

# KINGDOM SPIRIT

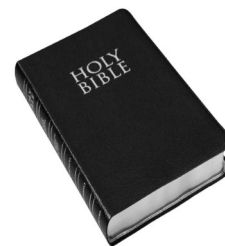
P O Box 279, Pleasant View, CO 81331

Phone 970-562-4874

e-mail [ksm@fone.net](mailto:ksm@fone.net)

**"SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD"**

Matthew 6:33



Issue 2207

## IT'S THE LAW

### ORDINANCES

Besides offering sacrifices, the priests had some other duties. One on these duties was, in effect, to be the public health officer. One of the most feared communicable diseases of that day was leprosy. Lev. 13 describes how a priest was to determine if a person had leprosy. He was to enforce quarantine all the while until the person was determined not to have it or was healed. Leprosy was also in garments and it was the priest's job to determine if it was healed in the garment or whether the garment had to be burned. Once a leper was healed, he had to be cleansed. This was quite a process that the priest had to go through so that the person could rejoin the congregation. On the eighth day of the cleansing he was to offer a lamb as a trespass offering, another as a sin offering, and another for a burnt offering. If the former leper could not afford the three lambs, he could substitute two turtle doves or two pigeons for two of the lambs. Lev. 14:2-33 details the complete process. A house could also have the plague of leprosy and the priest again was the one responsible for checking it out. If the plague couldn't be stopped, the house was to be destroyed and removed out of the city. However, if it stopped, the priest was to pronounce it clean and go through a cleansing ritual with it. Lev. 14:49-53 details this ritual.

Any man with a running sore was considered unclean. Cleanliness was very much a preventative measure in checking the spread of anything like this. Once healed, another seven days had to elapse before the man could be cleansed. Lev. 15:13-15 tells how this ceremonial cleansing took place.

A woman in her menstrual period was considered unclean and if she continued to have an issue beyond her normal period, once she was cleansed of her issue, she must wait another seven days and be ceremonially cleansed on the eighth day. (Lev. 15:28-30)

We have discussed already that a person could be "cut off from the congregation" because of uncleanness. A number of things could cause a person to be unclean such as touching a dead body or the bone of a man, or touching the grave. If this happened, then some of the ashes of the red heifer, which we discussed before, were to be put into a vessel with running water and one who was clean was to take hyssop and dip it in the water and sprinkle the one who was unclean on the third and on the seventh day and then the unclean was to wash himself and his clothes and be clean at even. Anyone not doing this was to be cut off from his people.

The ashes and water were also to be used to sprinkle on the tent and all that was in it where a person dies, in order to cleanse it. (Num. 19:11-12)

The high priest was not to touch even his father or mother when they died. (Lev. 21:10-11) His sons could not touch any dead body except their father, mother, brother, virgin sister, son or daughter. They were to make no baldness on their head or beard, nor cut their flesh in any way as a sign of mourning. (Lev. 21:1-6) Even if one touched an unclean person, or became unclean himself in the natural course of things, he could not eat of the holy things until he was clean. (Lev. 22:2-7)

The priests were also to preside over certain holy days and the ceremonies and sacrifices attendant to them. The Sabbath of course was the first. Sabbath means cessation. Lev. 23:2-3 tells us work was to be done six days, **"but the seventh day is the Sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein."** The fourteenth day of the first month, Abib (roughly April on our calendar) was to signal the beginning of a seven-day feast celebrating Passover (Lev. 23:4-8) and the offering of the firstfruits of the barley harvest. It was also called the Feast of Unleavened Bread. (Ex. 34:18) They could not eat of the new harvest until they offered a sheaf of the firstfruits to God. (Lev. 23:10-14) They were to offer a burnt offering on the fifteenth day of the month and each day for seven days in addition to the usual burnt offerings. (Num. 28:16-25)

They were to eat only unleavened bread and no leaven was to be found in their home for the 7 days. (Deut. 16:1-8)

Seven weeks from the day after the Sabbath during the Passover, they were to observe another one-day Feast of Weeks, later to be known as Pentecost. (Ex. 34:22-26) The harvest here was wheat and 2 loaves of leavened wheat bread were to be offered as a wave offering. It was to be a holy convocation and they were to offer one bullock and two rams as a burnt offering in addition to the usual daily burnt offering, one kid of the goats as a sin offering and two lambs as a sacrifice of peace offering. (Lev. 23:15-21; Num. 28:26-31; Deut. 16:9-12)

Deut. 16:16-17; Ex. 23a:17 and Ex. 34:23 tell us there are 3 times in a year that all the males were to appear before God in the place He chooses. These were the Passover, or Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks, both of which we have just mentioned, and the Feast of Tabernacles. The Feast of Tabernacles started on the fifteenth day of the seventh month following the final harvesting of the year including the grape or wine harvest. It was an eight day affair and the people were to build booths out of tree branches to stay in during this time. Special burnt offerings plus a sin offering was to be made each day. It was to be a time of rejoicing. (Lev. 23:34-36; Lev. 23:39-43; Num. 29:12-38; Deut. 16:13-15)

These are the three main feasts that were to be kept annually. There are a couple more special days that were to be observed annually. The first day of the seventh month is sometimes called the Feast of Trumpets. It was to be a Sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation. A burnt offering was to be offered. (Lev. 23:24-25; Num. 29:1-6) This apparently was a day set aside to remember the communication system the priests were to develop with silver trumpets. The priests were to use trumpets to signal assembly or alarms while they were in the wilderness. (Num. 10:1-10)

On the tenth day of the seventh month there was to be the Day of Atonement. This was to be a Sabbath and the people were to afflict (humble) themselves. A special burnt offering was offered and this was the day each year that the high priest made atonement, first for himself with a sin offering and then for the people in which two goats were chosen, one to be sacrificed as a burnt offering, and the other (the scape-goat) was released in the wilderness after the high priest confessed the sins of the people over it. The procedures for this day have particular fulfillment in the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ many centuries later. (Lev. 23:27-32; Num 29:7-11)

The attendance of the men of Israel was mandatory at the first three feasts at the place that God chose. Naturally there was always someone who, for

good reason, could not attend. For example, if a man touched a dead body less than seven days before the 14<sup>th</sup> day of Abid, he would be unclean on the 14<sup>th</sup>, so he could not take part. One might have been in a journey far off. They were then to keep the Passover starting with the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the second month. (Num. 9:1-14)

A few examples of how a priest worked daily include the example in Lev. 19:20-22. In this case if a man lieth carnally with his bondmaid that is betrothed to a husband, she is to be scourged and he is to bring a trespass offering to the priest to make atonement for him. They are not put to death because she is not free.

Another is the case of a man who becomes jealous of his wife thinking she has had an affair with another man. The husband is to bring her to the priest. The priest is then to put her through a particular ritual that will prove whether she is guilty or not. (Num. 5:12-31)

Another example is found in Num. 6:2-21. Here a man or woman wants to separate themselves to a vow, a vow of a Nazarite. If for any reason he or she be defiled, such as unavoidably touching a dead person, then he is to bring a burnt offering and a sin offering to the priest and then start over on the days of his vow. When his vow is completed, he is to bring a burnt offering, a sin offering and a peace offering to the priest which the priest shall offer for him.

We have already seen that it was their job to keep the fire continually on the altar for burnt offerings. It was also the job of the high priest to keep the candlestick in the holy of holies burning continually. (Lev. 24:2-4) This should give us an idea of the amount of work there was for the high priest and his sons to do.

They were to keep themselves holy or set apart from everyone else as well. None of them could have a blemish such as blindness, lameness, deformity of anything of this nature. To be able to go within the veil or come near the altar, they had to be good specimens of men and be in good health. (Lev. 21:17-23) They could not marry a whore, a divorced woman or a widow, but were to marry a virgin of their own people. (Lev. 21:13-15) They couldn't eat anything that had died of itself. (Lev. 22:8) They were not to defile themselves with any uncleanness, but were to keep God's ordinances. (Lev. 22:9)

Only the priests could eat of the holy things. Those born in his house and a purchased servant could eat of it, but a hired servant or a visitor could not. Even a daughter who was married outside the priesthood could not eat of it so long as she was married and if she had children. If she had no children and became widowed or divorced and returned to her father's house she could eat of it. (Lev. 22:10-13)

If someone who was not allowed to eat of the

holy things did so unwittingly, he was to restore it plus 20% to the priest. (Lev. 22:14-16)

The priests were compensated in several ways. Of course the tithe was to go to the Levites. The Levites were then to give a tithe of the tithe to the high priest and his family. (Num. 18:20-32) Ex. 34:19-20 tells us that all the first-born of man and animals was to go to God. The firstborn sons and the firstling of an ass were to be redeemed, and all of the unredeemed animals plus the redemption price went to the priests as God's representatives. Israel was to offer up heave offerings of the first-fruits of the land. The priests received all heave offerings or wave offerings. (Num. 18:8-19) An offering of shewbread was to be made each Sabbath. This was to go to the high priest and his sons. (Lev. 24:5-9) We have already seen occasionally a fine was to be levied as part of a judgment. The priests received these fines.

The Levites had the responsibility of up keep of the tabernacle. This had to come from the tithes for the most part. However, Ex. 30:11-16 tells us of a poll tax (apparently a one-time tax) that went to the service of the tabernacle. We also know the materials for the tabernacle were all donated originally and later in Scripture we see offerings for the tabernacle or temple being taken.

I hope this helps us understand the reason for the ordinances which translates into the reasons for good many of the things that Christ did in His death, burial, resurrection and ascension. The fact that many of these laws are no longer practiced has led many to feel the whole law has been done away with. This is simply not the case. Keep in mind that it is the principle of the law that we need to learn and understand. Also keep in mind that Christ said He came to "fulfill" the law and the prophets. We'll be discussing this at considerable length as we continue our study. JRL

## A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF HEBREWS

To maintain our context, I am beginning this issue with the last paragraph of this study in our last issue.

(Read Heb. 3:5-6) Moses represents the faithful servant in contrast to Christ, the faithful son. This servant and son relationship extends to us today. Moses, representing the Old Covenant, is a faithful servant. Though Moses had a great calling, the calling of Jesus Christ, representing the New Covenant is a greater calling. Moses's faithfulness as a servant was for a testimony of those things that were about to happen, i.e. the coming of Christ, his death, burial, and resurrection. Note in verse six that we are Christ's

house, "if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope to the end." This is not talking about personal salvation as we will see as we continue reading. Paul is using the Exodus as an allegory of one's Christian experience. "Unto the end" is referring to enduring to the end of the journey, the entering into the promised land. Again, if we can use the feast days as an example, the people had the faith to put the blood of the lamb on the doorposts and to get out and leave Egypt. This was their Passover experience comparable to justification.

While this is taught by some to mean that if one doesn't endure unto the end, he or she is not a Christian, or they lose their salvation, this is actually speaking of the next feast, Pentecost. While Pentecost represented the giving of the law, to us it is the means of attaining to "sonship," the entering into the Promised Land; or the Tabernacle feast experience, being a part of Christ's house. Israel under Moses was a servant nation. The people were supposed to be like Moses, a faithful servant. Under the New Covenant, we are not under Moses, but under a new head, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, not merely a servant.

Yet, being justified by faith does not automatically make one a son. Sonship is that second step that we have discussed before that we referred to as sanctification. It takes us through servanthood to beyond servanthood.

Perhaps this would be more understandable if we paused a moment and considered the whole trip of the Exodus as it relates to our Christian experience. The fact that the people had the faith to leave Egypt compares to ones faith to accept the gift of justification, our leaving the world so to speak. As we have discussed before, this is the Passover experience. Crossing the Red Sea compares to the ritual of water baptism. (I Cor. 10:2) At Mt. Sinai God spoke the Ten Commandments to the people. This correlates with the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Had they been willing to hear, God would have spoken the law into their hearts and minds. Since they were not willing, God wrote the law on the external tablets of stone. This would have been their Pentecost experience. The offering that was to be made at Pentecost was 2 loaves of wheat bread baked with leaven. The leaven represents sin which is killed by the baking of the loaves. The fire for the baking represents God's law. Baking means that we learn obedience. Had the people been willing to go into the land of Canaan when God first told them to, He

says that they would have entered into His Rest. This would have been their Tabernacles experience, their glorification. Since they refused to obey God, that Rest is still yet to be entered into, but, as we have studied previously, will be associated with the first resurrection. Servanthood begins with the Passover experience. Sonship actually begins with the Tabernacles experience, but develops under Pentecost. Not all who have become servants will become Sons; not all will endure until the end, but this doesn't mean that they went back to Egypt, (though they thought about it) i.e. lose their justification, they are still servants.

(Read Heb. 3:7-11) This is taken from the 95<sup>th</sup> Psalm. The provocation started immediately after God had spoken the 10 commandments to the people and the people refused to hear God Himself anymore. (Read Ex. 20:18-21) Because they did not have the faith to experience Pentecost, i.e. God speaking the law into their hearts, it was not until after Christ's resurrection that at least a partial fulfillment of Pentecost was achieved. The entering into God's rest is the equivalent of entering the Promised Land. By not learning the lessons of Pentecost, most of the Israelites did not have the faith they needed to enter the Promised Land after the 12 spies gave their report.

There are three "rests" in Scripture portrayed by the Sabbaths, the Sabbath day, the Sabbath year, and the Jubilee. The first is man's rest, the second is the land's rest, and the third is God's Rest. Had the Israelites entered the Promised Land when God told them to, they would have entered in at the 50<sup>th</sup> Jubilee from Adam, i.e. in God's Rest. Instead, because of their disobedience, God made them wait another 38 ½ years in the wilderness, so when they finally entered, it was not in a Jubilee year. As a result, their calendar had Sabbath years and Jubilees that were not in alignment with God's Creation Jubilee calendar.

(Read Heb. 3:12-13) Considering all that we have looked at thus far, the author of Hebrews gives us this admonition. "Today" with the Israelites could have been a single day, such as the day they refused to hear God's voice at Mt. Sinai, or the day the spies gave their report, or 40 years. "Today" is an indefinite period of time for us. Usually, to us as individuals, I believe, it is a per-

son's lifetime. A person has that length of time to be justified by faith, then having been justified by faith, to learn to obey God's Word, unless the resurrection occurs during one's lifetime. In the big picture, it is until the first resurrection.

(Read Heb. 3:14-15) In verse 14 we're told, "**For we are made partakers of Christ, IF we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.**" Note the condition, the "if." But referring to the allegory that the author has used of the Exodus to explain our relation to Christ, we know that this is not talking about justification, or salvation, as most people express it. As we have already stated, the fact that the people had faith to believe the blood of the lamb would protect them from the death angel is equivalent to one having the faith to accept the blood of the Lamb, Christ Jesus, to protect one from the second death, i.e. one is justified by faith. It is important that we understand that there are two resurrections, actual resurrections from physical death, if we are to understand what Paul is teaching. What this verse is talking about is Sonship. Not only did the people have to have the faith to leave Egypt, but they had to go to Mt. Sinai and then on to the Promised Land. Endurance to the end is required to attain to Sonship, or the first resurrection. "End" would mean the end of our life, or the return of Christ, whichever comes first.

The word "beginning" in verse 14 is from the Greek word *arche* which means first or primary or beginning. It also means "chief." The word "confidence" is the Greek *hupostasis*, the same word we looked at in Hebrews 1:3 which means "substratum, what lies under," or foundation. It is also used to refer to title deeds, the proof of ownership, so to speak. We could look at verse 14 then as saying that we are made partakers of Christ, IF "we hold the chief ruler of our foundation, or our title deeds, steadfast unto the end. Heb. 11:1 says, "**Now faith is the substance (*hupostasis*) of things hoped for, the evidence (*elenchus*, "proof") of things not seen.**" In Hebrews 1:3, we saw that Christ is the imprinted seal of heaven that certifies the validity of God's title deed of the kingdom. So we could say here that we will inherit Sonship if we hold fast to the Chief Ruler of our title deed.

(Read Heb. 3:16-19) Unfortunately, the example, or allegory that the author of Hebrews is using is a negative example. The people of Israel

did not have the faith they needed to enter into God's Rest, i.e. the Promised Land at the appointed time. Verse 16 indicates that not all that came out of Egypt provoked God. We know that Joshua and Caleb and their families, who had come out of Egypt with Moses, were able to go into the Promised Land. But the vast majority died in the wilderness. Joshua and Caleb would compare to the overcomers that will attain to the first resurrection, thus immortality, while the vast majority will remain mortal, i.e. they will be subject to death until the second resurrection.

(Read Hebrews 4:1) Because "salvation" has become the overriding theme of most Christian churches today, there is a failure to understand the symbolism that the author of Hebrews is allegorically using here from Psa. 95. This is not talking about salvation, it is something beyond justification, something that we have to strive for. The Promised Land is not heaven. Rather it is the promises of God that we have had from the beginning. As individuals, it is the promise of life in the Age, i.e. participation in the first resurrection and living and reigning with Christ a thousand years. (Rev. 20:4) Not all Christians believe in 2 resurrections, but I realize that most Christians that do believe in the two resurrections, believe that all Christians will be in the first resurrection and the non-Christians will be in the second resurrection. To understand that this is not so, let's compare Rev. 20:4-6 with John 5:28,29. (Read Rev. 20:4-6) I think it is obvious that only Christians are included in this group that are in the first resurrection, it does not include everybody.. (Read John 5:28,29) In this resurrection we're told that all that are in the grave will be resurrected. However, some will be resurrected to life and some will be resurrected to judgment. Obviously, we are not speaking of the same resurrection in both Scriptures. In Revelation, only Christians will be resurrected, a partial resurrection, whereas in John he is speaking of a resurrection in which all that are in the grave will be resurrected, some to life and some to judgment. So it was with Israel, the vast majority were judged in the wilderness with only a few of those who left Egypt with Moses, Joshua and Caleb and their families specifically, ultimately entering the Promised Land. As we said above, the Promised Land is not heaven, as opposed to hell. The heaven/hell doctrine as taught in most churches, Catholic or Protestant, is

actually a teaching from Greek mythology. The Bible simply does not teach this type of doctrine. The Promised Land is the fulfillment of God's planned kingdom on earth. This is what Heb. 4:1 exhorts us to attain to.

(Read Heb. 4:2) While we have, for the most part, limited the term "gospel" to only the news of Jesus Christ, in reality, the "gospel" is God's Word, whether spoken by God or man. This verse tells us that the "gospel" was not new as it was preached to the Israelites in the wilderness. This does not necessarily mean that it was as understandable as it is to us today after the fact. Two things make the gospel more understandable to us, first we have the fact that Jesus Christ was born of a woman, ministered to men, died as a man and was resurrected to life by the Father; second, we have the advantage of the earnest of the Holy Spirit that God gave man on the day of Pentecost. The gospel of the cross was preached to Israel by means of the Passover Lamb and the attendant ceremonies. While it would appear that the majority of the people did not understand the prophetic significance, still for them to obey killing the lamb, putting its blood on their doorpost and then packing up and leaving Egypt required more faith than some of us have or have had in the past. Verse 2 does not mean that they had no faith at all as they certainly had faith enough to leave Egypt. But they did not have enough faith to hear God at Mt. Sinai nor to go into the Promised Land at the appointed time. The focus was not on their leaving Egypt, but upon hearing God's voice at Mt. Sinai. Rom. 10:17 tells us, **"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."** The people refused to hear God, saying they would rather hear from Moses than from God. Because they preferred to hear a man rather than God, though Moses told them what God told him, it did not produce faith in them. This refusal to hear God carried over to them not really hearing Moses, though he told them what God told him.

It is unfortunate that many people are discouraged from hearing God's voice, i.e. His Word, by their pastors and teachers just as a great number of today's pastors and teachers don't want them to hear anything that might not agree with their opinion. When I was in the service, I was attending a church one Sunday evening and the preacher told the congregation that they did not

need to read the Bible as he would tell them what they needed to know in just those words. Needless to say, I never went back. I regret that I did not get up and walk out when he said that.

Getting back to Heb. 4:2, since the people refused to hear God, and since faith cometh by hearing, they did not have the faith to enter the Promised Land at the appointed time.

(Read Heb. 4:3-5) The Ferrar Fenton translation translates the first part of verse 3, **“But we, the believers, may enter that rest (although He said...)”** i.e. though God had said of the Israelites that refused to go into the Promised Land, **“They shall not enter into my rest.”** Paul is saying that the believers now would go in. He and the other writers of the New Testament assumed that everyone would hear God’s word and that instead of being limited to just justification by faith, they would all advance through sanctification and would be in that first resurrection. This turned out not to necessarily be so, as it is today. However, entering God’s rest for the Israelites meant going into the Promised Land. The question then comes up then is, How was going into the Promised Land, God’s rest? The last part of verse 3 plus verses 4, 5 helps answer this question, though we may need some extra explanation. The idea of resting comes from the law of the Sabbaths. Referring back to what we have already said about the 3 Sabbaths, the Sabbaths are based on the pattern established by God on the seventh day of creation. Each Sabbath was a different level of rest. In the final Sabbath, the Jubilee, God’s rest, all debt was cancelled. Had the Israelites gone in at the appointed time, it would have been at the 50<sup>th</sup> Jubilee from Adam, i.e. 2450 years from Adam. Since all sin incurs a debt, it is interesting to speculate on what God’s rest would have meant. Because they refused to go in at that time, they had to wait 38 ½ years to go in at which time their calendar started the jubilee count but it was not in alignment with God’s Creation Jubilee calendar. The result was that though they were finally allowed to enter the land, it was no longer God’s rest as it would have been had they entered when they should have.

(Read Hebrews 4:6-9) The Sabbath rest that remains is the Jubilee. It is a time of cancellation of debt, i.e. the liability of sin. Historically Israel never kept the land Sabbaths until the time of Ezra. By the time of David, they had accumu-

lated 62 land Sabbaths and 8 Jubilees that they had not kept, i.e. 70 rest years. These were owed to God. God foreclosed in a strange way. He caused David to number the people without collecting the half shekel atonement money that God commanded Moses to collect in the last census. (Ex. 30:11-13) This removed their protection and God slew 70,000 men of David’s army, 1000 men for each rest year. This story is in II Sam. 24. The people still didn’t learn their lesson as their time debt again grew to 70 years again at the time of the Babylonian captivity. II Chronicles 36 tells us that the Judahites spent 70 years in captivity to the Babylonians and verse 21 then says, **“To fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths for as long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years.”** When the people returned from the Babylonian captivity, they began to keep the land Sabbaths, but refused to keep the Jubilee. Thus verse 9 tells us **“there remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.”**

(Read Heb. 4:10) This refers to Christ and helps explain what God’s rest is. (Read Isa. 58:13-14) We consider the weekly Sabbath, the first level of rest, to be a time of physical rest and study of God’s Word. The second level of rest, we begin to learn to cease from our own works even as Jesus Christ did nothing of Himself, but only what He saw His Father do. (Read John 8:28, 29) also (Read John 12:49, 50) also (Read John 14:10). Jesus had entered into the “rest” which Heb. 4:9 tells us still remains. This is the highest Sabbath that God has intended for man from the beginning. It is to cease from one’s own works, and desist from speaking one’s own words and do only what the Father does and to speak only the Father’s words.

We begin to learn this in the second level of rest, Pentecost, through the leading of the Holy Spirit. Keep in mind that the Pentecost offering was 2 loaves baked with leaven. The leaven has to be killed by baking, i.e. by fire or the law as it is written on our hearts. It is a time of training, of maturing.

(Read Heb. 4:11) The example of disobedience he is referring to was the refusal to enter the Promised Land at the appointed time. As a result, God would not allow them to enter His “rest” at that time.

(Read Heb. 4:12, 13) The word “quick” in the King James means “living.” It is not just the Word of God, but as Heb. 1:2 says, it is spoken by the Son, One who has entered the “rest” of God. As Heb. 2:1 tells us, **“Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard.”** When this twoedged sword is spoken, it truly is sharper than any man’s sword. In I Cor. 14:24, 25, Paul says that if Christians were in agreement in preaching God’s Word, **“But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.”** There is nothing hid from God and His Word lays bare who and what we are before Him. Assuming that Paul is the author of Hebrews, he is carefully laying out his case block by block. As we have said before, it sounds like Paul is addressing this primarily to Jews who were trying to mix the Old Covenant with the New Covenant, but what he has to say applies to any Christian any time. We’ve seen that Paul has shown how Jesus Christ is better than an angel; and how Sonship is better than servanthood; now he is going to show us how the Melchisedec priesthood is better than the Aaronic priesthood. (Read Heb. 4:14-16) We have this great high priest, Jesus Christ, that the author says has passed through the heavens. The word “into” in the King James should be translated “through.” This may be in reference to II Corinthians 12:2 in which Paul, actually speaking of himself, says he knew a man that, though he doesn’t know whether in the body or in the spirit, was caught up to the third heaven. The third heaven presumably is where the throne of God is and this great high priest passed through the first and second heaven into the third heaven. This is a little speculative, but the word “through” would seem to give the idea credibility. Seeing we have such a high priest he says, let us hold fast to our profession.

Because Christ endured every temptation, only more so, that we have to endure, yet remained without sin, Paul tells us that He is able to be touched with the feelings of our infirmities and weaknesses. (Read I John 2:15-16) We have discussed before that when Christ was in the wilderness 40 days after His baptism, the three ex-

amples of temptation that He faced manifested the three temptations listed here in vs. 16: lust of the flesh; lust of the eyes; and the pride of life. John is saying that all temptation falls into one of these categories. Christ was tempted to the extreme in each of these categories in His temptations there in the wilderness. Thus Paul says in vs. 15 here in Heb. 4 that Christ **“was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”** So he says let us come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may be able to obtain mercy and help in our needs. The throne of grace is symbolized by the Ark of the Covenant in the tabernacle of Moses. The glory of God appeared over the Ark. In the Ark were the tablets of stone with the 10 Commandments written on them. A throne symbolizes law as it is from the throne that law and judgments were disseminated. Over the Ark rested the mercy seat showing us that mercy is a part of the administration of judgment in God’s system. The latter part of James 2:13 says, **“mercy rejoiceth against judgment.”** The word “rejoiceth” is from the Greek *katakauchaomai* that Dr. Young defines as “to boast against.” Some translations use the words “triumph over.” Mercy then triumphs over, or covers over judgment, thus the mercy seat sits over the law symbolically. This is the theme of what God done for us. He requires true justice. True justice means death to us as cannot survive true justice. (Keep in mind that Paul tells us in Romans 5:12 that we all die the mortal death, not because of our own sins, but because of the sin of Adam. The penalty for that sin was death, or mortality,,, thus we have all inherited mortality. So the death that we are destined to receive is the second death as described in Rev. 20:14) But in His mercy, God, through Jesus Christ, His son, took our penalty, our judgment, on Himself and paid it for us. So Paul says, **“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace.”**

(Read Heb. 5:1-3) The purpose of having a high priest was to have someone to offer sacrifices and gifts for sins to God on behalf of man. To be able to act on behalf of man, the high priest himself must also be a man so that he would know the weaknesses and infirmities of man and thus have compassion on man. But because he is a man, and because he is beset with these weaknesses and infirmities of man, it was necessary that he offer also for himself and then for the people. Recall that, on the day of atonement, when

the high priest made sacrifice for all the people of Israel, he first had to offer a sacrifice for his own sin first. It was necessary then that Christ, to be our High Priest, be born as a man as well, that He might know the weaknesses and infirmities of man. However, it was not necessary that He offer for Himself since He had no sin to repent of.

(Read Heb. 5:4-11) God is the One whose responsibility it is to ordain or appoint the high priests, not man's. The author uses the appointment of Aaron under the Old Covenant as an example. Only Aaron and his descendents could be high priest. Aaron did not ask for the job, God appointed Aaron and his descendants to the job. The same applies to Christ, Christ did not glorify Himself to be High Priest, rather the One who said unto Christ when he was baptized by John the Baptist, "**Thou art my Son, today have I begotten thee.**" He also said in another place, "**Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.**" This is a quotation from Pas. 110:4, a Psalm of David in which David prophesied of Christ.

Verses 7 and 8 tell us that even Jesus Christ had to learn obedience. (Read Matt. 26:36-42) The Father certainly had the power to save Jesus from the cross, but to be the High Priest of the order of Melchisedec, Jesus Christ had to mature just as we have to mature as Christians.

We have talked quite a bit about the 3 steps to age-lasting life, i.e. reigning with Christ 1000 years (Rev. 20:4-6), justification, sanctification and glorification. These three steps are patterned after the tabernacle that had an outer court, that had the bronze altar of sacrifice and the laver, where citizens of the nation could go in; then there was the Holy Place that only priests could enter; and then the Most Holy, or Holy of Holies where only the high priest could enter. The outer court represents our justification by the blood sacrifice, or Passover experience, the Holy Place

represents our sanctification, or Pentecost experience, and the Most Holy place represents our glorification or Tabernacles experience. It is a progressive track. If we are Christ like in our experience, we must progress. Death on the cross was to Jesus Christ an act of obedience. He was obedient, though He like many of us, certainly did not want to suffer as He did, but in obedience to the Father He willingly subjected Himself to the cross. As were told in Gal. 4, though He was a Son, yet to attain to the throne at the right hand of the Father, He had to learn obedience, i.e. He had to mature. If we desire to be a part of the body of this High Priest after the order of Melchisedec, then we too, must learn obedience, we must mature. We cannot stop with justification alone, but must progress through sanctification. Sanctification is not a singular experience, but rather a learning and practicing experience. It is not without suffering, but through suffering we learn discipline, humbleness, and love.

Verse 9 tells us, "**And being made perfect** (*teleioo*, 'complete, finished, mature'), **he became the author of eternal** (*aionian*, age lasting) **salvation unto all them that obey him.**" We need to question ourselves, if Jesus had to experience obedience to become mature, how can we do otherwise?

The author feels he has established the fact that Christ was called of God to the office of High Priest after the order of Melchisedec, but he intends to discuss more about the subject. However he is concerned that those to whom he is writing will not hear what he has to say.

---

*Paul, if he is the author, continues to air his concern for the people to whom he is writing as we continue next issue with verse 12 of Heb. 5.*

*JRL*

*Hear instruction, and be wise, refuse it not.*  
*Prov.8:33*

---

**But, Seek ye first the kingdom of God,  
And His Righteousness  
And all these things shall be  
Added unto you. Matt. 6:33**