the sin that breaks down the order of the community

—A formal judgment, not emotional retaliation

—The responsibility of those who give testimony

—The proportion between crime and punishment

—The difference in value between life and property

—The same righteousness for the stranger and the native

—The vicarious atonement of Jesus Christ, who bore the judgment of sin in our place

2. A fight spread into the sin of blaspheming the name of God

Verses 10–11 record the beginning of the event.

"Now the son of an Israelite woman, whose father was an Egyptian, went out among the children of Israel; and this Israelite woman's son and a man of Israel fought each other in the camp. And the Israelite woman's son blasphemed the name of the LORD and cursed; and so they brought him to Moses. (His mother's name was Shelomith the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan.)"

This man was born to an Israelite mother and an Egyptian father. But his mixed lineage itself was not a sin or the reason for punishment. Verses 16 and 22 say that the same law applies to the stranger and to the native. The standard of the judgment was not his status but the fact that he had blasphemed God.

The event began with a fight between two men. But as emotions ran high, one of them went so far as to blaspheme the name of God and curse.

This was not a matter of merely mispronouncing the name of God by mistake. It was an act of publicly insulting and defying

the God of the covenant, who was present in the camp of Israel and who had saved them out of Egypt. Considering that God was the true King of Israel, this went beyond personal impiety; it was an act like rebellion that shook the covenant foundation of the community.

The Ten Commandments had already commanded as follows.

"You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain" (Exodus 20:7).

3. The name of God is not a mere title

In the Bible, the name of God does not mean merely a pronunciation or a designation. The name of God holds together the being, the character, the authority, the word, and the covenant of God.

Therefore, to blaspheme the name of God is a sin deeper than simply using an impious word. It includes distorting who God is, denying His authority, and calling what He has done evil.

Today it can appear in the following forms.

—Lying or swearing falsely in the name of God

—Claiming that "God has spoken" in order to fulfill one's own greed

—Using the authority of God in order to control people or to gain money

—Deliberately distorting the salvation God has accomplished

—Exalting God with the mouth while profaning the name of God with one's life

But not every doubt or theological question should be labeled immediately as blasphemy either. One must distinguish between

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asking honestly in order to know the truth and maliciously insulting God while knowing the truth.

4. The reason the people did not kill him immediately but put him in custody

Verse 12 is very important.

"Then they put him in custody, that the mind of the LORD might be shown to them."

The people heard him blaspheming the name of God, but they did not throw stones immediately. They put him in custody and waited for what judgment God would give.

This shows the fact that the righteousness of God is different from the anger of a crowd. It is not that no procedure is needed just because the sin is great. Rather, the graver the punishment, the more it requires confirmation of the facts and a clear judgment.

This word gives an important lesson today as well. One must not condemn a person or ruin him socially on hearsay alone just because his words sounded impious. Especially when collective anger arises on the internet or within a community, the following matters must be confirmed.

—What did he actually say?

—What is the context of those words?

—Is the testimony accurate?

—Is it deliberate insult, or ignorance or a mistake?

—Who has the authority to judge?

If, under the banner of guarding the holiness of God, one gives false testimony or condemns hastily, that too is a sin that violates the righteousness of God.

5. The reason the witnesses laid their hands on his head

In verse 14, God says as follows.

"Take outside the camp him who has cursed; then let all who heard him lay their hands on his head, and let all the congregation stone him."

Here, the witnesses laying their hands on the head of the offender was an act of turning back on him what he had done in blaspheming God.

The laying on of hands carries the meaning of passing something on or turning it back on someone. In Leviticus chapters 1 and 16, the sinner had his sins passed on to the sacrificial offering. In Leviticus chapter 24, those who had heard those words laid their hands on the head of the one who had cursed and turned that blasphemy back on him, and he received the judgment for his own sin.

Deuteronomy 17:6–7 also stipulates that the death penalty may not be carried out on the testimony of one person alone, and that the witnesses must first take part in carrying out the sentence. This was a safeguard so that testimony could not be given lightly.

Therefore this man cannot be seen as a sacrificial offering that takes the place of sinners. He was judged for his own sin of blaspheming God. Unlike him, Jesus, who has no sin, bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John and received the judgment of those sins on the Cross in our place.

6. Why was he taken outside the camp?

The offender was taken outside the camp. In the middle of the camp was the tabernacle, and God dwelt among His people.

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Therefore, sending him outside the camp was not simply moving the place of execution; it showed the fact that he had violated the holiness of the covenant community and had been cut off from the community.

Outside the camp was the place where unclean things and things under judgment were dealt with. But in the New Testament, a very astonishing reversal appears.

"Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate" (Hebrews 13:12).

Jesus was not one who had blasphemed the name of God. He committed no sin, and there was no deceit in His mouth. Yet the religious leaders, on the contrary, accused Jesus as a man who had spoken blasphemy.

"Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, 'He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy! What do you think?' They answered and said, 'He is deserving of death'" (Matthew 26:65–66).

The sinners who had truly blasphemed God were human beings, but Jesus, who has no sin, was condemned as a blasphemer and taken outside the gate. This does not mean that Jesus was actually a blasphemer; it means that He bore in our place the condemnation and the curse we were to receive.

7. How should the punishment of stoning be understood?

The death penalty imposed on the one who blasphemed the name of the LORD was an actual punishment carried out within the covenant community of ancient Israel. At that time, Israel was a religious community and at the same time a national

community to which God had directly given the law. The act of publicly cursing the name of God was covenant rebellion, defying God, the King of the community.

But the church today has no authority to carry out this regulation literally. The church of the New Testament is not a theocratic state like ancient Israel, and the church has not been given the authority to stone people or to carry out the death penalty.

In the New Testament, the way the church deals with sin is rebuke through the word, exhortation, repentance, and church discipline and restoration. Criminal punishment for crimes must be handled by the judicial institutions of a lawful state. Neither individual saints nor the church may exercise violence.

Therefore, the punishment of this text must not be used as grounds for saying that it is permissible today to inflict violence on a person who has insulted a particular religion.

8. Why do the laws concerning murder and injury suddenly follow?

In verses 17–21 come the laws concerning murder, the killing of an animal, and the injuring of a person.

"Whoever kills any man shall surely be put to death. Whoever kills an animal shall make it good, animal for animal."

This regulation distinguishes between life and property. Because an animal was important property, restitution had to be made without fail when it was killed; but the life of a person could not be replaced by mere material restitution. It is because man was made in the image of God.

As God judged the case of blasphemy, He also set forth the principle of righteousness that no judgment may vary according

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to emotion or status. Neither the sin that violates the holiness of God nor the sin that harms the life and body of a person is light.

It is a contradiction to claim to exalt the name of God while treating the life and human rights of people carelessly.

9. The reason God distinguished the life of a person from property

A person who claims to love God must also regard as precious the life of a person made in the image of God.

In verses 18 and 21, in the case of killing an animal, God had restitution made with an animal of the same value. But in the case of killing a person, it could not be replaced with goods. This means that human life is essentially more precious than property.

This principle is important today as well. Restitution can be made for economic loss, but the life and personhood of a person must not be converted into money. To sacrifice the life and personhood of a victim under the banner of protecting the honor of the church or the interests of an organization is not the righteousness of God.

10. The true meaning of *"eye for eye, tooth for tooth"*

Verses 19–20 say as follows.

"If a man causes disfigurement of his neighbor, as he has done, so shall it be done to him—fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; as he has caused disfigurement of a man, so shall it be done to him."

This word shows the righteousness of God, that the person who has injured another must be judged according to what he

has done. God did not do away with responsibility for sin, nor did He permit retaliation exceeding the harm. Nor did He give individuals the right to take private revenge.

Jesus corrected the attitude of using this word as a pretext for personal retaliation.

He said, *"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.'"* Then He commanded them to love their enemies and to pray for those who persecute them (Matthew 5:38–44). The fair trial of the state and the attitude of the individual are distinguished. Public institutions must restrain evil, but the saints must give up private revenge. Romans 12:19 also teaches, *"Do not avenge yourselves"* but leave it to the judgment of God.

11. The same law for the stranger and the native

Verse 22 is the important conclusion of this passage.

"You shall have the same law for the stranger and for one from your own country; for I am the LORD your God."

The offender was not punished more heavily because his father was an Egyptian, nor was he given preferential treatment for being an Israelite. The standard of the trial was not lineage, ethnicity, or social standing, but the law of God.

In the light of the gospel, too, this principle becomes even clearer. All peoples are equally sinners, and no one is saved by lineage or religious background. At the same time, no people is excluded from salvation. Both Jews and Gentiles receive the same remission of sins by believing in the baptism Jesus received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His rising again from death.

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12. Righteousness and the gospel of the water and the Spirit

This text shows the fact that sin demands actual judgment. The love of God is not a sentiment that covers up sin as if it did not exist. The price of sin must be paid without fail.

Every person has profaned the name of God with his lips, his heart, and his life. Therefore, before the law, we too must be judged. But when Jesus, who has no sin, received baptism from John, He bore all our sins, including our blasphemy, our lies, and our curses. After that, the Lord was falsely charged with the crime of blasphemy, taken outside the gate, and hung on the Cross.

Galatians 3:13 testifies that Christ *"has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us."* Jesus was not cursed because He was a sinner; He received the curse and death in our place because of our sins, which He bore with the baptism He received from John. And by rising again from death, He completed our salvation.

Here the righteousness and the love of God appear together. God judges sin according to righteousness, yet because He loves sinners, He had His own Son bear in their place the judgment they were to receive. The gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a gospel that has abolished righteousness, but a gospel in which Jesus fulfilled all the demands of righteousness and gave life to sinners.

13. Sin does not become light just because one has received grace

The word that Jesus bore all sins does not mean that one may

now profane the name of God as one pleases. The remission of sins is not a license that makes one take sin lightly, but the grace that makes one know deeply the fearfulness of sin and the sacrifice of the Lord.

The saved person must be careful especially in his words. James 3:9–10 says that it is not fitting to bless God and, with the same mouth, curse people made in the image of God. Therefore the saints must guard against the following.

—Lying in the name of God or justifying one's own greed

—Using the gospel to gain money and power

—Condemning people on the basis of unconfirmed rumors

—Cursing the personhood and life of the other person when angry

—Insulting people or exercising violence against them because their faith is different

A person who respects the name of God must also use pure speech toward others.

14. The righteousness the church today must apply

This text teaches that the church must live as follows.

First, the graver the wrong, the more it must go through accurate confirmation of the facts and a fair procedure. People must not be judged by rumors and the emotions of a crowd.

Second, those who give testimony must take responsibility for their own words. False testimony and exaggerated exposure can destroy the lives of other people.

Third, the harm and the measures taken must be proportionate. One must neither bury a person's whole life on the pretext of a small mistake, nor reduce grave violence and exploitation to a mere mistake.

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Fourth, the same standard must be applied to foreigners, the poor, and the socially weak. A judgment that is lenient toward the powerful and strict only toward the weak is not the righteousness of God.

Fifth, the church must deal with sin not by violence, but by the word, exhortation, and proper discipline. Criminal offenses must not be covered up within the church, but must be brought under the judgment of the proper institutions of the state.

Sixth, the saints must not take vengeance privately. They may make the wrong known truthfully and demand the necessary protection and restitution, but they must not harbor hatred and retaliate; they must leave judgment to God.

Conclusion

Leviticus 24:10–23 shows that God is holy and righteous and actually judges the words and deeds of people. At the same time, it makes us look to the gospel of the water and the Spirit, in which Jesus, who has no sin, bore in our place the curse we were to receive and suffered outside the gate.

Because Jesus bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of sin on the Cross, and rose again from death, we have been redeemed from the curse. The person who believes this gospel must live a life that not only exalts the name of God but also respects the life and personhood of people, judges fairly, avoids false testimony, and does not take private revenge on enemies. ✉

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

Light the lamp of the gospel with the word of the remission of sins

< Leviticus 24:1-4 >

"Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: Command the children of Israel that they bring to you pure oil of pressed olives for the light, to make the lamps burn continually. Outside the veil of the Testimony, in the tabernacle of meeting, Aaron shall be in charge of it from evening until morning before the LORD continually; it shall be a statute forever in your generations. He shall be in charge of the lamps on the pure gold lampstand before the LORD continually."

The lamp that must be lit with the oil God has appointed

Dear beloved saints, in today's word God commanded Moses concerning the lamp of the sanctuary. The children of Israel had to bring the oil to light the lamp, and Aaron had to look after before the LORD the lamps lit with that oil. The people who prepared the oil and the priest who tended the lamp each had the work entrusted to them. Through that work, God had the light keep shining in the place He had commanded. He said: *"Command the children of Israel that they bring to you*

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pure oil of pressed olives for the light, to make the lamps burn continually" (Leviticus 24:2).

God said to bring pure oil of pressed olives. He did not leave people to choose whatever material each thought good and light the fire with it. The lamp God had commanded had to be lit with the oil God had appointed. The light of the sanctuary was not a light that changed according to the taste of the people.

Through this word, we must examine what we light our hearts with before God and what we must preach to the world. What shines the light of salvation into our hearts is the word of God, which has washed away sin completely. The word of the pure gospel, which lets us know what God accomplished through Jesus Christ, must be in us. Only then can we know how we ourselves have received the remission of sins, and preach clearly to other people the way to receive the remission of sins.

People easily rely on their own faithfulness and zeal. They try to obtain peace of heart from the fact that they have prayed more than others, served for a long time, and striven to correct their wrongs. But even if such labors are gathered together, they cannot remove the sins already committed. The sins committed earlier do not disappear by themselves just because one did a good deed yesterday. The answer to how sins are washed away lies within the word of salvation God has given.

The fact that we must live holy lives is also clear. However, resolving to live a holy life and being washed of sin must be known as distinct things. The remission of sins is received by believing in the salvation the Lord has accomplished. The person who has received that grace lives serving God. If one reverses the order and makes one's own life the ground of salvation, the heart keeps examining itself endlessly and yet cannot resolve the problem of sin.

The word of the remission of sins must first light our hearts

Just as there must be oil in the lamp for the fire to be lit, in the heart of the person who preaches the gospel there must be the word of salvation God has given. He must know and believe through the word how Jesus bore his sins and how He received the judgment for those sins. When that truth takes its place in the heart, he comes to have the assurance of the remission of sins.

When one looks at one's own conduct, there are days worthy of praise and days of shame. On some days one feels like a person with strong faith, and then, looking at the evil thoughts within oneself, one becomes discouraged. If one judges the remission of sins with oneself as the standard, that judgment also wavers according to one's circumstances. But the fact that the Lord bore our sins does not change according to how our day went.

Therefore, when our faults are exposed, we must acknowledge those faults honestly and come before the word of God. We must confirm how the Lord bore my sins and what judgment He received on the Cross. We cannot make our conscience clean by dressing ourselves up as good people. The salvation of the Lord, who bore sin and paid its price, gives the true answer to our conscience. He said: *"Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, 'I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life'" (John 8:12).*

Jesus gives the light of life to the person who is in sin. The person who could not stand before God because of sin comes to believe in the salvation the Lord has accomplished and draws near to God. The person who did not know whether his sins had been resolved comes to know the remission of sins through the

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gospel of the water and the Spirit. In this way the gospel shines the salvation of the Lord clearly into our hearts.

In order to light the hearts of other people, we too must be standing in the place of believing this word. One cannot tell other people to be saved by faith while one is still trying to remove one's own sins by works. We must first obtain peace through the salvation of the Lord, and preach that salvation just as it is. The light of the gospel does not come from a confidence we produce ourselves. It shines from the heart that believes in the salvation God has accomplished.

Jesus bore our sins by receiving baptism from John

Then what is the word of salvation that lights our hearts? It is the gospel of the water and the Spirit, that Jesus washed away our sins with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross. To know this gospel, we must know clearly what Jesus did in order to save sinners.

In the sacrifices of the Old Testament, the sinner laid his hands on the offering and passed his sins on to it, and the offering that had the sins transferred to it was killed and shed its blood. The passing on of sin and the judgment for sin were connected with each other. Through such sacrifices God showed how a sinner comes to receive the remission of sins. And Jesus came to this earth and accomplished that salvation.

Jesus, who has no sin, went to the Jordan River and received 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).*

In the baptism Jesus received from John is contained the work of bearing the sin of mankind. Just as the sinner passed his sins on to the offering 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, who represented mankind. In order to fulfill the righteous will of God to save sinners, He Himself bore our sins.

Only when we believe this fact can we know how my sins and the Cross of Jesus are connected. Jesus was not hung on the Cross because of His own sins. Because He bore our sins when He received baptism from John, He went to the Cross bearing those sins. If we leave out the baptism of the Lord, we cannot clearly preach how the Lord, who has no sin, is the Savior who bore our sins. John testified: *"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).*

John testified of Jesus as *"the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."* Our sins, too, are included in that sin of the world. It is not that only the few wrongs we remember are included. The Lord bore all the sins we commit from birth until death. The sins we come to realize later, too, are not sins the Lord did not know. Jesus knew the sins of our whole lifetime and bore those sins by receiving baptism from John.

He was judged with the blood of the Cross and gave the Holy Spirit to those who believe

Jesus, who bore our sins, shed His blood and died on the Cross. He received in our place death, the wages of sin. Therefore the faith that believes in the blood of the Cross must be connected with the baptism the Lord received from John. We

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must believe together the fact that the Lord bore our sins with His baptism, and that because of those sins He was judged on the Cross.

The Lord did not leave to us the work of resolving our sins. The Lord did the work of bearing sin, and the Lord also did the work of paying the price of that sin. And Jesus rose again from death. The Lord, who resolved our sins with His baptism and blood and rose again from death, became our Savior. We receive the remission of sins by believing this salvation in our hearts.

To receive the remission of sins, one must not pretend not to know one's wrongs; one must acknowledge that one is fundamentally a sinner and accept the fact that one cannot remove one's sins by one's own strength. And one must believe in Jesus Christ, who bore those sins and was judged. The assurance of the remission of sins arises when one believes the word that the Lord has completely resolved all those sins.

The apostle Peter preached as follows: *"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).*

God gives the Holy Spirit as a gift to the person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Here one must not think that the act itself of a person being baptized with water removes sin. The baptism we receive expresses the faith that believes in the salvation Jesus has accomplished. We must know distinctly the baptism that Jesus, who bore our sins, received from John, and the baptism we receive by faith.

Nor is there any need to force one's emotions to become fervent in order to receive the Holy Spirit. God said that He gives the Holy Spirit as a gift to the person who has received the remission of sins. Therefore the person who desires the

indwelling of the Holy Spirit must first hear and believe what the gospel of the water and the Spirit testifies of. When one believes the fact that one's sins have been washed away by the baptism and the blood of Jesus, one receives the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit that God gives.

Here is the truth we must hold on to before the word that tells us to light the lamp with pure oil. We must accept the word of salvation in our hearts and believe it. The Holy Spirit is not one who leads us apart from the word of God. He dwells in us and leads us to believe in the salvation the Lord has accomplished and to preach that gospel. We can serve God with the assurance the Holy Spirit gives within the word of the remission of sins.

The priest who tends the lamps before the LORD

Following the command to bring the oil, God spoke of the place and the time at which Aaron had to look after the lamp. He said: *"Outside the veil of the Testimony, in the tabernacle of meeting, Aaron shall be in charge of it from evening until morning before the LORD continually; it shall be a statute forever in your generations" (Leviticus 24:3).*

The place where the lamps were looked after was in the tabernacle of meeting, outside the veil that covered the ark of the Testimony. There Aaron had to tend the lamp from evening until morning. His duty did not end with having lit the fire once. He had to see that the lamp kept doing its work. God entrusted this work as a duty performed before the LORD.

For us who have received the remission of sins, too, there is the work the Lord has entrusted. The apostle Peter spoke to the saved saints: *"But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may*

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proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9).

To proclaim the grace with which God has saved us from sin is the duty of the saved priests. What we are to put forward is not our own career or fine character. We must let people know how the Lord delivered us, who were in sin. We must preach the word so that the one who hears believes in the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross and receives the remission of sins.

When we apply the word about looking after the lamp to our faith, too, we must examine this point. We must look back on whether the words I preach actually contain the gospel of the remission of sins. Words that comfort people and exhort them to live rightly are also needed, but if one does not let a person know the way to be washed of sin, that person's problem of sin remains as it is. From words that merely say to keep attending church for a long time, one cannot know what salvation Jesus has accomplished.

Therefore, when we preach the word, we must pay attention to the heart of the one who hears and preach the truth of salvation clearly. To the person who is afraid because of sin, we must let him know the fact that the Lord bore that sin; and to the person who relies on his own good deeds, we must preach so that he believes in the righteousness of the Lord. To the person who strives to resolve his sins by his own strength, we must explain the salvation accomplished by the baptism, the blood, and the resurrection. This is the work in which we who have received the remission of sins serve, shining the light of the gospel.

Keep shining the light with the gospel you have received from the Lord

He said: *"He shall be in charge of the lamps on the pure gold lampstand before the LORD continually" (Leviticus 24:4).*

The text says again to keep tending the lamps before the LORD. The standard for the work of lighting the lamp lay with God. Aaron could not decide his duty by the standard of how much people recognized him. Because it was the work God had entrusted, he had to carry it out faithfully before God.

We, too, as we preach the gospel, have times when our hearts are moved by the reactions of people. It is easy to lean toward words the hearer will like, and one may even think that the word of salvation preached repeatedly may now be left out. But the content of the gospel that saves sinners cannot change. The baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross are not knowledge needed only for a moment when one first receives the remission of sins. They are the truth of salvation that we must keep believing and preaching even after receiving the remission of sins.

The salvation of the Lord has already been accomplished. The reason we keep preaching the gospel is that those who do not yet know that salvation must hear the word and believe. Also, we who have received the remission of sins must confirm through the word what God has accomplished every time we return to our own thoughts and waver. As we hear and share the word together, we must establish one another's hearts firmly on the gospel.

The people brought the oil, and Aaron tended the lamp. Today we, too, can serve together for the gospel in the place God has entrusted to us. We must be of one heart in the work of preaching the word and in the work of adding our strength so

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that the word reaches people. Even if the work each person is given is not the same, we can take part together with the faith that hopes for sinners to hear the gospel and receive the remission of sins.

Dear beloved saints, God has given us the pure word of salvation. Jesus bore all our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death. We who believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit have received the remission of sins and have received the Holy Spirit as a gift. How precious is the grace of the Lord, who has lit our hearts!

Now let us keep that word in our hearts and carry out the duty entrusted to us before God. Let us make known the way of salvation to other people as well, with the very gospel by which we ourselves received the remission of sins. Let us light our hearts with the word the Lord has given, and bring the light of life to the people who are in darkness because of sin. We give thanks and glory to the Lord, who has saved us and made us serve the gospel. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

Believe in the Lord, the bread of life, and enjoy the grace of the remission of sins

< Leviticus 24:5-9 >

"And you shall take fine flour and bake twelve cakes with it. Two-tenths of an ephah shall be in each cake. You shall set them in two rows, six in a row, on the pure gold table before the LORD. And you shall put pure frankincense on each row, that it may be on the bread for a memorial, an offering made by fire to the LORD. Every Sabbath he shall set it in order before the LORD continually, being taken from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant. And it shall be for Aaron and his sons, and they shall eat it in a holy place; for it is most holy to him from the offerings of the LORD made by fire, by a perpetual statute."

The twelve loaves of bread placed before the LORD

Dear beloved saints, people live by eating food. Even if food is close at hand, if one does not eat it, one cannot gain strength from that food. We must also examine our faith in how we treat the word of God. The fact that one has a Bible and has heard the

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word about the gospel is distinct from accepting that word as the truth of one's own salvation and believing it. Only when one believes in one's heart the salvation the Lord has given does that salvation become one's own.

In today's text appears the bread that is set in order before God. God said how that bread was to be made, where it was to be placed, and who was to eat it. He said: *"And you shall take fine flour and bake twelve cakes with it. Two-tenths of an ephah shall be in each cake" (Leviticus 24:5)*. He also said: *"You shall set them in two rows, six in a row, on the pure gold table before the LORD" (Leviticus 24:6).*

They had to bake twelve loaves of bread with fine flour, making each loaf with the quantity of two-tenths of an ephah. And they had to place them in two rows of six loaves each on the pure table before the LORD. God set even the number and quantity of the loaves and the place and arrangement in which they were set in order. The people had to prepare the bread according to that word and place it before God.

To set in order means to lay out in an appointed place. This bread was the bread placed before the LORD. In Exodus, too, God commanded that the showbread be set on the table so that it would be before Him always. Israel had to keep doing the work of placing before Him the bread God had appointed.

When we read this word, we must go beyond the fact that bread was placed in the sanctuary and think about what kind of food God gives His own people. Just as the flesh needs food, our souls need the word that gives life. God has given us the remission of sins and eternal life through Jesus Christ, and has made us, who have been saved, live believing that truth. The word that proclaims the salvation of the Lord becomes the food of our hearts.

It is a holy offering offered to God and the food given to the priests

God said to put pure frankincense on each row of the bread that was set in order. He said: *"And you shall put pure frankincense on each row, that it may be on the bread for a memorial, an offering made by fire to the LORD" (Leviticus 24:7).*

The frankincense was set apart as a memorial burned and offered to the LORD. In verse 9 that follows, He gives the bread to Aaron and his sons and has them eat it in a holy place. The offering to God and the portion that goes to the priests are appointed together. He did not have people take the bread and eat it as they pleased; He had it set apart and offered before the LORD and had the priests eat it according to His command.

The text says that this bread is most holy. This is not a word explaining how special a taste the bread had. It means that it is an offering belonging to God and a holy portion that must be used for the purpose God has appointed. When the priests received that bread, they had to accept together with it the command of God given to them. Even the place of eating could not be decided according to their own convenience.

Here we see the fact that God did not only entrust the priests with a duty but also gave them food to eat. The priests who served God also had to eat food. They did not become people who needed no food because they worked in the sanctuary. God appointed the portion they were to eat and had them eat it in a holy place.

We, too, who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and serve God today, need the food of the word. Even the person who teaches the Bible to other people must believe the word of the Lord and gain strength from it. It is not that one becomes a

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person who no longer needs to hear the word of salvation just because one has served the gospel for a long time. The person who has received the remission of sins by the grace the Lord has bestowed serves the gospel relying on that grace of salvation. One must not neglect the work of accepting into one's own heart the food God gives and believing it.

Jesus became the bread that gives us life

When we think of the food of life through the bread of the sanctuary, we must look to Jesus, who said that He Himself is the bread of life. He said: *"And Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst" (John 6:35).*

Jesus spoke of coming to Him and of believing in Him. The life the Lord gives is given to the person who believes in Him. Therefore we must know what the faith that eats the bread of life is. One cannot obtain the life the Lord gives merely by imitating the act of eating food with the mouth or by performing religious rites. One must know and believe the work of salvation the Lord has done for us. He also said: *"I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world" (John 6:51).*

The Lord said that He gives His flesh for the life of the world. That Jesus came to this earth clothed in the flesh of a man was for our salvation. The Lord came to save us, who were shut up in sin and could only die. Because we could not cast off sin by ourselves and go up to God, Jesus, who is God, came to us and accomplished salvation.

We can resolve to live good lives, but we cannot pay by

ourselves the price of the sins we have already committed and the sins we will commit in the future. A person who cannot save even his own life cannot give eternal life to the soul of another person either. The One who will give us life is Jesus Christ, who bore sin and received the judgment of that sin in our place. That is why believing in the flesh and blood of the Lord becomes for us the faith that eats the food of life.

Believing in the flesh and blood of the Lord is the faith that receives the remission of sins

To understand the word that says Jesus gave His flesh, one must know the baptism He received from John. In the sin offering sacrifice of the Old Testament, the sinner laid his hands on the head of the sacrificial offering and passed his sins on to it. The offering that had the sins passed on to it was killed and shed its blood. The transfer of sin and the judgment for sin were together within the law of sacrifice.

Jesus, who came to this earth, received baptism from John at the Jordan River. 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).*

By receiving baptism from John, Jesus received all the sin of mankind passed on to His own body. Just as the laying on of hands in the Old Testament was the passing on of sins to the sacrificial offering, the baptism Jesus received from John was the bearing of the sin of the world. The Lord is one who has no sin, but in order to save sinners, He Himself bore our sins.

We must believe the fact that my sins are included in that sin of the world. The Lord bore the sins committed in childhood and

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the sins committed while growing up, the sins now being exposed and even the sins one will commit as one goes on living. The few sins we have found out were not the only sins passed on to Jesus. He bore, by receiving baptism from John, all the sins mankind commits from birth until death.

Believing this fact in the heart is the faith that eats the flesh of the Lord. We must not stop at only knowing the fact that Jesus came clothed in the flesh. We must accept the fact that in that body He bore my sins by receiving baptism from John. The person who thought that his sins still remained with him and was looking for a way to remove them by himself obtains the grace of the remission of sins only when he believes the word that the Lord received those sins passed on to Him.

Jesus, who bore our sins with the baptism He received from John, was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood, and died. The Lord, who bore sin, received the judgment for that sin. Because the wages of sin is death, the Lord gave up His own life in our place. Believing the fact that the Lord bore the judgment we were to receive is the faith that drinks the blood of the Lord. He also said: *"For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed" (John 6:55).*

When we believe in the baptism of the Lord, we come to know how He received our sins passed on to Him. When we believe in the blood of the Lord, we come to know how the judgment for those sins was carried out. Only when we believe together in the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross do the work of bearing sin and the work of paying the price of sin become clear in our hearts. The faith that eats and drinks the flesh and blood of which the Lord spoke is precisely the faith that believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John,

died on the Cross, and then rose again from death. The Lord, who bore all our sins and was judged, rose again from death and became our Savior. We receive the remission of sins and obtain eternal life by believing this salvation. God gives the Holy Spirit to the person who believes this gospel in his heart and makes him His own child. This is the salvation the Lord, the bread of life, has given us.

Do not stop at looking at the bread laid out, but eat it with the heart

Knowing the fact that bread is placed on the table and eating that bread are different. Even if one knows how to explain what ingredients the bread was made of, one cannot be filled without eating it. When we deal with the gospel, too, there is something we must be careful about. Even if one has grown accustomed to hearing and can explain the words about the baptism and the Cross of Jesus, one must examine whether one believes that salvation in one's heart. It is written: *"For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:10).*

To believe the word in the heart does not mean vaguely producing a feeling of having been saved. It is to acknowledge, as God has said, what one is as a sinner, and to believe how Jesus resolved those sins and accept it as one's own salvation. It is not to stop at agreeing with the sentences that explain salvation, but to entrust the problem of one's own sins to that word.

For example, if one has heard the word that Jesus bore the sin of the world, one must place one's own sins, too, before that word and think. One must confirm through the word whether the Lord also bore the wrongs one wanted to hide and the sins one

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is ashamed to tell other people. The person who tried to give up on himself because of the evil thoughts that constantly arise in his heart must also examine what sins the Lord said He bore. When one believes the word that the Lord bore all sins, one also obtains the answer to the problem of one's own sins.

Faith is not an attitude of regarding one's own sins as trivial. It is to acknowledge sin honestly and believe the fact that the Lord received baptism and shed His blood because of that sin. The blood the Lord shed on the Cross shows how heavy the judgment for sin is. At the same time, it lets us know the grace that we have been saved because the Lord received that judgment in our place.

For the person who believes the gospel in this way, the salvation of the Lord cannot be someone else's story. The fact that Jesus bore sin for me and gave up His life for me becomes thanksgiving. That person comes to draw near to God relying on the salvation He has accomplished. The person who has eaten the word of life with the heart obtains his own life from that word.

Like the bread of every Sabbath, always keep the word of salvation in your heart

God did not have the bread set in order once and then be done with it. He said: *"Every Sabbath he shall set it in order before the LORD continually, being taken from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant" (Leviticus 24:8).*

The bread had to be set in order before the LORD every Sabbath. God called this work an everlasting covenant for the children of Israel. It was not a work the people could forget according to their circumstances. It was an ordinance that had to be kept continually according to His word within the relationship

God had established. On the table of the sanctuary, the bread God had commanded had to be placed always.

When we hold this word up to our faith, we can see how necessary it is to keep accepting the word of salvation into our hearts. One must not think that, because one has received the remission of sins, one can now live a life of faith by one's own strength without the grace of the Lord. We needed Jesus before we were saved, and we need Jesus after we have been saved as well. He who has given us life becomes the food of our hearts today, too.

Even when we hear the same gospel again, we must lay out before that word what we ourselves are today. We may see today a pride that was not clearly exposed until yesterday, and we may discover that the selfishness we thought was only the fault of other people is in us as well. At that time we must not hide our sins or strive to become righteous by ourselves, but must believe again the word of salvation the Lord has accomplished. It is to acknowledge our wrongs and turn from them while relying on the grace of the Lord, who bore even those sins.

It is not that Jesus must receive baptism again or die on the Cross again every time just because we continue to believe the gospel. The Lord has already borne all our sins and paid their price. What we confirm every day is that salvation which has already been accomplished. When we hear and believe the word of life again, that grace becomes strength to our hearts today as well.

Therefore, do not let the gospel go in one ear and out the other because it is familiar. Do not close your heart because you already know how to explain it. We must treasure the truth of salvation and keep holding on to it. Just as another person cannot eat the meals of the flesh in our place, we, too, must each believe in our hearts the word the Lord has given and live by it.

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The food of God eaten together in a holy place

He said: *"And it shall be for Aaron and his sons, and they shall eat it in a holy place; for it is most holy to him from the offerings of the LORD made by fire, by a perpetual statute" (Leviticus 24:9).*

God gave the bread to Aaron and his sons and commanded them to eat it in a holy place. The priests received and ate the portion God had given according to His word. Today we, too, must live in faith, sharing the word of life together with the people who have received the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Hearing the word in the Church of God and sharing that grace with the saints who believe in the same salvation becomes precious food for our souls.

People who eat the word together also come to examine the heart with which they treat one another. It is because they believe the fact that the Lord, who bore my faults, also bore the faults of the brothers and sisters as well. The person who knows the mercy bestowed on himself can also have mercy when he sees the shortcomings of other saints. Even when a wrong must be set right, he helps with the word as a person who has received the same grace of the Lord. The word of salvation gives strength to our relationships and our service as well.

Dear beloved saints, with what food are we filling our hearts? The soul cannot live only by ruminating on what one has done well. Nor can the recognition of people take the place of the life the Lord gives. Jesus Christ, who bore our sins and gave up His life, becomes the true food. We must enjoy the grace of the remission of sins with the faith that believes in the baptism the Lord received from John and the blood of the Cross.

Jesus bore all our sins, received their judgment, and rose again from death. Let us believe this salvation as the salvation

of each one of us. Let us, who have already received the remission of sins, also keep ruminating on that word in our hearts and rely on the Lord. The Lord, the bread of life, has given us life, and He makes us live today as well by the faith that believes in His salvation. We give thanks and glory to the Lord, who has given us the remission of sins and eternal life and feeds us with the food of the word. ✉

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Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

Believe in the Lord, who bore our sins and judgment

< Leviticus 24:10-23 >

"Now the son of an Israelite woman, whose father was an Egyptian, went out among the children of Israel; and this Israelite woman's son and a man of Israel fought each other in the camp. And the Israelite woman's son blasphemed the name of the LORD and cursed; and so they brought him to Moses. (His mother's name was Shelomith the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan.) Then they put him in custody, that the mind of the LORD might be shown to them. And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, Take outside the camp him who has cursed; then let all who heard him lay their hands on his head, and let all the congregation stone him. Then you shall speak to the children of Israel, saying: Whoever curses his God shall bear his sin. And whoever blasphemes the name of the LORD shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall certainly stone him, the stranger as well as him who is born in the land. When he blasphemes the name of the LORD, he shall be put to death. Whoever kills any man shall surely be put to death. Whoever kills an animal shall make it good, animal for animal. If a man causes disfigurement of his neighbor, as he has done, so shall it be done to him—fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; as he has caused disfigurement of a man, so shall it be done to him. And whoever kills an animal shall restore it; but whoever kills a man shall be put to death. You shall have

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the same law for the stranger and for one from your own country; for I am the LORD your God. Then Moses spoke to the children of Israel; and they took outside the camp him who had cursed, and stoned him with stones. So the children of Israel did as the LORD commanded Moses."

In the face of the event in which the name of God was blasphemed

Dear beloved saints, in today's text is recorded the event in which a man who blasphemed and cursed the name of the LORD was judged. As we read this word, we must know how heavy sin is before God. We must also examine what the Lord did in order to save us from the judgment of that sin. When we know the verdict of God on sin, it becomes even clearer how precious a grace the remission of sins given through the gospel of the water and the Spirit is.

Looking at verses 10 and 11, a man whose father was an Egyptian and whose mother was an Israelite fought with a man of Israel in the camp. His mother was Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan. In the course of the fight, this man blasphemed and cursed the name of the LORD, and the people brought him to Moses.

What became the problem in this event was not that man's origin but the sin he had committed against God. The text makes known who his parents were, but the verdict God gave concerned the act of blaspheming the name of the LORD. In the word that follows, too, He commands that the same law be applied to the stranger and to the native. Therefore we must not make his lineage the cause of the sin, nor read this as an event that applies only to people of a particular origin.

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A quarrel with a person led to the sin of blaspheming God. The circumstance that he was angry because of the other person did not remove the sin he had committed against God. We, too, easily justify our own words and actions when resentment arises. But before God, sin cannot be judged only by how angry I was. We must examine before the word of God what I actually said and whom I defied. The text says: *"Then they put him in custody, that the mind of the LORD might be shown to them" (Leviticus 24:12).*

The people put him in custody and waited for the command of the LORD. Moses and the congregation placed this matter before the word of God. God had to say how that man's sin was to be dealt with. This scene shows that the judgment of sin does not depend on the mood or convenience of people. We cannot arbitrarily make light of what God calls sin.

He had those who heard lay their hands on his head

God commanded Moses to take that man outside the camp. He said: *"Take outside the camp him who has cursed; then let all who heard him lay their hands on his head, and let all the congregation stone him" (Leviticus 24:14).*

What we should look at carefully here is that He had those who heard his words lay their hands on that man's head. This laying on of hands was a laying on of hands that turned the blasphemy he had committed back on him and made him bear the responsibility for that sin. He had to receive the judgment for the sin he himself had committed. It is revealed that the blaspheming of the name of God is not something that ends with words and disappears, but a sin whose responsibility returns to

the one who committed it.

In Leviticus, the laying on of hands also appears when sins are passed on to the sin offering. But one must not understand every scene in the same way just because the act of the laying on of hands appears. In the sin offering sacrifice, the sinner lays his hands on the head of the offering without blemish and passes his own sins on to it. In today's text, hands are laid on the head of the one who blasphemed so that he bears the responsibility for his own sin. This man cannot be seen as a sin offering that removes the sins of the congregation in their place.

Only when we know this distinction can we also rightly understand the salvation Jesus accomplished. The man in the text was put to death because of the sin he himself had committed against God. Jesus is one who has no sin, yet He bore our sins and died in our place. There is this clear difference between a sinner being judged for his own sins and the Lord, who has no sin, being judged in place of sinners.

We are people who cannot pay by ourselves the price for our own sins. Sin does not disappear before God just because we shift the blame to other people or have forgotten it with the passing of time. We need a Savior who will actually bear those sins and pay their price. The gospel of the water and the Spirit is precisely the answer of salvation God has given to this problem of sin and judgment.

The righteousness of God, who judges sin and damage just as they are

In verses 15 and 16, God says that whoever curses his God shall bear his sin, and that whoever blasphemes the name of the LORD shall be put to death. And from verse 17 He speaks of the

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law concerning the killing of a person, the killing of an animal, and the injuring of a neighbor's body. While judging the one event of the blaspheming of God, He also taught together the law of sin and responsibility that the whole congregation had to know.

Whoever killed a person had to be put to death, and whoever killed an animal had to make it good with an animal. The person who injured his neighbor had to bear responsibility according to what he himself had done. Verse 20 states that standard concretely: *"Fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; as he has caused disfigurement of a man, so shall it be done to him."*

The text commands that the person who has injured another bear the responsibility for that injury. It means that harm done to someone's body and life cannot be overlooked as trivial. Also, He distinguished the killing of a person from the killing of an animal and appointed the responsibility for each. Here appears the righteousness of God, who does not deal with every wrong vaguely as the same thing, but judges according to what was done.

When we read this word, we must not stop at finding the wrongs of other people. We must know the fact that the wounds and damage I have inflicted on others are also exposed before God. We have a heart that regards the harm done to us as great while regarding the harm we have done to others as small. But God is not one who judges hearing only the words we have explained to our own advantage. Before His law, we must acknowledge the sins we have committed.

The righteousness of God judges sin as sin and calls it to account. Therefore, in speaking of salvation, the judgment of sin cannot be left out. If one thinks that since God loves us, sin will not matter either, one cannot understand why the Lord had to

bear our sins and shed His blood. God saved us by paying the price of sin.

He gave the same law to the stranger and to the native

He said: *"You shall have the same law for the stranger and for one from your own country; for I am the LORD your God" (Leviticus 24:22).*

God said to apply the law the same way, whether to the stranger or to the native. In verse 16, too, He spoke of the same standard concerning the person who blasphemed the name of the LORD. One could not escape the responsibility for sin after blaspheming God just because one was an Israelite, nor was one judged separately by a different law just because one was a stranger.

Before God, one's origin cannot be a ground that removes sin. Today we, too, cannot make the faith of our family or the office we hold in the church the ground of the remission of sins. The sins of children do not disappear by themselves just because their parents believe in God. Nor does the price of the sins one has committed disappear merely because one has been in charge of the work of God for a long time. Each person must realize his own sins before the word of God and believe in the salvation the Lord has given.

Just as everyone must stand before the law of God in this way, the way to receive the remission of sins must also be sought within the salvation God has appointed. It is not that one person removes his sins by his own good deeds and another removes his sins by a special experience. We must know and believe the salvation God showed through the sacrifices and accomplished

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through Jesus Christ. Both the Jew and the Gentile need the Savior who bore sin.

We must not try to change the law of God to our own advantage, but must go forward on the way of salvation He has prepared. Acknowledging one's own sins is not giving up hope. Rather, it is the beginning of bringing before the Lord the problem of sin that one cannot resolve by one's own strength. God sent His own Son to this earth in order to save the sinners who were to be judged.

Jesus received our sins passed on to Him by receiving baptism from John

It is written: *"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23).*

In this word, the verdict on sin and the grace of salvation God gives appear together. The wages of sin is death. Yet God gives us eternal life in Christ Jesus. How can a sinner who must die obtain eternal life? It is because Jesus bore our sins and received the judgment for those sins in our place.

In the sin offering sacrifice of the Old Testament, the sinner laid his hands on the head of the sacrificial offering without blemish and passed his own sins on to it. The offering that had the sins passed on to it was killed and shed its blood. That offering paid the price of sin in place of the sinner. Through this sacrifice, God showed how sin is transferred and how the judgment for that sin is carried out.

In order to accomplish this salvation, Jesus came clothed in the flesh of a man. And He came to the Jordan River and received 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).

The baptism Jesus received from John was the bearing of the sin of mankind. Just as the sinner passed his sins on to the offering by the laying on of hands in the Old Testament, Jesus received the sin of the world passed on to His own body by receiving baptism from John, who represented mankind. The Son of God, who has no sin, bore our sins according to the will of the Father to save sinners.

The sin of the world that was passed on to the Lord at that time includes all the sins of each one of us. The Lord bore the sins we remember and the sins we do not remember, the sins committed in the heart and the sins committed in deed, all the sins we commit from birth until death. He did not deal with only the few wrongs already exposed. The Lord knew the sins of our whole lifetime and received all those sins passed on to Him.

Therefore the person who has realized the fact that his sins are heavy must believe in the baptism Jesus received from John. One cannot obtain the remission of sins by bearing one's own sins to the end and striving to become clean by oneself. One must believe the word that the Lord actually bore those sins. The gospel of the water and the Spirit lets the sinner know how Jesus received his sins passed on to Him.

He paid the price of sin with the baptism He received from John and the Cross, and rose again from death

After Jesus received our sins passed on to Him, He went to the Cross bearing those sins. And He was nailed to it, shed His blood, and died. Just as the text clearly speaks of the

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responsibility and the judgment for sin, the judgment for our sins also had to be actually carried out. The Lord bore in His own body the judgment we were to receive. It is written: *"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).*

It says that the reason Jesus suffered lies in our transgressions and iniquities. It is not that the Lord suffered alone without any relation to our sins. He bore our sins by receiving baptism from John, and He received the judgment for those sins on the Cross. The transfer of sin and the judgment for sin were carried out together within the salvation of the Lord.

Here is the love of God. God did not treat the price of sin as if it were nothing while saying that He had compassion on sinners. He gave up His own Son and had Him bear our sins and give up His life. He loved us to the point of His Son being sacrificed in order to save us. Therefore, when we look at the Cross of the Lord, we must know together the righteousness of God and His love toward us.

Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John, died on the Cross, and then rose again from death. The Lord, who bore our sins and was judged, rose again from death and became our Savior. It is written: *"Who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification" (Romans 4:25).*

The ground on which we are justified does not lie in our own blameless lives. It lies in the salvation Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His rising again from death. By believing this gospel of the water and the Spirit in our hearts, we receive the remission of all our sins and become the children of God. Because the Lord bore the responsibility and the judgment for sin, the person who has

received the remission of sins can draw near to God boldly.

Acknowledge the verdict of God and believe in His salvation

In verse 23, Moses delivered the word of God to the children of Israel. The congregation took the one who had cursed outside the camp and stoned him. The text ends by recording that the children of Israel did as the LORD had commanded Moses. The verdict God gave to the congregation of Israel at that time was actually carried out.

This ending teaches us not to make light of the word of God and the judgment of sin. Looking at that man's death, we cannot stand as if we were people who had nothing to do with the judgment of God. We must apply to ourselves, too, the word that there is judgment for the person who has sin before God. And we must believe the fact that, in order to save us from that very judgment, Jesus bore our sins and gave up His life. He said: *"For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3:17).*

God sent His Son in order to save sinners. It is not that we must remain in despair after hearing the word that sin is heavy. We must hear and believe how the Lord removed that sin. If one acknowledges only the fact that judgment is due to oneself and does not believe in the judgment the Lord received in one's place, one fails to accept the grace of salvation God has bestowed.

That we have received the remission of sins does not mean that we have become able to claim that the sins we committed were right. The person who knows that the Lord was sacrificed for those sins cannot boast of sin or despise the word of God. He must acknowledge his wrongs and turn from them, and live

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relying on the grace of the Lord, who has already saved him. Rather than putting forward his own righteousness, he comes to give thanks to the Lord, who has delivered him from sin and judgment.

Dear beloved saints, God knows all our sins. And He Himself has also prepared the way to save us from those sins. Jesus bore all our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death. Whoever believes in this salvation obtains the remission of sins and eternal life.

Let us acknowledge our sins before the word of God, and respond with faith before the salvation God has accomplished. Let us rely on Jesus Christ, who bore our sins and our judgment. Let us also preach this gospel of the water and the Spirit to the people who are still afraid because of sin, so that they too may receive the remission of sins the Lord gives. We give thanks and glory to the Lord, who is righteous and who loved us to the point of saving us. ✉

Questions and Answers on Leviticus Chapter 24

[Question] 1. Leviticus 24:2—what meaning is contained in God's command to keep the lamps burning?

God had the people of Israel bring pure oil of pressed olives, and had the priest light the lamps with that oil. The priest had to look after the lamp from evening until morning to light the sanctuary, and had to carry on this work from generation to generation. God saw to it that the service entrusted before Him would not be cut off.

Spiritually, the pure oil makes us think of the pure word of God, which has saved us. Just as oil is supplied to the lamp and the fire is lit, the saints must accept the word of God into their hearts and draw near to God relying on that word. The ground for preaching the gospel lies not in the perfection of one's own works, but in the truth of the salvation the Lord has accomplished.

The work of keeping the lamps burning contains the lesson that this gospel must be preached without ceasing. We must keep testifying of the fact that Jesus bore our sin through the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, rose again from death, and became the Savior. The saints and the church must believe and preach this word of salvation, and serve so that the same gospel is carried on to the next generation as well (Leviticus 24:1–4; Exodus 27:20, 21; Matthew 3:13–17; 1 Corinthians 15:3, 4).

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[Question] 2. Leviticus 24:3, 4—who was in charge of looking after the lamp of the sanctuary, and what did they have to do?

Leviticus chapter 24 commands that Aaron tend the lamps. Exodus chapter 27 explains that Aaron and his sons are in charge of that work. Therefore the work of looking after the lamp was a duty entrusted to the priests, Aaron and his sons.

The people brought the pure olive oil to be used for the lamp, and the priests looked after the lamps in the tabernacle of meeting, outside the veil, that is, in the sanctuary. They had to supply the oil, trim the wicks, and light the fire, so that the lamp would be burning before the LORD from evening until morning. In serving the sanctuary there was, in this way, a responsibility that had to be carried out faithfully every day.

This duty also makes us think of the service of the gospel entrusted today to the saints who have received the remission of sins. The saints must hold on to the word that has saved them, preach that word to other people, and serve so that the gospel keeps being testified of. Faith is needed that does not end with a momentary zeal, but steadily carries out the work God has entrusted (Leviticus 24:2–4; Exodus 25:37, 38; 27:20, 21; 30:7, 8).

[Question] 3. Leviticus 24:4—what were the three main articles placed in the sanctuary where the priests served?

In the sanctuary were the lampstand, the table of the showbread, and the altar of incense. The position and use of each are as follows.

• The lampstand: it was placed on the south side of the

sanctuary, and its seven lamps were lit to light the sanctuary. Pure olive oil was used for the lamps of the lampstand made of pure gold.

• The table of the showbread: it was placed on the north side of the sanctuary, facing the lampstand. On this table the twelve loaves of bread were set in order before the LORD.

• The altar of incense: it was placed before the veil that covered the Most Holy Place. On this altar the priest burned sweet incense in the morning and in the evening.

These three articles were in the sanctuary where the priest served every day. Since the ark of the Testimony was further inside, in the Most Holy Place separated by the veil, its position must be distinguished from that of the three articles of the sanctuary (Leviticus 24:3–6; Exodus 25:31–38; 30:6–8; 40:20–27).

[Question] 4. Leviticus 24:5–9—what kind of bread was the showbread, and how was it laid out before God?

The showbread is the holy bread that was laid out on the table of the sanctuary so as to be before the LORD always. Twelve loaves were made of fine flour, and two-tenths of an ephah of flour was used for each loaf. This bread was placed on the pure table in two rows, six loaves in each row.

On each row pure frankincense was placed and burned and offered to the LORD as a memorial for the bread. The bread was newly set in order every Sabbath, and the bread that was taken away went to Aaron and his sons. The priests had to regard this bread as most holy and eat it in a holy place.

The showbread was an offering of the covenant that was

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continually placed before God for the children of Israel. This ordinance shows the fact that the people of God live before Him and take part in the holy service God has appointed (Leviticus 24:5–9; Exodus 25:30; 1 Samuel 21:6).

[Question] 5. Leviticus 24:5—what meaning concerning the people of God is contained in the twelve loaves of the showbread?

The twelve loaves of the showbread are the bread placed before the LORD for the children of Israel. As God had this bread set in order every Sabbath, He said that it was for the children of Israel and an everlasting covenant. Therefore this bread must be understood within the relationship of the people who had made a covenant with God.

The fact that the bread offered in the name of the people was always placed before God makes us think that Israel lived before Him as a people belonging to God. The priests were in charge of setting it in order, but the text explains that bread as being for the children of Israel. Serving God was a work of the covenant in which the people took part together (Leviticus 24:5–9).

[Question] 6. Leviticus 24:6—what kind of table is *'the pure gold table before the LORD,'* on which the bread was placed?

This table refers to the table of the showbread, that is, the table of bread, on which the showbread was placed in the sanctuary. It was made of acacia wood, overlaid with pure gold, and had a molding of gold around it. On its four sides there was

a frame a handbreadth wide, and it was also furnished with rings and poles used when carrying the table.

This table was an article set apart as holy before the LORD. It was placed on the north side of the sanctuary, and on it the twelve loaves of bread were always set in order. The words *"before the LORD"* make clear the fact that this bread had to be treated as an offering offered before God.

The saints, too, must receive as precious the word of life God gives. Just as the showbread was placed and handled on the holy table, we need the attitude of holding in our hearts the word that has saved us and accepting it by faith (Leviticus 24:6–9; Exodus 25:23–30; 40:22, 23).

[Question] 7. Leviticus 24:8—what does it teach that new bread was placed every Sabbath so that the showbread would always be there?

God had the bread newly set in order every Sabbath, so that the bread would be before the LORD always. The priest kept this ordinance continually by taking away the former bread and placing new bread. Since this work was an ordinance of the everlasting covenant for the children of Israel, it was not a work to be done only when it happened to come to mind.

Spiritually, it gives the lesson that the saints must live continually accepting the word of life. Jesus said that He Himself is the bread of life, and that He gives life to those who come to Him and believe. The saints must hear and believe the word that has saved them, and hold on to it so that the truth does not leave their hearts.

At the center of that word is the salvation in which Jesus bore our sins by receiving baptism from John and received the

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judgment of those sins on the Cross. Accepting this gospel by faith is the faith that eats the food of life. Therefore the saints must keep engraving on their hearts the word of salvation they have already received, share that word together within the church, and live relying on the Lord (Leviticus 24:8, 9; 1 Samuel 21:6; John 6:35, 47–58; Matthew 3:13–17).

[Question] 8. Leviticus 24:10—what does the event teach in which the son born of an Israelite woman and an Egyptian committed sin while quarreling?

The son of Shelomith, an Israelite woman, blasphemed and cursed the name of the LORD while fighting with a man of Israel in the camp. The people brought him to Moses, and, keeping him in custody, waited for the command of the LORD. In this event, the act for which God sternly held him responsible was the blaspheming and cursing of the name of God.

This event teaches that even when quarreling with a person and emotions run high, the name of God must be hallowed. Words that insult God cannot be regarded lightly on the grounds that one was angry. The people of God must fear God not only when worshiping but also in dealing with people and speaking in daily life.

Also, the people waited for the command of God rather than dealing with the matter by their own judgment. The ordinance that follows commands that the same law be applied whether to the stranger or to the native. Before God, the responsibility for sin does not vary according to origin, and the community must judge fairly according to the word of God (Leviticus 24:10–16, 22, 23).

[Question] 9. Leviticus 24:20—what principle of fairness is contained in the ordinance that required repayment '*eye for eye, tooth for tooth*'?

The core of this ordinance is holding a person responsible in proportion to the damage he has inflicted on another. God did not let harm done to the life or body of another pass lightly, but had the person bear the responsibility that matched what he had done. Leviticus chapter 24 deals separately with the case of killing a person, the case of killing an animal, and the case of injuring a neighbor's body.

That God appointed a responsibility corresponding to the injury means that punishment, too, must follow a fair standard. It is not a word that permits one to inflict greater harm on the other person without limit on the grounds that one has suffered harm. The command to apply the same law to the stranger and to the native also shows the principle that judgment must not vary according to a person's status or origin.

This word must not be taken as a command for an individual to take revenge according to his own anger. Deuteronomy presents the same principle in the context of the judges investigating the facts carefully and holding people responsible, and Leviticus chapter 19 commands not to take vengeance but to love one's neighbor. Jesus also mentioned this word and taught an attitude not bound by retaliation.

Therefore, what we are to learn from this ordinance is the righteousness of God, who makes clear the responsibility for sin and harm. We must not regard lightly the harm we have done to others, must follow a fair standard when we judge, and must not add evil out of personal grudges (Leviticus 24:17–22; 19:18; Deuteronomy 19:15–21; Matthew 5:38–42; Romans 12:17–21). ✉

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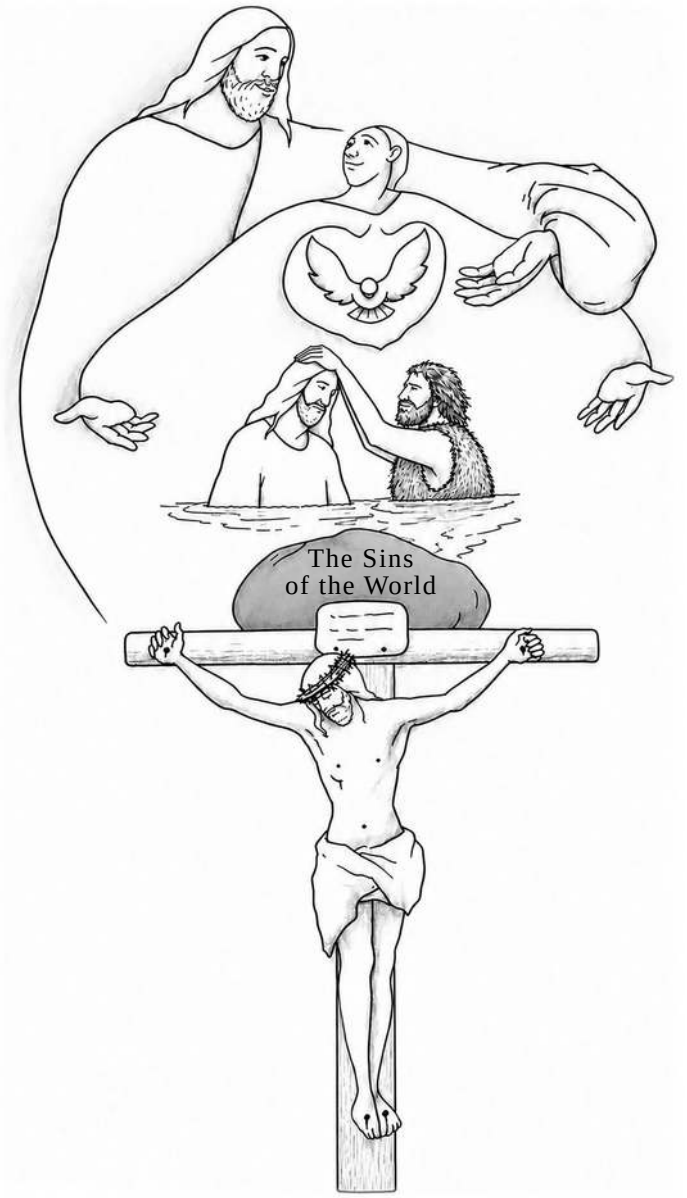

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Leviticus Chapter 25 seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Leviticus 25:1–7—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 25:1–7: even the land must rest before God

Leviticus 25:1–7 is the ordinance of the *"sabbath"* year given to the people of Israel. God said that after the people of Israel entered the land of Canaan, for six years they were to sow seed in their fields and tend their vineyards and gather the produce, but in the seventh year they were to stop farming and let the land rest.

This word is not a mere agricultural law. At its center is the following faith.

—The true Owner of the land is God.

—The life and the produce of people are not sustained by human effort alone.

—At the time God has commanded, one must stop working and trust in the provision of God.

—The produce God has given does not belong to the owner

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alone, but must be shared with servants, hired workers, strangers, and livestock as well.

The meaning of this sabbatical year is connected with the rest of salvation that Jesus Christ accomplished in the New Testament.

2. *"The LORD spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai, saying"*

The sabbatical year was not a farming system the people of Israel made for their own convenience, but the word of the covenant that God Himself gave on Mount Sinai. Therefore, keeping the sabbatical year was not simply letting the land rest; it was believing and obeying the word of God.

The people of Israel had not yet even entered the land of Canaan, but God first told them how they were to live in that land. This means that more important than taking possession of the land of Canaan was whom they would rely on as they lived in that land.

God gave Israel the land, but He did not hand over the absolute ownership of the land as well. Leviticus 25:23, which follows, makes this clear.

"The land shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with Me."

Israel was not the owner of the land, but a steward managing the land God had entrusted. The sabbatical year was the ordinance that made them confess this in actual life.

3. *"The land which I give you"*

God called Canaan *"the land which I give you."* Even though

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Israel fought wars, farmed, and toiled, the fundamental source of the land was not their ability but the grace of God.

This applies just as it is to salvation. The remission of sins and eternal life are not results that human beings produce by their efforts, but gifts God gives. If a person tries to wash away his sins by his own good deeds, prayers, and works of the law, it is like thinking that he himself is the owner of the land.

But the gospel of the water and the Spirit testifies of the fact that salvation is a work God has already accomplished. Jesus fulfilled all righteousness through the baptism He received from John, was hung on the Cross and shed His blood and died as the Lamb of God who bore the sin of the world, and rose again from death. Therefore salvation is not something people produce, but something received by believing in what God has accomplished.

4. *"The land shall keep a sabbath to the LORD"*

Here it is important that the subject of the rest is not only people but *"the land."* Even the land was not to be treated only as a means of production for endlessly satisfying human greed. The land belongs to God and had to rest before God.

The sabbatical year was a command that put a brake on human greed. Human beings try to plant more, reap more, and store up more whenever possible. But God said to stop that work in the seventh year. It is because possession, production, and accumulation must not become the master of human beings.

Rest before God is not the irresponsibility of doing nothing. It is an active act of faith that believes the fact that God feeds and keeps even if I do not control everything myself.

5. Work faithfully for six years

"Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather its fruit" (Leviticus 25:3).

The sabbatical year does not deny labor. God first said to sow seed in the fields, tend the vineyards, and gather the fruit for six years. Not working on the grounds that one believes in God is not the meaning of this word.

Faith is not laziness. If God has given a time to work, working faithfully, and if He has commanded a time to stop, stopping by faith—that is obedience. A person must work when he should work, and rest when he should rest. If only one side is emphasized, the order of God is lost.

It is the same for the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The toil of piling up one's own righteousness in order to be saved must be laid down, but after being saved, one must live faithfully, serving the will of God. It is not working in order to obtain salvation, but working out of thanks for the salvation already received.

6. The rest of the seventh year is *"a sabbath to the LORD"*

"But in the seventh year there shall be a sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a sabbath to the LORD. You shall neither sow your field nor prune your vineyard" (Leviticus 25:4).

The sabbatical year was not a mere fallow year, but *"a sabbath to the LORD."* At the center of the act of resting from farming was God.

When farming stops, a realistic question arises for the people of Israel: "Then what shall we eat?" God anticipated this

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question, and in Leviticus 25:20–21 He promised to command His blessing in the sixth year and give produce that could be used for three years.

Therefore the sabbatical year was not a reckless act of testing God, but obedience that believed the promise of God. The command to rest from farming and the promise to supply food were given together.

The salvation of the New Testament is the same. God first tells the sinner to stop the work of trying to become righteous by his own strength. And He tells him to believe the promise that Jesus has accomplished all the work of salvation.

Hebrews 4:3 says as follows.

"For we who have believed do enter that rest"

The rest of salvation begins when one stops struggling by oneself to remove sin and believes in one's heart what Jesus has accomplished.

7. The meaning of the word not to reap

"What grows of its own accord of your harvest you shall not reap, nor gather the grapes of your untended vine, for it is a year of rest for the land" (Leviticus 25:5).

But verses 6–7 say to eat the produce of the sabbatical year. Then how should we understand the *"you shall not reap"* of verse 5 and the *"shall be food for you"* of verse 6?

Verse 5 does not mean not to eat any of the grain and grapes that grew of themselves. It means not to carry out the farming activity of securing all the produce of the field as one's own as in an ordinary year, and reaping, storing, and selling it by plan. They could eat as much as they needed, but they were not to accumulate it as their own exclusive harvest.

This shows a change of ownership. For six years the cultivator reaped the produce, but in the seventh year the owner alone could not monopolize the produce that grew of itself. The produce God brought forth became food for every living thing.

8. The produce of the sabbatical year is food for all

The people and creatures that eat the produce of the sabbatical year are as follows.

—The owner of the land
—Male and female servants
—Hired workers
—The stranger who dwells with them
—Livestock
—Wild beasts

In the sabbatical year the boundaries of social status are lowered. Master and servant, landowner and hired worker, native and stranger all eat together the produce God has given. Even the livestock and the wild beasts are not excluded.

Exodus 23:11 also explains the purpose of the sabbatical year like this.

"The seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, that the poor of your people may eat; and what they leave, the beasts of the field may eat."

Therefore three kinds of rest are contained together in the sabbatical year.

The first is the rest of the land; the second is the rest of stopping the toil of cultivating and harvesting; and the third is the rest of the community, in which even the poor, the stranger, and the animals enjoy the provision of God together.

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9. The gospel of the water and the Spirit and true rest

The sabbatical year is the ordinance of believing in and enjoying the produce God gives and letting the land rest. The rest of salvation, too, does not come from washing away sin by one's own strength, but is obtained when one believes in the salvation Jesus Christ has accomplished.

A sinner cannot keep the law of God perfectly. No matter how much he weeps, prays, and piles up good deeds in order to wash away his sins, he cannot completely remove his sins by his own strength. This is the heavy toil of human beings under sin.

Jesus fulfilled all righteousness through the baptism He received from John. John the Baptist testified of Him like this.

"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).

Jesus bore the sin of the world and received the judgment of that sin on the Cross. And after saying, *"It is finished!"* He died, and He rose again from death. The Holy Spirit testifies that this gospel of the water and the blood is true salvation.

Therefore, to believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not for me to wash away my sins and complete salvation, but to believe in and accept the salvation Jesus has accomplished. This is the rest of the soul.

"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

10. Rest is not inactivity but a life that comes from faith

Entering the rest of salvation does not mean doing nothing. After Jesus said, *"Come to Me,"* He said, *"Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me."*

Before believing the gospel, one works in order to obtain salvation, but after believing the gospel, one works out of thanks for the salvation already received. The former is toil to establish one's own righteousness, and the latter is the toil of faith that serves the grace of God.

Just as there was an appointed time to work before and after the sabbatical year, faithfulness and service do not disappear from the person who believes the gospel. Only, their center changes. One breaks away from the thought, "I must achieve something to be recognized by God," and lives by the faith, "Since the Lord has saved me, I live according to that grace."

11. The lesson for the life of the saints today

This word must not be applied to the saints today just as the agricultural law of the Old Testament, commanding that all occupational activity must be stopped every seven years without fail. The ordinances of the Old Testament, such as the Sabbath and the feasts, are a shadow of things to come, and their substance is of Christ.

But the principles of faith that the sabbatical year shows clearly remain.

First, the true Owner of our lives, our possessions, and our workplaces is God.

Second, we must not make human effort alone absolute, but must trust in the provision of God.

Third, we must work faithfully when we work, but must not regard rest as a matter of guilt.

Fourth, we must share what we have received from God with workers, the poor, and strangers.

Fifth, we must not treat nature and the land only as tools for

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satisfying our desires.

Sixth, above all, we must stop the toil of trying to wash away sin by our own works and believe in the gospel of the water and the blood that Jesus has accomplished.

The core of Leviticus 25:1–7 does not lie in "Do not work." This means to lay down the human pride that thinks everything is maintained by one's own effort, and to acknowledge that God is the owner of the land, of life, and of salvation.

Just as the land of the sabbatical year rested within the provision of God, the heart of the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit also rests within the remission of sins that Jesus Christ has completed. And the person who has obtained that rest becomes not a person who possesses and accumulates only for himself, but a person who lives sharing with other lives the grace, the material things, and the gospel he has received from God.

Leviticus 25:8–17—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 25:8–17: freedom and restoration that begin with atonement

Leviticus 25:8–17 is the word concerning the institution of the Jubilee. Israel had to count seven sabbatical years, that is, forty-nine years, and then set apart the fiftieth year as holy. In that year they had to proclaim liberty throughout all the land, and let those who had left their possession and their family because of poverty and debt return to their original place.

The core flow of the Jubilee is as follows.

The sound of the trumpet on the Day of Atonement → the proclamation of liberty → the restoration of the possession → the return to the family → fair transactions

It is important that liberty is proclaimed on the Day of Atonement. The freedom God speaks of is not a vague freedom declared while sin is left as it is. The gospel of the water and the Spirit testifies that one is saved from sin and judgment by believing in the atonement Jesus has accomplished. This relationship between atonement and freedom is the center of examining the Jubilee in connection with the gospel.

2. Count seven sabbatical years

"And you shall count seven sabbaths of years for yourself, seven times seven years; and the time of the seven sabbaths of years shall be to you forty-nine years" (Leviticus 25:8).

Israel had to keep the sabbatical year of letting the land rest every seven years. And when that sabbatical year is counted seven times, it makes forty-nine years. The following year, the fiftieth year, is the Jubilee.

If the sabbatical year was a year of stopping sowing and the ordinary harvest for one year and trusting in the provision of God, the Jubilee was a year in which that rest was extended to the restoration of individuals, families, land, and the whole of society.

If the sabbatical year taught the faith that "God feeds us," the Jubilee shows the grace that "God gives back what was lost." Even if a possession had passed to another person because of a person's failure and poverty, God did not let that loss continue forever.

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This also shows an important picture for human beings, who have lost their relationship with God and their eternal inheritance because of sin. A person cannot recover by his own strength the life, the righteousness, and the inheritance of the kingdom of God that he has lost. He can return only through the atonement and the redemption God has prepared.

3. The trumpet of the Jubilee sounded on the Day of Atonement

"Then you shall cause the trumpet of the Jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement you shall make the trumpet to sound throughout all your land" (Leviticus 25:9).

The trumpet announcing the Jubilee did not sound on just any day. It sounded on the tenth day of the seventh month, that is, on the Day of Atonement.

On the Day of Atonement, the high priest of Israel entered the Most Holy Place with the blood of the sacrificial offering and made atonement for the sins of the people. He also laid his hands on the head of the live goat, passed the sins of the children of Israel on to it, and sent it into the wilderness. On the day that atonement was made, the trumpet of the Jubilee sounded throughout the whole nation.

When we examine this relationship between atonement and freedom in the light of the gospel, it is as follows.

—First, sins are passed on to the sacrificial offering.

—The sacrificial offering bears the judgment of those sins.

—After atonement has been made, liberty is proclaimed.

—The person who has obtained freedom returns to the possession and the family he had lost.

Therefore it is not the sound of the trumpet that accomplishes atonement. The trumpet of the Jubilee was the sound that proclaimed liberty on the Day of Atonement.

Preaching the gospel in the New Testament is the same. The spread of the gospel does not newly produce the work of salvation of Jesus. It proclaims the remission of sins that Jesus has already accomplished.

4. The Day of Atonement and the salvation Jesus accomplished

On the Day of Atonement of the Old Testament, atonement was made with the blood of the goat of the sin offering for the people, and after that, hands were laid on the head of the live goat, and the goat had the sins of Israel passed on to it and it was sent into the wilderness. These two goats show the work of Jesus Christ, who bears sin and makes atonement. In the New Testament, Jesus fulfilled all righteousness through the baptism He received from John.

"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15).

The baptism Jesus received from John is connected with the laying on of hands of the Old Testament. Jesus bore the sins of all the people of the world and became the Lamb of God. That is why John the Baptist, looking at Jesus the next day, testified as follows.

"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).

Jesus, bearing the sin of the world, was hung on the Cross and shed His blood. He received in our place death and judgment, the wages of sin, and completed salvation by rising again from death.

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Hebrews 9:12 speaks of the result like this.

"With His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption."

In the Old Testament, the trumpet announcing the Jubilee sounded on the Day of Atonement. In the New Testament, the gospel that Jesus accomplished eternal atonement with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross is proclaimed to the whole world. This is like the sound of the trumpet of the spiritual Jubilee.

5. *"Proclaim liberty throughout all the land to all its inhabitants"*

"You shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land to all its inhabitants" (Leviticus 25:10).

The liberty here is not merely a psychological freedom in which the heart becomes at ease. It was a concrete freedom in which a person actually recovered the possession he had lost, and the person who had left his family because of his economic circumstances returned to his family again.

But this freedom must not be equated immediately with the cancellation of all debts or the equal distribution of all property in the modern sense. The center of Leviticus chapter 25 lies in God's seeing to it that the possession He had given to each tribe and family would not disappear permanently because of poverty and failure. It is because the land originally belongs to God.

Seen from the dimension of the gospel, human beings have become slaves of sin because of sin. Jesus said as follows.

"Whoever commits sin is a slave of sin" (John 8:34).

"Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed" (John 8:36).

True freedom is not the freedom to live as one wishes. It is the freedom of escaping from the condemnation, the judgment, and the slavery of sin and returning to God.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit testifies of the fact that Jesus completely bore our sins and was judged. When one believes this gospel, one does not receive only the promise, "You will become free if you commit a little less sin from now on." By believing the word that Jesus has already borne sin, one receives the remission of sins now and escapes from condemnation.

6. *"Each of you shall return to his possession"*

The possession is the land God distributed to each tribe and family of Israel. Even if a person had handed over his land to another person because he was poor, when the Jubilee came, that land had to return to the original family.

It is because the possession given to the people of Israel was not mere real estate. That land was a gift God had given according to the covenant. Therefore a powerful person could not take possession of the land of a poor person forever.

Seen from the gospel, a sinner is like one who has lost the inheritance of the kingdom of God because of sin. But because Jesus bore our sins and redeemed us, the person who believes becomes a child of God and receives the kingdom of God as his inheritance.

It is not that we buy back the inheritance with our own good deeds. Because Jesus bore the price of redemption with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross, we receive the inheritance by faith. Salvation is not something that comes from human beings, but grace that God gives.

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7. *"Each of you shall return to his family"*

The liberty of the Jubilee was not only the restoration of land but also the restoration of the family. Even the person who had left his family because he had come to serve another person on account of economic hardship could return in the Jubilee.

Sin makes a person depart from God, and it also breaks down his relationship with the people of God. But atonement makes a person return to God. The person who has received the remission of sins by believing the gospel is no longer a slave of sin but becomes a child of God.

Therefore the restoration of the Jubilee can be thought of in three stages.

—One returns from the place of a slave to the place of a free person.

—One recovers the possession one had lost.

—One returns to the family one had left.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit, too, moves the person who believes from a slave of sin to a child of God, and from one who is to be judged to one who receives the kingdom of God as his inheritance. And it makes him live together with the family of faith in the church, the house of God.

Only, the return to the family in the Jubilee must not be understood as compulsory membership in a church. Its essence lies in the fact that the person saved from sin and bondage is restored to the original place God has given.

8. Even in the Jubilee, do not sow, and do not reap in the normal way

In the Jubilee, as in the sabbatical year, they were not to sow

seed or cultivate the vineyard. Nor were they to systematically gather and accumulate what grew of itself as in an ordinary year. But eating the produce that grew of itself in the field was permitted.

"For it is the Jubilee; it shall be holy to you; you shall eat its produce from the field" (Leviticus 25:12).

This is not a command to starve. It means to stop the work of ruling over the land as one's own property and producing and accumulating, and to receive and eat what God gives naturally.

The food of the Jubilee was not produce that human beings made by sowing and cultivating, but produce God brought forth. This is also connected with the nature of salvation. The remission of sins is not a fruit we produce; it is like receiving and eating the fruit of the salvation Jesus accomplished.

It is not trying to produce salvation by piling up one's own merits, but accepting by faith the righteousness Jesus has completed.

9. The reason the command to return to the possession is repeated

Verse 10 already said to return to the possession, but verse 13 says it again.

"In this Year of Jubilee, each of you shall return to his possession."

This emphasizes the fact that the center of the Jubilee lies not simply in resting from farming but in restoration. God did not proclaim liberty in words only. He had the possession that had been lost actually given back.

The gospel, too, is not a comfort of words only. Jesus did not tell sinners to set their hearts at ease by themselves; He actually

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bore sin and actually received the judgment of that sin. And by rising again from death, He gave actual remission of sins and new life to those who believe.

Therefore the freedom of the gospel is not a self-suggestion, "Let us think as if there were no sin though there is sin." It is the freedom in which God declares the person who believes righteous, because Jesus actually bore sin and paid its price.

10. What was traded was the remaining years of harvest

"According to the multitude of years you shall increase its price, and according to the fewer number of years you shall diminish its price; for he sells to you according to the number of the years of the crops" (Leviticus 25:16).

Since the land returns to the original family when the Jubilee comes, the price for buying and selling land had to be set on the basis of how many years remained until the next Jubilee.

If thirty years remained until the Jubilee, the price would be higher, since the harvest that could be obtained in the meantime was greater; and if only five years remained, the price had to be lower, since the harvest that could be obtained was smaller.

Therefore, strictly speaking, it was not the land itself that was bought and sold permanently; what was traded was the 'right to the harvest' that could be obtained from that land until the next Jubilee. In verse 23 that follows, God states the reason clearly.

"The land shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine"

A person is a steward who uses what belongs to God, not an absolute owner. Therefore, just because a poor person was in urgent circumstances, one was not to take advantage of that weakness and take away his possession at an absurd price.

11. The command not to deceive one another and the fear of God

"You shall not oppress one another, but you shall fear your God" (Leviticus 25:17).

At the end of the ordinance of the Jubilee comes the word to fear God. It is because, although a transaction takes place between one person and another, God is watching that transaction.

One can deceive about the number of years remaining until the Jubilee, or take advantage of the poverty and ignorance of the other person and set the price unjustly. One can avoid the eyes of people, but one cannot avoid the eyes of God.

The faith that fears God does not appear only at the time of worship. It must also appear in economic life, such as contracts, buying and selling, wages, interest, prices, and employment. The person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must not take advantage of other people on the grounds that he has received grace, but must live honestly and fairly according to the grace he has received.

12. *"The acceptable year of the LORD"* that Jesus proclaimed

Jesus read the word of Isaiah in the synagogue at Nazareth.

"To proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD" (Luke 4:18–19).

And He declared like this.

"Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:21).

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"The acceptable year of the LORD" is an expression connected with the Jubilee of Leviticus chapter 25. Jesus came in order to actually accomplish the freedom and restoration that the Jubilee had shown.

But the freedom Jesus gives must not be limited only to political and economic liberation. What binds human beings most fundamentally is sin. Unless one is saved from sin, one is still under condemnation and death even if one's circumstances change.

Jesus bore the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John, paid the price of that sin on the Cross, and rose again from death. The Holy Spirit testifies that this gospel of the water and the blood is true. Therefore the gospel proclaims as follows, even today, to the person bound by sin.

"Atonement has been made for your sins. Escape from the slavery of sin in Jesus Christ and return to God."

13. The gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Jubilee shows

When the connection between the Jubilee and the gospel is put in order, it is as follows.

—The sacrifice of the Day of Atonement points to the work of Jesus bearing sin with the baptism He received from John and being judged on the Cross.

—The trumpet of the Jubilee is connected with the proclamation of the gospel that preaches the completed remission of sins to the whole world.

—The liberty given to the slave shows the person who was a slave of sin being set free by believing the gospel.

—The restoration of the possession is connected with becoming a child of God and receiving the inheritance of the

kingdom of God.

—The return to the family shows the restoration of returning to God and dwelling among His people.

—Resting from farming and eating the produce shows enjoying by faith the salvation God has accomplished, rather than one's own works.

—Fair trade teaches that the person who has received grace must live righteously without taking advantage of the weakness of his neighbor.

14. The freedom of the Jubilee is not licentiousness

To say that one has been saved from sin does not mean that one may now commit sin as one pleases. The person who had obtained freedom in the Jubilee had to return to his possession and his family and live within the order of God.

Likewise, the freedom the gospel gives is not the freedom to leave God but the freedom to return to God. It is the freedom to be able to serve God, do righteousness, preach the gospel, and love one's neighbor without the fear of condemnation.

The remission of sins does not make a good life unnecessary; it changes the starting point of a good life. It is not doing good in order to be saved, but doing good with thanks because Jesus has saved us.

15. The application for us today

One cannot conclude that the ordinance of the Jubilee must be transferred just as it is to the nations of today and that all land transactions must be nullified every fifty years. This ordinance

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was a law belonging to the covenant and to the possession of Canaan that God distributed to Israel.

But the will of God revealed in it is clear today as well.

First, a way of restoration must be opened so that a person's failure does not become eternal despair.

Second, one must not gain unjust profit by taking advantage of the poverty and desperation of other people.

Third, property, jobs, and abilities are not absolutely my own possessions, but things God has entrusted.

Fourth, the person who preaches the gospel must not only cry out condemnation, but must clearly proclaim the remission of sins and the freedom Jesus has completed.

Fifth, the person who has received the remission of sins must not keep being held by the guilt and self-condemnation of the past, but must return to the place of a righteous person that God has given.

Sixth, one must help the restoration of other people according to the grace received from God, and live honestly and fairly.

After all, the Jubilee is not a vague institution that says, "Let us make everything as if it had never happened." It is the order of grace that, on the ground of the atonement of God, sets the slave free, restores the possession that was lost, and makes the person who had left return to his family.

The true freedom to which this Jubilee points has been accomplished in Jesus Christ. When a person believes in the baptism Jesus received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His rising again from death, he escapes from being a slave of sin, becomes a child of God, and obtains the inheritance of the kingdom of God. And preaching this news of salvation is the trumpet of the Jubilee that must sound throughout the whole world today.

Leviticus 25:18–22—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 25:18–22: obedience that trusts the word and the provision God gives in advance

Leviticus 25:18–22 is the answer of God to the realistic fear that the people of Israel could not help having after hearing the ordinances of the sabbatical year and the Jubilee.

"If we do not farm in the seventh year, and do not harvest and store even what grows of itself as in an ordinary year, what are we to eat and live on?"

God did not rebuke this question. Rather, He promised to send His blessing in advance in the sixth year and to supply food to eat until the harvest of the ninth year. Therefore the center of this word is not irresponsible optimism, but the fact that with the command of God comes the provision of God, who prepares so that it can be followed.

2. *"Observe My statutes and keep My judgments, and perform them"*

"So you shall observe My statutes and keep My judgments, and perform them; and you will dwell in the land in safety" (Leviticus 25:18).

The judgments and ordinances spoken of here include the commands of the sabbatical year and the Jubilee spoken of before. The people of Israel had to farm for six years but let the land rest in the seventh year, and in the Jubilee they had to

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proclaim liberty and return the possession to the original family.

Therefore the obedience of verse 18 is not a word vaguely telling them to live good lives. It means to carry out by faith the order of the sabbatical year and the Jubilee that God actually commanded.

But keeping the sabbatical year was by no means an easy thing. Stopping farming for one year aroused fear concerning survival. To obey God, it was not enough merely to acknowledge that the command was right. They had to believe even the promise, “God will feed us.”

Therefore, here obedience and faith are not separated. Obedience without faith cannot continue, and faith that does not appear as obedience easily becomes a faith that does not trust God in actual life.

3. Does this word mean to be saved by works?

When we connect this passage with the gospel of the water and the Spirit, there is something we must distinguish first of all. Leviticus 25:18 is not a word saying that one obtains the remission of sins by keeping the law well.

The text teaches Israel, who had already been saved out of Egypt and become the covenant people of God, how to live in the land of Canaan. The Exodus came first, and after that the ordinances of Mount Sinai were given. It is not obedience in order to be saved, but the obedience of a saved people.

It is the same in the New Testament. A person does not receive the remission of sins by his own works and observance of the law. Jesus accomplished salvation with the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His rising again from death, and we receive the remission of sins by believing it

in our hearts.

But the person who has received the remission of sins does not live ignoring the word of God; because he believes in God, who has saved him, he lives obeying that word.

To put it in order, it is as follows.

—One does not obey in order to be saved.

—One receives by faith the salvation Jesus has accomplished.

—After being saved, one obeys because one trusts God.

—That obedience is not one's own merit but the fruit of faith.

4. *"You will dwell in the land in safety"*

For Israel, safety was not secured by military power and property alone. When they obeyed the word within the covenant relationship with God, God kept them.

If they did not keep the sabbatical year and kept on farming, by human calculation it might have looked safer. It is because it seems that the future will be safe only if one sows seed for even one more year and stores up more. But God said the opposite. It is not the grain secured by violating the command of God that makes them safe; they come to dwell in safety when they believe in God and obey His word.

For the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, too, the source of true safety is not his own works or possessions. When one believes the fact that Jesus bore sin, one escapes from the fear of judgment and can stand boldly before God.

This safety is not a promise that the believer will have no sickness, failure, or persecution at all. Above all, it means the safety of salvation: that the relationship with God is restored, that one escapes from the condemnation of sin and eternal

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judgment, and that one is not forsaken by God in any circumstances.

5. The One who makes the land yield its produce

"Then the land will yield its fruit, and you will eat your fill, and dwell there in safety" (Leviticus 25:19).

The people of Israel sow seed and tend the fields, but the One who makes the produce come forth from the land is God. People cannot make land, nor can they produce rain, sunlight, and life.

Therefore this word neither denies labor nor makes labor absolute.

The people of Israel had to sow faithfully and tend the vineyards for six years. When the eighth year came, they had to sow seed again. But the One who gave the fruit was God. Human beings work, but the owner of the result is God.

The same principle appears in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. A person must hear and believe the word, but he cannot wash away his sins by his own effort. The One who bore sin, was judged, and accomplished salvation is Jesus.

The role of a person is not to save himself, but to hear and accept the salvation God has accomplished.

6. *"What shall we eat"*

"And if you say, What shall we eat in the seventh year, since we shall not sow nor gather in our produce?" (Leviticus 25:20).

This question shows human weakness just as it is. They have heard the word of God, but when they look at reality, fear arises.

"We understand the word, but what about our livelihood?"

"If we rest from farming, what will our family eat?"

"What if the stored grain runs out?"

God already knew this question. He was not one who only gave the command and let the people starve. God prepared the produce of the sixth year before they asked.

Jesus also said something similar.

"Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'" (Matthew 6:31).

"Your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things" (Matthew 6:32).

Faith does not deny the need for food. It is to believe the fact that God knows that need. It is not making light of the problem of making a living either; it is not letting that problem become a master greater than God.

7. The difference between human anxiety and faith

Anxiety is the heart that drags the future, which has not yet come, into the present and tries to resolve it by itself. Faith is entrusting oneself to God, who knows the future, while acknowledging the fact that one does not know the future.

That does not mean, however, that faith is an attitude of making no preparation at all. Israel farmed for six years and sowed seed again in the eighth year. They had to preserve the abundant grain God gave in the sixth year and eat it in the seventh and eighth years.

Therefore the faith the text teaches is as follows.

—When it is time to work, one works faithfully.

—When God says to stop, one stops.

—One preserves what God has given without wasting it.

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—One thinks of future needs but does not become a slave of anxiety.

—One places the ultimate source of provision in God rather than in one's own effort.

8. God, who prepares before the need comes

"Then I will command My blessing on you in the sixth year, and it will bring forth produce enough for three years" (Leviticus 25:21).

God did not set up a plan only after the seventh year came and the grain ran out. He sent His blessing in advance in the sixth year and prepared the food that would be needed.

Here the expression *"I will command"* is important. The source of the produce was neither the land itself nor the skill of the people of Israel. It is because God commands His blessing that the land brings forth abundant produce.

That the produce of the sixth year was enough for three years is a special covenant promise given to Israel at that time. This must not be used today as a formula that every believer, whatever business he does, will surely obtain three times the profit. *"Three years"* in the text refers to the period during which food was needed.

Its meaning is practical. This means that God would supply in advance the food to eat while they rested from farming during the sabbatical year and until they sowed seed the following year and obtained a new harvest.

9. Salvation, too, was prepared before human beings realized their need

This provision that God gives in advance appears in the gospel as well. Before human beings looked for a way to resolve the problem of sin, God first prepared the way of salvation.

Jesus fulfilled all righteousness by receiving baptism from John. Because He bore the sin of the world with that baptism, John the Baptist testified of Jesus as *"the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."*

Jesus, bearing that sin, was judged on the Cross and said, *"It is finished!"* And He rose again from death. The Holy Spirit testifies that this gospel of the water and the blood is true salvation.

Before we were born, committed sin, and asked for salvation, God had already prepared salvation in Jesus Christ. Therefore the remission of sins is not something we produce, but something God has prepared, which we receive by faith.

Just as the food of the seventh year had already been prepared in the sixth year, the salvation the sinner was to receive was also prepared and completed first in Jesus.

God promised the food needed to the people who would keep the sabbatical year. We, too, rather than striving to procure the remission of sins by ourselves, must believe in the salvation Jesus has already accomplished and rely on God, who cares for us.

10. Sow again in the eighth year

"And you shall sow in the eighth year, and eat old produce until the ninth year; until its produce comes in, you shall eat of

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the old harvest" (Leviticus 25:22).

When the sabbatical year ended, Israel had to start farming again. They had to sow seed in the eighth year, and eat the grain stored earlier until that seed grew and was harvested in the ninth year.

This word shows the fact that the provision of God and the responsibility of human beings do not stand against each other.

—The abundant produce of the sixth year is given by God.

—The people must preserve that produce.

—In the seventh year they let the land rest according to the command.

—In the eighth year they sow seed again.

—Until the harvest of the ninth year they eat the old grain God has given.

If they did not sow seed even in the eighth year on the grounds that they trusted God, that would be not faith but disobedience. God appointed both the time to rest and the time to work.

It is the same for the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. He must stop piling up his own works in order to be saved, but after receiving the remission of sins he must serve the gospel, love his neighbor, and carry out faithfully the work entrusted to him.

The work of salvation was completed by Jesus, but that does not mean that the life of faith of the saved person disappears as well.

11. The waiting that *"old produce"* teaches

Sowing seed in the eighth year did not mean that they could eat new grain immediately. They had to wait until the seed grew,

bore fruit, and was harvested. During that period they ate the old grain God had given earlier.

In the life of faith, too, there is waiting. Obeying the word of God does not mean that every result appears before one's eyes immediately. There are times when, after sowing seed according to the word, one must wait until the fruit is borne.

In that waiting, the saints must remember the grace God has already given.

—Jesus has already borne all our sins through the baptism He received from John.

—He received all the judgment of those sins on the Cross.

—He rose again from death.

—The Holy Spirit testifies of the truth of the gospel.

—God has fed and led us until now.

Even when the new fruit is not yet visible, eating the word and the grace already given and waiting—that is faith.

12. *"Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness"*

Jesus did not deny the need itself of making a living. He said that God the Father knows that it is needed. And He commanded as follows.

"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matthew 6:33).

Here "*His righteousness"* refers first of all to the righteousness of the salvation Jesus has accomplished. Before establishing his own righteousness, a person must believe in the righteousness of God that Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross.

And the person who has received the remission of sins by

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believing in that righteousness must live giving priority to the kingdom of God and the gospel. It is not ignoring the problem of making a living, but not letting that problem take a place ahead of God and the gospel.

13. This word must not be used as a formula for prosperity

Leviticus 25:21 is the word in which God promised Israel at that time special produce in the sixth year so that they could keep the sabbatical year. Therefore it must not be applied today as follows.

—Whoever obeys God will surely obtain three times the property.

—If business goes well, one has good faith, and if it fails, one has no faith.

—A believer must never have poverty, sickness, or economic hardship.

—If one gives many offerings or serves much, God repays that much in material things.

The gospel does not make God a means of material success. The faith that God provides is not a faith that justifies greed, but a faith that makes one escape from greed and anxiety and obey the will of God.

God knows and cares for the needs of the saints, but the form and the time of that provision belong to the wisdom of God. He may provide sometimes with abundant material things, sometimes with just as much daily bread as is needed, and sometimes through the help of the church and neighbors.

14. The application for the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit

—One must stop one's own toil to obtain the remission of sins. Since Jesus completely bore sin with the baptism He received from John and received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, a person must not try to wash away his sins again by repeated acts of repentance or good deeds. He must receive by faith the salvation already accomplished.

—After being saved, one must live according to the word. The fact that one has been saved by grace is not a license for disobedience. Rather, because one believes in the love and the salvation of God, one obeys the word.

—One must entrust anxiety to God by faith. It is not becoming a person in whom anxiety does not arise, but living as a person who holds on to the promise of God and prays when anxiety arises.

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God" (Philippians 4:6).

—One must discern the time to work and the time to rest. They worked for six years, rested in the seventh year, and sowed again in the eighth year. Faith is neither overwork nor laziness. It is doing faithfully the work God has entrusted, without relying on one's own labor as if it were a savior.

—One must remember what God has already given. Even when nothing new is visible, one must not forget the word and the grace God has given until now. In particular, the remission of sins accomplished through the gospel of the water and the Spirit is food that does not change in any circumstances.

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Conclusion

The core of Leviticus 25:18–22 is not the simple formula, “If you obey, you become rich.” It means that when God requires obedience of His people, He first prepares what is needed so that they can obey.

Israel was not to starve because of the sabbatical year, but to experience the special provision of God. While resting from farming, they had to learn the fact that the One who fed them was neither the field nor the storehouse but God.

In the gospel of the water and the Spirit, too, God did not command the sinner to accomplish salvation by himself. Jesus first completed salvation by bearing the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John, receiving that judgment on the Cross, and rising again from death.

Therefore faith is not forcing God to make what does not exist. It is accepting the remission of sins God has already prepared in Jesus Christ, entrusting the present and the future to that God, and obeying His word.

Leviticus 25:23–28—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The center of Leviticus 25:23–28: the ownership of God and the redemption that makes one regain the lost possession

Leviticus 25:23–28 is the law of ‘the redemption of the possession,’ which God prepared for the Israelite who came to

sell, because of poverty, the land he had received from his ancestors.

This ordinance contains three important truths.

—The true Owner of the land is not man but God.

—Even if a poor person loses his possession, the way to recover it must not be blocked.

—If neither the person himself nor his relative is able to redeem it, in the Jubilee God makes the possession be restored.

Therefore the center of this word lies not in the land transaction itself, but in the ownership of God, the responsibility of the brother, the price of redemption, and the restoration of the possession.

2. *"The land is Mine"*

"The land shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with Me" (Leviticus 25:23).

God did not prohibit all land transactions themselves. He permitted a poor person to pass his land on to another person for his livelihood. But He did not let it be regarded as a sale by which ownership is transferred permanently.

The reason is clear.

"For the land is Mine" (Leviticus 25:23).

The land of Canaan was not a land that Israel had obtained by themselves. It was the land God had promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and had divided among their descendants as a possession. Therefore the person who received the land was not an absolute owner, but a steward managing the possession God had entrusted to him.

This principle is the key to understanding the whole of Leviticus 25. In the sabbatical year the land had to rest; in the

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Jubilee the land that had been sold had to return to the original family; and even the price of a transaction had to be set according to the number of years of produce until the next Jubilee. This is because the land belongs not to man but to God.

3. *"You are strangers and sojourners with Me"*

The people of Israel received the land of Canaan as a possession, but God called them *"strangers and sojourners."* This does not mean that they had no right of residence and no possession; it means that before God they could not act as absolute masters.

The owner was God, and Israel was in the position of a tenant or a steward dwelling together with God. They lived in the land God had entrusted to them, and they had to use that land according to the order of God.

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must also make the same confession. Our life, body, property, and time have all been received from God. The person who has been redeemed from sin can all the more not claim himself as his own possession.

"You are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Corinthians 6:19–20).

The freedom of the gospel is not my becoming the absolute master of my own life. It is the freedom of escaping from the rule of sin and returning to God, the original Owner.

4. *"You shall grant redemption of the land"*

"And in all the land of your possession you shall grant redemption of the land" (Leviticus 25:24).

To 'redeem' means to pay the price and take back what has already passed to another person. What is important here is the fact that God did not close the door of restoration to the person who had lost his possession.

Just because a person had sold his possession on account of poverty, that poverty was not to continue as an eternal loss even to his descendants. God guaranteed by the law the right to regain that land.

Therefore even the person who had bought the land could not claim, "I have paid the money, so now it is mine forever." He had to acknowledge the redemption and the restoration in the Jubilee that the law of God had set.

This ordinance was a safeguard preventing the strong from taking advantage of the crisis of the weak and seizing the possession of that family permanently. The righteousness of God does not acknowledge only freedom of transaction; it also guarantees the poor person a way to recover.

5. The brother who became poor and came to sell his possession

"If one of your brethren becomes poor, and has sold some of his possession" (Leviticus 25:25).

In the text, the reason for selling the possession is not greed but poverty. It is a situation in which one has no choice but to pass on part of the possession of one's ancestors because it is hard to maintain one's livelihood.

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God did not cast him away as a failure. Nor did He say only, "You became poor through your own fault, so take responsibility yourself." He placed the responsibility of redemption within the family community so that his possession could be regained.

Here the poor person is still called *"your brethren."* Losing property does not mean losing one's qualification as the covenant people or even one's dignity as a human being.

Today the church, too, must not treat a person who has fallen into difficulty merely as an incapable person. Nor must it judge as if material failure determined the whole of a person's faith, personhood, and dignity. God opens a way of restoration to the person who has lost.

6. *"His redeeming relative comes to redeem it, then he may redeem what his brother sold"*

The redeeming relative is a close relative who has the responsibility to pay the price on behalf of the poor family and restore the possession. Merely feeling pity could not redeem the possession. It had to be a close relative who could actually pay the price.

In the Book of Ruth, Boaz's redeeming the possession of Naomi and Ruth is the representative case of this law. There was a relative closer than Boaz, but he refused to redeem it, fearing that his own possession would suffer loss. Boaz accepted the responsibility, redeemed the possession, and carried on the name of the dead.

Three elements were needed for the person who redeemed the possession.

—He had to have a close family relationship with the person who had lost the possession.

—He had to have the ability to pay the price on his behalf.

—He had to have the will to redeem it voluntarily, accepting the loss and the responsibility.

This scene becomes an important picture for understanding the redemption of Jesus Christ.

7. Jesus is the Redeemer who drew near to us

The Son of God came to this earth in the body of a man to save sinners. The Book of Hebrews says as follows.

"Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same" (Hebrews 2:14).

"In all things He had to be made like His brethren" (Hebrews 2:17).

Jesus has no sin, but He put on the body of a man like us. He did not remain only as One who helps us from afar, but became like our brother and stood in the place of the Redeemer.

Jesus had the qualification to redeem. He is the Son of God, who has no sin, and He had the power to save us. Moreover, He did not redeem us by compulsion, but willingly gave His own life.

"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45).

Boaz redeemed the possession of Naomi by using his property, but Jesus redeemed sinners with His own life.

8. The price of redemption and the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Because of sin, man lost his relationship with God, his life,

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and his eternal inheritance. But man cannot bring his life back to life by his own good deeds or riches.

"None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him—for the redemption of their souls is costly, and it shall cease forever—" (Psalm 49:7–8).

The only One who can redeem sinners is Jesus Christ, who has no sin. That redemption was accomplished through the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross.

Jesus fulfilled *"all righteousness"* by receiving baptism from John. Just as the sacrifice of the Old Testament had sins passed on to it by the laying on of hands, Jesus bore the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John. That is why John the Baptist testified, pointing to Jesus, that He was *"the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."*

Bearing the sin He had borne, Jesus went to the Cross and shed His blood. The water testifies of the baptism Jesus received from John to bear sin, and the blood testifies of the death on the Cross by which He received the judgment of that sin. Jesus rose again from death and became the Redeemer of those who believe, and the Holy Spirit testifies that this gospel of the water and the blood is the truth.

"Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:18–19).

The baptism Jesus received from John is the event in which He bore our sins, and the blood He shed on the Cross is the evidence that He paid the price of the sins He had borne with His life. Therefore the baptism Jesus received from John and the Cross must not be separated.

9. When the person himself becomes able to redeem it

"Or if the man has no one to redeem it, but he himself becomes able to redeem it" (Leviticus 25:26).

Even if there was no one among the close relatives to redeem the possession, if the person himself regained economic ability, he could take back his possession.

He had to count the period from the year he sold the land until now, and return to the person who had bought the land the price corresponding to the period remaining until the next Jubilee. It was a method of acknowledging the produce of the period already used as the share of the buyer, while returning the price of the period not yet used and taking back the possession.

This is a fair ordinance that considers together the right of the buyer and the restoration of the original owner. It neither gives the poor person an unconditional privilege and forces a loss on the buyer, nor allows the buyer to occupy the possession of the poor person forever.

The righteousness of God looks after both sides.

10. The clause that one can redeem it oneself and spiritual salvation must be distinguished

Verses 26–27 say that if the person himself becomes rich again, he can redeem his own possession. But this must not be applied spiritually and interpreted to mean that a sinner, too, can save himself if he makes an effort.

On the literal level of the text, it is the law by which the landowner, when he has recovered economically, actually pays the price and takes back the land. But in the redemption of the soul, man has no ability to save himself.

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The structure that the whole text shows—the lost possession, the ability to redeem, the redeemer who pays the price on one's behalf, and the restoration of the possession—makes us understand the redemption of Jesus Christ.

In the redemption of the soul, only Jesus can redeem us.

11. Even if one is not able to redeem it, in the Jubilee it returns

"But if he is not able to have it restored to himself, then what was sold shall remain in the hand of him who bought it until the Year of Jubilee; and in the Jubilee it shall be released, and he shall return to his possession" (Leviticus 25:28).

This verse is the final guarantee of the restoration of the possession. If there is no close relative and the person himself is not able to redeem it either, all human methods seem to be blocked.

But God set the Jubilee. When the Jubilee came, even a person who had no ability to pay the price could return to his original possession. God set the time of restoration so that poverty and inability would not lead to the eternal loss of the possession.

Here we can see the nature of grace. Even when a person cannot solve it by his own strength, the law and the promise of God leave a way of restoration.

However, this must not be expanded to mean that all people are automatically saved regardless of faith. The ordinance of the Jubilee was a law concerning the possessions of the covenant community of Israel. In the New Testament, the gospel that Jesus has completed redemption is proclaimed to all people, but that salvation is applied to the person who hears the gospel and believes in his heart.

12. The inheritance restored to the redeemed person

Ephesians 1 speaks together of the redemption of Jesus Christ, the inheritance, and the guarantee of the Holy Spirit.

"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace" (Ephesians 1:7).

And the person who has heard the gospel and believed is sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, and the Holy Spirit becomes the guarantee of the inheritance to be received in the future.

Redemption has a meaning beyond simply escaping punishment.

—One receives the remission of sins.

—One becomes a child of God from a slave of sin.

—One's relationship with God is restored.

—One receives the inheritance of the kingdom of God.

—The Holy Spirit dwells in one's heart as the guarantee of that inheritance.

Just as in Leviticus the person who was redeemed returned to the land he had lost, the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit recovers the relationship with God and the inheritance of eternal life that he had lost through sin.

13. *"The land is Mine"* and *"bought at a price"*

The word *"the land is Mine"* in Leviticus 25:23 and the word *"you were bought at a price"* in 1 Corinthians 6 show an important principle that connects them with each other.

Because God is the Creator, He is originally our Owner. Yet He redeemed us again, who had left God because of sin, with the

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baptism of Jesus and the blood of the Cross. Not only through the right of creation but also through the price of redemption, we have become God's.

Therefore the redeemed saint confesses as follows.

"My body is not mine, my time is not mine, and my property and ability are not mine. Because Jesus has redeemed me from sin, I am God's."

This confession does not take away human freedom. It is the true freedom of escaping from the possession of sin, greed, and self-centeredness and coming to belong to God, who loves us.

14. The lesson for the saints and the church today

First, one must not make possessions absolute.

Since the property a saint has is what God has entrusted to him, he must not accumulate it without limit only for himself.

Second, one must open a way of restoration to the brother who has fallen into difficulty.

One must not take advantage of the poverty and desperation of the other person and take his property and labor at a giveaway price.

Third, help must not stop at mere sympathy.

The redeeming relative actually paid the price and restored the possession. The church, too, must not comfort a person in difficulty with words only, but must give concrete help within the range that is possible.

Fourth, the redeemed person must offer his body to the will of God.

Since one has become a person bought at a price, one must use one's body, time, and material things for the gospel and for righteous work.

Fifth, one must not try to redeem one's sins by one's own deeds.

One must not try to save oneself by tears, fasting, good deeds, and repeated resolutions, but must believe the word that Jesus has completed redemption with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross.

Sixth, if one has already been redeemed, one must not keep condemning oneself as if one were a slave of sin.

The Holy Spirit testifies of the gospel of the water and the blood, and guarantees the inheritance of the kingdom of God to the person who has believed in the gospel.

Conclusion

Leviticus 25:23–28 is a law that limits human ownership, and at the same time a law of grace that guarantees restoration to the poor.

Because the land belongs to God, the rich could not monopolize it forever. When a poor brother lost his possession, God had a close relative pay the price and redeem it, and if there was no such person, He let the person himself redeem it when he had recovered. Even if that too was impossible, He made the possession return in the Jubilee.

A sinner has no ability to redeem his own eternal life. No other human being can pay the price of that life on his behalf either. That is why the Son of God put on the body of a man and became our close Redeemer.

Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John, paid the price of sin by shedding His precious blood on the Cross, and rose again from death. The person who believes in this gospel of the water and the blood receives redemption, that is,

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the remission of sins, becomes a child of God, and obtains the eternal inheritance.

Therefore the deepest gospel message of this text is this.

We had no ability to redeem ourselves, but Jesus Christ drew near to us, had the ability to redeem us, and willingly paid His own life as the price and restored to us the life and the inheritance we had lost.

Leviticus 25:29–38—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The center of Leviticus 25:29–38: the order of possessions and the grace that gives life to the poor brother

Leviticus 25:29–38 is divided broadly into two parts.

—Verses 29–34: the law of redeeming houses and the possession of the Levites

—Verses 35–38: the law to help a fellow countryman who has become poor, without interest

The first part does not treat all real estate the same. It regulates differently a house in a walled city, a house in a village without a wall, and the cities and fields of the Levites. The latter part commands the community to hold up a brother before he falls into complete ruin and is sold as a slave.

The center that connects these two parts is this.

God acknowledges property rights, but He did not permit the strong to take advantage of the crisis of the weak and take away the basis of their survival and their dignity.

2. A house in a walled city

"If a man sells a house in a walled city, then he may redeem it within a whole year after it is sold" (Leviticus 25:29).

The person who sold a house in a walled city could pay the price and take back that house within a year. But if he did not redeem it within a year, that house was confirmed as the possession of the person who bought it.

"Shall belong permanently to him who bought it, throughout his generations. It shall not be released in the Jubilee" (Leviticus 25:30).

This is a regulation different from that of farmland, which we looked at before. Because farmland was directly connected with the possession God had given to each tribe and family, it returned to the original family in the Jubilee. But an ordinary house in a walled city was confirmed as the possession of the buyer after the period of redemption of one year had passed.

Through this difference we can see that God did not nullify all sales. The Jubilee was not a system that abolished all private property or normal transactions. God also acknowledged the finality and the order of transactions.

In this way God gave different ordinances of redemption for an ordinary house inside a wall and for a farming possession.

3. The meaning of giving the opportunity to redeem for one year

Even a house in a walled city did not become the permanent possession of the buyer immediately. God gave the person who had sold it the opportunity to buy it back for one year.

Here the opportunity of restoration and the finality of the

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transaction are contained together.

—The person who sold the house is given time to take it back.

—The person who bought the house also has his stable ownership acknowledged after one year has passed.

—Because the period of redemption is clear, it is hard for either side to deceive the other.

The grace of God is not disorder. While giving the poor a way of restoration, He also has legitimate transactions and promises respected.

The grace of the gospel, too, does not mean that God ignores sin as if it had never existed. Because judgment surely follows sin, Jesus bore that sin and was judged on the Cross. The love and the righteousness of God were accomplished together in Jesus Christ.

4. A house in a village without a wall

"However the houses of villages which have no wall around them shall be counted as the fields of the country. They may be redeemed, and they shall be released in the Jubilee" (Leviticus 25:31).

A house in a village without a wall was treated in the same way as the fields of the country.

Therefore a house in a village could be redeemed, and even if it was not redeemed, it returned to the original family when the Jubilee came. God protected the basis of a family's survival so that it would not pass permanently to another person because of poverty.

This limits the structure in which, once a poor person fails, that poverty is passed down forever to his children and descendants. God holds a person responsible, but He does not remove even the possibility of restoration.

5. The cities and houses of the Levites

"Nevertheless the cities of the Levites, and the houses in the cities of their possession, the Levites may redeem at any time" (Leviticus 25:32).

The tribe of Levi did not receive a wide territory as a possession like the other tribes. Instead, they received cities and the fields around them from among the possessions of each tribe of Israel. Numbers 35 says that the cities were given as the dwelling places of the Levites, and the fields around the cities for their livestock and their goods.

Therefore a house in a city of the Levites was different from an ordinary city house. It was a special possession God had given so that the Levites could dwell among Israel and serve the Tabernacle and the law.

A Levite could redeem a house in his own city at any time. Even if he did not redeem it, he received it back when the Jubilee came. The fields around the cities could not be sold at all.

"But the field of the common-land of their cities may not be sold, for it is their perpetual possession" (Leviticus 25:34).

6. The reason God specially protected the possession of the Levites

If the Levites lost their cities and fields permanently, it would not end with simply losing their dwelling place. It would also become hard for them to carry out stably the duties of the sacrifices and the word that God had entrusted to them.

Therefore this regulation contains not only the protection of the individual Levite, but also the purpose of preserving the worship and the work of the word of the community of Israel.

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Today this word cannot be used directly as a basis that the property of pastors or church leaders must be specially guaranteed. This is because the office of Levi in the Old Testament and the office of the church in the New Testament are not completely the same.

But we can consider the principle that the community must look after the basis of living that is needed so that the work of serving God's gospel and word can continue. Conversely, for a religious leader to use this word to accumulate personal property does not agree with the meaning of the text. The possession of the Levites was not for luxury and power, but for the duty God had entrusted to them.

7. The order of possession and restoration shown in the ordinances of houses

The text does not explain houses with walls and houses without walls as different kinds of believers or churches, nor does it set the one-year period of redemption as a particular time of salvation.

The primary meaning of this part is the law concerning how houses and possessions were to be traded and restored in the actual society of Israel.

Examining this ordinance, we obtain the following lessons concerning the ownership of God and the grace of restoration.

—God is the true Owner.

—God respects legitimate transactions and order.

—God gives a way of restoration to the person who has lost.

—God protects the dwelling place and the basis of survival of His people.

8. Hold him up before he falls into complete ruin

"If one of your brethren becomes poor, and falls into poverty among you, then you shall help him" (Leviticus 25:35).

Verse 35 does not say to pay attention to a brother only after he has already lost everything. It says to help him when he *"falls into poverty among you,"* that is, when it begins to become hard for him to maintain his living by himself.

From verse 39 onward, the text deals with the situation in which a poor fellow countryman comes to sell even his body. Therefore verses 35–38 are the preventive mercy by which the community holds up a brother before he falls into the condition of a slave.

The help God wants is not simply giving something to eat once in an urgent time and ending there.

"Like a stranger or a sojourner, that he may live with you" (Leviticus 25:35).

It means to help him so that he can go on living within the community. One must not isolate the poor person far away or put him to shame, but must hold him up at one's side so that he can build up his living again.

9. Even when he has become poor, he is still *"your brother"*

In verse 36 God again calls the poor person *"your brother."* The fact that his property is gone does not mean that even the relationship of brothers is gone.

A person does not obtain dignity by economic ability. He must be respected because he is one of the covenant people belonging to God.

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In the church, too, one must not conclude that a person in economic difficulty is incapable or lacking in faith. The attitude of drawing near to the rich and alienating the poor does not agree with the gospel.

Before the gospel of the water and the Spirit, all people were poor sinners who could not solve the problem of sin by their own strength. No one can boast of his own good deeds and merits. We have received the remission of sins only by believing in the salvation Jesus Christ has accomplished.

Therefore the person who has received grace cannot lord it over another brother on the basis of economic circumstances.

10. Do not make poverty an opportunity for profit

"Take no usury or interest from him" (Leviticus 25:36). "Nor lend him your food at a profit" (Leviticus 25:37).

What is prohibited here is the act of taking advantage of the survival crisis of a poor brother, lending him money and food, and taking profit.

The text deals with helping a brother who has to borrow money and food because his living is hard. If one demands interest from a person who has to borrow even food, one is not helping him but making his poverty deeper.

Exodus 22:25 also says as follows.

"If you lend money to any of My people who are poor among you, you shall not be like a moneylender to him; you shall not charge him interest."

God said not to regard the poor as objects that generate income. Their desperation is not an opportunity to gain profit, but a reason to show love.

11. Can all interest and financial transactions be seen the same way?

It is hard to conclude from this verse alone that all financial gains today—bank deposit interest, business investment, commercial loans, and so on—are equally sin. The text specifically prohibits taking profit while lending money or food to a poor fellow countryman whose living has collapsed.

Deuteronomy 23:19–20 also says not to charge interest to a brother, and distinguishes him from a foreigner. But that distinction does not become a basis for unconditionally permitting today's commercial loans or high interest. In this text, one must first hold on to the command not to take advantage of the want of a poor brother.

Applied today, the following acts go against the spirit of this word.

—Demanding unbearably high interest from a person who needs money urgently

—Making a person take on more debt while knowing that he cannot repay it

—Taking excessive profit by using essential needs such as food, housing, and medical care

—Deceiving a person who does not understand the contents of a contract

—Continuing to dominate and shame the other person after giving help

12. *"Fear your God"*

"Take no usury or interest from him; but fear your God" (Leviticus 25:36).

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A transaction with a poor person can be made in secret. Outwardly it may look like giving help, but in reality one may be taking advantage of his desperation. Even if people do not know that inner heart, God knows.

That is why the basis of the prohibition of interest is not a mere economic policy but the fear of God. How one treats the poor reveals how much one fears God.

The person who fears God thinks like this.

"Before this person is an object that gives me profit, he is a person God has made and my brother. God is looking at his circumstances."

13. Salvation comes first, and love is its result

"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to give you the land of Canaan and to be your God" (Leviticus 25:38).

After telling them in verses 35–37 to help a poor brother, God reminds them of the salvation of the Exodus.

God did not say, "If you help the poor well, I will save you out of Egypt." He told the people He had already brought out of Egypt to live like this.

The order is important.

Being saved from slavery in Egypt → becoming the people of God → receiving Canaan as a possession → helping the poor brother without exploiting him

Therefore brotherly love is not a condition or a price for obtaining salvation. It is the life in which the person who has already been saved shows to his neighbor the grace he has received.

14. The Exodus and the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Just as Israel were slaves of Egypt, all people are born as slaves of sin. They cannot escape from the rule and the judgment of sin by their own deeds and efforts.

God sent Jesus Christ to save sinners. Jesus fulfilled all righteousness by receiving baptism from John, and bore the sin of the world. That is why John the Baptist testified of Jesus as *"the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."*

Jesus, bearing the sin He had taken upon Himself, shed His blood and was judged on the Cross, and rose again from death. The Holy Spirit testifies that this salvation Jesus accomplished with the water and the blood is true.

The person who believes in this gospel receives the remission of sins not as a reward for works but by grace.

"By grace you have been saved through faith" (Ephesians 2:8).

"Not of works" (Ephesians 2:9).

But the very next verse says that the saved person was created *"for good works."* Salvation is not of works, but works of love must come from the faith of the person who has been saved.

15. Jesus, who became poor for us

2 Corinthians 8:9 speaks of the grace of Jesus like this.

"Though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich"

Jesus abandoned the glory of heaven, put on the flesh, and came to this earth. He bore our sins with the baptism He received

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from John, and gave His own life on the Cross.

That we have become rich does not necessarily mean that our worldly property has increased. It means that we have received the remission of sins, eternal life, becoming children of God, the Holy Spirit, and the inheritance of the kingdom of God.

The person who believes in this grace cannot make himself rich by using the poverty of another person. This is because he himself is a person who has come to live through the sacrifice of Jesus.

16. The brotherly love of the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit

1 John 3 directly connects the salvation of Jesus with brotherly love.

"By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us" (1 John 3:16). "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?" (1 John 3:17).

Believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not end with confessing doctrinally that one has no sin. If one believes the fact that Jesus gave Himself to save me, that love must also appear in one's attitude toward one's brother.

This does not mean, however, that all saints must unconditionally share all their property and become poor. 2 Corinthians 8:13–14 says, *"I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened; but by an equality"*

What God wants is not an irresponsible sharing that makes one side fall into want again, but the balance of love in which the surplus of those who have fills the need of those who lack, and they hold one another up.

17. The application for the church and the saints today

—One must help a brother before he collapses completely. Verse 35 says to help him not after he has lost everything, but when he *"falls into poverty among you."* It is important to give practical help in the early stage of a crisis, such as loss of a job, sickness, a housing problem, or sudden debt.

—Help must build up dignity and self-reliance together. The word "that he may live with you" is deeper than simply giving one-time relief goods. One must provide relationships and opportunities within the community so that he can build up his living again.

—One must not make good deeds the merit of salvation. Sins are not washed away because one has helped the poor much. The remission of sins is received by believing in the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross. Good deeds are not the price of salvation, but the fruit of thanksgiving for having been saved.

—One must not condemn the poor as people without faith. Having much or little property is not the standard for judging salvation or the size of faith. God still calls the poor person *"your brother."*

—One must see life before profit. Even a legal contract, if it takes advantage of the desperation and ignorance of the other person, may break the law of love before God. The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must examine not only "How much can I earn?" but also "Does this transaction save a person, or make him collapse further?"

—One must live remembering the salvation one has received. Israel had to remember the fact that they themselves had been slaves of Egypt and were saved by the grace of God. The saints, too, must remember that they were slaves of sin but were saved

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by the baptism of Jesus and the Cross. That memory breaks pride and makes one have pity on one's brother.

Conclusion

Leviticus 25:29–38 does not ignore property rights. For a house in a walled city, ownership was confirmed after the one-year period of redemption. But a house in a village, connected with the farming possession, returned in the Jubilee, and the cities and fields of the Levites were specially protected for their office and survival.

And God said to hold up a brother who had become poor before he fell into deeper slavery, and not to take advantage of his want and take interest and profit on food.

The reason is that Israel, too, was originally a people who had been in slavery in Egypt. Because God had first saved them, they too were not to drive their brother into slavery.

It is the same in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, rose again from death, and saved us. This salvation is not our works but the grace of God.

Therefore the person who has come to live by grace must stand not on the side of using the poverty of another person, but on the side of saving and restoring him. This is the fruit of faith that the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must show in economic life and in the relationship of brothers.

Leviticus 25:39–46—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. Whose possession is the redeemed person?

The center of Leviticus 25:39–46 lies in a question more fundamental than "How is a person to be owned?"

Because Israel is the people God redeemed with power from slavery in Egypt, they are ultimately the possession of God. Therefore no one can treat a fellow countryman who has become poor as if he were his own absolute property.

But verses 44–46 permit foreigners to be owned as permanent slaves and to be inherited by one's children. From today's perspective, this regulation is clearly a difficult and uncomfortable word. Therefore this part must neither be glossed over as having been a mere employment relationship, nor, conversely, be used as a basis for justifying modern racial slavery.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit in the New Testament, while completing the principle of redemption in this word, establishes Jew and Gentile, slave and free, as one brotherhood and as children of God in Christ.

2. The fellow countryman who is sold because of poverty

"If one of your brethren who dwells by you becomes poor, and sells himself to you, you shall not compel him to serve as a slave" (Leviticus 25:39).

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Here, being sold refers mainly to the state of having to entrust one's labor to another person because of poverty and debt. Economically he had to work under another person, but God did not let him be treated as a slave like ordinary property.

Just because a person is poor, his human dignity does not disappear. Nor does a creditor obtain the right to own the whole life of a person just because that person has fallen into debt. God restricted the person in an economically superior position so that he could not take advantage of the vulnerability of a poor fellow countryman.

This gives an important principle to the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The person who believes in the gospel does not regard his economic power and position as a right to oppress others. If the grace he has received from God is great, that grace must appear in the direction of protecting the weak.

3. Not as a slave, but as a hired servant and a sojourner

"As a hired servant and a sojourner he shall be with you, and shall serve you until the Year of Jubilee" (Leviticus 25:40).

The poor fellow countryman had to work, but he was not to become permanent property. A hired servant is a person who works under certain conditions and for a certain period, and a sojourner, even though he stays in a household, is not the property of the master of that house.

Therefore the employer could use his labor, but could not own even his personhood and his life.

The important expression here is *"he shall be with you."* God had them not treat him as a subhuman tool, but see him as a

person living together within the community.

Today, too, an employment relationship, a debt relationship, or a relationship of office within the church cannot do away with a person's dignity. A leader who preaches the gospel cannot dominate the conscience and the life of the saints as if they were his own possession, and a business owner cannot take advantage of the desperate circumstances of an employee and force unjust labor on him.

4. The Jubilee is not only liberation but also restoration

"And then he shall depart from you—he and his children with him—and shall return to his own family. He shall return to the possession of his fathers" (Leviticus 25:41).

When the Jubilee came, it did not stop at ending slavery; he returned to his own family and recovered the possession of his fathers. In the Bible, freedom is not merely the passive state of escaping from an oppressive master. It is the active salvation of recovering the place, the relationships, and the possession God has given.

Jesus, too, proclaimed as follows in the synagogue.

"To proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD" (Luke 4:18–19).

The liberation and restoration of the Jubilee make us look toward the salvation given in Christ. We must understand that the direction of redemption that the whole Jubilee shows—liberation, return, and the restoration of the possession—is completed in Christ.

The sinner became a slave of sin, left God, and lost the

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inheritance of the kingdom of God. But Jesus Christ has liberated sinners and made them return as children of God. The saved person is not merely a person who has escaped hell, but a person who has become a member of the family of God and an heir of the promised inheritance.

5. The reason a person cannot own an Israelite permanently

"For they are My servants, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt; they shall not be sold as slaves" (Leviticus 25:42).

Here is the most fundamental reason a fellow countryman could not be made a permanent slave. It is because God brought them out of Egypt.

The freedom of Israel was not something they had won by themselves. God broke the power of Pharaoh and redeemed them from slavery in Egypt. Therefore no other person could own the redeemed Israel absolutely again.

This principle becomes even clearer in the New Testament.

"You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men" (1 Corinthians 7:23).

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is a person Jesus Christ has redeemed. Jesus bore all the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and completed salvation by rising again from death.

1 John 5:6–8 says that Jesus Christ came by water and blood, and that the Spirit, the water, and the blood testify as one. The water points to the baptism Jesus received from John, the blood shows the judgment of the Cross, and the Holy Spirit testifies of the truth of this salvation.

Therefore the ultimate Master of the saved person is not man but God. A pastor cannot own the saints, parents cannot dominate their children according to their own will, and an employer cannot treat workers as a means of production without personhood.

6. Do not rule over him with rigor

"You shall not rule over him with rigor, but you shall fear your God" (Leviticus 25:43).

The problem of ruling over a person with rigor is not a mere problem of temperament, but a problem of whether one fears God. A person who has power easily treats the weak carelessly where no one is watching. But God sees that.

The word *"fear your God"* includes the meaning that God becomes the Protector of the weak. Treating a person carelessly is not only insulting that person, but an act of ignoring God, who made him and redeems him.

The gospel not only saves a person from sin, but also changes the attitude with which that person uses power. If one threatens and oppresses people at home, at work, and in the church while believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, one is denying in one's life the meaning of the salvation one has received.

7. The difficult regulation concerning foreign slaves

Verses 44–46 regulate that Israel may buy slaves from among the surrounding foreigners or the children of the strangers who dwell among them, and may own them and give them to their descendants as an inheritance.

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This part must be read clearly.

First, this is not a mere short-term employment relationship. The expressions *"your property," "an inheritance for your children,"* and *"your permanent slaves"* show that foreign slaves were excluded from the regulation of automatic liberation in the Jubilee.

Here *"your permanent slaves"* does not mean that those persons receive eternal punishment, but that their status as slaves did not end automatically in the Jubilee and could be inherited by the next generation.

Second, this regulation cannot be read as if changed into an equal employment relationship. The text actually permits owning foreigners as inheritable slaves.

Third, the Bible does not present this regulation as a universal command that all societies today must carry out as it is. This is a social regulation given to Israel under the old covenant. For the church of the New Testament to take this clause and buy and sell people or treat a particular people as inferior goes against the gospel.

Fourth, even Leviticus itself does not say to treat foreigners unconditionally in an inhuman way.

"The stranger who dwells among you shall be to you as one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself" (Leviticus 19:34).

The love of the stranger in Leviticus 19 and the regulation of foreign slaves in Leviticus 25 exist together within the same law. Therefore 25:44–46 cannot be read as an unlimited permission for cruelty. But neither must the regulation of ownership in chapter 25 be weakened, on the basis of 19:34, as if it had never existed.

The reason the text itself directly states is that because Israel is the covenant people redeemed by God, they are not to make a

fellow countryman a permanent slave. But as to why the same right of the Jubilee was not given to foreigners, the text does not provide a sufficient explanation. Therefore we must not draw conclusions about reasons the Bible does not state.

8. In the gospel, even Gentiles become the family of God

In the society of Israel under the old covenant, there was a legal difference between an Israelite fellow countryman and a foreign slave. But the gospel of the New Testament does not leave Gentiles as permanent slaves outside the covenant.

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28).

This word is not a simple declaration that all social differences disappear immediately. But it is a declaration that in the salvation, the sonship, and the inheritance received before God there is no discrimination according to nation or status. The person who belongs to Christ, whether Jew or Gentile, is a child of God who will inherit the promised inheritance.

Ephesians 2:19 also says as follows to Gentile believers.

"Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God"

In Leviticus 25, a foreigner could become an inherited slave, but in the gospel even Gentiles become those who belong to the house of God and inherit the inheritance. This is an important advance in the history of redemption.

Concerning Onesimus, too, Paul said to receive him *"no longer as a slave but more than a slave—a beloved brother"*

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(Philemon 1:16). The gospel does not end with merely treating a slave more kindly; it makes one see him as a brother in the Lord.

Therefore, if one follows the spirit of the gospel, a system that makes a person the hereditary property of another person cannot be maintained.

9. From a slave of sin to one who is truly free

The slavery in Leviticus 25 becomes an important background for understanding the slavery of sin in the New Testament. But the Israelite slave and the foreign slave must not be matched one to one with the saved person and the forsaken person respectively.

Jesus spoke of the spiritual state of all people like this.

"Whoever commits sin is a slave of sin" (John 8:34).

Whether Jew or Gentile, slave or free, all people are born under sin. No one can escape completely from the sovereignty of sin by his own will and deeds. Sin demands of a person shame, fear, judgment, and the wages of death.

But Jesus went on to say.

"Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed" (John 8:36).

Because Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John and paid the price of those sins on the Cross, the person who believes this fact is liberated from the place of a slave of sin. And by believing in Jesus Christ, who rose again from death, he obtains new life.

This freedom is not the freedom to sin as one pleases. Romans 6 says that the saved person, *"Having been set free from sin,"* has *"become slaves of righteousness."* It is the freedom of

being released from the rule of sin and being able to serve God and do righteousness and love.

Moreover, the saved person is not a person who has received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but a person who has received the Spirit of adoption. He does not serve God as if He were a fearsome slave master, but has become a child who calls Him *"Abba, Father"* (Romans 8:15).

10. The life of the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit

This word requires the following life of believers today.

First, one must not evaluate people only by economic value. A person in debt, a poor person, a foreign worker, and a socially weak person are also people made in the image of God.

Second, one must not take advantage of the want of others. Forcing an unfair contract on a desperate person or not paying a just wage goes against the spirit of the word, "You shall not rule over him with rigor."

Third, one must help restoration beyond mere relief. The Jubilee did not end with sharing a little food; it restored family, possession, and the ground of life. The church, too, must help a person in difficulty to stand again rather than making him keep depending on it.

Fourth, one must not make classes within the gospel according to race, nationality, and status. Even Gentiles are fellow citizens and the family of God in Christ.

Fifth, a church leader must not make the saints his own people or his own possession. Because the saints are people Christ has bought at a price, they cannot become the slaves of any pastor or organization.

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Sixth, the saved person must not use freedom for his own desires, but must serve others in love. Gospel freedom is not the freedom to dominate but the freedom to serve.

Conclusion

Leviticus 25:39–46 is a word that, under the old covenant, forbade making a poor Israelite fellow countryman a permanent slave and commanded that his family and possession be restored in the Jubilee. Its basis is the fact that God redeemed them from Egypt.

At the same time, the limitation and the difficulty of verses 44–46, which permitted owning foreigners as inheritable slaves, must not be hidden either. This clause is a social regulation given to ancient Israel, not a command that justifies owning people or ethnic slavery today.

In the gospel of the water and the Spirit, Jew and Gentile, slave and free, were all people who had been under sin. But Jesus bore the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John, was judged on the Cross, and rose again from death, and thereby liberated all who believe from the slavery of sin.

Therefore the person who believes in this gospel does not try to become the master of others. He preaches the gospel so that all people may become children of God and beloved brothers in Christ, does not oppress the weak, and helps those who have fallen into debt and collapsed to stand up again.

The redeemed person is not the property of a person but a person of God. And the person who belongs to God treats others not as property but as brothers to be loved.

Leviticus 25:47–55—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The redeemed person obtains freedom again

Leviticus 25:47–55 continues the explanation of the preceding verses 39–46. If verses 39–46 are the regulation for when a poor Israelite is sold to a fellow countryman, verses 47–55 are the regulation for when he is sold to a foreigner who has become rich.

Whether the master is an Israelite or a foreigner, the conclusion is the same. An Israelite whom God redeemed from Egypt cannot become anyone's permanent property. If a close relative paid the price, he obtained freedom, and even if no one redeemed him, he had to be released without fail in the Jubilee.

This word is deeply connected with Jesus Christ, who in the New Testament came in the same flesh as ours to redeem man, who had become a slave of sin.

2. A foreigner can become rich and a fellow countryman can become poor

"If a sojourner or stranger close to you becomes rich, and one of your brethren who dwells by him becomes poor" (Leviticus 25:47).

This word shows that in the society of Israel a foreigner was not necessarily always in a poor and inferior position. A foreigner could accumulate property and become rich while residing among Israel, and conversely an Israelite could become

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poor and sell himself to him.

God did not deny this economic reality. Just because one is of the covenant people, one does not always become rich, and just because one is a foreigner, one does not necessarily have to live in poverty.

But God said that economic success does not give the right to own a person permanently. The Israelite who was sold because of poverty had to work, but his whole being did not become the master's.

The person who believes in the gospel, too, must not judge the love and the salvation of God by economic circumstances. Being rich does not mean being closer to God, and being poor does not mean being forsaken by God. Material condition and the status of having been saved are not the same.

3. *"After he is sold he may be redeemed again"*

"After he is sold he may be redeemed again. One of his brothers may redeem him" (Leviticus 25:48).

To "redeem" means to pay the price and release a person from the state of a slave. Even if a poor person had already sold himself to a foreigner, that was not the end of everything. God left open to him a way to obtain freedom again.

What is important in this word is *"after he is sold."* Even in the state in which ownership had already passed to another person, redemption was possible. Even if his condition looked hopeless, the way of redemption God had set was not closed.

This makes us think of the state of man, who has been sold to sin. Jesus said.

"Whoever commits sin is a slave of sin" (John 8:34).

Sin is not simply a mistake a person makes now and then.

Sin is a power that rules over man, makes him drift away from God, and finally drags him to death and judgment. Man is not a master who controls sin as he wishes; rather, he has become a slave who is ruled by sin.

But just as in Leviticus there was a way of redemption even after one was sold, God has also prepared a way of redemption for man, who has been sold under sin.

This ordinance is a law protecting an Israelite who has become a slave because of economic poverty. When we examine the gospel, we pay attention to the redemption that sets an enslaved person free by paying the price. Jesus gave His own life to redeem us, who were slaves of sin.

4. A close relative redeems him

"His uncle or his uncle's son may redeem him; or anyone who is near of kin to him in his family may redeem him" (Leviticus 25:49).

If a poor person could not raise the price by himself, a close relative could pay the price on his behalf. This means that redemption was not left as a merely personal matter.

It was not, "You became poor and were sold, so solve it yourself." His brothers, his uncle, his cousin, and his close relatives had the responsibility to restore him.

The redeemer was not a third party unrelated to that person, but a close relative. He accepted the circumstances of the enslaved person as a matter of his own family, and gave his own property to set him free.

This principle makes us think of why Jesus Christ came to this earth in the body of a man. Hebrews 2:14 says as follows.

"Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and

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blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same"

Jesus, the Son of God, put on the same flesh and blood as ours to redeem sinners. And Hebrews 2:17 says that the Lord accomplished redemption for the sins of the people by *"in all things"* being *"made like His brethren."*

The redeeming relative of Leviticus becomes an important background for understanding Christ in the New Testament. Jesus did not merely declare salvation from a far place unrelated to us. He came as a man, bore our weakness and death, and was not ashamed to call us brethren.

But although Jesus put on the same flesh as ours, He was not a sinner. As the sinless Son of God, He became the true Redeemer, who has the qualification to take the place of sinners.

5. He could also redeem himself

The latter half of verse 49 says as follows.

"If he is able he may redeem himself"

Literally, if the enslaved person later obtained property, he could pay his own redemption price and obtain freedom. Therefore in this law, redemption was not something only a relative could do.

But when applying this to spiritual salvation, a distinction is necessary. The debtor of Leviticus could later gather actual property and redeem himself, but a sinner cannot pay the price of sin by his own good deeds and the works of the law.

The wages of sin is death, and the religious merits or good deeds a sinner has accumulated cannot take the place of the judgment of sin. A person cannot save himself by offering prayer, fasting, offerings, service, or acts of repentance as the redemption price.

Therefore spiritual redemption needs a Redeemer who comes from outside us. He is Jesus Christ.

6. The redemption price was calculated fairly

The redemption price of an enslaved person was not a method of unconditionally returning in full the money he had received when he was first sold. The period remaining from the year he was sold until the Jubilee was counted, and the period he had already worked was acknowledged as a period of hired labor.

If many years remained until the Jubilee, the redemption price was also large, and if few years remained, the redemption price was also small. The master was made to receive back only as much as the value of the labor he had not yet been provided.

This regulation contains righteousness in two directions.

First, on the ground of liberating the poor person, the legitimate share of the master was not taken away arbitrarily.

Second, the master was not allowed, under the pretext of the price he had first paid, to ignore even the labor he had already been provided and demand the full amount.

Therefore redemption was not an emotional favor, but the actual payment of a set price.

The redemption of the gospel, too, is not overlooking sin as if nothing had happened. God judges sin in holiness and righteousness. Jesus said.

"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45).

Our redemption price was not silver or gold.

"But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:19).

Here the redemption price of Christ must not be thought of as

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money paid to the devil. Jesus bore in His own body the righteous judgment of God on sin. God accomplished the way of salvation that gives life to the sinner while not conniving at sin.

7. The redemption accomplished with the water and the blood

The redemption of Leviticus was the work of liberating a slave by paying the price. In the New Testament, Jesus accomplished our redemption with the water and the blood.

"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 – ASV" (1 John 5:6).

Jesus first received baptism from John.

"Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15).

The baptism Jesus received from John is the work of salvation by which He bore all our sins once and for all. Because the sinless Jesus had the sin of mankind passed on to Him, John the Baptist testified the next day, pointing to Jesus, as follows.

"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).

After bearing the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John, Jesus went up onto the Cross bearing that sin. The blood of the Cross is the evidence that the Lord actually received the judgment of the sin He had borne. And by rising again from death, Jesus completed salvation from sin and death.

Therefore, in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, redemption is connected as follows.

—Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John.

—By shedding His blood on the Cross, He paid the judgment of sin and the price of death.

—By rising again from death, He gave new life to those who believe.

—The Holy Spirit testifies that this gospel of the water and the blood is the truth of genuine salvation.

The water must not be separated out on its own, nor the blood on its own. The baptism of Jesus, the Cross, and His rising again from death are one complete work of redemption.

8. God, who did not let him be ruled over with rigor

"He shall be with him as a yearly hired servant, and he shall not rule with rigor over him in your sight" (Leviticus 25:53).

Even if he had not yet been redeemed, the master could not treat him like permanent property. God had him treated like a hired servant employed yearly.

The word "*in your sight*" is also important. This was not a regulation left merely to the personal conscience of the master. The community of Israel had to watch so that a foreign master could not rule over a poor fellow countryman with rigor.

Today the church, too, must not look away, calling it a personal matter, when it sees the weak being exploited. It must watch for and stop unjust debt, wage exploitation, forced labor, human trafficking, abuse of migrant workers, and spiritual and economic domination by the use of power.

Within the church, too, keeping people bound in guilt and fear and subordinating them to a leader or an organization goes against the spirit of the gospel. The saints are not the possession of church leaders, but people Christ has bought at a price.

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9. Even if no one redeems him, in the Jubilee he is free

"And if he is not redeemed in these years, then he shall be released in the Year of Jubilee—he and his children with him" (Leviticus 25:54).

Even if he had no close relative or the relative had no ability to redeem him, and he himself could not raise the money either, he did not remain a slave forever. When the Jubilee came, he and his children obtained freedom together.

This was the final safeguard of liberation that God had set. Even when human ability and circumstances were lacking, the Jubilee of God set that person free.

In the gospel, that liberation of the Jubilee begins from Jesus Christ. The person who believes in Jesus receives the remission of sins now and is liberated from the condemnation of sin. Colossians 1:13–14 says that God has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of His Son, and that in the Son we have obtained "*redemption…the forgiveness of sins.*"

The remission of sins has already been completed, and the saved saints also wait for the redemption of the body in the future. Even the saved person experiences a weak body, suffering, and death while living in this world. When the Lord comes again, He will raise the saints who have died and also change the saints who are alive, and let them enjoy the complete freedom in which there is no sin, death, or corruption.

Therefore the Jubilee makes us look together at the present remission of sins and the complete restoration to be accomplished in the future.

10. The purpose of freedom is to belong to God

"For the children of Israel are servants to Me; they are My servants whom I brought out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God" (Leviticus 25:55).

The reason God did not let an Israelite become the permanent slave of another person appears in the last verse. It is because they are already God's.

God did not liberate Israel from slavery to Pharaoh to make them absolutely autonomous persons belonging to no one. He liberated them from being slaves of Pharaoh to make them the people of God.

The redemption of the New Testament is the same.

"For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Corinthians 6:20).

The purpose for which Jesus redeemed us is not to let us serve sin and desire again as we please. It is to liberate us from being slaves of sin and make us serve God.

But belonging to God does not mean becoming a slave of fear again. The saved person is at the same time a servant of God and a child of God.

"Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ" (Galatians 4:7).

The slave of a worldly master works out of fear, but the child of God serves the Father in thanksgiving for the grace of having been saved. The freedom the gospel of the water and the Spirit gives is not the freedom to leave God, but the freedom to love and serve God without guilt and without fear of judgment.

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11. The redemption price has already been paid in full

When a slave of Leviticus was redeemed by paying the price before the Jubilee came, the set redemption price had to be paid.

Likewise, if Jesus had borne only part of our sins, we could not receive complete salvation. But Jesus bore all the sins of the world with the baptism He received from John, and received all the judgment of those sins on the Cross.

Therefore the person who believes must not keep trying to pay the price of the remaining sins by his own deeds. Good deeds, repentance, prayer, and devotion are not an additional redemption price for being saved. They are the fruit of faith that the person who has already received complete redemption bears in thanksgiving.

The assurance of salvation does not lie in "Am I paying back the redemption price well?" It lies in believing the word that Jesus Christ bore all my sins with the baptism He received from John and received the judgment of those sins on the Cross.

If the Lord has paid the complete price, the person who believes has been completely redeemed.

12. The life of the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit

This word requires a concrete life of the saved person.

First, one must not take advantage of the crisis of the weak. Obtaining unjust profit by using the poverty, debt, and desperation of others is a matter of going against the God of redemption.

Second, one must share the responsibility of restoring a brother who has fallen into difficulty. Just as a close relative paid

the price and redeemed him, the church must provide practical help so that a collapsed person can stand again.

Third, debt and employment relationships must be transparent and fair. The redemption price of Leviticus was calculated according to the remaining period. An employer or a creditor must not demand an arbitrary price by using his superior power.

Fourth, no one must try to own another spiritually. A pastor or a church must not dominate the conscience, property, and life of the saints as if they were its own possession. The Master of the saved person is Christ, who bought him at a price.

Fifth, one must look at the power of the Redeemer rather than one's own weakness. For the sinner who cannot redeem himself, Jesus Himself paid the price. Therefore faith is not relying on one's own merit, but accepting the salvation Christ has accomplished.

Sixth, one must use the freedom of having been saved to serve the gospel and righteousness. The person liberated from being a slave of sin must not sell himself again to the desires of the flesh, but as one belonging to God must preach the gospel and do love and righteousness.

Conclusion

Leviticus 25:47–55 provides a threefold protection for an Israelite sold to a foreigner because of poverty.

A close relative can pay the price and redeem him, the redemption price is calculated fairly according to the period remaining until the Jubilee, and even if no one redeems him, he obtains freedom without fail in the Jubilee.

At the center of this word is the fact that "Israel is the people

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of God, whom God has already redeemed from Egypt." Therefore no one can own them permanently.

In the New Testament, Jesus Christ came in flesh and blood like a close brother to redeem us. Jesus bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins by shedding His precious blood on the Cross, and by rising again from death saved us from the slavery of sin and death. The Holy Spirit testifies of this gospel of the water and the blood as the truth.

Therefore the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is no longer a slave of sin and judgment. He is a person of God, whom Christ bought by paying the price, a child who calls God Father, and an heir of the eternal inheritance.

The reason we are free is not that there was no redemption price, but that Jesus Christ paid that price in full. ✉

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

God, who has given true rest through the grace of the remission of sins

< Leviticus 25:1-7 >

"And the LORD spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai, saying, Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: When you come into the land which I give you, then the land shall keep a sabbath to the LORD. Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather its fruit; but in the seventh year there shall be a sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a sabbath to the LORD. You shall neither sow your field nor prune your vineyard. What grows of its own accord of your harvest you shall not reap, nor gather the grapes of your untended vine, for it is a year of rest for the land. And the sabbath produce of the land shall be food for you: for you, your male and female servants, your hired man, and the stranger who dwells with you, for your livestock and the beasts that are in your land—all its produce shall be for food."

The rest learned in the land God gives

Dear beloved saints, people think that one can live only by working hard. A farmer sows seed in season, tends the vines, and gathers the fruit. Working like that with sweat is a precious thing.

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Yet in today's text, while telling the people of Israel when to work, God also set for them a time to stop the work they were doing and let the land rest. The people had to follow the word of God not only when working but also when resting.

Leviticus 25 begins with the LORD speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai. God taught the people of Israel how they were to live in the land they would enter in the future. *"Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: When you come into the land which I give you, then the land shall keep a sabbath to the LORD" (Leviticus 25:2).*

God spoke of that land as the land He Himself gives to the people. Before the people entered that land and came to farm it, there was first the giving of God. Therefore they were not to think only of what they would obtain from the land, but also had to listen to what God, who had given them that land, was saying. Even the life of plowing the field and gathering the fruit had to be carried out within the word of God.

We, too, must first know the grace of the Lord before God. We are not people who obtained life by our own strength, nor are we people who washed away our sins by ourselves and became the people of God. God accomplished salvation for us and made us believe in that salvation. When we think of the remission of sins, too, we must not put forward how hard we have tried, but must look at what the Lord has accomplished for us. The rest of our hearts begins from accepting by faith the salvation God has given.

Today's text is an actual ordinance to let the land rest. While examining that word, we also want to learn with what heart we must receive the rest God gives. In particular, let us think about how a person who lives carrying a heavy burden because of sin receives the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit and obtains true rest.

God, who told them the time to work and the time to rest

God first told them the work to be done for six years. *"Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather its fruit" (Leviticus 25:3)*. They had to sow seed in the field and tend the vineyard. He had them do the labor needed until they obtained the fruit. It is not a word saying that one may neglect the work entrusted to oneself on the ground that one believes in God.

But in the seventh year He gave a different command. *"But in the seventh year there shall be a sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a sabbath to the LORD. You shall neither sow your field nor prune your vineyard" (Leviticus 25:4)*. Continuing in that year the farm work they usually did was not faithfulness. When God said to let the land rest, stopping as He had said was obedience.

Here we must examine toward whom this rest was directed. God called it a sabbath to the LORD. It was different from the people reducing their work for a while according to their own circumstances. It was the work of letting the land rest in the year God had set, as God had said. The people living in that land could not set their schedule following only their own judgment.

When people hear the word to stop working, worry can arise in their hearts. This is because they feel at ease only when they keep doing the work they have always done. But the people of God had to trust the word of the Lord more than the way they had been accustomed to doing things. God had them follow His word when working, and also had them follow His word when He let them rest.

Genesis says that God finished the work of creation and rested. *"And on the seventh day God ended His work which He*

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had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done" (Genesis 2:2). The fact that God had completed the work He had been doing and His rest appear together. The true rest our souls obtain is also based on the salvation the Lord has accomplished. The One who completed salvation is the Lord, and we obtain rest of heart by believing in that salvation.

He let the farming rest, but let them eat the produce

In verse 5, God said not to reap even what grew of its own accord or the fruit of the untended vine. Then does it mean that in the sabbatical year no one could eat what grew in that land? When we read the following word together with it, we can know the will of God in commanding this. He said: *"And the sabbath produce of the land shall be food for you: for you, your male and female servants, your hired man, and the stranger who dwells with you, for your livestock and the beasts that are in your land—all its produce shall be for food" (Leviticus 25:6–7).*

God made them stop the work of farming and harvesting as in an ordinary year, but He did not forbid even eating the produce of that land. The prohibition of verse 5 and the permission of verse 6 must be seen together. The people could not say that they were keeping the sabbatical year while continuing to farm as they pleased, and conversely they were not to think that they could eat nothing. They had to stop the work God had told them to stop, and eat what He had given them to eat.

It is also necessary to pay attention to the range of people who were to eat that produce. God did not speak only of the

person who owned the field. He also spoke of the male and female servants, the hired man, and the stranger who dwelt with them. Then He let even the livestock and the beasts of that land eat of that produce. Within the ordinance to let the land rest was also contained the care of God, who feeds those who live depending on that land.

Therefore the person who met the sabbatical year was not to think only of himself and try to monopolize that produce. He had to remember whom God had permitted to eat. Obeying the word did not end with stopping the farm work. It went on to acknowledging those whom God had made to eat together.

Here we also come to look back on the heart with which we treat the grace we have received from God. The person who receives the care of God cannot live looking only at his own benefit. In particular, we who have received the grace of the remission of sins must treat others as people who must also know that grace. We cannot sort out the people who are to hear the gospel by looking at their status or their circumstances in life. Can we, who did not obtain salvation by our own merit, demand merit of others? We must preach to them, too, the salvation freely given to us.

The heavy burden of sin cannot be laid down by one's own effort

Dear saints, there are times when the body is resting but the heart cannot rest. We remember the sins of the past, and seeing our own evil that is exposed even today, we feel that we cannot stand before God. Even if we can pretend before people that nothing is wrong, we cannot hide sin before God. Sin becomes a heavy burden in our hearts.

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People try to solve this burden by themselves. They live more kindly, do good deeds as much as they have done wrong, and resolve never to commit the same sin again. The attitude of acknowledging one's wrongs and trying to set one's life right is necessary. But the sins already committed do not disappear by that. Nor are the sins before God washed away of themselves just because one adds good deeds.

We do not have only the sins that appear in our actions. Greed, hatred, and pride also come out of our hearts. When we think we have corrected one wrong, another sin is exposed. The person who tries to find the ground of the remission of sins within himself keeps confirming his own lack. If one says one will come to God after making oneself clean, one cannot escape from that heavy burden.

To us who are like this, Jesus said. *"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28)*. The Lord did not say to come after solving all one's burdens. He called those who were burdened, and said that He Himself would give them rest. The person who has no ability to remove sin must come to the Lord, who will save him.

We must honestly acknowledge our own condition before God. Judged according to the word of God, we have sin, and we are people who cannot escape the judgment on that sin. Acknowledging this fact is not giving up salvation. It is knowing that we ourselves need salvation. The remission of sins is not something a sinner obtains by declaring it to himself, but the grace God gives. Therefore we must hear how the Lord has solved our sins.

The remission of sins Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John and the Cross

Jesus, the Son of God, came into this world to save sinners. The Lord is not One who only taught us how to overcome sin and left. He accomplished salvation by Himself bearing our sins and even receiving the judgment on those sins. The gospel of the water and the Spirit lets us know this salvation Jesus accomplished for us.

Jesus went to the Jordan River and received baptism from John. When John tried to prevent Him from being baptized, 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 is not a ceremony unrelated to our sins. Just as in the Old Testament the sacrifice had sins passed on to it by the laying on of hands, Jesus bore the sin of mankind by receiving baptism from John. He fulfilled the righteous will of God, who saves sinners. Through this baptism we must clearly know who received our sins passed on to Him.

The sins Jesus bore do not contain only the sins of our past. All the sins we commit throughout our lives are included. The sins that are exposed outwardly and known to people, the sins hidden in our hearts, and even the sins we are ashamed even to admit ourselves—the Lord bore them all. Our sins are contained in the sin of the world that the Lord received passed on to Him.

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 went to the Cross in the body in which He bore the sin of the world. The blood He shed on the Cross is the blood with which He received the judgment on our sins. Jesus did not die because He

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Himself had sin; He died because of our sins, which He had borne by receiving baptism from John.

Therefore we must believe together in the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross. Through the baptism He bore our sins, and on the Cross He received the judgment of those sins. If we leave out the baptism of the Lord, we cannot know how He bore our sins, and if we leave out the blood of the Cross, we miss how the judgment of those sins was carried out. The Lord accomplished both the work of receiving sins passed on to Him and the work of paying the price of sin.

Jesus, who died on the Cross, rose again from death. The Lord did not remain in death, but came to life and became our Savior. The salvation Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John, His death on the Cross, and His rising again from death is complete. It is not a salvation that is barely completed only when we add something more. We receive the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Lord has accomplished.

To the person who believes in this salvation, God also gives the Holy Spirit. The Lord, who has washed away our sins, makes us the people of God. The person who used to fear God and keep away from Him because of sin now comes to rely on God, who has washed away his sins. The true rest the Lord spoke of is in this salvation. The Lord, who bore our sins, received the judgment, and rose again from death, becomes the rest of our hearts.

There is rest in the heart that believes in the salvation already accomplished

The ground on which we have received the remission of sins

does not lie in our lives having become perfect. It lies in Jesus having washed away our sins completely. We must know this difference clearly. If we make our own appearance the ground of the remission of sins, we are confident on days when we have done well, and on days when we have done wrong, we come to think as if salvation had disappeared. But the salvation the Lord has accomplished does not change according to the score of each of our days.

The word of God is clear. *"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit" (Romans 8:1)*. The person who believes this word does not regard his sins lightly. He knows how fearful sin is—so fearful that the Lord Himself bore it and received the judgment of the Cross. At the same time, because the Lord bore that judgment, he does not think that he must newly do something in order to receive salvation.

Even after receiving the remission of sins, there are times when we discover our own weakness. At such times we must not hide our wrongs or insist that we are right. We must acknowledge our sins before God, and if we have wronged someone, we must set it right. And while doing so, we must believe in the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross, by which He bore even those sins. Even in the place of acknowledging sin, we must not miss the remission of sins the Lord has accomplished.

The same feelings do not always arise in our hearts. When the body is tired or we meet a hard thing, the heart can also be shaken. But the degree to which the heart feels at ease is not the evidence of the remission of sins. What is important is to believe, according to the word of God, that the Lord has washed away our sins. If the ground of rest lies in our feelings, that rest is

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easily shaken. When it is based on the salvation the Lord has accomplished, we can put our shaken hearts back on the word.

In the sabbatical year, the people could not replace the word of God by continuing the farm work they usually did. Thinking of this ordinance, we too must look back on our own efforts to obtain the remission of sins. Even though the Lord has accomplished all of salvation, are we not still holding on to removing sin by our own labor? What we need is not to supplement the salvation of the Lord, but to believe in the salvation the Lord has accomplished as it is.

Let us serve God within the rest we have received

Dear saints, the rest obtained through the remission of sins does not make us irresponsible. Remember the word in which God told them to work for six years. We must live doing faithfully the work entrusted to us at home and at work. Only, we do not make that labor the price for washing away sin. We work in thanksgiving for having already received the remission of sins, and we treat people with a heart that believes in God, who has saved us.

God let many people eat the produce of the sabbatical year together. We who hear this word, too, must not shut up within ourselves the grace we have received. If there is someone nearby who is suffering, carrying the burden of sin, let us not merely tell him to try to become clean by himself. Let us preach Jesus, who has saved weak people like us. Let us preach the gospel that Jesus bore that person's sins, too, by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death.

Today God told His people to let the land rest. And He let

them eat the produce of the resting land. Stopping the work that had to be stopped and receiving what God had given was the way to obey that word. Our souls, too, must receive the salvation the Lord has given. There is no need to keep living carrying the heavy burden of trying to remove sin by ourselves. The Lord, who has called us, has already borne those sins.

Believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit in your heart. Our rest comes not from having forgotten sin, but from the Lord having washed away sin. Let us give thanks to God, who has saved us from sin and judgment and given us true rest. And let us live serving God within this grace of the remission of sins, and preaching the salvation the Lord has accomplished to those who are still carrying the burden of sin. ✉

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Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

God, who proclaims liberty through the gospel of the remission of sins

< Leviticus 25:8-12 >

"And you shall count seven sabbaths of years for yourself, seven times seven years; and the time of the seven sabbaths of years shall be to you forty-nine years. Then you shall cause the trumpet of the Jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement you shall make the trumpet to sound throughout all your land. And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a Jubilee for you; and each of you shall return to his possession, and each of you shall return to his family. That fiftieth year shall be a Jubilee to you; in it you shall neither sow nor reap what grows of its own accord, nor gather the grapes of your untended vine. For it is the Jubilee; it shall be holy to you; you shall eat its produce from the field."

Proclaim liberty in the year God has set

Dear beloved saints, in today's text appears the word of God to make the trumpet sound loudly throughout the whole land. That sound was the sound announcing the Jubilee to the people. God had them consecrate that year, proclaim liberty, and each

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return to his own possession and his family. To people placed in a condition they could not change by their own strength, God set a way to return.

First, let us look at verse 8. *"And you shall count seven sabbaths of years for yourself, seven times seven years; and the time of the seven sabbaths of years shall be to you forty-nine years."* God had them count seven years seven times. After they had counted forty-nine years in that way, He had them set apart the fiftieth year as the Jubilee. The Jubilee was not a year the people set arbitrarily according to their circumstances. God set the time, and also told them what was to be done at that time.

The following word is clear. *"And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a Jubilee for you; and each of you shall return to his possession, and each of you shall return to his family" (Leviticus 25:10).*

God did not tell them merely to hope for liberty. He told them to proclaim liberty. To proclaim here means to declare so that all people may know. He had them make known to the whole land the fact that the Jubilee God had set had come, and that they could return as that word said. The vague expectation of man and the liberty God has granted are different. The people who heard the trumpet of the Jubilee had to know what God had said and follow that word.

Our remission of sins, too, becomes clear from hearing and believing the fact God has accomplished. Just because a sinner says by himself that he is free, the sin before God does not disappear. The One who can save us from sin must solve the sin for us. And we must know how He has saved us. Examining the word of the Jubilee today, let us think together about what the liberty the Lord has given us through the gospel of the water and the Spirit is.

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The trumpet of the Jubilee He had sounded on the Day of Atonement

On what day did God have the trumpet announcing the Jubilee sounded? *"Then you shall cause the trumpet of the Jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement you shall make the trumpet to sound throughout all your land" (Leviticus 25:9)*. God spoke of the tenth day of the seventh month, that is, the Day of Atonement. When we examine the liberty of the Jubilee, we must not overlook the fact that this day was the Day of Atonement.

The Day of Atonement was the day God had set for the sins of the people of Israel. In Leviticus 16 He spoke of that 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)*. It was not a day on which the people removed their own sins by themselves, but a day on which they received the remission of sins through the sacrifice God had set.

On that day the high priest made atonement for himself and his household, and also offered the sin offering for the people. He took the blood of the goat for the people, entered the Most Holy Place, and sprinkled it on and before the mercy seat. He also laid both his hands on the head of the live goat, confessed over it all the iniquities and sins of the children of Israel, and put those sins on the head of the goat. That goat was sent into the wilderness bearing the iniquities of the people.

Here the will of God in dealing with sin is revealed. The sins of the people passed on to the sacrifice, and the sacrifice had to bear those sins. A sinner did not become clean by covering up his sins as if nothing had happened. There had to be the atonement God had set. The laying on of hands and the blood of

the sacrifice showed how the remission of sins is accomplished.

It was on this very Day of Atonement that God had the trumpet of the Jubilee sounded loudly. He had the sound announcing liberty and return ring out on the day the sins of the people were cleansed. We who hear this word must not forget the remission of sins even while thinking of liberty. Even if one becomes able to do what one wants in the world, if sin remains before God, the soul cannot escape from the judgment of that sin. We need the salvation that solves sin itself for us.

Jesus said. *"Jesus answered them, Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin" (John 8:34)*. A sinner cannot govern his own heart and commits sin, and because of that sin he is in a condition to be judged before God. To make such a person truly free, the problem of sin and judgment must be solved. The Lord came into this world for that very work.

Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John

On the Day of Atonement of the Old Testament, the high priest passed the sins on to the sacrifice on behalf of the people. Jesus, who came in the New Testament, bore our sins as the Lamb of God, who would save mankind. God did not merely tell us of the possibility of obtaining the remission of sins; He sent His Son and actually accomplished salvation.

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).*

Jesus received baptism from John in order to bear the sin of

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mankind. Just as the high priest of the Old Testament laid his hands on the sacrifice and passed the sins of the people on to it, when John, the representative of mankind, baptized Jesus, the sin of the world passed on to Jesus. The Lord, who has no sin, bore that sin in His own body to save sinners.

Our sins are also contained in the sins that passed on to Jesus at that time. The Lord did not accomplish salvation without knowing us. He knew all the sins we commit from birth throughout our lives. The sins already committed and the sins to be committed in the future, the sins revealed in actions and even the sins harbored in the heart, all belong to the sin of the world. Jesus bore all these sins by receiving baptism from John.

Therefore the person who is afraid because of his own sins must know the baptism Jesus received from John. One must not try vaguely to obtain liberty while thinking that one's sins still remain only on oneself. One must see, within the salvation God has set, who received our sins passed on to Him. When one believes the fact that the Lord bore those sins, the remission of sins is accepted in the heart as one's own salvation.

Jesus, who received baptism from John, went to the Cross in the body in which He bore the sin of the world. Because He had borne sin, He also had to receive the judgment on that sin. The blood Jesus shed on the Cross is the blood with which He gave His life for our sins. The Lord suffered on our behalf the death we had to receive, and paid the price of sin for us.

We must believe together in the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross. The Lord, who bore our sins with the baptism, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross. His death on the Cross was not a death for the Lord's own wrong. The One who had received our sins to save us died in our place. When we know this fact, we can clearly believe that the Cross of the Lord is a sacrifice for me.

After dying on the Cross, the Lord rose again from death. Jesus, who bore our sins and received the judgment, became our Savior by rising again from death. The gospel of the water and the Spirit preaches the salvation Jesus accomplished in this way. The Lord, who is God, came in the flesh, received baptism from John, died shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death, and thereby saved us.

In the Old Testament the sacrifice of the Day of Atonement was offered every year, but Jesus accomplished eternal atonement with His own body. The Book of Hebrews says. *"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)*. Our remission of sins is not a salvation whose effect ends when the next year comes. We receive the remission of sins by believing in the eternal atonement Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross.

When we know and believe the fact of salvation, we obtain true freedom

Dear saints, Jesus said, *"You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32)*. Knowing how the Lord has saved us is not separated from faith. We cannot hope only for assurance to arise in the heart without knowing that work. We must know the fact of salvation through the word, and believe as that word says.

When we hear the word that Jesus bore our sins, we must examine how the Lord bore them. We must know that the baptism He received from John is the work by which He received our sins passed on to Him, and that the blood of the

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Cross is the blood with which He bore the price of those sins. Only then does the gospel that He has saved us not remain a vague word. The fact that what Jesus actually did is the salvation for me becomes clear.

For the people who heard the sound of the trumpet of the Jubilee, too, it was important to know what that sound announced. They had to know that God had proclaimed liberty and granted a way to return. We, too, must hear the contents of the gospel that has been preached to us. Do not be satisfied only with the fact that you have attended worship and heard many words about salvation, but believe in your own heart the remission of sins Jesus has accomplished.

The salvation God has bestowed on us is not a promise without any ground for us to believe. Jesus bore our sins and received the judgment of those sins. We are not people who change or supplement that work, but people who believe in that salvation. The Lord accomplished the work of saving us, and now we receive that grace by faith.

The Lord also said. "*Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed" (John 8:36)*. The One who makes us free is the Son of God. It is neither a freedom obtained by insisting that one has no sin, nor a freedom obtained by trying hard not to think of sin. It is the freedom obtained by believing in the Lord, who bore our sins. Because there is the Savior, who received the judgment of sin in our place, we can be sure of the remission of sins.

He had them return to their own possession and family

In verse 10, God told each to return to his possession and

each to return to his family. In the liberty of the Jubilee there was return together with it. God said this so that the person who had been away could return to his own possession and family. Hearing this command, the people could think of the place to which they would return.

Examining this word, we also come to think of the purpose for which the Lord saved sinners. The Lord did not leave the person who had received the remission of sins to live without any relationship with God. To us, who could not come before God because of sin, He opened the way to come to God. Our salvation is the grace of escaping from the judgment of sin, and at the same time the grace of coming to God and obtaining the life of being with Him.

When Jesus died on the Cross, the veil of the sanctuary was torn. The Lord opened the way for people, who had been blocked because of sin, to come to God. Now the person who believes in the remission of sins Jesus has accomplished can come before God. We do not enter by making our own qualification; we come by the way the Lord has opened.

Jesus said, *"Jesus said to him, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6)*. The Lord Himself is the way to come to the Father. Because He is the One who received our sins and ended the judgment of those sins, the person who believes in the Lord can stand before God. He escapes from the life of hiding and avoiding God with sin, and comes to God, who has saved him, giving thanks.

We must treasure this grace. Having received the remission of sins does not mean having become a person who has nothing to do with God. It means that we have now come to know the salvation of God, who loved us, and to live relying on Him. Since Jesus Himself opened the way by which we can come to

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God, we must believe in that way and serve God with thanksgiving.

Enjoy the holy year before God, who has given liberty

In verse 11, God said that in the Jubilee they were neither to sow, nor to reap what grew of its own accord, nor to gather the grapes of the untended vine. Then He said, *"For it is the Jubilee; it shall be holy to you; you shall eat its produce from the field" (Leviticus 25:12)*. The joy of the Jubilee was a joy enjoyed within the ordinance God had set.

Just because the people had obtained liberty, they could not regard that year as something they might use as they pleased. God told them to consecrate the fiftieth year, and permitted the people to eat the produce of the field while resting from farm work. The One who gives liberty and the One who teaches the life of enjoying that liberty were the same God.

We who have received the remission of sins must also know the will of the Lord, who has given us freedom. We must not think of the fact that the Lord has removed sin as meaning that sin is nothing. How great a sacrifice did the Lord pay to remove sin? The person who believes in Him who saved us with His own life comes to know that love and give thanks.

We can believe in the salvation of the Lord, who bore our sins, without hiding our own faults. Also, when we see the shortcomings of our brothers and sisters, we must remember the fact that the Lord bore that person's sins too. While knowing the grace of the remission of sins bestowed on ourselves, we must not judge others by their faults alone. We must treat one another and serve the gospel within the grace of the Lord, who has saved us all.

Preach fully the news of the remission of sins and of liberty

Dear saints, God told them to sound the trumpet loudly throughout all the land. The news of the Jubilee was not news that only some people were to know. He had the word of liberty and return that God had set made known so that the people would hear it.

We, too, have the news of salvation that we must preach. It is the gospel that Jesus bore not only our sins but the sin of the world. To the person who is still afraid because of sin, we must make known that Jesus bore that person's sins, too, when He received baptism from John. We must preach so that he may receive the remission of sins by believing in the Lord, who received the judgment of those sins on the Cross and rose again from death.

When preaching the gospel, we must not speak only of the result of salvation, but must also make known clearly the work the Lord has accomplished. While saying that one can receive the remission of sins, we must not leave out how those sins passed on to Jesus. We must preach the baptism the Lord received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His rising again from death. We must help the hearer to know what the Lord has done and to believe that that salvation is for himself.

Let us ourselves believe in this salvation first. The Lord did not leave us as slaves of sin. He bore our sins and paid the price of those sins, and gave us freedom. And He opened the way to come to God. We are not people waiting for another Jubilee to come in order to receive this grace. We are people who receive the remission of sins by believing in Jesus Christ, who has already accomplished salvation.

Remember the word of God, who had liberty proclaimed on

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the Day of Atonement. Our true freedom lies in the remission of sins the Lord has accomplished. Let us believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and give thanks to God, who has saved us. And let us live preaching fully the gospel of the remission of sins to those who do not yet know this salvation. ✉

Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

Live in the fear of God by the grace of the remission of sins

< Leviticus 25:13-17 >

"In this Year of Jubilee, each of you shall return to his possession. And if you sell anything to your neighbor or buy from your neighbor's hand, you shall not oppress one another. According to the number of years after the Jubilee you shall buy from your neighbor, and according to the number of years of crops he shall sell to you. According to the multitude of years you shall increase its price, and according to the fewer number of years you shall diminish its price; for he sells to you according to the number of the years of the crops. Therefore you shall not oppress one another, but you shall fear your God; for I am the LORD your God."

Dear beloved saints, the heart that believes in God is not needed only in the place of worship. Even when we meet people, buy and sell things, and decide matters related to our own interests, we must keep the word of God in our hearts. If we exalt God with our lips but in actual life make only what is advantageous to ourselves the standard, we must examine that heart before the word.

In today's text, while telling them each to return to his

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possession in the Jubilee, God also said not to deceive one another even in the transactions made until then. And He connected this command with the word to fear God. Even in setting a price with one's neighbor, there was a faith one had to have before God. Through this word we want to examine our hearts, and learn with what faith the person who has received the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit must live.

Trade with your neighbor remembering the promise of the Jubilee

Verse 13 says like this. *"In this Year of Jubilee, each of you shall return to his possession."* God confirmed again the word that in the Jubilee He would make them return to their possession. This promise was not a word to be thought of only when the Jubilee came. Even the people who bought and sold land before then had to trade knowing the fact that the year of returning to their possession would come in the future.

Just because someone had bought land, he could not erase the word of the Jubilee. He could not put forward only his own circumstance that he had paid the price and bought it. It was the same for the seller. While knowing the word of God that when the Jubilee came they would return to their possession, he was not to set a price regardless of that fact. Both the buyer and the seller stood before the same word.

Then God said. *"And if you sell anything to your neighbor or buy from your neighbor's hand, you shall not oppress one another" (Leviticus 25:14)*. God did not speak only to the seller, nor did He speak only to the buyer. Whichever side one was on, one was not to deceive the other. Being in an advantageous

position did not give one the authority to deceive the other person.

Here we must also think about the fact that He called the person one trades with a neighbor. The person bargaining over a price with me was not an object that might be used in order to gain profit. God gave the word to be kept even in the relationship with him. When goods or money come before their eyes, people easily have their heart for the other person clouded. But God said not to deceive one's neighbor even in the place of calculating profit.

We, too, must not try to apply the word of God differently according to our own circumstances. If I demand honesty of the other person when I buy, but hide the facts I want to conceal when I sell, I am not following the same word. God does not change His command according to which side I am on. To live by faith is to acknowledge the word of God before one's own position.

He had them set the price according to the number of years of fruit

Together with the command not to deceive one another, God also gave the standard for actually setting the price. *"According to the number of years after the Jubilee you shall buy from your neighbor, and according to the number of years of crops he shall sell to you" (Leviticus 25:15)*. What the buyers and sellers had to consider together was the Jubilee and the number of years in which fruit could be obtained from that land.

The person who buys land obtains produce from that land until the Jubilee. Therefore how long he could obtain fruit had to be reflected in the price. God spoke of this standard more clearly in

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the next verse. *"According to the multitude of years you shall increase its price, and according to the fewer number of years you shall diminish its price; for he sells to you according to the number of the years of the crops" (Leviticus 25:16).*

It says to increase the price if the number of years of fruit is great, and to diminish the price if the number of years is small. Because the produce that could be obtained until the Jubilee differed, the price also had to be set accordingly. One could not set the price thinking as if one were making the land one's own forever. The fact that God would make them return to their possession had to be the standard even for the present transaction.

For example, think of the case in which, with other conditions the same, a long period of obtaining fruit remains, and the case in which little remains. If one demands only the price advantageous to oneself without distinguishing the two cases, one is ignoring the standard God has given. The seller must not demand a price as if much fruit could be obtained even though the remaining period is short. Nor must the buyer try to lower the value unjustly while knowing the condition in which much produce can be obtained.

God did not forbid the transaction itself. He had them set the price according to a legitimate standard. Therefore, reading this word, there is no need to think that all matters of gaining profit are sin. What must be examined is whether one is deceiving the other person in the process of gaining that profit. The mere fact that something benefits me does not make it right.

We must examine our hearts before the word to fear God

Finally, God spoke again. *"Therefore you shall not oppress*

one another, but you shall fear your God; for I am the LORD your God" (Leviticus 25:17). Repeating the command given in verse 14, He told them to fear God. The matter of not deceiving one's neighbor and the matter of fearing God were not separated from each other.

To fear God is to respect, love, and fear Him. It is the heart that acknowledges that God is alive and that His word is right. Therefore the person who fears God thinks not only about whether the other person can find out his trick, but about what God has said. This is because a thing does not become right before God on the ground that it is not found out by people.

God said that He Himself is the LORD their God. God, who leads the people, was their God even in the place of trading. They were not to serve God only when offering worship, and make their own greed their master when giving and receiving money. The heart that believes in God had to accept His word even in the life of dealing with one's neighbor.

Before this command, we must examine our own hearts rather than look only for the faults of others. Have I always been honest? Have I honestly spoken even the facts unfavorable to me? Was there no desire to take advantage of what the other person did not know well? One does not become a person to whom this word applies only by committing a great fraud. Even in small matters, the desire to state the facts differently for one's own benefit comes out of us.

The command of God exposes such an appearance of ours. Romans says. "*Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:20)*. Through the law we come to know what kind of person we are before God. We do not stop at vaguely saying that all people are lacking; we come to acknowledge that I myself am a sinner who has broken the word of God.

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One may think that since the other person deceived me too, I may do the same. One may also say that one had no choice because one's circumstances were hard. But the command of God does not disappear because of such circumstances. Before the word of the Lord, we must acknowledge our own sin as sin. The heart that fears God is not a heart that hides its own wrongs to the end, but a heart that acknowledges that His judgment is right.

Jesus, who bore our unrighteousness and fulfilled the righteousness of God

Dear saints, just because we have realized our sin, that sin does not disappear of itself. After acknowledging our own deceit and covetousness, we need the Savior, who will wash away that sin. We cannot solve even the judgment on our past sins by resolving to live honestly from now on. If a sinner could be justified before God by correcting his own deeds, there would have been no need for the Lord to sacrifice Himself for us.

God revealed a righteousness different from our deeds. *"But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets" (Romans 3:21)*. This is the righteousness God Himself accomplished to save sinners. It is not a righteousness we made by piling up right deeds, but the salvation Jesus Christ accomplished by bearing our sins and receiving the judgment of those sins.

Jesus, the Son of God, came into this world in the flesh of a man. And He came to the Jordan River and received 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).*

The baptism Jesus received from John is the baptism by which He bore the sin of mankind. Just as in the Old Testament a sinner laid his hands on the head of the sacrifice and passed his sins on to it, Jesus received the sin of the world passed on to Him by receiving baptism from John, the representative of mankind. The sinless Lord bore our iniquities in His own body. God accomplished in this way the righteous work of saving us.

In the sins Jesus bore are also contained our lies and deceit. The sin of deceiving the other person, the sin of coveting what belongs to one's neighbor, and the sin of hiding the truth for one's own benefit—the Lord bore these too. He did not bear only the sins we acknowledge. The sins we did not realize ourselves, the evil harbored in the heart, and even all the sins that will be revealed while we live are included in the sin of the world the Lord received.

While acknowledging our own sins before the word of God, we must at the same time believe the fact that those sins passed on to Jesus when He received baptism from John. Acknowledging one's own sins and believing in the remission of sins the Lord has accomplished must be together. If one acknowledges sin but does not believe in the work by which the Lord bore that sin, one cannot accept the grace by which He has saved us from sin.

Jesus, who received baptism from John, went to the Cross in the body in which He bore the sin of the world. Because He had borne our sins, He received the judgment on those sins. The blood He shed on the Cross is the blood with which He paid the price of sin in our place. God did not treat sin as if it had simply never happened; He saved us by having His Son, who bore our sins, receive that judgment.

Therefore we must fully believe in the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross. The work of

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bearing sin with the baptism and the work of receiving the judgment of those sins on the Cross are the work of the Lord that accomplishes our salvation. Because Jesus received my sins, His death becomes a death in my place. We must not diminish this salvation the Lord has accomplished, but receive it in our hearts just as it is.

Jesus, who died on the Cross, rose again from death. The Lord, who suffered death in our place, rose again from death and became our eternal Savior. The news that Jesus, who is God, came to this earth, received baptism from John, died shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death, and thereby saved us, is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We receive the remission of sins by believing in this gospel.

Romans 3:24 says. *"Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus"* In the transaction of today's text, He had them set the price according to the crops to be obtained, but our remission of sins is not something we buy by paying a price. We receive by grace the salvation the Lord has accomplished. The ground on which we are justified before God is not our honest life or good deeds, but the righteousness of God that Jesus Christ has accomplished.

Even the heart that has received the remission of sins needs the command of God

Then is the word not to deceive one another no longer necessary for the person who has received the remission of sins? It is not so. This word must not be made the price for obtaining salvation, but neither must it be discarded on the ground that one has been saved. The Lord has washed away our sins, and He makes us, who have received that grace, live keeping the word

of God in our hearts.

If we remove the command of God from our hearts, we become unable to discern our own wrongs. We easily regard our own thoughts as right and our own way as wise. But if we keep the word in our hearts, it is revealed in what part I am doing wrong. And in that, we come to know again that our salvation was not obtained by our own excellence. We also come to realize how great and necessary the grace of the Lord is.

The saved person does not need to deny the remission of sins when he realizes his own faults. Yet neither can he insist that what he did wrong is right. He must acknowledge the wrong as wrong, and believe in the baptism of the Lord and the blood of the Cross, by which He bore even that sin. Knowing and giving thanks for the grace that the Lord has saved such a person as me, he must now turn from that wrong according to the word.

If one has stated the facts differently in a transaction, one must correct that statement. If one has taken advantage of what the other person wrongly knew, one must tell him the facts. While saying that one believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, one must not insist that the deceit one has done to one's neighbor is right as it is. Correcting a wrong is not an act for receiving the remission of sins, but the life of fearing God, who has saved us, and following His word.

In the heart that fears God, love and fear are together. While being thankful to God, who has saved us, we know that we cannot treat His word carelessly. It is not that we regard our relationship with God lightly because the Lord has washed away our sins, but that we treasure the word all the more because we know that love. When we live with such a heart, we come to rely on the Lord rather than put forward our own superiority.

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Remember your neighbor even in the place of deciding profit

Dear saints, let us not think of today's word as applying only to people who make special transactions. In our lives we make various promises, hear explanations, and give explanations to others. At such times we may want to inflate the facts or hide the parts unfavorable to us. Even in the place of that small choice, we must remember the word of God not to deceive one another.

In particular, we who know the gospel must not regard the trust of people lightly. If we speak deceiving words in daily life with the lips that preach the gospel, how confused the hearer will be! It is not because we are perfect people that we preach the gospel. But neither must we, knowing our own wrong, fail to correct it and try to cover that wrong with the word that we have been saved. The grace of the remission of sins cannot become an excuse for keeping a lie.

Our honesty cannot wash away a person's sins. What saves a person is the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross. While preaching that gospel clearly, we must also respect the word of God in our relationships with our neighbors. We must treasure both believing in the gospel of salvation and living according to the word, without confusing the two with each other.

And whenever we deal with people, let us think not only of our own benefit but of the word of God. Relying on the Lord, who has saved us with the gospel of the water and the Spirit, let us live honestly without deceiving one another. I hope that all of us will become people who love and fear God, who has given us the remission of sins, and treat our neighbors with a faith that gives thanks for that grace. ✉

Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

Live believing in the promise of the Lord, who has accomplished the remission of sins

< Leviticus 25:18-22 >

"So you shall observe My statutes and keep My judgments, and perform them; and you will dwell in the land in safety. Then the land will yield its fruit, and you will eat your fill, and dwell there in safety. And if you say, What shall we eat in the seventh year, since we shall not sow nor gather in our produce? Then I will command My blessing on you in the sixth year, and it will bring forth produce enough for three years. And you shall sow in the eighth year, and eat old produce until the ninth year; until its produce comes in, you shall eat of the old harvest."

God, who cares for the life of the people who obey His word

Dear beloved saints, when we try to live according to the word of God, worry about our living can arise in our hearts. While thinking that the word is right, we come to wonder whether following it as it is will block the way for me to live. Today's text deals with exactly that question. After telling them

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to let the land rest, God also told them what the people who followed that word would eat and live on.

First, let us look at verse 18. *"So you shall observe My statutes and keep My judgments, and perform them; and you will dwell in the land in safety."* While commanding them to keep His judgments and ordinances, God promised that they would dwell in the land in safety. The matter of the people of Israel living in that land did not end with obtaining the land. They had to live according to the word of God, who had given them that land.

Verse 19 also speaks of the same promise. *"Then the land will yield its fruit, and you will eat your fill, and dwell there in safety."* God spoke of dwelling in safety and eating their fill together. If the people had only a place to stay but nothing to eat, they could not have continued that life. God knew that both their dwelling place and their food were needed.

Therefore the people were not to regard the command of God as a word unrelated to their living. God was not One who only gave commands and said that He did not know the circumstances afterward. He promised together that He would care for the people who would live within that word. What they had to rely on was not only their own labor, but God, who let them live in that land.

We, too, must live by faith in God after receiving the remission of sins. The Lord, who has saved our souls, knows the fact that we live on this earth in the flesh. He also knows the fact that we need something to eat, something to wear, and a place to dwell. Therefore we need the faith that tells the Lord about our living, seeks His help, and lives according to His will.

Live believing in the promise of the Lord,
who has accomplished the remission of sins

The answer given to the question, *"What shall we eat?"*

Verse 20 says like this. *"And if you say, What shall we eat in the seventh year, since we shall not sow nor gather in our produce?"* God first spoke of the question the people could ask. To people who lived by sowing seed in the field and gathering grain to eat, the command neither to sow nor to gather could immediately raise a question about food.

This question is not a word spoken by someone who does not know life. A person who farms knows that one can reap only by sowing seed. He also knows that if he cannot gather grain, food becomes scarce. That is why he comes to ask what he will eat if he cannot farm as usual in the seventh year. God knew that the people would think of such a problem.

But the process of farming the people knew did not explain the whole of the power of God. They thought of their own work of sowing and reaping, but God was the One who could bless that land. They had to believe the fact that God could do what the people could not do with their own hands. While examining the command of God, they also had to think of the power of the One who fulfills that word.

We, too, have worries like this. We want to follow the will of the Lord and serve the gospel, but we worry about what will become of our living in the future and whether we can manage with what we have now. Sometimes, while thinking ahead of things that have not yet happened, the heart is caught by that worry. Then, even after hearing the word of the Lord, we become unable to take a step of faith because of worry about our living.

At such times we must not merely repeat our worries, but must hear what God says. If we know well what I am worried

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about, but do not think of what God has promised, the heart keeps going round in the same place. The Lord knows our needs. We must tell those needs to the Lord and accept His word in our hearts.

I will command My blessing in the sixth year and make it enough for three years

The answer of God to the question of the people is clear. *"Then I will command My blessing on you in the sixth year, and it will bring forth produce enough for three years" (Leviticus 25:21)*. God said that He would send His blessing in the sixth year and make its produce enough for three years. To the people who worried that they would not obtain food in the seventh year, He spoke of the blessing He would give in the year before it.

What is to be noted here is the fact that God said He Himself would command and give the blessing. It was not that the people boasted that they would produce more than usual by their own strength. God promised that He would send His blessing on that land. The One who would prepare their food was God, and what the people had to do was to believe that promise and follow the word.

God said that He would make it enough for three years. He did not say that they should eat for a while and then solve the rest by themselves when it ran short. He said that He would abundantly give the food needed for the life of obeying the word. They had to accept together the ordinance God had set and the provision God had promised.

Even while saying that we believe in God, in reality we easily rely only on what has already come into our hands. When what is visible is sufficient, the heart is at ease, and when it seems lacking, even the word of God feels far away. But faith is relying

on God, who has spoken. What we need is not to force into being a result not yet visible and believe it, but to know who the One who has promised is and to believe His word.

The provision that continues until the new grain is gathered

Verse 22 explains that promise concretely. *"And you shall sow in the eighth year, and eat old produce until the ninth year; until its produce comes in, you shall eat of the old harvest."* The people sow seed again in the eighth year. But just because they have sown seed, they do not gather grain immediately on that day. They must wait until it grows and ripens and is harvested.

God said that they would eat the old grain even during that period of waiting. He had them let the land rest in the seventh year, sow again in the eighth year, and eat the grain He had given before until the harvest of the ninth year. It is a word showing how the promise of verse 21, that it would be enough for three years, continued in the life of the people.

Looking at this order, we can see how concretely God knew the life of the people. He thought not only of the year of rest, but also knew the period until they obtained fruit after starting to work again. Just because the people had started to work, the need for food did not disappear from that day. God promised that He would let them eat and live even in between.

While eating the old grain, the people could remember that they were living even today by the blessing of God they had received in the past. And in the eighth year they had to sow seed again as the word said. The faith that believed in the provision of God and the obedience that did the work He had commanded them were together. It is eating the food God has prepared, and

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working at the time God has set.

We, too, must carry out the work entrusted to us today while seeking the help of the Lord. We must not put off the will of the Lord on the ground that the heart is uneasy, but must do what has to be done, relying on Him. If we say that we will believe only after all the results have appeared before our eyes, we cannot live a life of following the word. Because we believe what God has said, we can rely on Him even before gathering the fruit.

The Lord, who upholds all things, has also cleansed our sins

Dear saints, what kind of One is the Lord we rely on? The Book of Hebrews speaks of Jesus Christ. *"Who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Hebrews 1:3).*

The Lord is the One who upholds all things by the word of His power. At the same time, He is the One who has accomplished the work of cleansing our sins. There is no need to think of the power to care for our living and the grace by which He has saved our souls as separate from each other. Jesus, who has saved us, is God, who made all things in the universe, and the Lord, who upholds all those things even now.

Therefore, even when we think of the remission of sins, we must not look only at our own ability. Once a person knows his own sin, he agonizes over how he can remove it. He wonders whether even his past sins will disappear if he does well from now on, and whether God will accept him if he strives more. But the

remission of sins is not something a sinner produces by his own strength. God must accomplish the work of cleansing our sins.

God accomplished that salvation through His own Son. Before Jesus came into this world, He made known the way of the remission of sins through the law of sacrifice of the Old Testament. He had a sinner lay his hands on the sacrifice and pass his sins on to it, and receive the remission of sins by the sacrifice that had borne those sins being sacrificed. And Jesus Christ came to this earth and accomplished that salvation.

Jesus came to the Jordan River and received 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).*

The baptism Jesus received from John is the baptism by which He bore the sin of mankind. Just as in the Old Testament sins passed on to the sacrifice through the laying on of hands, Jesus bore the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, the representative of mankind. The sinless Son of God received our sins passed on to His own body in order to save sinners.

The Lord did not do this work without knowing what kind of people we are. He knew our weakness and evil, and He knew all the sins we would commit while we live. Not only the sins we have committed until now, but all the sins we commit throughout our lives are included in the sin of the world. Jesus bore all those sins by receiving baptism from John. Therefore we must believe the fact that the Lord received our own sins without leaving any out.

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 went to the Cross in the body in which He bore the sin of the world. And by dying there shedding His blood, He received in our place

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the judgment of sin that we had to receive.

The Cross of Jesus is not a death unrelated to our sins. The Lord, who bore our sins by receiving baptism from John, died because of those sins. The blood the Lord shed is the blood with which He bore the price of sin. Therefore we must believe together in the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross. The Lord accomplished both the work of bearing sin and the work of receiving the judgment on that sin.

Jesus, who died on the Cross, rose again from death. The Lord, who bore our sins and received the judgment, rose again from death and became our Savior. The news that Jesus, who is God, came in the flesh, received baptism from John, died shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death, and thereby saved us, is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We receive the remission of sins by believing in this gospel in our hearts.

The Lord has accomplished the work of cleansing our sins. It is not a salvation that becomes complete only when we add something more afterward. Because the Lord bore our sins and received that judgment, we believe in that salvation. We must not judge the remission of sins on the basis of how strong our own resolution is, but must confirm through the word and believe how complete the salvation the Lord has accomplished is.

Even after being saved, we live relying on the word of God

Even after receiving the remission of sins, various problems of living lie before us. Just because we have been saved, the things needed to live from day to day do not disappear. We must care for our families, work, and carry out the responsibilities entrusted to us. When difficulties arise in the midst of this, we

must seek help from God. It is relying on the Lord, who has saved us, in our daily lives as well.

Jesus said. *"For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things" (Matthew 6:32)*. It means that the heavenly Father knows what we need. There is no need to take on all the worries alone, thinking that God does not know our living. We are the people of God, and we can pray to the Father, who knows our needs.

The Lord went on to say. *"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matthew 6:33)*. It means to seek first the kingdom and the righteousness of God. We must believe in the righteousness of God, who has washed away our sins, and live serving the Lord so that the gospel of that salvation may be preached to other souls as well. In the midst of this, we must ask the Lord for what we need and rely on His care.

If we think that we will serve the Lord only after our living has become completely settled, we keep putting off that beginning. This is because human worry, even when one thing is solved, can appear in another form. We must rely on God in the place now given to us and follow His will. Even while carrying out the work entrusted to us at work and at home, we can serve the Lord by being of one heart with the church, praying for the gospel, and doing what we can.

Such a life needs the continual hearing of the word of God. If we keep away from the word and follow only our own thoughts, worry easily fills the heart. But when we hear the word, share the fellowship of faith with the saints, and pray to God, it becomes clear again on whom we rely as we live. We are not people who live only by our own ability, but people who live having received the grace of God, who has saved us.

When we meet difficulties, let us not think that we must bear

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them alone. Let us seek help from God, pray together with the church, and carry out by faith the work the Lord has entrusted to us. We say that we serve the Lord, but in reality the Lord bestows more grace on us. He has washed away our sins, let us live as a people belonging to God, and also granted us the precious life of serving the gospel.

Even in the midst of worry, let us look to God, who has promised

In today's text, the people could worry about what they would eat. God told them that He would send His blessing in the sixth year and make it enough for three years. He promised that He would let them eat until they passed the year of rest, sowed seed again, and gathered the new grain. God knew the process the people would walk through in the future and the food needed in that process.

We, too, must believe in the remission of sins the Lord has accomplished, and rely on Him for the rest of our lives. The Lord, who bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John and received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, the Lord, who rose again from death and became our Savior, is our God. Let us live believing what He has said and praying.

Let us not push the word of God aside because of things that have not yet appeared before our eyes. Let us keep the promise of the Lord in our hearts rather than our own worries, and carry out by faith the work to be done today. Giving thanks to God, who has bestowed the grace of the remission of sins, let us live a life of seeking first His kingdom and His righteousness. I believe that the Lord, who has saved us and cares for us, will lead us as His word says. ✉

Live believing in the promise of the Lord,
who has accomplished the remission of sins

Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

The Lord, who paid the price of redemption for us

< Leviticus 25:23-28 >

"The land shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with Me. And in all the land of your possession you shall grant redemption of the land. If one of your brethren becomes poor, and has sold some of his possession, and if his redeeming relative comes to redeem it, then he may redeem what his brother sold. Or if the man has no one to redeem it, but he himself becomes able to redeem it, then let him count the years since its sale, and restore the remainder to the man to whom he sold it, that he may return to his possession. But if he is not able to have it restored to himself, then what was sold shall remain in the hand of him who bought it until the Year of Jubilee; and in the Jubilee it shall be released, and he shall return to his possession."

Dear beloved saints, in today's text appears a person who became poor and sold his possession. That land was the ground of life on which he and his family were to live. But his circumstances became hard, and he had to pass some of that possession on to another person. In the eyes of people, it may look as if everything had ended with the sale of the land. It is easy to think that since it has now become the possession of another person, there is no way to return either. Yet God gave an

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ordinance for this person. A close relative could redeem that land for him, and when he himself gained the ability, he could take it back. Even if that ability never came, in the Jubilee He had him return to his own possession.

What way did God prepare for the person who had sold his possession? Today, examining the ordinance of redeeming land, let us think together about the grace of redemption the Lord has accomplished for us, who are in sins we cannot solve by ourselves.

Even the person who owns land is a stranger before God

He said: *"The land shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with Me" (Leviticus 25:23).*

God first spoke of the reason He did not let land be sold permanently. It is because all that land belongs to God. The people of Israel lived farming in the land God had given, but they could not dispose of it as they pleased, departing from the word of God, the Owner of that land. The fact that they occupied and cultivated the land could not come before the ordinance God had set.

This word applies to both the seller and the buyer of land. The seller could not cut off forever the relationship between the possession received from God and his own descendants just because his circumstances were hard. Nor was the buyer to think that even the authority of God over that land had passed to him because he had paid money. Even after the transaction was made, God was still the Owner of that land. Therefore they had to keep the ordinance of redeeming land and the ordinance of returning

it in the Jubilee.

God also called them strangers and sojourners. To sojourn means to stay and live. Israel were not people who had secured an eternal dwelling place by their own strength alone. They were a people who lived in the land God had given and were ruled by God. Yet God said that they were with Him. The word stranger carries the meaning that one cannot boast of one's own possessions, but in this verse it does not mean that they had been forsaken and were wandering without any protection. There was God, who let them live in that land.

God left open the way to regain the possession

He said: *"And in all the land of your possession you shall grant redemption of the land" (Leviticus 25:24).*

To redeem land is to pay the price according to the ordinance and take back the land one had sold. God did not permit this to only a few people. He told them to grant the redemption of land in all the land Israel had received as a possession. No one was to ignore that ordinance because he had power, or block at will the way for a poor person to take it back.

We cannot immediately conclude that the poverty appearing in the text is a punishment for a particular sin of that person. The text speaks of the circumstance of having become poor and sold one's possession, and tells the ordinance to be kept at that time. Rather than imagining what wrong this person had and condemning him, we must see what way God has placed for a person in such a circumstance.

That God showed consideration for the poor can be confirmed in the ordinance of atonement as well. In Leviticus 5, for the person who was not able to offer a lamb He gave the way

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of offering doves, and He had the person who could not even reach that bring fine flour. He did not close all the ways to come before God on the ground that a person's circumstances were hard. The One who set the ordinance concerning the offering according to the circumstances of the people was God, and the One who had atonement made according to that ordinance was also God.

He had a close relative come and redeem that land

He said: *"If one of your brethren becomes poor, and has sold some of his possession, and if his redeeming relative comes to redeem it, then he may redeem what his brother sold" (Leviticus 25:25).*

This verse still calls the person who has fallen into difficulty a brother. Just because he had become poor and sold his possession, the relationship of the people that God had set did not disappear. And He had the redeeming relative, that is, a close relative, come and redeem what he had sold. Even if the person who had sold the land had no ability to take it back immediately, He made it possible to regain the possession through a relative who paid the price for him.

The land did not return merely by comforting him with words. The actual redemption had to take place. One had to go beyond knowing that person's sad circumstances, and carry out what was needed so that he could regain the possession he had lost. God had the relationship toward a brother in difficulty appear in such help.

At this point, let us think of our salvation. We do not escape from sin only by knowing that sin is painful. Nor is the judgment of God solved just because other people feel sorry about our

wrongs. The work of salvation that washes away sin and bears the price of that sin must actually be accomplished. We receive the remission of sins not because Jesus merely said that He had pity on us. It is because the Lord came to this earth, bore our sins, and sacrificed Himself.

Redeeming land for someone and saving a sinner are not the same transaction. But seeing the help in which another person actually pays the price, we can think deeply of the salvation of the Lord, who gave His own life for us. To take back the land, the remaining price was paid, but the Lord gave His own life to remit our sins. Our thanksgiving must be directed to that very Lord.

Even when one gained the ability to redeem it oneself, one followed the ordinance of God

He said: *"Or if the man has no one to redeem it, but he himself becomes able to redeem it, then let him count the years since its sale, and restore the remainder to the man to whom he sold it, that he may return to his possession" (Leviticus 25:26–27).*

There were also cases in which a close relative could not redeem it. God did not leave such a case as it was, but told them what to do when the person who had sold the land later became rich and gained the ability to redeem it himself. At that time He had him count the years that had passed since selling the land, give the remaining price to the buyer, and return to his own possession.

In verses 15–16 before, God had them set the price according to the number of years of obtaining crops until the Jubilee. Therefore, even when redeeming the land, they had to reckon

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the period already passed and the period remaining. It is not a word to return unconditionally the money first received as it was. They had to count the period in which the buyer had already obtained crops and give the remaining price. God set not only the way to return but also the procedure for following that way.

Then, reading this word, may we think that the remission of sins, too, can be accomplished by a person himself if he builds up his strength later? It must not be connected that way. Even if one can prepare the property needed to buy back land, a person cannot produce within himself the righteousness that removes sin. The sins of the past do not disappear by the good deeds accumulated afterward. The salvation a person needs is in Jesus Christ, who bore the price of sin. *"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23).*

The wages of sin is death. We cannot substitute for that price by making up our minds firmly or promising to do well from now on. That is why Jesus is needed. The person who knows that his own strength is insufficient has no reason to put off salvation. Because the Lord has accomplished the righteousness of salvation that we do not have, we must believe in that Lord now.

Jesus received baptism from John and paid the price of sin on the Cross

Jesus, our Savior, is God and the Son of God. He came to this earth in the flesh of a man to save us from sin. Because a sinner could not go up to God by his own strength, the Lord came to us. And He actually accomplished the work of taking on our sins for us.

Matthew 3 says that Jesus came to the Jordan River and

sought to receive baptism from John. When John tried to prevent this, Jesus said like 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 not received by the sinless Lord to wash away His own sins. It is the baptism He received in order to bear the sin of mankind. Just as in the Old Testament the sacrifice had sins passed on to it by the laying on of hands on its head, Jesus received the sin of the world passed on to Him by receiving baptism from John, the representative of mankind. God accomplished in this way the righteous work of saving sinners.

Our sins are also contained in the sin of the world that passed on to Jesus at this time. The Lord bore all the sins of our whole lives—not only the sins committed from birth until now, but even the sins we will commit while we live in the future. He did not take on only the sins we have remembered. Even the sins we have not yet realized, and the sins too shameful to speak of before people, are included in the sin of the world the Lord bore. It is not that salvation is completed only when we find and remove our sins one by one.

John saw Jesus and testified as follows: *"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 was the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. The Lord, who bore the sin of mankind by receiving baptism from John, went to the Cross in the body in which He bore those sins. And, nailed there and shedding His blood, He received in our place the judgment on sin. Because the wages of sin is death, the Lord gave His own life. Our salvation was not accomplished by pretending not to see sin. It is the salvation in which the Lord actually bore our sins and received the judgment

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of those sins for us.

Therefore, when we believe in the Cross of Jesus, we must know together the baptism the Lord received from John. Only when we know how our sins passed on to Jesus can we clearly believe that the judgment He received on the Cross is the judgment for us. Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John, and paid the price of those sins by dying shedding His blood on the Cross. We receive the remission of sins by the faith that accepts in the heart this salvation the Lord has carried out.

Moreover, Jesus rose again from death. The Lord, who died for us, does not remain in death. Jesus, who rose again from death, became our living Savior. We believe that Jesus, who is God, came to this earth, that He bore all sins by receiving baptism from John, that He was judged on the Cross, and that He rose again from death. This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which saves us from sin.

To receive this salvation, we do not have to pay the Lord an additional price of life. The price of the sacrifice the Lord paid cannot be reckoned in money. This is because Jesus gave Himself. We receive freely, by faith, the salvation He has accomplished. Just because it has been given to us as a gift, the sacrifice of the Lord does not become a light thing. The more we think of the remission of sins we have received without price, the more we come to give thanks to the Lord, who gave Himself for us.

He had even the person unable to redeem it return to his own possession

He said: *"But if he is not able to have it restored to himself,*

then what was sold shall remain in the hand of him who bought it until the Year of Jubilee; and in the Jubilee it shall be released, and he shall return to his possession" (Leviticus 25:28).

The last verse deals with the person who never gained the ability to redeem it. He did not receive the help of a relative, and he himself did not become rich either. It is a circumstance in which the possession cannot be regained through the two ways spoken of before. Yet God did not say that this person's possession had to remain in the hand of another person forever. He had it return when the Jubilee came.

The person who had bought the land could hold that land until the Jubilee came. But when that term expired, he had to return it. The term God had set was not extended just because the poverty of the person who had sold the land continued. Nor was his becoming rich a condition for returning in the Jubilee. Because God, who had first given the land, had set the time to return, he could return again to his own possession.

In the matter of receiving the remission of sins, too, we must not regard the salvation of the Lord as small because of our own inability. We cannot conclude that we cannot be saved because we have committed too many sins or because we have lived wrongly for too long. The Lord, even knowing such sins of ours, came to bear those sins. It is not that we first change into people worthy of being saved and then go to the Lord. We must acknowledge ourselves as sinners, and believe in the Lord, who bore those sins and removed them.

Only, we must not think that we receive the remission of sins of itself as time passes. The ordinance that the land of Israel returned in the Jubilee cannot be changed into the meaning that all people are automatically saved even without believing in the gospel. The salvation Jesus has accomplished is received by faith. We must accept in our hearts the fact that the Lord bore

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even my sins and paid the price of those sins.

The person who believes in the grace of redemption remembers the sacrifice of the Lord

Dear saints, that we have received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not mean that we explain away our past wrongs as if they had never happened. We must acknowledge what we have done wrong as wrong. Only, we do not try to put forward our own resolutions or good deeds as a new price to solve that sin. We believe that the Lord bore even that sin with the baptism He received from John and was judged on the Cross.

This faith does not make us regard sin lightly. Rather, it makes us realize the fact that the Son of God sacrificed Himself for my sins. If we value the salvation of the Lord, we cannot remain in hiding our own wrongs or blaming others. We must acknowledge our wrongs and turn from them, and follow the right way again relying on the Lord, who has saved us. The grace of the remission of sins makes us go forward toward the work of God.

Also, we must not judge by our own conditions a person who needs the same grace as we do. We must preach this gospel even to the person who has nothing and has nothing to put forward. It is not that that person can hear the word of salvation only after he has sufficiently improved by his own strength. We, too, heard the salvation the Lord had accomplished when we could not solve our sins by ourselves, and received the remission of sins by believing that fact. Therefore we must not look only at the other person’s lack, but must preach Jesus, who bore that person’s sins too.

In today's text, what the person who had sold his possession needed was the way of redemption God had left open. What our souls need is Jesus Christ, who paid the price of sin for us. The Lord bore all our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins by dying shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death and became our Savior. We receive the remission of sins by believing in this gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The sacrifice of the Lord, who has saved us, is not insufficient. I hope that you will lay down the heart that tried to wash away sin by its own strength and believe in the salvation the Lord has accomplished. And I hope that you will live a life of preaching this precious gospel, giving thanks for the grace of the remission of sins freely given to us. We give glory and thanks to the Lord, who gave His own life for us. ✉

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Sermon 6 by Paul C. Jong

The Lord, who has given us the eternal inheritance by the remission of sins

< Leviticus 25:29-34 >

"If a man sells a house in a walled city, then he may redeem it within a whole year after it is sold; within a full year he may redeem it. But if it is not redeemed within the space of a full year, then the house in the walled city shall belong permanently to him who bought it, throughout his generations. It shall not be released in the Jubilee. However the houses of villages which have no wall around them shall be counted as the fields of the country. They may be redeemed, and they shall be released in the Jubilee. Nevertheless the cities of the Levites, and the houses in the cities of their possession, the Levites may redeem at any time. And if a man purchases a house from the Levites, then the house that was sold in the city of his possession shall be released in the Jubilee; for the houses in the cities of the Levites are their possession among the children of Israel. But the field of the common-land of their cities may not be sold, for it is their perpetual possession."

Dear beloved saints, in today's text appears the ordinance of redeeming a house again after it has been sold. Yet not all houses had the same ordinance applied to them. For a house in a walled

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city there was a term of one year, and to a house in a village without a wall the same ordinance as for land was applied. To a house belonging to the possession of the Levites He gave yet another ordinance. Only when we examine carefully these differences God spoke of can we understand rightly the meaning of today's text.

In the latter half of the text appears the word by which God had the possession He gave to the Levites be kept. He looked after the dwelling place and the possession of the people He had set apart to serve God. Through this word, let us think together about the grace of the remission of sins and the eternal inheritance, and about the life of the saved person serving God.

A house in a walled city had a term for redemption

He said: *"If a man sells a house in a walled city, then he may redeem it within a whole year after it is sold; within a full year he may redeem it" (Leviticus 25:29).*

The person who had sold a house in a walled city could redeem that house within a full year from the day he sold it. Just because they had heard the word about redeeming land before, they were not to think that the same ordinance applied to all houses too. Here God spoke separately of a house in a walled city, and clearly set the term within which it could be redeemed.

The person who had sold the house had to know this term. He could not regard it as something he could take back at any time when his circumstances improved later, or think that it would surely return if he waited until the Jubilee. The person who had bought the house also had to acknowledge that within a year the right to redeem that house belonged to the seller. Both sides had to trade under the word God had set. He also said: *"But*

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if it is not redeemed within the space of a full year, then the house in the walled city shall belong permanently to him who bought it, throughout his generations. It shall not be released in the Jubilee" (Leviticus 25:30).

A full year means the time when one year has been completed. If it was not redeemed within a full year, that house was confirmed as the possession of the buyer and belonged to him throughout his generations. Even when the Jubilee came, it was not returned to the original owner. Through this word we can see that the restoration of the Jubilee was not an ordinance applied to all property without exception. They had to follow the objects and the conditions God had set.

A house in a village without a wall followed the same ordinance as land

He said: *"However the houses of villages which have no wall around them shall be counted as the fields of the country. They may be redeemed, and they shall be released in the Jubilee" (Leviticus 25:31).*

This time He speaks of a house in a village without a wall. To be counted as the fields of the country means to be treated by the same ordinance as the land of that country. Such a house could be redeemed, and in the Jubilee it had to be returned. It was not, like an ordinary house in a walled city, to belong permanently to another person merely on the ground that a year had passed.

The ordinance of redemption could not be judged by looking only at the size or the price of the house. They had to know to which ordinance God had set it to belong. The text distinguishes a house in a walled city from a house in a village without a wall.

Dear saints, examining the word carefully is not a matter unrelated to faith. It is the same in the matter of receiving the remission of sins. Even if the words that one believes in Jesus look the same, only when we know how Jesus bore our sins can we clearly believe in the salvation He has accomplished. We must not stop at thinking vaguely of the love of the Lord, but must know by what work of salvation that love was accomplished. To preach accurately the promise of God and the fulfillment of that promise is the responsibility of the person entrusted with the word.

The houses of the Levites were the possession God had given

He said: *"Nevertheless the cities of the Levites, and the houses in the cities of their possession, the Levites may redeem at any time" (Leviticus 25:32).*

God gave a separate ordinance concerning the houses in the cities of the Levites. Those houses the Levites could redeem at any time. He did not apply as it was to the possession of the Levites the one-year limit that had been applied to ordinary houses before. That does not mean, however, that one might take it from another's hand at any time without paying the price. It means that He continued to acknowledge the right to redeem that house.

The reason appears in the next verse. He also said: *"And if a man purchases a house from the Levites, then the house that was sold in the city of his possession shall be released in the Jubilee; for the houses in the cities of the Levites are their possession among the children of Israel" (Leviticus 25:33).*

Even if a Levite could not redeem his house, in the Jubilee it

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had to be returned. God said that this was because that house was the possession of the Levites obtained among the children of Israel. The key here does not lie in the Levites having managed their houses better than others. It lies in the fact that God had given it to them as a possession. According to the nature of that possession, He set the right of redemption and the return in the Jubilee.

In Numbers 35, He commanded that from among the possession the children of Israel had obtained, cities to dwell in and the fields around them be given to the Levites. He also spoke of the use of the cities and the fields. He says: *"They shall have the cities to dwell in; and their common-land shall be for their cattle, for their herds, and for all their animals" (Numbers 35:3).*

For the Levites, the cities were dwelling places in which they actually lived. The fields around them were also places needed for their living. To the Levites, who had not been allotted land in the same way as the other tribes, God gave in this way cities to dwell in and fields, and He had that possession kept by the ordinance so that it would not disappear permanently.

Moreover, within the tribe of Levi, Aaron and his sons were in charge of the office of the priests, and the other Levites were in charge of helping them and serving in the tabernacle of meeting. Not all the Levites carried out the same priestly office. But they were people set apart to participate together in the service God had set. The word that protected the dwelling place and the possession He had given them makes us think that the life of the person who serves God is also a matter God cares for.

He did not let the fields around the cities be sold

He said: *"But the field of the common-land of their cities may*

not be sold, for it is their perpetual possession" (Leviticus 25:34).

For the houses of the Levites there was an ordinance of redeeming them when sold or receiving them back in the Jubilee. But the fields around the cities He did not let be sold at all. Just because they had heard the ordinance concerning houses, they were not to think that the fields around them, too, could be sold for now and taken back later. This is because God had set them as an eternal possession.

This is a command by which He had the possession needed for the life of the Levites be preserved. They were not to regard everything received from God only as things they could dispose of as they pleased. That possession had a use God had set, and a place that had to be passed on to later generations as well. That will could not be changed by the circumstances of the moment or by the benefit of a transaction alone.

Through this word we learn the heart that treasures what God has entrusted to us. In particular, we who have received the remission of sins have the work of believing in and preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We must not change according to the responses of people the truth that has saved us from sin. If we leave only the words that are comfortable to hear and omit the baptism Jesus received from John, or speak only of the Cross without explaining how sins passed on to Him, we cannot preach fully the work of salvation. We must rightly keep and preach the contents of the gospel that has given us life.

Jesus removed our sins with the baptism He received from John and the Cross

Then how do we become a people belonging to God and

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receive the grace of the remission of sins? It is neither that we must inherit the lineage of the tribe of Levi, nor that we must own land or a house. We receive the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus Christ has accomplished. This is because Jesus has removed the sin that lay between God and us.

In the sacrifice of the Old Testament, the person who had committed sin brought a sacrificial offering without blemish that God had set. He laid his hands on the head of that offering and passed his sins on to it, and the offering was killed because of those sins. The priest offered its blood as God had set. The laying on of hands that passed sins on and the sacrifice that bore the price of sins were together. This ordinance of sacrifice showed the salvation that Jesus Christ, who was to come, would accomplish.

Jesus is God and the Son of God. He came to this earth in the flesh of a man to save us, who have sin. The sinless Lord became our sacrificial offering. Moreover, God sent John and had him prepare the way before Jesus. John was born as a descendant of Aaron, and as the representative of mankind he carried out the work of passing the sin of the world on to Jesus.

In Matthew 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).*

The baptism Jesus received from John is the work at the very center of our salvation. It is not a baptism Jesus received to wash away His own sins. It is the baptism the sinless Lord received in order to bear all the sin of mankind. Just as in the Old Testament the high priest laid his hands on the sacrificial offering and passed the sins of the people on to it, when John baptized Jesus,

the sin of the world passed on to Jesus. By receiving baptism from John, Jesus fulfilled all the righteousness by which God saves sinners.

Our sins are also included in that sin of the world. The sins committed from birth until now, the sins committed in our present weakness, and even the sins we will commit while we live in the future—the Lord bore them all. The sins of our whole lives are contained in the sin of the world the Lord received. He did not bear only the sins we can remember, nor did He take on only the sins before we began our life of faith. The Lord bore all sins in order to save us completely.

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 went to the Cross in the body in which He bore the sin of the world. And, nailed there and shedding His blood, He received the judgment of sin in our place. The blood He shed on the Cross is not the blood of a death unrelated to sin. It is the blood of the sacrifice by which the Lord, who had received our sins by receiving baptism from John, paid the price of those sins. The Lord received in our place the judgment we had to receive.

Therefore we must know together the baptism of Jesus and the Cross. We must believe the fact that the Lord bore our sins with the baptism He received from John, and believe the fact that He was judged for those sins on the Cross. The One who carried out this salvation is Jesus Christ, who is God. It is not a person's resolution or a religious ceremony that removes our sins. We receive the remission of sins by believing in the work of salvation Jesus actually carried out.

Jesus rose again from death. The Lord, who bore our sins and died on the Cross, rose again from death and became our living Savior. We believe that Jesus, who came to this earth, received

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baptism from John, was judged on the Cross, and rose again from death. This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which gives us the remission of sins and new life.

The Lord has given the promise of the eternal inheritance through eternal atonement

Dear saints, let us also examine the grace of salvation that God, who had the possession of the Levites be kept, has given us. The Book of Hebrews testifies like this of the atonement accomplished by the sacrifice of Jesus: *"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).*

What Jesus accomplished is eternal atonement. The sacrifices of the Old Testament had to be offered repeatedly, but Jesus bore the sins of our whole lives and accomplished salvation by offering His own body. It is not that every time we discover our lack, we must regard the sacrifice of the Lord as ended and prepare again an offering to remove sin. We must believe in the baptism of Jesus and the sacrifice of the Cross, by which He bore even those sins.

Hebrews 9 speaks further of the grace this atonement has brought us. It also said: *"And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance" (Hebrews 9:15).*

Jesus atoned for sin and made us receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. The salvation we have received is not a matter of obtaining comfort of heart for a moment and then

losing it. We, who could not be with God because of sin, have received the remission of sins and, as the people of God, have come to look toward His kingdom. The promise of the inheritance the Lord has given us is based on the atonement He has accomplished.

We do not believe this promise because our hearts are always strong and there is no lack in our lives. We believe because the Lord, who promised, bore our sins and accomplished salvation. When a wrong we have done is revealed, we must acknowledge that wrong. But we must not stop at seeing our own faults; we must hold on to the salvation of the Lord, who bore even that sin. When we believe in the eternal atonement the Lord has accomplished, we can come before God and serve Him.

The person who has received the remission of sins preaches the word of life and peace

Reading the word by which He had the possession of the Levites be kept, we must also remember the work they were entrusted with. God set them apart and had them participate in the work of serving God. The work of the priests, too, was not merely a matter of handling offerings. It was the work of having the people obtain the remission of sins and fear God according to the word and the ordinance of sacrifice God had given. He said: *"My covenant was with him, one of life and peace, and I gave them to him that he might fear Me; so he feared Me and was reverent before My name" (Malachi 2:5).*

God gave life and peace and made them fear God. How precious is this grace! A person who could not stand before God because of sin receives the remission of sins, obtains peace in his heart, and comes to serve God. We, too, have received this

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grace by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Therefore we cannot regard lightly the work of offering worship, hearing the word, and preaching the gospel of salvation.

Serving God is not a matter of paying back the price of the remission of sins. Because the Lord has already remitted our sins, we serve in thanksgiving. The person who preaches the gospel, too, does not stand in that place because he is more excellent than others. He believes in the Lord, who bore his own sins, and does the work of making that salvation known to others as well. The person who has received grace must not boast of himself, but must testify of Jesus, who has saved him.

Also, to preach peace to people, one must tell them accurately where that peace comes from. The sins of the conscience are not washed away by the mere comfort of telling people to take heart. We must make known that our sins passed on to Jesus when He received baptism from John, that the judgment of those sins was carried out on the Cross, and that the Lord rose again from death. The person who believes that fact obtains the answer to his own problem of sin. The person entrusted with the word of God must preach this truth without changing it into his own thoughts.

Treasuring the possession God has given, let us believe in Jesus Christ, who has accomplished eternal atonement for us. Our hope is in the Lord, who has given us the remission of sins and the promise of the eternal inheritance.

Let us give thanks to the Lord, who bore our sins and made us the people of God. Enjoying the life and peace the Lord has given, let us live setting our hearts on the work of preaching fully the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We praise the Lord, who has made us, who have received the remission of sins, serve the living God. ✉

Sermon 7 by Paul C. Jong

The life of caring for one's brother through the grace of the remission of sins

< Leviticus 25:35-46 >

"If one of your brethren becomes poor, and falls into poverty among you, then you shall help him, like a stranger or a sojourner, that he may live with you. Take no usury or interest from him; but fear your God, that your brother may live with you. You shall not lend him your money for usury, nor lend him your food at a profit. I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to give you the land of Canaan and to be your God. And if one of your brethren who dwells by you becomes poor, and sells himself to you, you shall not compel him to serve as a slave. As a hired servant and a sojourner he shall be with you, and shall serve you until the Year of Jubilee. And then he shall depart from you—he and his children with him—and shall return to his own family. He shall return to the possession of his fathers. For they are My servants, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt; they shall not be sold as slaves. You shall not rule over him with rigor, but you shall fear your God. And as for your male and female slaves whom you may have—from the nations that are around you, from them you may buy male and female slaves. Moreover you may buy the

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children of the strangers who dwell among you, and their families who are with you, which they beget in your land; and they shall become your property. And you may take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them as a possession; they shall be your permanent slaves. But regarding your brethren, the children of Israel, you shall not rule over one another with rigor."

Dear beloved saints, when one's circumstances become hard and one has to seek help, how the people at one's side treat one is important. In today's text God says to help a brother who has become poor and let him live together with you. He commanded concretely even the matter of lending money and food, and the matter of treating a person who has been sold and come to serve.

In the text the command to fear God appears repeatedly. The faith that fears God must appear also when treating a person whose circumstances are hard. With what heart must we, who have received the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, follow this word?

Help the brother who has become poor to live together with you at your side

He said: *"If one of your brethren becomes poor, and falls into poverty among you, then you shall help him, like a stranger or a sojourner, that he may live with you" (Leviticus 25:35).*

God speaks of a fellow countryman who has become poor and fallen into poverty at one's side. He is a person who has nothing to offer immediately to the one who helps him. God did not say to examine first what could be gotten out of him. He said

to help him and let him live together with you. The fact that that person's hands were empty was not to become a reason to turn away from him.

The word to let him live together with you like a stranger or a sojourner must also be read in this flow. It does not mean that since he has become poor, he is now to be treated like an outsider. It means to receive the person who needs a place to dwell and a ground to live on, so that he can live at one's side. In the next verse, too, God still calls him a brother. Just because his circumstances had become hard, the relationship of a brother who had to live together did not disappear.

We, too, did not receive the remission of sins because we had righteousness to offer before the Lord. When we had no ability to remove sin and nothing to boast of before God, the Lord gave us the grace of salvation. When we think of this grace, our heart toward the person who needs help must also change. We must not forget the fact that the Lord saved us, who could not live by our own strength alone.

Do not turn your brother's difficulty into your own profit

He said: *"Take no usury or interest from him; but fear your God, that your brother may live with you. You shall not lend him your money for usury, nor lend him your food at a profit" (Leviticus 25:36–37).*

Usury refers to interest, and food refers to the provisions one eats. God said not to take interest while lending money to a brother who had become poor, and not to try to gain profit while lending him food. The person spoken of here is the brother who is at one's side empty-handed. One was not to increase one's

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own income by using his desperate circumstances of needing money to live on and something to eat.

The text did not merely say not to take too much interest. It said to take no interest from this poor brother. He applied the same meaning not only to the way of lending money but also to the way of lending food. One could not evade it by saying that since one had given grain instead of money, it was all right to receive it back with profit added. It means not to lose the purpose of helping a brother to live, and not to fill one's own greed in the form of help.

In the midst of this is the word to fear God. Even in the place of giving and receiving money, one must know that one stands before God. Just because the other person cannot say anything and accepts the conditions I have set, it does not mean that God is pleased with that heart as well. God knows whether I am trying to relieve that person's difficulty or trying to make that difficulty an opportunity.

Remember God, who brought you out of Egypt

He said: *"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to give you the land of Canaan and to be your God" (Leviticus 25:38).*

After the word to help a poor brother, God revealed who He is. He is God, who brought Israel out of Egypt. The purpose for which He saved them was to be their God and to give them the land of Canaan. Israel were not a people who had escaped from slavery and obtained a possession by their own strength alone. They were a people who had first received the salvation of God.

Therefore, just because they now had a ground to live on and the strength to help others, they were not to forget the grace of

the past. Even the person standing today in a position of strength before a poor brother was a person God had brought out. God was the God of that brother, and at the same time the God of the one who gave help. They had to remember the fact that both were under the grace of God.

In Deuteronomy 6, too, God said that when Israel came to eat their fill, they were not to forget the LORD, who had brought them out of the house of bondage in Egypt. This is because it is easy to seek God when things are hard and then think only of one's own ability when one's circumstances improve. The person who remembers the grace of God does not try to exalt only himself with what he has. He tries to use it according to the will that pleases God.

Our life after receiving the remission of sins must also know this order. It is not that we first care well for our neighbors and thereby make ourselves qualified to be saved. We receive the remission of sins by believing in the salvation the Lord has accomplished, and within that grace we go forward into a life of loving God and loving people. We must not make good deeds a condition of salvation, but neither must we regard the word of the Lord lightly on the ground that we have been saved by grace.

Jesus saved us with the baptism He received from John and the Cross

When we hold our hearts up to the word of God, the sin of having thought of our own profit before love is revealed. There were times when we turned away from the difficulty of others, and times when we helped someone and then boasted of it. When we realize such sins, we cannot remove even our past sins merely by resolving to live kindly from now on. We need the

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Savior, who washes away our sins. The Scripture says: *"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5).*

God did not make our righteous deeds the ground of salvation. He had mercy on us, washed away our sins, and renewed us. The One who accomplished that salvation is Jesus Christ. Jesus is God and the Son of God. He came to this earth in the flesh of a man to save us, who have sin.

Jesus received baptism from John at the Jordan River. Matthew 3 tells of the word the Lord spoke when John tried to prevent Him from being baptized. He 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 is the baptism for bearing our sins. The sinless Jesus did not receive it to wash away His own wrongs. Just as in the Old Testament the high priest laid his hands on the sacrificial offering and passed the sins of the people on to it, John, as the representative of mankind, baptized Jesus and passed the sin of the world on to Him. By receiving baptism from John, Jesus fulfilled the righteousness of God that saves mankind from sin.

All our sins are also included in the sin of the world Jesus bore at that time. The Lord bore the sins of our whole lives—not only the sins committed until now, but even the sins we will commit while we live in the future. Not only the sins of actions revealed outwardly, but also the pride and greed of the heart, and the sin of hating and despising one's brother, are within the sin of the world the Lord received. Even what we had not yet realized was sin, the Lord knew and bore.

John saw Jesus and testified as follows: *"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 bore the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John, and went to the Cross in the body in which He bore that sin. Shedding His blood on the Cross, He received the judgment in our place. The sinless Lord suffered in our place the death we had to receive because of sin. Because our sins had passed on to the Lord, the judgment the Lord received became the judgment for us. The Lord gave His own life and paid the price of sin.

Therefore, while believing in the Cross of Jesus, we cannot leave out the baptism the Lord received from John. Only when we know how the Lord bore our sins can we clearly believe that the sacrifice of the Cross is the salvation for me. Jesus received our sins passed on to Him with the baptism He received from John, and received the judgment of those sins on the Cross. When we believe this fact in our hearts, we receive the remission of sins.

Jesus rose again from death. The Lord, who bore our sins and died, rose again from death and became our living Savior. Jesus, who is God, came to this earth, received baptism from John, died shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death, and thereby saved us. This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which gives us the remission of sins and new life.

We do not receive this salvation because we have helped many people. Even the person who could not help others because he had nothing, and the person who has lived wrongly out of his own greed, receive the remission of sins by believing in the salvation the Lord has accomplished. One must acknowledge one's sins and believe in the Lord, who bore those sins. The ground of the remission of sins lies not in our character or merit, but in the salvation Jesus Christ has accomplished.

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Even the brother who has been sold is a person belonging to God

He said: *"And if one of your brethren who dwells by you becomes poor, and sells himself to you, you shall not compel him to serve as a slave. As a hired servant and a sojourner he shall be with you, and shall serve you until the Year of Jubilee" (Leviticus 25:39–40).*

This time it is the case in which a fellow countryman who has become poor comes to have even his own body sold. He was placed in very hard economic circumstances and had to serve another person. God said not to compel such a person to serve as a slave, but to let him be with you like a hired servant or a sojourner. It does not mean that there was no serving at all. It means that he was to serve until the Jubilee, but was not to be treated like a person one owned permanently. He also said: *"And then he shall depart from you—he and his children with him—and shall return to his own family. He shall return to the possession of his fathers" (Leviticus 25:41).*

In the Jubilee He had that person and his children depart together, return to his own family, and recover the possession of his fathers. He did not let the present circumstance of having been sold decide the future of that family forever. The person who had entrusted work to him could not keep him on the mere ground of his own circumstance that he continued to need him. God set the time to return. He says: *"For they are My servants, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt; they shall not be sold as slaves. You shall not rule over him with rigor, but you shall fear your God" (Leviticus 25:42–43).*

The reason he cannot be treated carelessly is that he is a person of God, whom God brought out of Egypt. Just because he works under me, I do not gain even the authority to decide

everything about him as I please. God said not to treat him harshly. Even in the place where one's own power reached, one had to fear God.

Before this word we must examine our attitude in treating people. Entrusting work and crushing a person are different. One can require responsibility of the other person, but one must not despise and insult him by using his weak position. In particular, we must not treat the brothers and sisters who serve the gospel together with us like means for accomplishing our own will. We must remember the fact that the Lord bore that person's sins too. Our relationship must become a relationship of joining our strength together and serving the will of God.

The ordinance concerning foreign slaves and oneness in the gospel

Verses 44 and 45 say that male and female slaves may be bought from among the foreigners around Israel. He said that slaves could also be bought from among the children of the foreigners sojourning in Israel and those who had formed families in that land. And verse 46 says that these could be passed down to one's descendants. He said: *"And you may take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them as a possession; they shall be your permanent slaves. But regarding your brethren, the children of Israel, you shall not rule over one another with rigor."*

In this regulation there is clearly a difference of status between an Israelite fellow countryman and a foreigner at that time. To foreign slaves the regulation of liberation in the Jubilee given to fellow countrymen before was not given in the same way, and He let them be passed down to descendants as a

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possession. If this is explained simply as the same as today's employment relationship, the actual difference in the text is obscured. We must read that difference as it is.

But the church today must not make this regulation a right to buy and sell people or to dominate according to ethnicity. Nor must it be interpreted to mean that foreigners are people who cannot receive the remission of sins, or people inferior before God. We must distinguish the ordinance of status of that time, which the text deals with, from the grace of salvation received in Christ. The Scripture says: *"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28).*

What Jesus bore by receiving baptism from John is the sin of the world. It is not only the sins of people belonging to one nation or a particular status. The person in the status of a slave and the free person alike receive the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Those who belong to Christ by faith become children of God together. One does not obtain a greater salvation on the ground that one has much money or a high position. We become one by believing in the same salvation the same Lord has accomplished.

Therefore we must not select the people to whom we preach the gospel by looking at their nationality or circumstances. We must make known to all people Jesus Christ, who bore their sins. Even when treating the brothers and sisters who believe in the gospel, we must not decide high and low by worldly status. What we rely on together is the remission of sins Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John and the sacrifice of the Cross.

Let us live together remembering the grace we have received

Dear saints, in today's text the command to help a poor brother and the command not to treat him harshly are both connected with the word to fear God. Treating people is also a matter done before God. The Lord knows what words we speak and what conditions we demand, and with what heart we look at the difficulty of the other person.

When helping a brother, we must examine what he actually needs. We must share food with the person who needs food, and share the burden with the person who has taken on work hard to bear. We must not boast of our help and put the other person to shame, or try to dominate even his heart on the ground that we have given help. We must remember the word to let him live together with us.

We cannot solve all difficulties by ourselves. But together with the brothers and sisters who believe with us, we can gather our hearts and each carry out what we can do. The life of acknowledging one another's labor, sharing the help that is needed, and serving the gospel is precious. Because the Lord has saved us, we can live for other souls beyond our own benefit.

If, hearing the word, you have realized the greed or heartlessness of your own heart, do not hide it. You must acknowledge the wrong and look to the Lord. Jesus bore even that sin by receiving baptism from John, and was judged on the Cross. Believing in that salvation, you must turn from the wrong attitude. It is not trying to pay for past sins by helping others, but following the will of the Lord as a person who has received the grace of the remission of sins.

Let us fear the Lord, who has saved us from sin. Remembering that we are people who have first received mercy,

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let us care for a brother in difficulty so that he can live together with us at our side. I hope that the new life we have received by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit will appear also in our words, our hands, and our service. We give thanks and glory to the Lord, who has made us the people of God and made us love one another and serve the gospel. ✉

Sermon 8 by Paul C. Jong

The Lord, who redeemed us so that we might serve God

< Leviticus 25:47-55 >

"Now if a sojourner or stranger close to you becomes rich, and one of your brethren who dwells by him becomes poor, and sells himself to the stranger or sojourner close to you, or to a member of the stranger's family, after he is sold he may be redeemed again. One of his brothers may redeem him; or his uncle or his uncle's son may redeem him; or anyone who is near of kin to him in his family may redeem him; or if he is able he may redeem himself. Thus he shall reckon with him who bought him: The price of his release shall be according to the number of years, from the year that he was sold to him until the Year of Jubilee; it shall be according to the time of a hired servant for him. If there are still many years remaining, according to them he shall repay the price of his redemption from the money with which he was bought. And if there remain but a few years until the Year of Jubilee, then he shall reckon with him, and according to his years he shall repay him the price of his redemption. He shall be with him as a yearly hired servant, and he shall not rule with rigor over him in your sight. And if he is not redeemed in these years, then he shall be released in the Year of Jubilee—he and his children with him. For the children of Israel are servants to Me; they are My servants whom I brought out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God."

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Dear beloved saints, in today's word appears an Israelite who became poor and was sold to another person. A person who should have lived freely in his own land came to serve in the house of a stranger. His living had become hard, and it was not easy for him to change that circumstance by his own strength either. But God left open a way to redeem him even after he was sold. He also set the limits the person who made him work had to keep, and even spoke of the time when he would become free if he was never redeemed.

At the end of all these ordinances, God declares that the children of Israel are His servants. God remembered the people He had brought out of Egypt. Through this word we must examine how a person who has been sold is to be redeemed and protected, and engrave on our hearts the grace of the Lord, who has delivered us from sin and made us serve God.

Even when one's circumstances are lowered, God remembers His people

Verse 47 speaks of the case in which a foreigner residing among Israel became rich, and an Israelite fellow countryman living beside him became poor. An Israelite could be sold to that foreigner or to his family. This word shows that circumstances of want can come even to the people of God. Even living in the same region, property and living circumstances could become different from one another.

Therefore one must not think that one will always be in an economically superior position merely because one is an Israelite. Nor can one conclude, seeing a person who has become poor, that he has been forsaken by God. The text does not explain that he became poor because he committed some

particular sin. Rather, it teaches how he is to be treated when he has fallen into difficulty.

God still calls the person who has been sold a fellow countryman of Israel. The wealth of the person who bought him does not determine whose people he is. In the world, the words of a person with money and position are heard loudly, and the circumstances of the poor are easily pushed aside. But the word of God must be applied to the powerless as well. Just because his circumstances have been lowered, even the protection God has set does not disappear.

We, too, when dealing with people, easily weigh first their property and their usefulness. But when a brother has met with difficulty, we must first think of the word of God toward him. We must examine the circumstances of the person who needs help, listen to his words, and look into whether he is receiving unjust treatment. This is the attitude we who hear today's text must keep in our hearts.

Even after a person was sold, the way of redemption was open

He said: *"After he is sold he may be redeemed again. One of his brothers may redeem him; or his uncle or his uncle's son may redeem him; or anyone who is near of kin to him in his family may redeem him; or if he is able he may redeem himself" (Leviticus 25:48–49).*

God did not let the fact that a person had been sold block his future forever. A brother could redeem him, and an uncle, a cousin, or a close relative could also redeem him. If he himself became rich, there was also the way of redeeming himself. While letting him receive the help of his brothers and relatives,

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He also let him obtain freedom when his own circumstances had recovered.

Redemption here is paying the set price for the person who has been sold and having him released. It was a matter of going beyond a relative having a heart that felt sorry for his condition, and actually paying the price so that he could leave that house. The person who had fallen into difficulty needed, together with words of concern, a concrete hand that could help him.

Moreover, the text does not designate only one person and say that if one cannot receive that person's help, all ways are ended. It speaks in turn of a brother, an uncle, a cousin, and one near of kin. People in close relationships could remember and look after the brother who had been sold. God opened a way for the people who could give help to participate in that work.

Examining this ordinance, we also come to think of the problem of being saved from sin. A person can receive help or gather property to escape from hard economic circumstances. But when solving one's sin before God, one cannot rely on money or the ability of one's relatives. We need a Savior, who will bear the price of sin and give us life. The Lord came to us to accomplish this very work.

The price of redemption was calculated according to the remaining period

Verses 50 to 52 explain how the price is calculated when redeeming. He had them reckon from the year he was sold until the Jubilee with the person who had bought him, and regard the days he had served as the days of a hired servant. They had to include in the calculation the period already served, and examine how much remained until the Jubilee. He said: *"If there are still*

many years remaining, according to them he shall repay the price of his redemption from the money with which he was bought. And if there remain but a few years until the Year of Jubilee, then he shall reckon with him, and according to his years he shall repay him the price of his redemption" (Leviticus 25:51–52).

If many years remained until the Jubilee, the price corresponding to that period had to be returned, and if few years remained, it had to be calculated accordingly. Even though he had already served for many years, the same price as when he was first sold could not be demanded unconditionally. Nor was the price to be set at will by using the desperate circumstances of the person to be redeemed. There were the period and the standard of calculation God had set.

The word by which He had them calculate in this way contains the meaning that the person who had been sold was not to be regarded merely as an object to be owned and disposed of at will. His labor had a period, and the time when that period would end was also set. The person who had bought him could not put forward only the fact that he had paid money. He also had to acknowledge the Jubilee and the ordinance of redemption God had set.

When we hear the word of God, we must look carefully even at such concrete parts. The heart that fears God is revealed in the place of actually calculating the price and dealing with people. In particular, when the other person depends on me, it is easy to put my own profit first. But the fact that that person needs my help does not become a right to make unreasonable demands of him. We must examine before the word whether our own demands are legitimate.

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Jesus redeemed us with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross

Dear saints, how heavy is the problem of sin that we must solve before God? A person cannot make the sins he has already committed into something that never happened. Even if he resolves to do more good deeds, his past sins do not disappear, nor does the judgment of sin disappear of itself just because the years pass. Since we ourselves are in sin, we cannot bear even the sins of another person on his behalf and save him.

God spoke of the way of atonement in which the price of sin is borne with life. He said: *"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).*

In the sacrifice of the Old Testament, the sinner laid his hands on the offering and passed his sins on to it, and the offering that had borne those sins died and shed its blood. The offering that had borne sin died in place of the sinner. Through this way of atonement, God showed His will to save sinners. The salvation we needed was not a matter of simply overlooking sin, but a salvation in which our sins are transferred and the judgment on those sins is carried out.

To accomplish this, Jesus, who is God, came to this earth in the body of a man. Jesus is One who has no sin. The sinless Lord went to the Jordan River and received baptism from John in order to save us sinners. When John tried to dissuade Him, 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 is the work by which He bore the sin of mankind. Just as in the Old Testament the

offering had sins passed on to it by the laying on of hands, Jesus received the sin of the world passed on to Him by receiving baptism from John, the representative of mankind. Through this word we must know where our sins were transferred. Jesus did not tell us to pretend to have no sin; He bore in His own body all the sins we actually committed.

In the sin of the world the Lord bore, all the sins of our whole lives are included. He did not divide the sins committed before believing in Jesus from the sins committed after believing and take on only a part. The sins of days past, the sins revealed today, and even the sins we will commit in our weakness in the future—the Lord bore them by receiving baptism from John. The sins we remember and the sins we have not yet realized are also among the sin of the world the Lord took on.

John 1:29 is the word in which John testified of Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Because Jesus bore the sin of the world, He died on the Cross shedding His blood in our place. The death on the Cross does not end as an event in which one sinless person died unjustly. The Lord, who had borne our sins with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment on those sins. The work of taking on our sins and the work of dying because of our sins are connected in this way.

The Lord gave His own life in our place. And He rose again from death. Jesus is the living Savior, who has saved us, who were under sin and death. We receive the remission of sins by believing in the baptism Jesus received from John, the blood He shed on the Cross, and the fact that He rose again from death. This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which gives us life.

Therefore, to receive the remission of sins, we must not try to offer our own good deeds and religious labors as the price of salvation. The ground of the remission of sins lies in the

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salvation the Lord has already accomplished. Even when we realize sin, we must not hide it or regard it lightly, but must believe that the Lord bore that very sin too and received the judgment. The person who accepts in his heart the salvation the Lord has accomplished can escape from the condemnation of sin and stand before God.

Even while waiting for freedom, he was not to be treated harshly

He said: *"He shall be with him as a yearly hired servant, and he shall not rule with rigor over him in your sight" (Leviticus 25:53).*

God, who spoke of redemption and the Jubilee, also looked at the life until then. The person who had been sold could not be treated harshly on the ground that the price had not yet been paid or the Jubilee had not yet come. He had to be regarded as a yearly hired servant. Even while waiting for the day of becoming free, there was a treatment that had to be kept.

In particular, the text says that he was not to be treated harshly in the sight of the people of Israel. Seeing a fellow countryman being abused, they were not to pass it over, saying that since that person had already been sold, nothing could be done. The fact that he had been sold to a stranger did not become a reason that the word of God need not be applied. Together with preparing the price of redemption, they also had to examine how that person was being treated now.

This word makes us consider not only the distant future of a person in difficulty, but also his suffering today. The present unjust treatment cannot be justified only by the word that things will get better later. If a person who needs help is receiving

demands hard to bear, we must examine his circumstances and check whether we ourselves are adding to his burden.

We who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit are people saved by the life of the Lord. The Lord treasured us and gave us life. Therefore we must abandon the heart that tries to push through its own will by using the weakness of others. Even in the work of serving God, we cannot treat people carelessly. We must help people to live believing in the word together, consider each other's circumstances, and open our hearts so that a person who has met with difficulty can seek help.

God set the time of becoming free

He said: *"And if he is not redeemed in these years, then he shall be released in the Year of Jubilee—he and his children with him" (Leviticus 25:54).*

God did not end His word at telling them the way to redeem. He spoke of the case in which one was not redeemed even by that way. What happens if a close relative cannot pay the price and the person's own circumstances do not improve either? When the Jubilee comes, he and his children become free. He and his children could not be held endlessly on the ground that the price of redemption had not been prepared.

This ordinance also gave a clear limit to the person who had bought him. When the Jubilee came, he had to release him according to the command of God. Freedom could not be kept postponed on the ground of the inability or the poverty of the person who had been sold. His freedom did not depend only on the mood or the goodwill of the master. There were the time and the word God had set.

Here we see how thoroughly God looks at the circumstances

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of people. The text deals with both the case of the person who gained the ability to redeem and the case of the person who was never redeemed. Within the word there is also the regulation concerning the person who could not recover his circumstances by himself and his children. The circumstances of the weak are not outside the concern of God.

When preaching the gospel of the remission of sins, too, we must not conclude, looking only at the present appearance of the person who needs salvation, that there is no hope for him. We must make known clearly the salvation Jesus has accomplished. We must preach the gospel so that a person bound by sin can hear and believe the fact that the Lord bore his sins. It is not that we have the ability to remove that person's sins. Our role is to testify of the Lord, who has accomplished the remission of sins.

The Lord saved us so that we might serve God

He said: *"For the children of Israel are servants to Me; they are My servants whom I brought out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God" (Leviticus 25:55).*

This word is the reason that supports all the ordinances before it. God brought Israel out of Egypt. Therefore they were a people belonging to God. Even when they were working in someone's house, the fact that God had saved them was not to be forgotten. Above the authority of the person who had bought a man was the will of God, who had saved them.

In Deuteronomy 6, too, when a child asked what the ordinances of God meant, the parents had first to tell him that they themselves had been slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt and had come out by the power of God. It is remembering the grace by which God saved them and following His word. The life of the

saved people was connected with God, who had delivered them.

It is the same for us who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It is not that we serve the Lord and thereby pay for our past sins. The Lord bore our sins and gave His life, and thereby saved us. As people who believe in this grace, we learn and follow the will of God. We do not offer service as the price for obtaining the remission of sins; we serve the Lord in thanksgiving for having received the remission of sins.

Zacharias prophesied like this of the salvation God would bestow: *"To grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life" (Luke 1:74–75).*

If sin is not solved, a person is afraid before God. Even if he serves and prays outwardly, if the sin of the heart remains, he cannot come boldly. But Jesus completely solved our sins with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross. The person who believes in this gospel can serve God with a heart that has received the remission of sins. This is because God, who receives our service, first made us clean.

Dear beloved saints, let us remember the grace of the Lord, who has redeemed us. To us, who could not solve our own sins, the Lord came, and He bore all our sins and their judgment. Now we have become people belonging to God by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. With this faith, let us hear the word and pray, look after the difficulties of our brothers, and preach the gospel of the remission of sins to those who are still bound by sin. The Lord has accomplished complete salvation so that we may serve God, who has delivered us, without fear. We give thanks and glory to Jesus Christ, who has redeemed us to make us serve God. ✉

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Questions and Answers on Leviticus Chapter 25

[Question] 1. What lesson do the sabbatical year and the Jubilee give to the faith and life that rely on God?

The sabbatical year and the Jubilee teach that the land and the people belong to God, and that the One who keeps their lives is also God. Israel lived cultivating the land they had received from God, but in the appointed year they had to rest from farming. They were not to be led only by the desire to produce more, but had to believe in God, who gave them the land and supplied their food, and obey His word.

In the Jubilee He had them return to the possession they had sold, and He had even the person who had been sold to a fellow countryman because of poverty return together with his family. God did not leave the people to lose the ground of their lives through poverty and go on living oppressed. Contained in this is the lesson that one must not regard the property one has received as absolutely one's own, but must help the recovery of a brother who has fallen into difficulty.

Examining these ordinances of rest and recovery, the saints can remember the rest God gives. 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 enjoy the remission of sins and true rest by believing in the salvation the Lord has accomplished. The person who lives believing in the grace received from God must also

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treasure, in his own life, caring for his neighbor and helping his recovery rather than oppressing him. (Leviticus 25:1–17, 23–43; Hebrews 4:1–11; Matthew 3:13–17; 1 Corinthians 15:3, 4).

[Question] 2. Leviticus 25:1–7—what was the ordinance the people had to keep when letting the land rest in the seventh year?

After entering the land of Canaan, the people of Israel sowed seed in their fields and tended their vineyards for six years and gathered the produce. But in the seventh year they had to rest from farming so that the land would rest before the LORD. That ordinance is as follows.

• They rested from sowing and tending the vineyard. In the seventh year they stopped the farm work they had done for six years and let the land rest.

• They did not gather the grain that grew of its own accord and the fruit of the untended vine as in the harvest of an ordinary year. He forbade the owner to gather in that produce as his own harvest.

• The produce of that year was taken as food. Even in the sabbatical year, eating what grew from the land was not itself forbidden. The owner, the male and female servants, the hired workers, and the strangers who dwelt with them could eat it.

• The livestock and the beasts also ate that produce. He did not let the produce of the land become the possession of one person alone, but let them eat it together.

Therefore the sabbatical year was a year of letting the land rest while enjoying together what God supplied. The people had to acknowledge that even the livelihood obtained through farming and harvesting depended on God, and obey the

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ordinance of rest He had set. (Leviticus 25:1–7).

[Question] 3. What does the word of Leviticus 25:2, *"The land shall keep a sabbath to the LORD,"* mean?

This word means letting the land God has given rest according to His command. After cultivating for six years, the people of Israel had to stop sowing and tending the vineyard in the seventh year. That rest was not something the people determined according to their convenience, but an act of obedience to the LORD.

God said that all the land was His. Because the people were those who lived in the land received from God, they could not act like absolute owners who might produce as much as they wished without resting. When God told them to rest, they had to let the land rest and follow His will.

This ordinance teaches that one must trust God even in the matter of maintaining one's living. One must work faithfully when working, accept by faith the rest God has set as well, and not forget the One who has given the produce and the ground of one's life. (Leviticus 25:2–7, 18–23).

[Question] 4. Leviticus 25:8–55—how did He have the land, property, and the lives of the poor people restored in the Jubilee?

God had them count seven sabbatical years, that is, forty-nine years, and then set apart the fiftieth year as holy and keep it as the Jubilee. On the Day of Atonement He had the trumpet

sounded throughout all the land to proclaim liberty, and had the people return each to his possession and his family. The main ordinances related to this are as follows.

• In the Jubilee, too, they let the land rest. They did not sow seed, nor gather the grain that grew of its own accord and the untended grapes as in the harvest of an ordinary year. The produce that grew in the field that year was taken as food.

• The land of the possession that had been sold was returned. Land sold because of poverty could be taken back by a close relative or by the person himself paying the price. Even if there was no ability to take it back, in the Jubilee it returned to the person who originally held the possession. When trading, they had to set the price according to the period of obtaining fruit until the Jubilee, and not deceive one another.

• For houses, the ordinance was distinguished according to location and owner. A house inside a walled city, if not redeemed within a year after being sold, was confirmed as the possession of the buyer and did not return even in the Jubilee. A house in a village without a wall could be redeemed like land and also returned in the Jubilee. A house in a city of the Levites could be redeemed at any time, and if not redeemed, it returned in the Jubilee. The fields around those cities could not be sold.

• They helped a poor fellow countryman. They had to help a brother whose living was hard so that he could live together with them, and they were not to take interest from him or lend him food to gain profit.

• They did not treat harshly a person who had been sold to a fellow countryman. They treated him like a hired worker or a person dwelling with them, and in the Jubilee they had him and his children return to their family and recover the possession of their fathers.

• They also made it possible to redeem a fellow countryman

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who had been sold to a foreigner. A brother or a close relative could pay the price, or the person himself, when his circumstances improved, could redeem himself. Even if the price could not be paid, in the Jubilee he and his children became free.

This chapter distinguishes the ordinances for fellow countrymen and for foreign slaves, and to the foreign slaves of verses 44–46 it did not apply the same ordinance of liberation in the Jubilee as to fellow countrymen. Therefore, even when explaining the restoration of the Jubilee, one must examine together those to whom the text applies and the exceptions it sets. At the basis of all these ordinances is the fact that the land belongs to God, and that the people of Israel are people whom God saved and brought out of Egypt. (Leviticus 25:8–55).

[Question] 5. Leviticus 25:9—when was the trumpet announcing the Jubilee sounded, and how was the Jubilee counted?

The trumpet announcing the Jubilee was sounded loudly throughout all the land on the tenth day of the seventh month of the calendar of Israel, that is, on the Day of Atonement. At that time liberty was proclaimed to the people, and they were made to return each to his possession and his family.

The Jubilee was kept by counting seven years seven times, that is, forty-nine years, and then setting apart the fiftieth year as holy. Therefore the standard of the Jubilee was not simply setting a convenient time, but lay in the number of sabbatical years God had set and in the Day of Atonement. The people had to carry out the ordinances of rest and restoration according to the time God had set. (Leviticus 25:8–13).

[Question] 6. Leviticus 25:13–17—when buying and selling land, how was the period remaining until the Jubilee reflected in the price?

The price of land was set on the basis of the period in which fruit could be obtained from that land until the next Jubilee. If many years of harvest remained, the price was raised, and if few remained, the price was lowered. This is because, even for the same land, the period in which the buyer would obtain produce grew shorter as the Jubilee drew nearer.

Because in the Jubilee the land returned to the person who originally held the possession, this transaction could not be regarded as a transaction of occupying the land forever. The text has the price set according to the multitude or fewness of the crops to be obtained from that land. Therefore the seller and the buyer had to calculate honestly the remaining period.

Together with this ordinance, God commanded them not to deceive one another and to fear God. They were not to set an unjust price on the ground that the other person's circumstances were urgent, nor to calculate as if they would receive even the harvest that would not come to them. (Leviticus 25:13–17, 23, 24).

[Question] 7. Leviticus 25:14—what attitude toward life does the ordinance against deceiving one another in land transactions teach?

This ordinance gives the lesson that one must fear God and be honest with one's neighbor even in the place of trading property. By having them set the price according to the period of obtaining produce until the Jubilee, God had both sides of a

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transaction follow a fair standard. They were not to obtain unjust profit by taking advantage of the difficulty of their neighbor.

Moreover, the land belongs to God, and the people are those who live in the possession received from God. Therefore even the person who had bought land was not to try to monopolize it forever, and had to let the person who originally held the possession return when the appointed time came. God left open the way for the poor to recover the ground of their lives.

This word teaches that faith is not revealed only in the place of worship. One must be honest also in buying and selling things, setting prices, and giving and receiving money. The heart that fears God must appear in an attitude that does not put only its own profit first, but respects the rights and the living of one's neighbor. (Leviticus 25:14–17, 23–28).

[Question] 8. Leviticus 25:18–22—what did God promise to the people who worried about food in the year of resting from farming?

God promised that in the sixth year, before the sabbatical year, He would send His blessing and make its produce enough for three years. Knowing that they would worry about what they would eat if they could neither sow seed nor gather produce in the seventh year, He said that He would prepare food for them in advance.

The people rested from farming in the seventh year, and even while sowing again in the eighth year, they ate the old grain they had stored. It was a promise that He would supply so that they could live on that old grain until the harvest of the ninth year. God did not merely stop at commanding them to rest; He said that He would give produce so that they could live following that

command.

This promise is the word given so that the people would keep the ordinances of God and live safely in that land. When learning the rest of the sabbatical year and the Jubilee, too, one must remember, together with human labor, the care of God, who gives produce to that labor. What the people needed was not an attitude of securing their livelihood by ignoring the ordinances God had set, but a faith that trusted the promised provision and obeyed. (Leviticus 25:18–22).

[Question] 9. Leviticus 25:25—when a poor relative sold the land of his possession, what responsibility did the close relative take on?

The *"redeeming relative"* refers to a close relative. When a fellow countryman became poor and sold part of the possession received from God, the close relative took on the responsibility of paying the price to the person who had bought that land and taking it back for him. Here 'to redeem' means to take back what has been sold by paying a just price.

The purpose of this work was to help the poor relative recover the ground of his life that he had lost. One was not to turn away from a relative's difficulty as if it were someone else's matter, but had to actually help him so that he could enjoy again the possession he had received. Even if there was no relative to redeem it, when the person's own circumstances improved he could pay the price of the remaining period and take it back, and even if he had no such ability, in the Jubilee the land returned.

In the latter half of the same chapter, He also made it possible for a brother or a close relative to redeem a fellow countryman who had been sold. In the role entrusted to the close relative is

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contained the meaning of helping the recovery of a family that has fallen into difficulty through poverty and subjection, so that they can live again. (Leviticus 25:25–28, 47–49).

[Question] 10. Leviticus 25:39–45—how was a fellow countryman who had been sold because of poverty to be treated, and when was he to be sent back?

When a fellow countryman of Israel became poor and was sold, they were not to compel him to serve as a slave, but had to treat him like a hired worker or a person dwelling with them. While using the labor of a poor brother, they were not to treat him harshly, and had to treat him with a heart that feared God.

He served until the Jubilee, and when that time came, he departed together with his children, returned to his own family, and recovered the possession of his fathers. God said that the people of Israel were people He had brought out of Egypt, and servants belonging to Him. The person who entrusted work to a fellow countryman, too, was not to act like a master who could own and dominate that brother as he pleased.

Verses 44–45 also record the ordinance of that time by which slaves could be bought from foreigners. This chapter distinguishes the treatment of fellow countrymen and of foreign slaves. The lesson clearly revealed in the command concerning fellow countrymen is that one must not treat a brother carelessly on the ground of poverty, but must guarantee the recovery of his family and his life. The people saved by God had to fear God even in the matter of treating a brother in difficulty. (Leviticus 25:39–46). ✉

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CHAPTER

26

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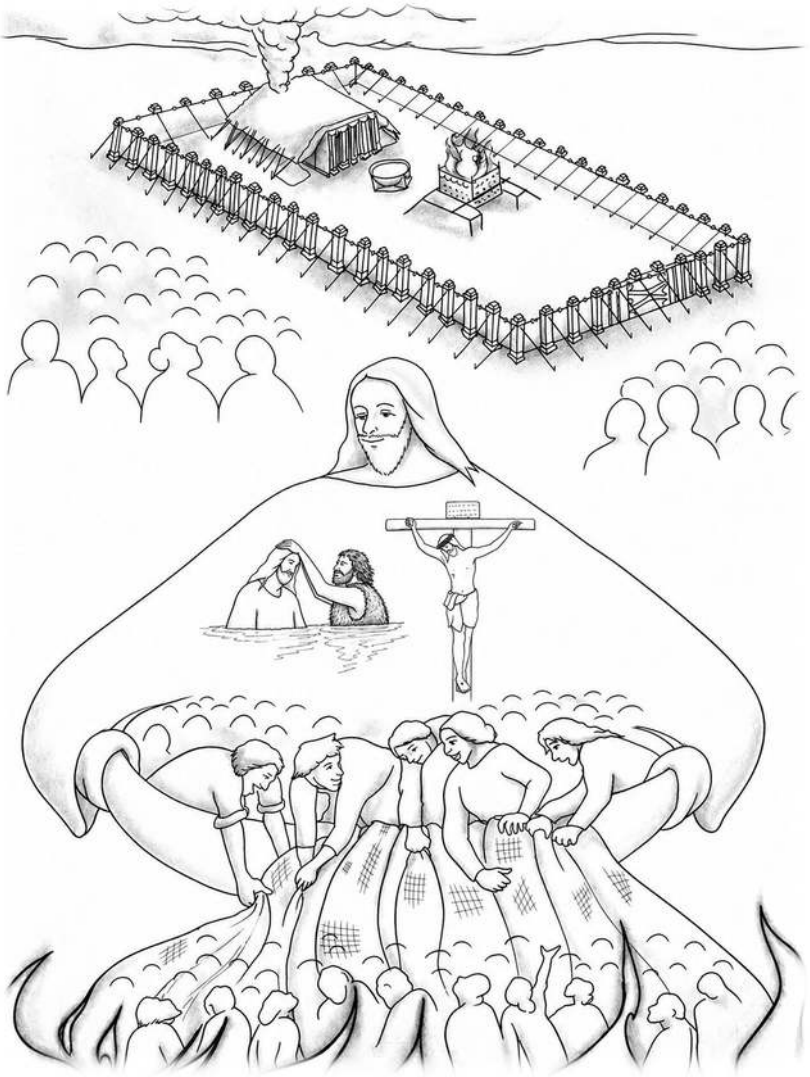

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Leviticus Chapter 26 seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Leviticus 26:1–2—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 that condenses the life of the covenant people into three things

Leviticus 26:1–2, before the blessings and the discipline of the covenant that follow, shows in condensed form in what relationship with God the people of Israel were to live.

"You shall not make idols for yourselves; neither a carved image nor a sacred pillar shall you rear up for yourselves; nor shall you set up an engraved stone in your land, to bow down to it; for I am the LORD your God. You shall keep My Sabbaths and reverence My sanctuary: I am the LORD."

In these two verses are contained three commands.

—Do not worship idols that take the place of God.

—Keep the Sabbath of God.

—Reverence the sanctuary of God.

These three are not separate rules. The prohibition of idols teaches whom one is to serve, the Sabbath teaches on whose

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completed work one is to rely, and reverence for the sanctuary teaches how one is to treat the place where God is present and speaks.

The life of the person who has received the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit also appears in these three directions. It is serving God alone, resting within the salvation Jesus Christ has completed, and treating as holy both oneself and the church, in whom the Holy Spirit dwells.

2. This command was given not before salvation but after salvation

Leviticus 26 is the word God gave after He had saved Israel out of Egypt. It is not that God saved them out of Egypt because Israel had abandoned idols and kept the Sabbath well. God first delivered them from death through the blood of the Passover lamb, and liberated them from slavery to Pharaoh by letting them cross the Red Sea.

Then He told the saved people, "You must live like this."

This order is extremely important. It is not that one is saved by keeping the law; it is that the people saved by the grace of God live obeying the will of God.

It is the same in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It is not that we receive the remission of sins because we have abandoned idols, kept the Sabbath, and lived godly lives. 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. The person who has received the remission of sins by believing this fact lives serving God in thanksgiving.

Obedience is not the price of salvation, but the fruit of faith that appears in the saved person.

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3. *"You shall not make idols for yourselves"*

The expression to be noted first in verse 1 is *"for yourselves."*

An idol is not something a person makes in order to serve God, but in the end something he makes for himself. A person tries to make a god he can control in order to obtain the safety, success, abundance, and pleasure he wants.

The true God is not One who follows the commands of people. God speaks, and people must obey that word. But an idol is something people make, set up, name, and use whenever they want.

Therefore, at the core of idolatry is the question, "Does God rule me, or am I trying to fulfill my desires by using God?"

—A carved image, a sacred pillar, and an engraved stone: the primary meaning of the text is that one is not to make actual idol images and bow down before them. A carved image, a sacred pillar, and an engraved stone were things the Canaanite peoples used when they gave form to their gods and worshiped them.

God forbade setting up a visible image as if it were God and worshiping before it. This is because God is not One who can be confined within material things made by people or defined by human imagination.

The act of serving an image or an object made by people as a divine being and praying to it for blessings still goes against this word.

4. The idols set up in people's hearts today

The New Testament, too, says that covetousness is idolatry.

"Covetousness, which is idolatry" (Colossians 3:5).

Wealth itself is not an idol. Occupation, success, family, health, learning, and honor are not evil in themselves either. But

when they become objects one loves, relies on, and obeys more than God, they become idols.

Jesus also said.

"You cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6:24).

An idol does not necessarily mean only an image made of stone or wood. The following things, too, can take the place of God.

—Believing that money guarantees one's life and future

—Thinking that success and recognition decide the value of one's existence

—Fearing and relying on one's family or a particular person more than God

—Exalting one's own thoughts and feelings above the word of God

—Making political ideology, or one's people and nation, absolute

—Making a pastor or a religious leader an absolute being who cannot be criticized

—Relying on one's own good deeds and godliness as the ground of salvation

Not every goal and hope automatically becomes an idol. But if one loves it more than God and even abandons the word of God, it has become an idol.

5. Even one's own righteousness can become an idol

From the perspective of believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the idol to be guarded against in particular is one's own righteousness.

People try to wash away their sins and be acknowledged by God with their prayers of repentance, tears, fasting, devotion,

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and good deeds. Then, while saying with their lips that they believe in Jesus, in reality they come to rely on their own deeds as the ground of salvation.

This is exalting one's own deeds above the salvation of Christ.

The ground on which we have received the remission of sins is not how diligently we have lived. It is the fact that Jesus fulfilled all righteousness with the baptism He received from John and bore the sin of the world, the fact that He was judged on the Cross while bearing that sin, and the fact that He rose again from death.

John the Baptist testified of Jesus as follows.

"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).

To abandon one's own righteousness does not mean that there is no need to live a good life. It means not putting forward good deeds as the price of salvation. Salvation is received through the work Christ has accomplished, and a good life is lived in thanksgiving for having been saved.

6. We believe not in material things or images, but in the word of salvation

To believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not mean worshiping the material called water itself as a mysterious power. It is believing in the event in which Jesus actually received baptism from John in the Jordan River, and in its meaning.

Nor do objects in the shape of a cross, or particular places and ceremonies themselves, remove sin. The One who has saved us is not objects and images, but Jesus Christ.

1 John 5:6–8 says that the Spirit, the water, and the blood testify as one. The water points to the baptism Jesus received from John, the blood points to the blood He shed while receiving the judgment of sin on the Cross, and the Holy Spirit testifies of the truth of this salvation.

Therefore we must not mystify material things or images, but must believe in the word of salvation that Christ actually accomplished with the water and the blood.

7. *"You shall keep My Sabbaths"*

In the Old Testament, the Sabbath was the actual seventh day, and it was the covenant sign between God and Israel.

"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).

By stopping work on the Sabbath, the people of Israel confessed several facts.

First, they confessed that God had created heaven and earth in six days and rested on the seventh day.

Second, they acknowledged that the One who sustains the world and keeps their lives is not human labor but God.

Third, they believed that the One who sanctifies them is God.

Fourth, they remembered that they were free people saved from slavery in Egypt.

The people of Israel had suffered heavy labor in Egypt. But God gave rest to the redeemed people. Therefore the Sabbath was not simply a heavy law forbidding work, but a sign of grace God had given to the saved people.

Jesus also said, *"The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath"* (Mark 2:27).

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8. In the New Testament, the substance of the Sabbath is Christ

One must not transfer the Sabbath regulation of the Old Testament as it is to the church of the New Testament and say that one is saved only by keeping a particular day of the week.

Colossians 2:16–17 says as follows concerning festivals, new moons, and sabbaths.

"Which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ" (Colossians 2:17).

The Sabbath was a shadow showing the true rest Christ would give in the future. The substance the shadow pointed to is Jesus Christ.

Therefore the rest of the New Testament is first of all the rest of the remission of sins. It is the sinner stopping the work of striving to wash away his sins by his own deeds, and believing in the salvation Jesus Christ has completed.

"We who have believed do enter that rest" (Hebrews 4:3).

Because Jesus bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and said, *"It is finished!"* the person who believes no longer needs to strive to complete salvation by his own merit.

This is spiritual rest.

—One stops doubting whether one's sins passed on to Jesus and continually trying to pay for them by one's own deeds.

—One does not make whether one's feelings are at peace the ground of salvation.

—One believes in the baptism of Jesus, the Cross, and His rising again from death just as the written word says.

—One obtains rest of conscience within that completed salvation.

9. To rest in the gospel is not to do nothing

To rest in Christ does not mean that one may live lazily or need not obey God.

Working in order to be saved and serving because one has been saved are entirely different. The former is labor to establish one's own righteousness, and the latter is service offered in thanksgiving for the grace of having been saved.

It is not that one preaches the gospel and serves in order to receive the remission of sins. Because one has already received the remission of sins, one serves with the heart that wants other souls, too, to hear this gospel.

True rest does not make a person listless. Rather, it leads him out of condemnation and fear and enables him to serve God with joy.

Nor does spiritual rest remove the need for physical rest. Because man is not God, he must rest. Rather than regarding oneself as having to be responsible for everything, one must work when it is time to work and rest when it is time to rest, believing in God, who cares for us.

10. Must the Lord's Day and the Sabbath be regarded as the same?

It is a precious life of faith for the saints of the New Testament to worship together and hear the word on the Lord's Day in commemoration of the Lord's rising again from death. But one must not simply transfer the seventh-day Sabbath regulation of the Old Testament to Sunday and say that one is saved only by legalistically regulating every act on Sunday.

The New Testament teaches that in the matter of esteeming a day, each person is to do it for the Lord (Romans 14:5–6). It

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also does not let anyone judge others on the basis of sabbaths and festivals.

Therefore worship on the Lord's Day is not merit for being saved. It is the worship of thanksgiving in which the saints who have already been saved gather together, remember the salvation of the Lord, hear the word, serve the gospel, and build one another up.

More fundamental than the act of keeping a particular day of the week is whether one has entered into the salvation Christ has completed.

11. "*Reverence My sanctuary*"

In Leviticus, the sanctuary refers first of all to the actual Tabernacle. It was the holy place where God dwelt among the people of Israel, received the sacrifices, and spoke to Moses.

The people of Israel were not to change the law of sacrifice of the Tabernacle as they pleased, enter it carelessly in an unclean state, or regard the name and the presence of God lightly.

But to reverence the sanctuary does not mean worshiping the tent or the furnishings themselves like a god. The reason the sanctuary was holy was not that its materials were special, but that God put His name there, met with the people, and showed the way of atonement.

To reverence the sanctuary is, in the end, to respect God, the Owner of the sanctuary, and the word of atonement He has set.

12. Jesus became the true temple

In the New Testament, the meaning of the sanctuary is

fulfilled first of all in Jesus Christ.

Jesus said, *"Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."* The Gospel of John explains its meaning as follows.

"But He was speaking of the temple of His body" (John 2:21).

Jesus is the true temple where God and sinners meet. In the sanctuary of the Old Testament, atonement was made through the laying on of hands on the sacrificial offering and its blood. Jesus Himself became the sacrificial offering, bore sin with the baptism He received from John, and shed His blood on the Cross.

And by rising again from death, He opened a new and living way for sinners to come to God.

Therefore, today one must not regard a particular church building as completely the same as the Old Testament Tabernacle, or think that the building itself has a mysterious holiness. A church building is a precious place set apart and used for worship, the word, and fellowship, but the building itself cannot wash away sin or give the Holy Spirit.

13. The saints in whom the Holy Spirit dwells are the temple of God

In the person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the Holy Spirit dwells.

"Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" (1 Corinthians 3:16).

Now the word to reverence the sanctuary applies to the life of the saints as well. One must not carelessly give over the body in which the Holy Spirit dwells to fornication, greed, drunkenness, and violence.

One must also treat other saints as the temple of God. To

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insult, use, and dominate the saints is to regard lightly the people in whom the Holy Spirit dwells.

The whole church community, too, is the temple of God. Ephesians 2:21–22 says that the saints, joined together in Jesus Christ, are being built into *"a dwelling place of God in the Spirit."*

Therefore reverence for the sanctuary appears as follows.

—One does not make worship a means of one's own feelings or entertainment.

—One does not treat the word of God lightly.

—One does not distort the truth of the gospel to fit human thoughts.

—One does not treat the body, the conscience, and the personhood of the saints carelessly.

—One keeps order, love, and holiness within the church.

—One joins one's heart to the work of preaching the gospel and building one another up.

14. We respect the servants who preach the word, and we serve the gospel together with the church

The word to reverence the sanctuary also contains the meaning of respecting the priests who preach the word of God. Today the saints, too, must respect the servants of God who preach the word, and, receiving the guidance of the church, preach and serve the gospel of the water and the Spirit together.

No leader can dominate the property, the conscience, and the lives of the saints as if they were his own possession. If the words of a leader differ from the word of God, the saints must discern according to the written word.

To respect the church is not to make a human organization absolute, but to respect Christ, the Head of the church, and for

the saints to serve one another within the word of the gospel.

If one says that one reverences the sanctuary while idolizing a pastor, the result is that one sets the prohibition of idols in verse 1 and the reverence for the sanctuary in verse 2 in conflict with each other.

15. Worship offered in spirit and truth

Jesus spoke of true worship.

"God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24).

To worship in spirit and truth does not mean merely that one's feelings become fervent or that one is absorbed in a religious atmosphere. It is worshiping God in the Holy Spirit and in the truth.

The person who has been washed of the sins of his heart by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not look at God only as a fearful Judge, but comes to Him believing in Him as the Father of salvation. Because he believes the truth that sin has been solved by the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross, he worships with thanksgiving and assurance.

True worship is not a time to offer sacrifices again in order to wash away one's sins repeatedly. It is a time to believe in and give thanks for the remission of sins Jesus Christ has completed once and for all, and to submit oneself to the word of that gospel.

16. The three commands are connected as one

The prohibition of idols, the Sabbath, and reverence for the

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sanctuary show one faith from three directions.

To abandon idols is not to serve anything other than God as Savior and Master.

To keep the Sabbath is to rest relying not on one's own deeds but on the salvation God has completed.

To reverence the sanctuary is to treat as holy the word of salvation God has set, and the saints and the church in whom the Holy Spirit dwells.

Conversely, idolatry makes people work without rest. Money, success, and recognition constantly demand, "Achieve just a little more and you will be safe." But they never say that it is enough.

Jesus Christ liberates sinners from slavery to their own desires and gives them true rest. And He makes them the temple in which the Holy Spirit dwells, and makes them serve God.

Conclusion

Leviticus 26:1–2 shows how the saved covenant people are to live.

Israel were not to make idols. This is because God is the only God who saved them out of Egypt. They had to keep the Sabbath. This is because they had to confess that the One who sanctifies them and keeps their lives is God. They had to reverence the sanctuary. This is because it was the place where God met with the people and showed the way of atonement.

This word becomes even clearer within the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Jesus bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of sin on the Cross, and accomplished complete salvation by rising again from death. The Holy Spirit dwells in the heart of the person who believes

in this gospel of the water and the blood, and makes him the temple of God.

Therefore the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not serve his own desires and his own righteousness as idols. He stops the labor of trying to complete salvation by his own deeds, and obtains rest of heart by believing the word that Christ has already remitted all sins. And he treasures his own body, in which the Holy Spirit dwells, other saints, and the Church of God, and preaches the gospel together with them, and they love one another.

To abandon idols is to serve God alone as Master; to enter into rest is to believe in the salvation Christ has completed; and to reverence the sanctuary is to treasure the saints and the church in whom the Holy Spirit dwells, and to serve God together following the guidance of the word.

Leviticus 26:3–13—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. What must be seen before the blessing of obedience

Leviticus 26:3–13 is the blessing of the covenant given to Israel, who obey God. Rain in its season, an abundant harvest, safety and peace, victory over enemies, fruitfulness, and the presence of God are promised.

This word is the promise of actual blessings God gave to Israel, who were to live in the land of Canaan. Today, too, the saints who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must not ignore the word of God on the ground that they have been

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saved. God delights in and cares for the life that obeys the word by faith and serves the gospel together with the church.

And the climax of this passage is not a bountiful harvest or military victory, but the following word.

"I will set My tabernacle among you" (Leviticus 26:11). "I will walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people" (Leviticus 26:12).

The center of all the blessings is God dwelling together with His people. Within the gospel of the water and the Spirit, this promise leads to the remission of sins and reconciliation through Christ, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and the life of having become the people of God.

2. *"Walk in My statutes and keep My commandments"*

"If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments, and perform them" (Leviticus 26:3).

To "perform" means not to end with hearing the word of God, but actually to live according to that word.

Israel had to keep the worship and the law of sacrifice God had set, the Sabbath, the prohibition of idols, and the commandments of justice and love toward one's neighbor. The way for Israel to enjoy blessings in the land of Canaan was not to follow the fertility religions of the surrounding peoples, but to serve God alone and obey the word of the covenant.

But here the order must not be missed. Israel were not saved out of Egypt because they had kept the law well. God first saved them by the blood of the Passover lamb, liberated them from slavery to Pharaoh, and then gave them the word.

Verse 13 makes that fact clear again.

"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land

of Egypt, that you should not be their slaves"

Therefore verse 3 is not a word saying that Israel were saved out of Egypt by the merit of obedience. It is the word in which God commanded the people He had already delivered to keep and carry out His ordinances and commandments so that they might live enjoying the blessings He had promised.

It is the same in the New Testament. Obedience does not take the place of the price of the remission of sins. 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 lives according to the word of God in thanksgiving for that grace.

3. Can a human being carry out the law perfectly?

When one reads the condition of Leviticus 26, one serious question arises. It is the question, "Who indeed can keep all the ordinances and commandments of God perfectly?"

Galatians 3:10 says as follows.

"Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them"

The law does not say that it is enough to choose and keep only a few commandments. It demands that one *"continue"* in *"all things."* But human beings continually commit sin in thought, word, and deed. Therefore, before the law, there is no one who will be acknowledged as righteous by his own deeds.

Here the gospel of the water and the Spirit is needed. Jesus said as follows while receiving baptism from John.

"Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15).

With the baptism He received from John, Jesus bore all the

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sin of mankind, who had broken the law. That is why John the Baptist testified of Jesus as *"the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."*

And bearing that sin, Jesus received the curse and the judgment of the law on the Cross.

"Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us" (Galatians 3:13).

Because Jesus completed salvation by rising again from death, the person who believes receives the remission of sins not by his own perfect observance of the law, but by the righteousness Christ has accomplished.

Therefore the first obedience within the gospel is to abandon the thought, "I will become righteous by my own strength," and to believe in the word of salvation God has set.

4. Rain in its season and fruit

"Then I will give you rain in its season, the land shall yield its produce, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit" (Leviticus 26:4).

The agriculture of the land of Canaan depended greatly on rain. Rain that came too early or too late, and rain that was too much or too little, could ruin the farming. So rain that falls *"in its season"* does not simply mean that it rains, but means that God gives the needed rain at the time most suitable for the crops.

God promised that He would care for the land, the agriculture, and the livelihood of Israel. We, too, must not rely only on our own labor, but must believe in God, who gives what is needed and helps the work of serving the gospel.

But here we can discover a spiritual principle. It is the fact that fruit cannot be produced by human effort alone. Even if the

people of Israel plowed the field and sowed seed, they could not obtain fruit unless God gave rain and sunlight.

It is the same with the fruit of faith. The fruit of the Spirit cannot be produced by human resolution and will alone. Jesus said.

"He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not try to produce holy fruit by his own strength and be acknowledged by God. He first abides in Christ, and, receiving the guidance of the word and the Holy Spirit, bears the fruit of love, thanksgiving, and preaching the gospel.

5. The abundance in which threshing and the vintage follow one another

"Your threshing shall last till the time of vintage, and the vintage shall last till the time of sowing" (Leviticus 26:5).

This word means that the harvest would be so abundant that the time to gather grapes would come before the threshing of grain was finished, and the time to sow seed again would come before the vintage was finished.

In verse 10, too, the same abundance is repeated.

"You shall eat the old harvest, and clear out the old because of the new."

It means that they would clear out the old grain not because it was short, but because the harvest would be so abundant that they would need room to store the new grain. This is an actual agricultural blessing given to Israel under the old covenant.

That they would bring in *"the new"* even before they had finished eating *"the old harvest"* is the promise that God would

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give abundantly so that food would not run out.

The New Testament application lies in trusting the provision of God. God is concerned not only with the spiritual life of the saints but also with their physical needs. The saints can work honestly, not waste, receive with thanksgiving what God has given, and share it with their neighbors.

But this promise must not be changed into an unconditional guarantee of wealth applied to all believers. The saints of the New Testament, including the apostle Paul, experienced poverty, hunger, and persecution while serving the gospel faithfully. God does not prove the faith of a believer by material abundance alone.

6. *"Dwell in your land safely"*

Even with an abundant harvest, if there is no safety, one cannot enjoy that blessing. If the surrounding peoples invaded and took everything away, a bountiful harvest could rather become the object of plunder.

So God promised safety together with food.

Here the blessing the Bible speaks of is not only the increase of property. The ordinary daily life of eating one's fill, not being driven out of one's land, and living safely together with one's family is also a great grace of God.

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not regard lightly the grace of daily life God has given. Food, a dwelling place, health, the opportunity to work, family, the church community, and an environment in which one can worship in peace are all things to be thankful for.

At the same time, just because a person has lost these things, it does not necessarily mean that he has been forsaken by God.

Many saints of the New Testament lost their homes, property, and safety for the gospel, but were not cut off from the love of God.

7. The peace God gives

"I will give peace in the land, and you shall lie down, and none will make you afraid" (Leviticus 26:6).

The peace God promised includes together the state in which there is no war from outside and the state in which fear within disappears. The sword does not go through the land, the threat of evil beasts is also removed, and the people can lie down at night and rest comfortably.

In the New Testament, peace with God becomes the starting point of all peace.

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

The person whose sin has not been solved meets God as a fearful Judge. But when one believes that Jesus bore all one's sins with the baptism He received from John and was judged on the Cross, the relationship of enmity with God ends.

This is the first peace the gospel of the water and the Spirit gives. Before the peace in which there is no problem in one's circumstances comes the peace in which the relationship with God has been restored.

The peace Jesus gives is not a promise that there will be no tribulation at all either.

"In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

Even when a Christian feels fear in the midst of tribulation, he must believe the word that Jesus bore all his sins and

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judgment. Because Jesus has completed salvation and the Holy Spirit is with him, he can live boldly relying on God.

8. The victory in which five chase a hundred

"Five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight" (Leviticus 26:8).

This word is the promise that when the nation of Israel under the old covenant fought against its enemies, God would give an overwhelming victory. That a few defeat many is not because the military power of Israel is superior, but because God fights together with them.

This word cannot be used as a command that the church today may conquer its enemies by actual force. The battle of the church of the New Testament is not a war that kills people, but a battle against falsehood, sin, and the spiritual powers that hinder the gospel.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit does not depend on human numbers and strength. The gospel can be preached to many souls even through a small flock and weak people. What is important is not the number of people, but whether the gospel is the truth and whether God is with that word.

But neither must one claim on the basis of this verse, "If you have faith, you will surely win in every competition, lawsuit, and business." The victory of the New Testament does not mean only worldly success. Not abandoning faith while suffering, not yielding to falsehood, and testifying of the gospel to the end are also victory.

9. God confirms His covenant and makes them fruitful

"For I will look on you favorably and make you fruitful, multiply you and confirm My covenant with you" (Leviticus 26:9).

Here "*look on you favorably*" does not mean rebuking wrongs; in this context it means that God cares for the people and treats them graciously.

The fruitfulness of Israel was God carrying out the covenant He had made with Abraham. This is because God had promised that He would make the descendants of Abraham fruitful and give them the land.

In the New Testament, this blessing is passed on to the Gentiles as well.

"That the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" (Galatians 3:14).

The most fundamental blessing of Abraham given to the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not simply that his property increases. It is receiving the remission of sins and obtaining the righteousness of God, receiving the Holy Spirit, and becoming the people of God and children of the promise.

The true fruitfulness of the church, too, cannot be judged only by the increase of buildings, property, and numbers. That the gospel is preached rightly, that sinners receive the remission of sins, and that saved people grow in the word and serve other souls is spiritual fruitfulness.

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10. The climax of all blessings—the tabernacle and the presence of God

"I will set My tabernacle among you, and My soul shall not abhor you" (Leviticus 26:11).

The ultimate purpose for which God gives rain, food, peace, and victory is to dwell among His people.

The Tabernacle was the place where God met and spoke with His people, made atonement for sin, and walked with them among them. Therefore the greatest blessing of Leviticus 26 is not that the granaries become full, but that the holy God does not abhor the sinful people and dwells among them.

But it does not mean that God ignores sin and dwells among them. In the Tabernacle there had to be sacrifices and the blood of sacrificial offerings without fail. Only when there was the atonement in which sins passed on to the sacrificial offering and the offering was judged in their place could the holy God and the people be together.

This atonement of the Tabernacle was fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Jesus bore the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of that sin with the blood of the Cross, and rose again from death.

The Spirit, the water, and the blood testify together of this truth of salvation. In the person who has received the remission of sins by believing in this gospel, the Holy Spirit dwells.

"Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" (1 Corinthians 3:16).

11. God becomes our God and we become His people

"I will walk among you and be your God, and you shall be

My people" (Leviticus 26:12).

This word is the center of the whole of Leviticus 26. That God walks among the people means not that He only sends blessings from afar, but that He is with them directly, leads them, and protects them.

The New Testament connects this word directly with the church in which the Holy Spirit dwells.

"You are the temple of the living God. As God has said: I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (2 Corinthians 6:16).

The greatest blessing the gospel of the water and the Spirit gives is that God becomes our Father and we become the people of God.

Even with much property, if there is no God, the soul is poor. Even with success in the world, if sin has not been solved, the problem of judgment remains. Conversely, even with lack and tribulation in the world, the person who has received the remission of sins in Jesus Christ and has the Holy Spirit in him is a person who has received the most fundamental blessing.

12. God, who liberated them from being slaves of Egypt and made them stand upright

"I have broken the bands of your yoke and made you walk upright" (Leviticus 26:13).

The bands of a yoke bring to mind a tool that oppresses an animal or a slave and controls its movement. In Egypt, Israel had to bow their heads as slaves of Pharaoh and bear heavy burdens.

But God broke that yoke. That He "made you walk upright" means, beyond merely letting them rest from labor, that He restored to them the dignity befitting the people of God, freed

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from the oppression and fear of slavery.

The gospel, too, liberates people from the yoke of sin. A sinner cannot lift his head under guilt and the fear of judgment. He tries countless times to remove his sins, but sin keeps condemning his heart.

But when one believes that Jesus bore all sins with the baptism He received from John and paid the price on the Cross, the yoke of sin is broken. The saved person does not walk proudly putting forward his own righteousness, but stands upright boldly before God, believing in the righteousness of Christ.

13. The reason this word cannot be made into a 'prosperity formula'

The rain, the bountiful harvest, the safety, and the military victory of Leviticus 26 are the blessings of the covenant given to the nation of Israel living in the land of Canaan. If these are applied without any distinction to the individual believer of today, one can fall into the following errors.

"If you are poor, you have not obeyed."

"If you are sick, you have a hidden sin."

"If your business fails, you have no faith."

"If you are rich and healthy, God has approved of you."

But the New Testament does not speak so simply. Concerning the man who had been blind from birth, Jesus said.

"Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him" (John 9:3).

It also says that *"all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution"* (2 Timothy 3:12). Jesus obeyed the will of God completely, but He was rejected and suffered. The

apostles, too, went through poverty and persecution while preaching the gospel.

Of course, certain sins and foolish choices can bring actual suffering, and there are times when God disciplines the saints to turn them back. But not every sickness, poverty, and accident can be concluded to be a punishment for the disobedience of a particular individual.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is the word saying that after bearing all our sins with the baptism He received from John, Jesus received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, rose again from death, and completed salvation. We must preach this gospel, care for those who suffer, and rely on God together.

14. Then do obedience and the blessings of life have nothing to do with each other?

It is not so. The life that obeys the word of God actually bears good fruit.

If one works honestly, the possibility of gaining trust grows, and if one restrains greed, one can avoid needless ruin. If one keeps away from drunkenness and violence, one can protect one's family and health, and if one practices love and forgiveness, peace arises in the community. Faithful labor and wise management help to stabilize one's living.

God cares for the actual lives of the saints and meets their needs, and sometimes provides special material help and health and opens ways. We must receive these with thanksgiving.

But obedience must not be made into a transaction for getting material success from God. The purpose of obedience is not to become rich, but to love God and accomplish His will.

The saints must believe in God, who does not forsake them

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even in the midst of suffering. Also, they must not think that since they have been saved, it is all right to live in any way, but must serve the gospel together with the church, receiving the guidance of the word. To live this way is to believe that God cares for and blesses that life.

15. The blessings that appear in the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit

When this text is applied within the gospel, it is as follows.

First, one is redeemed from the curse of the law. Because Jesus bore our sins and our curse, the person who believes is liberated from condemnation.

Second, one enjoys peace with God. Before peace in one's circumstances, the relationship of enmity with God ends.

Third, the Holy Spirit dwells in one's heart. Like the Tabernacle of the Old Testament, the saints who have received the remission of sins and the church become the dwelling place of God.

Fourth, one bears fruit by the word and the Holy Spirit. The fruit of love and service, of preaching the gospel and of thanksgiving appears.

Fifth, one escapes from the yoke of sin and fear. One is liberated from the religious bondage of trying to accomplish salvation by one's own merit, and stands upright believing in the righteousness of Christ.

Sixth, even in the midst of tribulation, one enjoys the peace of God being with one. This is not because all worldly problems have disappeared, but because salvation has been completed and God does not forsake His people.

16. The final fulfillment is in the kingdom of God

The rain, the bountiful harvest, the peace, and the tabernacle of God of Leviticus 26 make us look toward the kingdom of God that will be completed in the future.

Revelation 21:3 declares as follows.

"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 and be their God"

At that time there will be no more death, sorrow, crying, or pain. The abundance, the safety, and the presence of God that were promised partially in Leviticus are fulfilled completely in the new heaven and the new earth.

At present the saints have already received the remission of sins and the presence of the Holy Spirit, but the suffering of the body and the tribulation of the world still remain. When the Lord comes again, the saints who have died will rise again from death and the saints who are alive will also be changed, and they will fully enjoy even the redemption of the body.

Conclusion

Leviticus 26:3–13 is the word in which God promised Israel rain in its season, an abundant harvest, safety and peace, victory over enemies, and fruitfulness. But the center of all these blessings is that God sets His tabernacle among them and becomes their God.

Because human beings cannot keep all the ordinances and commandments of God perfectly, they were placed under the curse of the law. But Jesus bore all sins with the baptism He received from John, received the curse of the law on the Cross,

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and saved us by rising again from death. The person who believes in this gospel of the water and the blood receives the remission of sins and the promise of the Holy Spirit.

Therefore the greatest blessing of the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not necessarily becoming rich and healthy. It is that the yoke of sin is broken, that one enjoys peace with God, that the Holy Spirit dwells in one, and that one becomes the people of God and bears the fruit of the word.

God cares for our physical needs as well. But the saints are not people who obey God in order to obtain material blessings, but people who follow God in thanksgiving because they have already received the greatest blessing in Christ.

The climax of blessing is not many possessions, but that God dwells among us and we become the people of God.

Leviticus 26:14–20—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The context of Leviticus 26:14–20

Leviticus 26 contrasts the blessings and the discipline of the covenant God made with Israel. In verses 3–13 appear the rain and bountiful harvest, the peace and victory, the fruitfulness and the presence of God that He gives when they obey, but from verse 14 onward, the covenant discipline Israel would receive when they rejected God is recorded.

Therefore the disasters of verses 14–20 are not a punishment brought down immediately on a person who has made a mistake

once. They are a warning against the continued rebellion of not listening even though God speaks repeatedly, despising that word, and finally betraying the covenant.

2. The meaning of not heeding

Verse 14 speaks of disobedience as follows.

"But if you do not obey Me, and do not observe all these commandments,"

To 'obey' does not mean simply hearing with the ears. It is accepting the word of God as the word God has spoken, and obeying it by faith. Therefore not obeying is a deeper problem than stumbling once because one did not know the word. It is the attitude of hearing the word and yet not accepting it in the heart, and putting one's own thoughts and desires ahead of the word of God.

Verse 15 shows step by step how that disobedience deepens.

"And if you despise My statutes, or if your soul abhors My judgments, so that you do not perform all My commandments, but break My covenant,"

Disobedience generally proceeds in the following direction.

—One does not listen to the word of God.

—One does not put the word into action.

—One begins to regard the ordinances of God lightly.

—Finally one abhors the judgments of God in the heart.

—As a result, one breaks the covenant made with God.

Therefore the core of sin does not lie only in breaking a few outward regulations. It lies in abhorring God in the heart, and in making oneself master and rejecting the rule of God.

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, too, must examine himself before this word. Having

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received the remission of sins does not mean that one may now ignore the word of God. Paul says as follows.

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?" (Romans 6:1–2).

The gospel is not a word that permits sin, but the word that delivers us from sin and death and makes us belong to God.

3. Disease and labor in vain—the blessings of the covenant are reversed

Verse 16 speaks of the first result of disobedience.

"I also will do this to you: I will even appoint terror over you, wasting disease and fever which shall consume the eyes and cause sorrow of heart. And you shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it."

This is the reversed form of the blessings of verses 3–5. When they obey, the land yields its produce and grain is abundant, but if they break the covenant, even though they sow seed and labor, their enemies take the fruit from them.

The wasting disease and fever that appear in the text are actual diseases of the body, and the failure of sowing is also an actual disaster of agriculture and livelihood. While letting Israel live in the land of Canaan, God used rain and farming, health and safety as signs of the covenant. This is a realistic warning given to the community of Israel. We who have been saved, too, must accept it as a warning that if we live going against the will of God and following only our own greed, God disciplines that life.

One must not apply this word as it is to every individual today and judge, "You have fallen sick, so you have been cursed

by God," or "Your business has failed, so you have a hidden sin." Concerning the man who was blind from birth, Jesus said as follows.

"Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him" (John 9:3).

Not every disease or failure is a direct punishment for a particular sin of an individual. Disease has natural causes as well, suffering also has the purpose of revealing the work of God, and there is also tribulation that the righteous receive because they live by faith.

Therefore one must not think that on the ground of having received the remission of sins, one may leave God and live following only one's own greed. God also rules over the actual lives of the saints. We must believe in the grace by which He has saved us, and set our hearts on the work of serving the gospel, which pleases God.

4. Defeat and groundless fear

Verse 17 speaks of the second discipline.

"I will set My face against you, and you shall be defeated by your enemies. Those who hate you shall reign over you, and you shall flee when no one pursues you."

In verses 3–8 He said that Israel would defeat their enemies and dwell in peace without fear. But if they betray God, the opposite happens.

—They are defeated by their enemies.

—They are ruled by those who hate them.

—They flee in fear even though no one is actually pursuing them.

The word "you shall flee when no one pursues you" shows

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that not only outward safety is lost, but even inner boldness disappears. When the person who relied on his own strength rather than on God loses that strength, he comes to fear even a small sound.

But one must not apply this verse directly to a person who suffers from anxiety or panic today and condemn him, saying, "It is because of a hidden sin." Anxiety can have physical and psychological causes as well. The core of the text does not lie in diagnosing a particular disease, but in the fact that a human being who has left God cannot obtain true peace by his own strength alone.

True peace is not obtained by the stability of one's circumstances alone; it is given when the problem of sin and judgment has been solved and one is reconciled with God.

5. *"Punish you seven times more"*—the discipline in stages that leads them to return

Verse 18 says as follows.

"And after all this, if you do not obey Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins."

The important expression here is *"after all this."* It speaks of the situation in which Israel do not turn back even though God has disciplined them. Therefore the stronger discipline that follows is not anger without reason, but discipline brought down on a people who continue to disobey the word of God.

God said that He would punish the people who do not obey seven times more for their sins. One must not regard lightly the matter of resisting God and holding out even after receiving discipline, but must acknowledge one's wrong and turn back.

Here, together with the severity of judgment, is also

contained the intent that they should return to God. If God had no concern at all, He would not warn or discipline, but leave them as they are. But that He continually says, "Obey," is because He waits for them to turn back.

6. God, who breaks pride

Verse 19 reveals the central purpose of the discipline.

"I will break the pride of your power; I will make your heavens like iron and your earth like bronze."

Israel could think that they had obtained their abundance, military power, and the produce of the land by their own ability. But the rain, the land, and life were all given by God. God said that when they boasted of their own strength and forgot God, He would break that *"pride of your power."*

That the heavens are like iron and the earth like bronze expresses the state in which rain does not fall and the ground hardens so that farming fails. It shows the fact that although a person labors with all his might, he cannot produce the fruit of life unless the Creator permits.

Verse 20 speaks of the result as follows.

"And your strength shall be spent in vain; for your land shall not yield its produce, nor shall the trees of the land yield their fruit."

The goal of discipline is not merely to take away possessions, but to break down the pride that says, "I can do anything by my own strength." God wants a person to realize who he is and return to God when what he relied on collapses.

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7. Jesus Christ, who bore this curse

Before the warning of Leviticus 26, no human being can say confidently, "I have obeyed every word of God completely." Galatians 3:10 declares that the one who does not continue in all the law is under the curse.

But the gospel does not demand that we solve that curse by ourselves.

"Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree')" (Galatians 3:13).

Jesus first fulfilled the righteousness of God by receiving baptism from John.

"Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15).

The baptism Jesus received from John is the event in which the sinless Son of God bore all the sins of sinners. That is why John the Baptist testified, pointing to Jesus, as follows.

"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. There He received in our place death, the wages of sin, and the curse of the law, and by rising again from death He gave us new life.

The core of the curse that appears in Leviticus 26 is the wasting away of life, labor in vain, the rule of enemies, fear, and death. Jesus Himself bore that very curse and judgment of sin. Therefore the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a person who avoids the curse by his own deeds, but a person who has been redeemed from the curse of the law by believing in the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross.

The result is as follows.

"That the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" (Galatians 3:14).

Because Jesus received in our place the punishment of sin that we had to receive, the person who believes in this salvation receives the remission of sins and is justified before God. This is the salvation given to us through the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

8. How do condemnation and discipline differ for the saints in Christ?

This part must be distinguished clearly.

—Condemnation has ended

"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:1–2).

Because Jesus completely bore the price of sin of the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, God does not demand the price of sin from that person again. The suffering the saints receive is not a second punishment for completing the remission of sins. The atonement of Jesus is complete.

—But there is the discipline of the Father. Hebrews 12 says that God disciplines those He loves, and that its purpose is *"for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness."* 1 Corinthians 11:32 also explains as follows.

"But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world."

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Condemnation is bringing punishment on a sinner so that he perishes, but discipline is correcting a child so that he lives. Condemnation demands the price of sin, but discipline leads a child who has already been saved to return from a wrong way. It does not mean that even if a person who has received the remission of sins lives in disobedience, there is no discipline at all in his life.

Therefore, when the saints meet difficulty, they must think of two things together.

—One must not be unconditionally discouraged, saying, "God has cursed me."

—Nor must one attribute everything only to chance without examining one's own wrongs before the word.

One must examine one's life before the word, but without falling into groundless condemnation, and return to God within the gospel.

9. The practical lesson for the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit

First, one must not regard the word of God lightly. Salvation is not a reward for works, but the saved person loves and wants to follow the will of God, who has saved him.

Second, one must not make the remission of sins the ground of licentiousness. The thought, "I have no sin, so I may live as I please," is not faith that has come from the gospel, but the thought of the flesh. The gospel moves us from being slaves of sin to being children of God.

Third, one must abandon the pride of relying on one's own strength. Talents, property, health, and the fruit of one's work, too, are what God has granted. The person who believes in the

gospel of the water and the Spirit does not boast, "I achieved it," but acknowledges the grace of God.

Fourth, when receiving discipline, one must not resist God all the more. The problem in verse 18 lies not so much in the fact of having received discipline as in not having obeyed *"after all this."* In the midst of difficulty, rather than asking only, "Why has this happened to me?" one must examine, "What is the word God is speaking to me now?"

Fifth, one must not carelessly declare a curse on seeing the suffering of others. Human beings have no authority to judge anyone a cursed person on the basis of a particular disease or failure. Rather than condemning those who suffer, we must care for them, comfort them, and, if necessary, help them receive medical help.

Sixth, the life of serving the gospel is not labor done by compulsion out of fear of a curse. Because we believe in the grace by which Jesus bore our curse, we serve the will of God and the gospel in thanksgiving.

Conclusion

Leviticus 26:14–20 is a severe warning that a life that keeps rejecting God ends up losing life, peace, and fruit. Human beings cannot produce a blessed life by their own strength while rejecting the word of God.

But the final conclusion of this word is not to shut the saints up under the curse again. Jesus bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John, received the curse and the judgment of the law on the Cross, and saved us by rising again from death.

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit believes the word that Jesus has already borne the

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judgment of sin. But that does not mean that God leaves even a life of disobedience as it is. One must fear God and listen to the word, and when one has done wrong, acknowledge it, turn back, and serve the gospel together with the church. That is not merit for newly obtaining the remission of sins, but the life of faith the saved saints must live.

The core of what this text asks us is this.

It is not, “Do I have no difficulty at all?” but, “Am I listening to the word of God, or am I rejecting the will of God with grace as an excuse?”

Leviticus 26:21–26—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The position and flow of Leviticus 26:21–26

The discipline of Leviticus 26 does not proceed to the final stage all at once. God first warns, and if the people do not turn back, He intensifies the discipline.

—Verses 14–17: disease, failure of farming, defeat by enemies

—Verses 18–20: drought and labor in vain

—Verses 21–22: wild beasts and decrease of population, desolation of the roads

—Verses 23–26: war, pestilence, captivity, and severe shortage of food

In this repetition, what is most important is not the kind of disaster, but the stubbornness of the people, who “even after all this do not return.” What God wants is not the destruction of the

people itself, but that they stop their rebellion and return to God.

2. *"Walk contrary to Me"*—not a mistake but resistance against God

Verse 21 says like this.

"Then, if you walk contrary to Me, and are not willing to obey Me, I will bring on you seven times more plagues, according to your sins."

Here the words *"walk contrary to Me"* do not mean simply having stumbled once out of weakness. It is the attitude of not accepting the word of God even after receiving discipline before, and continuing to resist God.

The repeated problem of Leviticus 26 is as follows.

—They do not listen to the word of God.

—Even when they receive discipline, they do not look back on themselves.

—They do not return to God.

—Rather, they resist God.

Therefore what God takes issue with is not the fact itself that human beings have weaknesses. It is the stubbornness of insisting on one's own thoughts and desires to the end even though God speaks and awakens them.

To *"obey"* is to hear the word, acknowledge that that word is right, and follow it by faith. On the other hand, to 'walk contrary' is to exalt one's own judgment above the word of God. At the deep root of sin is the pride that says, "I decide my own life, and God cannot interfere."

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3. *"According to your sins"* and *"seven times more plagues"*

In verse 21 God says that He will bring plagues *"according to your sins."* This shows that the discipline of God is not capricious anger, but a righteous response to the sin of having broken the covenant.

Once again the warning appears that He will bring *"seven times more"* plagues. It means that He will discipline more heavily the attitude of not returning to God even after receiving the previous discipline.

But the fact that God does not bring the strongest disaster from the beginning is also important. He warns and waits, speaks again, and gives an opportunity to turn back. That the discipline intensifies in stages is the result of continually rejecting the longsuffering of God.

Therefore in the wrath of God there is not only righteousness; the patience that waits for them to turn back also appears together with it. But that patience must not be mistaken for the indifference of God.

4. Wild beasts, the loss of children and livestock, and the desolation of the roads

Verse 22 says as follows.

"I will also send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children, destroy your livestock, and make you few in number; and your highways shall be desolate."

This word is first of all an actual covenant discipline given to Israel, who dwelt in the land of Canaan. At that time wild beasts were a real danger that threatened life and livestock.

That people and livestock decrease through wild beasts and that traffic on the roads is cut off is a disaster in which the life of the people collapses. Before this word, the saints, too, must know that God is the One who keeps their life and their living, and follow His will.

The result of the discipline appears in four directions.

—They lose their children.

—They lose their livestock, their means of livelihood.

—The population of the community decreases.

—The roads people traveled become desolate.

The words *"your highways shall be desolate"* do not mean only that the roads are not maintained. They show the state in which the coming and going of people, trade, and the life of the community collapse, so that there is no one traveling the roads.

In 26:6 God promised that when they obeyed, He would rid the land of wild beasts. But in verse 22 that protection is withdrawn. The state of blessing has been reversed.

This word also shows the fact that sin does not end only in the heart of an individual. If one generation disobeys God, destructive results can reach even to the children and the family, the economic life, and the whole community. This must not be concluded in the form that every suffering of a child is because of a particular sin of the parents, but the principle that human sin leaves actual wounds on other people and the next generation is clear.

5. What is more fearful than calamity is the heart that does not return

Verse 23 is the center of this passage.

"And if by these things you are not reformed by Me, but walk

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contrary to Me,"

What is most fearful here, more than wild beasts or war, is the heart that does not return to God even after suffering all those things.

Suffering does not automatically make a person repent. Going through the same suffering, some people realize their pride and return to God, but others become even more stubborn in heart and resent and resist God.

Therefore it is not suffering itself that changes a person. Even in the midst of suffering, one must hear the word of God, acknowledge one's wrong, and turn back. Only by believing and following that word can one return to a right life.

To return to God is not merely to ask that one's circumstances improve. It is to lay down what one has loved and relied on more than God, and to acknowledge that the word of God is right. It is to abandon one's own righteousness and obstinacy and accept the way of salvation God has prepared.

6. *"I also will walk contrary to you"*

Verse 24 is very severe.

"Then I also will walk contrary to you, and I will punish you yet seven times for your sins."

If the people keep resisting God, God says that He too will walk contrary to them. The expression *"I also"* emphasizes that this matter is not merely an accidental natural disaster or a change in the international situation, but a matter God, the Lord of the covenant, rules directly.

When God walks contrary to them, they cannot win by human wisdom and strength. Even if they avoid the wild beasts, raise the walls higher, and store up food, human beings cannot

restore by themselves the protection God has withdrawn.

This is also a warning that God must not be made a means for accomplishing human purposes. A person may say that he believes in God while in reality loving his own success and safety more. If he follows God when He gives what he wants, but turns his back on God when things do not go as he wishes, he has served not God but his own desires.

7. "*Execute the vengeance of the covenant*"—the seriousness of breaking the covenant

Verse 25 says as follows.

"And I will bring a sword against you that will execute the vengeance of the covenant; when you are gathered together within your cities I will send pestilence among you; and you shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy."

"The vengeance of the covenant" refers to the vengeance for their having broken the covenant. Israel were not a people who had no relationship with God. God had saved them out of Egypt and made them His people, but they served idols and betrayed the covenant they had made with God.

Here *"a sword"* refers to the invasion of enemies and the disaster of war. Even if the people gather in their cities, they cannot avoid by their own strength the judgment God brings.

—Outside the city is the sword of war.

—Inside the city is pestilence.

—In the end they are delivered into the hand of the enemy.

God said that even if the people gathered in their cities, He would send pestilence and deliver them into the hand of the enemy. Just because one takes refuge inside the walls, one cannot avoid the discipline of God.

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These four judgments appear together in Ezekiel 14:21 as well, as *"the sword and famine and wild beasts and pestilence."* This was the form of judgment that came upon the whole community when Israel continually betrayed the covenant.

8. The supply of bread is cut off, and they eat and are not satisfied

Verse 26 shows the famine that follows war and pestilence.

"When I have cut off your supply of bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and they shall bring back your bread by weight, and you shall eat and not be satisfied."

When food becomes seriously short, the bread to bake becomes so little that ten women may use one oven together.

That bread is given *"by weight"* means that food has become so short that it is rationed. One cannot eat as much as one wants, but can receive only a fixed, very small amount.

The text speaks of the disaster in which the people actually starve through war and food shortage. One must know that a person's livelihood depends on God and follow His word.

At the same time, the expression *"your supply of bread"* also reveals the fact that human beings live depending on God every day. People sow seed and make bread, but that grain grows and life is sustained is the grace of God. In ordinary times it is easy to take that grace for granted, but when the supply of bread is cut off, it is revealed how weak a being a human is.

9. Can human beings escape from all these curses by themselves?

Before the word of Leviticus 26, human beings cannot boast of their own obedience. There is no one who can keep the word God has given perfectly and avoid the curse.

The fundamental problem of human beings is not their circumstances but sin. Avoiding war, treating disease, and securing food are also important, but with those alone the problem of the sin of resisting God is not solved.

The only One who can save human beings from the curse caused by sin is Jesus Christ.

"Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree')" (Galatians 3:13).

Jesus had no sin to be cursed for. That He nevertheless received the curse in our place was because He had borne all our sins.

10. The solution of the curse seen through the gospel of the water and the Spirit

When Jesus received baptism from John, He said as follows.

"Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15).

The baptism Jesus received from John is the event in which the sinless Son of God bore in His own body all the sins of the world. 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, who bore the sin of the world in this way, received the

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curse and the punishment of sin by shedding His blood on the Cross. And by rising again from death, He overcame sin and death and gave new life to those who believe.

To believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is to believe together in the following work of salvation.

—The incarnation of Jesus

—Jesus bearing the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John

—His receiving the judgment and the curse of sin by shedding His blood on the Cross

—His rising again from death

—His giving the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit to those who believe in this gospel

In Leviticus 26 the sinner was one who resisted God, and God also walked contrary to him. But because Jesus received in the sinner's place the curse the sinner had to receive, the person who believes has been reconciled with God.

Galatians 3:14 speaks of the result as follows.

"That the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

Jesus received our curse, and we have received righteousness, life, and the promise of the Holy Spirit by faith.

11. "*Eat and not be satisfied*" and the bread of life

Verse 26 speaks of an actual famine in which physical food is cut off. But this also makes one think of the fact that human beings need the food of life, which is more fundamental than physical bread.

Jesus said as follows.

"And Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst" (John 6:35).

Physical food is needed every day, but with that alone one cannot obtain eternal life. Jesus is the bread of life, who gives us eternal life.

No matter how much of what is in the world one obtains, if one does not obtain the remission of sins and eternal life, the soul cannot be satisfied. Conversely, the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit obtains the satisfaction of eternal life in Jesus Christ even in lacking circumstances.

That does not mean, however, that the gospel makes one ignore hunger. The person who believes in Jesus, the bread of life, must live a life of sharing actual food with the hungry and helping the victims of war and disaster.

12. Curse and discipline must be distinguished for the saints

For the person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, there is no longer condemnation as the punishment of sin.

"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:1–2).

Because Jesus completely bore our curse, it is not that God demands the price of sin from the saints again. The disease or economic difficulty the saints suffer must not be interpreted as "receiving the remaining price of sin because the atonement of

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Jesus was insufficient."

But for the saved saints there can be the discipline and training of God. Its purpose is not condemnation and destruction, but holiness and restoration.

"He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness" (Hebrews 12:10).

Therefore the warning of Leviticus must not be overlooked as a word unrelated to the life of the saved saints. At the same time, the saints receiving discipline must not be understood as paying the price of sin again because the atonement of Jesus was insufficient.

—The curse of the covenant shows the righteous punishment for sin.

—Christ bore that curse on the Cross.

—The discipline given to the saints is not a punishment that makes them receive the price of sin again.

—It is the training of love that makes the children of God return from a wrong way.

13. One must not carelessly judge a person who has suffered disaster to be a sinner

This is the part that requires the most care when applying this word. Seeing people who have suffered war, pestilence, or famine, one must not say, "Those people have many sins, so they have been cursed."

Jesus said that the people who died in an accident did not have more sins than others. And He said that instead of judging others, all people must examine themselves.

"I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3).

What one must do when seeing disaster is not to condemn the victims.

—One must realize the fact that human life is weak.

—One must examine whether one is oneself disobeying the word of God.

—If one has not yet received the remission of sins, one must believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. If one has already received the remission of sins, one must rely on that grace and turn from a wrong life.

—One must have compassion on those who suffer and actually help them.

Human beings cannot judge in every case what disaster has happened to whom and why. In particular, a leader or a preacher has no authority to declare, on the basis of an individual's disease or failure, that the curse of God has come upon that person.

14. The lesson for the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit today

First, one must not regard the warning of God lightly. The fact that one has received the remission of sins is not a permit to ignore the word of God.

Second, when meeting difficulty, one must first examine oneself before God. But one must not conclude that every difficulty is a punishment for a hidden sin, or fall into a sense of condemnation.

Third, if one has realized one's wrong, one must not hold out stubbornly but return. The most serious sin in the text is, more than stumbling, not returning to God *"by these things."*

Fourth, one must not rely on one's own ability and material

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things. Food and safety, health and life are things human beings cannot guarantee forever by themselves.

Fifth, repentance is not self-punishment. It is not paying the price of sin by shedding many tears or by ascetic practices, but acknowledging one's wrong and looking again by faith at the salvation Jesus completed with the baptism He received from John and the Cross.

Sixth, the person who believes in the gospel must help those who have suffered disaster. One must not stop at explaining war, disease, and hunger only theologically, but must treat, feed, protect, and preach the gospel.

Conclusion

The core of Leviticus 26:21–26 does not lie in God enjoying cruel disasters. It lies in the fact that although God continually warned, the people did not return but rather resisted God.

As a result, wild beasts and war, pestilence and famine come, and the community collapses. This shows the fact that the end of sin and of a life that has left God is not life and peace, but death and desolation.

But the gospel of the water and the Spirit preaches to us the way to escape from this curse. Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John, received the curse and the judgment of the law on the Cross in our place, and rose again from death.

Therefore the person who believes in this gospel is no longer under curse and condemnation. Yet neither does he change grace into licentiousness. In thanksgiving for the love that has saved him, he listens to the word, and when he has done wrong, he does not stubbornly resist God, but returns with the faith of the

gospel.

Before this warning, one must not judge only the circumstances of others, but must ask oneself.

It is, “When God speaks, do I listen, and when He tells me to turn back, do I believe in the gospel and return to God?”

Leviticus 26:27–33—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 Leviticus 26:27–33

This passage is the climax of the covenant discipline recorded in Leviticus 26. Before it, disease and the failure of farming, defeat by enemies, wild beasts and pestilence, and shortage of food were warned of. If Israel still do not return to God, they finally come to the horror of siege, the destruction of idols, the desolation of the sanctuary and the cities, and being scattered among the nations.

But the purpose of this word does not lie in emphasizing cruel scenes. It shows how serious the sin of not listening to the end and resisting is, even though God has warned repeatedly, and at the same time it reveals how great the grace of Jesus Christ is, who saves sinners from this curse.

2. “*After all this*”—stubbornness more serious than discipline

Verse 27 says like this.

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"And after all this, if you do not obey Me, but walk contrary to Me,"

The expression *"after all this"* is important. God warns that if Israel do not return even after receiving discipline several times, He will discipline them more heavily. Yet the stubbornness of resisting God is the problem.

Here three stages of stubbornness appear.

—They do not listen to the word of God.

—Even when they receive discipline, they do not turn back.

—Finally they resist God.

Therefore the core problem of the text is not the fact that a person has stumbled out of weakness. It is the heart that does not acknowledge its own wrong and is hostile to God even though God keeps speaking.

To *"obey"* does not simply mean having heard the word. It is acknowledging that the word of God is right, accepting it in the heart, and following it by faith. Conversely, to resist God is to exalt one's own thoughts and desires above the word of God.

Suffering does not automatically make a person repent. If one hears the word in the midst of suffering, the heart is humbled, but if one rejects the word, one may rather resent God and the heart may become even more stubborn.

3. *"Walk contrary to you in fury"*

Verse 28 says as follows.

"Then I also will walk contrary to you in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins."

When the people keep resisting God, God says that He too will walk contrary to them. This does not mean that God explodes emotionally. It means that the holy and righteous God

judges the sin of having betrayed the covenant.

The word *"for your sins"* shows that there is a clear reason for the wrath of God. God is not One who capriciously torments a person who has no sin. The people served idols, despised the judgments of God, and did not return even after repeated warnings.

God said that He would chastise the people who kept resisting seven times more for their sins. The more this warning is repeated, the more the severe judgment is revealed in which even the food, the cities, and the sanctuary the people relied on collapse.

—Health collapses.

—Farming and livelihood collapse.

—Military safety collapses.

—Family and community collapse.

—The sanctuary and the cities collapse.

—Finally they are driven out of the land.

Everything they relied on more than God collapses.

4. The horror of siege in which they eat the flesh of their children

Verse 29 is one of the most terrible warnings in the Bible.

"You shall eat the flesh of your sons, and you shall eat the flesh of your daughters."

This is a warning of the actual horror that happens when an enemy army besieges a city for a long time and food is completely cut off.

It is not that God commanded parents to eat their children. He warned that upon the people who betrayed the covenant to the end, war and famine would come, and an extreme situation

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would come in which society and humanity would completely collapse.

The same warning appears in Deuteronomy 28:53 as well.

"You shall eat the fruit of your own body, the flesh of your sons and your daughters whom the LORD your God has given you, in the siege and desperate straits in which your enemy shall distress you."

Sadly, this warning actually happened in the history of Israel. 2 Kings 6:28–29 records that when Samaria was besieged, a woman boiled and ate her own son. When Jerusalem fell, too, there was the following horror.

"The hands of the compassionate women have cooked their own children; they became food for them in the destruction of the daughter of my people" (Lamentations 4:10).

This word shows the fact that when human beings leave God, it does not end merely with losing religious blessings. Sin destroys human relationships and the community, and finally brings people to a state in which they cannot live as human beings.

But this verse must not be applied mechanically to families today whose children go through difficulty. The disease or accident of a child cannot be concluded to be a curse for a particular sin of the parents. The text speaks first of all of the historical judgment the community of Israel under the old covenant would suffer through war and siege.

5. The reason God breaks down the high places and the idols

Verse 30 shows that the judgment is directed at the center of idolatry.

"I will destroy your high places, cut down your incense altars, and cast your carcasses on the lifeless forms of your idols; and My soul shall abhor you."

Israel abandoned God, who had saved them out of Egypt, and served the idols and high places of the Canaanite peoples. God says that He will completely break down the idols they relied on.

That their carcasses are cast on the destroyed idols is a very shameful scene. This reveals the fact that the idols they relied on have no ability at all to save them.

—Idols cannot protect them in war.

—Idols cannot give food in famine.

—Idols cannot save life from death.

—Idols themselves also collapse in the face of the judgment of God.

The person who has left God makes other objects he thinks will protect him. Money and power, family and nation, religious organizations, and even one's own good deeds can become idols if one relies on them more than on God.

God breaks down idols because they are false refuges that cannot give life. While a person is holding on to idols, it is hard for him to acknowledge his own inability and his need for God.

6. *"My soul shall abhor you"*

This word is the exact opposite of the blessing that appears in 26:11.

"I will set My tabernacle among you, and My soul shall not abhor you."

In the place of obedience God dwells among the people, but in the place of betraying the covenant and serving idols, God rejects their false worship.

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The words *"My soul shall abhor you"* do not mean that the feelings of God change capriciously. It is a declaration of judgment that God rejects sin and idolatry by His holiness, and will no longer share the covenant fellowship as before with a people who do not repent.

That does not mean, however, that He has forsaken Israel completely and forever. In verse 44 of the same chapter, God says as follows.

"Yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, nor shall I abhor them, to utterly destroy them and break My covenant with them; for I am the LORD their God."

Therefore the rejection in verse 30 is a holy judgment on sin and idolatry, but it does not mean that even the covenant faithfulness of God has disappeared. Behind the discipline remains the will of God, who waits for confession and restoration.

7. The reason God does not receive incense even though there is a sanctuary

Verse 31 says like this.

"I will lay your cities waste and bring your sanctuaries to desolation, and I will not smell the fragrance of your sweet aromas."

Israel could think that if they offered sacrifices and incense, they would be safe even while disobeying God. But God does not receive worship that hides disobedience on the ground that sacrifices are offered in the sanctuary.

The sacrifice itself is not magic that moves God. In the sacrifice God had set were contained the meanings of

acknowledging sin, passing sins on to the offering, receiving atonement through the shedding of blood, and believing in God. But the people maintained only the outward form of sacrifice while resisting God.

In Isaiah 1:13, too, God said as follows.

"Bring no more futile sacrifices; incense is an abomination to Me. The New Moons, the Sabbaths, and the calling of assemblies—I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting."

The ceremony of worship cannot take the place of repentance and faith. Just because one attends church, gives offerings, serves, and says many religious words, the sin of a heart that does not believe in the gospel does not disappear.

What God receives is not worship in which human beings put forward their own righteousness, but worship offered by believing in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, whom God sent.

8. The desolation of the cities and the land

Verses 32–33 speak of the result of the judgment.

"I will bring the land to desolation, and your enemies who dwell in it shall be astonished at it. I will scatter you among the nations and draw out a sword after you; your land shall be desolate and your cities waste."

This is not merely a matter of farming going badly for a while. It foretells the life of captivity in which Israel are driven out of the promised land and scattered among the nations.

The discipline of Leviticus 26 proceeds in the following order.

—The produce of the land decreases.

—They are defeated by their enemies.

—War, pestilence, and famine come.

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—The cities and the sanctuary are destroyed.

—The people are scattered among the nations.

—The land becomes desolate.

This word appeared historically, in particular, in the captivity by Assyria and Babylon. 2 Chronicles 36 records that the army of Babylon burned the house of God and Jerusalem, carried away the survivors into captivity, and that the land lay desolate and enjoyed its sabbaths.

Because they rejected God in the land God had given, they lost the privilege they had enjoyed in that land. The land was not an absolute possession Israel had acquired by themselves, but a gift God had entrusted to them within the covenant.

9. This word must not be used to condemn the Jewish people

Just because the curse of Leviticus 26 was actually fulfilled in the history of Israel, one must not say that all the persecution and massacres the Jews suffered afterward were the just judgment of God.

That human beings persecuted and massacred another people is the sin of the perpetrators. It cannot be justified by the words "the judgment of God." In particular, this text is not a word that supports anti-Semitism or ethnic superiority.

The apostle Paul said as follows.

"Has God cast away His people? Certainly not!" (Romans 11:1).

Leviticus 26 itself also says, from verse 40 on, that when Israel confess their sins, God will remember the covenant He established with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Therefore the Christian who reads this text must not point a

finger at Israel, but must discover his own sin of having disobeyed God in the same way. This is because the Gentiles, too, were saved not by their own righteousness but only by the mercy of God.

10. All human beings under the curse of the law

The word of Leviticus 26 was given historically to Israel, but the principle of sin and judgment revealed in it applies to all human beings.

Human beings have not obeyed the word of God completely. They loved themselves more than God, relied on created things, and tried to cover their sins with religious acts. Therefore no one can avoid the judgment of God by his own righteousness.

The way for a sinner to escape from the curse of the law is not to keep the commandments more diligently and thereby make up for past sins. The tears, good deeds, and ascetic practices that human beings put forward as their own merit cannot remove the sins already committed either.

The only One who can save from this curse is Jesus Christ.

11. Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John

When Jesus received baptism from John, He said as follows.

"Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15).

The baptism Jesus received from John is the event in which the sinless Son of God bore in His own body all the sins of the world. That is why John the Baptist testified, pointing to Jesus.

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"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).

Just as in the Old Testament the sacrificial offering had sins passed on to it and then died shedding its blood, Jesus bore the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John and went to the Cross.

The source of all the curses that appear in Leviticus 26 is sin. Therefore, in order for Jesus to save us from that curse, He first had to bear our sins. That work was accomplished through the baptism Jesus received from John.

12. He bore the curse and the judgment on the Cross

Jesus was hung on the Cross bearing the sin of the world, which He had borne with the baptism He received from John.

"Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree')" (Galatians 3:13).

In Leviticus 26, what the sinner had to receive was wrath and death, being forsaken and shame. Jesus bore that very judgment of sin in the sinner's place on the Cross.

The curse we had to receive came upon Jesus, and the righteousness of Jesus was given to us who believe. And Jesus overcame sin and death by rising again from death.

Therefore the gospel of the water and the Spirit testifies of the following work of salvation.

—Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John.

—He received the punishment of sin and the curse of the law by shedding His blood on the Cross.

—By rising again from death, He gave us new life.

—The person who believes this fact receives the remission of sins and the promise of the Holy Spirit.

13. The rejected old sacrifice and the perfect sacrifice of Christ

In verse 31 God said that He would not receive the sweet aromas Israel offered. This is because they continued only the religious ceremony while resisting God.

But Jesus Christ became the offering without blemish that God fully received.

"By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Hebrews 10:10).

It also says as follows.

"For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14).

The ground on which we are saved is neither that we have offered worship perfectly nor that we have much religious merit. It is because we believe in the righteousness Jesus completed with the baptism He received from John and the Cross.

Therefore the worship of the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a price for obtaining salvation. It is the worship of faith offered in thanksgiving for the remission of sins and the salvation already received.

14. The warning this word gives to the saved person

Just because Christ has borne our curse, it does not mean that one may now ignore the will of God. The remission of sins is not the freedom to resist God, but the freedom to serve God with joy.

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The person who believes in the gospel, too, can make the following idols.

—He can rely on material things and success more than on God.

—He can love his family or the recognition of people more than God.

—He can mistake church office and religious activity for the evidence of faith.

—He can exalt his own knowledge and experience above the word of God.

—He can rely on organizations, leaders, and the results of his work more than on the gospel.

God may train the saints to rely on God alone again by breaking such false refuges. But this is not condemnation that makes them pay the price of sin again. This is because Jesus completely bore the punishment of sin.

The purpose of the discipline given to the children of God is not destruction, but restoration and holiness.

15. The distinctions needed when applying this to life

When applying this text today, the following points must be distinguished.

First, this warning was given to Israel, but the saved saints today, too, must accept it while examining their own lives. One must not regard lightly a life that goes against the will of God. Yet one must not judge, by looking only at an individual's health and property, that that person has disobeyed or has not been saved.

Second, not every war, disease, and disaster can be concluded to be a particular curse of God. Rather than judging

those who have suffered disaster, comforting and helping them is the attitude of the person who believes in the gospel.

Third, when going through suffering, self-examination is needed. But one must not fall into groundless condemnation; after examining one's pride and idols before the word, one must believe in the gospel Jesus has completed.

Fourth, disobedience cannot be covered by religious activity. What God wants is not only the outward form of worship, but believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and living by that faith.

Fifth, when one has realized one's wrong, one must not stubbornly resist God. One must acknowledge one's wrong, believe in Jesus, who has already borne one's sins, and return to God.

Conclusion

Leviticus 26:27–33 shows the fact that sin and idolatry in the end break down the most precious things of human beings. Family and community collapse, idols and the sanctuary are destroyed, the cities and the land become desolate, and the people are scattered among the nations.

But Leviticus 26 does not end with this warning of judgment. From verse 40 on follows the promise that when they confess their sins and their hearts are humbled, God remembers the covenant. The judgment of God does not allow sin to be regarded lightly, but the mercy of God does not close the way for the sinner to return.

And in the New Testament, that way of return has been fully opened in Jesus Christ. Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John, received the curse of the law on the Cross,

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and rose again from death.

Therefore the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is no longer under the curse and condemnation of the law. At the same time, he does not resist God with grace as an excuse. He abandons the idols he relied on, believes in the complete salvation of Christ, and listens to the word of God with thanksgiving.

Hearing this warning, we must examine our own faith and life.

It is, "What am I relying on more than God? Am I not covering disobedience with the outward form of religion? And when God speaks, do I believe in the gospel and return?"

Leviticus 26:34–46—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 Leviticus 26:34–46

In Leviticus 26:34–46, judgment and restoration appear together.

—Verses 34–35: while the people are driven out, the land enjoys its sabbaths.

—Verses 36–39: those who are left live in fear and wasting away.

—Verses 40–41: they confess their sins and their stubborn hearts are humbled.

—Verses 42–45: God remembers the covenant He made with the fathers and does not forsake the people completely.

—Verse 46: it makes clear that all these words were the

ordinances of the covenant God made with Israel on Mount Sinai.

The center of this passage is, "How can a people who have been judged return to God again?" The answer does not lie in regaining the lost blessings by their own strength. It lies in acknowledging their sins, humbling their hearts, and believing the word that God keeps the promise He made to the fathers.

2. God lets the land rest that people did not let rest

Verses 34–35 say like this.

"Then the land shall enjoy its sabbaths as long as it lies desolate and you are in your enemies' land; then the land shall rest and enjoy its sabbaths. As long as it lies desolate it shall rest—for the time it did not rest on your sabbaths when you dwelt in it."

Israel had received the word of God to let the land rest every sabbatical year. This is because the land was not the absolute possession of human beings, but what God had entrusted to them. But if the people ignore the word of God and keep using the land, God says that He will let the land rest even by sending them out of the land.

The rest of the land that God commanded is accomplished only after the people are carried away into captivity.

—People did not obey by letting the land rest.

—In the end the people are carried away into captivity.

—When the people are carried away into captivity and become unable to cultivate the land, that land comes to rest.

Israel may have thought that if they kept the sabbatical year, they would suffer loss. So they believed their own calculations more than the promise of God. But while trying to obtain more, they ended up losing both the land and its produce.

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This word shows the fact that human greed cannot ignore the order of creation of God forever. God is the Owner not only of people but of the land. Even if human beings try to possess and produce endlessly, going against the order of God, when God makes them stop, they cannot but stop.

3. The land's rest actually fulfilled at the time of the Babylonian captivity

This warning of Leviticus 26 was actually fulfilled later in the Babylonian captivity of Judah.

"And those who escaped from the sword he carried away to Babylon, where they became servants to him and his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia, to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths. As long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years" (2 Chronicles 36:20–21).

This shows that the word of God did not end as a mere warning, but was fulfilled in history.

But this word must not be applied directly to the fall of some nation or to economic difficulty today, concluding, "They perished because they did not keep the Sabbath." This regulation is first of all directly connected with the covenant made with Israel on Mount Sinai and with the possession of the land of Canaan.

The lesson we must receive today is the fact that God does not justify the human desire for possession, and that time, land, labor, and life all belong to God.

4. The result of rejecting rest is losing true rest

Israel may have thought that if they kept the rest, production would decrease and they would suffer loss. But the result of rejecting rest was not more possessions, but the life of captivity.

When God commanded rest, they had to rest, not relying only on their own labor, but believing the word that God gives what is needed. We, too, must rely on God and do the work He has entrusted to us.

The sabbatical year required the following faith.

—One acknowledges that God is the Owner of the land.

—One acknowledges that the harvest is not achieved by human ability alone.

—One trusts the provision of God.

—One stops greed and obeys the word of God.

If a person cannot rest in God, he constantly tries to possess more. But he is not satisfied with what he has obtained that way, fears losing it, and in the end becomes a slave of possessions.

For the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, true rest begins within the salvation Jesus has completed. It is stopping the striving to remove sin by one's own deeds, and believing that the remission of sins has been completed by the baptism Jesus received from John and the Cross.

"There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His" (Hebrews 4:9–10).

Leviticus speaks of the matter in which the people who were cultivating the land are carried away into captivity and the land of Canaan comes to rest. When we examine the rest of salvation, Jesus bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John, received that judgment on the Cross, and completed salvation by

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rising again from death. We obtain rest of heart not by striving to wash away sin by our own strength, but by believing in this salvation.

5. The fear that makes one flee even when no one pursues

Verses 36–37 speak of the state of those who are left, who were carried away into captivity.

"I will send faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies; the sound of a shaken leaf shall cause them to flee; they shall flee as though fleeing from a sword, and they shall fall when no one pursues"

In 26:6 He said that when they obeyed, none would make them afraid. But as a result of resisting God, they come to be startled by the sound of a small leaf and flee even though no one is actually pursuing them.

This is not only the loss of outward safety. It is the state of having lost boldness and peace of heart. People who relied not on God but on their own cities, military power, and idols come to fear even a small sound when they have lost all of those.

The words of verse 37, "*They shall stumble over one another,*" describe the scene in which order collapses in terror and they trample one another and fall. Even if no actual enemy attacks, fear itself breaks them down.

But this verse must not be applied as it is to a person who suffers from an anxiety disorder or panic disorder today, judging, "It is because of a hidden sin." Mental and physical difficulties can have various causes, and appropriate care and treatment are needed. The core of the text is not to diagnose a particular patient, but that the community of Israel, who abandoned God and relied

on their own strength, lost the peace of the covenant.

6. *"The land of your enemies shall eat you up"*

Verses 38–39 speak of the misery of the life of captivity.

"You shall perish among the nations, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up. And those of you who are left shall waste away in their iniquity in your enemies' lands; also in their fathers' iniquities, which are with them, they shall waste away."

Israel had to leave the land God had given and live in a foreign land. There they lost their national identity and freedom, were ruled by their enemies, and many died or were scattered among other peoples.

That "the land of your enemies shall eat you up" means that the people carried away into captivity are placed in danger of perishing under the rule and culture of foreign nations, and in economic oppression and death.

Verse 39 says that they waste away in *"their iniquity"* and in *"their fathers' iniquities."* Here individual responsibility and communal responsibility appear together.

They were born within the history of idolatry and disobedience their fathers had begun, but it was not that they received punishment in an innocent state simply because of the sins of their fathers. They themselves also repeated the same sins and resisted God.

The Bible also clearly speaks of the responsibility of each person.

"The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son" (Ezekiel 18:20).

Therefore to confess the sins of one's fathers does not mean

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that one pays the price of the sins of one's fathers in their place. It is acknowledging the history of sin that has come down from the fathers and the fact that one has oneself also participated in that sin.

7. The confession that turns from judgment to restoration

From verse 40, the atmosphere changes.

"But if they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers, with their unfaithfulness in which they were unfaithful to Me, and that they also have walked contrary to Me,"

Restoration does not begin with circumstances improving first. It begins with acknowledging one's own sins.

What they had to confess is clear.

—They went against the word of God.

—They resisted God.

—They repeated their fathers' iniquities in the same way.

—They acknowledged that what they had suffered was not a chance event unrelated to God.

True confession is not merely saying vaguely, "I was lacking." It is acknowledging that God is right and that one is wrong. It is not attributing the responsibility for one's wrong only to circumstances or other people, but accepting one's sins concretely before the word.

That does not mean, however, that confession itself is merit that pays the price of sin. It is not that one receives the remission of sins because one has confessed many sins. Confession is acknowledging one's own wrong. We must not put forward our own goodness, but must believe in the word of salvation God has prepared.

8. The meaning of *"uncircumcised hearts"* being humbled

Verse 41 says as follows.

"And that I also have walked contrary to them and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if their uncircumcised hearts are humbled, and they accept their guilt—"

Israel had the circumcision of the flesh as the sign of the covenant. Yet God calls their hearts *"uncircumcised hearts."*

In the flesh there was the sign of the covenant, but the heart was closed to God. Outwardly they looked like the people of God, but inwardly they abhorred the word, resisted the Holy Spirit, and insisted on their own will.

Stephen, too, spoke toward such people.

"You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you" (Acts 7:51).

Spiritual circumcision is not a matter of a person correcting his own obstinacy by himself and removing sin, but having the sins of the heart removed by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It is believing the word that Jesus bore all sins with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose again from death. Paul explains that true circumcision lies not only in outward form but in the heart.

"Circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter" (Romans 2:29).

Therefore, that "the heart is humbled" is not simply grieving emotionally. It is acknowledging that the judgment of God is right, and abandoning the pride of having claimed that one is more right than God.

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9. *"Accept their guilt"* does not mean self-punishment

In verses 41 and 43 appears the word that they accept the punishment of their iniquity. This does not mean to torment oneself or do ascetic practices in order to pay the price of sin.

Its meaning is as follows.

—One acknowledges that the judgment of God is righteous.

—One does not resent God even in the midst of discipline.

—One does not attribute the results of sin only to other people.

—One humbles one's heart under the hand of God.

—One seeks the way to return to God.

Human beings cannot wash away sin and be saved by tormenting themselves or volunteering for punishment. Jesus bore our sins and received that punishment in our place, and thereby accomplished salvation.

Therefore repentance within the gospel is not a matter of punishing oneself to obtain salvation. It is acknowledging one's own sin and inability, and believing in the salvation Jesus accomplished by bearing our sins and judgment in our place.

10. God remembers the covenant He made with the ancestors

Verse 42 speaks of the ground of restoration.

"Then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and My covenant with Isaac and My covenant with Abraham I will remember; I will remember the land."

In this verse the subject is God throughout.

—God remembers the covenant.

—God cares for the land.

—God does not forsake the people completely.

—God opens the way of restoration.

That God 'remembers' the covenant does not mean that He had forgotten it for a while and then recalls it. It means that He will act as He has promised.

The restoration of Israel is accomplished not because they have paid a sufficient price, but because God is faithful to the promise He made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Here an important principle of grace appears. Human beings betrayed the covenant, but God does not betray His own promise.

11. The covenant of Abraham and Jesus Christ

The New Testament makes clear that the center of the promise God made to Abraham is Jesus Christ.

"Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, 'And to seeds,' as of many, but as of one, 'And to your Seed,' who is Christ" (Galatians 3:16).

It also says that the promise given to Abraham cannot be annulled by the law given 430 years later. Israel received discipline for breaking the law, but human failure cannot make void the promise of salvation God would accomplish in Christ.

The way for the blessing of Abraham to come even upon the Gentiles is also in Jesus Christ.

"That the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" (Galatians 3:14).

Therefore the remembering of the covenant in verse 42 does not show only the historical restoration in which Israel returns to the land of Canaan. Ultimately it makes us look toward the promise that God will bestow the blessing of salvation on Jews

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and Gentiles in Christ.

12. Jesus bore our sins and our curse

In order for human beings to return to God, the problem of sin and the curse must first be solved. The sins already committed do not disappear merely by humbling one's heart.

Jesus said as follows while receiving baptism from John.

"Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15).

The baptism Jesus received from John is the event in which He bore in His own body all the sins of the world. That is why John the Baptist testified, pointing to Jesus, as follows.

"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).

Jesus went to the Cross bearing the sin He had borne with the baptism He received from John.

"Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us" (Galatians 3:13).

The curse and the punishment that the one who betrayed the covenant in Leviticus 26 had to receive, Jesus received on the Cross in that person's place. And by rising again from death, He overcame sin and death.

To believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is to believe the following facts.

—Jesus bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John.

—He received the judgment of sin and the curse of the law by shedding His blood on the Cross.

—By rising again from death, He gave us new life.

—He has given the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit to

the person who believes in this gospel.

The ground on which we can return to God is not that our feelings of repentance are sufficient, but that Jesus has completely dealt with sin and the curse.

13. The punishment of the old covenant and the remission of sins of the new covenant

Verse 44 says as follows.

"Yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, nor shall I abhor them, to utterly destroy them and break My covenant with them; for I am the LORD their God."

The judgment was very severe, but complete extermination was not the final purpose. God did not break the covenant even when Israel were in the land of their enemies.

In the new covenant of the New Testament, this promise of restoration appears as the complete remission of sins and the change of the heart.

"I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (Jeremiah 31:33).

In the following verse 34, He promises as follows.

"I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more"

The law of the old covenant revealed the sin and disobedience of human beings. But in the new covenant, Jesus bore that sin with the baptism He received from John and received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and He gives the Holy Spirit to the heart of the person who believes and makes him follow the will of God.

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Therefore the remission of sins received within the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not stop at merely avoiding punishment. It is entering into a new relationship in which God becomes our God and we become the people of God and receive the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

14. *"Nor shall I abhor them, to utterly destroy them"*— the faithfulness of God, greater than judgment

In verse 44 God says three things.

—He does not cast them away.

—He does not abhor them and utterly destroy them.

—He does not break the covenant He has made.

Human beings betrayed the covenant, but God does not break His own promise. This is the reason Israel could have hope even in the midst of the life of captivity.

This word makes clear the fact that Leviticus 26 must not be read as a declaration of permanent curse on the Jewish people. The apostle Paul also said as follows.

"Has God cast away His people? Certainly not!" (Romans 11:1).

Therefore the persecution and massacres the Jews suffered in history cannot be called the legitimate execution of Leviticus 26. Persecution and massacre are the sin of the perpetrators, and the Bible must not be used as a basis for justifying them.

Gentile believers, too, were not saved by their own deeds and merit. Jews and Gentiles alike are justified only by the mercy of God and the salvation of Christ.

15. God, who remembers the Exodus

Verse 45 says as follows.

"But for their sake I will remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God: I am the LORD."

The purpose for which God saved Israel out of Egypt did not lie merely in ending their life of slavery. He saved them *"that I might be their God."*

The purpose of salvation is the restoration of the relationship.

—God becomes their God.

—They become the people of God.

—God dwells among them.

—The people live according to the word of God.

The salvation of the New Testament is the same. That Jesus saved us from sin is not only to let us avoid hell. It is to liberate us from being slaves of sin and death and let us live as children of God.

The Holy Spirit dwells in the saved person, and leads him to love the word of God and serve the gospel. Therefore the remission of sins is not an independence in which one may live as one pleases, but the true freedom of living belonging to God.

16. The historical scope of the old covenant that verse 46 tells us

The last verse, 46, sums up like this.

"These are the statutes and judgments and laws which the LORD made between Himself and the children of Israel on Mount Sinai by the hand of Moses."

This verse makes clear to whom and within what covenant

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the blessings and curses of chapter 26 were given.

—The place is Mount Sinai.

—The mediator is Moses.

—The direct object of the covenant is the children of Israel.

—The contents are statutes and judgments and laws.

Leviticus 26 is an actual promise and warning concerning the land and the life of Israel. The saints who believe this word, too, must live obeying the will of God. One must not think that since one has been saved, there is no discipline in one's life. Only, whether a person has faith and salvation cannot be judged by an individual's disease or poverty alone.

God wants His people to abandon idols and follow the word. When they have done wrong, they must break their obstinacy and return, believe in God, who keeps His promise, and serve the gospel.

17. Practical lessons for those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit

First, one must believe in the rest God has given. One must stop the effort to remove sin by one's own deeds, and believe that the remission of sins has been completed by the baptism Jesus received from John and the Cross.

Second, one must honestly acknowledge one's own sins. Confession is not an act of paying the price of sin oneself, but abandoning one's own righteousness and acknowledging that the judgment of God is right.

Third, one must be able to examine the sins of one's fathers and one's community. It is not that one bears the price of the sins of the previous generation in their place, but one must examine whether one is oneself repeating the idolatry and greed, the

violence and falsehood they left behind.

Fourth, more important than outward office or acts of worship is having the sins of the heart removed by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The saints who have received this spiritual circumcision must not put forward their own obstinacy, but must follow the will that the Holy Spirit leads them to through the word.

Fifth, in the midst of discipline one must humble one's heart rather than resent God. But one must not conclude that every suffering is a punishment for a particular sin, or condemn those who suffer.

Sixth, one must abandon the idols one loves more than God. Money and success, the recognition of people, and religious achievement, too, can become idols if one relies on them more than on God.

Seventh, one must believe the fact that God is faithful to His own covenant. Our salvation is based not on the fluctuation of feelings or deeds, but on the salvation Jesus Christ has completed.

Conclusion

Leviticus 26:34–46 begins with judgment but ends with the promise that God will keep the covenant.

When Israel rejected the word of God, the land became desolate and the people were scattered among the nations. But when they confessed their sins and their stubborn hearts were humbled, God remembered the covenant He had established with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The ground of restoration was not human merit but the faithfulness of God.

This covenant grace appeared even more clearly in Jesus

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Christ. Jesus bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John, received the curse and the punishment of sin on the Cross, and rose again from death. To the person who believes in this gospel, God has given the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit.

Therefore the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must hold on to two things together.

—He does not regard lightly sin and a life of resisting God.

—He believes in God's faithful promise of salvation, which is greater than his own inadequacy.

Our true rest does not lie in the assurance that we have kept the law perfectly. It lies in the faith that Jesus bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John and completely received the punishment of those sins on the Cross. And the person who has received that grace goes forward into a life of loving God most, listening to the word, and serving the gospel, following the guidance of the Holy Spirit. ✉

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

Serve God alone, who has given the rest of the remission of sins

< Leviticus 26:1-2 >

"You shall not make idols for yourselves; neither a carved image nor a sacred pillar shall you rear up for yourselves; nor shall you set up an engraved stone in your land, to bow down to it; for I am the LORD your God. You shall keep My Sabbaths and reverence My sanctuary: I am the LORD."

Dear beloved saints, in today's text God says not to make or worship idols, and to keep the Sabbath of God and reverence His sanctuary. In the short word of these two verses is contained whom the people of God are to serve and how they are to live. It is a word telling us to turn from the heart that lives holding on to what is visible before its eyes and trying to fulfill its own wishes, and to believe in the living God and live in the grace He has bestowed.

God, who has saved us, speaks

After forbidding idols, God makes it clear that He is the LORD, the God of Israel. After giving the commands about the

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Sabbath and the sanctuary, too, He says again that He is the LORD. When we read these two verses, we must first know who it is that gives the commands. This word is not a religious rule that people set up following their own thoughts. It is the word given by God, who made Israel His own people.

In Exodus, when God gave the commandments, He first said as follows: *"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage" (Exodus 20:2).*

Israel was not a people who had escaped from the bondage of Egypt by their own strength. God delivered them. Therefore, for them to serve God was to know the One who had saved them and to respond to that grace. God, who had saved His own people, now told those people to have no other gods.

We who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must also clearly know this order. It is not that we first cast away idols completely and kept all the commandments, and so obtained the remission of sins. The Lord bore our sins and accomplished salvation, and we received the remission of sins by believing in that gospel. Now, as people who have been saved, we believe in and follow God, who has given us life.

Therefore, whenever we hear the commands of God, there is no need to think that we must make ourselves qualified to be saved all over again. Yet neither is it the case that, because we have received the remission of sins, we need not listen to the word of God. The One who has saved us is our God. The person who knows the grace of salvation wants to learn what He is pleased with and what He forbids. The word of God is the word that leads the hearts and lives of us who have been saved.

Cast away the idols set up for yourselves

In verse 1 appear idols, a carved image, a sacred pillar, and an engraved stone. People can work wood, set up stones, and carve images. But they were not to make what they themselves had made into an object of worship. God forbade setting up such things in the land where Israel dwelt and bowing down to them. The people of God could not live relying on an image that people had made.

What we must look at carefully here is the word saying that people make idols for themselves. People look for something that will fulfill what they desire, help them avoid what they fear, and protect their lives. With that heart they make idols and worship them. Outwardly they seem to be exalting something, but inside is the heart that wants to fulfill its own wishes. God did not permit His own people to set up idols following such a heart.

We must not think of this word only as the affair of people long ago who bowed down before wood and stone. We, too, can set up in our hearts something we regard as more precious than God and rely on more than God. We can make our own success our highest goal and push the word of God back for the sake of that goal. Because the recognition of people is too important to us, we sometimes hide the heart that believes in the gospel, and to keep our own plans we sometimes turn away from what pleases God.

God is the One who made us and the One who has saved us from sin. We cannot make up God to suit our own circumstances. We must learn through the word who He is, and believe what He has done. Deuteronomy says to Israel as follows: "*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with*

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all your strength" (Deuteronomy 6:4–5).

Where our hearts are to return is clear. We must give our hearts to God, who loves us and has given us life. When we realize what we have put ahead of God, we must not try to cover it up, but must acknowledge it. And we must accept again the will of God for us. Here is the reason why even the person who has received the remission of sins must place his own heart before the word every day.

Our faith is in the remission of sins the Lord has accomplished

Dear saints, to cast away idols and believe in God is not to think of God as we want to believe. It is to know how God has saved us and to believe that work. One cannot say that his sins have been solved only because he is deeply moved by Jesus, or only because he has lived a life of faith diligently for a long time. We must clearly know through the word how the Lord bore and removed our sins.

Jesus, who is God, put on the body of a man and came to this earth to save us sinners. Jesus is the holy One who had no need to wash away any sin of His own. He went to the Jordan River and received baptism from John. When John tried to prevent Him, 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).*

In the Old Testament, when a sinner came before God, the sacrifice God had appointed was needed. When the sinner laid his hands on the head of the sacrifice, his sins were passed on to that sacrifice, and the sacrifice that bore the sins died and shed its blood. It was not that the sinner erased his sins with his own

devotion and feelings. According to the way of atonement God had made known, he passed on his sins, and he received the remission of sins by the sacrifice of that offering.

The baptism Jesus received from John is connected with this passing on of sins. By receiving baptism from John, Jesus bore all the sin of mankind on His own body. It is not that our sins still remained on us just as they were while the Lord was crucified without any relation to them. He first bore the sin of the world by baptism, and went to the Cross in the body in which He bore that sin.

In the sin of the world that the Lord bore, all our sins are contained. The sin of putting oneself ahead of God, the sin of being dragged along by greed and going against the word, the sins committed with the lips and in deeds, and even the sins of the heart not revealed to others—the Lord bore them all. We cannot limit the salvation of the Lord to only the few wrongs we remember. All the sins we commit throughout our whole lives—past, present, and future—were passed on to the Lord when He received baptism from John.

Jesus, who bore all those sins, shed His blood and died on the Cross. He received the judgment on sin in our place. Therefore, when we believe in the blood of the Cross, we must also know together the baptism Jesus received from John. Because the Lord took on our sins, He died in our place. The baptism of Jesus and the blood of the Cross testify of the righteous work of God, who has saved us from sin.

Jesus rose again from death. The Lord is the living Savior who bore our sins, received the judgment, and then rose again from death. We receive the remission of sins by believing in this gospel of the water and the Spirit. The One who has saved us is God, and the salvation we are to rely on is the salvation Jesus has accomplished. God accepts the person who believes in this

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gospel as His own people and gives him the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, do not put forward your own zeal as the ground of salvation. Do not try to pay the price of sin yourselves, in His place, by piling up offerings, service, and prayers. The Lord bore our sins, and the Lord also received the judgment on them. We must acknowledge our own sins before the word, and believe the fact that Jesus washed away even those very sins completely. Accepting the salvation God has given just as it is, is the faith that believes in God.

The Sabbath of God makes us remember the grace He has bestowed

In verse 2, God says to keep His Sabbaths. The Sabbath was not a day Israel had set for their own convenience. It was a day God had given to His own people. In Exodus 20, He had them work for six days and rest on the seventh day, and had even the children, servants, and livestock of that house, and the sojourner who dwelt with them, rest. He also spoke of how God had made the heavens and the earth and rested on the seventh day.

Israel had to stop their work and remember their God. Continuing to work and gaining more could not be the whole of their lives. The life with which they could work, the land in which they lived, and the grace that had delivered them had all come from God. The people who kept the Sabbath had to remember that they belonged to God and fear Him.

When we think of rest, we must know, together with letting the body rest, the enjoying of the grace God has bestowed. Even if the body is resting, if the heart is pressed down by sin, one cannot be truly at peace. One can sit doing nothing at all and yet be in anguish, not knowing how to solve his own sins. Leaving

the problem of sin as it is and merely emptying one's schedule does not bring rest to the heart.

The One who has given us the rest of the remission of sins is Jesus. The Lord accomplished the work of cleansing sins. It is written: *"Who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Hebrews 1:3).*

Because the Lord accomplished the work of cleansing sins, we can believe in that salvation and rest. If we had to complete with our own labor a remission of sins not yet accomplished, there could be no peace in our hearts. But the Lord solved our sins with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross. We believe in that grace and give thanks and praise to God.

With this faith we must go forward to worship. We must not try to buy the remission of sins with the act of offering one more worship service, but must listen to the word while giving thanks to God, who has washed away our sins. While enjoying the rest the Lord has given, we must come to know more and more who God is. The time when we hear the word and our faith is renewed, and when we share the grace of salvation with the saints, is precious to us.

Turn from the wrong heart within the rest of the remission of sins

Even after receiving the remission of sins, greed can arise in one's heart and wrong thoughts can be exposed. While saying that we love God, we can complain when our own plans are blocked, and neglect listening to the word when we obtain what we want. When we come to see ourselves like this, what must

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we do? While acknowledging our wrongs, we must believe in the remission of sins the Lord has accomplished.

There are also people who make their sins small in order to put their hearts at ease. They say it is all right because everyone does it, and try to comfort themselves by finding someone who has done a greater wrong. But that is not the attitude of standing before the word. If we have loved something else more than God, we must acknowledge that that heart was wrong. If our own greed has hidden the will of God, we must accept that fact.

At that time, the One we are to look to is the Lord, who has already borne our sins. We must believe that Jesus bore even these sins by the baptism He received from John, and received even the judgment on them on the Cross. The assurance of the remission of sins does not depend on how excellent I have been today. It depends on the salvation of the Lord, who has cleansed us. It is written: *"Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin" (Hebrews 10:18).*

The person who believes in the remission of sins the Lord has accomplished has no need to prepare yet another sacrifice to solve his own sins. He has only to set his heart on the salvation the Lord has given, turn from the wrong way, and follow the word. The faith that believes in the remission of sins is not a faith that keeps one living according to one's own will while leaving one's wrongs covered up. Rather, it is a faith that makes one acknowledge his sins honestly and follow the will of God again.

In this way we live within the rest the Lord has given. Whenever our weakness is exposed, there is no need to be afraid as if salvation had collapsed. Yet neither should we push away the word of God with our weakness as an excuse. We must believe in the Lord, who has saved us, and turn our hearts to Him. With a heart thankful to the Lord, we lay down our wrong greed and accept the word we are to obey today.

Reverence the sanctuary and treasure the word of God

Together with the word to keep the Sabbath, God said to reverence His sanctuary. The sanctuary was the holy place where Israel came before God and offered the sacrifices He had appointed. The sacrifices were carried out according to the word God had made known through Moses, and the priests performed the duties entrusted to them. The people were not to handle that place according to their own thoughts or regard the sacrifices lightly.

The heart that reverences the sanctuary does not stop at treasuring the utensils and the place inside it. It goes on to accepting the word of God delivered there and respecting the duties the priests perform according to the command of God. In the sanctuary was the way of atonement God had appointed. They had to treasure that word, which made known how a sinner is to come before God.

We, too, must look back on the heart with which we treat the Church of God today. Are we treasuring the place where we heard the gospel of the water and the Spirit and came to know the remission of sins? Are we respecting the duty of preaching the word and caring for souls? Are we not picking out and listening only to the words that sound good to us, while pushing away the very word that corrects our thoughts?

The person who preaches the word must make known accurately how God has saved us. The one who hears must also accept that word in his heart and believe it. We cannot lead a life of faith looking only at the outward appearance of the chapel or the eloquence of people. Hearing and believing the fact that Jesus bore our sins and the salvation He has accomplished must be at the center. The Church of God is precious precisely because this gospel is preached there and people come to obtain the remission of sins.

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It is precious that the saints who have received the remission of sins hear the word together, share their hearts, and serve the gospel. We must also pass on to other souls the grace of salvation we have received. Each of us must take on what we can do in our own circumstances, gather our hearts together in the work of preaching the gospel, and help one another to live by faith. The heart that reverences God is shown in this way, in a life that serves together the work that pleases God.

Let us give our hearts to the Lord, who has washed us

Jesus is God, who has saved us from sin. By receiving baptism from John He bore all our sins, on the Cross He shed His blood and died in our place, and He rose again from death. By believing in this gospel of the water and the Spirit, we have received the remission of sins and become people who belong to God. This salvation is the ground of our faith and the rest of our hearts.

Now let us give our hearts to the Lord. Let us not be bound only to fulfilling our own will, but look into the will of God, who has saved us. Let us not try to solve again with our own labor the sins the Lord has washed away, but believe in that grace. Let us treasure the place where the word is heard and the duty of preaching the gospel, and together with the Church serve the work of giving life to other souls.

It is not that we become people loved by God only when we have something more. The Lord has already loved us and accomplished perfect salvation. What reason is there for us who believe in that love to rely on anything else more than God? Let us live believing in and fearing God, who has washed away our sins and given us true rest. We give thanks and glory to the Lord, who has saved us by the gospel of the water and the Spirit. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

God, who dwells in the midst of His people who have received the remission of sins

< Leviticus 26:3-13 >

"If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments, and perform them, then I will give you rain in its season, the land shall yield its produce, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. Your threshing shall last till the time of vintage, and the vintage shall last till the time of sowing; you shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely. I will give peace in the land, and you shall lie down, and none will make you afraid; I will rid the land of evil beasts, and the sword will not go through your land. You will chase your enemies, and they shall fall by the sword before you. Five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight; your enemies shall fall by the sword before you. For I will look on you favorably and make you fruitful, multiply you and confirm My covenant with you. You shall eat the old harvest, and clear out the old because of the new. I will set My tabernacle among you, and My soul shall not abhor you. I will walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people. I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, that you should not be their slaves; I have broken the bands of your yoke and made you walk upright."

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Dear beloved saints, people think that they will be happy if they have enough to eat and their lives are safe. But even if one has property, he can always be afraid of having it taken away, and even if he seems at peace outwardly, he can be in anguish because of the sins in his heart. When we look at the blessings God promises Israel today, there appears not only food and safety but also the word that God Himself will dwell among them. It is the promise that He will care for His own people and be their God.

It is a promise given to the people who hear and follow the word of God

It is written: *"If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments, and perform them, then I will give you rain in its season, the land shall yield its produce, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit" (Leviticus 26:3–4).*

God first says to keep and carry out His ordinances and commandments. The ordinances and commandments are the word God set and gave to the people. Israel could not live as they wanted to live and only demand blessings from God. They had to hear what God, who had made them His own people, was saying, and follow that word.

To keep and carry out does not stop at knowing the word; it is to accept that word and carry it out. They were not to treat lightly what God had forbidden, or to change according to their own thoughts the law of sacrifice God had appointed. If they were a people who believed in God, they had to follow the way God had set for them. The promised blessings, too, were given within this covenant relationship.

Before this word we also discover our own sins. There is no

one who can say that he has kept all the commandments of God perfectly. While knowing that we must love God, we followed our own greed, and while knowing that we must obey the word, there were times when we went against it. Therefore, the problem we must solve first is the problem of the sins that are before God. By only hoping that our lives will go well while leaving our sins as they are, we cannot stand rightly before God.

God prepared the way for sinners to receive the remission of sins. Israel had the sacrifice of atonement God had appointed, and Jesus Christ came to fulfill that promise. We must know and believe how the Lord removed our sins. And as people who have received the remission of sins, we must live according to the word. We lay down the heart that boasts of its own deeds in order to be saved, and obey the word of God, who has saved us.

God gives rain in its season and abundant fruit

In verse 4 God says that He will give rain in its season. A person who farms can sow seed and tend the field, but he cannot produce by his own strength the rain that falls from heaven. For rain to fall when the land needs it and for the trees to bear fruit, the care of God is needed. God speaks concretely of the livelihood of His own people. He said: *"Your threshing shall last till the time of vintage, and the vintage shall last till the time of sowing; you shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely" (Leviticus 26:5).*

That the threshing continues until the grape harvest, and the grape harvest continues again until the time of sowing, is a word that the harvest is abundant. It is not a situation where they sit idle and wait because there is nothing to gather in, but a blessing where the work of harvesting goes on because there is plenty to

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reap. God promised that they would eat their food to the full and dwell safely in their own land.

Here the labor of the people and the supply of God appear together. The people thresh, gather grapes, and sow seed. Believing the word that God gives the rain and the fruit does not mean that the work they must do disappears. Rather, knowing that their labor depends on God, they rely on Him and do the work entrusted to them.

We who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must also rely on God in our lives. To serve the gospel, time and labor are needed, and there must also be people to work with and the food needed for living. God knows such circumstances of ours. Therefore, when we work, we must not trust and boast only in our own abilities, but must ask God for wisdom and help. We must work faithfully, believing that the Lord, who has entrusted the work to us, will care for us.

Peace and victory, too, are given by God

It is written: *"I will give peace in the land, and you shall lie down, and none will make you afraid; I will rid the land of evil beasts, and the sword will not go through your land" (Leviticus 26:6).*

Even if they reap abundantly, if they tremble with fear every night and lose the foundation of their lives because of war, they cannot enjoy it in comfort. After food, God promised peace. He said that when they lay down there would be no one to make them afraid, that the wild beasts would be removed from the land, and that the sword would not sweep through the land. It means that He would protect the foundation on which the people lived.

In verses 7 and 8, He also speaks of the victory of chasing

their enemies. He also said: *"Five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight; your enemies shall fall by the sword before you."*

That five chase a hundred and a hundred chase ten thousand is not a strength that can be explained by the number of people alone. It is not a promise given so that Israel might boast of their own size and ability. It is a word that God is with them and gives them the strength to drive back their enemies. What they needed was not to calculate only their own numbers, but to believe in God, who protects them.

We, too, see our own lack while serving the gospel. There are times when the people are few compared to the work to be done, what we have is not enough, and the words that oppose the gospel sound loud. The more so, the more we must engrave on our hearts the salvation the Lord has accomplished and the work the Lord has entrusted to us. The strength of the work of preaching the word of God does not come from ourselves. The power to deliver people from sin is in the gospel God has accomplished.

Therefore we must pray together in faith and serve the gospel. Rather than each scattering, putting forward only his own ability, we must gather our strength with the heart that believes in the same gospel. When we do the work that pleases God, we can ask for His help. There is no need to step back from the beginning on the ground that we are lacking. We must rely on God, who has saved us, and take on the work entrusted to us today.

God remembers and looks after the covenant He has established

It is written: *"For I will look on you favorably and make you*

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fruitful, multiply you and confirm My covenant with you. You shall eat the old harvest, and clear out the old because of the new" (Leviticus 26:9–10).

That God looks on the people with favor is a word that He regards them and looks after them. God is not One who does not know the circumstances of His own people. He says that He will confirm the covenant He has established with them and make them fruitful. The future of Israel was connected with the covenant of God. God Himself fulfills what He has promised.

In verse 10, He says that they will eat the old harvest and clear out the old because of the new. This is an abundance in which they come to gather a new harvest even while there is food left over. It is a promise that God will care for their lives continuously. It shows God, who does not give them something to eat once and turn away, but looks after the people and supplies the food they are to live on.

Yet this does not mean that the person who believes in God has no persecution or trials at all. While living according to the gospel, one may also meet hardships. Even then we must hold on to the word of God and rely on Him. We must not leave God or follow our own thoughts because of the circumstances before our eyes alone. We need the faith that the Lord, who has saved us, cares for the people who live according to the word.

In Deuteronomy, too, God had Israel remember, while living in Canaan, the God who had brought them out of Egypt. Even when their lives improved and they came to enjoy many things, they were not to forget God. We, too, must remember the grace the more we live in the care of the Lord. Rather than having our hearts taken by what has been given, we must believe in and follow all the more God, who has given it.

The most precious blessing is that God dwells with His people

It is written: *"I will set My tabernacle among you, and My soul shall not abhor you. I will walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people" (Leviticus 26:11–12).*

After speaking of food, peace, and fruitfulness, God says that He will set His tabernacle among the people. It is the promise that He will not abhor them, but will walk among them and be their God. He speaks of the relationship in which God dwells with the people and is with them. How great a blessing is this?

That Israel had the tabernacle means that a way to come to God was given. There, the sacrifices God had appointed were offered. When the people had sin, they had to follow the way of atonement God had made known. The problem of the holy God and sinners dwelling together was not solved by treating sin lightly. The sacrifice and the atonement God had appointed were needed.

Paul, writing to the church of Corinth, speaks again of the promise that God dwells among His people. It is written: *"And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: 'I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people'" (2 Corinthians 6:16).*

The promise that God dwells among His own people is precious to us today as well. We must not think as if God were far away and were One who helps us only briefly when we need Him. The person who has received the remission of sins is a person who belongs to God. The Holy Spirit God has given is in him and enables him to live according to the word of God.

Therefore, to receive this blessing in our hearts, we must clearly know what the remission of sins is. The relationship with

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God does not become whole of itself merely by the fact that one attends a chapel. We must know and believe how the Lord bore our sins. There is the work Jesus has accomplished so that God might accept sinners as His own people.

Jesus has made us the people of God by the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Jesus, who is God, put on the body of a man and came to this earth to save us who were under sin. He came to accomplish the salvation God had promised through the sacrifices of the Old Testament. Just as the sinner of the Old Testament laid his hands on the unblemished sacrificial offering to pass on his sins, and that offering died in his place, Jesus came as the Savior who would bear our sins and receive the judgment in our place.

When Jesus went to the Jordan River and was about to receive baptism from John, John tried to prevent it. Then 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 is the work of receiving the sin of the world passed on to His own body. It is not that the Lord received baptism because He Himself had sins to be washed away. Jesus, who had no sin, bore all our sins by receiving baptism from John, the representative of mankind. He fulfilled the will of salvation God had appointed.

We are people who have not been able to obey the word of God wholly. We have the sins of going against God in our hearts, lying for our own gain, hating others, and harboring greed. There are sins that, even if not exposed before people, cannot be hidden before God. All those sins Jesus bore on His own body by the

baptism He received from John.

From the sin of the world that the Lord took on, the sins of our whole lives cannot be left out. The sins committed in the past, the sins committed today, and even the sins we will commit in the future out of weakness—the Lord bore them all. It is not that He took on only the sins committed before we believed in Jesus and left the sins after that to us. Because the Lord took on all our sins, we can believe in the salvation the Lord has accomplished without hiding our own sins.

Jesus, who received baptism from John, bore the sin of the world and was crucified. The Lord shed His blood and died in our place. He received the judgment of God on sin in our place. The blood of the Cross is connected with our sins that Jesus bore. Jesus received our sins passed on to Him by the baptism He received from John, and paid the price of those sins on the Cross.

The Lord rose again from death. Jesus, who bore our sins and received the judgment, became our living Savior by rising again from death. This salvation Jesus has accomplished is not an incomplete salvation that must be supplemented by our efforts. The Lord has saved us from all sins. By believing in this gospel of the water and the Spirit, we receive the remission of sins and become righteous.

Here is the ground on which we can live with God. It is not because our deeds are always without blemish that God accepts us. Because Jesus washed away our sins completely, He accepts us who believe in that salvation as His own people. God did not say that it was all right to leave sin as it was; He solved sin through the Lord and is with us.

Therefore we must lay down the heart that tries to obtain the remission of sins by its own labor. Our sins do not disappear because we shed many tears and do many religious works. We must believe in the baptism Jesus received from John, the blood

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of the Cross, and the Lord, who rose again from death. Accept in your hearts the salvation God has already accomplished. The person who believes the word that the Lord has washed away our sins has the peace of the remission of sins.

Walk with God, who has removed the yoke of slavery

It is written: *"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, that you should not be their slaves; I have broken the bands of your yoke and made you walk upright" (Leviticus 26:13).*

Ending these promises, God speaks of how He delivered Israel out of Egypt. It is God who broke their yoke and made them walk upright. The starting point from which Israel came to live as the people of God was the salvation of God. God, who freed them from slavery, now says that He will care for His own people and be with them.

We, too, were people who were bound to sin and could not save ourselves. Jesus washed away our sins by the gospel of the water and the Spirit and set us free from the condemnation of sin. Now we live before God as people who have received the remission of sins. We have come out of the life of avoiding God and hiding our own sins, and have become able to believe in the Lord, who has saved us, and walk according to the word.

Therefore, after receiving the remission of sins, we must give our hearts to the Lord. It is not that, because the Lord bore all our sins, we may live only according to our own will. We must learn and follow what pleases God, who has saved us. We must lay down the heart that tries to live by its own strength alone, rely on the Lord, and gather our hearts together with the Church

in the work of preaching the gospel.

Even though we have shortcomings, we can serve the Lord. We do not serve the gospel because we are better than others. We serve because the Lord has saved us and entrusted this precious work to us. Do the work assigned to you in your daily lives faithfully, pray for those who preach the gospel, and look after the saints who work together with you. Make known the gospel we have received to those who do not yet know the remission of sins. When we carry out these things with a heart that believes in the Lord, we are living a life that walks with God.

Dear beloved saints, God, who has delivered us from sin, has become our God. Let us believe in God, who supplies what is needed in its season, cares for us who live according to the word, and is with us in our midst. Let us keep in our hearts the grace of having received the remission of sins by the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and walk along the way the Lord leads. We give thanks and glory to God, who dwells among His own people and leads us to a blessed life. ✉

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Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

Lay down your pride and listen to the word of the remission of sins

< Leviticus 26:14-20 >

“But if you do not obey Me, and do not observe all these commandments, and if you despise My statutes, or if your soul abhors My judgments, so that you do not perform all My commandments, but break My covenant, I also will do this to you: I will even appoint terror over you, wasting disease and fever which shall consume the eyes and cause sorrow of heart. And you shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. I will set My face against you, and you shall be defeated by your enemies. Those who hate you shall reign over you, and you shall flee when no one pursues you. And after all this, if you do not obey Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins. I will break the pride of your power; I will make your heavens like iron and your earth like bronze. And your strength shall be spent in vain; for your land shall not yield its produce, nor shall the trees of the land yield their fruit.”

Dear beloved saints, God also gives us the word that exposes the wrongs of our hearts. He lets us know how dangerous it is to trust in one’s own strength and go against the will of God.

In today’s text, God warns of discipline for Israel, who reject

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the word, and says that He will break their pride. We must know ourselves in the light of the word, and believe in Jesus Christ, who has saved us from sin and judgment. Also, even after receiving the remission of sins, we must give ear to the will of God, who has saved us.

Disobedience begins from the heart that dislikes the word

It is written: *"But if you do not obey Me, and do not observe all these commandments, and if you despise My statutes, or if your soul abhors My judgments, so that you do not perform all My commandments, but break My covenant" (Leviticus 26:14–15).*

God did not point out only the failure to carry out His commands. He said that in their hearts there was an abhorring of His judgments. Not listening to the word, despising the ordinances, and finally going so far as to break the covenant with God—this is what it comes to. Inside the disobedience that is exposed outwardly is the heart that regards its own will as more right than the word of God.

To heed is to listen carefully to the word of God and act according to it. Even if one knows the content of the word, if he pushes it away in his heart, he cannot be said to heed it. We must examine ourselves as to whether we are accepting the words that suit our own thoughts while disliking the words that break our greed.

God delivered Israel out of Egypt and made them His own people. If they disliked the word of God, that became a matter of going against God, who had saved them and led them.

We who have received the remission of sins must also accept

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this warning. God, who has saved me, is still my God. Even when we have fallen in weakness, we must acknowledge that the word of God is right. We must guard against the heart that dislikes the word exposing our wrongs and insists on its own way.

One cannot protect his life and his labor by his own strength

In verse 16, God says that by terror their eyes will be darkened and their lives will waste away. He also says that even if they sow seed, their enemies will eat the produce. Here appear two things that people want to hold on to by their own strength. One is their own life, and the other is the produce of their livelihood obtained by their labor.

When people are healthy, they think as if their own strength would continue. They assume that if they tend the field, the fruit will naturally become theirs. But in the text, even though they have done the labor of sowing seed, those who eat are the enemies. Even though they have put in effort, they have become unable to hold the result in their own hands.

Verse 17 speaks of this matter more clearly. *"I will set My face against you, and you shall be defeated by your enemies. Those who hate you shall reign over you, and you shall flee when no one pursues you."*

Outwardly they cannot overcome their enemies, and inwardly they cannot overcome their fear. This is the judgment God said He would bring on Israel, who break the covenant. They were not to think that they could go on enjoying the protection and peace of God just the same while rejecting the word of God.

We cannot judge as if we knew all of a person's heart just by seeing that he has fallen ill or that his affairs have become difficult. Nor does the person who preaches the word have the authority to decide the blessing and curse of others as he pleases. We must first ask ourselves. Though I am a person who can live only when God holds me up, am I not regarding myself as able to protect my own life and future without God?

Guard against the heart that stops its ears even after receiving discipline

It is written: *"And after all this, if you do not obey Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins" (Leviticus 26:18).*

In this word we must pay attention to the part *"after all this."* They have already gone through their lives and livelihood being shaken and being defeated by their enemies. And yet there is a heart that does not give ear to God. It is not that when people meet hardship, they naturally become humble and come to believe the word of God. Even while suffering pain, one can still hold on to only his own thoughts and turn his back on God.

One can dislike having his own will broken while wishing only for his circumstances to improve. But by trying to change only one's environment while leaving as they are the sins God points out, one cannot stand rightly before the word.

The word that He will punish them seven times more is a warning that when they insist on disobedience, the discipline becomes heavier. People cannot overcome the will of God by being stubborn. The problem of sin does not disappear of itself with the passing of time.

Yet neither does it mean that if one suffers much pain, that

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pain washes away sin. The period of enduring discipline or the tears one has shed cannot become the price of the remission of sins. Nor should one put forward his own suffering and regard himself as now having become qualified to be accepted by God. What we must do is lay down the heart that used to reject the word and listen to what God says about sin and about salvation. We must examine whether, though God has set the way to save us, we are turning away from that way because of our own thoughts.

God breaks the pride that relies on power

It is written: *"I will break the pride of your power; I will make your heavens like iron and your earth like bronze. And your strength shall be spent in vain; for your land shall not yield its produce, nor shall the trees of the land yield their fruit" (Leviticus 26:19–20).*

God points out the heart that has become exalted, trusting in its power. It is regarding oneself as not needing to follow the word of God while trusting in one's own position and ability, wealth and the help of people. But before God, no power whatsoever can become the final guarantee that protects a person.

Think of the word that the heavens become like iron and the earth like bronze. The heavens that would send down rain are shut, and the land and the trees do not yield fruit. Even if people have seed and the strength to work, if rain does not fall from the heavens and produce does not come from the land, they cannot obtain food by that labor.

In verse 16, the produce was taken by the enemies. Here, the land itself does not yield its produce. Not only protecting the fruit but also obtaining the fruit is not achieved by human

strength alone. The power Israel boasted of could neither open the shut heavens nor change the fruitless land as they wished. God exposes the limit of the strength they had trusted so much.

We, too, when we overestimate our own strength, easily push back the matter of listening to the word. But we must first acknowledge the fact that we are creatures. The One who has permitted us ability is God. We must not live going against the Lord with what the Lord has given.

Especially in the problem of the remission of sins, human power is of no help at all. Can one change the judgment of God on sin by having become a person recognized in the world? Can one remove the sins he has committed by having accomplished many things? When we stand before God, we cannot put forward position and property. We must acknowledge the fact that I cannot solve my own sins.

We must acknowledge our own sins before the word

The conclusion we are to draw while reading this stern word is not that from now on we will keep all the commandments perfectly and escape the curse by ourselves. We already have the sins of having broken the word of God, and our flesh is still weak. The resolution to do well in the future does not remove past sins either. If we acknowledge the fact that God is right, we must also be honest about ourselves, who have broken that word. It is written: *"Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:20).*

We can compare ourselves with other people and think that we are decent people. But in the light of the word God has set,

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our sins are exposed. We did what He said not to do, and turned away from the word He said to follow. While saying that we believe in God, we regarded our own thoughts as more right. If, without acknowledging ourselves as we are, we put forward religious zeal or good deeds, it only becomes an attempt to cover up sin.

To acknowledge sin is not to remain in despair, endlessly listing one's own shortcomings. It is to know that I have no ability to save myself, and to listen to the salvation God has accomplished. God is the One who spoke of judgment on sin, and at the same time the One who sent the Savior for sinners. We must acknowledge that His judgment is right, and also accept by faith the remission of sins He has bestowed.

The person who humbles his heart before God does not try to produce salvation in his own way. He does not put the ground of salvation on how long he has prayed or how great a resolution he has made. He confirms through the word how God has removed sin, and believes it. Then the word clearly shows us the salvation Jesus Christ has accomplished.

Jesus bore our sins by the baptism He received from John

God sent His only begotten Son Jesus Christ to this earth to save sinners. Jesus is not One who inherited sin as we did. He who is God by nature came, putting on the flesh of a man. The Lord, who had no sin, became the sacrificial offering in place of us sinners.

In the sacrifices of the Old Testament, the sinner laid his hands on the head of the sacrificial offering and passed on his sins. The offering that had received the sins passed on to it shed

its blood and died, and so took the sinner's place. Through this sacrifice, God showed that sin had to be passed on to the offering and the judgment on that sin had to be carried out. Atonement was not accomplished by the sinner insisting that his sins had not existed or resolving to do well in the future.

To accomplish this salvation, Jesus received baptism from John. When John tried to stop Him from being baptized, 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 the work of fulfilling the righteousness of God, who saves sinners. Just as in the Old Testament sins were passed on to the offering by the laying on of hands, Jesus bore the sin of the world on His own body by receiving baptism from John, the representative of mankind. It was not a baptism He received because the Lord had sin. It was a baptism He received in order to bear our sins in our place.

In the sin of the world that was passed on to Jesus at that time, all our sins are included. The sins committed from birth until death, the sins committed in the past and the sins of the present, and even the sins we will commit in the future—the Lord bore them all. The sin of having disliked the word of God and the sin of pride in having exalted oneself are not left out either. Not only the sins we remember but even the sins we do not yet know, the Lord took on. John testified: *"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).*

John testified of Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. We have no need to judge by the feelings of our hearts whether our own sins have been passed on to Jesus. We believe the word that Jesus bore the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John. The person who has

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acknowledged his own sins must now look at the Savior who has borne those sins. He must not stop at thinking how heavy his sins are, but must believe who the Lord is, who has borne those sins.

The Lord received the judgment on our sins

After bearing the sin of the world, Jesus went to the Cross. Because He had received our sins passed on to Him by the baptism He received from John, He received the judgment on those sins in our place on the Cross. The shedding of the Lord's blood was not a suffering unrelated to sin. It was the work of the Lord bearing in His own body the punishment of sin that we were to receive. It is written: *"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. 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" (Isaiah 53:5–6).*

We have turned, every one, to his own way. We put our own thoughts ahead of the word of God, and held on to what we wanted rather than what God wanted. For us, who were to receive judgment because of those sins, Jesus shed His blood and died. Because the Lord, who had no sin, received the judgment, we who believe in Him have come to enjoy peace with God.

The word of God in Leviticus that He would judge sin was not a light word. God did not treat the price of sin as if it had never existed, but had His only begotten Son Jesus Christ bear it. Here is the reason why we must believe together in the baptism the Lord received from John and the blood of the Cross. The work of taking on our sins and the work of receiving the

judgment on those sins were accomplished wholly in the Lord.

Jesus bore our sins by the baptism He received from John, died on the Cross, and then rose again from death. Our salvation did not end with the death of the Lord. The Lord, who overcame sin and death and rose again from death, has become our living Savior. It is written: *"Who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification" (Romans 4:25).*

This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit that we believe. Jesus has saved us by bearing our sins through receiving baptism from John, paying the price of those sins by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rising again from death. We receive the remission of sins by believing in this salvation. Salvation is not completed by adding our good deeds. The remission of sins is the grace of God given to the person who believes in the salvation the Lord has accomplished.

Therefore, the person who has not yet received the remission of sins must not remain holding on to his own deeds and striving to become a better sinner. He must believe the gospel that the Lord bore all his sins and even received the judgment. The person who already believes this gospel, too, must not think, whenever his shortcomings are exposed, as if the atonement of the Lord were insufficient. He must rely on the Lord, who knew even those shortcomings and accomplished salvation. The honesty that does not hide sin and the faith that believes in the perfect remission of sins of the Lord must be together in our hearts.

Follow the word within the grace of having received the remission of sins

Dear beloved saints, can we think that, because we have received the remission of sins, we may now go against the will

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of God? If we believe in the love of the Lord, who received the judgment in our place, we cannot use that grace in that way. God speaks to the person He has saved so that that person's heart and life may follow the will of God. With the assurance of the remission of sins, we must give ear to the warnings of God as well.

For a saved person to acknowledge his own wrongs and set right the direction of his life is not to pay the price of sin again. It is for the person who believes in the salvation the Lord has already accomplished to follow the will of the One who has saved him. Therefore, even when we discover that we have been lacking in obedience, there is no reason to leave the Lord. We must lay down the heart that insisted on its own thoughts, and set our hearts again on the work that pleases the Lord.

God wants the gospel of the remission of sins to be passed on to other souls as well. We must not remain seeking the grace of the Lord only for our own lives, but must serve together the gospel that has saved us. It is not that one can serve God only if he has great ability. We can take on in faith what we can do in our own circumstances, care for souls together with the Church, and labor in the place where we are needed. When we lay down the heart that boasted of its own strength, we also come to learn where we are to use the strength the Lord has given.

If you have discovered your own pride before today's word, do not make excuses for it. Acknowledge that God is right. If you have not received the remission of sins, believe in the salvation Jesus has accomplished by the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His rising again from death. If you are a saint who has received the remission of sins, hold on to that grace and follow the word of the Lord. I hope that we will give ear to God, who has saved us, and give the rest of our lives to serving the gospel. ✉

Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

The Lord, who has delivered us from the sin that destroys life

< Leviticus 26:21-22 >

"Then, if you walk contrary to Me, and are not willing to obey Me, I will bring on you seven times more plagues, according to your sins. I will also send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children, destroy your livestock, and make you few in number; and your highways shall be desolate."

Dear beloved saints, in today's text appears the scene of losing children and livestock, of people decreasing in number, and of even the roads people travel becoming desolate. It is easy to take for granted having a family, a foundation for living, and people to visit one another. But God warns the people who go against Him that all of that life can collapse.

While reading this word, we must clearly know the result that sin brings. Even though leaving God and living according to one's own will seems a free and comfortable way, there is no life on that way. Before this stern warning, the One we must seek is Jesus Christ, who delivers us from sin and death. We must hear and believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which brings us to the remission of sins.

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We must not keep walking the way that goes against God

In verse 21, God speaks to the people who, even after the preceding discipline, still go against Him and do not heed Him. They regard the commands of God lightly and keep going on the way they have chosen.

To go against God is to be unwilling to follow even though God has made His will known. Though He speaks of the way of life, they insist on the way familiar to them. Even when they ought to correct their own thoughts, they try to stand against the word. God warns how dangerous it is to keep going on in that way.

The life and livelihood of Israel were within the covenant made with God. They were not to think that they could go on enjoying just the same the grace given to the people of God while forsaking God and serving other things.

God said that He would bring plagues on them according to their sins. He did not let them attribute the cause of the plagues to the caprice of God or to an unknowable fate, but pointed out the sin of going against Him. In the word that He would bring seven times more plagues is contained the meaning that the judgment on the people who insist on rebellion becomes heavier. One cannot keep up the attitude of not listening to the word of God and hope that the end of it will be peaceful.

Today we, too, must stand in the place of listening when God speaks. We must not push away the word of salvation because it differs from the method we think of, nor regard the will of the Lord after being saved as something that has nothing to do with us.

Even the children and the foundation of life are put in danger

In verse 22, God says that He will send wild beasts among them. He said that the wild beasts would rob them of their children and destroy their livestock. The warning of God is not about something that happens in a place far away. It is a word that the plague comes into the place where the people live, and the things they love and want to protect are put in danger.

To lose children is for the lives the parents loved and cared for to come to harm. It is for death to enter the place where the children were to grow up and live together. To lose livestock is for the property needed to keep on living to collapse. God spoke of a judgment reaching even their homes and their livelihood.

People easily think of going against God as merely a matter within their own hearts. One can regard it as having nothing to do with other people whether he follows God or not. But the warning of the text is directed to the whole people who live together. Their disobedience puts even their children and the foundation of their lives in danger. We must see that the way that has left God does not end with merely one individual's thought.

Yet we must not, with this word, immediately conclude that a misfortune some family goes through today is the retribution for the sins of those parents. We cannot say that we know all the will of God just by looking at another person's circumstances. The text is a warning given to Israel, who break the covenant. We who hear this warning must, before judging the pain of others, examine what faith and what direction of life we are showing before the people who live together with us.

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See the desolation in which people decrease and coming and going ceases

God said that He would make them few in number and make their highways desolate. It does not stop at the children and livestock coming to harm; the people decrease in number, and even the roads people used to travel become desolate. It is a scene in which, beyond the sorrow of one house, the whole place where the people live together wastes away.

On the roads is the life of people going to meet one another and coming and going to work. That the roads become desolate means that this coming and going ceases. Even though the shape of the road remains, there is no one who travels it. The life of visiting one another has collapsed. We can see in this last word how deep the plague reaches.

We usually fear that what we have will decrease. But for the people we are to live together with to decrease and for the place where we used to come and go to one another to disappear is an even more fearful thing. Even if the houses and roads remain, if there is no life to live in them, what joy is there? We must remember the fact that in the life God has given there are not only things to eat but also people to live together with.

We must not become people who realize the preciousness of something only after losing it. We must lay down the thought that we can keep the life we want as much as we please even apart from God. We must listen to the word now, while we can listen to it, and treasure that grace while we can serve the gospel together.

We must know the root of sin and death and seek the Savior

Dear beloved saints, this word makes us look back on how lightly people have thought of sin. Sin is not something that is all right as long as it is not found out. Nor is it the case that sin does not harm life because people have not yet seen its result. We must know what position we have been placed in before God because of sin. It is written: *"Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—" (Romans 5:12).*

The Bible says that through one man, Adam, sin entered the world, and death came through sin. We, the descendants of Adam, were born having inherited sin. And as we live, we show in our actions the sins that are in our hearts. Therefore, our problem is not one that ends if we only correct a few wrong habits. We must know our own root as sinners before God.

When people have their wrongs pointed out, they try to explain that there are decent parts in them, too. While acknowledging the sins exposed to others, they try to hide the sins that are inside. But God knows our hearts. He knows even the thoughts that go against God, the covetousness, and the evil heart. If we regard ourselves only as slightly lacking people and think that we can solve it by our own strength, it is hard to accept the grace of the remission of sins.

The death that comes through sin includes the problem of the relationship with God being cut off. Even if one gets along with people and his life is comfortable, if sin remains before God, he cannot escape the judgment on that sin. Therefore, a sinner must not seek only for the life before his eyes to become comfortable, but must know how his own sins can be removed. He must meet the Savior who will deliver him from sin and death.

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Here we must not take the expression "giving up on oneself" as meaning to despair. It is to acknowledge that I cannot save myself, and to turn our hearts to the Lord, who has the power to save. God not only speaks of the result of sin, but also sent Jesus Christ to save sinners. Though sin brought us to death, the Lord has accomplished the salvation that justifies sinners and brings them to life.

By the obedience of one Man sinners have become righteous

It is written: *"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous" (Romans 5:19).*

By the disobedience of one man, Adam, many were made sinners. But God sent Jesus Christ to save those sinners. Jesus obeyed the will of the Father and accomplished our salvation wholly. It is not that we repay with our imperfect obedience the sins by which we went against God; He has made us receive the remission of sins by believing in the righteous salvation Jesus Christ has accomplished.

Jesus is God by nature and the Creator who made us. He put on the flesh of a man and came to this earth. He is not One who was born having inherited sin as we were; the Son of God, who has no sin, came as the Savior in place of sinners. The Lord did not look at sinners from afar and tell them to try to do well by themselves. He Himself bore our sins and paid the price of those sins.

Jesus first received baptism from John at the Jordan River. When John tried to stop this, Jesus said as follows: *"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. Just as in the Old Testament sins were passed on to the sacrificial offering by the laying on of hands, Jesus received the sin of the world passed on to His own body by receiving baptism from John, the representative of mankind. The will of God was not for sinners to wash away their sins by their own strength, but for Jesus Christ, who has no sin, to bear those sins and save them.

At that time the Lord bore the sin inherited from Adam and all the sins we commit throughout our lives. Not only the sins of the past but also the sins of the present and even the sins we will commit in the future are included in the sin of the world. The sin of going against God, the sin of having been unwilling to listen to the word, and the sin of having caused pain to others because of my greed—the Lord took these on, too. It is not that only the sins we know of were picked out and passed on to Him. He bore all of them, even the sins we do not know of. John testified: *"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).*

John testified of Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Because Jesus bore the sin of the world by the baptism He received from John, He went to the Cross. His shedding of blood and dying on the Cross was precisely the work of receiving the judgment on that sin in our place. We were the ones who had to receive death, the wages of sin, but Jesus, who had taken on our sins, gave Himself up.

Therefore we must believe together in the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross. By the baptism He bore our sins, and on the Cross He paid the price of those

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sins. The passing of sin on to the Lord and the carrying out of the judgment on that sin together testify of our salvation. The death on the Cross was not because of any wrong of Jesus Himself, who has no sin. It was the result of His obeying the will of God, who wants to save us.

Jesus bore our sins by the baptism He received from John, died on the Cross, and then rose again from death. The Lord does not remain in death. He who bore all our sins and was judged rose again from death and has become the living Savior. Jesus has wholly accomplished the salvation for our remission of sins and new life.

This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Jesus has saved us from sin and death by the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His rising again from death. We receive the remission of sins by believing in that salvation. The reason a person must acknowledge his sins without hiding them is not to complete atonement by his own confession. It is to accept the salvation the Lord has accomplished for him, a sinner. It is not that the remission of sins is accomplished only when our tears or good deeds are added to the salvation of Jesus.

Believe in the grace that is greater than sin and live in that life

It is written: "*Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 5:20–21).*

When we hear the word of God, we come to know how many sins we have committed. But we must not think that the salvation

of the Lord is insufficient because we have realized the fact that our sins are many. The grace the Lord has bestowed is sufficient to remit all our sins. Even a person who has lived going against God receives the remission of sins if he believes the gospel that Jesus Christ bore all his sins.

That a person has lived long in sin cannot limit the saving power of the Lord. There is no need to think that it is too late and one must now go on bearing his own sins by himself. We must not regard lightly the sins we have committed, but neither must we regard as small the righteousness of the Lord, who has washed away those sins. The Lord, who bore all our sins and their punishment, is our Savior.

The person who believes in this grace does not go on to the conclusion that it is all right to sin more. It is because he knows the fact that sin destroys life, and also knows the love of the Lord, who has delivered him from that sin. The remission of sins is not a permission given to continue a life that goes against God. It is the grace that makes us believe in God, who has saved us, and live following His will.

If we have committed a wrong even after being saved, we must acknowledge it. At the same time, we must believe in the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross, by which He bore even that sin. In that way we stand on the word of the remission of sins and turn from the wrong way. It is not struggling alone, apart from the Lord, saying that we will solve our own sins; it is relying on the Lord, who has already saved us, and following His will.

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Preach the word of life to the people who live together with you

God does not want His own people to live thinking only of themselves. He wants the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which has saved us, to be passed on to other souls as well. If we have seen in today's word the desolation of the children, the people, and the roads where they used to come and go, we must think about what we are to pass on to the people who live together with us. What they need is the gospel of the Lord, who saves from sin and death. It is written: *"And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up" (Deuteronomy 6:6–7).*

God said to keep the word in the heart first and then teach it to the children. The work of making the word known to children is not separate from the faith of the adults themselves. While I treasure the word of God, I must make known what that word means. We must not leave the children to rely only on the circumstances of life, but must let them hear clearly how Jesus has remitted sins. The children, too, must know that gospel and believe it in their hearts.

Within the Church, too, we must treasure the place of serving the gospel together. It is helping someone to be able to hear the word, sharing the labor that is hard to bear alone, and preaching the word of salvation to the souls near and the souls far away. When the purpose for which we are together is clear, even a small labor becomes a precious work. This is because the Lord has established us as people who have received the remission of sins and made us live together for the gospel.

Even the person who follows the will of the Lord has

weakness and hardships. Therefore, we must not judge the grace only by our immediate circumstances and change our hearts. The salvation we have received is the salvation Jesus Christ has accomplished. We believe that fact, and serve the Lord together in faith in the place given to us. We must treasure the passing on, to yet other people, of the gospel that has given us life.

Dear beloved saints, the sin that goes against God destroys life and makes desolate the place where people live together. But Jesus Christ obeyed the will of the Father and saved us from sin and death. If you have not yet received the remission of sins, believe in the salvation the Lord has accomplished by the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His rising again from death. If you are a saint who has received the remission of sins, treasure that grace and join your heart to the will of the Lord. I hope that we will give thanks to the Lord, who has given us life, and preach the gospel of life to the people who live together with us. ✉

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Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

The Lord, who reconciled to God the sinners who had broken the covenant

< Leviticus 26:23-26 >

"And if by these things you are not reformed by Me, but walk contrary to Me, then I also will walk contrary to you, and I will punish you yet seven times for your sins. And I will bring a sword against you that will execute the vengeance of the covenant; when you are gathered together within your cities I will send pestilence among you; and you shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy. When I have cut off your supply of bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and they shall bring back your bread by weight, and you shall eat and not be satisfied."

Dear beloved saints, when hardship comes, people look for a safe place and a way to make a living. But in today's text, God says to the people who stand against Him that even if they enter their cities they will not escape the plague, and even if they eat bread they will not be satisfied.

This word shows that one cannot seek only his own safety while turning away from the relationship with God. The problem God points out is that they have broken the covenant and yet do

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not return. Before this word we must know the righteousness of God concerning sin. We must also know and believe what salvation God has accomplished to reconcile us sinners to Himself.

God also stands against the people who do not return

It is written: *"And if by these things you are not reformed by Me, but walk contrary to Me, then I also will walk contrary to you, and I will punish you yet seven times for your sins" (Leviticus 26:23–24).*

God speaks to the people who, even after going through the preceding plagues, do not return to Him. They wait only for the hardship to pass while going against God. But God makes it a problem that they do not return to Him. The relationship with God does not become right by the mere fact of having gone through suffering. They must acknowledge for what they are being rebuked, and turn their hearts to God.

The word that God, too, will stand against them is stern. While standing against God, who delivered them out of Egypt, they cannot still expect God to uphold their own will. The people who stand against God are standing against the One who is to protect them. When God deals with their sins, there is no other power that can hold back that judgment.

We easily forget the fact that God hates sin while saying that we know the love of God. But God does not simply approve of the disobedience of the people He loves. We must not keep holding on to the attitude of pushing away the will of God while following our own desires. The saints who have received the remission of sins must also give ear to this warning. God, who has saved us, is our God even now.

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God judges the sin of breaking the covenant

It is written: *"And I will bring a sword against you that will execute the vengeance of the covenant; when you are gathered together within your cities I will send pestilence among you; and you shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy" (Leviticus 26:25).*

Here, breaking the covenant refers to forsaking the covenant that was made. For God to bring a sword is to call Israel to account for the sin of breaking the covenant. This verse is not a promise that God will take revenge on their enemies on behalf of Israel. It is a warning that Israel themselves, who forsook the covenant, will come to be judged.

The covenant between Israel and God was not made with light words. In Exodus 24, when Moses declared the word of God, the people responded that they would do that word. Moses read the Book of the Covenant aloud and sprinkled the blood on the people. It is also written: *"And Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on the people, and said, 'This is the blood of the covenant which the LORD has made with you according to all these words'" (Exodus 24:8).*

In the covenant established with blood, life was at stake. They had to know that the sin of breaking the word of God was not a small mistake unrelated to death. God judges justly the sin of going against His word. The people responded that they would live according to the word, but by that resolution alone they did not become people who do not sin. They had to know their own sins and weakness before the word of God.

We, too, resolve many times that we will not repeat the same wrong. But that promise does not remove the sins already committed. The person who holds on only to his own resolution comes to be pressed down by sin again whenever that resolution

collapses.

Therefore, when we hear the word about the sin of breaking the covenant, we must not try to save ourselves by making a greater promise to God. We must acknowledge ourselves as having sinned before God, and know the salvation that delivers from the judgment on that sin. Together with the law, which exposes sin, God also gave the sacrifice of the offering that takes the sinner's place. Sinners needed an offering that would bear their sins and die in their place.

Even gathered in the cities, they do not escape the judgment of God

In verse 25, God said that even if the people gathered together within their cities, He would send pestilence among them and deliver them into the hand of the enemy. When the sword threatens from outside, people try to gather together and protect themselves. But in the situation where God judges, the fact that they have gathered in the cities does not make them safe. They came in to escape the threat outside, but they meet the plague inside as well, and in the end are handed over to the hand of the enemy.

By merely changing the place of refuge, the problem cannot be solved. What they must examine first is the fact that they themselves are standing against God.

The problem of the remission of sins is the same. One's sins do not disappear because he leads a religious life together with many people. Even if there is a chapel one has long attended, familiar religious activities, and people around who say that his faith is good, if sin remains before God, the problem of that sin has not been solved. Before putting forward where one belongs,

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one must know and believe how Jesus Christ has removed his sins.

The way of returning to God is not the work of finding a place where one can hide his sins. It is acknowledging one's own sins before the word and accepting the salvation God has prepared for sinners. Since God has made known to us who the Savior we need is, we must believe in Him.

When the food they relied on is cut off, they eat and are not satisfied

It is written: *"When I have cut off your supply of bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and they shall bring back your bread by weight, and you shall eat and not be satisfied" (Leviticus 26:26).*

God says that He will cut off the food they relied on. People think that if they have something to eat, they can live tomorrow as well. Yet even the food that sustained that life is cut off. Following the sword and pestilence of verse 25, in verse 26 want reaches even the most basic place of making a living.

The scene of ten women baking bread in one oven is not the picture of an abundant table. Food has become so scarce that the bread many people would have to bake can be handled by one oven. Even the baked bread they cannot share and eat as much as they like, but must give it out by weight. It is not only the complete disappearance of eating that is a plague. To eat, yet not eat enough, so that hunger continues, is also a fearful want.

What this verse speaks of is a judgment in which the food of actual life becomes scarce. If the people regarded themselves as able to keep up their own lives at least, even while going against God, God warned that even the food they relied on could be cut

off. Neither the protection of the cities nor the food eaten every day solves the sin of standing against God.

We who read this word must look beyond the matter of making a living right now and examine our relationship with God. Laboring for our livelihood is necessary. But we must not think that when our lives improve, the problem of sin will also be solved of itself. Material abundance cannot substitute for the remission of sins. Conversely, we must not think that because our lives are hard, we are paying the price of sin with the suffering we go through. The judgment on sin is solved only through the way of salvation God has appointed.

God sent the peace offering for sinners

Dear beloved saints, if God judges sin justly, how can we stand before Him? We have not kept the word of God wholly. We ought to love God, but we put our own greed first; we ought to love our neighbors, but we harbored a heart of hatred. There are not only the actions exposed outwardly but also the sins committed in our hearts. God, though knowing us to be like this, sent His own Son to save us. It is written: *"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).*

The way of being reconciled to God is not opened by our first showing sufficient love to God. God first loved us sinners. To give life to us, who had become far from God because of sin, He sent Jesus Christ as the peace offering. God Himself accomplished the work of salvation in order to restore the relationship with us.

We must not take the word that He became the peace offering as meaning merely that God looks on us favorably. The sin that

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blocks the way between God and us must be actually solved. The judgment cannot disappear while sin is left as it is. God showed through Jesus Christ the love that saves sinners without abandoning His own righteousness.

In the Old Testament, when the sacrifice of the peace offering was offered, they brought an unblemished offering, laid hands on its head, and killed it. There was the passing of sin on to the offering, and the offering that had borne that sin shedding its blood and dying. Jesus came to accomplish precisely that salvation. The Lord, who is God by nature, put on the flesh of a man and came to this earth. The Son of God, who has no sin, became the peace offering in place of us sinners.

He solved our sins with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross

For Jesus to become the peace offering for us, He had to bear our sins. So Jesus received baptism from John at the Jordan River. When John tried to stop 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 the work of fulfilling the righteousness of God, who saves sinners. Just as in the Old Testament sins were passed on by laying hands on the head of the sacrificial offering, Jesus received the sin of the world passed on to His own body by receiving baptism from John, the representative of mankind. Jesus, who has no sin, stood in the place of sinners and bore our sins.

In the sin of the world that the Lord bore, all our sins are contained. The sins committed from birth until death—the sins

of the past, the present, and the future—are all included. The sin of forsaking the promise with God, the sin of going against the word even while knowing it, and the sins of the heart not exposed to people—the Lord took these on as well. It is not that only the sins we remembered and told Him were passed on to Him. Even the sins we do not yet know, the Lord bore them all. John testified: *"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).*

John testified of Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Jesus, who bore our sins, went to the Cross bearing those sins. By shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, He received in our place the judgment we were to receive. The death of the Lord was not a suffering unrelated to our sins. The Lord, who bore our sins by the baptism He received from John, paid the price of those sins with His own life.

God did not regard lightly His righteousness concerning sin. He had His only begotten Son bear the punishment that the sinners who broke the covenant were to receive. Jesus received our sins passed on to Him by baptism, and received the judgment on those sins by the blood of the Cross. Therefore we believe together in the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross. Through this salvation, the problem of sin between God and us has been solved.

Jesus bore our sins by the baptism He received from John, died on the Cross, and then rose again from death. He who bore our sins and was judged rose again from death and has become the living Savior. The Lord did not leave us in sin and death, but accomplished the salvation that makes us receive the remission of sins and live as the children of God.

This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit that we believe. Through Jesus Christ, God who came in the flesh, God solved

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all our sins by the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His rising again from death. We receive the remission of sins by believing in that salvation. It is not a salvation that is completed only when human good deeds or religious zeal are added. We receive by faith the salvation God, who first loved us, has bestowed.

Believe in the remission of sins the Lord accomplished once and for all

It is written: *"By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Hebrews 10:10).*

Jesus offered His own body once and for all. The atonement He accomplished for us is not a work that must be started over from the beginning every time we sin. According to the will God desired, Jesus accomplished perfect salvation by bearing sin and being judged. The person who believes in this salvation has no need to create anew the ground of the remission of sins every time his feelings and deeds change.

Hebrews goes on to say. It is also written: *"Then He adds, 'Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.' Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin" (Hebrews 10:17–18).*

That God remembers our sins no more is not because He does not know the sins. It is because Jesus Christ bore our sins and even received the judgment on those sins. It is absolutely necessary for us to acknowledge our sins, but that acknowledgment and confession do not substitute for or complete the atonement of Jesus. The ground of the remission of sins lies in the salvation Jesus Christ has accomplished.

Therefore, the person who has not yet received the remission of sins must not make excuses for the sins he has committed, but must believe in the salvation of the Lord. He must accept the word that the Lord bore even the sin of my having stood against God. When I believe the fact that God sent the peace offering and saved me, I, a sinner, am reconciled to God.

The saints who have already received the remission of sins, too, must turn their hearts to the salvation the Lord has accomplished whenever they discover their shortcomings. We must neither hide our wrongs nor think as if the atonement of the Lord had disappeared because of those wrongs. It is believing in the Lord, who bore even those sins, and setting right our wrong hearts and the direction of our lives. The assurance of the remission of sins does not come from a heart that regards sin as nothing much. It comes from believing in Jesus Christ, who received the judgment of sin in our place.

Follow God within the love that has reconciled us

Dear beloved saints, today's text has shown what judgment the people who stand against God come to receive. Through that warning we know that we cannot regard sin lightly. We also know how great the love of God is, through Jesus, who became the peace offering for us. God did not leave us sinners alone, but gave up His own Son. It is written: "*There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love" (1 John 4:18).*

We have this love. It is the love by which Jesus washed away our sins with the baptism He received from John and bore the punishment with the blood of the Cross. The person who believes in that love, instead of hiding from God to escape the

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judgment of sin, comes forward giving thanks to God, who has saved him. Relying on the word of the remission of sins, he can serve God boldly.

This boldness is not a heart that thinks it may go against the will of God. It is the heart that wants to follow His word because it believes in the Lord, who has loved us. God has told us to love God and to love one another. We must examine our own wrongs by the word, care for our brothers who are lacking, and preach the gospel of the remission of sins to other souls as well. The salvation the Lord has accomplished for us becomes the reason for our thanksgiving and service.

By the protection of the cities or the food eaten every day, sin is not solved before God. The One who has reconciled us to God is Jesus Christ. Believe in the salvation the Lord has accomplished by the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His rising again from death. I hope that we will turn our hearts to God within the grace of the remission of sins, and live following the will of the Lord, who first loved us. ✉

Sermon 6 by Paul C. Jong

Forsake the idols that will collapse and believe in the Lord, who has washed away our sins

< Leviticus 26:27-33 >

"And after all this, if you do not obey Me, but walk contrary to Me, then I also will walk contrary to you in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins. You shall eat the flesh of your sons, and you shall eat the flesh of your daughters. I will destroy your high places, cut down your incense altars, and cast your carcasses on the lifeless forms of your idols; and My soul shall abhor you. I will lay your cities waste and bring your sanctuaries to desolation, and I will not smell the fragrance of your sweet aromas. I will bring the land to desolation, and your enemies who dwell in it shall be astonished at it. I will scatter you among the nations and draw out a sword after you; your land shall be desolate and your cities waste."

Dear beloved saints, how much can a person who has left God hold on to with his own hands? In today's word we come to see the scene in which the idols the people relied on are broken, the sanctuaries where they offered sacrifices become desolate, and they are scattered even from the land where they lived. They

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would have thought that even while leaving God they could keep their own gods, worship, and life just as they were. But God speaks of the day when the things they held on to collapse together.

When we read this warning, we must not stand in the place of judging Israel. This is because we, too, put our own thoughts ahead of the word of God, and there are times when we say that we rely on God but in fact hold on to something else. We must look back on ourselves as to what God hates, and what we must believe in to come before God.

In particular, today's text shows that God does not unconditionally accept something just because it has the form of worship. In the matter of washing away sins, too, we must know the way God has appointed. The power that makes our hearts clean is not in a religious method that people have made. It is in the salvation Jesus Christ has accomplished by the water and the Spirit.

Do not reject to the end the word He keeps letting you hear

It is written: *"And after all this, if you do not obey Me, but walk contrary to Me, then I also will walk contrary to you in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins" (Leviticus 26:27–28).*

Verse 27 begins by pointing to the things He had already warned of before. The people had not remained in the state of their first wrong, done through not knowing the will of God. God had spoken repeatedly and had let them know the result of the way they were going. And yet, if they do not listen to the word and stand against God, they come to receive a sterner chastisement.

In verse 28, God says that He will stand against them in fury. It means that going against God cannot be a choice without any consequence. God is holy, and He does not Himself overturn the word by which He declared sin to be sin. Before the word of sevenfold chastisement, rather than calculating what disaster will happen how many times, we must realize how sternly God deals with continued rebellion.

The person who has received the remission of sins must also hear this word. It is not that, because he has been saved, he may put his own desires ahead of the will of God. When what our hearts want clashes with the word, we must examine which side we are following. The person who believes that God has saved me also treasures the word that guides me. We must not live holding together, as a matter of course, the confession of having received grace and the attitude of rejecting the word.

At the end of sin is a misery no one wished for

It is written: *"You shall eat the flesh of your sons, and you shall eat the flesh of your daughters" (Leviticus 26:29).*

This word is heavy on the heart just to read. Before, He said that even if they weighed out their food and shared it, they would not be satisfied. Now He says that the hunger will become so much more severe that even something that must never happen between parents and children will take place. It is not that God commands such conduct. He is warning how wretchedly their lives will collapse in the midst of the judgment on sin.

We must not try to avoid its horror by changing this verse into a different meaning. The sons and daughters are the actual children whom parents must love and protect. Even the place where the lives nearest to them must be protected collapses. The

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people who forsook God in order to live better come, on the contrary, to a state where they cannot keep even the most basic order of human life.

There would be no one who goes against God hoping for such an end from the beginning. They push back the word because for the moment it seems beneficial to them and seems to help fulfill their wishes. But the starting point a person wants does not guarantee the result of that way. God lets us know in advance the final appearance of sin, so that we may not judge looking only at the gain before our eyes.

The idols I believed would protect me collapse together

It is written: *"I will destroy your high places, cut down your incense altars, and cast your carcasses on the lifeless forms of your idols; and My soul shall abhor you" (Leviticus 26:30).*

The high places and the incense altars show the places where the people left God and served other things. They would have sought their own peace and prosperity there. But when God judges, those idols do not protect the people who serve them. Rather, the idols themselves are broken, and the carcasses of the people who relied on them are laid on top of them.

In this scene, the idols and the people who serve them collapse together. If the idols truly had the power to save, they would first have to prevent their own destruction. But the broken idols can do nothing. The object to which people had entrusted their lives had no power to save life. The word by which God forbade idolatry was not a command meant to take good things away from people. It was a word telling them not to perish while believing in what cannot save.

We easily think that this word has nothing to do with us because we do not bow down before a carved image. But if there is something we regard as more precious than God, and think that to obtain it we may even reject the word, we must examine our hearts. When fulfilling one's own desires sits in the highest place, the heart can serve another master, unlike the lips that call on God.

What God hates is not only the objects people have made. It is the rebellion of the people who turned their backs on God and entrusted their hearts to those objects. Therefore, the problem of the heart is not solved of itself just because one outward idol has been removed. We must turn our hearts to God, who has saved us and guides us.

The form of worship cannot take the place of God

It is written: *"I will lay your cities waste and bring your sanctuaries to desolation, and I will not smell the fragrance of your sweet aromas" (Leviticus 26:31).*

In verse 30 the idols collapsed, and in verse 31 He says that even the sanctuaries will be brought to desolation. He says that He will not accept the sweet aromas either. Just because the people continue the act of offering sacrifices, the problem of rebelling against God is not covered up. One cannot be guaranteed peace on the ground that he offers something to God while hating God and forsaking His word.

Here, that He will not smell the fragrance means that He does not accept what they offer. Even if the incense goes up and the form of the sacrifice remains, that does not become evidence that God is pleased. The One who receives worship is God. One cannot demand that God accept it only on the ground that he has

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put in much devotion. Keeping only the outward form while having left the will God has made known cannot be true faith.

The word spoken to Jeroboam in 1 Kings 14 also reveals this fact. God had raised him up and made him rule the people, but he made other gods and molded idols. God rebuked him for having cast God behind his back. It is not that he had no religion. The problem was that he had changed the object of service and the way of sacrifice to his own advantage.

Even if the people gather, the priests work, and offerings are offered, if God has been replaced, that worship cannot be worship that serves God. The sin of Jeroboam did not stay an individual wrong, but led even the people onto the wrong way. 1 Kings 14:15–16 says that because of that idolatry the people would be uprooted from the good land and scattered. It shows the same problem as the warning of Leviticus today.

We, too, when we speak of the remission of sins, must not change according to our own thoughts the salvation God has accomplished. We must not say that our sins have disappeared because we have worshiped for a long time, or think that God will overlook our remaining sins because we have offered much devotion. Such thinking makes one's own act of taking part in worship the ground of salvation. The ground of the remission of sins lies in what God has accomplished for us.

To offer the worship that pleases God, we must first know how God has washed away our sins. We must believe in that salvation with our hearts and give thanks. Just as sin does not disappear because people make the form of a sacrifice, neither can we produce the method of salvation ourselves.

Even if the land and the cities remain, they lose the foundation of their lives

It is written: *"I will bring the land to desolation, and your enemies who dwell in it shall be astonished at it. I will scatter you among the nations and draw out a sword after you; your land shall be desolate and your cities waste" (Leviticus 26:32–33).*

The desolation God spoke of is not a momentary inconvenience. The foundation of life collapses to such an extent that even the enemies who come in and dwell in that land are astonished. The people are scattered from their own land, and because of the sword that follows them they lose even a place to stay safely. The mere fact of having the houses and cities they lived in does not mean they can keep on living in them.

This land was not a possession they had produced by themselves. It was the land God gave to the people He delivered from slavery in Egypt. Therefore, living in that land, too, could not be thought of apart from the relationship with God. They tried to push God, who gave the land, to the back and hold on only to the gain obtained from the land, but while rebelling against God they could not keep that gain forever.

The grace we have received is the same. We must not take for granted having come to hear the gospel, having come to believe in the remission of sins, and having become able to learn the word together and serve the Lord. The value of that grace does not decrease because time has passed and we have become accustomed to it. If we only calculate what more we can obtain within it, the Lord, who actually gave us the grace, can become far from our hearts.

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In the face of the judgment of sin, the One who will save us is the Lord

Dear saints, before this warning, who can put forward his own righteousness? While seeing the idols collapse and even worship not being accepted, we must not try to look for a stronger idol or prepare more offerings. We must first acknowledge our own sin of having rebelled against the word of God.

Then by what are we saved? Can we pay the price of the sins already committed with the resolution to be careful in the future? Are sins washed away just because one's fear is great? Realizing sin is necessary, but the realization itself is not the power of atonement. We need a Savior who will wash away our sins. God has sent us Jesus Christ as that Savior.

God, who spoke of judgment on sin, has also prepared the way to save sinners. We must learn that way through the word and believe it. If we acknowledge the warning of God but cannot believe in the salvation God has accomplished, we remain in fear. Now we must turn our eyes to Jesus Christ, who came for us.

Jesus solved our sins with the baptism He received from John and the Cross

Jesus is not a slightly more righteous person among those who have sinned. The Lord, who is God, put on the flesh of a man and came to this earth to save sinners. The Lord Himself had no sin. Therefore He could become the unblemished sacrificial offering who would take on our sins.

In the Old Testament, when a sinner offered the sacrifice of atonement, he brought an unblemished offering and passed on

his sins by laying his hands on its head. The offering that had received the sins passed on to it shed its blood and died. Through this sacrifice, God showed together the passing of sin on to the offering and the judgment of death on sin. In not letting people make sacrifices arbitrarily, there was such a clear will of salvation.

Jesus, who came to fulfill this promise, received baptism from John at the Jordan River. When John tried to stop Him, 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 not a baptism to wash away any sin of the Lord's own. It was the work of the Lord, who has no sin, receiving the sin of mankind passed on to Him. Just as sins were passed on to the offering by the laying on of hands in the Old Testament, Jesus bore the sin of the world on His own body by receiving baptism from John, the representative of mankind. He received that baptism in order to accomplish the remission of sins God had promised.

In the sins passed on to the Lord at that time, the sins of each one of us are also contained. It is not only the sins we remember. The sins committed from childhood until now, the sins harbored in the heart and the sins shown in action, and even the sins we will commit as we live from now on—all the sins belonging to our whole lives the Lord bore. It is not that we entrust to Jesus only the wrongs we already know of and must solve separately the sins not yet exposed. The Lord took on the sin of the world wholly.

Jesus, who bore those sins, was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood, and died. The death on the Cross does not stay a tragedy that moves our feelings for a moment. The Lord received in our place the judgment on the sins He had borne when He received

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baptism from John. God did not overlook sin as if it were nothing. Jesus Christ paid the price of sin with His own life.

Therefore, when we believe in the Cross of Jesus, we must also believe together how the Lord bore our sins and went to the Cross. The baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross are joined together within the salvation of God, who accomplished our remission of sins. We must not divide, by human thinking, the baptism by which He received sins passed on to Him and the death by which He received the judgment of sin in our place, or leave one of them out.

Jesus rose again from death. The Lord, who bore our sins and paid the price of those sins, is the Savior who is alive even now. The salvation the Lord has accomplished is not something that weakens with the passing of time like our resolutions. We receive the remission of sins by believing the fact that the Lord received baptism from John, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again from death. This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit that has delivered us from sin.

Let us serve God with the thanksgiving of those who believe in the remission of sins

Dear saints, to believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not to add one's own merit to the salvation of God. It is to accept in our hearts the word that the Lord took on all our sins and solved them. Our tears, our service, or the length of our religious life does not complete the atonement. The One who completed salvation is Jesus Christ.

When we come to God with this faith, the content of our worship also becomes clear. We go from the worship that puts forward our own devotion in an attempt to remove sins not yet

solved, to the worship that believes in the remission of sins the Lord has accomplished and gives thanks. We do not stop at calling on God with our lips, but come to believe in our hearts and praise the salvation God has bestowed. The grace of the Lord is the ground that makes us stand before God.

Our flesh has not become perfect because we have received the remission of sins. Shortcomings are still exposed, and we can commit wrongs. But acknowledging a wrong and turning from it is different from trying to complete again, by one's own repentance, the atonement already accomplished. We believe in the Lord, who bore even those sins, while not hiding our wrongs. And we turn from the place where we insisted on our own will, and receive the guidance of the word.

Since the Lord has saved us, let us now use our bodies and hearts in serving the Lord. Rather than boasting of the scale of a religion recognized by people, let us treasure the work of preaching the gospel of the remission of sins accurately, even to one person. We must not change the gospel in order to protect what we have built. Rather, we must use what we have in order to preach the salvation the Lord has accomplished.

Today's word shows that neither idols, nor the outward form of worship, nor the land one lived in can take the place of God. The One we are to believe in and rely on to the end is Jesus Christ, who has washed away all our sins. Let us not make what will collapse our savior, but believe in the Lord, who bore our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment on them in our place on the Cross, and rose again from death. I hope that all of us will give thanks for that remission of sins and live by the faith that pleases God. ✉

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Sermon 7 by Paul C. Jong

Escape from the fear of sin and enjoy the rest the Lord has given

< Leviticus 26:34-39 >

"Then the land shall enjoy its sabbaths as long as it lies desolate and you are in your enemies' land; then the land shall rest and enjoy its sabbaths. As long as it lies desolate it shall rest—for the time it did not rest on your sabbaths when you dwelt in it. And as for those of you who are left, I will send faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies; the sound of a shaken leaf shall cause them to flee; they shall flee as though fleeing from a sword, and they shall fall when no one pursues. They shall stumble over one another, as it were before a sword, when no one pursues; and you shall have no power to stand before your enemies. You shall perish among the nations, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up. And those of you who are left shall waste away in their iniquity in your enemies' lands; also in their fathers' iniquities, which are with them, they shall waste away."

Dear beloved saints, in today's text the land and the people appear in different states. The land the people have left enjoys rest, but the people who have left that land do not rest. In the land of their enemies they are startled even at a small sound, they fall even when no one pursues, and they waste away because of

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sin. Rest has come to the land, but fear remains in the hearts of the people.

We think that when work stops and our surroundings become quiet, our hearts will also become at ease of themselves. But for a person to truly rest, there is a matter deeper than the surroundings becoming still. If one is harboring sin unsolved before God, his soul does not rest just because he has escaped hardship for a while.

Through today's word, let us look at the people who rejected the rest God had given. And let us find out what Jesus Christ has accomplished in order to deliver us from the fear of sin and judgment. The Lord does not tell us only to fear sin and look for a place to hide. He gives the remission of sins by the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and gives true rest to the heart that believes in that salvation.

God makes the land rest, which the people did not let rest

It is written: *"Then the land shall enjoy its sabbaths as long as it lies desolate and you are in your enemies' land; then the land shall rest and enjoy its sabbaths. As long as it lies desolate it shall rest—for the time it did not rest on your sabbaths when you dwelt in it" (Leviticus 26:34–35).*

God says that while the people stay in the land of their enemies, their own land will lie desolate and rest. What rests here is first the actual land they used to farm. Because the people leave that land and no longer cultivate it, it comes to obtain the rest it had not enjoyed all that time.

In Leviticus 25, God commanded that after entering the land He gives, they farm for six years, and in the seventh year let the

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land rest. That rest was a sabbath to the LORD. The people who had received the land had to use it according to the word of God, the Owner of that land. They were not to regard only the continued gathering in as important, but had to obey also the word that made them stop.

But verse 35 says that the land did not rest on the sabbaths of the people. It means that the rest God had appointed was not kept in the life of the people. While enjoying the grace of having obtained the land, they did not accept what He had said about how to use that land. They tried to use what God had given only according to their own will.

This is different from the blessed rest the people used to enjoy. The land rests, but the people suffer in the land of their enemies. Resting by faith when God speaks, and letting go of one's hands unavoidably after losing what one had through rebellion, are not the same. We must look back on whether we are pushing away the word of God, who gave it, because of the heart that wants to keep what we have received.

The heart to which a small sound becomes fear

It is written: *"And as for those of you who are left, I will send faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies; the sound of a shaken leaf shall cause them to flee; they shall flee as though fleeing from a sword, and they shall fall when no one pursues" (Leviticus 26:36).*

Verse 36 shows the hearts of the people who survived. They have preserved their lives, but have lost their boldness. Though no sword is actually following them, hearing the sound of a leaf shaken by the wind, they flee as though fleeing from a sword. Even at the moment when the outside threat has disappeared, the

fear within their hearts does not let them go.

Reading this word, we learn that a person is not a being who can always become strong whenever he sets his mind to it. Even a person who regarded himself as bold can collapse. A person who trusted in his own strength can become unable to bear even a small sound. Therefore, we must not leave the matter of setting our hearts before God to our own temperament or nerve.

This is especially so in the problem of sin and judgment. One can think that even while knowing the fact that he has sin, if he forgets it for a while, it will be all right. When one keeps busy and is absorbed in other things, there are times when sin does not come to mind. But sin does not disappear while one is not thinking of it. The moment one remembers the judgment of God, he becomes afraid again. By trying only to make the heart strong while leaving sin as it is, one cannot obtain true rest.

Of course, we must not make every moment we feel fear into evidence that there is no remission of sins. Even the person who believes in the Lord has weakness. What is important is what we rely on when fear comes. The ground that holds our hearts is not an unshakable feeling, but the salvation of the Lord, who has actually solved our sins.

Even together, they lose the strength to hold one another up

It is written: *"They shall stumble over one another, as it were before a sword, when no one pursues; and you shall have no power to stand before your enemies. You shall perish among the nations, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up" (Leviticus 26:37–38).*

To stumble over one another in verse 37 means to trample

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one another. The people who flee in alarm trample one another and fall. Since they are together, it seems they would hold one another up, but seized by fear, they rather fall down together. No strength remains even to stand against their enemies.

In verse 38, He says that the land of their enemies will eat them up. It is not merely a matter of the place they live in changing. They perish and waste away there. Going to another country after leaving the land God had given did not mean that the problem of having rebelled against God was left behind there. Even if they changed places, they could not escape the judgment of God on sin.

Do not make the wrong handed down from your ancestors your own faith

It is written: *"And those of you who are left shall waste away in their iniquity in your enemies' lands; also in their fathers' iniquities, which are with them, they shall waste away" (Leviticus 26:39).*

In verse 39, their own iniquity and their fathers' iniquities appear together. The people who survived also gradually waste away because of sin. The result of the sins the ancestors committed reaches even the lives of the descendants, and those descendants themselves are also sinning before God. It is not a situation where one can say that he has no responsibility because his ancestors did wrong.

Sin does not always end by affecting only the one person who committed it. A wrong faith and a wrong direction of life can be handed down within a family and a community. Because something has been repeated for a long time, people come to take the wrong thing for granted, and come to think it right to

follow it themselves because their parents did it. But the fact that it has continued for a long time cannot become a standard higher than the word of God.

1 Kings 22:51–53 says that Ahaziah, the son of Ahab, did evil in the sight of the LORD, following the way of his father and his mother. He could have seen the wrongs of those before him and left that way, but he made their way his own way. It shows how great an influence what one has seen and learned has on the faith of the descendants.

We do not hear this word as meaning that we must unconditionally throw away what we have inherited. The faith that believes in God must be inherited as something precious. But we must not keep holding on to what is contrary to the word of God merely because it is familiar. The person who teaches the faith, too, must not pass on only the religious life familiar to himself, but must make known rightly how Jesus Christ has washed away sins.

Our hope does not lie in making clean by ourselves the past of our family. It lies in believing in the salvation by which the Lord bore the sin of mankind. Neither the sins our ancestors committed nor the sins we committed following them are special sins outside the salvation of Jesus. Before the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which has washed away all sins, we must acknowledge our own sins and believe in that salvation ourselves, directly.

True rest is in the salvation that has removed sin

Dear saints, the land resting and a person's soul resting are not the same. The people of today's text came to let go of the farm work they had been doing, but their hearts did not rest. We,

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too, do not escape the problem of sin and judgment by the mere fact of not doing something. The rest of the soul needs the remission of sins.

God is not One who comforts us so that we may live forgetting sin while leaving it as it is. Nor does He make the judgment on sin as if it had never existed. The rest God has given us comes from the salvation by which He actually solved sin. That is why even a person who has deeply realized his sin can set his heart at ease before God if he believes in that salvation.

If a person had to wash away his own sins by himself, when could he finish that work? While he strives to correct one wrong, another wrong is exposed. Even if he is careful in his actions, hatred and greed rise up in his heart. He regrets the sin he committed yesterday, and today he sins again. The person who tries to remove sin by his own effort cannot know what, and how much, he must do to be enough.

The One whom people like us need is Jesus Christ. The Lord did not leave it to sinners to try harder to remove their own sins. He Himself accomplished the work of salvation that we who have sinned cannot do. That rest can be given to us is not because the ability to solve sin has arisen within us, but because the Lord has completed that work for us.

Jesus received baptism from John and bore the judgment of our sins

Jesus Christ is God, and He put on the flesh of a man and came into this world to save us. The Lord came in the same flesh as ours, but He is One who has no sin. A sinner dying because of his own sins, and Jesus, who has no sin, bearing our sins in our place, are different. The Lord became the unblemished

sacrificial offering for us.

In the sacrifices of the Old Testament, the sinner passed on his sins by laying his hands on the head of the sacrificial offering, and the offering that had received the sins passed on to it shed its blood and died. This way of atonement God had appointed showed the salvation Jesus Christ would accomplish in the future. Sin had to be passed on to the offering, and the judgment on that sin had to be carried out.

To fulfill this promise, Jesus came to the Jordan River and received baptism from John. The Lord 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" (Matthew 3:15).*

The baptism Jesus received from John was not a matter of washing away any sin of the Lord's own, for He has no sin. It was the Lord receiving the sin of mankind passed on to Him. By receiving baptism from John, the representative of mankind sent by God, Jesus bore the sin of the world. The Lord fulfilled the promise by which sins had been passed on to the sacrificial offering through the laying on of hands in the Old Testament.

In the sins the Lord took on, all our sins of the past, the present, and the future are contained. It is not that He took on only the sins of the people before we were born, nor that He bore only the sins we committed before we believed in the gospel. All the sins of our whole lives, the sins we commit in our hearts and thoughts, and even the sins we commit in word and deed were included in the sin of the world and passed on to the Lord. The Lord knew and bore even the wrongs we do not yet know of.

Only when we clearly believe this fact do our hearts obtain rest. If the Lord had taken away only a certain portion of sin and we had to solve the rest, we would at any time be bound again to the fear of judgment. But Jesus is not One who came to save

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sinners incompletely. To save us wholly, He received baptism from John and bore all sins.

Jesus, who bore those sins, shed His blood and died on the Cross. The Lord, who has no sin, received in our place the judgment we were to receive because of our sins. The blood of the Cross is the blood by which Jesus paid the price of the sins He bore by receiving baptism from John. By the baptism our sins were passed on to the Lord, and on the Cross the judgment on those sins was carried out. The righteous judgment of God and the salvation for sinners were accomplished through Jesus Christ.

Jesus rose again from death. The Lord, who paid the price of sin and died, came to life again and gave us life and hope. We do not rely on One who remains in death. We believe in the living Savior, who solved our sins and rose again from death. The salvation the Lord has accomplished does not change because our feelings are shaken.

The person who believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of sins. God gives the Holy Spirit to the one who believes and makes him His own child. To obtain salvation, there is no need to add one's own good deeds, tears, or confession as the price of atonement. It is believing in our hearts in the salvation of the Lord—the baptism by which He bore our sins, the blood of the Cross, and His rising again from death. It is written: *"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit" (Romans 8:1).*

This word is the ground that holds our rest. It is not that I judge myself leniently and say that I have no sin. It is believing in that salvation because Jesus Christ bore all my sins and even received the judgment. Because the salvation of the Lord is clear, the remission of sins is also clear.

While acknowledging your wrongs, believe in the salvation already accomplished

Even after receiving the remission of sins, we discover our own shortcomings as we live. There are times when we say hurtful words to those close to us, think only of our own gain, and go a way different from the word. At that time, the person who believes the gospel does not hide his wrongs. He does not speak as if even the fact that he did wrong had never existed, on the ground that the Lord has washed away sins.

When Jesus washed the feet of His disciples, He said that he who is already bathed needs only to wash his feet. The Lord knew even the weakness the disciples would show in the future. So that the disciples who had received the remission of sins would not become far from the Lord because of the wrongs they would commit as they lived, the Lord taught them the grace by which He washes them.

We, too, when a wrong is exposed, must acknowledge that sin before the Lord. And we must believe that Jesus bore even that wrong by the baptism He received from John and was judged for it on the Cross. It is not that Jesus newly takes away that sin because we have acknowledged it now. It is believing, even in the face of the wrong exposed today, in the remission of sins already accomplished.

This faith does not make us insensitive to sin. Rather, it enables us to acknowledge our wrongs. The person who thinks that everything is over if his sin is exposed tries to hide it, but the person who believes in the grace of the Lord can acknowledge his wrong and set it right. If we have wronged our neighbor, we must apologize, and if someone has come into difficulty because of us, we must look into that matter. The faith of the remission of sins and responsibility toward our neighbors

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must go together.

When we believe in that way in the salvation the Lord has accomplished, there is no reason to remain held by the darkness of the heart. Nor is there any need to throw away even the rest the Lord has given because we have seen our own shortcomings. We have only to give thanks for the grace that has saved me, lacking as I am, and live again according to the word. The salvation of the Lord is not smaller than our wrongs.

Let us comfort other souls with the heart that used to be chased by fear

Dear beloved saints, the people of today's word did not escape from fear and wasting away even after leaving the land. But the Lord did not stop at teaching sinners where they must hide to be safe; He solved sin itself and opened the way to come before God. The rest we are to enjoy is precisely in this salvation.

The person who has received that rest also comes to have a different heart in dealing with the weakness of others. To a soul discouraged because of his own wrongs, he does not only say to become stronger. He makes known the gospel that Jesus bore even that sin. Instead of trampling one another and falling in fear, they hold one another up by the grace the Lord has given.

Let us pass on this faith to our children and the next generation as well. Let us not stay at vaguely telling them to lead a religious life diligently, but make known to them why Jesus received baptism from John, why He died on the Cross, and why He rose again from death. Only then will they, too, know where to obtain true rest when they face their own sins.

The One who gives us rest is the Lord, who has washed away all our sins. Let us believe in the salvation already accomplished,

acknowledge our wrongs honestly, and walk with the Lord according to the word. We give thanks and glory to Jesus Christ, who has given us, who were bound to the fear of sin, the eternal remission of sins and true rest by the gospel of the water and the Spirit. ✉

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Sermon 8 by Paul C. Jong

God, who remembers His covenant and bestows the grace of the remission of sins

< Leviticus 26:40-46 >

"But if they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers, with their unfaithfulness in which they were unfaithful to Me, and that they also have walked contrary to Me, and that I also have walked contrary to them and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if their uncircumcised hearts are humbled, and they accept their guilt—then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and My covenant with Isaac and My covenant with Abraham I will remember; I will remember the land. The land also shall be left empty by them, and will enjoy its sabbaths while it lies desolate without them; they will accept their guilt, because they despised My judgments and because their soul abhorred My statutes. Yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, nor shall I abhor them, to utterly destroy them and break My covenant with them; for I am the LORD their God. But for their sake I will remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God: I am the LORD. These are the statutes and judgments and laws which the LORD made

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between Himself and the children of Israel on Mount Sinai by the hand of Moses."

Dear beloved saints, Leviticus 26 speaks of the stern discipline that the people who rebelled against God will go through. But its last word does not end with a declaration that the people have perished. God speaks even to the people who are in the land of their enemies, and says that He will not break the covenant He established with them. God, who does not regard sin lightly, does not regard lightly His promise toward His own people either.

In this word appear together the people who acknowledge their sins and God, who remembers His covenant. We must look carefully at both of these. We must not demand only grace without acknowledging our own wrongs, but neither must we think that our own confession of acknowledging our wrongs is the power that washes away sin. The One who remits sins is God, and the ground of the remission of sins also lies in the salvation God has accomplished.

Through today's text, let us find out with what heart we must return to God. And let us look at how God fulfilled in Jesus Christ the salvation He promised, and what we who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit can be assured of.

Confession is acknowledging one's own sin of having gone against God

It is written: "*But if they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers, with their unfaithfulness in which they were unfaithful to Me, and that they also have walked contrary*

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to Me, and that I also have walked contrary to them and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if their uncircumcised hearts are humbled, and they accept their guilt—" (Leviticus 26:40–41).

In verse 40, the people confess their own iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers. They acknowledge the fact that they went against God and walked contrary to Him. It is not speaking only of the hardships they have gone through all that time or listing only the wrongs of others. It is realizing what they themselves did wrong before God and admitting it.

People can go through pain and still not acknowledge their own wrongs. They can hope only for the situation to improve, and not think about why they became far from God. But in the text, the people who return to God lay down the insistence that they are right. They acknowledge that it was wrong to have abhorred the ordinances of God and rejected His word. They accept the fact that they walked contrary to God and that God disciplined that sin.

Confession is not the work of explaining sin with plausible words. It is for the very one who went a way different from the word of God to stand before the word himself. It does not change sin into something right on the ground that one's circumstances were hard, nor does it justify the wrongs of the ancestors on the ground that it is a custom handed down from long ago. It is acknowledging as sin oneself what God has called sin.

We, too, need this heart when we hear the gospel of the remission of sins. If we hold on to the thought that I am better than others, it is hard to accept wholly what the Lord has accomplished to save me. We must acknowledge the fact that we have sin before God and cannot remove that sin by ourselves. Only then do we come to seek the grace of the Lord with the lips that used to put forward our own righteousness.

God, who remembers His covenant and bestows
the grace of the remission of sins

The humbled heart accepts the judgment of God

Verse 41 calls the hearts of the people uncircumcised hearts. They were a people who had made a covenant with God, but in their hearts they were going against God. Outwardly bearing the sign of being the people of God, and the heart accepting the word of God, were not the same.

God speaks of precisely that heart being humbled. To be humbled does not mean to regard one's own existence as worthless. It is coming down from the attitude of putting one's own judgment ahead of God. It is accepting the fact that God is right and oneself was wrong. With the heart that used to be used for defending oneself, one now comes to listen to the word of God.

They also accept the punishment of their iniquity. It is laying down the heart that used to stand against God, saying that He had treated them unjustly. They acknowledge the relationship between what they did and its result. They turn from the attitude of rejecting God while trying not to take responsibility for it.

But accepting suffering is not a sin offering that washes away sin. One cannot say that his sins have disappeared in proportion to how much he has suffered. The years of enduring pain cannot take the place of Jesus Christ. The humbled heart God desires of sinners is not a heart that makes its own suffering a merit, but a heart that acknowledges that it needs a Savior.

God remembers the covenant He made with the ancestors

It is written: *"Then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and My covenant with Isaac and My covenant with Abraham I*

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will remember; I will remember the land" (Leviticus 26:42).

When the people are humbled and acknowledge their sins, God speaks of the covenant. He says that He will remember the promise He made to Jacob, Isaac, and Abraham, and will care for the land. While speaking of the restoration of the people, He does not look for a qualification they have newly built up. God presents the covenant He Himself made with the ancestors.

Here, the word that He will remember the covenant does not mean that God had forgotten and belatedly calls it to mind. It is a word that He will care for His own people according to that promise. People sometimes change their minds after promising, and sometimes cannot keep a promise for lack of ability even though they want to keep it. But God is the One who fulfills what He has said. The people had to look to the promise of God rather than to their own circumstances.

How was Abraham justified before God? God gave him the promise concerning his descendants, and Abraham believed that word. It is also written: *"And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness" (Genesis 15:6).*

It is not that Abraham was recognized after completing the promise by his own strength. He believed in God, who had promised. He trusted the word God had spoken. We, too, must learn this faith. While hearing the word that God has accomplished the remission of sins, we must not say that we will wait until we can complete salvation by our own deeds.

Of course, the name of being a descendant of Abraham does not wash away each person's sins of itself. One must not only boast of an ancestor who believed in God, but must himself believe in God. Today we, too, cannot speak only of who taught us the faith or how long we have attended church. We must ourselves believe in our hearts the salvation God has accomplished through Jesus Christ.

God, who remembers His covenant and bestows
the grace of the remission of sins

Grace does not change sin into something right

It is written: *"The land also shall be left empty by them, and will enjoy its sabbaths while it lies desolate without them; they will accept their guilt, because they despised My judgments and because their soul abhorred My statutes" (Leviticus 26:43).*

After speaking of the covenant and His care in verse 42, verse 43 again makes clear the wrong of the people. It is that they abhorred the judgments of God and despised His statutes. That He has promised restoration does not make the past rebellion a right thing. God, even while bestowing grace, does not blur His judgment on sin.

This is important also when we understand the remission of sins. That the Lord has washed away sin does not mean that the sins we committed were in fact no problem at all. It means that sin was an evil that had to be judged, and that Jesus paid the price of that sin in our place. Therefore, the more we know the grace of salvation, the less we can regard sin lightly.

God, who does not break His covenant even in the land of the enemies

It is written: *"Yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, nor shall I abhor them, to utterly destroy them and break My covenant with them; for I am the LORD their God" (Leviticus 26:44).*

This word is a word given while the people are still in the land of their enemies. It is not that one can hear the promise of God only after every problem is solved and he has returned to his own land. Even in the place where one has been humbled because of his own sins, he can hold on to the word God has

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spoken. This is because visible circumstances cannot erase the covenant of God.

God says that He will not utterly destroy them and will not break the covenant. Though the discipline was stern, God did not cast away even the promise He had made to His own people. The people rebelled against God, but God makes clear who He is. It is that He is the LORD, their God.

In verse 45, He speaks of how He brought their ancestors out of Egypt in the sight of the nations in order to be their God. The Exodus was not an event in which the people accomplished salvation by themselves and were recognized by God. It was the work of God delivering the people who had been slaves and making them His own people. The One who now remembers the covenant is the very same God who saved them at that time.

So their hope did not lie in the assurance that they themselves would never fail again. It lay in the word God had spoken. The reason they could return to God even in the reality of receiving discipline was that God was holding on to His own covenant. When God opens the way, a sinner must not remain where he is, concluding that he cannot return by himself.

The word of Mount Sinai leads us before the promise of salvation

It is written: *"These are the statutes and judgments and laws which the LORD made between Himself and the children of Israel on Mount Sinai by the hand of Moses" (Leviticus 26:46).*

Verse 46 makes clear that the Owner of the word we have heard so far is God. It is not that Moses spoke of blessing and discipline out of his personal thoughts. They are the statutes and judgments and laws God gave within His relationship with His

own people. The word that is pleased with obedience, the word that disciplines rebellion, and the word that remembers the covenant were all given by the same God.

Therefore, we must neither pick out and believe only the promises that are pleasant to hear, nor hold on only to the fearful warnings and throw away the hope of salvation. We must know our own sins before the law and believe in the salvation God has prepared. If, even after realizing the sin of not having lived according to the word, we again rely only on our own ability and try to become righteous, we are still trying to solve the problem of sin by our own strength.

Through the sacrifices of the Old Testament, God showed the way for sinners to be saved. It was the way in which sin was passed on to the sacrificial offering, and that offering shed its blood and died in place of the sinner. But the repeated sacrifices of animals in themselves were not the final salvation that makes people perfect forever. God promised that He would accomplish eternal atonement through Jesus Christ.

In Jeremiah 31, God says that He will make a new covenant, remit iniquity, and remember that sin no more. God did not stop at waiting for sinners to make a more perfect promise. He Himself sent the Savior who would solve sin. The One who fulfilled that promise is Jesus Christ.

Jesus fulfilled the promise of salvation with the baptism He received from John and the Cross

Jesus is God, and He put on the flesh of a man and came to this earth to save us. The Lord Himself had no sin. A person who has sin, and cannot solve his own sins, cannot become the eternal Savior of others. The Son of God, who has no sin, became the

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unblemished sacrificial offering for us.

Just as in the Old Testament sins were passed on by laying hands on the head of the sacrificial offering, Jesus bore the sin of mankind by receiving baptism from John. John, the representative of mankind sent by God, baptized Jesus. When John at first tried to stop Him, 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 washing away any sin of the Lord's own. It was the work of the Lord, who has no sin, receiving the sin of the world passed on to Him and accomplishing the salvation of God. The promise of the remission of sins that God had shown through the sacrifices was fulfilled through Jesus Christ. So we must not see the baptism of the Lord as something that has nothing to do with our salvation.

Our sins, too, were passed on to Jesus at that time. It is not only the sins we can remember and confess. The sins committed from birth until now and the sins we will commit as we live from now on, the evil thoughts harbored in the heart, and even the sins shown in word and deed—all the sins belonging to our whole lives the Lord bore. It is not that we entrust the sins of the past to the Lord and must wash away the sins of the future separately. Jesus took on the sin of the world of all mankind.

Jesus, who bore those sins, shed His blood and died on the Cross. The word that God judges sin was actually carried out on the Cross of Jesus. The Lord, who bore our sins by receiving baptism from John, received in our place the judgment of sin that we were to receive. The Lord did not pretend not to see sin; He paid its price with His own life.

Here is the reason why our confession cannot take the place of the Cross. Acknowledging sin is something I must do, but the work of paying the price of sin and saving us is something Jesus

did. However many tears and resolutions we gather, they cannot take the place of the blood the Lord shed. We acknowledge our sins, and believe in the salvation of the Lord, who bore those sins by baptism and was judged for them on the Cross.

Jesus rose again from death. God raised Jesus, who had died, to life again, and the Lord has become the living Savior who has saved us. The coming of Jesus, the baptism He received from John, His death on the Cross, and His rising again from death are the work God accomplished to save sinners. That salvation does not change like human resolutions. The person who believes in what the Lord has accomplished receives the eternal remission of sins.

Hebrews, testifying of the atonement Jesus accomplished, says. It is written: *"Then He adds, 'Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.' Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin" (Hebrews 10:17–18).*

God remembers the covenant of salvation, and says that He will remember no more the sins He has remitted according to that covenant. It is not because our memory is good that salvation is firm. Because God promised and Jesus actually accomplished it, the remission of sins is firm. The Holy Spirit, too, testifies of the perfect atonement with this word. This is the assurance of us who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Let us lay down our own righteousness and believe in the righteousness the Lord has accomplished

Dear beloved saints, the humbled heart is not a heart that endlessly condemns itself. It is a heart that acknowledges when God calls something sin, and also believes that word when God says that He has washed away sin by Jesus Christ. Just as it does

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not deny sin by its own judgment, neither does it deny the perfect salvation of the Lord on the ground of its own shortcomings.

Romans 10 points out the problem of not submitting to the righteousness of God in an attempt to establish one's own righteousness. Even if one has zeal to be saved, if he does not know how Jesus removed sin, he still comes to hold on to his own deeds. Now we must believe in the righteous work the Lord accomplished to save us. It is written: *"For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:10).*

In this confession there is the content of faith. It is believing the fact that Jesus is my Savior, that He received baptism from John and bore my sins, that He received the judgment on them in my place on the Cross, and that He rose again from death. The power of salvation is not in the voice of the person who confesses. It is in the salvation of Jesus Christ that he believes in his heart.

We who have received the remission of sins by this faith live following the will of God. We do not go back to the attitude that, having received grace, we may despise the word. We love the Lord, who has saved us, and preach the gospel so that other souls may also know this remission of sins. Even that service we do not boast of as our own righteousness, but offer as thanksgiving for the grace received from the Lord.

At the end of Leviticus 26, we meet God, who deals sternly with sin and yet does not forsake His own covenant. We ourselves have no righteousness to boast of, but God has accomplished in Jesus Christ the righteousness that saves us. Let us believe in that salvation with the humbled heart that acknowledges its own sins. We give thanks and glory to God, who has given us the eternal remission of sins by the gospel of the water and the Spirit and made us His own people. ✉

God, who remembers His covenant and bestows
the grace of the remission of sins

Questions and Answers on Leviticus Chapter 26

[Question] 1. Leviticus 26:1, 2—what did God say were the three things Israel had to keep without fail?

God said not to make and serve idols, to keep the Sabbaths of God, and to reverence the sanctuary of God.

First, they were not to make a carved image, a sacred pillar, or an engraved stone and worship them. This is because the LORD alone, who saved Israel out of Egypt, is their God. Second, they had to keep the Sabbath and remember God, who sanctifies them. Third, they had to respect the sanctuary God had appointed and the worship offered there.

These three ordinances teach whom Israel is to serve and according to whose word they are to live. One must not rely on idols or regard the word and the worship of God lightly while saying that he believes in God. We must believe in the salvation and love God has bestowed, and place Him at the center of our lives. (Leviticus 26:1, 2, 13; Exodus 31:13).

[Question] 2. Leviticus 26:2—with what attitude do keeping the Sabbath and reverencing the sanctuary tell us to serve God?

It means to remember that they are a people belonging to God, and to treasure God and His word and serve Him. The

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Sabbath was a sign showing the fact that God is the One who sanctifies Israel. While resting from their work, the people were not to rely only on their own labor, but had to remember God, who cares for them.

Reverencing the sanctuary does not stop at handling the building and its utensils with care. It also includes the attitude of respecting the sacrifices and duties by which God is served there, and of giving ear to the word God has given. If one ignores the will of God while going in and out of the sanctuary, he cannot be said to truly reverence the sanctuary.

In the gospel, we enjoy true rest by the remission of sins Jesus has given. We must believe in the salvation Jesus accomplished by the baptism He received from John, His death on the Cross, and His rising again from death, and worship God with thanksgiving and live according to His word. (Leviticus 26:2; Exodus 31:12–17; Matthew 3:13–17; 1 Corinthians 15:3, 4).

[Question] 3. Leviticus 26:4—how should we understand the promise that God gives rain *'in its season'*?

The *"season"* means the proper time, that is, the time when rain is needed. That God gives rain in its season is a promise that He will send down in due time the rain needed for the crops to grow and bear fruit.

Even if the people till the land and sow seed, if rain does not come, it is hard to gather the fruit of their labor. God said that if Israel obeyed His word, He would make the land yield its produce and the trees of the field bear their fruit. In the promise to give rain is contained the will to care for the livelihood of the people.

This word keeps the people from regarding an abundant

harvest as obtained by their own ability and labor alone. While cultivating the land, the people had to rely on God, who gives the rain and the harvest, and give thanks for the fruit they gathered. (Leviticus 26:3–5).

[Question] 4. Leviticus 26:3–13—what blessings did God promise to the people who obey His word?

God promised that if Israel obeyed His word, He would give them abundant food and peace, protection from their enemies, fruitfulness, and His presence.

• Abundant harvest and food: He gives rain in its season so that the land and the trees bear fruit. The harvest is so abundant that the threshing lasts until the grape harvest and the grape harvest until the time of sowing, and the people come to eat their fill. Food becomes so plentiful that they must clear out the old grain that is left over in order to bring in the new grain.

• Peace and protection: He lets them lie down without fear and live safely. He removes the evil beasts, protects them from the threat of war, and lets them drive back their enemies.

• Fruitfulness and the fulfillment of the covenant: He cares for the people so that they become fruitful and multiply, and fulfills the covenant He established with them.

• The blessing of God being with them: He sets His tabernacle among the people, walks among them, and becomes their God.

At the center of these promises is the fact that God is with His own people. Verse 13 makes clear that the One who gives these promises is God, who has already delivered them from slavery in Egypt. The people had to remember that salvation, trust in God, and obey His word. (Leviticus 26:3–13).

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[Question] 5. Leviticus 26:8—what does the promise that a small number of the people will drive back far more enemies teach?

It means that if God is with them and helps them, Israel can obtain a victory beyond their own numbers and strength. God said that He would make five chase a hundred, and a hundred chase ten thousand.

This promise shows that the ground of victory does not lie only in how many or how few the troops are. God, who saved the people, protects them and lets them drive back their enemies. Therefore, the Israelites were not to forsake God and look for something else to rely on just because the number of the enemy was great.

We, too, in serving God, easily become discouraged looking only at our own ability and circumstances. Through this word we learn the lesson that we must trust in the power of God and follow His will. However, we must not apply the figures of the text as they are to every fight or business today and calculate that we will surely succeed in that proportion. (Leviticus 26:3, 7, 8).

[Question] 6. Leviticus 26:10—what situation does the word that they will clear out the old grain because of the new indicate?

It indicates a situation in which the harvest is so abundant that they bring in the new grain even before they have finished eating the grain gathered before. It is not that, being short of grain, they wait for the next harvest, but that new grain comes in again while the old grain is still left over.

Therefore, the word that they clear out the old grain does not

mean that it has rotted or become useless. It means that God gives food so plentifully that they must clear out the grain left over in order to bring in the newly gathered grain.

This is an extension of the promise to give rain in its season and make the land bear abundant fruit. Even when they had plenty to eat, the people were not to take it for granted or boast of their own strength, but had to give thanks to God, who cares for their lives. (Leviticus 26:4, 5, 10).

[Question] 7. Leviticus 26:11–13—what love is contained in the word that God will dwell among the people and be their God?

The love of God is shown as the love that saves the people, accepts them, and is with them in their midst. God said that He would set His tabernacle among the people and would not abhor them. He also said that He would walk among them and be their God, and they would be His people.

This love had already been shown in the life of Israel. God brought them out of Egypt and set them free from slavery. The word that He broke the bands of their yoke and made them walk upright indicates the salvation by which He set free the people who had lived oppressed. God, who delivered the people, promised that He would be with them afterward as well.

In the New Testament, too, God says that He dwells among the believers, is their God, and accepts them as His children. Therefore, the people who receive the love of God must not leave Him and rely on idols, but must treasure the relationship with God, who has accepted them. (Leviticus 26:11–13; 2 Corinthians 6:16–18).

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[Question] 8. Leviticus 26:14–39—what plagues and suffering come upon the people if they rebel against the word to the end?

God warned that if Israel despised His word and broke the covenant, plagues would come upon many areas of their lives. In particular, the word is repeated that when they do not return even after receiving discipline but keep on walking contrary to Him, the punishment becomes heavier.

• Disease and defeat: Their bodies waste away with disease, and the grain they labored to sow is taken by their enemies. They are defeated by their enemies and come under their rule, and become so afraid that they flee even when no one pursues.

• Drought and crop failure: The heavens become like iron and the earth like bronze, and they obtain neither rain nor harvest. Their pride is broken, and even though they work hard, they gather no fruit from the land and the trees.

• Harm from wild beasts and the desolation of life: They lose their children and livestock, the number of the people decreases, and the roads become desolate.

• War, pestilence, and famine: Even gathered in the cities they are not safe, and because food is scarce, even when they weigh out the bread and share it, they are not satisfied.

• More terrible famine and the desolation of the nation: If they walk contrary to Him to the end, they come to a severe famine in which they eat even the flesh of their children, and the idols, the cities, and the sanctuaries collapse. The people are scattered among many nations, and their homeland enjoys, while it lies desolate, the rest it had not enjoyed all that time. Those who are left also go through fear and faintness in the land of their enemies.

This warning means that we must not regard rebelling

against the word of God lightly. However, on the basis of the warning of the covenant given to Israel, we must not immediately judge a person who suffers disease or disability today as a person being punished because of a specific sin. Concerning a man blind from birth, Jesus corrected the thinking that concluded it was because of his own sins or his parents' sins. (Leviticus 26:14–39; John 9:1–3).

[Question] 9. Leviticus 26:18—what do they go through if they do not return to God even after receiving discipline?

God said that He would punish Israel seven times more for their sins if they did not listen to His word even after receiving discipline. It means that if they ignore the first warning and keep on rebelling, the discipline does not end, but they come to receive a heavier punishment.

The problem highlighted in the passage is the attitude of the people who do not listen to God even while going through suffering. In the words that follow, too, God warns repeatedly that if they do not return but walk contrary to Him, greater plagues will come. No one can escape God's rule by clinging to their own strength and ideas.

Therefore, when faced with discipline, we must humble our hearts and listen to the word of God. It is necessary to acknowledge our wrongs and return to God. When God points out sin and makes us turn from it, accepting that warning without ignoring it is the right attitude. (Leviticus 26:18–24, 40–42).

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[Question] 10. Leviticus 26:30—why did God say to the people who serve idols, *"My soul shall abhor you"*?

It is because the people rebelled against God, served idols, and broke the covenant they had made with God. The word that God abhors them means that He is not pleased with their betrayal, and that He is actually angry at sin and judges it.

In verse 30, God says that He will destroy the high places where they served idols, cut down the sun pillars, and cast the carcasses of the people on the broken idols. This reveals that the idols they relied on cannot save them. Just because they bore the name of the people of God, serving idols to the end is not simply tolerated.

But we must not read this word as meaning that God completely abolishes His covenant. In verses 44 and 45 that follow, He says that even when the people are in the land of their enemies, He will not utterly destroy them, and will remember the covenant He made with their ancestors. We must see together the sternness of God, who judges sin, and His faithfulness, which remembers the covenant. (Leviticus 26:11, 14, 15, 30, 44, 45).

[Question] 11. What difference do living according to the word and living against the word make in our faith?

To obey the word is to trust in God, accept His will, and live by it. When we believe in the salvation God has accomplished, we enjoy assurance of the remission of sins and rest, and come to serve God in thanksgiving for the grace we have received. It does not stop at knowing the word, but leads to a life that puts

the will of God ahead of our own thoughts and selfish desires.

Conversely, if we hear the word and yet go against it, we come to follow our own selfish desires, and it is easy to close our hearts even to the word that points out our wrongs. Leviticus 26 teaches the fact that when such an attitude continues, one receives the discipline of God. Therefore, we must not regard disobedience lightly, or think that, since we have been saved, it does not matter how we live.

Yet it is not that we obtain the remission of sins by piling up our obedience. Our salvation is based on the grace Jesus accomplished by the baptism He received from John, His death on the Cross, and His rising again from death. We must believe in that salvation, and as a saved people, do what pleases God and serve the gospel.

When we have realized our own wrongs, we must abandon our stubbornness and return to God. The last part of this chapter shows together the people who confess their sins and humble their hearts, and God, who remembers the covenant for their sake. The life of faith is not a life that boasts of one's own strength, but a life that relies on the salvation and the word of God and follows His guidance. (Leviticus 26:3–15, 18, 40–45; Matthew 3:13–17; 1 Corinthians 15:3, 4). ✉

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CHAPTER

27

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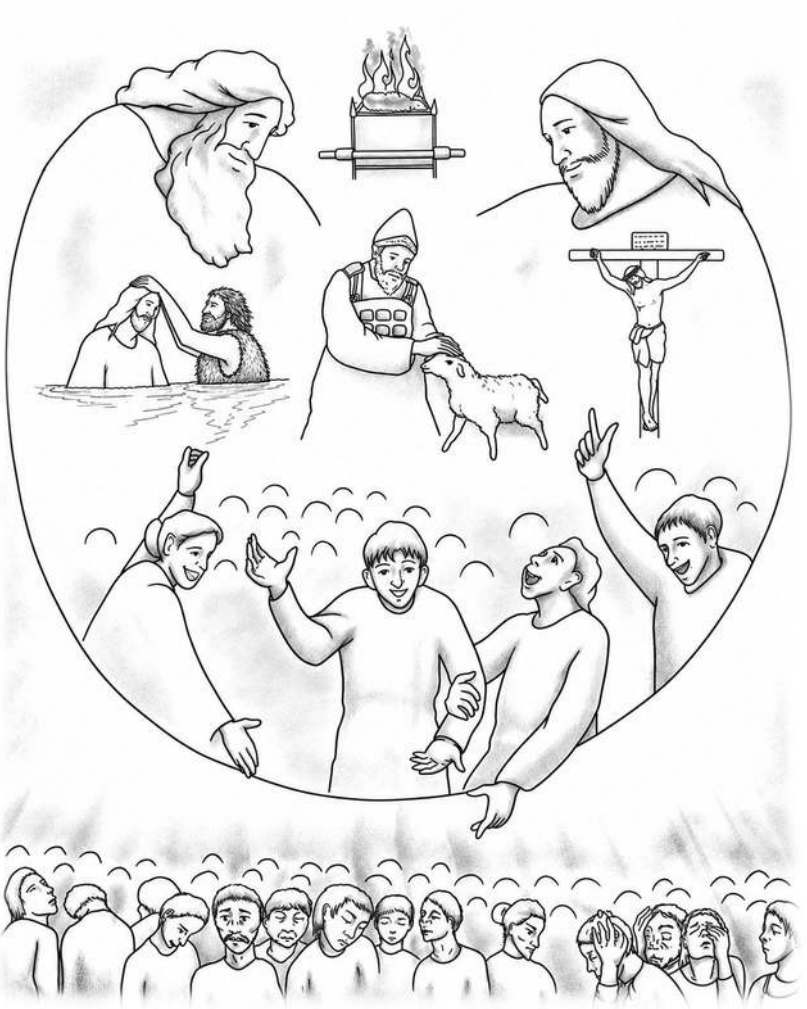

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Leviticus Chapter 27 seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Leviticus 27:1–8—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The position and theme of Leviticus 27:1–8

Leviticus 27 deals with the regulations concerning vows and dedications. It sets out how a person was to fulfill that promise when he had specially vowed to give himself or his family, his animals, or his house and field to God.

Verses 1–8, among these, are the regulations of valuation applied when a person had vowed to give a person to the LORD. This did not put a price on a person's soul or personal dignity, nor was it a system for buying and selling people with money. It is a regulation for converting a voluntarily made special vow into an amount of silver according to the official shekel of the sanctuary.

2. A vow made to God is not light

Verses 1–2 begin as follows.

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"Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: When a man consecrates by a vow certain persons to the LORD, according to your valuation,"

A *"vow"* is voluntarily promising to give something to God or to do some particular thing. Not every Israelite had to vow to give a person. But if one had vowed voluntarily, he was not to cancel that promise lightly or change it as he pleased.

Hannah, the mother of Samuel, also vowed that if God gave her a son, she would give him to the LORD all his life.

"Will give Your maidservant a male child, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor shall come upon his head" (1 Samuel 1:11).

Hannah gave Samuel to the LORD as she had vowed. In Leviticus 27:1–8, God sets the value for the case where a person has vowed to give a person to the LORD. The way of fulfilling a vow had to follow the word God had set.

The key lies in the fact that a promise made to God is not a momentary emotion or a means of bargaining.

3. *"According to your valuation"* is not the price of a person's soul

The *"valuation"* spoken of in the text does not mean the absolute value of a person's life or personhood. Nor is it the price of a person's salvation.

This is an administrative and economic valuation for converting into the shekel of the sanctuary the vow to give a particular person to God. Therefore, one must not look at these amounts and interpret them as saying, "One person's soul is fifty shekels, and another person's soul is only three shekels."

A person's soul is not something that can be redeemed with

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a few shekels of silver.

"None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him—for the redemption of their souls is costly, and it shall cease forever—" (Psalm 49:7–8).

The valuation of Leviticus 27 is the converted amount of a vow, while the redemption of life of which the Psalm speaks is the matter of delivering a person from sin and death. These two must not be confused.

4. The valuation from twenty years old up to sixty years old

Verses 3–4 say as follows.

"If your valuation is of a male from twenty years old up to sixty years old, then your valuation shall be fifty shekels of silver, according to the shekel of the sanctuary. If it is a female, then your valuation shall be thirty shekels;"

From twenty years old up to sixty years old, a male was set at fifty shekels of silver and a female at thirty shekels of silver.

The text sets the valuation differently according to male and female and according to age, but it does not explain that difference as being due to the ability to work. Therefore, what can be said with certainty is the fact that God specifically set the value of the vow.

The expression "*according to the shekel of the sanctuary"* means that the one who vowed was not allowed to set the amount as he pleased or to bargain depending on the person. The valuation was applied according to the official standard used in the sanctuary.

5. Does the difference in amount between male and female mean a difference in spiritual value?

It does not. This difference in amount does not mean that a man is more precious than a woman before God, or that a woman's soul is of lower value than a man's.

In particular, one must note the fact that this valuation is different from the ransom of life that atones for sin. In Exodus 30:15, the ransom of half a shekel offered to make atonement for life was prescribed as follows.

"The rich shall not give more and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel"

In the ransom, the rich and the poor paid the same amount. This is because before sin and death, the life of the rich is not more expensive, nor is the life of the poor cheaper.

The New Testament declares the spiritual status in Christ as follows.

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28).

Men and women, children and the elderly, the rich and the poor are all sinners, and all equally need the salvation of Jesus Christ. Also, anyone who believes the same gospel receives the same remission of sins and the Holy Spirit.

6. From five years old up to twenty years old

Verse 5 says as follows.

"And if from five years old up to twenty years old, then your valuation for a male shall be twenty shekels, and for a female ten shekels;"

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From five years old up to twenty years old, a male was set at twenty shekels and a female at ten shekels. It is a lower amount than the valuation from twenty years old up to sixty years old.

This amount is a valuation for fulfilling the vow, and it does not mean that the soul of a young person is less precious than that of an adult. The redemption of a person's life cannot be settled with a few shekels of silver.

God did not limit the personal value of a child to ten or twenty shekels of silver. Later, Jesus, too, said not to forbid little children from coming to Him. In the kingdom of God, a person's value is not determined by productive ability or economic contribution.

7. From one month old up to five years old

Verse 6 says this.

"And if from a month old up to five years old, then your valuation for a male shall be five shekels of silver, and for a female your valuation shall be three shekels of silver;"

From one month old up to five years old, a male was set at five shekels of silver and a female at three shekels of silver. It is the lowest valuation among the age groups that appear in the text.

But just because the valuation of the vow is low does not mean that the child's life is light. This regulation set the amount to be given when fulfilling a vow; it did not set how precious the child is to be regarded.

The one who vowed had to fulfill his promise according to the amount God had set.

In the case where he was too poor to afford that amount, the priest looked into his circumstances and set the value, according to the word of verse 8.

8. The valuation for those sixty years old and above

Verse 7 says as follows.

"And if from sixty years old and above, if it is a male, then your valuation shall be fifteen shekels, and for a female ten shekels."

For those sixty years old and above, a male was set at fifteen shekels and a female at ten shekels. The valuation is lower than that from twenty years old up to sixty years old, but it does not mean that the personal value of the elderly falls.

Before God, the elderly are not people who are not precious. In Leviticus 19, too, God commanded His people to rise up before the gray head and to honor the face of the old man.

Therefore, the valuation table of Leviticus 27 cannot be used as a standard for judging people's abilities and usefulness in modern society. In the kingdom of God, even those who cannot work—children, the sick, the disabled, and the elderly—are honorable people created in the image of God.

9. God, who opened a way for the poor

Verse 8 speaks of a very important exception in this regulation.

"But if he is too poor to pay your valuation, then he shall present himself before the priest, and the priest shall set a value for him; according to the ability of him who vowed, the priest shall value him."

Just because a poor person could not pay the fixed amount did not mean that his vow became void or that the way to give to God was blocked. The priest had to look into that person's actual circumstances and adjust the amount to one he could afford.

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This regulation shows two things together.

First, there is responsibility in a vow made to God. It is not that one takes no responsibility at all on the grounds of being poor.

Second, God does not forcibly demand an amount that one cannot afford. He takes into account people's actual circumstances.

A similar principle also appears in the New Testament.

"For if there is first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what one has, and not according to what he does not have" (2 Corinthians 8:12).

Devotion offered to God is not competing with other people over amounts. God does not simply compare the large amount of the rich with the small amount of the poor, but looks at with what faith and thanksgiving each person gives within the grace he has received and within his circumstances.

10. The valuation and the price of salvation must be distinguished

The silver shekels of Leviticus 27 must not be understood as money that buys the remission of sins. Salvation cannot be bought with silver or gold.

"Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:18–19).

However large an amount a person gives to God, he cannot remove even one of his sins. Nor can a person's devotion and service take the place of the price of sin. Salvation is not a reward

obtained by a person's vow or merit, but the gift of God.

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast" (Ephesians 2:8–9).

A vow is a human promise to give something to God, but the gospel is God's promise to save sinners. Our vows can waver and fail, but the salvation God has accomplished in Jesus Christ is perfect.

11. The true price of redemption seen in the gospel of the water and the Spirit

To redeem a person's soul from sin and death, a price far more precious than fifty shekels of silver was needed. That price was the life of the sinless Jesus Christ.

When Jesus received baptism from John, He said as follows.

"Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15).

The baptism Jesus received from John is the event in which He bore all the sins of the world on His own body. That is why 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 went to the Cross bearing the sin of the world, which He had borne with the baptism He received from John, and shed His blood.

"Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us" (Galatians 3:13).

And Jesus overcame sin and death by rising again from death. The person who believes this fact receives the remission of sins and receives the promise of the Holy Spirit.

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Therefore, the work of redemption spoken of in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is as follows.

—Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John.

—He received the judgment of those sins on the Cross.

—He paid the price of sin with His own life and precious blood.

—By rising again from death, He gave us new life.

Our salvation was accomplished not by a price we paid to God, but by the price Jesus paid for us.

12. Before we give to God, God first bought us

In Leviticus 27, a person vows to give himself to God. But the gospel of the New Testament proclaims the fact that, before that, God bought us at a price.

"You are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Corinthians 6:19–20).

Here, the order is important.

—It is not that we obtain salvation by giving ourselves.

—Jesus saved us by paying His own life as the price.

—The person who has believed in that grace gives himself to God with thanksgiving.

Therefore, devotion is not the condition of salvation but the result of salvation. It is not that one receives the remission of sins because he has given much to God; rather, because he has already received the remission of sins, he comes to want to give himself to God.

13. 'Giving oneself to God' in the New Testament

Paul exhorts the saved saints as follows.

"That you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1).

In the New Testament, giving oneself to God does not mean calculating the price of one's own body in silver shekels and paying it. It is believing that one has already been redeemed with the price of Christ, and using one's body and time, talents and possessions for the will of God.

This devotion is not the attitude of a servant dragged along by force. It is the response offered with thanksgiving by the person who has received the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

—He uses his body not as an instrument of sin but as an instrument of righteousness.

—He uses his talents for God and the gospel.

—He uses his wealth not for his own boasting but for serving his neighbors and the gospel.

—He uses his time and relationships within the will of God.

—He lives following the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

14. A vow must not be made into a transaction with God

When a person meets difficulties, he can easily promise, "If God solves this problem for me, I will give this." But a vow made to God must not be made into a transaction for obtaining blessings.

God is not One who fails to accomplish His work because

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people's money or service is lacking. Trying to move God with our promises can become a transaction, not faith.

Jesus emphasized the truthfulness of words.

"But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'" (Matthew 5:37).

Therefore, rather than making great promises emotionally, it is important to remember the grace of salvation already received and to begin the obedience one can actually manage.

15. The church must not evaluate a person's value by offerings and ability

The valuation table of Leviticus 27 must not be applied to the people in the church so as to value more highly those who give many offerings or those who do much work.

In the church, a person's value is not determined by things such as the following.

—The amount of offerings
—Office
—Social status
—Ability to work
—Age and gender
—The results of one's work

All the saints have been saved by the baptism Jesus received from John and the precious blood of the Cross. The price paid to save one person is not less than the price paid for another person. The Son of God gave His own life for all people.

In particular, verse 8 shows the important principle that those in economic difficulty must not be excluded. For the person who had the heart to give to God but could not afford the valuation, the priest had to open a way suited to his circumstances.

The church today, too, must not burden the poor, evaluate faith by the amount of offerings, or force people to make great vows.

16. The valuation of the vow and the price of the Lord who saved us

The valuation of the text sets the amount for fulfilling a vow according to age and gender. The one who vowed was not to change the value according to his own thoughts but had to follow the word God had set.

The price that saved us from sin and death is the life of Jesus Christ. Jesus bore the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John and paid that price by shedding His blood on the Cross. The person who believes in this salvation relies not on the amount of his own offerings but on the salvation the Lord has accomplished.

Conclusion

Leviticus 27:1–8 is not a word that puts a price on a person's soul. It is a regulation established so that a special vow a person made to give to God would be converted into the shekel of the sanctuary and fulfilled responsibly.

The valuation according to age and gender must not be judged as a difference in human dignity or in worthiness to be saved. In particular, for the person who was too poor to afford the valuation, God had the priest set the value according to his actual circumstances.

But redeeming man from sin and death cannot be settled with

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silver or gold. Jesus bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John, paid the price of sin by shedding His precious blood on the Cross, and rose again from death.

Therefore, the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not someone who came to belong to God by paying a great price himself. He is someone who came to belong to God because Jesus paid a great price.

True devotion comes out of this faith.

It is confessing not, "I will obtain salvation by giving myself," but, "Because the Lord bought me at a price, I will now give my body and life for the will of the Lord."

Leviticus 27:9–13—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 structure of Leviticus 27:9–13

If Leviticus 27:1–8 dealt with the valuation for when someone vowed to give a person to God, verses 9–13 are the regulations for when an animal was given as the thing vowed.

The text divides animals into two kinds.

—Verses 9–10: animals that can be offered to the LORD as sacrificial offerings

—Verses 11–13: unclean animals that cannot be offered as offerings

Because an animal that could be offered as a sacrificial offering was set apart as holy the moment it was vowed to God, it could not be exchanged or taken back. Because an unclean animal could not be offered on the altar as a sacrificial offering,

the priest set its value, and if the owner wanted to take it back, he had to add one-fifth to the valuation.

Here, the word "holy" does not mean that the character of the animal has changed morally. It means that it has been set apart as God's own and can no longer be used at will for ordinary purposes.

2. Every animal that can be offered to the LORD is holy

Verse 9 says as follows.

"If it is an animal that men may bring as an offering to the LORD, all that anyone gives to the LORD shall be holy."

Here, the *"animal"* is livestock that people raise. If, among them, someone set apart as the thing vowed an animal that can be offered to God as a sacrificial offering, such as cattle, sheep, or goats, that animal became holy and belonged to the LORD.

Because that animal was something the one who vowed had set apart to give to God, he could no longer exchange it as he pleased.

Before the vow, the one who vowed could use that animal freely. But after he had vowed to give it to God, he could no longer treat it like his own property. Giving something to God was not a feeling expressed only in words, but an act of actually handing over ownership.

Therefore, the basic meaning of holiness is "being set apart to belong to God."

3. Good and bad may not be exchanged for each other

Verse 10 says as follows.

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"He shall not substitute it or exchange it, good for bad or bad for good"

The one who vowed might at first say that he would give a good animal to God, and later, begrudging it, exchange it for an inferior animal. God forbade that.

However, the text does not forbid only exchanging it for something inferior. It says not to exchange it *"good for bad or bad for good."* It did not permit exchanging it for something better, either.

The reason is that the core of a vow lies not in comparing the quality of the animal again later, but in the fact that the very animal set apart to be given to God has already become God's.

A person may think as follows.

—"This animal is worth more than I thought, so let me exchange it for a slightly inferior one."

—"What I first gave is not very good, so it should be all right if I exchange it for a better one."

—"God has not actually taken it away, so surely I may calculate again."

But God kept the heart of the one who vowed from changing according to calculations of profit and loss. What was given to God was not an object of a transaction, but something set apart as holy.

4. If one is exchanged, both animals become holy

The latter part of verse 10 says as follows.

"If he at all exchanges animal for animal, then both it and the one exchanged for it shall be holy"

If one tries to exchange the vowed animal for another animal, it is not only the original animal that belongs to God; the newly

brought animal, too, becomes holy.

This regulation blocks the heart that tries to gain profit by using a vow. If one promised to give something good and then exchanges it for something worse, he must hand over both the original and the one exchanged for it.

Also, even if one tries to exchange it for a better animal, the original animal does not return to being ordinary property. The holy status of what has already been given to God is not revoked according to human judgment.

The important principle here is God's ownership. A person cannot turn what he has given to God back into his own according to his circumstances and greed.

5. God receives not what is left over but what was promised

This regulation warns against the attitude of giving the worst to God and keeping the good for oneself.

Leviticus 22:20 says as follows.

"Whatever has a defect, you shall not offer, for it shall not be acceptable on your behalf."

Later in their history, Israel also offered the blind, the lame, and the sick as sacrifices. God rebuked this through the prophet Malachi.

"And when you offer the blind as a sacrifice, is it not evil? And when you offer the lame and sick, is it not evil?" (Malachi 1:8).

Giving to God is not a matter of disposing of what is left over and unneeded. If one first promises to give something good and then actually hands over something inferior, this is not a matter of wealth, but a matter of a heart that treats God lightly.

But this must not be turned into an offering logic that says,

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"One must give God the most expensive thing unconditionally in order to be blessed." The text means that the person who voluntarily vowed a particular animal must not change that promise; it is not a regulation forcing all the saints to give their most expensive property.

6. The meaning of an unclean animal

Verse 11 says as follows.

"If it is an unclean animal which they do not offer as a sacrifice to the LORD, then he shall present the animal before the priest;"

Here, 'an unclean animal' does not mean an animal that is evil or morally corrupt. It refers to an animal that, according to the purity regulations of the law, cannot be used as a sacrificial offering on the altar.

An unclean animal, too, could be dedicated to God as a person's property, but it could not be slaughtered and offered on the altar like a burnt offering or a peace offering. So, instead of the animal itself being offered as a sacrificial offering, the priest assessed its economic value.

This distinction is important.

—An animal that can be offered as a sacrificial offering is set apart as holy when it is vowed.

—An unclean animal cannot be offered on the altar as a sacrificial offering.

—But an unclean animal, too, can be given as the value of property dedicated to God.

The text distinguishes the uses of clean animals and unclean animals, but it does not say that the very existence of unclean animals is worthless.

7. The priest determines the valuation

Verse 12 says as follows.

"And the priest shall set a value for it, whether it is good or bad; as you, the priest, value it, so it shall be."

The unclean animal had to be brought to the priest, and the priest examined the condition and value of that animal and determined the valuation.

Here, because that animal is a dedicated thing belonging to God, the priest acts as a public administrator who judges not by private bargaining but by the standard of the sanctuary. The one who vowed could not lower the price to his own advantage, nor could a buyer or anyone else set the price arbitrarily.

Valuing it "*whether it is good or bad"* means setting the value by examining the condition of the animal. Verse 12 says that the value shall be as the priest sets it.

This regulation, in which the priest set the value of a dedicated thing, does not give leaders today the authority to dispose of the saints' property at will. Discerning and guiding faith with the word must be distinguished from arbitrarily controlling other people's property.

8. To take back an unclean animal, one adds one-fifth

Verse 13 says as follows.

"But if he wants at all to redeem it, then he must add one-fifth to your valuation."

To "redeem" means to pay a price and take something back into one's own possession. If the owner wanted to bring back the unclean animal he had dedicated to God, he had to pay not only the price the priest had set, but also add to that price one-fifth,

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that is, 20 percent.

For example, if the priest set the value of that animal at ten shekels of silver, then to take it back, one had to add to it two shekels, which is one-fifth, and pay twelve shekels in all.

In this additional amount the seriousness of a vow appears. If a person could easily cancel what he had decided to give to God and take it back without any loss, he might come to treat vows lightly.

Therefore, the regulation of adding one-fifth has the following functions.

—It restrains impulsive vows.

—It protects the holiness of what has been given to God.

—It keeps the cancellation of a vow from becoming private bargaining.

—It makes responsibility accompany the taking back of what has become God's.

9. Does it have the same function as the one-fifth of the trespass offering?

In the trespass offering of Leviticus chapters 5 and 6, too, there is a regulation of adding one-fifth to the principal. But the direct functions of the two texts must be distinguished.

—The one-fifth of the trespass offering is related to restitution for damage caused by a trespass.

—The one-fifth of Leviticus 27:13 is an additional amount attached when one redeems an unclean animal that has been dedicated to God.

One-fifth was added to the fixed amount in the trespass offering when restitution was made for damage, and in this text when a dedicated animal was redeemed.

Together with the word of adding one-fifth in the trespass offering, we learn the salvation in which the Lord paid the price of our sin abundantly. Jesus bore the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John and gave His own life on the Cross. Because that price is sufficient, there is no price we must add to receive the remission of sins.

10. A vow is not a transaction with God

A vow was voluntary, but once one had promised it to God, he had to fulfill it responsibly. Ecclesiastes 5:4–5 says as follows.

"When you make a vow to God, do not delay to pay it; for He has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you have vowed—better not to vow than to vow and not pay."

In times of emergency, people easily make great promises to God, and when the problem is solved, they easily reduce or forget those promises. Leviticus 27 controls such religious impulses and fickleness.

Today, too, one must not make promises as though making a deal with God.

—"If You heal this illness, I will give You a large sum of money."

—"If You make my business succeed, I will do this for the rest of my life."

—"If You give me what I want, I will surely become this kind of person."

God is not One who cannot work because people's vows or money are lacking. Salvation and grace are not obtained through a transaction. God desires honest faith and obedience rather than exaggerated promises.

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11. The clean offering makes one look to Jesus Christ

An animal offered to God as a sacrificial offering had to be without blemish. This makes one look to Jesus Christ, who is without blemish and would offer Himself in place of sinners.

"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?" (Hebrews 9:14).

Jesus is the Son of God, who is inherently without sin and without blemish. It was not because He Himself had sin that Jesus received baptism from John.

"Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15).

Because Jesus bore all the sins of the world with the baptism He received from John, John the Baptist testified as follows.

"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).

Here a distinction must be made. Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John, but it is not that His own nature and deeds became sinful so that He became unclean. The One without sin took on the guilt of sinners in their place.

"For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

12. Unclean human beings cannot offer themselves as a sin offering

Just as an unclean animal could not become a sacrificial offering on the altar, a sinner cannot remove his own sins by

offering himself to God.

A person may try to take the place of the price of sin by offering things such as the following.

—Large offerings

—Fasting and self-mortification

—Service in the church

—Good deeds and almsgiving

—Martyr-like devotion

—Tears and repeated prayers of repentance

But no matter how much a sinner offers himself, he cannot become a sin offering without blemish. This is because he is already under sin. To save a sinner, Another who has no sin must bear the sin in the sinner's place and receive the punishment.

That One is Jesus Christ. Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John, completely paid the price of sin by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death.

13. We have been redeemed not with silver or gold but with the life of Christ

In Leviticus 27, an unclean animal could be redeemed with money. But the human soul cannot be redeemed with silver or gold.

"Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:18–19).

The price paid for our redemption is not shekels of silver but the life of Jesus. Because Jesus bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John and received the judgment of those sins

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by shedding His blood on the Cross, the price of sin has been paid without any shortfall.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is believing the following.

—Jesus bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John.

—He went to the Cross bearing the sin of the world.

—He shed His precious blood and received the punishment of sin.

—By rising again from death, He overcame sin and death.

—He has given the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit to the person who believes in this gospel.

We are not people who saved ourselves by paying a price to God. We are people who have been saved because Jesus paid the price.

14. Those who have been redeemed come to belong to God

1 Corinthians 6:19–20 says as follows.

"You are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's"

Just as, in Leviticus 27, an animal was set apart as holy the moment it was vowed to God, a person who has been redeemed with the price Jesus paid becomes a person who belongs to God.

But the two cases are not identical. An animal is property that the one who vowed gave, but we are children of God whom Jesus saved with His own life. Therefore, devotion within the gospel is not being owned against one's will, but offering oneself to God with thanksgiving, believing in the grace that has saved one.

Now the saints confess as follows.

—My body is not only for my own desires.

—My time and talents are what God has given me.

—What I own, too, must be used within the will of God.

—My life must be used in serving the gospel and my neighbors.

15. The application to faith of the word "Do not exchange"

The word not to exchange what has been given to God according to one's own interests also teaches with what heart the saved saints must serve God.

It is easy for people to say that they will give their best to God and then actually give only what is left over.

—When they have time left over, they pray.

—When they have money left over, they help.

—When they have strength left over, they serve.

—They try to serve the gospel after they have accomplished all their own plans.

But the person who believes in the grace of the Lord, who saved him through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, does not regard God as One to be served with leftover time and leftover material things.

Therefore, the saints must serve God with a heart that believes in the gospel, being guided by the word. Leaders, too, must teach the gospel and guide the saints to give by faith, and must not force excessive offerings or service on them.

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16. If an animal given to God is exchanged, both become holy

Verse 10 says that if an animal given to God is exchanged for another animal, both the original one and the one exchanged for it become holy.

This means that even if one hands over another animal in its place in order to take back the animal originally given, what was first given does not become his own again.

Therefore, a promise to give something to God must be made carefully. After making the promise, one must not try to change it in one's own favor, but must follow the word God has established.

17. Practical lessons for those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit

First, one must not take lightly what he has said to God. Rather than making great promises emotionally, honest and continual obedience is important.

Second, one must not give to God as though disposing of the worst. More important than the amount of one's devotion is how one treats the God who saved him.

Third, one must not try to buy salvation with money and devotion. Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John and completely paid the price of those sins on the Cross.

Fourth, one must acknowledge that a sinner cannot make himself a sin offering. The only offering that saves us is Jesus Christ, who is without blemish.

Fifth, the saved person must remember that he belongs to God. He must use the body in which the Holy Spirit dwells not

for sin but for the righteousness of God.

Sixth, church leaders must not force excessive vows or offerings on the saints. The regulation of the priest's valuation in Leviticus 27 is not a word that gives modern leaders the authority to control the property and lives of the saints arbitrarily.

Seventh, when one discovers his own shortcomings, he must not try to pay his own price again, but must return to the gospel, believing that Jesus has already sufficiently borne the price of sin.

Conclusion

Leviticus 27:9–13 teaches the fact that an animal vowed to God is set apart as belonging to God. A clean animal that can be offered as a sacrificial offering cannot be exchanged at will, and if it is exchanged, both animals become holy. For an unclean animal that cannot be offered as an offering, the priest set its value, and if the owner wanted to take it back, he had to add one-fifth to the valuation.

This regulation protects the truthfulness of a vow and God's ownership. But the valuation and the one-fifth must not be understood as the price of the remission of sins. The human soul cannot be redeemed with silver or gold.

We were originally unclean because of sin and could not by ourselves become a sin offering acceptable to God. But Jesus, who is without blemish, bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John, completely paid the price of sin by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death.

Therefore, the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not someone saved by a price he paid, but someone saved by the price Jesus paid. Now he does not offer

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himself in order to obtain salvation, but because he has already been saved, he offers his body and life to God with thanksgiving.

Leviticus 27:14–15—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The context of Leviticus 27:14–15

Leviticus 27 prescribes how the things specially vowed and offered to God must be handled.

—Verses 1–8: the valuation when one vowed to offer a person

—Verses 9–13: the handling when one offered an animal as the thing vowed

—Verses 14–15: the handling when one dedicated a house to God

—Verse 16 onward: the handling when one dedicated a field

The core of verses 14–15 is that if a person vowed to offer a house to God, he could not change that promise at will according to his private feelings and interests. The priest set its official value, and if the one who vowed wanted to return the house to his own possession, he had to add one-fifth to the valuation.

2. *"When a man dedicates his house to be holy to the LORD"*

Verse 14 says as follows.

"And when a man dedicates his house to be holy to the LORD,

then the priest shall set a value for it, whether it is good or bad; as the priest values it, so it shall stand."

To dedicate a house is to offer a house of one's own possession to the LORD. The priest set the value of the house that was offered, and to redeem it again, one had to add one-fifth to that valuation.

A vow to offer a house to God was not something every Israelite was obligated to do. It was a special vow made voluntarily. But just because it had begun voluntarily did not mean that the promise could be lightly canceled.

Before the vow, the house was an individual's possession, but after it was set apart to be offered to God, it could no longer be disposed of at one's own will. The words "offer to God" were accompanied by actual responsibility and a change of ownership.

3. The meaning of a house becoming 'holy'

In the context of Leviticus 27, to set apart a house as holy does not mean that the building becomes morally clean, or that the people living in it automatically become holy.

What is set apart as holy here is the house offered to the LORD. That house was not to be regarded as property to dispose of at one's own will, but had to be treated as something offered to God.

It does not mean the following.

—That if one lives in that house, one automatically receives the remission of sins

—That a mysterious power arises in the building itself

—That if one offers a house to God, the whole family is automatically saved

—That the person who has offered many houses is more

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righteous before God

—That a church leader has absolute rights over that house

That it was set apart for God means that the house is treated as property offered to God.

4. The house was dedicated and its value was set

When a house was dedicated, the priest examined whether it was good or bad and set its value. If the owner redeemed it again, he paid the valuation with one-fifth added, and the house became his possession again.

Therefore the promise to dedicate a house was accompanied by responsibility for actual property. One could not say one had offered it only in words and continue to dispose of it at one's own will.

This regulation teaches that the promise to offer something to God must be concretely carried out.

5. *"Set a value for it, whether it is good or bad"*

The priest had to set a value for the house *"whether it is good or bad."* This means that he evaluated it by examining the actual condition and economic value of the house.

To understand the condition of a house today, the following conditions can be given as examples. This does not mean that they are separate appraisal criteria listed in the text.

—The size of the building

—The state of construction

—Its usability

—Its location and surrounding conditions

—The degree of repair needed

The text does not go so far as to explain the specific method of evaluation, but the regulation did not apply the same amount to every house; it had the value set according to the actual worth.

Here *"good or bad"* does not mean that the house is morally good or evil. It refers to whether its condition as real estate is good or bad.

6. The reason the priest sets the value

If the one who vowed and offered the house set the value of his own house himself, there could arise the temptation to lower the price and offer less to God. Conversely, another person could emotionally demand an excessive price.

In the text, the responsibility for setting that value was given to the priest.

"As the priest values it, so it shall stand" (Leviticus 27:14).

This is a safeguard that keeps the one who vowed from adjusting what he offered to God to his own advantage. What is offered to God was not a matter decided by haggling or by mood, but had to be handled under a public standard and responsibility.

However, this word must not be applied to mean that pastors today have the authority to set the price of the saints' houses or to manage their property. This duty of the priest is a special regulation concerning the management of the sanctuary and the dedicated things of Israel under the covenant of Mount Sinai.

7. The house could be redeemed back

Verse 15 says as follows.

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"If he who dedicated it wants to redeem his house, then he must add one-fifth of the money of your valuation to it, and it shall be his."

Just because a house had been offered to God did not mean that the one who vowed could never recover it under any circumstances. If he redeemed it according to the fixed procedure, he could return the house to his own possession again.

However, paying only the amount the priest had set was not enough. He had to add one-fifth, that is, 20 percent, to that valuation.

For example, if the valuation of the house was one hundred shekels of silver, to recover it he had to add twenty shekels, which is one-fifth, and pay one hundred and twenty shekels in all.

The text clearly says what happens when he paid that price:

"And it shall be his" (Leviticus 27:15).

8. The reason one-fifth had to be added

The regulation of adding one-fifth keeps a vow made to God from being lightly canceled.

If a vowed house could be recovered without any additional burden, a person could emotionally promise to offer a house and then easily cancel it whenever he needed. He could also treat what he had offered to God as though he had entrusted it for a while and then taken it back.

The regulation of adding one-fifth has the following meanings.

—It reminds one of the solemnity of a promise made to God.

—It restrains impulsive vows.

—It protects the holy status of property offered to God.

—It makes responsibility accompany the returning of a dedicated thing to private possession.

—It keeps the sanctuary from suffering loss because of the whims of the one who vowed.

Therefore this additional amount does not mean that God greedily demands more money. It is a regulation given so that a vow made voluntarily would be handled responsibly.

9. The Price Needed to Redeem and the Price of Redemption Paid by the Lord

To redeem a vowed house again, one had to add one-fifth to the valuation. The owner could not recover the house he had offered to God without paying any price.

The regulation of adding one-fifth also appears in the trespass offering of Leviticus 5, but the direct context is different.

—The one-fifth of Leviticus 5 is related to restitution for a trespass.

—The one-fifth of Leviticus 27:15 is related to redeeming a vowed house again.

In both cases one had to follow the amount God had set. However, one is restitution for a trespass, and the other is the regulation for redeeming a vowed house.

The word of adding one-fifth in the trespass offering shows the salvation in which the Lord abundantly paid the price of our sins. The price that saved us is not the price of a house or silver, but the life of Jesus. Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John and received the judgment of those sins on the Cross.

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10. Offering a house does not bring the remission of sins

Just because a person offers his house to God does not mean that his sins are removed. The vow of offering a house and the sacrifice that atones for sin are distinct.

A person may try to solve the problem of his sins and his conscience by offering great property. But human life and the soul cannot be redeemed with a house or with silver and gold.

"None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him—for the redemption of their souls is costly, and it shall cease forever—" (Psalm 49:7–8).

Even if one offers not just one house but all one's property, it cannot take the place of the judgment of sin. This is because the wages of sin are not the loss of property but death.

Therefore one must not confuse dedicating a house with receiving the remission of sins. Devotion is not the price of salvation.

11. The true redemption seen in the gospel of the water and the Spirit

To redeem us from sin, what was needed was not the price of a house or shekels of silver, but a sinless life.

Jesus said as follows while receiving baptism from John.

"Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15).

Because Jesus bore all the sins of the world with the baptism He received from John, John the Baptist testified as follows.

"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).

Jesus went to the Cross bearing the sins He had borne with

the baptism He received from John.

"Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us" (Galatians 3:13).

The blood Jesus shed on the Cross is the price of redemption, more precious than silver or gold.

"Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:18–19).

Jesus overcame sin and death by rising again from death. The person who believes in this gospel receives the remission of sins and receives the promise of the Holy Spirit.

12. We were not saved by offering houses to God

In Leviticus 27, a person offers his house to God. But in the gospel, before that, God gave His own Son to us.

It is not that we first offered what we have to God and gained the love of God. God first sent Jesus Christ and had Him bear our sins.

The order is as follows.

—We left God because of sin.

—Jesus bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John.

—He shed His blood on the Cross and paid the price of sin.

—He rose again from death.

—He gave the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit to the person who believes this fact.

—The saved person offers his possessions and his life to God with thanksgiving.

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Therefore devotion is not the condition of salvation, but the result of salvation.

13. Offering a House and Living a Life of Dedicating One's Family to God

Today, one does not take a house to a priest, receive a valuation, and dedicate it to the sanctuary according to the regulation of Leviticus 27. But the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit can use his house and his family for the will of God.

Joshua confessed as follows.

"But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD" (Joshua 24:15).

This confession does not mean that, ignoring the will and the faith of the family members, the whole family is automatically saved by the decision of the head of the household alone. Each person must hear the gospel and believe with his heart.

To serve the LORD together with one's family like Joshua's confession, one must hear and believe the word at home and do together the things that please God.

—Share the word of the gospel at home.

—Love one's spouse and children, not treating them like possessions.

—Use the house to show hospitality to neighbors and the saints.

—Care for people who need help.

—Do not love money and possessions more than God.

—Follow honesty and love in the decisions of the household.

—Use the house and wealth for the work of preaching the gospel and serving.

14. Rather than the house itself, the saints are the dwelling place of God

In the old covenant, the tabernacle and the temple were the holy places where God was present. But in the New Testament, rather than buildings, the people who believe in Jesus Christ become the dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

"In whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:21–22).

Therefore, just because a church building has been dedicated does not mean that the building itself saves people or removes sin. It is a precious thing to set apart a place of worship and use it for God and the gospel, but the church of the New Testament is fundamentally not a building but the community of people who have received the Holy Spirit by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

If one has a splendid church building but there is no gospel, that building cannot save people. Conversely, even in a small family home or a humble place, if the gospel of the water and the Spirit is proclaimed and believers gather, God can be served there.

15. Offerings and the dedication of property in the New Testament must be voluntary

The vow of Leviticus 27 also began voluntarily. In the New Testament, too, the way of the church forcibly taking the property of the saints does not appear.

Peter said to Ananias as follows.

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"While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control?" (Acts 5:4).

Ananias's sin was not that he did not offer all his property, but that he lied to God under the pretense of voluntary devotion.

Paul also speaks about offerings as follows.

"So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7).

Therefore pastors or the church must not act in the following ways.

—Pressuring people by saying that one receives special blessings only if one offers a house

—Making the dedication of property a condition of salvation or of faith

—Threatening that one will be cursed if one does not offer a house

—Demanding unreasonable vows while ignoring the circumstances of the saints

—Packaging a pastor's personal wishes as a vow to God

True devotion comes from the thanksgiving the Holy Spirit gives to the heart that believes in the gospel.

16. Responsibility for caring for the family and devotion must not be set in conflict

One must not irresponsibly neglect the basic life of one's family under the pretext of offering a house to God. The New Testament also solemnly teaches the responsibility of caring for the family.

"*But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse*

than an unbeliever" (1 Timothy 5:8).

Therefore, disposing of joint property without sufficiently consulting one's spouse, ignoring the basic needs of one's children, or pushing excessive economic hardship onto one's family, for the reason of serving the gospel, cannot be called right devotion.

Offering one's family to God is not achieving religious accomplishment by sacrificing one's family. Rather, it is caring for one's family responsibly with the love received from God, enjoying the grace of the gospel together with one's family, and using wisely the possessions one has received.

17. A house can also become an idol

A house is a precious gift that protects the family and gives it rest. But if a house becomes a greater object of reliance than God, it can become an idol.

A person can harbor the following attitudes of heart.

—He thinks that he is safe only if he has a house.

—He judges his own worth by the size and price of his house.

—He sacrifices his faith and conscience to obtain a better house.

—He cannot follow the will of God because he is afraid of losing his house.

—He compares his house with other people's houses and falls into greed and a sense of inferiority.

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit neither despises a house nor worships it. He uses the house with thanksgiving as something God has entrusted to him, yet believes that his life and safety are not in real estate but in God.

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18. The difference between the word that one-fifth must be paid again and the gospel

In Leviticus 27, if the one who vowed wanted to return the house to his own possession, he had to add one-fifth to the valuation. This is a regulation of the old covenant for the management of dedicated things.

But just because a saved person has sinned again does not mean that he must pay anything more for the redemption accomplished by Jesus. This is because Jesus bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John and completely paid the price of those sins on the Cross.

We do not complete salvation by adding things such as the following.

—Additional penance

—A fixed offering

—Repeated sacrifices of atonement

—Human merit

—Religious vows

The redemption accomplished by Jesus is not lacking. The regulation of adding one-fifth must not be applied to mean that New Testament saints must pay an additional price to maintain the remission of sins.

When the saints realize their shortcomings, they must not try to pay their own price again, but must believe that Jesus has already borne their sins, acknowledge their wrongdoing, and return to God.

Conclusion

Leviticus 27:14–15 is a regulation for the dedication of property that applied when a person vowed to dedicate a house

to God. The priest evaluated the actual condition and value of the house, and if the one who vowed wanted to recover the house again, he had to add one-fifth to the valuation.

This regulation teaches the solemnity of a promise made to God and the ownership of God. But offering a house does not become the price of the remission of sins or automatically save one's family.

Human life cannot be redeemed with a house or with silver and gold. Jesus bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John, shed His precious blood on the Cross and completely paid the price of sin, and rose again from death.

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a person who became a child of God by offering a house. He is a person who became a child of God because Jesus paid the price. That is why, with thanksgiving, he uses his house and property for the will of God, the care of his family, love for his neighbors, and preaching the gospel.

The true confession is this.

It is not the confession, "I will be saved by offering this house," but the confession, "Because the Lord has saved me by paying a price, I will use this house and the life that takes place in it in accordance with the Lord's will."

Leviticus 27:16–25—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The overall structure of Leviticus 27:16–25

This word prescribes how the value of a field was to be set

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when someone vowed to dedicate it to God, and what procedure was to be followed when it was taken back again.

The text distinguishes two kinds of fields.

—Verses 16–21: the field of one's own possession inherited from one's ancestors

—Verses 22–24: a field bought from another person

—Verse 25: the standard shekel of the sanctuary applied to all valuations

The field of one's own possession and a field bought from another person had to be dealt with separately. The number of years remaining until the next Jubilee was reflected in the valuation, but what happened to the field in the Jubilee was not the same. The field of possession in verses 20–21 becomes the possession of the priest, and the field bought in verses 22–24 returns to the original owner of the possession.

2. The meaning of *"a field of his possession"*

Verse 16 says as follows.

"If a man dedicates to the LORD part of a field of his possession, then your valuation shall be according to the seed for it. A homer of barley seed shall be valued at fifty shekels of silver."

"A field of his possession" is generally land that was inherited from one's ancestors and preserved within the tribe and the family. It refers to the land that God divided and gave to each tribe and family when Israel entered Canaan.

This field was not simply real estate.

—It was land God had given by promise.

—It was a possession passed on to the family and to descendants.

—It was the foundation of livelihood and farming.

—Generally, a field of possession that had been sold returned to the original owner of the possession in the Jubilee, but there was a separate regulation for the dedicated field in verses 20–21.

An Israelite could use and cultivate the field of his own possession, but he was not an absolute owner unrelated to God.

Leviticus 25:23 clearly states the reason.

"The land shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with Me."

The ultimate Owner of the land is God. The Israelites were people who managed the possession God had entrusted to them.

3. What it means to dedicate a field to the LORD

To dedicate a field to the LORD does not mean to offer the field itself as a sacrifice on the altar. It means to dedicate that field, or the economic value of the field, for the use of the sanctuary.

Therefore, its valuation was set in silver by calculating the area of the field, its productive capacity, and the period of use remaining until the Jubilee.

Here too, 'to set apart as holy' does not mean that the nature of the soil is mysteriously changed. It refers to the legal and covenantal status that the land has been set apart as God's property and for the use of the sanctuary.

It is not that the field acquires some special power, or that a person who steps on that land automatically becomes holy.

4. *"Your valuation shall be according to the seed"*

Verse 16 says to set the value of the field *"according to the*

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seed." This is a method of evaluation that does not simply look at the surface area of the land, but takes as its standard how much seed can be sown in the field.

"A homer of barley seed shall be valued at fifty shekels of silver" (Leviticus 27:16).

"A homer of barley seed" refers to a field large enough to sow one homer of barley seed. God set its valuation at fifty shekels of silver.

The person who dedicated a field had to calculate the fixed valuation according to the seed of that field.

5. If it is dedicated from the Jubilee, the full valuation applies

Verse 17 says as follows.

"If he dedicates his field from the Year of Jubilee, according to your valuation it shall stand."

If the field was dedicated when the Jubilee had just begun, the longest period of use remained until the next Jubilee. Therefore, the valuation set in verse 16 was applied as it was.

The Jubilee came every fifty years. When the Jubilee came, the people of Israel each returned to their own possession and family.

"And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a Jubilee for you; and each of you shall return to his possession, and each of you shall return to his family" (Leviticus 25:10).

6. The nearer the Jubilee, the lower the value

Verse 18 says as follows.

"But if he dedicates his field after the Jubilee, then the priest shall reckon to him the money due according to the years that remain till the Year of Jubilee, and it shall be deducted from your valuation."

If the field was dedicated after many years had passed since the Jubilee, the period remaining until the next Jubilee became shorter. Therefore, the priest had to calculate the remaining years and deduct from the original valuation.

This regulation is the same as the principle of land transactions in Leviticus 25.

"According to the multitude of years you shall increase its price, and according to the fewer number of years you shall diminish its price; for he sells to you according to the number of the years of the crops" (Leviticus 25:16).

What was actually traded was closer to the produce that could be harvested from that field and the right to use it until the next Jubilee than to permanent ownership of the land.

This was a regulation for fair evaluation.

7. Exact calculation was needed even in what was offered to God

Even though it was a matter of offering a field to God, it was not handled with vague zeal or emotion. The priest had to calculate the years remaining until the next Jubilee and the productive capacity of the field.

This shows that there must be truthfulness and order in what is offered to God.

—The one who vowed cannot arbitrarily lower the value of the field.

—The priest, too, cannot emotionally set an excessive

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amount.

—The period actually available for use cannot be ignored.

—The regulations for the Jubilee that God set for the field of possession and for the field that was bought must each be followed.

Fair evaluation and responsibility were not to be ignored on the ground that it was something offered to God.

This principle is important today as well. Offerings and dedications of property must not be handled without transparency, and the actual value of property or the rights of other people must not be ignored under the pretext of serving God.

8. When the field is redeemed again, one-fifth is added

Verse 19 says as follows.

"And if he who dedicates the field ever wishes to redeem it, then he must add one-fifth of the money of your valuation to it, and it shall belong to him."

If the person who had vowed to offer a field to God wanted to return that field to his own possession again, he had to add one-fifth, that is, 20 percent, to the amount the priest had set.

For example, if the valuation of the field was fifty shekels of silver, he had to add ten shekels, which is one-fifth, and pay sixty shekels in all.

This additional amount serves the following purposes.

—It keeps a vow made to God from being canceled lightly.

—It protects the status of the field set apart as God's property.

—It prevents someone from vowing impulsively and then taking the field back without any loss.

—It makes practical responsibility accompany the vow and the redemption.

Only when the amount of the valuation with one-fifth added had been paid did the field at last *"belong to him."* Ownership did not return merely by a change of mind without the fixed procedure of redemption.

9. The price of redeeming a field and the price of saving sinners

The trespass offering in Leviticus 5 and the various redemption regulations in Leviticus 27 contain the adding of one-fifth. However, the direct function of each text must be distinguished.

—The one-fifth of the trespass offering is related to restitution for a trespass.

—The one-fifth of verse 19 is related to taking back a field of possession that had been set apart for God.

To make the field his own possession again, a person had to pay the price God had set.

As seen in the word about adding one-fifth in the trespass offering, the Lord paid the price of our sin in full abundance. A field could be redeemed with silver, but the price that saved us from sin and death is the life of Jesus. In the salvation that Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross, there is no price left for us to pay in addition.

10. When the field is not redeemed or has passed on to another person

Verse 20 is very solemn.

"But if he does not want to redeem the field, or if he has sold

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the field to another man, it shall not be redeemed anymore;"

Verse 20 says that if he does not want to redeem the field, or if he has sold it to another person, it cannot be redeemed again. Then, in the following verse 21, God determines that in the Jubilee the field becomes the possession of the priest.

The one who vowed was not to regard the field offered to God as something he could take back whenever he wished.

Such practical responsibility accompanied a promise to offer a field. What was done with it after it had been offered to God also had to follow the regulations God had set.

11. In the Jubilee it becomes the possession of the priest

Verse 21 says as follows.

"But the field, when it is released in the Jubilee, shall be holy to the LORD, as a devoted field; it shall be the possession of the priest."

If the one who vowed a field of possession did not redeem it in the fixed way, it did not return to him even when the Jubilee came.

This is different from ordinary land transactions. Generally, a field of possession that had been sold returned to the original family in the Jubilee, but when a field set apart for God was not redeemed, its status as offered to the LORD became final.

Therefore, when the Jubilee came, not every dedicated thing unconditionally returned to its original owner. This field became a holy offering given to the LORD and became the possession of the priest.

12. The importance of the possession received from one's ancestors

Verse 21 shows that vowing or disposing of a field of possession indiscriminately also affects one's descendants. The field of one's own possession was not the property of one individual alone, but a possession to be passed on to the family and to descendants.

Therefore, the one who vowed had to be careful not to offer his family's possession out of a momentary emotion and bring about an irreversible result.

This regulation cannot be applied today as it is, but an important principle remains. An individual must not ignore his responsibilities to his family and community on the ground of religious zeal.

—One must not unilaterally offer property jointly owned with one's spouse.

—One must not give excessive offerings while sacrificing the basic living of one's children.

—The church must not force the saints to dedicate their property.

—One must not endanger the livelihood of one's family by an impulsive vow.

Devotion is not the same as irresponsibility.

13. A field bought from another person is different in nature

Verse 22 speaks of the second kind of field.

"And if a man dedicates to the LORD a field which he has bought, which is not the field of his possession,"

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This field is not one's own possession inherited from one's ancestors. It means that he bought the right to use, until the Jubilee, a field belonging to another person's possession.

According to the principle of Leviticus 25, land could not be sold permanently. Therefore, even if someone bought a field from another person, it had to return to the original owner of the possession when the Jubilee came.

Therefore, what the buyer could offer to God was not permanent ownership of that field, but the value of its use for the period remaining to him until the Jubilee.

14. Only the value until the Jubilee is calculated and offered on that day

Verse 23 says as follows.

"Then the priest shall reckon to him the worth of your valuation, up to the Year of Jubilee, and he shall give your valuation on that day as a holy offering to the LORD."

The priest had to calculate the period remaining until the next Jubilee and set the value. And the one who vowed had to give that value to the LORD *"on that day"* without delaying it.

Three principles appear in this regulation.

First, one can offer only the right he actually has. Since ownership after the Jubilee belongs to the original owner of the possession, he cannot offer that ownership.

Second, the value is calculated fairly according to the remaining period of use. The rights of other people are not violated on the ground of religious zeal.

Third, what has been vowed must be fulfilled on that day. One must not postpone the promise indefinitely and claim to have devoted oneself only in words.

15. In the Jubilee it returns to the original owner of the possession

Verse 24 says as follows.

"In the Year of Jubilee the field shall return to him from whom it was bought, to the one who owned the land as a possession."

Even if a field that had been bought was dedicated to God, it returns to the original owner of the possession when the Jubilee comes. This is because the buyer could offer only the value of the period he held.

This word shows that the law of God comes before the zeal of the one who vowed. No matter how much one has the pretext of offering to God, one cannot violate another person's right of possession that God has set.

The act of offering to God cannot be a means of wrapping unrighteous possessions in holiness. Even if one takes what belongs to another person and offers it to God, it cannot be a devotion that pleases God.

16. *"The land is Mine"*

The key to understanding this whole passage is Leviticus 25:23.

"The land shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine"

The people of Israel owned land, but the ultimate Owner was God. Because God had entrusted the land to each tribe and family as a possession, people could not dispose of that land permanently according to their own greed.

This principle is not a direct command to change today's land laws into the law of the Jubilee as they are. However, it gives a

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clear lesson for the attitude with which a person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit looks at possessions.

—All possessions are what God has entrusted.

—Property is not eternal.

—Possessions carry responsibility toward one's family and neighbors.

—Property that violates the rights of other people cannot be justified.

—Greed must not be disguised under the pretext of offering to God.

17. The public standard called the shekel of the sanctuary

Verse 25 concludes as follows.

"And all your valuations shall be according to the shekel of the sanctuary: twenty gerahs to the shekel."

Every valuation had to follow the shekel of the sanctuary, and one shekel was fixed at twenty gerahs. Neither the one who vowed nor the evaluator could change that standard to his own advantage.

Honest scales and the same standard were needed in what was offered to God. The attitude that 'since it is offered to God, it is all right to calculate roughly,' or that 'since it is a religious matter, there is no need to verify it,' is contrary to the text.

Today, too, church finances and offerings must be managed honestly and transparently. The pretext that it is work for God does not justify a lack of transparency in accounting or special favors.

18. The redemption of a field and the redemption of man are different

The field in Leviticus 27 could be redeemed by paying the fixed shekels of silver. But the human soul cannot be redeemed with silver or gold.

"Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:18–19).

The redemption price of a field decreased according to the remaining years until the Jubilee. But the price for redeeming man from sin does not become lower with time or vary according to the economic circumstances of the sinner.

The wages of sin is death, and a sinless life was needed to pay that price in one's place. Only Jesus Christ, whom God sent, could bear that price.

19. Jesus completely bore the price of sin and of the curse

Jesus said as follows while receiving baptism from John.

"Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15).

Jesus bore all the sins of the world with the baptism He received from John. That is why 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 went to the Cross in the body in which He bore the sins

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with the baptism He received from John.

"Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us" (Galatians 3:13).

Jesus shed His blood on the Cross and completely bore the price of our sin and its judgment, and He rose again from death. The person who believes this fact receives the remission of sins and receives the Holy Spirit as a gift.

The redemption of a field required the shekel of the sanctuary, but the redemption of man required the baptism Jesus received from John and His precious blood.

20. The eternal inheritance received in Christ

A field that had been bought from another person and offered to the LORD returned to the original owner of the possession when the Jubilee came. The person who had bought that field had no right to dispose of it permanently.

But the inheritance of salvation that a person who believes in Jesus Christ receives does not disappear.

"To an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Peter 1:4).

Also, Hebrews 9:15 speaks of the purpose for which Jesus became the Mediator of the new covenant as follows.

"That those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance"

The possession in Canaan was land, and it was under the order of the Jubilee. The ultimate inheritance given to the saints of the New Testament is the remission of sins, eternal life, and the kingdom of God obtained in Christ.

God gave Israel the land of possession. In the New Testament, the word says that Jesus Christ, by His death, caused

those who believe to receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

21. The Holy Spirit is the guarantee of the inheritance

A person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a person who has only a vague expectation of the inheritance he will receive in the future. God gives the Holy Spirit to the person who believes and guarantees that inheritance.

"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, who is the guarantee of our inheritance" (Ephesians 1:13–14).

The flow of the gospel of the water and the Spirit is as follows.

—Jesus bore the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John.

—He received the judgment of the curse on the Cross and paid the price of sin.

—He rose again from death.

—A person who hears and believes this gospel of salvation receives the remission of sins.

—God gives the Holy Spirit to that person.

—The Holy Spirit becomes the guarantee that he is a child of God and one who will receive the eternal inheritance.

Our eternal inheritance is not obtained by the price of land or by human merit, but is received through the redemption accomplished by Jesus and the sealing of the Holy Spirit.

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22. Offering material things and buying salvation must be distinguished

A person's offering a field or property to God can be an expression of faith and thanksgiving. But with it he cannot buy the remission of sins or the inheritance of the kingdom of heaven.

The following teachings do not agree with the gospel.

—The claim that if you give land to the church, you will obtain a greater salvation

—The claim that if you offer property, the sins of your family will automatically disappear

—The claim that large offerings guarantee the inheritance of the kingdom of heaven

—The threat that if you do not offer your property, you will be cursed

—The claim that only when one hands over land to a pastor does it count as having been offered to God

Devotion in the New Testament is not compulsion but the voluntary response of a person who has received grace.

"So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7).

23. Practical lessons for those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit

First, we must acknowledge that God is the ultimate Owner of all possessions. One must not make his own property his absolute security or the purpose of his life.

Second, a promise made to God must not be taken lightly. Rather than making a great vow out of emotion, one must

truthfully practice the obedience he is able to carry out.

Third, one must not say that he serves God while violating the rights of other people. Just as a person could not offer what was not his own possession, devotion that ignores the rights of one's family and co-owners is also not right.

Fourth, church finances and dedicated offerings must be managed accurately and transparently. Just as there was the standard of the shekel of the sanctuary, fairness and verification are needed in the work of God.

Fifth, one must not try to buy salvation with property. Our redemption was accomplished not with silver or gold, but with the baptism Jesus received from John and the precious blood of the Cross.

Sixth, one must look to the eternal inheritance rather than to the possession on earth. Real estate and property remain in this world, but the inheritance of the remission of sins and eternal life received in Christ does not decay or fade.

Seventh, one must believe that the Holy Spirit is the guarantee of the eternal inheritance. The assurance of salvation is based not on how much one has offered, but on what Jesus has completed.

Conclusion

Leviticus 27:16–25 is a regulation that, when someone vowed to offer a field to God, had the field's value calculated fairly, protected the order of possession of the Jubilee, and had the promise made to God fulfilled responsibly.

The value of a field of possession inherited from one's ancestors was set according to the seed of barley sown on it and the period remaining until the next Jubilee. To redeem it again,

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one-fifth had to be added to the valuation, and a field that could no longer be redeemed according to verse 20 became the possession of the priest in the Jubilee. On the other hand, since a field bought from another person carried only the right to use it until the Jubilee, only the value of that period could be offered, and in the Jubilee it returned to the original owner of the possession.

A field could be redeemed with the shekel of the sanctuary, but the human soul cannot be redeemed with silver or gold. Our salvation required the life of Jesus Christ, who is without sin.

Jesus bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John, shed His precious blood on the Cross and completely paid the price of sin, and rose again from death. The person who believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of sins, receives the sealing of the Holy Spirit, and obtains the promise of the eternal inheritance.

Therefore, the saints do not make land and property the ground of salvation. While using all their possessions as what God has entrusted to them, they live looking to the eternal inheritance that does not decay or fade.

Leviticus 27:26–27—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The core of the text: what is already God's cannot be made a thing vowed again

Leviticus 27:26–27 says as follows.

"But the firstborn of the animals, which should be the

LORD's firstborn, no man shall dedicate; whether it is an ox or sheep, it is the LORD's. And if it is an unclean animal, then he shall redeem it according to your valuation, and shall add one-fifth to it; or if it is not redeemed, then it shall be sold according to your valuation."

Leviticus 27 prescribes how a person is to handle it when he has vowed to give himself, an animal, a house, or a field to God. But verse 26 says that the firstborn, that is, the firstborn of animals, is different from ordinary things vowed.

An Israelite could not look at the firstborn of his ox or sheep and vow, "I will give this especially to God." This is because that firstborn was already God's even before the person vowed.

Here an important difference is revealed.

—Ordinary things vowed are what a person dedicates and gives from among his own possessions.

—The firstborn does not become God's by a person's vow, but is God's from the beginning according to God's declaration.

Therefore the center of verse 26 lies not in 'what one will give more of,' but in 'who the true owner is.'

2. Why the firstborn is God's

Behind this ordinance lies the event of the Exodus. On the night of the Passover God judged the firstborn of Egypt, but He let the firstborn of the houses of Israel, on which the blood of the lamb had been put, live. After that God said as follows.

"'Consecrate to Me all the firstborn, whatever opens the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and beast; it is Mine'" (Exodus 13:2).

The declaration that the firstborn sons of Israel and the firstborn of their livestock are God's is not a mere regulation of

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ownership. It is a sign of salvation that God had delivered them from death.

Returning the firstborn to God made them remember the following fact.

"We did not come out of Egypt by ourselves; God gave life to us through the blood of the lamb. Therefore our lives and our possessions all belong to God."

Therefore at the foundation of the ordinance of the firstborn lie together judgment, the death of the lamb, vicarious atonement, salvation, and God's ownership.

3. The difference between the clean firstborn and the unclean firstborn

The *"ox or sheep"* of verse 26 are clean animals that could be given as offerings. Since their firstborn already belonged to God, a person could not claim it as a separate thing vowed. It had to be handled according to the ordinance of the firstborn that God had set.

The *"unclean animal"* of verse 27 refers to an animal that could not be given to the LORD as a sacrificial offering. God had it redeemed by adding one-fifth to the valuation, and, if it was not redeemed, had it sold according to the valuation.

The firstborn of an unclean animal also does not depart from the principle that it belongs to God. But since it could not be offered on the altar as a sacrificial offering, another way was needed.

—If the owner wanted to get it back, he could redeem it by adding one-fifth to the value the priest had set.

—If he did not redeem it, it was sold according to the fixed valuation.

Therefore verse 27 shows the fact that just because something is God's, it does not mean that a person may handle it as he pleases or offer it on the altar in any way at all. What is God's must be handled by the method God has set.

4. What 'one-fifth' means

If the owner wanted to get back an unclean animal, he had to add one-fifth to the valuation. This is primarily an amount attached to the actual procedure of redemption. To return to oneself what already belonged to God, one had to pay the fixed valuation without thinking lightly of that ownership.

One-fifth is an amount that had to be paid in addition to the valuation. The person who redeemed what was God's had to follow the regulation God had set, without cutting down the price as he pleased.

Yet in the light of the gospel, the principle this ordinance shows is clear. Redemption is not accomplished by words or emotions. To get back life, a proper price must by all means be paid.

Together with the word about adding one-fifth in the trespass offering, we learn of the salvation in which Jesus has paid the price of our sins abundantly. That price is not silver or gold, but the life and blood of Jesus Christ.

5. The redemption of the unclean animal and the salvation of the sinner

An unclean animal could not in itself be offered on the altar as a sacrificial offering. From the perspective of the gospel, this

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picture makes one think of the fact that a sinner cannot present himself as an offering that washes away sin.

A sinner cannot pay the price of his own sins with good deeds, resolutions, or religious zeal. A sinner cannot take the place of a sinner, nor can an unclean person make himself clean by giving his own life. An offering of vicarious atonement without blemish is needed.

Exodus says as follows concerning the firstborn of a donkey.

"The firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb. And if you will not redeem him, then you shall break his neck" (Exodus 34:20).

Leviticus 27:27 and Exodus 34:20 are not completely the same in the detailed regulations that apply to each. But there is a common principle. It is that what is unclean and cannot be given as an offering is not offered on the altar as it is, but needs a way of redemption.

This principle shows how a sinner can live before God. A sinner must be saved not by presenting his own righteousness, but through the lamb God has prepared.

6. The true price of redemption seen in the gospel of the water and the Spirit

In the New Testament, that lamb of vicarious atonement is Jesus Christ. John the Baptist saw Jesus and testified.

"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).

From the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, Jesus fulfilled all righteousness through the baptism He received from John. Though Jesus was without sin, He bore the sin of the world in order to take the place of sinners, received the judgment

of that sin by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death.

Jesus is not One who committed sin Himself. He is the offering of vicarious atonement who came as the sinless Lamb of God and bore the sins of sinners in their place with the baptism He received from John.

First Peter makes clear the following concerning our redemption.

"Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:18–19).

The price paid to redeem us is not our merit but the life of Jesus. Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John, paid that price by shedding His blood on the Cross, and completed our salvation by rising again from death.

Therefore salvation is not a transaction obtained by offering something more to God. It is grace received by believing with the heart in the gospel God has set.

7. The relationship between the firstborn and Jesus Christ

The New Testament calls Jesus *"the firstborn from the dead."*

"And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence" (Colossians 1:18).

Here the expression *"firstborn"* does not mean that Jesus is a created being. It means that Jesus, having overcome death and risen again from death, is the Head of the new creation and has

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the preeminence over all things.

Leviticus 27:26 says that the firstborn is already the LORD's. When we see it together with the word in Exodus 34 about redeeming the firstborn, we can know that we are lives that belong to God and must live by the vicarious atonement God has set. The One who accomplished that salvation is Jesus Christ.

Jesus is the offering without blemish who fully obeyed the will of God, and He redeemed us, who had become unclean because of sin, with His own life.

8. *"You are not your own"*

If we apply the word of Leviticus 27:26 to our lives as those who have been saved, it is that "what is already God's cannot be claimed again as if it were mine."

Paul says this to those who have been saved.

"You are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Corinthians 6:19–20).

The person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit acknowledges that the ownership of his life lies with God. But this does not mean that God oppresses people or treats them as property without personhood. It means that God has saved, with the price of Christ, lives that were to perish.

Therefore, even when the believer gives his body, time, material things, and talents to God, he must not think, "I am giving what is mine to God and building up great merit." It is returning to God what he has already received by the grace of God.

Devotion is not an act of paying the price of salvation, but

the fruit of thanksgiving that the saved person gives. It is not that we belong to God because we have devoted ourselves, but that we devote ourselves with joy because Christ first redeemed us.

9. The Holy Spirit testifies that we are children of God

The Holy Spirit testifies that the salvation of the water and the blood that Jesus has accomplished is the truth. He dwells in those who believe in that salvation and testifies that we are children of God.

This is also the reason why the body of the saved person is called *"the temple of the Holy Spirit."* The person who has received the remission of sins through the vicarious atonement of Jesus has become one of God's people, in whom the Holy Spirit dwells.

Therefore a life that belongs to God is not simply a life that keeps many outward religious rules. It is a life that believes in the salvation of Jesus Christ testified by the water, the blood, and the Spirit, and that glorifies God with one's own body, being led by the Holy Spirit.

10. When this word is applied to faith today

First, we must not try to make a deal with God.

The thought, "I have given this much, so please give me this much blessing," turns a vow into merit. Our lives and possessions have already been given by the grace of God.

Second, one must not try to be saved in one's own way.

Just as a person could not arbitrarily offer an unclean animal on the altar, a sinner cannot put forward his own righteousness

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and good deeds as an offering for salvation. He must believe in the vicarious atonement of Jesus Christ that God has set.

Third, material things cannot take the place of the price of salvation.

Offerings, service, fasting, and vows are not the price that washes away sin. Jesus Christ has already paid the price of our redemption with His own life.

Fourth, devotion comes after salvation.

Paul urges those who have received the mercy of God to present their bodies as a living sacrifice. First there is redemption, and then there is devotion. It is not that devotion produces redemption.

Fifth, the gospel sees the lives of all people as equally precious.

Whether rich or poor, whether of high or low position, the price of redemption is the same. All people are saved not by their own merit but by the same vicarious atonement of Jesus Christ.

Conclusion

The core of Leviticus 27:26–27 can be summed up in two sentences.

"What is already God's cannot be dedicated again by a person through his own merit. What is unclean and cannot be given as an offering must follow the way of redemption God has set."

This word becomes even clearer in the gospel. A sinner cannot make himself a clean offering and give himself to God, but God sent Jesus, the Lamb without blemish. Jesus fulfilled all righteousness by receiving baptism from John, bore the sin of the world and died shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose

again from death.

The person who believes in that gospel receives the remission of sins and becomes a person who belongs to God and in whom the Holy Spirit dwells. And now he comes to confess as follows.

"I am not my own, but a person who belongs to God, bought at the price paid by Jesus Christ. Therefore I do not give myself in order to obtain salvation, but I give my life to God because I have already been saved."

Leviticus 27:28–29—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: the difference between an ordinary vow and "devoting"

Leviticus 27:28–29 says as follows.

"Nevertheless no devoted offering that a man may devote to the LORD of all that he has, both man and beast, or the field of his possession, shall be sold or redeemed; every devoted offering is most holy to the LORD. No person under the ban, who may become doomed to destruction among men, shall be redeemed, but shall surely be put to death."

In the earlier part of Leviticus 27 there appear regulations for redeeming a vowed house, field, and so on by paying a set price. But not every thing vowed could be redeemed. The animal to be offered as a sacrificial offering in verses 9–10 could not be substituted, and "something devoted" in verse 28 also could not be sold or redeemed.

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What was permitted to be redeemed in the earlier part could be recovered according to the conditions God had set. On the other hand, it is stated explicitly that "something devoted" in verse 28 can neither be sold nor redeemed.

The contrast of the text is clear.

—The thing vowed that God set to be redeemable can be redeemed by following the relevant procedure.

—Something devoted cannot be withdrawn, traded, or redeemed.

—The final right over it belongs to God.

Therefore, to "devote" something is not merely offering something with emotional zeal, but passing on its ownership and its right of disposal completely to God.

2. The meaning of *"most holy"*

Verse 28 says that something devoted is *"most holy to the LORD."* Here the word "holy" does not first of all mean that the object is morally perfect or without sin.

In Leviticus, holiness basically means the state of belonging to God and being set apart from ordinary use. Therefore, that an animal or a field is "most holy" does not mean that it is personally righteous, but that a person can no longer use it as his own possession and that it belongs entirely to the right of God.

Verse 29 says that a person who has been devoted cannot be redeemed again and must be put to death. This does not mean that the person is morally clean, but shows the solemnity of a disposal that has been fixed so that it cannot be redeemed again.

Therefore, in the holiness of the text two aspects appear together.

—What is God's cannot be recklessly taken back or traded

by a person.

—The holiness of God does not change sin and judgment according to human convenience.

3. The reason man, animal, and the field of his possession are mentioned together

Verse 28 states the range of what could be devoted as *"both man and beast, or the field of his possession."* This shows the fact that the right of God is not limited only to religious ceremonies.

A person's life and labor, animals and property, and even land inherited from one's ancestors could belong to God. From the moment each was devoted, it could no longer be the object of ordinary economic activity.

But this word must not be read as meaning that people today may possess the life of another person as they please or dominate him in the name of offering him to God. This regulation was given within the covenant community of Old Testament Israel and within the legal order God had set.

The focus of the text is not that a person has the right to dominate another person, but that the final ownership and the right of judgment belong to God.

4. Verse 29 is not a word that permits personal cursing or murder

The word of verse 29, *"No person under the ban … shall be redeemed, but shall surely be put to death,"* is very solemn. But this word must not be interpreted as meaning that if an individual,

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being angry, declares that he has devoted another person to God, he may kill that person.

Verse 29 states explicitly that a person who has been devoted cannot be redeemed again. But no individual can, on the basis of this one verse, vow to devote a person and claim the authority to kill him.

Joshua 6:17 says this.

"Now the city shall be doomed by the LORD to destruction, it and all who are in it. Only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all who are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent."

People could not take for their own greed what God had set to be judged. When Achan secretly took the devoted things of Jericho, the whole camp of Israel came under the effect of the judgment. Saul, too, kept the good animals of Amalek, which God had commanded to be judged, and said that he would offer them as sacrifices, but God did not recognize this as godly devotion.

"To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams" (1 Samuel 15:22).

Therefore, no one can use verse 29 as an excuse to dispose of another person's life according to his own zeal or hatred. Even the pretext of offering to God does not justify murder.

5. The solemnity of the word "*No person under the ban… shall be redeemed*"

In Leviticus 27 there appear many things that can be redeemed. But verse 29 says that, concerning a person who has been devoted and set to be put to death, nothing can substitute for that person any longer, whether money or other things.

This shows that God's judgment on sin cannot be removed by money or by human negotiation.

A person cannot settle the judgment of sin by methods such as the following.

—Offering much wealth to God

—Doing great religious service

—Afflicting one's own body

—Trying to offset evil deeds with good deeds

—Trying to settle one's own sins with other people's wealth

—Taking God's verdict lightly and declaring oneself to be all right

The wages of sin is death, and the holy judgment of God cannot be canceled by human money and merit. In this respect, verse 29 blocks all the self-deception of human beings who think lightly of sin and judgment.

6. Then does this contradict Christ's having redeemed us?

Verse 29 says, *"No person under the ban … shall be redeemed."* On the other hand, the New Testament says that Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law.

"Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree')" (Galatians 3:13).

These two words do not contradict each other.

Leviticus 27:29 means that human beings cannot nullify the judgment of God by money or by other transactions. In the gospel, God did not simply treat His judgment as if it had never been. He made Jesus Christ stand in the place of sinners and actually bear that judgment.

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The righteousness of God was not abolished. The judgment on sin was carried out on the Cross. But the blameless Son of God received in place of sinners the judgment they should have received.

Therefore, salvation is not the result of God's turning a blind eye to sin, but the result of Christ's having completely borne the judgment of sin.

This word shows that there is a judgment that a person cannot change with money. God's judgment on sin is not light either. Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John and received that judgment in our place on the Cross.

7. The baptism Jesus received from John and the bearing of sin

From the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the vicarious atonement of Jesus did not begin suddenly on the Cross. Jesus spoke as He was receiving baptism from John.

"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15).

Jesus is originally the sinless Son of God. But He received baptism from John in order to bear the sin of the world in place of sinners. That is why John the Baptist proclaimed, pointing to Jesus:

"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).

From the standpoint of the sinner, there is no price at all by which to escape the judgment of God. But Jesus, whom God Himself prepared, is different. Jesus bore the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John, and went to the Cross bearing that sin.

On the Cross, Jesus, as the One without sin, bore the curse and death that sinners should receive. And by rising again from death, He overcame the power of sin and death.

The water and the blood are not two separate salvations.

—Jesus fulfilled all righteousness and bore the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John.

—Bearing that sin, He shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment.

—By rising again from death, He revealed complete salvation.

—The Holy Spirit testifies that salvation to the person who believes this gospel as the truth.

8. The gospel that made people who had to be judged into holy people

The person of Leviticus 27:29 cannot be redeemed and must be put to death. This makes one think how hopeless the state of the sinner outside the gospel is.

But Jesus received the judgment of sinners in their place, and made those who believe into the holy people of God.

"For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14).

It is not that we were saved because we were holy from the beginning. We obtained holiness because Jesus bore our sins and received the judgment of those sins.

Therefore, the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit acknowledges two facts together.

First, the fact that I was a sinner who could not escape the judgment of God.

Second, the fact that Jesus bore all my sins and curse in my place.

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If one does not acknowledge one's own sins and the holy judgment of God, one cannot know why the vicarious atonement of the Cross is necessary. Conversely, if one looks only at one's own sins and does not believe in the atonement Jesus has accomplished, one continues to remain in condemnation.

The gospel, without denying the judgment of God, completely saves the sinner from that judgment.

"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1).

9. "*Most holy*" and the status of the person who has been saved

In verse 28, something devoted belonged entirely to God. When applying this to the saints of the New Testament, one can consider 1 Corinthians 6:19–20 together with it.

"You are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's"

The person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is no longer a person who belongs to sin, the devil, and the world. He is a person of God bought with the price of Jesus Christ. Also, because the Holy Spirit dwells in him, his body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.

The saved saints are people whom Jesus bought by paying the price. Therefore, following the will of the Lord who saved them, they must offer their bodies, time, and wealth to the work of serving the gospel.

The principle is this.

"The person whom God has saved with the life of Christ is

no longer a being who disposes of himself as he pleases, but a person who belongs to God."

10. The devotion of the saved person is not the condition of redemption

That the saved person offers his body to God is not a price for being saved. It is a response of thanksgiving offered because Jesus first paid the price of salvation completely.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God" (Romans 12:1).

Paul does not say, "Only when you offer your body do you obtain the mercy of God." He urges the people who have already received the mercy of God to offer their bodies.

The order is clear.

—Sinners were under the judgment of God.

—Jesus bore sin and received that judgment in their place.

—The person who believes has obtained the remission of sins and eternal life.

—The Holy Spirit dwells in that person.

—The saved person offers his life to God with thanksgiving.

It is not that devotion accomplishes salvation, but that salvation gives birth to devotion.

11. This word cannot be used today as a basis for violence

The word of verse 29, *"Shall surely be put to death,"* cannot be used today by the church or by individuals as a basis for

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condemning and killing other people.

This regulation of the Old Testament was within the special covenantal and judicial order God gave to Israel. The church of the New Testament is not a nation carrying out a war of conquest of Canaan. The church is not a community that has received the command to physically remove sinners, but a community that has received the command to preach the gospel of Christ to sinners.

Jesus said:

"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).

Therefore, a person must not, by his own feelings, designate a particular individual or group as ones who may be killed. Discerning sin and faith by the word and claiming the authority to harm a person's life are entirely different things.

What the church must do is not to declare people doomed to destruction, but, while it is still the time of grace, to preach the gospel of the water and the blood of Jesus Christ and so let them be saved from judgment.

12. Lessons for the life of the saints

First, one must not take the holiness of God lightly.

God is not One who overlooks sin carelessly. The Cross is not evidence that sin is trivial, but evidence that shows how solemn the judgment of sin is.

Second, one must not try to escape judgment by one's own deeds.

Just as the redemption of the devoted person was not permitted in verse 29, a sinner cannot save his own soul with

money, good deeds, and religious life. He must believe only in Jesus Christ, whom God has prepared.

Third, the person who is in Christ must believe that he has been set free from condemnation.

One must not live looking only at one's own weaknesses, as if one were still a person to be judged. One must believe the fact that Jesus has completely borne the judgment of that sin.

Fourth, even after being saved, one must not live only for one's own desires, but must serve the work that pleases God.

Our bodies, time, and talents have been redeemed with the price of Jesus Christ. They must be used not to live only for the lusts of the flesh and the honor of the world, but to serve the gospel and souls.

Fifth, one must not make what is holy a means of one's own profit.

The gospel, the church, the saints, and devotion and service must not be used as a means of personal power or of making money. A person must not try to trade what belongs to God as if it were his own possession.

Sixth, one must not forcibly demand the devotion of others either.

Church leaders or parents must not use this text to bind people's lives and property under their own authority. True devotion is what the person who has been saved by believing in the gospel offers with thanksgiving within the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Conclusion

Leviticus 27:28–29 shows the regulation concerning something devoted to God and the solemnity of a disposal that

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cannot be redeemed again. Something devoted could not be traded or redeemed again, and a person placed under the judgment of God could not change that verdict with a human price.

In light of this word, every sinner comes to realize that he cannot escape judgment by his own strength. But the gospel testifies that God did not pour that judgment out on sinners themselves; instead, He made Jesus Christ bear it.

Jesus bore the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John, and bearing that sin, received the curse and death on the Cross, and rose again from death. The person who believes in that gospel is no longer under judgment, but becomes one of the people of God who have been made holy forever.

Therefore, this word leads believers to make two confessions.

"I was originally a person who could not escape the judgment of God, but Jesus Christ received my curse in my place. Now I am not my own, but a person of God bought with the price of Christ; therefore I will live receiving the guidance of the Holy Spirit and offering my life to God."

Leviticus 27:30–34—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The text: the tithe belongs not to man but to God

Leviticus 27:30–34 says as follows.

"And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD's. It is holy to the LORD. If a man wants at all to redeem any of his tithes, he shall add

one-fifth to it. And concerning the tithe of the herd or the flock, of whatever passes under the rod, the tenth one shall be holy to the LORD. He shall not inquire whether it is good or bad, nor shall he exchange it; and if he exchanges it at all, then both it and the one exchanged for it shall be holy; it shall not be redeemed. These are the commandments which the LORD commanded Moses for the children of Israel on Mount Sinai."

The starting point of this word is not so much the command "Give a tenth" as the declaration of ownership that the tithe *"is the LORD's."*

That the people of Israel obtained grain and fruit from the land and that their oxen and sheep multiplied was not something accomplished by their own strength alone. They obtained it because God gave the land, the sunlight, and the rain, and preserved life. Therefore, to offer the tithe was not to have what was one's own taken away, but a confession of faith acknowledging that the One who gave everything is God.

The basic confession of the tithe is this.

"This produce did not come entirely from me. It is God who gave the land, life, and the yield. Therefore I set apart the portion God has determined as God's."

2. The tithe *"is the LORD's. It is holy to the LORD"*

Verse 30 says that a tenth of the grain produced from the land and of the fruit of the trees *"is the LORD's"* and is *"holy to the LORD."*

Here the word "holy" does not simply mean an object that is religiously meaningful. It means that it has been set apart from common use and has become something that belongs to God. Therefore the people of Israel were not to think of the tithe as

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merely donating part of their property to a charitable work.

Through the tithe, God taught the people of Israel the following faith.

—God is the source of all life and fruitfulness.

—Man is not the absolute owner, but a steward who manages what he has received from God.

—To set apart first what is God's is an act of acknowledging God as Master.

—Offering to God is not disposing of what is left over, but setting apart by faith.

However, just because a tenth is God's, it does not mean that the remaining nine-tenths become man's absolute possession, unrelated to God. The tithe was a sign that representatively acknowledged the fact that everything is God's.

3. What was the tithe used for?

The tithe of Israel was not an institution simply for piling up wealth in the tabernacle or in a religious institution. The word in Numbers says that the tithe of Israel was given to the sons of Levi, who had no inheritance, so that they would be in charge of the work of the tabernacle of meeting.

"Behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tithes in Israel as an inheritance in return for the work which they perform, the work of the tabernacle of meeting" (Numbers 18:21).

Also, in Deuteronomy 14:28–29, at the end of every third year God had the tithe of that year's produce stored up within the cities so that the Levites, the strangers, the fatherless, and the widows might eat.

"And the Levite, because he has no portion nor inheritance

with you, and the stranger and the fatherless and the widow who are within your gates, may come and eat and be satisfied"

Therefore the following purposes were contained in the tithe.

—To let the duties concerning the tabernacle and the sacrifices continue

—To support the livelihood of the Levites, who had no inheritance in the land

—To maintain the community that worships God

—To care for the economically weak, such as the strangers, the fatherless, and the widows

—To let the whole people enjoy the grace of God together

The tithe was not money that fills human desires under the name of offering it to God, but a holy offering that served God, gave life to the community, and cared for the weak.

4. Why one-fifth was added when redeeming the tithe of grain and fruit

Verse 31 says that if a man wants to redeem the tithe of grain or fruit, he must add one-fifth to its value.

This means that once the tithe has been set apart to God, the owner cannot lightly cancel it or take it back according to his own circumstances.

The regulation of adding one-fifth contains the intention of not letting people treat God's holy offering lightly. What is God's could not be treated in such a way that one sets it apart for a while and then, when it becomes necessary, takes it back again without any burden.

Here the one-fifth is the amount added when redeeming the tithe of the produce of the land. To take back what belongs to God, one had to follow the value He had set.

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This regulation also teaches us how we must handle wealth.

"What is God's must not be treated carelessly according to one's own circumstances. What has been set apart to God must be handled within God's holy ownership."

5. Why was the tithe of the animals made to pass *"under the rod"*?

Verse 32 says that when oxen or sheep pass under the rod, every tenth one becomes holy to God.

"Passing under the rod" depicts the shepherd counting the animals as he makes them pass by one at a time. As he counted one, two, three, when the tenth came, that animal was set apart as God's.

The important characteristic of this method is that the owner does not first sort out good animals and bad animals and decide the tithe in a way that pleases him.

The animals were made to pass under the rod, and every tenth one was set apart as holy to the LORD.

That regulation blocks human calculation and manipulation. The tithe was not a gift the owner decided according to his mood, but something set apart according to the order God had established.

6. *"He shall not inquire whether it is good or bad, nor shall he exchange it"*

The expression in verse 33, *"Inquire whether it is good or bad,"* means that one is not to choose or exchange it by weighing whether it is good or bad.

Even if the animal that passed tenth looked good, one could not exchange it for a weaker one. Conversely, even if one tried to exchange it for a better animal, it was not permitted.

God prevented people from manipulating His ordinances according to greed or their own righteousness.

—Just because a good one has become the tenth, one cannot, begrudging it, exchange it for a bad one.

—Even if the tenth animal does not look good, one cannot exchange it for another good animal.

—If one exchanges it, both the original animal and the one set in its place become God's.

—Unlike the tithe of grain, the tithe of the animals cannot be redeemed either.

However, this word does not mean that even an animal with a blemish could be offered as a sacrificial offering on the altar without any restriction. The regulation on being set apart as a tithe and the regulation on the blemishes of sacrificial offerings offered on the altar must be distinguished. The center of verse 33 lies in not exchanging the tenth animal according to human interests.

7. Why do both become holy when it is exchanged?

If the owner tried to exchange the tenth animal for another animal, both the animal first set apart as the tenth and the animal newly set in its place became God's.

This is a strong regulation that prevents people from changing at will, by human calculation, what has been given to God. If a person tried to exchange what is God's in order to gain more profit, both instead became God's.

This word does not mean that God is greedy because He

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needs people's wealth. God was dealing with the hearts of His people.

God did not let the owner arbitrarily choose or exchange the tenth animal. The saints also must respect the word God has established and serve God honestly rather than putting their own judgment first.

8. The scope of application that verse 34 makes clear

Verse 34 makes clear that these regulations are *"the commandments which the LORD commanded Moses for the children of Israel on Mount Sinai."*

This word tells to whom and in what covenant situation the regulation of the tithe was given. It is a specific commandment given to the people of Israel under the covenant of Mount Sinai. They had a system centered on the tabernacle and the priests, the duties of the Levites, the Promised Land, and the produce of the land.

In Leviticus there are the procedure of making the animals pass under the rod and the procedure of adding one-fifth when redeeming the tithe of the produce. Offerings in the New Testament are taught, as in 2 Corinthians 9:7, to be given willingly by each person as he has decided in his heart. Offerings are not a price to buy the remission of sins, but a way in which those who have been saved serve God.

However, the will of God revealed through this regulation gives important teaching to New Testament believers as well.

—Faith that everything has come from God

—An attitude of setting apart as holy what is God's

—The responsibility of serving together the work of the gospel and its workers

—Love that cares for the poor and the weak

—A life that does not love material things more than God

—Honesty that does not manipulate what has been offered according to one's own profit

9. Why the tithe cannot be a condition for the remission of sins

What must be made most clear in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the relationship between the tithe and the remission of sins.

Offering the tithe is not a sacrifice that washes away sin. Offering much in tithes does not pay the price of sin. Not having been able to offer the tithe does not make the atonement Jesus accomplished incomplete.

A sinner cannot pay God the price of sin with wealth. Jesus Himself paid the price of salvation.

When Jesus received baptism from John, He said, *"Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus bore the sin of the world, and John the Baptist testified, pointing to Jesus.

"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).

Jesus went to the Cross bearing that sin, shed His blood and died, and rose again from death. The remission of sins is not received by our offering a tenth of our income, but by believing in the gospel of the water and the blood that Jesus fulfilled.

Therefore the tithe or offerings cannot be the following.

—A price paid to obtain salvation

—Compensation to wash away past sins

—A transaction to buy blessings from God

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—Membership dues to enter the kingdom of heaven
—A means of obtaining a higher position in the church
—A tool for showing off one's faith to other people

10. Even if one offers the tithe, one cannot be saved without believing in the gospel

The Pharisees in the days of Jesus thoroughly offered the tithe even of small plants such as mint, anise, and cummin. But Jesus rebuked them for having abandoned the weightier matters of the law.

"You pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone" (Matthew 23:23).

They calculated the amount of the tithe precisely, but they abandoned the righteousness, mercy, and faith of God. Just because the outward tithe is precise, there is no guarantee that there is true faith in the heart.

Today as well, if a person offers much in tithes and offerings, yet sin still remains in his heart and he does not believe the fact that Jesus bore his sins with the baptism He received from John, those offerings cannot save that person.

First one must receive the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. After that, the material things one offers can become the fruit of thanksgiving and faith toward God.

11. How should offerings be given in the New Testament?

The New Testament explains the giving of the saints not by the principle of compulsion and coercion but by the principle of faith and willingness.

"So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7).

Giving *"as he purposes in his heart"* does not mean that it is all right to give just a little of the money left over without any thought. It means to think deeply about the grace of God, examine one's own circumstances and the needs of the gospel, and prepare responsibly and give.

Offerings in the New Testament have the following character.

—Thanksgiving for the grace of salvation

—Participation in serving the work of preaching the gospel and its workers

—Love that cares for poor and struggling saints

—Training in faith that lays down one's own greed

—Unity in bearing together the work of the kingdom of God

—A confession acknowledging that God is the Master of all things

The fact of having offered the tithe does not guarantee the remission of sins. First one must receive the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The saved person must acknowledge that wealth, too, is given by God, and offer by faith for the work of preaching the gospel together with the church. Offerings must not be made into a price for the remission of sins or a means of coercive fundraising.

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12. The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not think that only a tenth is God's

The person who has been saved by believing in the gospel does not think, "Since I have given God only a tenth, I may use the rest entirely as I please."

Jesus gave up His own body and life completely to remove our sins. Therefore the saved person acknowledges that his own body and his whole life belong to Christ.

"For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Corinthians 6:20).

If the tithe of the Old Testament was a commandment to set apart God's portion from the produce of the land, the saints of the New Testament are people who offer to God their whole lives, redeemed at the price of Christ.

This does not mean that one must necessarily hand over all one's property to the church. Taking responsibility for one's family, living the life one needs, and preparing for the future are also responsibilities that one has received from God as a steward. Only, one does not think that the final owner of wealth is oneself, but uses what God has entrusted according to His will.

13. The relationship between the Holy Spirit and material life

The Holy Spirit testifies that the salvation Jesus accomplished through the water and the blood is the truth. The saints who believe in this gospel know that they are people who belong to the Lord, and they must use their wealth, too, according to the will of the Lord.

The Holy Spirit dwells in the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the blood that Jesus fulfilled, and makes that person know the grace of God and serve willingly.

The person led by the Holy Spirit does not establish his own righteousness through material things. Nor does he serve money as if it were the master of his life. Remembering the grace he has received from God, he uses his material things joyfully for the gospel and souls, for the church and for needy neighbors.

Giving that comes through the Holy Spirit is as follows.

—It is not giving by compulsion out of fear.

—It is not offering in order to be praised by people.

—It is not investing while calculating a greater material reward.

—It is not offering in order to obtain salvation.

—It is offering by faith in thanksgiving for the salvation already received.

14. Use for preaching the gospel and for the weak

Just as the tithe was used for the service of the Levites at the tabernacle of meeting and for the strangers, the fatherless, and the widows, the material things offered by the saints of the New Testament must also be used to preach the gospel and to give life to people.

Paul says as follows.

"Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel" (1 Corinthians 9:14).

The church must honestly use the offerings of the saints for preaching the gospel, the work of the word, missions, and caring for the needs of the saints and for needy neighbors. Conversely, if it uses them to show off the outward appearance of the church

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or to increase the luxury and power of its leaders, it moves away from the original spirit of the tithe.

The church must not only demand that the saints give honestly; the church also must manage honestly the wealth offered to God and clearly disclose how it is used.

15. Lessons to apply to life today

First, one must acknowledge that everything is God's.

My life, health, job, talents, and income are what God has permitted. When one obtains material things, one must not boast only of one's own ability but must give thanks to God.

Second, one must not reverse the order of salvation and offerings.

First one must believe in the remission of sins that Jesus fulfilled through the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross. Offerings are not a condition for obtaining salvation, but thanksgiving after being saved.

Third, one must not exchange what is given to God for the praise of people.

One must not show off how much one has given, or demand special rights in the church on the grounds of having given much.

Fourth, one must not manipulate again what has been offered according to one's own profit.

Just as God did not let the tenth of the animals be exchanged, one must not deceive or alter out of greed what one has decided to offer to God.

Fifth, one must not force it by compulsion.

Pastors or leaders must not threaten that if people do not pay the tithe they cannot be saved or will surely suffer calamity. They must lead the saints with the word so that the saints come

to understand the gospel and give by faith.

Sixth, one must keep righteousness, mercy, and faith together.

If one thoroughly offers the tithe yet acts unjustly toward people or turns away from the poor, one can fall into the hypocrisy of the Pharisees.

Seventh, one must offer not only material things but one's whole life.

God does not want money only; He wants people who offer themselves by faith. Preaching the gospel, prayer, service, love, and an honest life must follow together.

Conclusion

Leviticus 27:30–34 says to set apart as the LORD's a tenth of the grain and fruit and the tenth one of the oxen and sheep. Together with the fixed amount, one must accept the fact that the owner of the tithe is God.

The people of Israel had to set apart a tenth of the grain and fruit as God's holy offering, and of the oxen and sheep they had to offer as God's every tenth one that passed under the rod. To redeem the tithe of grain, they had to add one-fifth, and the tithe of the animals could neither be exchanged by choosing between good and bad nor be redeemed. Through this, God taught His people ownership and holiness, honesty and obedience.

Seen within the gospel of the water and the Spirit, our salvation is not accomplished by the tithe or offerings. Jesus bore the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and completed salvation by rising again from death.

The person who has received the remission of sins by

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believing in that gospel and has received the Holy Spirit does not try to buy salvation with money. Rather, believing that he is a person of God bought at the price of Christ, he uses his material things, his time, and his whole life with thanksgiving for the gospel and souls.

Therefore the confession of the believer can be summed up like this.

"It is not that I am saved by giving to God; rather, I was saved because Jesus gave Himself completely. Now, believing that everything I have has been received by the grace of God, I will live giving joyfully and honestly for the gospel and my neighbors, following the guidance of the Holy Spirit." ✉

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

Believe in the grace of the remission of sins and give yourself to the Lord

< Leviticus 27:1-8 >

"Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: When a man consecrates by a vow certain persons to the LORD, according to your valuation, if your valuation is of a male from twenty years old up to sixty years old, then your valuation shall be fifty shekels of silver, according to the shekel of the sanctuary. If it is a female, then your valuation shall be thirty shekels; and if from five years old up to twenty years old, then your valuation for a male shall be twenty shekels, and for a female ten shekels; and if from a month old up to five years old, then your valuation for a male shall be five shekels of silver, and for a female your valuation shall be three shekels of silver; and if from sixty years old and above, if it is a male, then your valuation shall be fifteen shekels, and for a female ten shekels. But if he is too poor to pay your valuation, then he shall present himself before the priest, and the priest shall set a value for him; according to the ability of him who vowed, the priest shall value him."

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We must learn from the word the life of giving to God

Dear beloved saints, in the heart of a person who has received grace from God arises a desire to serve the Lord. I become thankful to the Lord, who has saved me from sin, and come to want to use the rest of my life for the gospel. But even when we have a heart that wants to give something to God, we must first examine the word. This is because we must clearly know what we give to God and what God has accomplished to save us.

Today's text is the ordinance for setting the value when a man has vowed to give a person to the LORD. In verse 1, the LORD spoke to Moses, and in verse 2, He had him deliver that word to the children of Israel. Then He set the values according to age and sex, and lastly He made known what to do with the one who vowed but is too poor to pay the fixed valuation.

If, while reading this word, we set our hearts only on the numbers of so many shekels of silver, it is easy to think that the person who can give much to God is regarded as more precious. Also, one may misunderstand that his sins will be removed only if he offers something to God. But the text is a word about a vow to give a person. The amounts set here must not be read by immediately turning them into the price for obtaining the remission of sins.

If one has vowed to give a person, set the value

It is written: *"Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: When a man consecrates by a vow certain persons to the LORD, according to your valuation" (Leviticus 27:2).*

A vow is a promise that one will give something before God.

The text deals with the case in which a man has vowed to give a person to the LORD. God did not leave such a vow to people's feelings or to each one's own judgment, but had a value set concerning it. The words of giving before God were accompanied by a concrete responsibility.

Look closely at the word of verse 2. Here God did not say that everyone must necessarily make a vow to give a person. He said that if a man has vowed to give a person, the value is to be set. He taught the ordinance to be applied in cases where a vow has been made. Therefore, with this text, one cannot demand that all the saints make great vows, or say that if they do not make a vow, they do not love God.

However, if one has said that he will give something to God, he must not regard it lightly. When our hearts are fervent, we sometimes say that we will do many things. At such times it seems as if we could do anything. But as time passes, we see our own circumstances, and also come to know that there are many more difficult things than we had first thought. Therefore, in the work of serving God, a heart that learns the word is needed along with being deeply moved.

Do not confuse the fixed amounts with the worth of souls

Verses 3 through 7 speak concretely of the values concerning the vow. From twenty years old up to sixty years old, He set a male at fifty shekels of silver and a female at thirty shekels. From five years old up to twenty years old, He set a male at twenty shekels and a female at ten shekels. From a month old up to five years old, He set a male at five shekels of silver and a female at three shekels of silver. From sixty years old and above, He set a

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male at fifteen shekels and a female at ten shekels.

Verse 3 makes clear that the standard for those values is the shekel of the sanctuary. In the text there are clear standards and distinctions. It was not an ordinance in which everything ended with the one who vowed stating the amount he himself wanted. The giving had to be dealt with according to the standard God had made known.

But in reading these differences in the amounts, one must not think that there are such differences in price in the souls of people as well. It does not mean that the person set at fifty shekels must be saved more than the person set at thirty shekels, or that the young and the old need less salvation. What is written in the text is the valuation concerning a vow. This must not be used as a table that grades salvation or rates the size of faith.

We need this distinction also when we look at other people. Some people can do much work, and some cannot do the same work because their bodies are weak. Some people have plenty of wealth, and some find it hard even to go on making a living. There are differences in the abilities and circumstances that appear in each person. But the way to receive the remission of sins is not divided into various ways according to those differences.

He also looked into the circumstances of the poor man who vowed

It is written: *"But if he is too poor to pay your valuation, then he shall present himself before the priest, and the priest shall set a value for him; according to the ability of him who vowed, the priest shall value him" (Leviticus 27:8).*

Verse 8 deals with the person who cannot pay the value set

earlier. Here, the one whose circumstances are looked into is the one who vowed. God spoke of the case in which he is too poor to pay the valuation. He did not regard everyone as being in the same economic circumstances. While there was a fixed value, He also made known at the same time a way for the person who could not pay that value.

He had that person brought before the priest, and had the priest set a value according to the ability of him who vowed. He did not merely tell the poor person to stand back until he solved his difficulty by himself. Nor did He tell the priest to ignore that person's actual circumstances and demand the valuation to the end. Looking into the situation of the one who vowed was included in the ordinance.

Yet neither did He let the one who vowed decide everything as he pleased. He had to come before the priest, and the priest had to look into his circumstances and set the value as God had said. The responsibility of giving to God and consideration for the poor are together in this word. One must not turn away from people's circumstances on the grounds of keeping the ordinance, nor must one treat giving to God carelessly on the grounds that his circumstances are difficult.

Dear fellow believers, while serving God, are there times when your heart shrinks because of your own lacking circumstances? Are there times when, looking at the work other people do, you feel as though you were a person who can do nothing? Look at today's word. God put the situation of the poor man who vowed into His word. Looking into that person's circumstances was God's command.

We, too, when we deal with the brothers and sisters who live the life of faith with us, must look into what their circumstances allow them to manage. One must not demand the same of everyone as what is possible for himself. Nor must one judge

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their hearts by looking only at the outward results. In the community that preaches the word of God and serves the gospel, one must not make a person in difficult circumstances hide his situation or be ashamed of it.

God, who opened the way of the remission of sins to the poor as well

The word in which God looked into the circumstances of the poor can also be seen in the sacrificial ordinances of Leviticus. In Leviticus 5:7–10, there is the word in which God had the person who could not afford a lamb bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons. He had one offered as the sin offering and the other as the burnt offering, and said that when the priest made atonement for him for his transgression, he would receive remission.

That word is about the sacrifice that atones for sin, and today's text is about the vow to give a person. The matters the two ordinances deal with must be distinguished. But we can look together at the point that God did not turn away from the circumstances of the poor. God is not One who lets only those with plenty of wealth come before Him.

If the remission of sins were obtained by a person's property, what hope would there be for the poor? If one were saved only if he could put forth much of what he has, where would the person who has nothing to put forth have to go? But the salvation God has given through Jesus Christ is a salvation that anyone receives by faith. It is not that there is a gospel of the rich for the rich and a separate gospel of the poor for the poor.

Even the person who has much property cannot remove sin with his own money. Nor is the poor person made righteous by

the fact of his being poor itself. What the two need is the same. They must know their own sins and believe in Jesus Christ, who bore those sins and washed them away. The person who believes in the righteousness God has accomplished receives the remission of sins.

Therefore, you who hear the gospel, do not hesitate to come before the Lord on the grounds that what you have is lacking. It is not that you can believe the word of salvation only after first preparing something. Listen to the gospel of the water and the Spirit that is now being preached to you. Know what the Lord has accomplished for you, and accept that salvation in your hearts. The remission of sins is not a blessing received after making one's own circumstances plentiful.

We cannot remove sin by our vows

We want to live well before God. When we discover our wrongs, we sometimes resolve never to do so again. But if we honestly look back on our resolutions, we know that we have not lived entirely as we said. When we shine the word of God not only on our actions but even on the thoughts we harbor in our hearts, the fact that we need salvation becomes all the clearer.

God gave the law to let us know what kind of people we are. The word of God exposes the sins of our hearts and the transgressions of our deeds. The person who has realized before that word that he is a sinner comes to acknowledge that he cannot become righteous by relying on his own resolution. However sincere the promise to do something for God may be, that promise does not erase the sins already committed.

If one tries to obtain the remission of sins by a promise to do many things, his heart will become afraid again every time he

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fails to keep that promise. Even while trying to reassure himself by recalling the service he has done, when he thinks of where he fell short, he will lose the assurance of salvation. This is because he thinks that his own deeds are the ground for washing away sin. But God did not entrust sinners with the task of completing their own salvation. Jesus Christ came to save us.

It was also because Abraham believed the word of God that he was justified before God. He did not produce the promise of God by his own strength. God spoke, and he believed that word. We, too, in order to receive the remission of sins, must turn from the heart that relied on what we ourselves intend to accomplish in the future, and believe in the salvation God has accomplished through Jesus Christ.

This faith is not a faith that regards serving God as trivial. It is a faith that clearly knows on whom the washing away of sin depends. Before pondering what more we should give to the Lord in order to be saved, we must know how the Lord gave His own body for us.

Jesus bore our sins by the baptism He received from John and the Cross

Jesus, who came to save us, is the Son of God and true God. The Lord loved sinners and came to this earth putting on the flesh of a man. The sinless Jesus came to save us, who had sin. It is not that we first became perfect people and went to find the Lord. Because we cannot escape from sin by our own strength, the Lord came to us.

In Matthew chapter 3 is recorded the event of Jesus coming to the Jordan River and seeking to receive baptism from John. When John tried to stop Him, 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 the work of bearing the sin of mankind. Just as in the Old Testament sins were passed on by the laying on of hands on the sacrificial offering, Jesus received the sin of the world passed on to His own body by receiving baptism from John. Because sinners cannot remove their own sins, the sinless Lord bore our sins. In this way God accomplished the righteous work of saving sinners.

In the sin that was passed on to Jesus at that time, our sins are included too. The sins we have had since birth and the sins we commit in our hearts, thoughts and actions while living, the sins committed in the past, the sins of the present, and even the sins we will commit throughout our lives in the future—the Lord bore them all. The Lord is not One who came knowing only a few wrongs that we remember. As God, who knows our whole lives, He bore all the sin of mankind.

John testified of Jesus as follows: *"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 that He had borne by receiving baptism from John. Being nailed to the Cross, shedding His blood and dying was receiving the judgment on our sins in our place. We were to receive death, the price of sin, but Jesus, who had received our sins passed on to Him, bore it in our place. Therefore, we must believe together in the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross. The work of bearing our sins and the work of receiving the judgment on those sins are within one salvation.

Jesus died in our place and rose again from death on the third day. He has become our Savior, who lives even now. The

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salvation the Lord has accomplished is not a salvation that dealt only with the sins of one particular time and ended. It is a salvation in which He bore the sins of our whole lives and received their judgment, and so accomplished eternal atonement. It is written: *"For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14).*

This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit that we believe. Jesus, who is God, came in the flesh, bore our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment on those sins by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and rose again from death, and so saved us. Through the word, the Holy Spirit testifies of this salvation the Lord has accomplished. By believing this gospel, we receive the remission of sins and become the children of God.

It is necessary to acknowledge one's own sins. But confession, tears, or the resolution to do well again do not fill any lacking part in the atonement of the Lord. This is because Jesus has already borne all our sins and received the judgment. The assurance of the remission of sins does not depend on how great a promise we have made. It lies in believing in the heart the fact that the salvation Jesus Christ has accomplished is perfect.

Let us serve the Lord in gratitude for having received the remission of sins

If I believe the fact that the Lord has washed away all my sins, my heart in serving God also changes. Thanks arise in the heart that used to fear what I had to do to escape judgment. The heart I used to pour into solving my own sins can now be used for preaching the gospel and helping other souls. I come to wish that other people,

too, would hear and believe the salvation given to me.

Even then, we must not turn what we do into the ground of salvation. Just because one has served for a long time, his own deeds cannot take the place of the righteousness of God. Even if one has labored much for the gospel, that labor is not what washed away his sins. The One who has made us righteous is Jesus Christ. We serve the Lord within that grace.

The word in the text in which He looked into the circumstances of the poor man who vowed can also be ruminated on in this life. Before telling someone who serves with you that he does not do as much as you, look into his circumstances. If your own circumstances are difficult, do not start by making great promises in order to hide them. Look into what you can do in the place given to you, and if you need help, serve by faith while discussing it together. It is not only the work that looks great to others that helps the work of the Lord.

We can pray for those who preach the gospel, we can preach the gospel to those who want to hear the word, and we can help the labor of the brothers and sisters who work with us. This is responding, within each one's circumstances, to the grace received from the Lord. If through that service someone hears and comes to believe the fact that Jesus Christ has washed away his sins too, we are taking part together with thanks in the work the Lord has entrusted to us.

Above all, believe in Jesus Christ, who has washed away our sins. Jesus bore our sins by receiving baptism from John, received their judgment on the Cross, and rose again from death. We have received the remission of sins by believing this gospel of the water and the Spirit. Now, giving thanks for that grace, let us give to the Lord the life given to us. Relying on the Lord, who has saved us, let us live serving together so that other souls may also hear this gospel. ✉

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Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

Offer in holiness according to the will of the Lord, who has washed away sin

< Leviticus 27:9-15 >

“If it is an animal that men may bring as an offering to the LORD, all that anyone gives to the LORD shall be holy. He shall not substitute it or exchange it, good for bad or bad for good; and if he at all exchanges animal for animal, then both it and the one exchanged for it shall be holy. If it is an unclean animal which they do not offer as a sacrifice to the LORD, then he shall present the animal before the priest; and the priest shall set a value for it, whether it is good or bad; as you, the priest, value it, so it shall be. But if he wants at all to redeem it, then he must add one-fifth to your valuation. And when a man dedicates his house to be holy to the LORD, then the priest shall set a value for it, whether it is good or bad; as the priest values it, so it shall stand. If he who dedicated it wants to redeem his house, then he must add one-fifth of the money of your valuation to it, and it shall be his.”

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How should we treat what has been offered to God?

Dear beloved saints, when we offer something to God, it is not only the heart at the moment of offering that matters. We must also examine how we treat what we have offered afterward. If, while saying that we have offered it to God, we still change it according to our own thoughts and handle it carelessly according to our own circumstances, we have not fully understood the meaning of the words "offering to God."

Today's text is the word about an animal offered as a thing vowed and about a house dedicated to God. God did not allow a certain animal to be exchanged, and for an unclean animal that could not be brought as an offering, and for a house, He had the priest set a value. He also had one add one-fifth to the set value when he wanted to redeem it. There was a standard of the word both for offering to God and for returning something to one's own possession again.

An animal offered as a thing vowed belongs to the LORD

It is written: *"If it is an animal that men may bring as an offering to the LORD, all that anyone gives to the LORD shall be holy" (Leviticus 27:9).*

Verse 9 speaks of the case of offering, as a thing vowed, an animal that can be brought to God as an offering. He said that when that animal is given to the LORD, it is holy. Here, being holy does not mean that the animal has done some good deed. It means that it has been given to the LORD and set apart. That animal was not to be treated the same as what had been one's

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own until then.

Next, God speaks about exchanging that animal. He also said: *"He shall not substitute it or exchange it, good for bad or bad for good; and if he at all exchanges animal for animal, then both it and the one exchanged for it shall be holy" (Leviticus 27:10).*

This word is not merely a regulation that it is enough just not to exchange it for something bad. He said that it could not be exchanged, whether good or bad. One could not weigh which side looked better in man's eyes and exchange it at will. God did not let what had already been offered to Him be treated like an object that one could keep changing according to one's own will.

If one exchanged animal for animal, what happened? It is not that the first one offered became his own and only the newly brought one was offered to God. He said that both would become holy. Just because one had exchanged it, the first animal offered was not recovered. The setting apart of what had been offered to God did not disappear through man's exchange.

Dear fellow believers, even after we have offered something, we can keep calculating our own profit. At first we wanted to offer it, but later it becomes too precious to part with, and we also think about whether we could replace it with something else. We can turn even the act of offering to God into a matter of weighing whether it is advantageous or disadvantageous to us. Today's word makes us examine such hearts of ours. When we deal with what belongs to God, we must put the word of God before our own calculations.

There was a different procedure for an animal that could not be brought as an offering

Verse 11 deals with an animal distinguished from the

preceding case. He said that if it is an unclean animal that cannot be brought as an offering to the LORD, it is to be brought before the priest. It was not that one could offer any animal whatsoever on the altar in the same way just because he wanted to give it. One had to follow the distinction concerning what God accepts as an offering.

Here the role of the priest is to set the value of that animal. Verse 12 says that the priest sets a value for it, whether it is good or bad, and the value becomes as the priest sets it. It is not that an animal that cannot be brought as an offering is turned into a sacrifice at will; rather, a procedure was given for assessing the worth of that animal.

This is also different from the prohibition of exchange mentioned before. Verses 9–10 are the word that did not allow an animal offered as a thing vowed to be exchanged for another animal. Verses 11–13 are the word that had an animal that could not be brought as an offering taken before the priest to have its value set, and that told what one had to do if he wanted to redeem it. One must not mix the two ordinances and read them as saying that any animal can be recovered at will as long as one pays money.

Also, He did not say that because the value of an unclean animal had been set, that animal was changed into a sacrifice that could be offered on the altar. Just because a man highly values something that God has said cannot be offered does not mean that it can be offered. The assessment of value and the distinction of whether something can be offered as a sacrifice are separate matters.

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To redeem it, one had to add one-fifth to the set value

It is written: *"But if he wants at all to redeem it, then he must add one-fifth to your valuation" (Leviticus 27:13).*

To redeem means to pay the fixed valuation and get something back. In verse 13, it did not end with paying only the value the priest had set. One had to add one-fifth to that value. One-fifth is twenty percent of the valuation. For example, if the set value is one hundred, one adds twenty, which is one-fifth of it, and pays one hundred twenty. The standard for the amount to be added was also not one's own thought but the valuation.

In this regulation, there are together a way to get something back and the responsibility that goes with that way. God permitted redeeming. But He did not let one simply take it back without any procedure. That person had to follow the conditions God had spoken. On the one hand, he had to acknowledge the word that said he could redeem it, and on the other hand, he was not to do away with, by his own judgment, the amount God had told him to add.

Here there is something we must carefully understand. Adding one-fifth is the regulation for redeeming the animal that the present text speaks of. One cannot take this number and say that for a sinner to obtain salvation, he must add twenty percent of his own merit. Nor does it mean that because the Lord's salvation is lacking, man must fill in the shortfall.

There were also ordinances of God for dedicating a house and getting it back

In verse 14, the object changes from an animal to a house. If

a man wanted to dedicate his house to the LORD, God had the priest set a value for it, whether it is good or bad, and had the value become as the priest set it. In dedicating a house as well, there was a procedure for setting its worth.

A house is a possession a man needs for living. Yet the text deals with even such a house as something to be dedicated to God. Offering to God was not limited to the animals brought at the time of the sacrifices. One could also dedicate to the LORD the house he had, and God made known the ordinances to be applied in that case.

Verse 15 explains the case in which that man wants to redeem his house. It is written: *"If he who dedicated it wants to redeem his house, then he must add one-fifth of the money of your valuation to it, and it shall be his."*

Here too one had to add one-fifth to the money the priest had set. He clearly said that it would then become his own possession. The ground for getting that house back was not merely the claim that it had originally been his house, or the circumstance that he needed it badly now. There was a procedure for redeeming that God had set, and when one did according to that word, it became his own possession.

Through this ordinance we learn the fact that we must not treat lightly what has been dedicated to God. At the same time, we must also respect the way God has set so that it can be gotten back. Man must neither do away with the setting apart as he pleases nor block the way God has permitted. Both offering and redeeming had to be done within the word.

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The priest, too, had to keep the word of God

In today's text, the word that the priest sets the value appears again and again. God did not leave this matter only to the personal judgment of the one who vowed. The priest had to assess the animal and the house according to the ordinances given. That duty was something carried out within the word of God.

The book of Malachi says this about what kind of responsibility the priest took on: *"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" (Malachi 2:7).*

The priest had to know and keep the word of God and pass it on to the people. He was not a person who had received the authority to change the sacrifices offered to God according to his own convenience. If God had commanded an offering without blemish, he had to follow that word, and he had to serve so that the people would obtain the remission of sins through the sacrifices God had set.

The covenant God made with Levi was a covenant of life and peace. In it was the will of God to let the people, who were to die because of sin, obtain the remission of sins and enjoy peace before God. Therefore, regarding the law of sacrifice as bothersome or changing it according to one's own thoughts was not simply a matter of omitting one procedure. It was treating lightly the grace God gives to sinners.

We, who preach the gospel today, must also have this heart. Sin cannot be washed away by a man's eloquence or moving stories. We must make known according to the word how the Lord has saved sinners. We must preach so that the hearers may know and believe how their sins were passed on to Jesus and how the judgment on those sins was ended.

Jesus, who had no sin, received our sins passed on to Him

Dear fellow believers, for a sinner to come before God, his sins must be resolved. While the sins remain as they are, one cannot cleanse his heart merely by zealously offering something. To resolve this problem, God sent Jesus Christ. Jesus is God who came to this earth putting on the flesh of a man, and He is the sinless Son of God.

In the sacrifices of atonement of the Old Testament, the sinner laid his hands on the head of a sacrificial offering without blemish and passed on his sins. That offering bore the sins and died, and the priest took its blood and offered the sacrifice as God had set. For the sinner to live, there was a sacrifice in his place. God has accomplished that salvation for us through Jesus Christ.

Jesus went to the Jordan River and received baptism from John. When John tried to stop Him from being baptized, the Lord said as follows: *"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 in which the Lord, who had no sin, bore the sin of mankind on His own body. Just as in the Old Testament sin was passed on to the sacrificial offering by the laying on of hands, Jesus received the sin of the world passed on to Him by receiving baptism from John. God saved us by having Jesus Christ bear the sins that sinners could not wash away by themselves.

Your sins are also included in this. The Lord bore the sin we have had since we were born and all the sins we commit throughout our lives. The sins committed in the past, the sins exposed now, and even the sins we will commit as we go on

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living—the Lord knew them and received them passed on to Him. He did not bear only the sins we have confessed and remembered. The Lord knew the sins of our whole lives, which even we ourselves cannot fully count.

John testified as he looked at 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, shed His blood on the Cross and died. That death was a death in which He received the judgment on our sins in our place. Because Jesus had received our sins passed on to Him by receiving baptism from John, He paid the price of those sins in our place on the Cross. When we believe together in the work of bearing sin through baptism and the work of receiving judgment on the Cross, we can know clearly how our sins have been resolved.

Jesus bore our sins by the baptism He received from John, died on the Cross, and then rose again from death on the third day. The Lord, who bore our sins and received the judgment, overcame death, came back to life, and became the eternal Savior. We believe in Jesus Christ, who is still living even now, and in the salvation He has accomplished. This is the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It is written: *"By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Hebrews 10:10).*

The ground on which we have been sanctified lies in Jesus Christ's having offered His own body once and for all. We have received the remission of sins and become the people of God because we believed this salvation in our hearts. The Holy Spirit testifies through the word to the salvation the Lord has accomplished. We do not speak of salvation by relying on how perfect a person we have changed into, but we are justified by believing the fact that Jesus bore and washed away all our sins.

Therefore, we must not think only of the death on the Cross while leaving out the baptism Jesus received from John. Nor must we speak only of the baptism while leaving out the blood of the Cross, by which He received the judgment on sin in our place. We must believe the salvation God has accomplished according to its complete content. The Lord, who received our sins passed on to Him, received the judgment on those sins, and rose again from death, has saved us.

The price of sin the Lord paid is not lacking

In the text, when one wanted to redeem an animal or a house, he had to add one-fifth to the set value. That is a regulation God set for getting back that possession. On the other hand, in the trespass offering of Leviticus chapter 5, God had one make restitution for a trespass regarding the holy offerings, add one-fifth, and offer a ram without blemish as a trespass offering. Even though the same expression "one-fifth" appears, the redeeming in today's text and the sacrifice that makes atonement for a trespass regarding the holy offerings must be understood as distinct.

What we must examine together in the trespass offering is the responsibility for sin and the sacrifice that bears it. Sin is not something that passes by without any price. Jesus, who has saved us, also bore our sins and received the judgment on those sins in our place. God came in the flesh of a man and gave His own life for us. By that sacrifice, the price of our sins has been completely paid.

It is not that because the atonement the Lord accomplished is lacking, we must add more to it with offerings or service. One must not attach the regulation of adding one-fifth to the gospel

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and add man's merit to the salvation of Jesus. Jesus Christ has amply borne our sins. It is not that the Lord overlooked, without knowing, even the faults that are exposed after we have received the remission of sins.

We must honestly acknowledge what we have done wrong. If we have wronged others, we must apologize and set it right. But fulfilling such responsibilities does not supplement the atonement Jesus accomplished. Neither words of confession nor tears of regret can bear our sins in our place and die. The ground of the remission of sins is in Jesus Christ, who bore our sins in our place and received the judgment.

Because the Lord has resolved the problem of sin for us, we have no need to remain sunk down in our own faults. Without hiding our wrongs and while acknowledging them, we can again believe and rely on the salvation the Lord has accomplished. The faith that the Lord's salvation is sufficient is not a heart that treats sin lightly; rather, it gives us strength to return to the Lord and follow His will.

A person who has been made holy also regards the gospel as holy

When we preach the gospel of the remission of sins, we must preciously guard its content. We must not leave out the baptism Jesus received from John, saying that it is troublesome to explain, and keep only pleasant words and exhortations to live diligently. What a sinner must know is the fact that his sins were passed on to Jesus Christ and that the Lord received the judgment on those sins in his place. Only when he hears and believes that word of salvation does he obtain the remission of sins and peace in his heart.

The life of offering to God must also be carried out from this faith. One cannot please God by covering with many activities a heart that has not received the remission of sins. First, one must believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receive the washing away of sin in his heart. And then, in thanks for the life and peace received from the Lord, he serves that gospel.

Saying that we have been made holy does not mean that there are no longer any mistakes in our actions. It means that Jesus Christ has saved us from sin, and that by believing that salvation we have become a people belonging to God. Therefore, do not use your shortcomings as an excuse to leave the Lord, but live following the word within the grace that has cleansed you.

Dear beloved saints, regard as precious what has been dedicated to God. Obey what God has said, and do not change that word according to your own thoughts. Above all, keep in your hearts the gospel of the water and the Spirit that has made us holy. The Lord completely resolved our sins by the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross, and rose again from death. I hope that we, who have received the remission of sins by believing in that Lord, will now serve the Lord with thanksgiving and preach the complete word of salvation to other souls as well. ✉

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Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

The Lord, who has given us the eternal inheritance by the remission of sins

< Leviticus 27:16-25 >

"If a man dedicates to the LORD part of a field of his possession, then your valuation shall be according to the seed for it. A homer of barley seed shall be valued at fifty shekels of silver. If he dedicates his field from the Year of Jubilee, according to your valuation it shall stand. But if he dedicates his field after the Jubilee, then the priest shall reckon to him the money due according to the years that remain till the Year of Jubilee, and it shall be deducted from your valuation. And if he who dedicates the field ever wishes to redeem it, then he must add one-fifth of the money of your valuation to it, and it shall belong to him. But if he does not want to redeem the field, or if he has sold the field to another man, it shall not be redeemed anymore; but the field, when it is released in the Jubilee, shall be holy to the LORD, as a devoted field; it shall be the possession of the priest. And if a man dedicates to the LORD a field which he has bought, which is not the field of his possession, then the priest shall reckon to him the worth of your valuation, up to the Year of Jubilee, and he shall give your valuation on that day as a holy offering to the LORD. In the Year of Jubilee the field shall return to him from whom it was bought, to the one who owned the land as a possession. And all your valuations shall

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be according to the shekel of the sanctuary: twenty gerahs to the shekel."

Offering a field before God, who gave the possession

Dear beloved saints, today's text contains the word concerning fields, their value, and the period remaining until the Jubilee. When you first read it, it may feel like a regulation for calculating land. But if you look into it closely, God is dealing not only with the person who offers the field, but also with whose possession that field is, how long it can be used, and to whom it returns in the end.

For the people of Israel, a possession was the ground of life that they inherited and lived on. The text distinguishes between a field received as one's own possession and a field bought from another person. Both were fields that one had at present, but the ordinances applied when dedicating them to God and the place to which they would return in the Jubilee were not the same. They had to know not only the size of what they had, but also within what relationship and responsibility they had it.

God led the people of Israel into the promised land through Joshua. The people who entered that land and lived there had to remember the grace that God had bestowed on them. Offering to God must also be done within this faith. Rather than thinking of what one has as if he had obtained it only by his own strength, he must first know that it is what God has given and give thanks.

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He set the value of a field received as a possession

It is written: *"If a man dedicates to the LORD part of a field of his possession, then your valuation shall be according to the seed for it. A homer of barley seed shall be valued at fifty shekels of silver" (Leviticus 27:16).*

Verse 16 is the case of dedicating to the LORD part of a field received as one's own possession. When setting its value, God had it calculated according to the seed. He said to reckon fifty shekels of silver on the basis of a field large enough to sow one homer of barley. It was not that the one offering raised or lowered the value according to his feelings, but that God gave a standard according to the size of the field.

Honesty is needed in offering to God. One must not make it appear in words as though he has offered something great while the actual content is different from that. What one was offering and how much its value was had to be dealt with clearly according to the standard of the word. God did not stop at vague words, but made known even how an actual field was to be calculated.

However, not every calculation was finished by the size of the field alone. Even for a field of the same size, the valuation differed depending on when it was offered. In the word that follows, another standard appears: the period remaining until the Jubilee.

He had the value deducted according to the period remaining until the Jubilee

Verse 17 says that if one dedicated a field from the Jubilee, it was to be according to the value that had been set. On the other

hand, if he dedicated that field after the Jubilee had passed, the remaining period had to be calculated. It is written: *"But if he dedicates his field after the Jubilee, then the priest shall reckon to him the money due according to the years that remain till the Year of Jubilee, and it shall be deducted from your valuation" (Leviticus 27:18).*

The Jubilee was the year that God had appointed. In Leviticus 25, He had liberty proclaimed in the fiftieth year and had each person return to his own possession and to his family. Even when fields were bought and sold, He had the price calculated according to the period during which crops could be obtained. Therefore, the Jubilee is also an important standard when assessing the field in today's text.

The priest had to look into how many years remained until the next Jubilee and reduce the valuation to fit that period. God did not have the whole initial value demanded as it was even when few years remained. He had them examine not only the size of the field but also the period related to that field. The period actually remaining had to be reflected in the calculation that God had made known.

From this word we can learn the honesty that does not hold on to only one condition that is favorable to oneself. Fields whose visible area was the same were not, for that reason alone, to be handled identically. The conditions that God told them to look at together had to be looked at together. Following the word is not putting forward only the parts that one wants to emphasize, but accepting what God has determined without leaving anything out.

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The way to redeem and the case in which it cannot be redeemed again

Verse 19 speaks of the case in which the person who dedicated a field wishes to redeem that field. He had to add one-fifth to the money of the valuation. Then, God said, that field would belong to him. Taking back a field that had been offered to God was permitted, but that had to be done according to the fixed conditions.

However, in verses 20 and 21 a different case appears. God said that if one does not redeem the field or has sold it to another man, it cannot be redeemed anymore. He also said that when the Jubilee comes and that field is to return, it becomes a holy offering to the LORD and becomes the possession of the priest. It is written: *"But the field, when it is released in the Jubilee, shall be holy to the LORD, as a devoted field; it shall be the possession of the priest" (Leviticus 27:21).*

Here God did not say that when the Jubilee comes, that field returns unconditionally to the person who first offered it. To the field of the possession dedicated to God, the ordinance pertaining to it was applied. Just because it was land that had originally been his, he could not determine the outcome according to his own will.

This shows why one must not regard lightly the words of offering to God. How one dealt with a thing after dedicating it to God was related to the actual result. It was not a matter in which one only speaks of his initial intention and need not think about the responsibility that follows. The text teaches together offering, redeeming, and to whom that field comes to belong in the Jubilee.

A field that was bought returns in the Jubilee to the original owner of the possession

From verse 22 on is the case of dedicating a field that is not one's own possession, that is, a field bought from another person. This field could also be offered to the LORD, but God did not have it handled the same as a field inherited as a possession. The priest had to calculate the period until the Jubilee, and the person offering had to give the money of the valuation to the LORD on that day as a holy offering.

And verse 24 clearly says to whom that field returns in the end. *"In the Year of Jubilee the field shall return to him from whom it was bought, to the one who owned the land as a possession."*

Just because one had bought a field from another person, he could not make that person's possession his own forever. That field had an original owner of the possession, and it had to return to him in the Jubilee. Even if the one who bought it did the work of offering it to God, he could not cancel the relationship of the possession that was to return to the original owner.

When verses 21 and 24 are read side by side, the difference is clear. After a field of one's own possession has been dedicated, a field that falls under the case of verse 20 becomes the possession of the priest in the Jubilee. On the other hand, in the case of dedicating a field bought from another person, it returns in the Jubilee to the original owner of that possession. God did not look only at who had that field now, but also distinguished whose possession that field originally was.

Dear fellow believers, just because one has the good intention of serving God, it does not mean that he can do as he pleases even with the portion that is to return to another person. One must know the scope entrusted to him. He must not consider

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that all rights belong to him merely because of the fact that he holds it in his hand now. Offering to God, too, must not become a pretext for infringing on another person's possession.

This word makes honest our hearts that deal with belongings. While thinking about what to offer to God, one must at the same time think about what to give back to others as well. Faith does not separate the heart toward God from the responsibility toward one's neighbor. Respecting the relationship of possession that God has established is also following His word.

The same standard had to be used for every valuation

It is written: *"And all your valuations shall be according to the shekel of the sanctuary: twenty gerahs to the shekel" (Leviticus 27:25).*

Verse 25 speaks of the standard to be applied to all valuations. God said to follow the shekel of the sanctuary and to make twenty gerahs one shekel. People were not to calculate by a different reckoning for each person or to use a unit of the same name differently from one another. For even if the size of the field and the remaining period were calculated correctly, if the very standard by which the value was expressed was different, fair handling could not take place.

God spoke not only of what was offered but also of how it was calculated. It was not that one could neglect the actual calculation on the grounds that it was a matter of offering to God. The words of taking part in a holy work and actually handling things honestly had to go together.

We, too, must let our words and reality agree while serving God. We must deal clearly with the material things used for the

gospel and the work entrusted to us, and must not change the standard for our own benefit. A heart that believes in grace does not become a reason to avoid honest responsibility. A person who gratefully uses what he has received from God also examines rightly how it is used.

Jesus has redeemed us from sin

Up to now the text has taught us about the value of the field, the period, and the owner to whom that field was to return. Then what is the way for a person bound by sin to become one of the people who belong to God and to obtain the kingdom of God as an inheritance? Just because we offer to God the fields or wealth that we have, that does not wash away our sins. The remission of sins requires the work of the Savior who bore sin in our place.

Between the holy God and sinners there was the problem of sin. God gave the people of Israel the sacrifice of atonement, so that a sinner passed on his sins by the laying on of hands on an unblemished sacrificial offering, and that offering died in his place. The priest made atonement with its blood as God had prescribed. The remission of sins was not a matter of overlooking sin carelessly, but a matter of sin being transferred and the judgment of that sin being carried out.

Jesus Christ came to this earth to accomplish eternal atonement for us. The Lord is the Son of God and is God. He came clothed in human flesh, yet He is without sin. Because we cannot resolve our own sins by ourselves, God Himself came to accomplish the work of salvation.

Jesus came to the Jordan River and was about to receive baptism from John. When John tried to stop Him, Jesus said as follows: *“But Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Permit it to be*

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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 bearing the sin of mankind. Just as in the Old Testament sins were passed on by the laying on of hands on the head of the sacrificial offering, Jesus received the sin of the world passed on to His own body by receiving baptism from John. It is not that we vaguely think our sins have disappeared without knowing where they went. It is that we know and believe that the Lord bore our sins by the baptism He received from John.

That sin includes the sins we have had from birth and all the sins we commit throughout our lifetime. Jesus bore not only the sins of the past but also the sins of the present, and even the sins we will commit as we go on living. Even the sins that we ourselves do not remember or have not yet realized are not unknown to the Lord. God, who knows all the sin of mankind, bore that sin.

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 went to the Cross in the body in which He bore the sin of the world that had been passed on to Him when He received baptism from John. His shedding of blood and dying there was receiving in our place the judgment on our sins. The Lord paid with His own life the price of sin that we were to pay. The baptism by which He received sin passed on to Him and the Cross on which He received the judgment of that sin are together within the work of the Lord who saves us.

And Jesus rose again from death on the third day. The Lord, who died in our place, overcame death and came back to life, and became the eternal Savior. We believe in the salvation that Jesus accomplished by the baptism He received from John, the

blood of the Cross, and His rising again from death. This is the faith that receives the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Ephesians 1:7 says: *"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace"*

The blood in this word is the blood that Jesus, who bore our sins, shed on the Cross. It is not blood separated from Jesus' having received baptism from John. Because the Lord, who received our sins passed on to Him, received the judgment on them, we obtain redemption, that is, the remission of sins, in Christ. We do not provide salvation by our own merits or material things, but receive by faith the salvation that the Lord has accomplished.

He has given the eternal inheritance to those who have received the remission of sins

It is written: *"And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance" (Hebrews 9:15).*

In the purpose for which Jesus made atonement for our sins, there is the grace of letting us obtain the eternal inheritance. He has let sinners receive the remission of sins, become the people of God, and enjoy the kingdom of God. The Lord not only delivered us from the judgment of sin, but also gave us the hope of living as those who belong to God.

For the field in today's text, the period remaining until the Jubilee had to be calculated. However, the atonement that Jesus

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accomplished is not a salvation that deals only with the sins of a certain period. Nor is it a salvation whose effect diminishes as time passes, so that the price of sin must be paid again. The Lord bore the sins of our whole lifetime and accomplished eternal atonement. Therefore, the inheritance He gives to those who believe is also an eternal inheritance.

Ephesians 1:13–14 speaks of the faith that receives this inheritance and of the guarantee of the Holy Spirit. It also 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, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory."*

God has sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise those who heard the gospel and believed. The Holy Spirit is the guarantee of our inheritance. Therefore, we need not look for the assurance of salvation in how fervent our own feelings are or how many good things we have done today. We must believe in the salvation that God has accomplished in Jesus Christ and in that word.

Even those who believe have weaknesses. When they realize their wrongs, they must acknowledge them and turn back. But they must not think that each time they discover such wrongs, the atonement Jesus accomplished has become insufficient. The Lord knew even those transgressions and bore the sins. Those who believe in the grace of the remission of sins do not try to pay the price of salvation again by their own deeds, but live relying on the Lord who saved them.

Even if we do not have many belongings on this earth, we are people who have received the kingdom of God as an inheritance. Conversely, just because one has many belongings on this earth, he does not automatically obtain the kingdom of

God. What matters is believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, receiving the remission of sins, and becoming children of God. This inheritance is the grace given to us in Jesus Christ.

Let us live today by the faith that has received the eternal inheritance

Today's word distinguished between the field of one's own possession and a field that was bought, had the remaining period and the owner to whom it would return examined, and had the value set by the same standard. The heart of offering to God had to lead to handling actual belongings honestly. We, too, must not use what God has entrusted to us only for our own greed, but must handle it responsibly according to the word.

Those who receive and enjoy by faith what God has given can share with others and serve the gospel. Because we have obtained the eternal inheritance, we need not wear out our hearts holding on only to the belongings of this earth. While faithfully carrying out the work and life entrusted to us, we can take care that other souls also hear the gospel of the remission of sins. This is not a price paid to obtain the kingdom of God, but a life of thanksgiving for the salvation we have already received.

Dear beloved saints, the One who has given us the most precious inheritance is Jesus Christ. The Lord bore our sins by the baptism He received from John, received the judgment on them on the Cross, and rose again from death. We have received the remission of sins by believing in this gospel and have obtained the hope of the kingdom of God. Keeping that grace in our hearts, let us live using honestly the life and belongings given to us and serving the gospel. We give thanks and glory to the Lord, who has let us obtain the eternal inheritance. ✉

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Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

The Lord, who has redeemed us and made us His own people

< Leviticus 27:26-27 >

"But the firstborn of the animals, which should be the LORD's firstborn, no man shall dedicate; whether it is an ox or sheep, it is the LORD's. And if it is an unclean animal, then he shall redeem it according to your valuation, and shall add one-fifth to it; or if it is not redeemed, then it shall be sold according to your valuation."

The firstborn of oxen and sheep are already the LORD's

Dear beloved saints, before thinking about what we will offer before God, there is a fact we must remember. It is who has delivered us from sin, and to whom we belong. If we forget this, even while living a life of faith, we can easily count only what we have offered and how much we have labored. But what has given us life is the grace of salvation that the Lord first bestowed. Today's word turns our hearts toward God by making clear what already belongs to the LORD. It is written: *"But the firstborn of the animals, which should be the LORD's firstborn, no man shall dedicate; whether it is an ox or sheep, it is the LORD's" (Leviticus 27:26).*

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Leviticus chapter 27 speaks of how to handle the things that people vowed and offered to God. But in verse 26, God speaks particularly and separately of the firstborn of oxen and sheep. The firstborn of an ox or a sheep had already been determined to be rendered to the LORD even before a person made a separate vow. Therefore, one could not make it an offering that he newly vowed and offered.

Here, the word that no man shall dedicate it does not mean that the firstborn must not be offered to God. Nor does it mean that God will not accept the animal because it is unclean. It means that since it already belongs to the LORD and must be rendered to Him, a person cannot arbitrarily designate it as the object of another vow. Whether it is an ox or a sheep, this principle is the same. The fact that it belongs to God does not change according to the size or the value of the animal.

Someone might look at a firstborn sheep and say that he will offer it to God. But even before he said so, that sheep was to be rendered to the LORD according to the word of God. That person's promise did not newly create God's right. God did not let people change what He Himself had determined. Those who serve God must first know what He has said.

Before this word, we too must examine ourselves. We are people who have received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. When we serve the Lord who has saved us, we must not think as though a relationship with the Lord came into being only because of our labor. We have become able to serve Him because the Lord bore our sins and made us His own people. If we keep this grace in our hearts, we see the Lord who has given life to us before we see what we offer.

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We must remember God, who delivered us

God also spoke about the firstborn in Exodus. It is written: *"All that open the womb are Mine, and every male firstborn among your livestock, whether ox or sheep" (Exodus 34:19).*

Just before this word, God tells them to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread and makes them remember the fact that Israel came out of Egypt. Rendering the firstborn of oxen and sheep to the LORD cannot be thought of apart from the salvation God worked for His people. Israel was not a people who escaped from slavery in Egypt by themselves. God delivered them and led them to be His own people.

In Deuteronomy chapter 6 as well, when children asked about the ordinances of God, parents had to tell them first the fact that God had brought them out of Egypt. It was because the One who gave them the ordinances was the very God who had saved them. If one forgets the salvation of the One who gave the commandments while learning God's commandments, only the things to be done remain, and the faith that carries them out grows dim. God also said: *"Then beware, lest you forget the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage" (Deuteronomy 6:12).*

Dear saints, after receiving the remission of sins, we too must engrave this word on our hearts. At first, the fact that the Lord has washed away our sins seems truly great and something to be thankful for. But as time passes, we can take the grace of salvation for granted and look only at our own affairs and circumstances as great. Then even serving the Lord can easily become something done to obtain the results we want.

At such times, we must turn our hearts to the Lord who has saved us. Who gave the remission of sins to us, who could not stand boldly before God because of sin? Who bore the sins that

we could not remove by our own strength? Jesus accomplished that for us. That we can believe the word of God today and call upon Him is because the Lord first opened the way of salvation.

Living as people who belong to God means living while remembering this grace. Even when self-boasting grows in our hearts, and even when we are discouraged because of our shortcomings, we must think of the salvation of the Lord who has given life to us. If we know that the basis of our faith is not in ourselves, we can rise again with a heart that believes in the Lord.

Even an unclean animal had to be handled according to the ordinance God had set

In verse 27, God speaks about an unclean animal. He said: *"And if it is an unclean animal, then he shall redeem it according to your valuation, and shall add one-fifth to it; or if it is not redeemed, then it shall be sold according to your valuation."*

God did not have an unclean animal handled in exactly the same way as clean oxen and sheep. Here, a procedure for redeeming it on the basis of the valuation is given. To redeem it, one had to add one-fifth to the fixed valuation. If it was not redeemed, He had it sold according to the fixed valuation. We must read these distinctly: when it is redeemed, one-fifth is added, but when it is sold, it is sold according to the valuation.

This regulation leaves no room for handling it as a person pleases. Just because it was an unclean animal, one could not discard it at will or treat the portion to be rendered to God as though it had never existed. God spoke not only of what He receives but also of how it must be handled. Those who wanted

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to serve God were not to put forward only their own good intentions but had to follow the way God had set.

However, the valuation and the one-fifth in this word must not immediately be turned into an amount required for a person's remission of sins. This verse speaks of the procedure for redeeming or selling an unclean animal. It does not mean that if a person gives offerings above a certain amount, his sins disappear, and if he cannot give that much, he is not saved. Nor should the amount in this regulation be explained as a price set on the human soul.

The way to solve the problem of our sins before God is to believe in the salvation He has given. A person cannot take the place of the judgment of sin by giving up his own wealth. To receive the remission of sins, one must know whom God has appointed for sinners and how He bore sin. That is why we must look into the vicarious atonement by the lamb, which was given together with the word concerning the firstborn.

The life that comes to life through the vicarious atonement of the lamb

In Exodus, God speaks thus about the firstborn of a donkey. It is written: *"But the firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb. And if you will not redeem him, then you shall break his neck. All the firstborn of your sons you shall redeem. And none shall appear before Me empty-handed" (Exodus 34:20).*

In this word, God had the firstborn of a donkey redeemed with a lamb. It is not that the donkey prepares by itself the price to preserve its own life. It had to be redeemed through the lamb that God had determined. When it was not redeemed, the life of that donkey could not be preserved as it was. Here the solemn

fact is revealed that one can live only when there is vicarious atonement.

The regulation in Leviticus 27:27 of redeeming or selling according to the valuation and the regulation in Exodus 34 of redeeming a donkey with a lamb must each be understood according to the word as it was given. One cannot read the selling regulation of Leviticus by changing it into the regulation of breaking the donkey's neck. Also, while Exodus says to redeem the firstborn of a donkey with a lamb, it separately says that the firstborn among people must also be redeemed. Through these words we learn the fact that God has set the way of vicarious atonement.

Dear saints, a sinner needs a Savior who will take his place. No matter how long a person lives and how many things he does, he cannot remove by himself the sins he has committed and the judgment for those sins. Past sins do not disappear merely because one has held a good heart. Nor is the price of sin paid of itself just because one grieves over his wrongs. In order for us to live before God, there must be One who bears our sins and receives that judgment in our place.

God has sent Jesus Christ as our Savior. Jesus is the Lamb of God who has accomplished the vicarious atonement we need. Accepting this salvation that God has prepared is faith. It is laying down the heart that judges, "In my thinking, this much will be enough," and setting one's heart on the word of how the Lord has removed my sins.

While holding on to our own righteousness, we cannot fully rely on the Lord's vicarious atonement. If we think we are all right because we are better than others, or think that by our future efforts we can solve even our past sins, we will miss the grace of salvation in which the Lord bore our sins in our place. We must acknowledge ourselves as sinners before God and believe

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in Jesus Christ, who came for us. What gives us life is the vicarious atonement the Lord has accomplished.

Jesus saved us by the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross

Then how did Jesus, the Lamb of God, bear our sins? Jesus, the Son of God, came to this earth in the body of a man to save sinners. Jesus Himself had no sin. Yet Jesus went to the Jordan River and received baptism from John. This baptism was the work in which the Lord, who had no sin, bore the sin of mankind.

When John tried to prevent Jesus from being baptized, the Lord said as follows: *"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 sacrifices of the Old Testament, there was the laying on of hands that passed sin on to the sacrificial offering, and the offering that bore that sin was killed and shed its blood. In the New Testament, Jesus received the sin of the world passed on to Him by receiving baptism from John, the representative of mankind. Only when we know both the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood He shed on the Cross can we clearly know how the Lord redeemed us.

The sins Jesus bore when He received baptism from John were not only the sins of some people of a certain era. He bore all the sin of all mankind. The sins we were born with and the sins we commit while living, the sins of the past, the sins of the present, and even the sins we will commit in the future—all the sins of our lifetime were passed on to the Lord. Nor did He bear only the sins we remember. The Lord knew and bore all of them, even the sins we overlooked without realizing them.

John saw Jesus and testified as follows: *"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 is the very Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Because the Lord bore our sins by receiving baptism from John, He went to the Cross in the body in which He bore those sins. On the Cross, His hands and feet were nailed, and by shedding His blood and dying, He received in our place the judgment of sin that we should have received. Because the price of sin is death, the Lord gave His own life.

Therefore, the faith that believes in the Cross of Jesus must also include the truth that He bore our sins by the baptism He received from John. Why did Jesus, who had no sin, die on the Cross? It is because our sins were passed on to Him. How does the blood Jesus shed settle the judgment on our sins? It is because the Lord, who bore our sins, died in our place. The Lord's baptism and blood are one work of salvation that saves sinners.

Jesus bore our sins by the baptism He received from John, died on the Cross, and then rose again from death. The Lord is not One who is held by death. The Lord, who bore our sins and received the judgment of those sins, rose again from death and gave new life to us who believe in this salvation. We believe in the living Savior. The salvation the Lord has accomplished is not an incomplete salvation in which we must pay the price of sin again.

Those who believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit with their hearts receive the remission of sins. It is not that the Lord's vicarious atonement is completed because we shed many tears. Nor does repenting and acknowledging our wrongs pay, in His place, the price of the sins Jesus bore. Because the Lord has solved all our sins by the baptism He received from John and the

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blood of the Cross, we receive the remission of sins by believing that fact. God gives the Holy Spirit to those who have received the remission of sins by believing this gospel and has Him dwell in them.

The remission of sins is the grace that has conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of God

Dear beloved saints, what meaning does the fact that the Lord has redeemed us have for our lives? We are now no longer people who must live avoiding God because of sin. We can come by faith before God, who has saved us. It is because the Lord washed away our sins and received us as His own people. It is written: *"He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins" (Colossians 1:13–14).*

This word tells us where God has delivered us from and where He has conveyed us to. The remission of sins does not end with the heart becoming at ease for a while. It is the salvation in which God delivered us from the power of darkness and made us belong to the kingdom of His Son. In the Son, we have received redemption, that is, the remission of sins. Our new life stands upon this fact.

Therefore, there is no need to be shaken, doubting even the fact that one belongs to the Lord, whenever one discovers one's own shortcomings. If one has committed a wrong, one must acknowledge that wrong and turn back. If one has harmed another person, one must set that matter right. But it is not that Jesus must receive baptism again and die on the Cross again to wash away that sin. Even before we committed those sins, the

Lord knew the sins of our lifetime and bore them.

We cannot live with a heart that takes sin lightly. It is because we know that the Lord gave His own life precisely because of that sin. At the same time, we must not hold on to the sins He has already borne and deny even the Lord's salvation. Believing in the gospel that has saved us, we must walk again according to the will that pleases the Lord. The Holy Spirit who dwells in us leads our hearts by the word of God.

Let us serve the gospel with the life that belongs to the Lord

Think again about the word in today's passage that the firstborn of oxen and sheep are the LORD's. Even before a person's vow, what was to be rendered to God had been determined. Those who remember this fact cannot put forward only their own will when dealing with what is God's. Through this word we come to see ourselves and our lives as well before the Lord who has saved us.

The Lord has redeemed us and given life to us. Now we live each day as people who have received that grace. We can learn the word, look after our brothers and sisters who believe together with us, and preach the gospel to those who do not yet know the remission of sins. While faithfully doing the work entrusted to us, we can help in the work of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Such service is the joy we enjoy within the new life the Lord has given us.

If we look only at our own labor, we come to compare ourselves with others and easily grow weary when no one recognizes it. But when we think of the Lord who gave His own life for me, the reason for serving becomes clear. We can do the

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Lord's work with a heart that hopes others too will come to know and believe the grace of the remission of sins we have received. It is living by faith while giving thanks to the Lord who first loved us and saved us.

The word God established concerning the firstborn teaches us the faith that respects God's will. The word that said to redeem with a lamb makes us realize that a sinner surely needs a Savior. Jesus received baptism from John, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again from death to save us. We who believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit are God's people who have received the remission of sins.

We give thanks to the Lord who has redeemed us. Keeping in our hearts the grace by which He has made us His own people, let us live today as well a life that serves the gospel while believing the word of the Lord. ✉

Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

The Lord, who has given us life by bearing the judgment of sin

< Leviticus 27:28-29 >

"Nevertheless no devoted offering that a man may devote to the LORD of all that he has, both man and beast, or the field of his possession, shall be sold or redeemed; every devoted offering is most holy to the LORD. No person under the ban, who may become doomed to destruction among men, shall be redeemed, but shall surely be put to death."

What is devoted to the LORD cannot be redeemed again

Dear beloved saints, the word we will read today teaches us how we must treat what has been given to God, and how solemn the decision of God is. Though it is only two short verses, it is a word we must engrave deeply on our hearts. Especially because a word concerning a person's death appears in it, we must rightly understand its meaning by following the context before and after it. Through this word, I hope that we will know God, who judges sin, and believe in the grace of the Lord, who has saved us from that judgment. It is written: *"Nevertheless no devoted offering that a man may devote to the LORD of all that he has, both man and beast, or the field of his possession, shall be sold or*

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redeemed; every devoted offering is most holy to the LORD" (Leviticus 27:28).

In this word, it is written that whatever is devoted to the LORD, whether man or animal or the field of one's possession, can be neither sold nor redeemed. Earlier, God spoke of the case in which a house dedicated to God could be redeemed by adding one-fifth to its valuation. But here He does not allow such a way of getting it back. Something devoted must not be regarded in the same way as the things vowed that were dealt with earlier.

What we must read carefully is not only the words that it was given to God, but also the word that it was devoted and the word that it can be neither sold nor redeemed. God distinguished between the cases in which something could be redeemed and the cases in which it could not. It is not that a person can pick out the regulations convenient for himself and apply them. Just because in other cases a thing could be gotten back by adding to its value, one could not do so even with something devoted.

That God called something devoted most holy shows that it had been solemnly set apart to Him. Now it cannot be sold or gotten back according to personal gain. Nor can a person continue to do with it as he pleases just because he formerly held it as his own possession. In dealing with what had been set apart to God, the word of God had to be the standard.

Dear saints, faith begins from accepting the word God has spoken just as it is. We easily welcome the words that are favorable to us, while passing over the words that make our hearts uncomfortable. But God is not One who changes His word according to our feelings. Just as we believe the comfort the Lord gives, we must also accept in our hearts the word concerning the holiness and judgment He has set.

We cannot read this passage and conclude that giving a great deal unconditionally is good faith. Rather than what and how

much is to be given, the text makes clear the fact that a person cannot again dispose of something devoted according to his own will. Even in the matter of serving God, we must learn His word and fit our hearts to His will. Just because one's zeal is great, he cannot change even the will of God.

The word concerning death must be read by discerning its meaning

Let us read the word of verse 29. God said: *"No person under the ban, who may become doomed to destruction among men, shall be redeemed, but shall surely be put to death."*

This word is truly solemn. Here He says that a person handed over to death cannot be redeemed again. He does not let people think that, where a person's life is concerned, it can be reversed in every case if more of a price is paid. The text speaks even of a case in which the person must surely be put to death, and it does not allow that disposition to be changed arbitrarily.

However, this word must not be read to mean that anyone who has said he would give himself to God must be put to death. In the earlier part of the same chapter, God spoke of setting a value when someone had vowed to give a person to the LORD. If he was poor and could not afford that value, God had it set according to his ability. Therefore, to read this entire chapter simply as a regulation for putting to death the person who has made a vow does not agree with the earlier word either.

Also, from this passage one cannot obtain the authority to take a person's life merely by declaring that he has devoted that other person to God. In Leviticus chapter 20, God dealt with giving one's children to Molech as a sin that defiles the sanctuary and profanes His name. In the name of devotion or

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religious zeal, recklessly harming a person's life must not be justified.

The aspect of judgment being included in devoting something to God can also be seen in Joshua chapter 6. When God had the city of Jericho and the things in it devoted to the LORD, the city was destroyed, and the silver and gold and the vessels of bronze and iron went into the treasury of the LORD. The people could not take the things of that city as their own as they pleased. What to destroy and what to put in the treasury had to follow the word that had been given.

Therefore, the expression "devoted" must not always be explained by turning it into only one kind of action. We must distinguish the regulation concerning the field of one's possession from the regulation concerning a person's death. At Jericho, too, there were things that were set apart and put in the treasury, and things that were destroyed. Remembering the solemnity that none of those things could be treated as one's own possession at one's will, we must read accurately what is commanded in each word.

What we must learn from verse 29 is the fact that people cannot take the judgment of God lightly or cancel it according to their own will. It is not a word to be brought today as a command to harm someone. Rather, we must stand ourselves before the word of judgment and consider how we, who are sinners, can be saved before God.

The wages of sin and the gift God gives

God is the One who judges sin. At the same time, He is the One who has pity on sinners and opens the way of salvation. We must know these two facts together. While speaking of the love

of God, we must not erase the judgment of sin, and while looking only at judgment, we must not turn away from the salvation God has given either. It is written: *"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23).*

This word shows together the result sin brings and the gift God gives. The wages of sin is death. We cannot think of standing before God with sin as if it were no problem at all. We cannot conclude on our own that, because God is good and merciful, He will just overlook sin too. The God who saves us is also the One who truly fulfills His own word concerning sin.

A person can give various reasons concerning his own sin. He can say that his circumstances were difficult, that he became angry because of someone else, or that he had no choice but to do so. Just because he speaks of such circumstances, the sin he has committed does not become something he did not commit. Nor does my sin disappear just because another person's sin looks bigger. The problem of sin must be resolved before God.

Therefore, we must acknowledge the fact that we are sinners who are to be judged. This acknowledgment is not for hating oneself endlessly. It is for knowing the fact that one cannot remove sin by his own strength, and for seeking the salvation God has bestowed. Just as a person who does not know he is sick does not seek treatment, if we take our own sins lightly, we will not come to know deeply why the Lord sacrificed Himself for us either.

God has opened the way to receive the remission of sins. That way does not lie in our preparing an excuse more plausible than the verdict of God. It lies in the Savior whom God has set up for us. God did not leave sin as it was and say that it was all right; He saved us by sending the One who would actually bear our sins. We must believe in what He has accomplished.

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God gave the sacrifice in which sin is passed on and the judgment is received

Leviticus is not a book that records only commands concerning sin. It is a book that teaches, through the law of sacrifice, how a sinner can receive the remission of sins. God had the sinner come forward with an offering without blemish and lay his hands on its head. It is written: *"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 was the passing on of sin to the offering. Just because a person who had realized his sin brought an offering, it did not mean that the whole procedure was finished. He had to lay his hands on the head of that offering to pass on his sin, and the offering that had borne the sin had to be killed and shed its blood. Through that sacrifice, God let the sinner receive the remission of sins.

Here there is no picture of lightly overlooking sin. The sinner lives, but the life of the offering is given up. The offering bears the sin of the sinner and dies in his place. Thus the price of sin was paid. The fact that God has pity on the sinner and the fact that He judges sin appear together in that sacrifice.

This law of sacrifice must not be mixed with the regulation concerning something devoted in today's text as if they were the same procedure. Verse 29 does not say that a person devoted and handed over to death can be gotten back with a single sacrificial animal. While keeping each regulation as it is, we must see together the holiness of God and the way of atonement for sinners that appear throughout Leviticus. The One who came to fulfill that promise of atonement is Jesus Christ.

Jesus bore our sins and their judgment

Dear beloved saints, Jesus was not a sinner who had committed sin and had to be judged. The Lord, who is the Son of God, is without sin. He came to this earth in a human body to save sinners. To deliver us from the judgment we should have received, the Lord came to bear our sins.

Jesus went to the Jordan River and received baptism from John. When John tried to prevent this, the Lord said as follows: *"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 His receiving the sin of mankind passed on to Him. Just as in the Old Testament sin was passed on to the offering by the laying on of hands, in the New Testament John, the representative of mankind, gave baptism to Jesus and passed on the sin of the world to Him. The Lord received that baptism to fulfill the righteous will of God to save sinners.

The sin passed on to the Lord includes all my sins and all your sins. It includes both the sin we were born with and the sins we commit throughout our lives. Not only the sins committed in the past and the sins of the present, but even the sins we will commit in the future—the Lord bore all the sins of our lifetime. He did not receive only a few sins that we remember passed on to Him. The Lord bore all the sins we commit with our thoughts, hearts, and actions.

This is why we must clearly know the baptism Jesus received from John. How did Jesus, who is without sin, come to bear our sins? He received those sins passed on to Him by receiving baptism from John. After that, John pointed to Jesus and testified of Him as the Lamb of God. It is written: *"The next day John*

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saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).

The Lord went to the Cross in the body in which He bore the sin of this world. Because the Lord bore the sins we have committed, He also received in our place the judgment of sin that was to come upon us. By shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, He paid the price of sin. The love of God toward sinners was revealed in such a concrete sacrifice. The Lord gave His own life and saved us.

Therefore, when we speak of the blood of the Cross, we must also believe in the baptism Jesus received from John. The Lord's bearing our sins and His receiving the judgment for those sins are connected. If the baptism is left out, we miss how Jesus, who is without sin, bore our sins and died. If the death of the Cross is left out, we miss how the price of sin was paid. The Lord completely resolved our sins with the baptism and the blood of the Cross.

After dying, Jesus rose again from death. The Lord overcame sin and death, and gave new life to those who believe in this salvation. The Savior we believe in is Jesus Christ, who died for us and rose again from death. Through the salvation He accomplished, we have received the remission of sins and have come to stand before God as righteous people.

This gospel of the water and the Spirit is the gospel by which God has saved sinners. It is not a way for people to reduce judgment through zealous ascetic practice. Nor is the Lord's salvation completed only when we shed more tears or offer more prayers of repentance. The Lord has already borne all our sins and paid the price of those sins. Acknowledging ourselves as sinners, we receive the remission of sins by believing with our hearts in this salvation the Lord has accomplished. God gives the Holy Spirit to those who believe this gospel and has Him dwell in them.

God, who spoke of judgment, also confirms the remission of sins

Some people, when they read the word concerning judgment, think that there is no hope for them. This is because when they examine their hearts there is sin, and when they look back on the lives they have lived there are wrongs. But even then, they must also hear the word of salvation God has given. The news most needed by the person who knows his own sins is the gospel that Jesus bore those sins.

In Romans, it is written as follows: *"But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness" (Romans 4:5).*

God does not declare us righteous only after we have made ourselves perfect people. To the person who believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, He accounts his faith for righteousness. This does not mean that while sin remains as it is, He calls him righteous in words only. Because Jesus removed sin with His baptism and blood, He declares righteous those who believe in that salvation.

If we believe the word of God concerning judgment but cannot believe the word concerning the remission of sins, we are not fully accepting what the Lord has accomplished. Just as the fact that God called the wages of sin death is true, the fact that Jesus paid that price is also true. Just because our feelings waver, the sins the Lord bore do not come back to us again. We must believe in the salvation the Lord accomplished according to the word. It is also written: *"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit" (Romans 8:1).*

This word is a sure word that the person who has received the remission of sins must hold on to. In Christ Jesus there is no

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condemnation. The person who believes in the baptism the Lord received from John and the blood of the Cross draws near to God boldly, not because his own deeds are always perfect, but because the salvation of the Lord is perfect. The assurance of salvation does not come from rating oneself highly. It comes from believing in the Lord, who has removed our sins.

Let us believe the word of salvation and preach it to other souls as well

When the city of Jericho fell, Rahab and those who belonged to her house were saved. God commanded that they be kept alive, and the spies brought them out as they had promised. Even in the midst of the city's destruction, the word of salvation was fulfilled. God is the One who fulfills both the word of judgment and the word that He will save.

We too believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit that He has given. The Lord bore our sins, and the Lord received the judgment for those sins. Therefore, the person who has received the remission of sins no longer needs to strive to produce salvation by his own strength. He can believe in the salvation the Lord has given and preach it to those who do not yet know that grace.

Just because one knows about judgment, he must not recklessly condemn others or exalt himself as though he were more righteous than others. We too were people who could not escape from sin and death by ourselves. The Lord had pity on us and saved us. The person who knows that grace must let the soul suffering because of sin know the way of the remission of sins the Lord has prepared.

It is not enough merely to tell a person who is afraid because

of the problem of sin not to be afraid. He must be told the fact that Jesus bore the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, received its judgment by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death. When that person knows and believes in the salvation the Lord has accomplished, he gains the assurance of the remission of sins beyond vague comfort.

Dear beloved saints, today's text teaches that the solemn word of God cannot be changed according to one's own will. Before that word, we do not take sin lightly. At the same time, we do not take lightly the vicarious atonement the Lord accomplished to give life to us either. The Lord bore all our sins and their judgment. He has saved us, who believe this gospel of the water and the Spirit, from sin and death.

We give thanks to the Lord, who gave His own life for us. Let us keep in our hearts the word that has given us the remission of sins, and live preaching this gospel to those who do not yet know the grace of salvation. ✉

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Sermon 6 by Paul C. Jong

Offer the produce of your life by the faith that has received the remission of sins

< Leviticus 27:30-33 >

"And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD's. It is holy to the LORD. If a man wants at all to redeem any of his tithes, he shall add one-fifth to it. And concerning the tithe of the herd or the flock, of whatever passes under the rod, the tenth one shall be holy to the LORD. He shall not inquire whether it is good or bad, nor shall he exchange it; and if he exchanges it at all, then both it and the one exchanged for it shall be holy; it shall not be redeemed."

He set apart from the grain and the fruit the portion to be rendered to the LORD

Dear beloved saints, in today's text appear the grain harvested from the field and the fruit of the tree, and also the oxen and sheep that people raise. These are things close to the lives of the people of Israel. God had them live according to the word not only in the matter of offering sacrifices at the tabernacle but also in gathering in their produce and counting their livestock. Faith is not needed only in the time we gather before God. There must also be faith in the heart with which we

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treat what we have obtained by our labor. It is written: *"And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD's. It is holy to the LORD" (Leviticus 27:30).*

God said that a tenth of the produce of the land is the LORD's. The text specifically says that this produce is grain and the fruit of the tree. He had them set apart, out of what people had gathered in by their labor, the portion to be rendered to God. It is not a word telling them to think about it then if something is left over after using what they harvested. He fixed the portion of a tenth, and let them know that it is a holy offering to the LORD.

Here the word "holy offering" means something set apart as holy to God. Whether it was grain or fruit, they could not treat the portion God had fixed the same as ordinary consumption. Even the fact that people had plowed the field and labored to obtain that produce did not change the fact that God had fixed it as a holy offering. As the people counted what they had harvested, they had to remember the word of the LORD.

Dear saints, we, too, easily think only of our own strength when we look at what we have obtained by our labor. We can think, "I worked and I strove, so I may use this entirely according to my own greed." But the person who has received the remission of sins looks at his own life before God, who has saved him. He does not divide living and believing in God into things unrelated to each other. He wants to use what he has with a heart that believes in the salvation the Lord has given.

What must first be examined at this time is the heart toward God. We must look into whether we give in order to be seen by people, whether we give in order to exalt our own name, or whether we give in thanksgiving for the salvation the Lord has accomplished. If one counts rendering to God only as his own merit, then even while setting apart the holy offering, his heart

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actually remains on himself. Just as we place the produce before the Lord, we must also place before the word the heart with which we treat it.

The regulation for redeeming the tenth is not a way to buy the remission of sins

In verse 31, He speaks about the case of redeeming the tenth of the land. He said: *"If a man wants at all to redeem any of his tithes, he shall add one-fifth to it."*

God had a person add one-fifth to it if he wanted to redeem the tenth that had earlier been set apart as a holy offering. It was not that he could simply take it and use it just because he had come to need it again. In keeping with the fact that it had been set apart as a holy offering, he had to follow the procedure God had set. While permitting a way to redeem it, God made it so that it could not be dealt with lightly.

The one-fifth added here is based on that tenth. It must not be read as meaning to add one-fifth to the whole of the original produce. Also, this verse does not speak of a regulation to impose a fine of some amount on everyone who has given the tithe late. The text speaks of the case of wanting to redeem the tenth that has been set apart. We must know accurately the object and the case the word has set.

In particular, just because the word "redeem" appears, it must not be taken to mean that if one pays more money, the sin of the soul is washed away. Here the object that is redeemed is the tenth of the produce spoken of in the previous verse. If one treats the vicarious atonement for human sin and the procedure of redeeming a holy offering as the same thing, he comes to the wrong thought that one can obtain the remission of sins by the

wealth offered to God.

The fact that God gave the law for setting apart wealth and the fact that He gave the way to save sinners must each be rightly understood. However faithfully one offers wealth, it cannot replace the salvation Jesus has accomplished. What makes us clean before God is the remission of sins for which the Lord bore our sins. Even the person who offers a holy offering must first know the Lord, who has saved him.

He said not to exchange the tenth one that passes under the rod

Following the grain and the fruit of the land, He speaks concerning the tenth of the oxen and sheep. It is written: *"And concerning the tithe of the herd or the flock, of whatever passes under the rod, the tenth one shall be holy to the LORD" (Leviticus 27:32).*

In this word, He has them make the oxen and sheep pass under the rod and set apart every tenth one. It is not looking over the oxen or sheep, picking one that pleases oneself, and calling it the tenth. It is setting apart as holy to the LORD the one that becomes the tenth according to the order of passing through. God set even the method of determining what was to be set apart.

And He immediately goes on to say: *"He shall not inquire whether it is good or bad, nor shall he exchange it; and if he exchanges it at all, then both it and the one exchanged for it shall be holy; it shall not be redeemed" (Leviticus 27:33).*

Here He says not to exchange it by weighing good and bad. One cannot exchange the one that has become the tenth for another animal because he regrets losing it. Conversely, exchanging it for the reason that, in one's own thinking, another

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one seems better is not permitted either. The text forbids both weighing good and bad and exchanging. The setting apart God had fixed came before the reasons people put forward.

What happens, then, if one exchanges it? Both the one first set apart and the one brought to take its place become holy. Just because one tried to exchange it, the first one does not return to being a possession he can freely dispose of. Both are set apart and cannot be redeemed. Trying to get one back by human calculation, one instead has both set apart. It is a stern regulation by which God kept people from doing by their own judgment what He had forbidden.

In the earlier word concerning grain and fruit, He permitted the case of redeeming by adding one-fifth, but in the case of exchanging an animal, He said that both are holy and cannot be redeemed. These two must not be mixed. The way permitted in one case cannot be applied at will to another case. To learn about offering to God, one must read each verse carefully and know what He permits and what He forbids.

Also, this word must be distinguished from the regulations for choosing the sacrifice of the sin offering or the peace offering. In Leviticus chapter 3, He had them offer as the sacrifice of the peace offering one without blemish. The present text speaks of the method of setting apart the tenth of the oxen and sheep. One must not take the word not to exchange the tenth one and think that even the regulation for an offering without blemish in the sacrifices has been done away with. Each word must be accepted according to its purpose.

In our life of faith, too, there are times when we want to change the standard to our own advantage. One may follow the word in small matters, but when something comes up that he is reluctant to part with, he may put forward some other reason. But the faith that serves the Lord is learning what pleases God

and following His will. We must examine before the word the heart that outwardly puts on only the appearance of offering while inwardly holding on to only its own calculation.

Even the person who gives a tenth needs perfect salvation

Dear saints, when we read the word about the tithe, we must not stop only at the act of giving. We must examine whether the person who comes to God has the remission of sins. The fact that someone had given a tenth to a priest of the Old Testament did not remove all that person's sins forever. Hebrews, while mentioning the priests who receive a tenth, leads us to a deeper word of salvation.

In Hebrews chapter 7 appears the account of Abraham giving a tenth to Melchizedek. Melchizedek blessed Abraham, and Abraham gave him a tenth. Through this event, Hebrews explains the greatness of Melchizedek and makes clear the priesthood of Jesus according to the order of Melchizedek. Our eyes must finally turn to Jesus Christ, the eternal High Priest. It is written: *"Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron?" (Hebrews 7:11).*

God has sent us the High Priest who would save us perfectly. The priests on earth had weaknesses and could not continue in their office because of death. But Jesus is the One who abides forever. The Lord accomplished with His own body the sacrifice of salvation for sinners. The One we rely on when we come before God is this very Jesus.

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Therefore, in looking back on our life of faith, we must not count only how much we have given in offerings or how much we have helped with the work of the church. One can do such things and yet not know how the Lord has removed his sins. If one is used to giving but does not know the gospel of the water and the Spirit, he must first hear and believe the word of salvation. A person cannot complete the salvation of his own soul by gathering up what he has offered.

What we need is the perfect remission of sins Jesus has already accomplished. Only when there is the faith that believes in the Savior God has sent does giving, too, become thanksgiving for that grace. Only when we know what the Lord has offered for us does it become clear with what faith we, too, serve Him.

Jesus washed away all sins by the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross

Jesus, the Son of God, put on the body of a man and came to this earth to save us. The Lord is the One who has no sin, and He is our Creator. He had compassion on us sinners and Himself became our Savior. To know the salvation Jesus has accomplished, we must first know the baptism the Lord received from John.

Jesus sought to receive baptism from John at the Jordan River. When John tried to stop Him, 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 bearing the sin of mankind. In the Old Testament, the sinner laid

his hands on the head of the sacrificial offering and passed on his sins. The offering that had borne the sins died and shed its blood in that person's place. In the same way, by receiving baptism from John, the representative of mankind, Jesus received all the sins of the world passed on to Him. The Lord, the Lamb of God, bore our sins in our place.

In the sin of the world the Lord bore, all our sins are included. The sins we were born with and the sins we commit as we live, the sins of the past and the sins of the present, and even the sins we will commit in the future—He bore all the sins of our lifetime. The greed and lies that arise in the heart, the sins committed in deeds, and even the sins we overlooked without realizing them—the Lord knew them all and received them passed on to Him. He did not deal with only a few faults visible to people.

John saw Jesus and testified as follows: *"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).*

This Lamb of God went to the Cross in the body in which He bore our sins. The reason Jesus shed His blood and died on the Cross is that He had borne our sins by the baptism He received from John. Because the price of sin is death, the Lord received the judgment on our sins in our place. God passed on our sins to the Lord, and the Lord paid the price of those sins with His own life.

The baptism of Jesus and the blood of the Cross are the truth of salvation that must be believed together. Sins were passed on by the baptism the Lord received from John, and the Lord, who bore those sins, received the judgment on the Cross. Leaving out the baptism, one cannot clearly know how the Lord became the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world. Leaving out the sacrifice of the Cross, one cannot speak of the salvation in which the price of sin has been paid. The Lord accomplished all these

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things perfectly.

And Jesus rose again from death. The Lord, who had borne our sins and died, rose again from death and became our living Savior. The Lord lives even now, and He is the eternal High Priest who saves perfectly those who come to God through Him. We believe in the salvation accomplished by the Lord, who rose again from death, and receive the remission of sins. It is written: *"Who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself" (Hebrews 7:27).*

The Lord resolved our sins by offering up Himself once and for all. Therefore, the wealth or labor we offer does not fill up some lacking part in the Lord's atonement. Nor is it that the remaining sins are removed only if we give more offerings, nor that salvation is completed only if we shed more tears and repeat prayers of repentance. Our remission of sins lies in the salvation Jesus has already accomplished by the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross.

This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We acknowledge our own sins, and believe with our hearts the fact that the Lord bore all those sins and removed them. By that faith we receive the remission of sins and are born again. The Lord is not One who looks at the size of what we have offered and sets the size of the remission of sins. He is the One who has given perfect salvation to us who believe in the salvation that has remitted all sins.

A saved person relies on the Lord in his life as well

David confessed in the Psalms as follows: *"Salvation*

belongs to the LORD. Your blessing is upon Your people. Selah" (Psalm 3:8).

Salvation belongs to the LORD. The One who has removed our sins is the Lord, and the One on whom we who have been saved rely as we live is also the Lord. In the midst of hardship, David believed God to be his shield and prayed. We, too, must rely on the Lord whether our circumstances in life are plentiful or hard. It is living by giving thanks when we have obtained produce, and asking Him for help when we have needs.

When their income increases, people easily rely on their own strength, and when their circumstances become hard, their hearts are easily overwhelmed by worry. Even at such times, we must remember the Lord, who has saved us by the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We must believe who the Lord is, who has saved us from sin, and examine before the word what we must do now, and pray. Serving God, too, is something we fulfill by that faith.

One cannot make what he offers to God into a transaction for obtaining the result he wants. If one thinks that because he has offered a certain amount he must surely receive back several times as much, the center of his faith moves from the salvation the Lord has accomplished to his own profit. The Lord, who has saved us, is not One who can be moved by what people offer. We must serve with a heart of thanksgiving for the grace we have received, believing in and relying on His will.

Also, one must not try to be exalted above other saints or be treated with honor for the reason that he has offered material things. All are people who have received the remission of sins by the baptism and the blood of the Lord. Whether offerings are large or small cannot become a person's Savior, nor can one put a value on one another's souls by it. We serve the gospel as people who have received the grace of the Lord together.

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Let us serve so that the love we have received may be passed on to other souls

The fact that we have received the remission of sins gives our lives a clear direction. Since the Lord has loved us and saved us, we now also want other souls to know that love and be saved. We want the material things we offer to God and our labor to be used in the work of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The gospel is passed on through someone's mouth, and it is also passed on through books that contain the word. The person who has heard the word and come to believe needs food with which to keep on learning. For this work, the labor of those who teach is needed, and the labor of those who help that work to be accomplished is also needed. The person who has received the remission of sins can serve this work together in the place entrusted to him.

Our offering of material things is also one of these kinds of service. One should not think that he has finished his whole life of faith by the act of giving alone. Because the Lord has saved us, we must hold in our hearts the desire that this gospel be passed on to other people as well. It is laboring together, praying, sharing the word, and helping with what is needed, so that the love we have received may be passed on to other souls.

In today's text, God set apart the tenth of the produce and did not allow the tenth one of the livestock to be exchanged by human calculation. We, too, must not put forward only our own thoughts in serving the Lord, but must follow the word. At the same time, we must clearly believe that our remission of sins does not depend on the portion we have offered, but lies in the salvation the Lord has accomplished by offering His own body.

Jesus received baptism from John, shed His blood and died

on the Cross, and rose again from death, and so saved us. We who have received the remission of sins by this gospel of the water and the Spirit give thanks to the Lord and offer the produce of our lives. Let us keep in our hearts the grace the Lord has given, and serve by faith so that the gospel of that salvation may be passed on to other souls as well. ✉

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Sermon 7 by Paul C. Jong

Believe in the remission of sins accomplished by God, who has spoken

< Leviticus 27:34 >

"These are the commandments which the LORD commanded Moses for the children of Israel on Mount Sinai."

Dear beloved saints, we are now standing before the last word of Leviticus. In Leviticus are recorded the sacrifices by which one comes before God, the duties of the priests, cleanness and uncleanness, and the ordinances by which the people of God are to live. On reaching the last chapter, we heard the word concerning vows and the things dedicated to God. And to us who have read all this word, the last verse makes clear again who the One is who gave that word.

The LORD commanded. Moses received that command. And that word was given for the children of Israel. If we read keeping this relationship in mind, we can know with what faith we are to receive the sacrifices and ordinances recorded in Leviticus. The One who judges sin is God, and the One who sets the way for sinners to receive the remission of sins and come before God is also God.

Now, through the last verse, let us look together at God, who has spoken, and the grace of the remission of sins that has been accomplished according to that word.

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Stand before the word the LORD has commanded

The text makes clear that the commandments recorded before came from the LORD. It is not that the people of Israel consulted with one another, set the method of sacrifice, and asked God to accept it. God spoke to Moses, and Moses delivered that word to the people. Therefore, the attitude of the people toward that word is connected with their attitude toward God, who has spoken.

The beginning of Leviticus also shows this fact. In Leviticus 1:1 it is recorded that God called Moses from the tabernacle of meeting and spoke to him. From the first word concerning the sacrifices to the last commandment, we hear the voice of God calling and teaching the people. Before the people came to God, God first spoke to them. The way of washing away sin, too, could be known within that word.

The authority of the word Moses delivered is in God, who gave that word. Because the people received the command of God through Moses, they could not decide whether that word was right or wrong according to their own feelings or circumstances.

Our faith, too, must stand here. We must listen to what God has said, and examine our own thoughts before that word. Even a thought we have held for a long time must be corrected if it differs from the word of God. Even if it is a saying many people agree with, that saying alone cannot guarantee the remission of sins. Because the One who will save us from sin is God, the faith that receives salvation must be the faith that accepts the way God has set.

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God has spoken for His own people

In the text it is recorded that this command was given for the children of Israel. God actually called the people of Israel and made them His own people, and taught them how they were to live before God. Therefore, when we read this word, we must first think about what kind of people they were.

When God gave the Ten Commandments, He said as follows: *"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage" (Exodus 20:2)*. God was the One who had brought them out of the place where they had been slaves. The One who spoke to that people was the very God who had rescued them. They had to learn what kind of God the God who had saved them was, and live serving that God.

But just because they had come out of Egypt, the people of Israel did not become people who did not commit sin. Even after receiving the command of God, they followed their own will and sinned. God knew the condition of such a people. So He taught them what sin is, and made it possible for a person who had sinned to receive the remission of sins through the appointed sacrifice. This is because, between the holy God and the people who commit sin, the problem of sin had to be solved.

So that a person who had committed sin would not vaguely fear and then try to solve it according to his own thoughts, God made known by the word the way of coming to God. Within it is the will of God, who wants to cleanse His own people and be with them.

Today we, too, learn the will of God contained in the remission of sins through the sacrifices given to Israel. And we believe in Jesus Christ, who came in the New Testament era and fulfilled that will. When we know together the promise given in the Old Testament and the salvation Jesus has accomplished, our

faith becomes even clearer. This is because we know that the work of the Lord bearing our sins is the salvation accomplished within the will of God.

We must realize our own sins through the word of the law

What we must know first as we think of Mount Sinai is the holiness of God. The commands God has given do not change according to the greed of people or the customs of the world. What God calls sin is sin. Even if a person thinks by himself that it is all right, if it goes against the word of God, he must acknowledge that wrong.

The Apostle Paul says as follows: *"Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:20)*. The law exposes the sins we did not know by ourselves. Even a person who used to regard himself as righteous only for the reason that he had not done great harm to others, when he stands before the word God has given, comes to see how far his own heart and life fall short of that word.

Examine your hearts before the word that commands us to serve God alone. There are times when, while saying with our mouths that we believe in God, we actually follow our own greed more. Even when we know the way God says is right, we sometimes choose the side that is advantageous to ourselves. Sin is not only in great wrongs exposed to the eyes of others. It is also in the heart that puts oneself ahead of God and in the life that comes out of that heart.

We must stop making excuses before the word, and acknowledge the fact that we cannot be justified before God by

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our own deeds. When we acknowledge this, we come to know why the remission of sins God gives is necessary.

Yet the fact of having realized sin is not itself the remission of sins. Even a person who knows his wrongs and is distressed needs a way for those sins to be solved. Even if I have become able to tell in detail how great a sinner I am, if I cannot believe in the Lord who removes those sins, I am still afraid because of sin. We must take the sins exposed by the law and come to the way of atonement God has prepared.

God, who pointed out sin, also set the way of atonement

When thinking of the word given on Mount Sinai, it is not enough to call to mind only the commands forbidding sin. God spoke to Moses concerning the tabernacle, and also set there the sacrifices to be offered for the sins of the people. In Exodus chapter 20, too, following the Ten Commandments, there comes the word to build an altar to God and offer burnt offerings and peace offerings. God taught the people the way to come to Him.

In Leviticus those sacrifices are recorded in detail. God said to the person offering a burnt offering as follows: *"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)*. He set the way in which the sinner laid his hands on the head of the sacrificial offering and passed on his sins, and the offering that had received those sins passed on to it died in place of the sinner.

This principle can also be seen in the sin offering offered when a common person sinned. In Leviticus chapter 4 it is recorded that the person who had realized his sin brought a

female goat without blemish as his offering, laid his hand on its head, and killed the sacrifice. The priest put its blood on the horns of the altar of burnt offering and poured out the rest at the base of the altar, and burned the fat of the offering on the altar.

God clearly spoke of the result of that sacrifice: *"He shall remove all its fat, as fat is removed from the sacrifice of the peace offering; and the priest shall burn it on the altar for a sweet aroma to the LORD. So the priest shall make atonement for him, and it shall be forgiven him" (Leviticus 4:31).*

Here the sinner relied on the sacrificial offering God had set and on the word of atonement. It was not that he obtained peace by regarding his wrongs lightly. Because the sins had been passed on to the offering and that offering had paid the price of the sins, he could believe the word of remission God had given. It was a sacrifice in which the laying on of hands that passed on the sins and the blood shed as the price of the sins were together.

Among the commandments God commanded are both the word forbidding sin and the word of the sacrifices that make atonement for sinners. Without lowering His own holiness, God gave the offering to bear sin and let people receive the remission of sins through its sacrifice. When we learn this will through the sacrifices of Leviticus, we also come to know clearly why Jesus came to this earth, bore our sins, and shed His blood.

Jesus accomplished the remission of sins by the baptism He received from John and the Cross

Dear beloved saints, God fulfilled through Jesus Christ the will of salvation He had revealed in the sacrifices of the Old Testament. Jesus, the Son of God, put on the body of a man and came to this earth to save us from sin. Jesus Himself had no sin.

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The Lord, who had no sin, became the sacrificial offering for us, who have much sin.

Then how were our sins passed on to Jesus? Just as the sinner of the Old Testament laid his hands on the head of the sacrificial offering and passed on his sins, Jesus bore the sin of mankind by receiving baptism from John. When Jesus came to the Jordan River and was about to receive baptism from John, John tried to stop Him. But Jesus clearly spoke of the will for which He had to be baptized: *"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 to fulfill all righteousness. Through John, the representative of mankind whom God had set up, the sin of the world was passed on to Jesus. Jesus did not receive baptism to wash away His own sins, but received baptism to receive our sins passed on to Him. He bore all our sins according to the will of God, who wants to save sinners.

In this, the sins of each one of us are also included. The sins committed when we were young, the sins committed in heart and deed while living, and even the sins we will commit while living from now on belong to the sin of the world the Lord bore. It is not only the sins we remember that were passed on to the Lord. The Lord bore all the sins, even those we have not properly realized or have forgotten. To believe in the baptism Jesus received from John is to believe this fact of salvation that our sins were passed on to the Lord.

John saw Jesus and testified as follows: *"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 as the Lamb of God who bore the sin of the world. He paid on the Cross the price of the sins He had borne

by receiving baptism from John.

Just as in the Old Testament the offering that had received the sins passed on to it was put to death, Jesus shed His blood and died on the Cross because He had borne our sins. The Lord received in our place the judgment of sin that we were to receive. Therefore, we must believe together in the baptism of Jesus and the blood of the Cross. In the baptism is the work of receiving our sins passed on to Him, and in the Cross is the sacrifice of the Lord who paid the price of those sins. Because the Lord bore our sins and received the judgment, the remission of sins has been accomplished.

And Jesus rose again from death. The Lord, who had died bearing the sin of the world, rose again from death and became our living Savior. The Lord has wholly fulfilled for us the will of God, who wants to save us. We receive the remission of sins by believing in the baptism Jesus received from John, His shedding of blood on the Cross, and His rising again from death. This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has given us.

The remission of sins is not something completed little by little according to the degree to which we repent of our wrongs. It is right to acknowledge one's own sins and turn back from the wrong way. But our tears or our resolution to do well in the future cannot pay the price of sin. There is no need to try again by our own efforts to remove the sins Jesus has already borne and been judged for. We must accept in our hearts and believe the salvation the Lord has accomplished.

The person who believes this gospel receives the remission of all sins and becomes a child of God. God gives the Holy Spirit to the heart of the person who has received the remission of sins. We are born again by the grace the Lord has bestowed, and come to serve God relying on that grace. When we believe following

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the way of salvation God has set, the remission of sins the Lord has accomplished takes its place clearly in our hearts as well.

Hold on to the will of God accomplished through the Son

God, who spoke through Moses, revealed His own salvation through Jesus Christ. Hebrews says as follows: *"God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds" (Hebrews 1:1–2).*

The One who spoke of the sacrifices of the Old Testament and the One who sent Jesus Christ are the same God. God taught the way of the remission of sins through the sacrifices, and accomplished that salvation through the Son. That is why we cannot read Leviticus only as a matter of Israel in the old days. This is because the will of God revealed in those sacrifices is connected with the work of Jesus saving us.

Hebrews 1:3 says that the Son did the work of cleansing sins and sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. It also records as follows concerning eternal atonement: *"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).*

The sacrifices of the Old Testament had to be offered again and again, but Jesus accomplished eternal atonement with His own body. We believe that accomplished salvation. It is not that we try to remove sins by preparing again today the offerings recorded in Leviticus, but that we believe what Jesus Christ, to whom those sacrifices pointed, has done for us. When we

believe in this way, the word of the Old Testament and the fulfillment of the New Testament are clearly connected in our hearts.

When we read the word with that faith, the heart with which we treat the commands of God also changes. Before the word that points out sin, we honestly acknowledge our own wrongs, and before the word that has accomplished the remission of sins, we believe with thanksgiving. We do not cover up as we please what God has called sin, nor do we deny the fact of salvation because of the sins God has resolved in the Lord. Because we believe in God, who has spoken, we accept both His judgment and His salvation together.

Live following the word with the heart that has received the remission of sins

Dear saints, even after believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receiving the remission of sins, we must keep listening to the word of God. There is still weakness in our flesh. Our hearts sometimes follow our own greed, and there are times when we make wrong choices even while knowing the word. At such times we must examine ourselves before the word, acknowledge our wrongs, and turn back.

The faith that we have received the remission of sins must not become a reason to hide our own wrongs. The person who knows the fact that the Lord has paid the price of our sins also knows how heavy sin is. Therefore, he does not insist that a wrong heart and wrong deeds are right. Listening to the word of God, he sets his heart on the side of following that word.

At the same time, whenever you discover your weakness, do not look for the ground of salvation in your own deeds. Think of

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the gospel that Jesus bore even those sins by the baptism He received from John, and even received the judgment on those sins on the Cross. While acknowledging our own weakness, we must clearly believe in the remission of sins the Lord has accomplished. By this faith we look to God again and obtain the strength to live following the word.

Also, when we preach the word to other people, we must help them believe in Jesus Christ. If we end the talk at pointing out sin, the sinner sees only a burden he cannot solve by his own strength. We must let him know why the remission of sins is necessary, and clearly deliver how the Lord removed those sins through the baptism of Jesus and the Cross. It is explaining the word so that other people, too, may believe and enjoy the grace we have received.

Dear beloved saints, the last verse of Leviticus closes this book by making clear that it is the word the LORD commanded Moses. Before that word we have come to know the holy God, have realized our own sins, and have learned the way of atonement God has set. And we look to Jesus Christ, who has wholly fulfilled that way.

Jesus bore our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose again from death to become our Savior. The will of salvation God spoke of has been accomplished through the Lord. Believe this gospel of the water and the Spirit in your hearts. In the assurance of having received the remission of sins, keep the word of God close, and live relying on the Lord who has saved us. We give thanks and glory to God, who spoke to us and accomplished salvation according to that word. ✉

Questions and Answers on Leviticus Chapter 27

[Question] 1. Leviticus 27:2—what is it to make a vow to God, and what ordinances did one have to follow when offering what he had vowed?

A vow is a voluntary promise to offer oneself or one's possessions to God. Leviticus 27 begins with the ordinance for setting the value when someone vowed to give a person to the LORD, and explains how to dedicate animals, houses, fields, and so on.

For a vow concerning a person, the value was set according to the standard God had appointed, and animals, houses, or fields also had to be offered according to their respective ordinances. What one had already decided to offer could not be exchanged or taken back as one pleased, and even in cases where it could be redeemed, one had to follow the method God had appointed.

A vow is not an obligation that must be made, but if one has voluntarily made a promise to God, he must faithfully fulfill that promise. Before God, not only the heart that wants to offer but also how one actually offers and keeps the promise is important. (Leviticus 27:2–24; Numbers 30:2; Deuteronomy 23:21–23).

[Question] 2. Leviticus 27:3–8—when someone vowed to give a person to God, how was the value for that person set?

When someone vowed to give a person, God had them offer

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a fixed value in silver according to age and sex. The standard is as follows.

• From 20 to 60 years old: 50 shekels of silver for a male, 30 shekels of silver for a female.

• From 5 to 20 years old: 20 shekels of silver for a male, 10 shekels of silver for a female.

• From 1 month to 5 years old: 5 shekels of silver for a male, 3 shekels of silver for a female.

• 60 years old and above: 15 shekels of silver for a male, 10 shekels of silver for a female.

These amounts were the standard applied when fulfilling the obligation of a vow concerning a person. The one who vowed did not set the value according to his own thinking, but had to offer according to the standard God had spoken. For all the amounts, the common standard of the shekel of the sanctuary was used.

However, when the one who vowed was poor and could not afford the fixed amount, God had the priest look into that person's circumstances and set the value. Within the fixed ordinance, consideration for people in economic difficulty was also provided. (Leviticus 27:3–8, 25).

[Question] 3. Leviticus 27:3—what kind of standard is *'the shekel of the sanctuary,'* which was used when calculating the value of the person or thing vowed?

The *"shekel of the sanctuary"* is the standard unit used when calculating values such as the amount of silver to be offered at the sanctuary. This chapter states that all valuations are to be set according to the shekel of the sanctuary, reckoning twenty

gerahs to one shekel.

The value of persons or things differed according to the object of the vow and the ordinance, but the standard for calculating the value was the same. Therefore, the one who vowed was not to make a separate standard favorable to himself and reduce the value, nor were the priests each to calculate by a different standard; they had to follow the standard God had appointed. (Leviticus 27:3, 25).

[Question] 4. Leviticus 27:8—what was done when the one who vowed was poor and could not pay the fixed amount?

If the one who vowed was poor and could not afford the fixed amount, he was to present himself before the priest and have a value set that suited his circumstances. The priest looked into that person's economic situation and set a value the one who vowed could afford.

It was not a way for the one who had vowed to cancel the promise by his own judgment or arbitrarily lower the amount; it was a way of making his circumstances known to the priest and fulfilling the obligation of the vow according to the ordinance God had provided.

This regulation shows God's considerate intention that even the poor could take part in offering to God. While making the responsibility of a vow clear, God did not lay the same burden on everyone regardless of their circumstances. (Leviticus 27:8).

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[Question] 5. Leviticus 27:16—what method of calculation is it to set the value of a field offered to God *'according to the seed'*?

To set the value *"according to the seed"* means to measure the size of the field by the amount of seed that can be sown in it and set its value accordingly. God said to take fifty shekels of silver as the standard for a field in which a homer of barley seed could be sown.

Here, a homer of barley is not the amount of harvest reaped from that field, but the amount of seed used to indicate the size of the field. Therefore, the measure by seed can be understood by the standard of 'how much seed can be sown in this field.'

Also, the value differed according to the time when the field was offered. If it was offered from the Jubilee, the fixed value was applied, and if it was offered after the Jubilee had passed, the years remaining until the next Jubilee were calculated and the value was reduced accordingly. Along with the size of the field, the period remaining until the next Jubilee was also taken into account. This ordinance is explained first with regard to a field of the possession inherited from one's ancestors. (Leviticus 27:16–18).

[Question] 6. Leviticus 27:28—how is what is said to have been 'devoted' to God different from an ordinary vow?

'A devoted offering to the LORD' refers to something set apart and offered to God completely, so that it can no longer be sold or taken back by paying a price. The text defines what is devoted as most holy to the LORD.

In this respect it is distinguished from ordinary things vowed that could be redeemed. The preceding verses explain cases in which the person who offered a house or a field and so on could redeem it according to the fixed method, but for what is devoted in verse 28, no such redemption is permitted.

Therefore, one must not deal with everything offered to God in a single way. One must distinguish what was offered and according to which ordinance. This word teaches that one cannot keep regarding and disposing of what has been completely offered to God as if it were still his own possession, and that one must regard as holy what belongs to God. (Leviticus 27:14, 15, 19, 28).

[Question] 7. Leviticus 27:30—what does the tenth that belongs to God among what is gathered from the land refer to?

It refers to a tenth of the grain and the fruit of the trees gathered from the land. God said that this tenth is the LORD's and is a holy offering to the LORD.

Even though it was what they had gathered by their labor in their own fields, the people had to set apart a tenth of it as God's portion. This is an ordinance to acknowledge that there is a portion God has appointed among the harvest they have, and to treat it as holy.

If they did not offer that tenth as it was but wished to redeem it by paying its value, they had to add one-fifth to that value. The ordinance of the holy offering, which could not be dealt with arbitrarily, was applied to the tenth of the grain and fruit as well. (Leviticus 27:30, 31).

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[Question] 8. Leviticus 27:32, 33—what is the meaning of forbidding them, when counting cattle or sheep, to inquire whether the tenth animal was good or bad or to exchange it for another?

It means that when counting cattle or sheep by passing them one by one under the rod, the animal that came as the tenth was to be set apart as holy to the LORD. ‘To inquire whether it is good or bad’ means to examine and compare whether the animal is good or bad.

The people were not to judge whether the tenth animal was good or bad and pick it out or exchange it to their own advantage. The text forbids not only exchanging it for another in order to keep a good animal but also the very act of exchanging it after judging whether it is good or bad. They had to offer that animal according to the order God had appointed.

If one exchanged it for another animal, both the original animal and the one exchanged for it became holy, and neither could be taken back by paying its value. This ordinance teaches the lesson that one must not adjust God’s portion according to one’s own interest, but must faithfully obey the word He has appointed. (Leviticus 27:32, 33).

[Question] 9. With what heart does the ordinance of vows in this chapter teach that the promise to offer to God must be kept?

The promise to offer to God must be made carefully with a heart that fears God, and after promising, it must be kept faithfully. This is because a vow is not words to be shown to people, but a promise made voluntarily before God.

Leviticus 27 explains concretely how the object vowed is to be offered, in what cases it can be redeemed, and what can never be taken back. Through this we can know that a vow involves not only words but also the responsibility to actually fulfill it. One must not change it according to one's own thinking just because one's heart has changed when the time comes to offer.

Deuteronomy teaches that one must carry out what one has voluntarily promised with one's mouth, and Ecclesiastes says that it is better not to vow than to vow and not pay. Therefore, rather than reeling off promises one cannot keep out of momentary feelings, one must be careful and truthful before God.

Also, a life of serving God must come from a faith that gives thanks for the salvation the Lord has bestowed. It is believing that Jesus Christ bore our sin and fully paid its price, and serving God with oneself and one's possessions in thanksgiving for that grace. One must not make the size of one's vow or devotion the price of the remission of sins. (Leviticus 27:2–24, 28; Deuteronomy 23:21–23; Ecclesiastes 5:4, 5; Hebrews 9:12).

[Question] 10. What lesson does the ordinance that required 20 percent to be added to the fixed value when taking back what had been offered to God give?

This regulation gives the lesson that even when taking back what is permitted to be redeemed, one must not lightly cancel the promise to offer to God. Since 'one-fifth' is 20 percent, if the fixed value is 100 shekels of silver, one adds 20 shekels and pays 120 shekels.

In this chapter this ordinance is applied to cases such as redeeming an animal that cannot be offered as a sacrifice and

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redeeming a house or a field of one's possession. Returning to one's own possession what had been offered carried a fixed responsibility. Therefore, one had to be careful from the time of vowing, and even when wanting to redeem, one had to follow God's ordinance rather than one's own convenience.

However, this does not mean that everything can be taken back by paying 20 percent more. For an animal vowed that can be offered as a sacrifice, there is the ordinance that it cannot be exchanged, and what is devoted to the LORD can be neither sold nor redeemed. Even when the tenth animal of the cattle or sheep has been exchanged, neither the original nor the one exchanged for it can be redeemed.

We, too, must not easily change, according to our own gain or loss, a promise we have made to offer to God. We need the attitude of respecting what belongs to God, faithfully fulfilling our promises, and also honestly examining our own circumstances. (Leviticus 27:9–15, 19, 28, 32, 33). ✉

◇ About the Next Series

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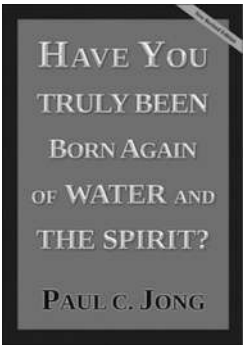

Among many Christian books written about being born again, this is the first book of our time to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit in strict accordance with the Scriptures. Man can't enter the Kingdom of Heaven without being born again of water and the Spirit. To be born again means that 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.

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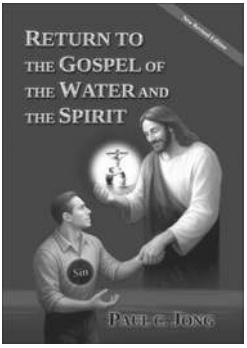

Let's return to the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Theology and doctrines themselves can't save us. However, many Christians still follow them, and consequently have not been born again yet. This book clearly tells us what mistakes theology and doctrines have made and how we can believe in Jesus in the most accurate and certain way.

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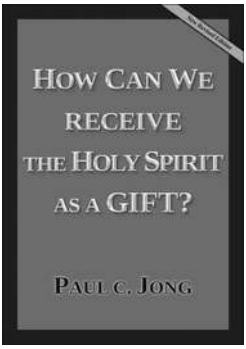

In Christianity, the most significantly discussed issue is salvation from sins and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. However, few people have the exact knowledge of these two topics. Nevertheless, in reality people say that they believe in Jesus Christ while they are ignorant of true redemption and 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.

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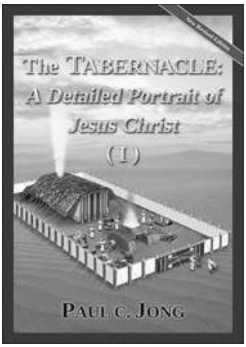

How can we find out the truth hidden in the Tabernacle? Only by knowing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the real substance of the Tabernacle, can we correctly understand and know the answer to this question.

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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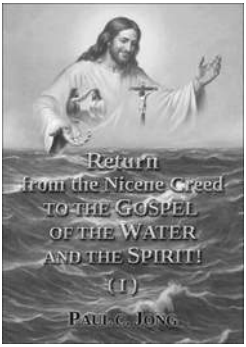
Return from the Nicene Creed TO THE GOSPEL OF THE WATER AND THE SPIRIT! (I)



-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.

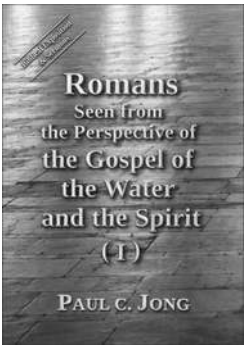
However, in the process of the Nicene Creed's formation, the ministry of Jesus having the sin of the world transferred to Him by being baptized by John was deleted from the creed's contents. As a result, this truth has been passed down in a hidden state within Christianity for about 1,700 years, reaching 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,

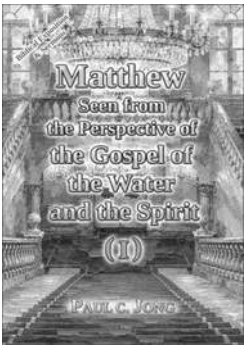
A person who embraces the gospel of the water and the Spirit in their heart comes to read Romans completely differently. The moment one opens this letter holding onto the gospel that Jesus had the sins of the world transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John, completely received the judgment of 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)



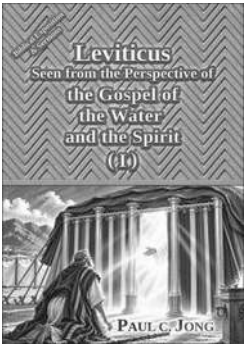
Why does sin still remain in your heart, even after believing in Jesus, reading the Bible for years, and attending church faithfully? Through Matthew chapters 1–4, this book answers clearly from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

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.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

Leviticus seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (4-Volume Series)

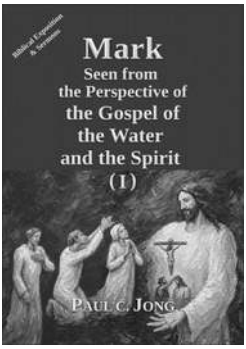


Leviticus seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (I) examines how the Old Testament law of sacrifice prefigures the salvation of Jesus Christ, looking at the burnt offering, the grain offering, the peace offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering, as well as the 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.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

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)

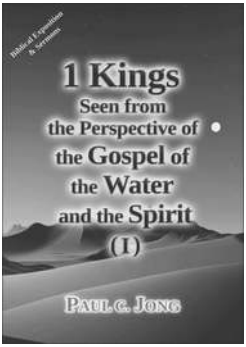


"Luke Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (I)" expounds the Word from Luke chapters 1 through 6 from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Each chapter is composed of three parts: Biblical Exposition, Questions and Answers, and Sermons. The central 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.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

1 Kings seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (4-Volume Series)

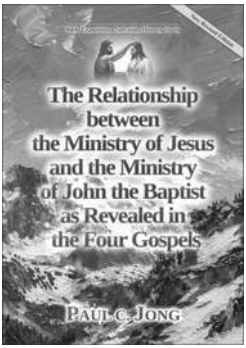


Why did Solomon, who received great wisdom from God, spend more time building his own palace than the Temple? Through David's old age and Adonijah's fall, and Solomon's accession and the building of the Temple, 1 Kings chapters 1–7 show that the glory of man fades, but the faith that fears God endures 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.

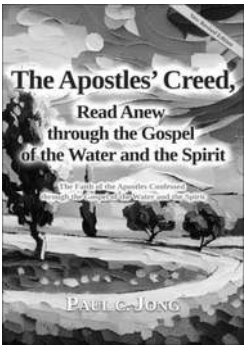
This book makes clear that we receive the remission of sins not by human zeal, but by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Just as sins were passed on to the sacrificial offering through the laying on of hands in the Old Testament, so Jesus took upon Himself the sin of the world through 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.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

Paul C. Jong's Special Features

The Apostles' Creed, Read Anew through the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit [New Revised Edition]

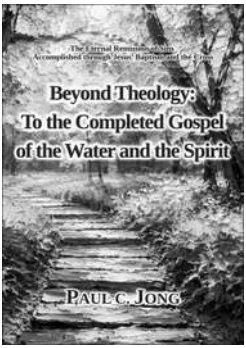


As you recite the Apostles' Creed every week, have you ever asked whether its statements are consistent with the gospel of the water and the Spirit proclaimed in the Bible? Countless Christians recite the Apostles' Creed, yet live without assurance as to whether they themselves have received the remission 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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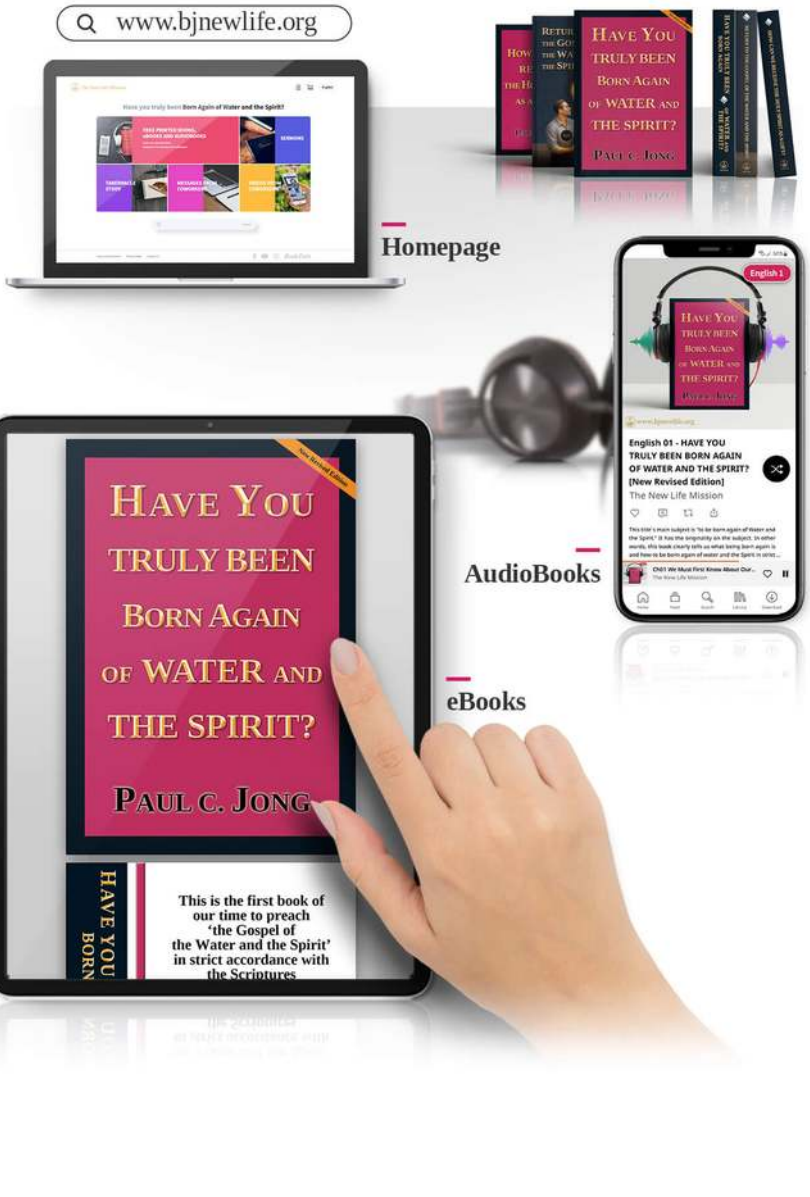

Our The New Life Mission is distributing Pastor Paul C. Jong's spiritual books in 'printed book' form through coworkers who have been born again by water and the Spirit.

If you wish to possess printed books to build up spiritual nourishment, or if you sincerely wish to participate in our gospel spreading ministry, please apply by writing your reason, name, contact information, and address to the email address below.

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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
Contact: John Shin, General Secretary
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

"I will walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people." (Leviticus 26:12)

God commanded the people He had delivered from slavery in Egypt not to make idols, to keep His Sabbaths, and to reverence His sanctuary. To the people who lived by His Word, He promised to give rain in its season, to grant them peace, and to dwell among them. To the people who forsook His Word, He spoke of chastisements meant to turn them back. Yet even at the end of those solemn words, God said that He would remember the covenant He had made with their forefathers.

This covenant love has been completely fulfilled in Jesus Christ. 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. Thus whoever believes in this gospel receives the remission of sins and becomes one of God's people.

The basis for our assurance of the remission of sins does not lie in our own deeds or feelings. It lies in the fact that the Lord bore all our sins and blotted them out, 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 the grace of having become God's people, and go forward into a life of serving the Lord with thanksgiving.

You can download Rev. Paul C. Jong's Christian Books to Computer, Tablet or Smartphone.