



CROSSROADS
FULL GOSPEL
BIBLE COLLEGE

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International Ministries

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Bracketed comments following some scriptures assist the reader in understanding the intended meaning of these verses

We acknowledge the additional works of the various Scholars and Bible Commentaries used in conjunction with the College material. This is not to say that we agree with all their theology, but we certainly value their contribution to the Body of Christ.

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Dear Bible student,

Congratulations on completing your first two studies. This letter gives you further information and direction regarding the syllabus.

YOU MUST DECIDE AT THIS POINT AT WHICH GRADE YOU WISH TO STUDY FOR THE REMAINDER OF THIS SERIES . We would recommend that students study, if at all possible, at the Intermediate Grade. In doing so, they will be studying at greater depth and will retain far more knowledge of God's Word in the long term. However, the choice is yours. Remember, if you decide to study from this point at the Ordinary Grade, you will be able to use your study booklet in answering the questions. If you decide to study at the Intermediate Grade, you will not be able to use your study booklet or notes in answering the questions. And only if you study at the Intermediate Grade will you be eligible to apply to do the Advanced Questions on your completion of each series.

We have found sometimes that people who are doing the studies do not bother to read the instructions given in the letters they receive. This can result in unnecessary confusion.

Other students answer questions by merely writing an answer from the study book, simply to gain a correct answer. They may do so without really understanding what they have written and this does not benefit anyone. For your goal should be to understand the answer you have written down, not just in your head, but also in your heart.

Some do not give scripture, when required, with their answers, or do not give an explanation of their answers when needed, e.g. how they arrived at their conclusions. Both these areas need to be addressed.

Some students do not study in depth or try to expand their studies. Others try to dig too deeply in expanding their studies. This could be compared to a person trying to do Grade 6 Maths when they are only in Grade 1. We need to remember, however, that we grow according to the principle of "precept upon precept, line upon line". In other words the foundation for success in gaining truth and wisdom is to do so step by step, principle by principle.

We as Christians are to judge all things in the Light of Gods Word, whether they be right or wrong, good or evil. However we need to be equipped in order to do this. We need to learn to handle the Word of God skillfully and wisely, and to thus become able to distinguish or discern between good and evil: Heb.5:14. We are also instructed to:

1PETER 3:15 . . . be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

In order to do this, we need to know and understand what God says in His Word.

What we try to help bring to a person's life is not just intellectual knowledge, but also heart-knowledge of God's Word. And there is an enormous difference between these two types of knowledge. For it is easy to agree intellectually with the truths of God's Word, but to walk in them requires Gods grace at work in us to bring our faith alive.

Our aim is to help you walk by this faith. For God's Word tells us:

GALATAINS 3:11 . . . "The righteous will live by faith."

2CORINTHIANS 5:7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

ROMANS 6:4 . . . even so we also should walk in newness of life.

ROMANS 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

So after your initial reading of each study, do not just continue to read the material as if it were a novel or a newspaper. This will give you intellectual knowledge, but will probably not give you the heart-knowledge you need. Study properly - making notes and expanding the study where you can - digging into the material so that you can gain an understanding of the teaching, retain it and apply it. Allow the Holy Spirit to work with you in this and to quicken the Word of God to your heart. For the Bible is merely a dead letter if it is not quickened by the Spirit of Grace.

God bless you as you reverence His Word and hold it up as your supreme authority.

To God be the glory. Amen.

STUDYING

There is no easy way (or short cut) to obtaining heart-knowledge of God's Word. Sincere dedicated personal study is always needed. Without it you will do little of any significance for God on this earth.

Too many Christians, throughout their whole lives, desire to be spoon-fed the Word of God by others. Not only do they desire this, but many also want the "lumps" taken out, e.g. teachings concerning hell, judgement, punishment, end times, bondages, commandments, personal responsibility, etc. God tells us that we are not only to hear His Word, but we must also diligently study His Word. And this means all of God's Word, not just small portions of it which feel comfortable to our senses and emotions.

The problem with some Christians is that they want to do very little work for God but still receive the same wage as if they had worked hard and long, as in the parable of the labourers in the vineyard: Mat.20:1-16. However the one who worked the least and received the same payment as the others in this parable was not like some Christians today who are basically lazy. And for God to bless lazy people with the same revelation of truth as diligent, open people would be to go against His basic principles of sowing and reaping, i.e. laziness reaps lack; diligent conscientious work reaps prosperity: Prov 13:4.

Also, do not mistake activity for progress, a common mistake in Christian circles. For we need to study diligently within the proper guidelines of truth and wisdom. For example, to study an untruth will reap no reward from heaven. Even though a person may do so conscientiously, their efforts will be in vain, and in fact they will really be moving backwards. So we need to make sure we are digesting good spiritual food.

Similarly, if we neglect our bodies and feed ourselves rubbish, the body will eventually become ill through a lack of proper nourishment. And while people usually have no problem feeding their bodies, it seems to be so difficult for many Christians to feed their spirits. This in fact appears to be an almost universal weakness and is one reason God has commanded us to study His Word diligently: 2 Tim.2:15; Rom.12:2; Josh.1:7-8.

There comes a time when we must feed ourselves personally from God's Word. This does not mean we should stop hearing the preaching of the Word - God forbid! We also need, however, to put in time and effort expanding our personal study of God's Word.

*One of the reasons we should grow in God's Word is so that we will become "**strong in the Lord and in the power of His might**" (Eph.6:10) and so able to help meet the needs of others. For it is in accepting the truths contained in God's Word that people will be set free. God will give us heavenly manna (food) to live on if we will only open our hearts to His direction, but there is no short cut to becoming a vessel of honour fit for the Master's use.*

HOW TO STUDY EFFECTIVELY

To help you gain the most from each study book, we have listed some basic techniques which you can utilize in order to study more effectively. You may not, at first, be able to apply all these techniques. However as you grow, you will be able to use them in expanding your studies more and more.

Just reading the studies over and over will not usually be enough for you to retain information in the long term. If you write notes while studying, this will enhance your ability to recall important points when needed. Tests have proven that if people who are studying write down important points as they are doing so, then revise these points at a later date, they have far better recall of the material they have studied. You could always write notes concerning the studies on the opposite blank pages marking and highlighting important points. By doing so you will improve your ability to recall the information you are studying.

EXPANDING THE STUDIES

The following is meant as a brief guide for expanding your studies AS TIME PERMITS.

1. *Before studying (or listening to teaching, etc.) be mindful of your blood-covering and thank God for it in faith. Also if needed bind in Jesus' name any influence from the enemy (e.g. unbelief, confusion, etc.), and thank your Teacher, the Holy Spirit, for what He is about to reveal to you.*

2. *If you are Baptized in the Spirit, speak in tongues for a little while before your study. This may help in gaining greater focus-concentration for studying spiritual things.*
3. *Look up the scriptural references given in the studies for the major relevant points and read the whole passage, not just one verse, so that you can gain a proper understanding of the context.*
4. *Analyze the scripture or principle you are studying. First deal with the logical side, then, if you can, move over into the spiritual side and analyze it, e.g. identify the "spirit" or fundamental principle of the scripture.*
5. *Are there any other scriptural references, major or minor, to the subject you are studying? If so, list them and look them up. Find additional scriptures which support these points. Remember: there are often Old Testament scriptures which parallel New Testament scriptures and vice versa.*
6. *Look for other general points of interest. Once these points have been found and written down, try to expand them as time permits.*
7. *Always keep in mind how any of the truths in the studies can be applied today.*
8. *Research, as time permits, the historical context of any scripture, e.g. time written / who wrote it? / to whom was it written? / why was it written? / has it universal applicability? / does it still apply today and if so, which aspects?*
9. *Use a dictionary to check word meanings in the studies. A tool which you may be able to use to check scriptural accuracy in a basic way is the Hebrew and Greek Interlinear Bible with Strong's dictionary numbers accompanying each word. You can use this reference book along with other reference books to check on the proper meaning of words found in scripture.*
10. *Sometimes a parallel Bible containing four or more versions can help you better understand some scriptures as you compare them across the different versions, e.g. King James Version, New International Version, The Amplified Bible, New American Standard, etc.*
11. *Continually ask yourself questions, then study to answer them, e.g. "Righteousness" - what can we do in this state? "Obedience" - what is the beginning of obedience? "Law of liberty" - what can we do under this law? "To be set free" - how is this realized? "Expose sin" - how can we do this? "Conviction" - what is conviction? "Breaking the law" - can a Christian be under the penalty of the law? If so, how, and what may happen to them? "Tolerance" - find examples of God's tolerance in both Old and New Testaments. Deuteronomy 28:15-68 - find other references to "the curse". "Love" - what does the Bible refer to as the works of love?*
12. *Are there other angles from which the same major principle is taught? For example, compare Romans Ch.6 and Romans Ch.7.*
13. *Study the Bible's history, as time permits, apart from the studies.*
14. *Study the Bible's characters, as time permits, apart from the studies.*
15. *Continue to have a daily Bible reading program apart from the studies so that you may read through the entire Bible from front to back.*

While some people may enjoy studying extra-curriculum material such as Bible history and characters, your main focus or priority should always be the study material. In other words, remain balanced in the way you divide your study time. Again, expand your studies only AS TIME PERMITS: i.e. according to the time limits given.

Be careful not to spend too much or too little time on each study. Remaining within the allotted time limits will enable you to continue progressing to subsequent studies and thus to gain the greatest overall benefit from the syllabus in a relatively short time.

Use your study time to study at a depth that you feel will enable you to answer the questions effectively at your chosen level - Intermediate or Ordinary Grade. If you feel you have achieved this before the time limit, then proceed to expand the study at a greater depth for the remaining time.

It may be difficult for some people who are studying an hour a day to find an unbroken hour each day during which they can study. Such people may need to study, for example, half an hour in the morning and half an hour at night, when the time is available. **WE STRONGLY RECOMMEND, HOWEVER, THAT PEOPLE STUDY ON A DAILY BASIS IN ORDER TO OBTAIN MAXIMUM BENEFIT.**

Bible Reference Books

Reference books can be very helpful when one is studying the Bible. To start your reference library, there are some very affordable Bible reference books available. Some examples are the paperback titles published by Barbour Books:

ALL ABOUT THE BIBLE: gives general information about the Bible in a simple, compact volume.

THE BOOK OF THE NEW TESTAMENT WORD STUDIES: makes difficult words easily understood. Each word study contains modern word meanings verses Bible time usage as well as references to the original Greek texts.

CHRIST IN ALL THE SCRIPTURES: all the lines of history, all the Psalms and all the prophecy converge toward one centre - Jesus Christ, and to one supreme event - His death on the cross for our salvation.

CRUDEN'S CONCORDANCE: includes almost every word in the Bible - an important reference tool for anyone interested in God's Word.

NEW TESTAMENT FULFILLMENT OF OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECIES: includes many proofs that Jesus is the Messiah. These proofs include: prophecies and fulfillments topically arranged, how Jesus fulfills the Levitical feasts, type-patterns and shadows of Christ through the Old Testament, the names for God and many, many more proofs that will help develop in you a sincere love and respect for the Word of God.

THE NEW TOPICAL TEXTBOOK: will help you in your daily Bible study by making available, at your fingertips, thousands of topically arranged scripture passages for easy reference. Also included is R.A. Torrey's famous "Methods of Bible Study", which can be used by the beginner as well as the most seasoned Bible scholar.

PEOPLE AND PLACES IN THE BIBLE: enables you to have at your fingertips all the proper names recorded in the Bible from Aaron to Zuzims!

SMITH'S BIBLE DICTIONARY: gives you archaeological and geological information and thousands of important word entries with easy to understand definitions and explanations.

There are many other Bible reference books, but this list will give you an idea of what type of study books you'll need to begin with.

“COMMUNION”

Study 3

Christian Foundation Studies
Series One

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COMMUNION

The celebration of communion is an extremely important aspect of Christian worship. This study will focus on the purpose of communion, what it represents, the requirements for partaking of communion and the benefits it provides. Before He ascended into heaven, the Lord gave the Church two New Covenant ordinances - communion and water baptism. And it must be understood that these are not to be voluntary additions or accessories to the Christian life. They are both commanded by the Lord and important for our ongoing spiritual growth.

Background Reading: Mark 14:22-24

The English word “communion” has been translated from the Greek word “koinonia” which means “partnership,” “communication,” “fellowship.” The Latin equivalent of “koinonia” is “communio,” and we derive our English words “communion,” “community” and “common” from this word.

In the light of this, to have communion with someone is to have things in common with, or to be bonded to this person in some way.

Man, through Jesus Christ, can have communion with God through a covenanted relationship, and because of this relationship, we, as Christians, are also bonded together, having things in common according to God’s Word.

“. . .The celebration of communion is an extremely important aspect of Christian worship. . .”

Indeed we are sons and daughters of the Father, and joint heirs with Christ our King. This is the common spiritual inheritance of the members of Christ’s Body.

This potential for true spiritual relationship has been given to the world through the Blood of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. It is available to all. In fact God desires all people to be in true “koinonia” (communion) with Himself. “Koinonia” is translated in the King James Bible in various scriptures as: “fellowship” (Acts 2:42), “contribution” (Romans 15:26), “communion” (1 Corinthians 10:16) and “communication” (Philemon 1:6).

So when we come to the communion table, we are celebrating our communion with the Lord and our bonded relationship with our fellow Believers through the Blood of Jesus. And we should come professing, as a corporate body, our faith in the Lord and our commitment to Him.

COMMUNION IS A TIME OF CELEBRATION

The night Jesus was to be betrayed, being the true Passover Lamb of God, He celebrated the Passover with His Disciples in what is now known as the Last Supper.

During this meal He gave direction concerning what the meal was to represent, both for them and for all the generations of Christians to follow.

LUKE 22:15 And He (Jesus) said unto them, “With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you (it would be symbolic of the New Covenant) before I suffer (instituted through His suffering on the cross):”

MATTHEW 26:26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and broke it (the bread is a symbol of His Body broken at Calvary), and gave it to the Disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is (represents) My Body.”

MATTHEW 26:27 And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, “Drink it all of you (the cup is a symbol of His shed Blood at Calvary);

MATTHEW 26:28 For this is (represents) My (the) Blood of the New Testament (Covenant), which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”

Jesus took the bread and the wine that night and established the format for communion, the love feast which He commanded the Disciples to continue to observe.

“. . . So when we come to the communion table, we are celebrating our communion with the Lord and our bonded relationship with our fellow Believers through the Blood of Jesus. . . ”

Communion is a time of celebration - a time where we can celebrate the victory Christ won for us. Through Jesus’ death and Resurrection, He conquered all that hell had to offer, and established the way to freedom for all who choose to follow Him. Jesus paid the redemptive price needed to release mankind from death. Indeed He came that we might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly, for He said:

JOHN 10:10 . . . “I (Jesus) am come that they (all who believe) **might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly** (life to the full).”

REVELATION 1:8 “I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending,” says the Lord, “Who is, and Who was, and Who is to come, the Almighty.”

REVELATION 1:18 “I am He Who lives, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death (the keys to release men from spiritual death).”

Not only did Christ release us from sin’s hold in a legal sense, but that which gives us the power to sin, i.e. the sin nature, has been legally dethroned. To replace this power source, a new nature, the Divine Nature, has been imparted to us so that we may partake of its graces - its power. Through the Divine Nature we now have power, when we yield to the Holy Spirit, to live the saved life at an experiential level. This means we can live victoriously, and in doing so, please the Father.

At salvation, the sin nature is cleansed from our spirit so that it becomes clean, and thus blameless in Christ. The soul (mind), however, needs to be renewed so that our thinking lines up with God's thinking. As different areas of our minds are renewed in the truth of God's Word, we become sanctified at a conditional level. This describes the work of ongoing sanctification. The message is this: as we stand in a spiritual sense before the Cross, let us never forget the finished work of Calvary. This includes not only the positional state of righteousness into which Christ has brought us, but the conditional state of righteousness we can attain (or experience), area by area, to match our position. This is possible if we keep our focus on the Cross of Calvary and Christ's finished work on our behalf whereby all sin has been defeated. This includes the sin nature which remains with us. It is defeated as we yield to the Spirit and receive the empowerment we need to subdue it and walk in victory through the energies and graces of the Divine Nature.

“. . .Not only did Christ release us from sin's hold in a legal sense, but that which gives us the power to sin, i.e. the sin nature, has been legally dethroned. . .”

We celebrate Christ's victory at the Cross on our behalf through remembering, at communion, the Lord's broken Body and shed Blood. It is a time of thankfulness, praise and worship - for our eternal future in heaven has been bought and paid for by Jesus' death and Resurrection. This celebration is variously called, in Christian circles, "the Lord's Supper," "the Communion Table," "the Eucharist" or simply "Communion."

A Main Focus Point Of Church On Sundays

As Bible-believing Christians and members of the Body of Christ, we come together on Sundays to magnify and praise our God and our Saviour.

One of the main focus points each Sunday should be the communion table where we bring into remembrance the great sacrifice that was made on our behalf. It is a time when we proclaim the death and Resurrection of our Lord. We do this by bringing into remembrance the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus. In so doing, we proclaim that the only way we are able to be saved (spirit, soul and body) is through the punishment He bore for us and the shedding of His precious Blood. By celebrating communion on a regular basis, we are keeping at the forefront of our minds the reality and power of our Covenant with God.

Through communion, we as a corporate body are able to testify to God, ourselves, the world and the devil that Jesus died and was raised again, and is alive forevermore (1 Corinthians 15:3-4).

1 CORINTHIANS 11:23 . . . the Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed took bread:

1 CORINTHIANS 11:24 And when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, “Take, eat: this is My Body, which is broken for you: do this in remembrance of Me.”

1 CORINTHIANS 11:25 After the same manner also He took the cup, when (after) He had supped, saying, “This cup is (represents) the New Testament in My Blood: this do you, as oft as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”

1 CORINTHIANS 11:26 For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are representing and signifying and proclaiming the fact of the Lord’s death until He comes [again]. (Amp.)

THE DEITY OF JESUS

Background Reading: Luke 1:26-35

To come to a greater understanding of the magnitude of Christ’s sacrifice, we will look at some scriptures which tell us of the Deity of Jesus. The word “Deity” means “the state of being God.” The word “Deity,” when expressed in relation to Jesus, simply means that Jesus was Divine. In other words He was God - for while Jesus was truly man, He was also the second member of the Holy Trinity.

JOHN 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (God the Word).

When this scripture tells us that “*the Word was with God*” and that “*the Word was God*,” it is speaking of the person Whom we know to be called “God the Word” - the second member of the Trinity. Therefore God the Word was with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit from the beginning.

“ . . . The word “Deity,” when expressed in relation to Jesus, simply means that Jesus was Divine. . . ”

Then John speaks of the Word taking on human form and living among men.

JOHN 1:14 And the Word was made flesh (God became man, a human being) and dwelt (lived) among us (with ordinary men, not elevated, being called Jesus, the Son of God and the Son of Man. He was all God and all man at the same time) . . .

When God the Word clothed Himself in human form, He, as Jesus the man, forsook His heavenly rights as God (while not ceasing to be God the Word). This meant that He stripped Himself of the right to use His Godly power - for as God the Word He was omnipotent, meaning “all powerful.” It also meant that He forsook His right to use His Godly knowledge - for as God the Word He was omniscient, meaning God knows all things, past, present and future. As the man Jesus He was also only able to be in one place at a time, meaning He forsook the Divine attribute of omnipresence, being everywhere at once.

PHILIPPIANS 2:6 **Who, being in the form of God** (*refers to Deity, which Christ always was*), **thought it not robbery to be equal with God** (*equality with God refers here to our Lord's co-participation with the other members of the Trinity in the expression of the Divine Essence*) : (E.S.B.)

PHILIPPIANS 2:7 **But made Himself of no reputation** (*instead of asserting His Rights to the expression of the Essence of Deity, our Lord waived His Rights to that expression*), **and took upon Him the form of a servant** (*a bondsman*), **and was made in the likeness of men** (*presents the Lord entering into a new state of Being when He became Man; but Him becoming Man did not exclude His Position of Deity; while in becoming Man, He laid aside the "expression" of Deity, He never lost "possession" of Deity*) : (E.S.B.)

PHILIPPIANS 2:8 **And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled himself** (even further), **and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.** (*This presents the character of His Death as one of disgrace and degradation, which was necessary for men to be redeemed. This type of death alone would pay the terrible sin debt, and do so in totality* : E.S.B.)

God the Word became flesh, being born of a virgin, and lived for approximately thirty three years upon the earth as the man Jesus. The father of Jesus was not Joseph but rather, God the Father. Jesus was born without original sin (Matthew 1:18) and had no acquaintance with sin personally all the days of His life (Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22; 1 John 3:5). He was the second Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45) in the sense of His original sinless state, but unlike Adam, Jesus never disobeyed God. He was sinless in all He did, and remained sinless all His life.

Scripture thus attests to the fact of Christ's sinlessness. He became eligible, through His sinlessness and His worth as the acceptable sacrifice, to become the Lamb of God, Who would pay the penalty for the sins of the whole of mankind (John 1:29). Through substitution and identification Christ took our place, before a just and loving God, at Calvary, the altar of sacrifice. Our Lord Jesus did not redeem us by His Deity, but through the incarnation of God becoming man. As the sin offering, Christ bore the weight of the wrath of God's judgement upon mankind's sin, and it was the shedding of His precious Blood which paid the price for our redemption (1 Peter 1:18-19).

***“ . . . Our Lord Jesus did not redeem us by His Deity,
but through the incarnation of God
becoming man. . . ”***

This was Christ's work upon the Cross, and this is what He accomplished - the payment of the ransom price. Now the sinner need only look to the Cross for the message of salvation, finding their answer to the greatest of life's questions in the substitutionary death of Christ on their behalf, and the shedding of His precious Blood (Romans 5:8; Colossians 1:14). This is the basis of the Gospel message, and will always be the foundation stone of the Christian faith. There is no other means of redemption, for the price was paid at

Calvary when the Blood of Christ our Passover Lamb was shed for the sin of the whole world.

1 CORINTHIANS 5:7 Purge out therefore the old leaven (a symbol here for sin: 2 Peter 1:9), **that you may be a new lump, as you are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover (Lamb) is sacrificed for us.**

Note: As Jesus held His faith in His Father's Word, yielding to the Father's will and refusing to be overwhelmed by the pain in His Body, His precious Blood remained sinless, and so able to pay the price for the sin of the world (Hebrews 9:22).

“. . . Now the sinner need only look to the Cross for the message of salvation, finding their answer to the greatest of life's questions in the substitutionary death of Christ on their behalf. . . ”

The Book of Revelation tells us more about the Deity of Jesus and the victory He won for us. In verses 17-18 of Ch.1, Jesus states:

REVELATION 1:17 “. . . Fear not; I am the first and the last (Creator and Lord of all):

REVELATION 1:18 I am He Who lives (He is our Source of Life and is immortal), **and was dead** (*Represents the Living One entering into death, into our death, in His human nature so that as the great High Priest He might finish the Sacrifice for sins, which He did: E.S.B.); and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen* (*He will never die again, and death is totally defeated: E.S.B.); and have the keys of hell and of death (the keys to release men from spiritual death).”*

The risen glorified Jesus addresses Himself as “*the first and the last*” which is another way of expressing His Deity. As God the Word, He had no beginning and He will have no end. He then declares He was dead, for He died on the cross at Calvary as the man Jesus, but is now alive forevermore. Through His death and Resurrection Jesus conquered sin and death, and now holds the keys of eternal life. Amen.

THE PUNISHMENT JESUS TOOK ON OUR BEHALF

Background Reading: Matthew 20:17-19

Scripture tells us that Jesus was physically beaten to such an extent that when He was hanging on the cross, we would not, if we had lived at that time and place, have been able to recognize who He was. This was foretold by the prophet Isaiah:

ISAIAH 52:13 Behold, My servant (Jesus) **shall deal prudently** (act wisely), **He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.**

ISAIAH 52:14 As many were astonished at You; His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men: *(In these passages, Isaiah seems to sit at the foot of the Cross of Calvary; he views the Redeemer as He hung upon the accursed tree, after He had been buffeted, crowned with thorns, smitten, scourged, and crucified, when His Face was covered with bruises and gore, His Frame and Features distorted with agony : E.S.B.)*

Another version reads:

ISAIAH 52:14 Just as there were many who were appalled at Him (You) - His appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and His form marred beyond human likeness (N.I.V.)

ISAIAH 53:3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised (not being the type of Messiah they wanted), and we esteemed Him not.

ISAIAH 53:4 Surely He (Jesus) has borne our griefs (sickness and disease), and carried our sorrows: yet we did (ignorantly) esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted *(Israel assumed He was “smitten of God,” and, in a sense, He was. He suffered in our stead, actually as our Substitute, which means that the blow that should have come to us instead went to Him. But yet, it was not for His sins, because He had none, but instead was for our sins. He was “afflicted” for us. As stated, He was our Substitute : E.S.B.)*

ISAIAH 53:5 But He was wounded for our transgressions (rebellion), He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace (the punishment needed to bring us peace) was upon Him (and Him alone); and with His stripes (wounds) we are healed (and made whole).

ISAIAH 53:7 He was oppressed, and He was afflicted (refers to all that He experienced in His suffering), yet He opened not His mouth (did not try to defend Himself) . . .

Everything written ahead of time concerning the Messiah was supremely fulfilled in Jesus. He was rejected and despised, whipped, beaten and humiliated. Jesus suffered this punishment on our behalf so we could have victory in every area of our lives, as we allow Him to be Lord of every area of our lives. The punishment He bore was necessary for the purpose of the Atonement. We can now have our minds renewed in the truth of Christ's finished work at the Cross, which includes healing for our bodies and freedom from every torment of the mind. Such was the love of our Father for us.

“ . . .Everything written ahead of time concerning the Messiah was supremely fulfilled in Jesus. . . ”

Also, let us not forget that Jesus broke sin's deathly grip on our lives. Our ledger of sin has been nailed to the Cross, with the words “paid in full” stamped on it. The sin nature has been washed out of our spirit where it resided, leaving our spirit clean and free from every pollution of darkness. The “old man” (the old unregenerate self) is therefore dead

and gone, and we have been released from the domination of the sin nature. The result is that we are now free to serve God, not sin (Romans 6:6).

This is made possible as we yield to the Holy Spirit and receive empowerment through the Divine Nature, enthroned in our hearts through Divine connection. In this way we are given the means to overcome sin in our daily lives, for as we know, the sin nature remains with us, commissioned or decommissioned, until we leave this life. Therefore the sin nature still needs to be defeated in the life of the Christian. This takes place as we, partaking of God's Divine Nature, are given graces to have not only a holy desire, but also the empowerment to do God's will. Through the graces of the Divine Nature, we gain the power to say "Yes" to God and "No" to sin. As we do this, the sin nature will not have ascendancy, but will continue to be dethroned. Amen.

Jesus' Death

Background Reading: Isaiah 53:6-11

God's will was for Jesus' Blood to be shed so that fallen man could be redeemed. Jesus submitted to His Father's will wholeheartedly, and underwent the suffering of death.

Psalm 22 gives a graphic account of what Jesus experienced as He was dying on the cross. Indeed the crucifixion scene was even more vividly portrayed by the Psalmist writing a thousand years prior to its occurrence than by the Gospel writers who actually witnessed it:

PSALM 22:1 My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? why are You so far from helping Me, and from the words of My roaring? (Jesus uttered this cry from the cross: Matthew 27:46)

PSALM 22:7 All they who see Me laugh Me to scorn (mock Me); **they shoot out the lip** (hurl insults), **they shake the head saying** (on the cross He was laughed at and mocked by His own people: Matthew 27:39-43),

PSALM 22:8 He trusted on the Lord that He would deliver Him: let Him (God) deliver Him, seeing He delighted in Him. (The religious leaders spoke these actual words in derision at the cross: Matthew 27:43)

PSALM 22:11 Be not far from Me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help. (The Disciples had forsaken Him and fled: Matthew 26:56. There was indeed, "*none to help.*")

PSALM 22:12 Many bulls have compassed Me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset Me round. ("*Bulls*" represent the demonically inspired, religious leaders who sought to kill Jesus: Matthew 27:1-26; John 11:47-53; Acts 2:36)

PSALM 22:14 I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint (the result of the torture of crucifixion): **My heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of My bowels.** (Jesus died of a ruptured heart: John 19:34)

PSALM 22:15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd (Jesus was weakened through physical and emotional torment); **and My tongue cleaves to My jaws** (loss of blood causes great thirst); **and You have brought Me into the dust of death.** (Death would come to Jesus at the cross: John 19:30)

PSALM 22:16 For dogs have compassed (surrounded) **Me** (the “*dogs*” are the Roman soldiers); **the assembly of the wicked have enclosed** (encircled) **Me** (the religious leaders - the Scribes, Priests and Pharisees), **they have pierced My hands and My feet** (nailed Him to the cross).

PSALM 22:17 I may tell (can count) **all My bones** (no bone in Jesus’ Body was broken: Psalm 34:20; John 19:36); **they look and stare upon Me.**

PSALM 22:18 They part (divide) **My garments among them and cast lots upon** (for) **My vesture.** (The Roman soldiers cast lots for His clothing: Matthew 27:35; John 19:24)

This Psalm is a memorial to the suffering and heartbreak of Jesus. It begins with the words Jesus was to speak on the cross, and through this cry we become aware of His anguish as He sensed the Father’s presence withdrawing from Him for the first time. Verses 14-18 of the Psalm portray the physical suffering of Jesus. Crucifixion literally resulted in the bones being pulled out of their sockets. He was weak through physical torment and in terrible thirst. Even the piercing of Jesus’ hands and feet is recorded in this Psalm which was written approximately 250 years before the introduction of crucifixion as a method of execution.

We can see that Jesus’ body would have undergone extreme physical stress, not only from the pain He experienced while on the cross, but from the beatings He had endured prior to it. However incredible stress would also have arisen from the emotional torment suffered by this innocent man during the whole period. Luke 22:44 attests to His great agony of spirit and shows what can happen physically to someone under such severe emotional pressure. It was in the Garden of Gethsemane that Jesus sweated great drops of blood as He agonized in prayer.

Furthermore, Pilate was actually surprised to hear from the Roman centurion that Jesus had died on the cross so quickly (Mark 15:44). This may have occurred partly because of the intense emotional pressure that Jesus had been under. At this time, knowing it was His time to die, Jesus proclaimed the words “*It is finished*” (John 19:30), committed His spirit to the Father’s care (Luke 23:46) and breathed His last. These words were hugely significant, for they proclaimed that the sacrifice for mankind’s redemption had been completed - no further sacrifice would ever be needed.

So events leading up to Jesus’ death show an innocent man betrayed, beaten and crucified, becoming, through this process, the Sin-Bearer for the whole world.

Note: Only after Jesus laid down His life could He then die, for this was His prerogative and His alone (John 10:17-18).

“. . . So events leading up to Jesus’ death show an innocent man betrayed, beaten and crucified, becoming, through this process, the Sin-Bearer for the whole world. . .”

The extreme mental as well as physical stress obviously played a part in His death. However, taking account of known medical facts and on examination of the scriptures, one can come to the conclusion that Jesus died, only after voluntarily laying down His life, as a result of a broken or ruptured heart. In other words, after Jesus cried out with a loud voice “*It is finished,*” He bowed His head (John 19:30; Matthew 27:50), and He yielded up His spirit. At this point His heart would have ruptured, and He died, not by the hands of the Romans, but by His own volition - “*I lay down My life . . . No man takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself*” (John 10:17-18) - according to the Father’s purpose.

This view that he died physically as a result of a ruptured heart is substantiated by the following observations:

1. **Psalm 22:14** gives a vivid description which warrants this interpretation:

PSALM 22:14 I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint: My heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of My bowels (within Me).

2. **It is medically known** that due to a great loss of blood, a person will feel extremely thirsty. Scripture tells us of Jesus’ thirst on the cross before He died.

PSALM 22:15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd (fragment of clay pottery); and My tongue (because of thirst) cleaves (sticks) to My jaws . . .

JOHN 19:28 . . . Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished (in the last minutes before His death), that the scripture might be fulfilled, said, “**I thirst.**” (Psalm 69:21)

PSALM 69:21 . . . and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink.

3. **Shortly after Jesus’ death,** a soldier pierced His side with a spear, and Blood and water came out and poured upon the ground.

JOHN 19:32 Then came the soldiers, and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who was crucified with Him (meaning the two thieves).

JOHN 19:33 But when they came to Jesus, and saw that He was dead already (this was unusual because those executed in this way often took days to die), **they broke not His legs:**

JOHN 19:34 But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith (immediately) came there out Blood and water.

This event tells us something of the probable physical cause of Jesus' death. Doctors of medicine would tell us that when water and blood come forth in this way, it is the result of internal bleeding.

It seems clear that Jesus' heart had ruptured physically. This would have produced a mixture of blood and watery serum which separated within the pericardium. So when the Roman soldier's spear pierced this sack that held the Blood,

“there came out Blood and water”

Adding together this information about the behaviour of blood to the information we derive from the scriptures (Psalm 22:14), we could conclude that Jesus died, after laying down His life, of a broken (ruptured) heart through internal haemorrhaging. This is the way in which His precious Blood was shed, the Blood which paid the price for our forgiveness (Hebrews 9:22).

It is interesting to note that despite all the torture Jesus suffered, not one of His bones was broken. This was also a fulfillment of Old Testament scripture:

JOHN 19:36 For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled: “A bone of Him shall not be broken.” (Psalm 34:20, Psalm 22:17)

PSALM 34:20 He keeps all His bones: not one of them is broken.

Jesus displayed the love of God to the world as He submitted to the Father's will in the terrible punishment and death He endured. The Word tells us that God demonstrated His love for us in that while we were yet sinners and enemies of God, Christ laid down His life and died for us (Romans 5:6-8).

“. . .we could conclude that Jesus died, after laying down His life, of a broken (ruptured) heart through internal haemorrhaging . . . in which His precious Blood was shed, the Blood which paid the price for our forgiveness. . .”

Because Jesus had power over His own life, to lay it down or not, His death was not of human design or manufacture. Rather, it was all part of God's Divine plan. Jesus stated during this trying time that He could have called on more than twelve legions of angels to deliver Him (Matthew 26:53-54). Instead He chose to endure the ordeal in obedience to the Father. And His attitude towards the people who nailed Him to the cross was “*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do*” (Luke 23:34).

THE CRUCIFIXION

Crucifixion was universally recognized as one of the most cruel and barbarous forms of death known to man. There were two main methods of securing a person to a cross - tying or nailing, and it is well established that Christ underwent the horror of the latter.

Jesus often spoke to His Disciples of the sufferings He would endure and how the Son of Man (referring to Himself) would be betrayed and condemned to death.

MATTHEW 20:18 Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn Him to death,

MATTHEW 20:19 And shall deliver Him to the Gentiles (the Romans) to mock, and to scourge (whip), and to crucify Him: and the third day He shall rise again.

Jesus also often stated it was for this very reason that He came into the world. He knew the suffering that He would experience, revealed to Him by the Holy Spirit. Yet He trusted the Father, and submitted Himself to the Father's will - His Divine plan.

After Jesus' ordeal in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36-45, Luke 22:39-46), a large crowd armed with swords and clubs and accompanied by Judas Iscariot (the Disciple who betrayed Jesus) arrested Jesus and took Him to the court of the High Priest for interrogation (Matthew 26:57-66). The next morning the Jewish leaders took Jesus and handed Him over to Pontius Pilate (Matthew 27:1-21), for only the Roman authorities had the power to sanction an execution.

“. . .Crucifixion was universally recognized as one of the most cruel and barbarous forms of death known to man. . .”

Let us read an account of the events leading up to the crucifixion from this point onwards, as found in the Gospel of Matthew.

MATTHEW 27:22 Pilate (the governor of the day) said unto them (the people), “**What shall I do then with Jesus Who is called Christ?**” They (having been persuaded by the chief priests and elders) all said unto him, “**Let Him be crucified.**”

MATTHEW 27:23 And the governor said, “**Why, what evil has He done?**” (Pilate knew that Jesus was innocent.) **But they cried out the more, saying, “Let Him be crucified.”**

MATTHEW 27:24 When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing (was getting nowhere), but that rather a tumult (an uproar) was made (was starting), he took water and washed his hands before the multitude (indicating he was absolving himself from all responsibility), saying, “**I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see you to it.**” (In other words, “It is your responsibility!”)

MATTHEW 27:25 Then answered all the people, and said, “**His blood be on us, and on our children**” (*the malediction they invoked upon themselves and upon their children rests upon them still, and was, and is, a malediction of appalling horror and suffering*). (E.S.B.)

MATTHEW 27:26 Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged (flogged) Jesus, he delivered Him to be crucified.

When a person was to be flogged in this way they were bent over and tied to a post. A Roman soldier then applied blow after blow to the prisoner's bare back. The whip used was a lash intertwined with pieces of bone and metal so that as it struck the victim's back, it would tear the flesh, causing deep lacerations. This in itself was sometimes sufficient to cause death.

Although completely unjust, Jesus' suffering and death constituted the Sacrifice of Atonement which took place so that mankind could be made whole, spirit, soul and body (Hebrews 13:12). Therefore both His suffering and death together make up the Sacrifice of Atonement - that has set free all those who believe and trust in Christ and His redemptive work. The Atonement itself was then brought to completion by the Resurrection.

In the context of the Atonement, Christ's finished work on our behalf, we can now understand that the stripes which Jesus received paid the price for our healing (Isaiah 53:5; 1 Peter 2:24). These stripes, as well as being part of the punishment meant for us, were also part of the suffering side of the Atonement. He suffered so that we might be healed.

“ . . . Although completely unjust, Jesus' suffering and death constituted the Sacrifice of Atonement which took place so that mankind could be made whole, spirit, soul and body. . . ”

As Jesus maintained His faith during this whole trial, He remained sinless, so being proven worthy to be the Lamb of God - to take away sin and its consequences (John 1:29).

MATTHEW 27:27 Then the (Roman) soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto Him the whole band (Roman “cohort”) of soldiers.

MATTHEW 27:28 And they stripped Him, and put on Him a scarlet robe.

MATTHEW 27:29 And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon His head, and a reed (staff) in His right hand: and they bowed the knee before Him, and mocked Him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!”

MATTHEW 27:30 And they spat on Him, and took the reed (staff), and smote (struck) Him on the head (again and again).

The crown of thorns which the soldiers put on Jesus' head were from a prickly shrub and would have been long and sharp. These thorns would have ripped His flesh. He was also severely beaten by the Roman soldiers. Furthermore, the combination of the crown, robe and staff were all meant to humiliate and mock Him.

MATTHEW 27:31 And after that they had mocked Him, they took the robe off from Him, and put His own raiment (clothes) on Him, and led Him away to crucify Him.

After all the physical affliction Jesus suffered, He was in such a weakened state that He was unable to carry the heavy wooden cross. The soldiers then compelled a man named Simon from Cyrene to carry the cross on Christ's behalf.

MATTHEW 27:32 And as they came out, they found a man of (from) Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled (forced) to bear (carry) His (Jesus') cross.

MATTHEW 27:33 And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull,

MATTHEW 27:34 They gave Him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when He had tasted thereof, He would not drink.

MATTHEW 27:35 And they crucified Him, and parted His garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, "They parted My garments among them, and upon My vesture did they cast lots." (Psalm 22:18)

MATTHEW 27:36 And sitting down they watched Him there;

MATTHEW 27:37 And set up over His head His accusation written (the crime for which He was condemned), **THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS** (*it is said that this was written in three languages, Hebrew, Greek, and Latin; they printed this in mockery, but no words were ever more true* : E.S.B.).

MATTHEW 27:38 Then were there two thieves crucified with Him (Isaiah 53:12), one on the right hand, and another on the left.

MATTHEW 27:39 And they who passed by reviled (hurled insults at) Him, wagging (shaking) their heads,

MATTHEW 27:40 And saying, "You who will destroy the Temple, and build it (again) in three days, save Yourself (He didn't come to save Himself, only others). If You be the Son of God, come down from the cross."

“. . .As Jesus maintained His faith during this whole trial, He remained sinless, so being proven worthy to be the Lamb of God. . .”

MATTHEW 27:41 Likewise also the chief priests mocking Him, with the scribes and elders, said,

MATTHEW 27:42 "He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He be the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him.

MATTHEW 27:43 He trusted in God (Psalm 22:8); let Him (God) deliver Him now, if He will have Him: for He said, 'I am the Son of God.' "

MATTHEW 27:44 The thieves also, who were crucified with Him, cast the same in his teeth (but one repented, as we see in Luke 23:42, one of the most amazing conversions in the Bible!).

MATTHEW 27:45 Now from the sixth hour (12 noon) there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour (3 p.m. - for these three hours God hid His face from His Son while Jesus became the sin-bearer, and paid the penalty for mankind's sins).

MATTHEW 27:46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is to say, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (*The question as to why God had forsaken Him was not asked in a sense of not knowing, but in a sense of acknowledging the act. God didn't deliver Him, even as He always had, because, to have done such, would have forfeited Redemption for mankind. Incidentally, Jesus spoke in Aramiac, which was commonly used by the Lord : E.S.B.*)

MATTHEW 27:47 Some of them (Jews) who stood there, when they heard that, said, "This man calls for Elijah."

MATTHEW 27:48 And straightway (immediately) one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave Him to drink.

MATTHEW 27:49 The rest said, "Let be, let us see whether Elijah will come to save Him (they were mocking Him)."

MATTHEW 27:50 Jesus, when He had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up His spirit (laid down His life - it wasn't taken from Him).

MATTHEW 27:51 And, behold, the veil of the Temple was rent in twin (torn in two) from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;

MATTHEW 27:52 And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the Saints (people who had been in Abraham's Bosom) which slept arose,

MATTHEW 27:53 And came out of the graves after His Resurrection, and went into the holy city (Jerusalem), and appeared unto many (how many and who they were we aren't told; only Matthew has this reference).

MATTHEW 27:54 Now when the centurion, and they who were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, "Truly this was the Son of God."

He Who created heaven and earth took on flesh and became, by the Father's will, a blood sacrifice for us. Jesus, the innocent man, died for the sins of the world on the altar of the cross. He could have called on the angels to bring Him down from the cross, to deliver Him from the pain and anguish. He remained there, however, according to the Father's will, speaking forth the greatest pronouncement of forgiveness ever made:

LUKE 23:34 Then said Jesus, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

...

“. . .He Who created heaven and earth took on flesh and became, by the Father's will, a blood sacrifice for us. Jesus, the innocent man, died for the sins of the world on the altar of the cross. . .”

The high cost of bringing redemption to mankind was revealed through Jesus' death on the cross. God the Father gave of His very best when He gave of His Son to die. There could have been no greater gift, no greater price paid. Such was the love of God, displayed for us through Jesus.

THE RESURRECTION

Background Reading: John 20:1-18

The Resurrection of Christ is the most phenomenal event to have taken place in human history, and to the Believer, is a source of hope beyond compare.

Many times throughout the Gospels, Jesus spoke to His Disciples about what was to happen to Him - how He must suffer and die, and after three days be raised from the dead, e.g. Matthew 20:19. However, even His Disciples who walked with Him for approximately three and a half years did not comprehend what Jesus was telling them. They seemed to have no understanding that He would die, and certainly no expectation that following His death, He would be resurrected (Luke 24:11). One reason for this was that the Disciples were unregenerated. They had no faith to understand or comprehend in any way what Jesus told them, which was so far from their own thinking. They needed spiritual regeneration to understand spiritual truth, as does every man and woman today (1 Corinthians 2:12-14).

We could well imagine how Satan and his forces of wickedness would have been rejoicing that they had crucified the promised Messiah and thwarted God's plans. What a shock would have run through the caverns of hell and the Kingdom of Darkness on that Sunday morning when the power of God raised Jesus from the dead and defeated all that hell and death had been able to hurl at Him.

Let's look at an account of the Resurrection morning from scripture:

LUKE 24:1 Now upon the first day of the week (Sunday), very early in the morning, they (some of the Galilean women who were followers of Jesus: Luke 23:55) **came unto the sepulchre** (tomb), **bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them.**

LUKE 24:2 And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre.

LUKE 24:3 And they entered in (to the tomb), and found not the Body of the Lord Jesus.

LUKE 24:4 And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout (were wondering greatly about this), **behold, two men (angels) stood by them in shining garments:**

LUKE 24:5 And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they (the angels) **said unto them, "Why seek ye the living among the dead? (Notes a mild rebuke with a touch of sarcasm : E.S.B.)**

LUKE 24:6 He is not here, but is risen: remember how He spoke unto you when He was yet in Galilee,

LUKE 24:7 Saying, ‘The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.’” (Luke 18:32-33)

LUKE 24:8 And they remembered His words,

LUKE 24:9 And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven (Disciples), and to all the rest.

MATT 28:17 And when they saw Him (Jesus - after He rose from the dead), they worshipped Him: but some doubted.

ACTS 1:3 To whom also He showed Himself alive after His passion (suffering) by many infallible proofs (many people saw Him), being seen of them forty days (time period between the Resurrection and His Ascension), and speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God:

The sign which confirmed that Jesus was from God and everything He said and did was of God, came when the power of God raised Him from the dead. This mighty physical sign proved that the way to eternal life had indeed been made, and that everything Jesus had said was true (John 14:6).

“ . . . The Resurrection of Christ is the most phenomenal event to have taken place in human history, and to the Believer, is a source of hope beyond compare. . . ”

Scripture also tells us that after His Resurrection, Jesus was, at various times, seen by the Disciples, and also by more than five hundred brethren at one time. So the reality of Jesus’ Resurrection was witnessed by many people.

Paul the Apostle wrote:

1 CORINTHIANS 15:3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received (the meaning of the New Covenant), how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures (Psalm 22:15);

1 CORINTHIANS 15:4 And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures (Isaiah 53:10):

1 CORINTHIANS 15:5 And that he was seen (after the Resurrection) of Cephas (Peter), then of the twelve:

1 CORINTHIANS 15:6 After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present (are still alive), but some are fallen asleep (are dead).

When God raised Jesus from the dead, His physical body was changed to an immortal glorified body which is not subject to death. With this glorified body, Jesus the man is able

to live in both the physical realm (being able to eat and be touched) and the spiritual realm. We can see this because of the words He spoke to His Disciples:

LUKE 24:36 And as they thus spoke, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said unto them (John's Gospel tells us "the doors were shut" : John 20:19), "Peace be unto you."

LUKE 24:37 But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.

LUKE 24:39 "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself: handle Me, and see; for a spirit has not flesh and bones, as you see I have." (Jesus was demonstrating to them that He was not a disembodied spirit, but had a physical body of flesh and bones - He was resurrected with a glorified body.)

LUKE 24:40 When He had thus spoken, He showed them His hands and His feet (with the marks of the nails: John 20:20, 25-28).

LUKE 24:41 And while they yet (still) believed not for (because of) joy, and wondered (amazement), He said unto them, "Have you here any meat (anything to eat)?"

LUKE 24:42 They gave Him a piece of broiled fish, and of an honeycomb.

LUKE 24:43 And He took it, and did eat before them (again, showing He was not a spirit but had a physical body).

JOHN 20:27 Then said He to Thomas, "Reach hither your finger, and behold My hands; and reach hither your hand, and thrust it into My side: and be not faithless (stop doubting!), but believing." (Thomas had refused to believe, being absent when Jesus had visited the Disciples eight days earlier : John 20:25-26)

To complete our full redemption, when Jesus returns at the Rapture for His Church, our mortal bodies will also be changed to glorified bodies. This is a guaranteed promise, for we serve a risen glorified Saviour (Philippians 3:21).

“. . .When God raised Jesus from the dead, His physical body was changed to an immortal glorified body which is not subject to death. . .”

Note: The same power which raised Jesus from the dead continues to be manifest today, i.e. to be clearly seen. One area in which this occurs is through the working of signs and wonders in the form of miracles and healings. Perhaps the major sign of God's power at work, however, will always be that of the transformed life - as the sinner repents and enters into a life of righteousness, giving glory to God and producing Godly fruits (Galatians 5:22-23).

WE WERE BOUGHT WITH A GREAT PRICE

Background Reading: Hebrews 2:9-18

Through Jesus' act of dying on the cross, He legally paid the price for all mankind to be redeemed. This then becomes a reality in the lives of those who make Him Lord and Saviour. First Corinthians 6:19-20 and Acts 20:28 tell us:

1 CORINTHIANS 6:19 **What? Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit Who is in you, Whom you have (received) of (from) God, and you are not your own?**

1 CORINTHIANS 6:20 **For you are bought with a price** (Jesus' shed Blood): **therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's** (belong to Him).

This means that through Jesus Christ and therefore Divine connection, God remains forever our Father. We become His possession in a relational way, and function both as His sons and daughters, and His servants. Therefore, as His treasured possession, we should live not for ourselves but for He Who died for us and bought us with the price of His shed Blood (2 Corinthians 5:15).

ACTS 20:28 **Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the (of) which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers** (here Paul is speaking to a group of Pastors), **to feed the church of God, which He has purchased with His own Blood.**

“purchased with His own Blood”

“to purchase” = “to buy”

Jesus legally purchased us with His shed Blood from the slave market of death. The word “purchase” signifies ownership.

Through accepting Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, we have allowed God to surround our spirit with His saving presence and we have become His treasured possession. Having been washed in the Blood of the Lamb, we have legally and therefore positionally received Christ's righteousness - and we are precious to the Father. We could say that each one of us is God's own unique possession. Indeed we are all God's beloved children.

“ . . . Jesus legally purchased us with His shed Blood from the slave market of death. The word “purchase” signifies ownership. . . ”

We should therefore be thankful for God's wonderful work of grace in our lives, grace which we read about in the Book of Colossians:

COLOSSIANS 1:12 **Giving thanks unto the Father, Who has made us meet** (qualified and fit) **to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light:**

COLOSSIANS 1:13 Who has delivered (rescued) us (all who have received Jesus as Lord) from the power (authority) of darkness (spiritual death), and has (past tense) translated (placed) us into the Kingdom of His dear Son:

COLOSSIANS 1:14 In Whom we have redemption through His Blood (this was the price paid), even the forgiveness of sins (*at the Cross, the Lord broke the power of sin, and took away its guilt [Romans 6:6] : E.S.B.*)

Through His grace we become partakers of a new nature, the Divine Nature, which provides us with the power to live experientially in victory - as we yield ourselves to the Holy Spirit.

2 PETER 1:3 According as His Divine power has given unto us all things (everything we need) that pertain to life and godliness (to live a Godly life), through the knowledge of Him Who has called us to glory and virtue:

2 PETER 1:4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises (relates to God's Word): that by these (promises) you might be partakers of the Divine Nature (given to all at salvation), having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust (speaks of ongoing sanctification by this means).

As we realize and understand the Lord's great love for us, the only fitting response we can make is to commit ourselves totally to His service. Indeed to lay our lives down daily so that we may do that which pleases the Father, not ourselves, is our "*reasonable service.*"

ROMANS 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy (by the power of God), acceptable unto God (because of the Cross), which is your reasonable (spiritual) service.

ROMANS 12:2 And be not conformed to this world (and its ways): but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind (so that you begin to think spiritually, not naturally), that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God (*presents that which the Holy Spirit is attempting to bring about within our lives : E.S.B.*).

As we renew our minds and begin to think as God thinks, we will understand the will of God and, by His power, walk in it.

THE BLOOD COVENANT

Background Reading: Hebrews 9:16-22

Jesus stated in Matthew 26:28:

MATTHEW 26:28 “. . . this is My Blood of the New Testament (Covenant), which is shed for many for the remission (forgiveness) of sins.”

When Jesus made this statement in Matthew 26:28, the Disciples would not have understood what He was talking about. They did not know that His death was imminent, and they did not know that the shedding of His Blood would usher in the New Covenant.

As we look back in hindsight, however, we can see that Jesus was using the wine in the cup as a symbol for His shed Blood, through which the New Covenant, the Covenant of Redemption, would be established.

It is also important to realize that Jesus' Blood was shed intentionally and purposefully, and that this was no accident or mistake. Indeed scripture tells us that without the shedding of blood there can be no forgiveness.

HEBREWS 9:22 **And almost all things are by the Law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission** (no forgiveness of sins).

In order to comprehend the significance of the words Jesus uttered in Matthew 26:28, we need to understand, more fully, what a blood covenant consists of.

A covenant is a solemn and binding agreement between two or more parties in which each makes certain promises to perform certain duties in regard to the other. This agreement is a commitment which is meant to last, regardless of whether problems arise or circumstances change.

A blood covenant was set in place by the shedding of blood, whether this was human blood or the blood of an animal. This was a sign of commitment to the pact, and demonstrated the solemnness of the agreement. In some cultures, the parties concerned would cut their fingers or wrists and let their blood flow and mingle, signifying that they had become, in one sense, of one blood. This demonstrated their commitment and was a solemn pledge to honour the terms of the agreement even if it meant endangering or losing their own lives.

After the Fall of Adam, and in Old Testament times, whenever God set in place a Covenant with anyone, it was always done through the shedding of the blood of animals. One of the reasons this was done is because blood signifies life - indeed scripture tells us that the life is in the blood (Leviticus 17:11a).

The sacrificial offering of animals throughout the Old Covenant was a type-pattern of what was to come - for Jesus became God's sacrificial Lamb, slain to take away the sins of the world and to establish our Covenant of Redemption. This was what Jesus was referring to in Matthew 26:28 when He said, "*This is My Blood of the New Testament (Covenant), which is shed for many for the remission of sins.*" Jesus used the wine as a representation of His shed Blood and the biscuit as a representation of His broken Body. By the shedding of His Blood, Jesus established the Covenant of Redemption - for all who would enter into that Covenant.

“. . . It is also important to realize that Jesus' Blood was shed intentionally and purposefully, and that this was no accident or mistake. . . ”

Everything in both Old and New Testaments points to the perfect Lamb of God, His finished work on the Cross of Calvary, and the Resurrection which makes it possible for His finished work to become a reality in our lives.

Through Jesus' sacrifice and the shedding of His Blood, God's plan of redemption was completed and set in force forever. This Covenant demonstrated God's great love for us and His pledge to honour and fulfill His promises to us. Our part in this Covenant is the circumcision of our hearts which occurs when we make Jesus our Lord and we repent. This brings us into complete union with the Father, spiritually, and so we become covenantal partners with Christ whereby we cry "*Abba Father*" (Romans 8:14-17).

THE LAST SUPPER

Jesus gave us a commandment concerning communion that we as Christians should obey until He comes again for us. In Luke Ch.22 we find:

LUKE 22:19 And He (Jesus) took bread, and gave thanks, and broke it, and gave unto them, saying, "This is (represents) My Body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me."

LUKE 22:20 Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is (represents) the New Testament (Covenant) in My Blood, which is (will be) shed for you."

1 CORINTHIANS 11:26 For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you do show (proclaim) the Lord's death until He comes (again).

Significantly, one important aspect of communion is that it is a memorial feast - a love feast in memory of our Saviour's finished work at Calvary. Here sin was conquered, death was defeated, and man gained the opportunity to be born again. The Believer then walks in "*newness of life*" through becoming a partaker of the Divine Nature - through which, as he yields to the Holy Spirit, he is given the power to walk in righteousness. When we walk in righteousness, doing God's will, the energies and graces of the Divine Nature are absorbed at an experiential level by our human nature. The human nature is then energized, and through this we gain the mind of Christ and the passion of Christ, being at one with Him in that area in which we are yielding (1 Corinthians 2:16; Philippians 2:5). Amen.

“. . .Through Jesus' sacrifice and the shedding of His Blood, God's plan of redemption was completed and set in force forever. This Covenant demonstrated God's great love for us and His pledge to honour and fulfill His promises to us. . .”

When we as Christians come together, we remember, through obeying this commandment, the sacrifice that was made for us - the sacrifice of Jesus' Body and His shed Blood.

To represent or symbolize Jesus' Body, just as He did at the Last Supper, Christians normally use a piece of broken bread or biscuit.

When we partake of the piece of biscuit, we are bringing into remembrance Jesus' beaten and bruised Body. The punishment Jesus endured at this time was needed in order for us to have healing, perfect peace of mind and prosperity in every area of our lives while we are here on earth - as, of course, we follow the leading of the Spirit.

ISAIAH 53:4 Surely He (Jesus) has borne our griefs (sickness, weakness and disease), and carried our sorrows: yet we did (ignorantly) esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

ISAIAH 53:5 But He was wounded for our transgressions (rebellion), He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace (punishment that brought us peace) was upon Him (and Him alone); and with His stripes (wounds) we are healed (and made whole).

To represent Jesus' shed Blood, Christians normally use a red liquid in a small cup.

When we partake of the cup, we are bringing into remembrance that it is only through Jesus' shed Blood that we are able to be washed clean of all sin, and so reunited with our Heavenly Father.

The communion emblems, the bread and red liquid, are not to be taken as the actual Body and Blood of Christ. They are only representations or symbols of His beaten and bruised Body and shed Blood.

We are, however, to continue to remember the Lord and His finished work on the Cross through these emblems, as He has commanded us to do, until He returns.

The Conditions For Partaking

There are two major requirements for participating in the Lord's Supper. Firstly the participant must be regenerated (born again) by God's grace and secondly, living a life that is correspondent to a commitment to Christ's Lordship.

Paul gave instructions regarding the celebration of communion in his first letter to the Corinthian Church. He was addressing a Christian assembly where severe excesses were taking place in this and other areas, and where the people needed to be strongly reprimanded. At Corinth, a fellowship meal was eaten by the Believers and this was followed by the solemn rite of communion. However the Corinthians appeared to be making no distinction between communion and the common meal. We can also perceive through reading 1 Corinthians Ch.11 that drunkenness, gluttony, selfishness and greediness were commonplace and that the holy purpose of communion was being trodden underfoot and profaned.

“. . . There are two major requirements for participating in the Lord’s Supper. Firstly the participant must be regenerated . . . secondly, living a life that is correspondent to a commitment to Christ’s Lordship. . . ”

Thus Paul reminded the people of the poignant scene where the Lord handed down the institution of the Lord’s Supper, on the very night in which He was to be betrayed. Paul reminded the Corinthian Church and he reminds us today through the authority of the scriptures that the Lord commanded us to *“do this . . . in remembrance of Me.”* And he brings us back to the bread and the wine, the Body and the Blood of Christ, as the true basis for this solemn meal.

After admonishing the Corinthian Church and then reminding them of the seriousness of the matters he was speaking about, Paul went on to give instruction concerning the responsibilities of the individual in regard to communion. We can apply these principles to our lives today.

1 CORINTHIANS 11:27 So then whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in a way that is unworthy [of Him] will be guilty of (profaning and sinning against) the Body and Blood of the Lord. (Amp.)

1 CORINTHIANS 11:28 Let a man [thoroughly] examine himself, and [only] when he has done so should he eat of the bread and drink of the cup. (Amp.)

1 CORINTHIANS 11:29 For any one who eats and drinks without discriminating and recognizing with due appreciation that [it is Christ’s] body, eats and drinks a sentence - a verdict of judgement - upon himself. (Amp.)

1 CORINTHIANS 11:30 That [careless and unworthy participation] is the reason many of you are weak and sickly, and quite enough of you are fallen into the sleep of death. (Amp.)

1 CORINTHIANS 11:31 For if we searchingly examined ourselves - detecting our shortcomings and recognizing our own condition - we should not be judged and penalty decreed [by the divine judgement]. (Amp.)

Paul **“pulled no punches”** in delivering this message to the Corinthians. He was telling them that they would bring judgement upon themselves if they participated in the Lord’s Supper unworthily.

What are these scriptures telling us today? They are telling us that those who partake of the Lord’s Supper are to ensure that they are worthy to do so. Indeed we will be treating the whole communion celebration with disrespect if we come unworthily. As we partake of the Lord’s Supper, we are entering the presence of the Lord in a special way, and sin (hatred, resentment, unforgiveness etc.) will block us from fellowshiping with Him in the way He would desire us to do.

“ . . . He was telling them that they would bring judgement upon themselves if they participated in the Lord’s Supper unworthily. . . ”

In Old Testament times, the high priests had to be ceremonially cleansed of sin before they entered the presence of God in the Holy of Holies, even though His presence was only there in a limited way (for no-one could look upon the face of God and live: Exodus 33:20). If they did not specifically follow the ordinances which were required to make them ceremonially clean, when they entered the presence of God they would die immediately. Jewish tradition tells us that this was why the High Priest had bells on his ceremonial dress (Exodus 28:33-35). If the bells fell silent while the Priest was officiating in the Holy of Holies, the other priests would assume that he had entered unworthily and had died. They could then retrieve his body by a rope which was attached to his waist, for only the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies on that Day of Atonement.

The same principle of entering the presence of God unworthily applies to communion today, for we too need to be clean before the Lord through repentance and the Blood of Jesus. When we take communion we are, in a similar way, spiritually entering the presence of God at this special level. If there is sin in our lives when we take communion (e.g. unforgiveness or hatred, etc.), then we are trying to enter into His presence stained with that sin. This will hinder our fellowship with the Lord at this special time, and may even result in us eating and drinking judgement upon ourselves, which will allow bondage into our lives (as occurred with some of the Believers in the Corinthian Church).

“ . . . As we partake of the Lord’s Supper, we are entering the presence of the Lord in a special way, and sin (hatred, resentment, unforgiveness etc.) will block us from fellowshiping with Him in the way He would desire us to do. . . ”

We should therefore examine ourselves to see whether or not we have sin in our lives before we take part in communion. If we do discover that we have sin in our lives, we should repent according to 1 John 1:9:

1 JOHN 1:9 If we confess (and repent of) our sins, He (the Lord) is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Confess and repent of your sin, then thank the Lord for the cleansing from all unrighteousness (the result of that sin). We should do this before we come to church, but if we forget, then it can be done at church before we partake of communion.

So when you come to communion, think about whether you have done anything wrong in the past week. For example, have you wronged anyone or have you been holding

anything against anyone, of which you have not repented? Or has anyone wronged you and you have not forgiven them?

If you have sinned you should be convicted at this point, and put the matter right through repentance. Then you can take part in communion with the right attitude, knowing that you have fulfilled your responsibility.

MARK 11:24 Therefore I say unto you, What things soever you desire (in this case forgiveness), when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you shall have them.

MARK 11:25 And when you stand praying, forgive, if you have ought against any (*implying, that the above Promises will not be honoured, if we harbour unforgiveness*): **that your Father also Who is in Heaven may forgive you your trespasses** (*forgiveness from the Lord on our part, is predicated on our forgiving others*). (E.S.B.)

MARK 11:26 But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father Who is in heaven forgive your trespasses (sins).

Quite often people do not forgive because they are afraid of being hurt again - so they allow fear to stop them from forgiving. Mark 11:24 tells us that we must believe in order to receive - for we cannot receive that which we have not believed for. Relating this verse to forgiveness, we can believe that God will empower us to forgive when we have problems with forgiveness. Some people can, at times, only forgive as they allow God to empower them to do so, through the grace of the Divine Nature. We need to forgive by faith, not by fleshly feelings. So stand on the Word of God and dismiss and cast down all thoughts of anger, resentment, revenge, etc. Boldly confess your liberation and continue to trust God and His liberating power. The evidence and assurance will follow. His grace is sufficient for every situation.

“. . .Quite often people do not forgive because they are afraid of being hurt again - so they allow fear to stop them from forgiving. . .”

Remember, if we are to receive the blessings communion offers, we need to be living in obedience, refraining from deliberate sin and desiring a more intimate fellowship with Christ as we come to the Communion Table. We need also to come before the Lord with a humble spirit, knowing that *“God resists the proud, but gives grace unto the humble”* (James 4:6).

We are to be a holy people, even as our Lord is holy, and to approach communion in a worthy manner.

1 PETER 1:14 As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves (conforming and being ruled) according to the former lusts (evil desires of the sin nature) in your ignorance (which happened before you were saved):

1 PETER 1:15 But as He Who has called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation (everything you do - your lifestyle);

1 PETER 1:16 Because it is written: “Be ye holy; for I am holy.” (Leviticus 11:44-45)

DISCERNING THE LORD’S BODY

Our Ongoing Identification With Christ Through Communion

Background Reading: Romans 6:3-11

We have spoken of coming worthily to the Lord’s Supper, discerning what it represents and recognizing that we are engaging in a sacred and holy ceremony.

“ . . .if we are to receive the blessings communion offers, we need to be living in obedience, refraining from deliberate sin and desiring a more intimate fellowship with Christ. . . ”

However, it can also be said that to discern the Lord’s Body and Blood at the communion table is to:

1. Acknowledge that the cup represents Jesus’ shed Blood (occasioning death) which was the price paid for our salvation (Hebrews 9:22).
2. Acknowledge that the bread or biscuit represents Jesus’ beaten and bruised Body, His suffering (both physical and mental) being necessary for man’s physical and mental healing (Isaiah 53:5).
3. Acknowledge that Jesus took man’s place at Calvary’s Cross, thereby obtaining salvation for all those who identify themselves with Him - by making Him their Lord and Saviour (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Armed with this understanding of the Atonement, we are identifying ourselves with Christ, not only in His death but also in His Resurrection. When Jesus was raised from the dead, He broke the power of sin and everything associated with it (Colossians 2:15). This includes anything that would keep man in bondage, including all sickness and disease. Amen. Indeed when Jesus said, “*It is finished*,” sin was defeated. Therefore we are no longer under any obligation to obey sin or the sin nature, but instead should reckon ourselves to be “*dead indeed unto sin*” :

ROMANS 6:11 Likewise reckon you also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

ROMANS 6:12 Let not sin (the sin nature) therefore reign (rule, gain the upper hand) in your mortal body, that you should obey it in the lusts thereof (ungodly lusts of the flesh).

ROMANS 6:13 Neither yield your members (parts of your mortal body) as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin (the sin nature): **but yield yourselves unto God, as those who are alive from the dead** (raised in “*newness of life*”), **and your members as instruments of righteousness to God** (through the energies and graces of the Divine Nature).

ROMANS 6:14 For sin (the sin nature) shall not have dominion over you: for you are not under the Law (trying to please God in your own strength), **but under grace** (God’s grace is abundantly available to us as we yield and believe for it).

Again, if we are discerning (understanding) the Body and Blood correctly (1 Corinthians 11:28-29), we will be identifying with Christ in all that He went through, knowing that as joint heirs with Him, we too have been legally set free from the power of sin, sickness and disease. He has paid the price, and we are raised up in victory with Him through His Resurrection into “*newness of life*.”

“ . . . Armed with this understanding of the Atonement, we are identifying ourselves with Christ, not only in His death but also in His Resurrection. . . ”

Of course to take advantage of our legal position, we need to allow the Holy Spirit to educate our spirit through the renewing of the mind so that God can empower us, strengthen us and even heal us, if needed. Therefore every time we take communion, we should discern the Body and Blood of Christ in this light, knowing that we have been legally set free from every sin, every bondage and every disease through Christ’s broken Body and shed Blood.

If we do not properly discern the Body and Blood, then yes, some may remain sick, become sick or even die prematurely. If we do not properly understand the meaning of the Blood of Christ, the devil will run rampant in our life - for only through the Blood can we be forgiven, cleansed and protected. And when we come to communion, if we have committed transgressions, we need to put them under the Blood if we are to fully identify with Christ.

At this time of communion, we also need to discern the Body of Christ so that we may participate fully in the freedom He has won for our bodies and minds. To be able to discern the Lord’s Body properly will help bring our body (if we are sick) into line with the New Testament Covenant that God has made with us through Christ. For as we know, part of this Covenant includes the provision of healing.

In other words we must understand the Atonement - the suffering, death and Resurrection of Christ - and how it applies to us in order to appropriate, on a personal level, the victory Jesus won for us.

When we come together as a corporate body of Believers around the communion table, it can be a time where our faith is activated and even tested. The enemy knows this and will take advantage of us if we allow him to do so. Communion presents us with an opportunity to exercise our faith at whatever level of faith we are at. This of course will

depend on how much we have allowed the Spirit to properly renew our minds with God's Word.

If we do not rid ourselves of sin before we partake of communion, by repenting of it and putting it under the Blood, then we will not be able, at an experiential level, to fully identify with Christ in all aspects - and we will fail the test. If this happens, the devil and his forces will take advantage of our failure to either take, or live on, the higher ground.

“. . .If we do not properly understand the meaning of the Blood of Christ, the devil will run rampant in our life - for only through the Blood can we be forgiven, cleansed and protected. . .”

Before the exodus from Egypt, the Israelites had to identify themselves with God Almighty by shedding the blood of the Passover lamb and painting this blood on the lintels of their doorways. Then the angels of destruction could not touch their households, having to “pass over” those identified by the blood. If they had not obeyed God in this area, then their households would have suffered loss (Exodus 12:3-13).

The same can be said today if we do not continue to identify, in faith, both at communion and in our daily Christian walk, with the precious Body and Blood of Christ. The Lord's Supper represents the crossroads at which we, as the Church, arrive, and what each individual does at this crossroads is important. The devil looks for weak sheep which he can attack, so do not allow yourself to become a weak sheep for there is no need. If you have problems with sin or faith, then seek out a mature Christian who can help you. Remember that God does not withhold His blessings from us - rather the enemy takes advantage of us if we allow him to do so (1 Peter 5:8).

We will now go on to look at how we can discern the Lord's Body from a deeper perspective, examining two Old Testament stories as type-patterns for today.

The Journey Of The Strong

Background Reading: Exodus 12:21-36

To be able to discern the Lord's Body properly will help bring our body (if it is out of line with our New Testament Covenant i.e. good health) into line with the New Testament Covenant that God has made with us through Christ. In the time of Moses, the Israelite people, who were God's “Church” at that time, were taken out of Egypt by God's hand. Even though they were not in the Promised Land but in transition, wandering in the desert, not one was feeble or sick (Psalm 105:37). In fact their sandals and clothing did not wear out (Deuteronomy 29:5), and God supplied the Israelites, who may have numbered 3 - 4 million, with every single requirement (Nehemiah 9:20-21). His Covenant with them was based on the blood of animals, which was a type-pattern of Calvary's sacrifice.

As we have read, in Paul's letter to the Corinthian Church, which probably only numbered hundreds of Believers, many were weak, sickly and feeble. This was the case even though they were a part of the New Testament Church which was based on a Covenant of grace and not law, as the old economy in the Old Testament had been. This new economy, based on grace, was established by the Blood of Jesus. Why then did the Israelites seemingly enjoy greater physical blessings (in terms of health) than the church at Corinth?

1 CORINTHIANS 11:28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

1 CORINTHIANS 11:29 For he who eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks damnation (judgement) to (upon) himself, not discerning (understanding spiritually) the Lord's Body.

1 CORINTHIANS 11:30 For this cause (careless and unworthy participation) many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep (have died prematurely).

Concerning Moses and his people, it was only after the establishment of the blood-ratified Covenant that God's grace was able to protect, provide for and lead His people. Good health was part of this Covenant.

PSALM 105:37 He brought them forth also with silver and gold: and there was not one feeble person among their tribes (numbering in the millions!).

Today our Covenant with God has been ratified by the Blood of the perfect sacrifice. There is therefore no more reason to sacrifice for Christ fulfilled completely the requirements of the Law, saying "*It is finished* (fulfilled)."

“. . . Concerning Moses and his people, it was only after the establishment of the blood-ratified Covenant that God's grace was able to protect, provide for and lead His people. . . ”

A thing to take note of is that the Israelites did two things in regard to the sacrifice. **Firstly**, they applied the blood to the doorway of their houses for protection. In fact this was the first Passover, and it pointed to, and was a type-pattern of, the last Passover, Christ at Calvary. There were many type-patterns involved in the detailed instructions given by the Lord to Moses and Aaron regarding how the Passover was to be celebrated.

EXODUS 12:5 Your lamb shall be without blemish (Jesus was without sin, "*a Lamb without blemish and without spot*" : 1 Peter 1:19), a male of the first year (representing Jesus Who died at the peak of His manhood); you shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats:

EXODUS 12:6 And you shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month (*they were to select the animal on the tenth day, and then kill it on the fourteenth day [Vs.3]*);

it was to be minutely inspected during these four days, that no trace of illness would be observed, representing Christ, it had to be perfect): and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. (The actual Hebrew says, "between the two evenings," which was about 3 p.m. This was the exact time that Jesus died on the Cross of Calvary [Matthew 27:46].) (E.S.B.)

EXODUS 12:7 And they shall take of the blood (representing Jesus' shed Blood), and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it (the blood brought protection from judgement).

The second thing the Lord told His "Church" (Israel) to do was to eat the flesh of the Passover lamb. In order for God's mercy and grace to be extended to the homes of the Israelites, they had to do these two things so that they could be protected and provided for and not come under judgement.

EXODUS 12:8 And they shall eat the flesh in that night (referred to in a symbolic sense by Jesus in John 6:53-55), roast with fire (speaks of the judgement of God coming on the Sin-Bearer), and unleavened bread (denotes the perfection of Christ - no leaven = no sin); and with bitter herbs (these were to remind the Hebrews of the bitterness of their slavery in Egypt) they shall eat it.

EXODUS 12:9 Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water (Christ cannot be accepted without the Cross), but roast with fire (speaks of the price paid for sin at the Cross); his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof (all of what was accomplished at the Cross must be accepted and embraced).

EXODUS 12:10 And you shall let nothing of it remain until the morning (all of the lamb had to be eaten - all of Christ must be accepted, which means all that the Cross meant and achieved); and that which remains of it until the morning you shall burn with fire.

EXODUS 12:11 And thus shall you eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in haste (in readiness to leave Egypt); it is the Lord's Passover (the Passover was always a type-pattern of Christ and the Cross).

EXODUS 12:12 For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgement: I am the Lord.

EXODUS 12:13 And the blood shall be to you for a token (a "token" or symbol of the Blood of the real Pascal Lamb) upon the houses where you are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you (*this is, without a doubt, one of the single most important Scriptures in the entirety of the Word of God; the lamb had taken the fatal blow; and because it had taken the blow, those in the house would be spared; it was not a question of personal worthiness, self had nothing whatever to do in the matter; it was a matter of faith; all under the cover of the blood were safe, just as all presently under the cover of the Blood are safe; . . . the Lord didn't say, "When I see you," or, "When I see your good works," etc., but, "When I see the blood"; this speaks of Christ and what He would do at the Cross in order that we might be saved . . . : E.S.B.*), and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt. (*Salvation from the "plague" of Judgement is afforded only by the shed Blood of the Lamb, and Faith in that shed Blood : E.S.B.*)

EXODUS 12:14 And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and you shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations; you shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever. (*The Passover is continued in the Lord's Supper [1Corinthians 5:7-8] : E.S.B.*)

“. . . In fact this was the first Passover, and it pointed to, and was a type-pattern of, the last Passover, Christ at Calvary. . .”

Note: In relation to the instruction to continue the feast of the Passover “for ever,” “it actually continues in the participation by Christians of the “Lord’s Supper,” which in a sense is an outgrowth of the Passover. In fact, God doesn’t recognize the Old Testament Passover anymore, and in fact, hasn’t recognized it since Jesus died on the Cross, and rose from the dead. It was not God’s Will after this great event for men to continue to look to the “type,” when in fact, the “antitype” had come, and had fulfilled all the type. Why does one want to offer up sacrifices of animals, when “the Sacrifice” has been offered! . . .”

“In the Perfect Age to come, which is graphically outlined in Revelation, Chapters 21 and 22, seven times in this account the word “Lamb” as it refers to Christ, is used. Now please understand, in this Perfect Age to come, Satan and all his minions of darkness, plus every unsaved soul, will be in the Lake of Fire. And to be sure, they will be there forever. There will be no more sin or transgression of any nature, but yet, the Holy Spirit refers seven times, as stated, to the “Lamb.” So I think that this tells us that in some fashion, this “memorial” will be kept forever. The word “Lamb” referring to Christ, is used in this fashion, I think, in order that all Believers might know and understand that the great and glorious privileges that we will have forever and forever . . . are all brought about as a result of what Jesus did at the Cross.”¹

As stated, today we keep this feast in the New Testament Church through the ordinance of Communion. Here we come together as a corporate body to remember, appreciate and celebrate Christ our Passover and what He has done for us.

The first requirement represented in type our identification with Christ on the cross. In other words, we must be identified in His death so that we can be identified in His Resurrection. It is the Blood of Christ which is our covering. It is the Blood which saves from judgement, those who have had their sins forgiven.

EXODUS 12:13 And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where you are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.

ROMANS 5:9 Much more then (if Christ died for us while we were sinners) **being now justified by His Blood** (how much more will He do for us now we are reconciled to Him!), **we shall be saved from wrath** (the wrath of God directed against sin) **through Him.**

The second requirement, that of eating the lamb’s flesh, had nothing to do with judgement passing over the household, for only blood on the doorways could have

provided them with this grace of protection. This second requirement of the Israelites in covenant with God not only gave them physical strength for their journey into the wilderness, it also revealed in a natural way the promise of what was to come because of Calvary in regard to Divine healing/health. Hence, *“there was not one feeble person among their tribes.”*

PSALM 105:37 He brought them forth also with silver and gold: and there was not one feeble person among their tribes (truly an amazing statement!).

When the Israelites ate the flesh of the lamb through physical digestion, this food was sent into their bloodstream to become part of them, flesh of their flesh, bone of their bone, skin of their skin, body of their body. It became part of them. It was a type of the Body of Christ.

When we as a corporate body partake of the bread in the communion service, we are to remember we are part of His perfect Body by digesting the Word in faith in regard to this truth.

Just as the Israelites ate of the Passover lamb (Exodus 12:8-11), scripture tells us we are to eat of the Lamb of God, *“the bread of life,” “the living bread”* (John 6:48, 51, 53-56). In reality, we eat of the Lamb by embracing all that the Lord commands for our lives, via the Logos Word and the Rhema Word, according to the leading of the Spirit. It is to do all, relying on His Lordship and so direction. With this God has promised to all who seek, find and embrace His will, the grace to do so.

Eating of all the flesh of the lamb (Exodus 12:10) constitutes a type-pattern which points today to obeying all that our Lord, the true Passover Lamb, has said. When we embrace all that God has said, and the Spirit leads us to do, we will indeed be eating all the Passover Lamb and so giving no grounds for the enemy to afflict us, mind or body.

“. . .In reality, we eat of the Lamb by embracing all that the Lord commands for our lives, via the Logos Word and the Rhema Word, according to the leading of the Spirit. . .”

After the Israelites did what the Lord had told them to do with the blood and the body of the lamb, they *“journeyed”* (Exodus 12:37) out of Egypt. As they *“journeyed,”* their sicknesses and diseases left them. Sickness was eradicated, diseases were no more, feebleness was a forgotten thing. The Covenant provided for Divine health.

If the Old Covenant could offer this, what more can the grace of God, which comes through Christ, give to those who believe? No less can or should we expect, for the old economy pointed to the new economy in Christ. The Old Testament Covenant proved that God is *“the Lord Who heals.”* The New Testament Covenant showed the reason for this grace, that it came through the real Lamb of God, by Whose stripes we are healed, of whom the Passover lamb was a type. God was honouring the real Lamb of God ahead of time, in the type, based on the assurance of His foreknowledge. The following story illustrates this truth more clearly.

THE BRASS SERPENT

Background Reading: Numbers 21:4-9

The second Old Testament story concerns the brass serpent. This story follows on from a situation where the people sinned by murmuring against God. Venomous snakes then bit many of the people so that they died.

NUMBERS 21:7 Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, “We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord, and against you; pray unto the Lord, that He take away the serpents from us.” And Moses prayed for the people (interceded on their behalf).

NUMBERS 21:8 And the Lord said unto Moses, “Make thee a fiery serpent (representing sin), and set it upon a pole (representing the cross): and it shall come to pass, that every one who is bitten, when he looks upon it, shall live (the curse of death shall be lifted, as with those who look upon Christ and the Cross).”

If we look at the story in Numbers 21:4-9, we will see that the Israelites, who sought healing after being bitten by the snakes, had to look with repentant hearts upon the brass serpent on the pole and believe that God would heal them. This brass serpent on the pole was a type-pattern of Christ, as our Sin Bearer. The snake represented the cursed man, Jesus, the Sin Bearer, Who was cursed on our behalf, taking the penalty of death in our place (Galatians 3:13; Deuteronomy 21:23).

Under the Lord’s direction, Moses made a serpent of brass in the wilderness and held it aloft on a pole. Those who looked upon the serpent of brass, if they had been bitten by a serpent, were saved from death.

NUMBERS 21:9 And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived (*it was to Moses . . . that the Lord proclaimed the way that the Son of God would die; it would be by the Cross, symbolized by the serpent on the pole : E.S.B.*).

The brass serpent on the pole is clearly a type of Christ bearing the sins and sicknesses of man. The serpent was a symbol of sin. Christ Himself never became sinful on the cross but was made the sin offering for the whole world. At this time even the Father forsook Him - while He became the “Sin Bearer” and the sin of the world was legally (though not experientially) attributed to Him. In this way sin’s penalty could be paid, and those who then identify with the Saviour can become righteous in Him!

2 CORINTHIANS 5:21 For He (God the Father) has made Him (Jesus) to be sin (a sin offering) for us, Who knew no sin (He was sinless); that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (our sin was imputed to Him, His righteousness imputed to us).

MATTHEW 27:46 And about the ninth hour (3 p.m.) Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?” that is to say, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

As the Israelites, with humble, repentant hearts, looked upon this brass serpent which represented Christ as the Atonement sacrifice, today we must also, with humble hearts, look in faith upon Christ Who was placed on the cross (pole). As we do so, we must trust that through Him, our sin and sickness bearer, we have been made whole (been healed), spirit, soul and body.

“. . . The snake represented the cursed man, Jesus, the Sin Bearer, Who was cursed on our behalf, taking the penalty of death in our place. . . ”

He paid a debt He did not owe. We owed a debt we could not pay. As our Kinsman Redeemer He took the penalty we deserved, thus satisfying the law of perfect justice. This has brought us peace and reconciliation with our God. Amen.

COLOSSIANS 1:20 And God purposed that through - by the service, the intervention of - Him (the Son) all things should be completely reconciled back to Himself, whether on earth or in heaven, as through Him [the Father] made peace by means of the Blood of His cross. (Amp)

All Sin And Sickness Is Nailed To The Cross

When the Israelites looked upon the serpent, it represented Christ the cursed One, Who would nail our sin and everything associated with the curse to the Cross. This of course was a once-only payment to bring to nought our sin, and to give us power over sin and the sin nature itself. Only if they looked upon that which represented the Redeemer (Who would stand in their place, become a curse for them and take the punishment due to all men on their behalf), could God bring His grace to the rescue - even that day hundreds of years before the sacrifice. In God's perfect foreknowledge, it was counted to the Israelites as salvation as they trusted (unknowingly) in the Saviour of the Cross - through the type-pattern of the serpent on the pole. Really they were trusting in God's representative Moses who spoke God's Word and told them to look upon the serpent and live. This gave God the legal ground to heal them, as He, by His foreknowledge, worked backwards from the Cross. So although they didn't understand, in a spiritual sense, they were trusting Christ, the Lamb of God, as revealed by God after the Fall.

GENESIS 3:15 And I will put enmity (animosity) between you (here the Lord is speaking to Satan) and the woman, and between your seed and her seed (Jesus the Redeemer); it (He) shall bruise your head, and you shalt bruise His heel.

Each time the Israelites, according to the Law, made a blood sacrifice for sin, they were trusting ahead of time, because of the type-pattern, in the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, i.e. that their sins would be forgiven. The types were a result of Calvary, even though they were forerunners. In trusting in the types, they were trusting in that which was to come. This enabled God to account it to them as righteousness. So as stated, they were really trusting in Christ through the type-pattern that the serpent on the pole represented.

They trusted and relied on the Saviour, Who was to come by promise, that what He would do would negate sin's power and anything associated with it. In this they looked upon the serpent who represented the cursed Christ, the One Who was to take the punishment of the curse, namely death. If they did this, i.e., looked upon the serpent and trusted in what God's servant Moses had said, then they were able to enjoy some of the benefits of the Cross - even at this point in time.

GALATIANS 3:13 Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, "Cursed is every one who hangs on a tree" (Deuteronomy 21:23)

Nothing has changed in this New Testament Age except the Saviour, Who was to be put on a cross that the pole represented, has come. The promise has been fulfilled. In the Old Testament era, the people of God had to look forward to the Cross, trusting in the types which represented Christ. In this New Testament Age, we must look back to the Cross and focus our attention on Him with a repentant heart, so as to allow the Blood of Christ to wash our sin away. In this our sin, and anything associated with it, is nailed to the Cross. We no longer need types for the real Saviour has come. Indeed He died and was raised from the dead for us, so that we may have life and have it more abundantly.

“. . .In the Old Testament era, the people of God had to look forward to the Cross . . . In this New Testament Age, we must look back to the Cross. . .”

Christ took our complete punishment on the Cross so that we could have complete salvation of spirit, mind and body. However only if our sin is left at the Cross can we then, by faith, enjoy all the benefits of the Atonement. In other words, we must, with the eye of faith, with a clean heart and a humble spirit, see ourselves after our sin is nailed to the Cross of Christ as being raised up with Christ into newness of life (as partakers of the Divine Nature):

2 PETER 1:4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises (refers to the Word of God): **that by these (promises) you might be partakers of the Divine Nature** (given to all who are saved), **having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust** (speaks of salvation and ongoing sanctification).

Therefore, in dealing with sin, we must forever look to the crucified Christ, and leave all our sin nailed to the Cross through repentance. Then with a heart of faith, we must see ourselves in Christ, denailed from the Cross, and raised with Him to enjoy the benefits the Cross has afforded us (Romans 6:1-8). So in order to be raised with Him in a conditional sense and enjoy the graces provided by the Atonement, our day-to-day sin must be nailed to the Cross. To have unconfessed sin in our life, or not to have proper focus concerning the spiritual realities of the Cross, will cause us not to experience the benefits of our salvation at an experiential level.

In other words we are to look on and trust in the Christ of the Cross, and allow the Holy Spirit to reveal to us the truth of the greatest words that were ever spoken: *“It is finished.”*

It tells us in Hosea that God's people can be destroyed through a lack of spiritual knowledge (Hosea 4:6). But Christ promised that He would send the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, to teach us and lead us, as Christians, into all the truth needed to live in abundant life (John 14:16, 17, 26).

Even today the snake-bitten sons and daughters of Adam need to trust in the crucified Christ to be healed of their sin. Even as a Christian, if sin enters one's life, the Cross and the Blood must be the answer. This is true, however, for all sin, that of the heathen and the Christian alike. Deliverance from sin and its curse comes only as we look upon Christ on the Cross, determining to leave our sin in the hands of the Saviour through our repentance and trust in Him.

“. . .To have unconfessed sin in our life, or not to have proper focus concerning the spiritual realities of the Cross, will cause us not to experience the benefits of our salvation at an experiential level. . .”

Not to continue to develop in our relationship with the Lord, by growing in the knowledge of God's will and Word and the power thereof, will cause sin to accumulate in our lives. This will drag us back in those areas of sin to live in its dark valleys. We need to leave our sin behind, nailed to the Cross, so that the process of ongoing sanctification may take place. In this way we can become more Christ-like, and develop a passion for the things of God. Then the Holy Spirit can help us develop faith in our hearts to move the mountains that would try to stop God working in our lives and us serving Him on the mountain tops. However everything proceeds from the Cross. We cannot bypass the Cross, for all sin, past present and future, must be nailed to it. Only when the Blood is applied to our sin can all this take place.

If you are a Christian living for God and you become sick, then this is the time to focus your faith on the fact that Christ allowed Himself to be nailed to the Cross so that along with our sin, all sickness could also be nailed to the Cross. For as we have said, He became a curse for us. In other words, He took all the punishment required to free us from the curse we were under - and this includes the curse of sickness.

With this focus of all sickness being nailed to the Cross, you can then either pray yourself or receive the prayer you need from another. As this takes place, let the picture of Moses and the serpent on the pole be in your mind's eye. Know that it was a pattern or a type of Christ, our Deliverer, on the Cross of Calvary, so that we could be identified positionally and conditionally in His Resurrection.

ROMANS 6:4 **Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life** (we died with Christ, we were buried with Him along with all our sins and transgressions, and His Resurrection was ours as well into newness of life!).

The abundant life spoken of in the scriptures (e.g. John 10:10) includes freedom from sickness and disease, for through His stripes and the Cross (within the context of the complete Atonement), He paid the price for the curse of sickness to be lifted (Isaiah 53:5).

Our focus must be Jesus our Lord, the object of our faith must be His Cross and we must recognize our power source as the Holy Spirit. Then we will find our victory in Him. As we with proper focus identify with Him, the power of His Resurrection is made available to us. But for this to be a reality in our lives, we need faith.

We can be confident that both sin and sickness are nailed to the Cross of Christ. We need only then allow the Holy Spirit to develop the faith in us to believe this - so that the victory may be ours.

With Christ as our focus and the Cross as the object of our faith, know that the Holy Spirit will bring the power of God to heal broken bodies according to the finished work of Calvary and the boundaries of this work.

The story of the brass serpent represents to us, in the New Covenant, man repenting and putting his sin under the Blood of Christ, then trusting in the Lord that the power to heal will be available because of the Atonement.

The Lord Our Healer

The Atonement has provided God's grace by which we can be made whole in every area. As we have stated, Christ paid the full price for our redemption and this includes healing. Faith must reach out and grasp it when it is needed so that the Father may be glorified through Jesus.

Again it is by faith in the Cross (the Atonement) that the benefits of the Cross flow to us in an experiential way, from salvation to bodily healing. God was not only the Israelites' Deliverer from the destroyer, He was also the Healer of their diseases. In fact one of God's names is "Jehovah - Rapha" which means "*the Lord our healer*" or "*the Lord Who heals*" (Exodus 15:26).

“. . .Our focus must be Jesus our Lord, the object of our faith must be His Cross and we must recognize our power source as the Holy Spirit. . .”

God is the same yesterday and today, and will be the same tomorrow and forever. He changes not. The Lord still heals today as we eat by faith God's living Word, Jesus the Pascal Lamb of God, so as to be one with Him. As we have said, this eating is a spiritual action involving the embracing of all God has for us. In doing this we will be believing to be filled with God's life-giving graces that will bring about change, first on the inside (to the mind and heart) and then on the outside (to the body) - as faith is developed within us to make proper demands on heaven's power. Christ went through all that He did not only so we could have life (so that our names could be written in the Book of Life in heaven) but so that we could have abundant life. This is essentially to have the power of God to walk in His will, and so to please the Father in all we do.

JOHN 10:10 The thief comes not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I (Jesus) am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly (to the full).

Under the Covenant, sickness and disease are therefore a marked enemy to be eradicated on sight. The only way to experience this abundant life, however, is by taking up your cross, then yielding daily to the Holy Spirit so that the graces and energies of the Divine Nature are made available to you both to will and then to do of God's good pleasure (Philippians 2:13). Don't let sin rob you of your inheritance in Christ. Repent, be restored by the Blood and eat of Christ until full of His grace so that you may run the race set before you. The Israelites' race was set before them, but sadly many did not enter the Promised Land of God's will, flowing with milk and honey.

“. . .Under the Covenant, sickness and disease are therefore a marked enemy to be eradicated on sight. . .”

Only as we, by faith, apply the Blood to our sin so that we are washed clean, can we then eat by faith of the goodness of Christ's flesh. As we do this, as we journey with the Spirit Who leads and empowers us, and as we apply the Word of God to any need for bodily healing, sickness and disease will have no place in our lives. We will grow old gracefully, still in our old age running as a foot soldier of the Cross, not in the power of the flesh but in the power of the Divine Nature which energizes our very being, and helps us become one with God.

2 PETER 1:4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these you might be partakers of the Divine Nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

We can even have the mind of Christ, which is to think as He thinks. This is to have the same mindset Christ had when He walked the earth, a divinely energized mind so that in thought and power, He could do the will of the Father.

1 CORINTHIANS 2:16 For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct Him? **But we have** (access to) **the mind of Christ** (so that we are able to see things as He sees them through the eye of faith).

As we come around the communion table let us remember that the Lord is not only the Forgiver of sins but also the Lord Who heals all those who would, by faith, eat of the Passover Lamb of God.

PSALM 103:3 (Bless the Lord) **Who forgives all your iniquities; Who heals all your diseases;**

ISAIAH 53:4 Surely He has borne (in punishment) **our griefs** (sickness, weakness and disease), and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

ISAIAH 53:5 But He was wounded for our transgressions (rebellion), He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace (the punishment that brought us peace) was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed (and made whole).

Sickness should then have no more power over us than sin. We should no more accept sickness in our lives than we accept sin. Both have been dealt with through the Cross. There is nothing left to do, as we have said, except **repent** (of sin), **believe** (God's Word), **reckon** (ourselves to be dead to the old man and alive to the new man in Christ), then **yield** (on a daily basis to the Holy Spirit) (Romans 6:8-13).

With the Divine Nature of which we are now partakers in Christ (2 Peter 1:4) energizing us, we can then become one in faith with Christ. Then through prayer, Anointing for healing is able to flow from the centre of our being outward to touch our flesh (or through prayer the flesh of another). Only holy faith can make proper demands on the Anointing of God. Only in the energy of the Divine Nature can we obtain this faith - this belief and trust in Christ, His Atonement and what it has given to us, health and wholeness in every area.

“. . .Sickness should then have no more power over us than sin. We should no more accept sickness in our lives than we accept sin. . .”

When we take up the cup that represents the shed Blood of Christ, we should do so with a heart which expresses gratitude that indeed our sins have been washed away. We should also give thanks to the Father that the power of sin has been broken in our lives. In fact it no longer has any dominion over us. This is because, being raised with Christ, each of us has become a partaker of the new Nature within. We are to be thankful and appreciative that we have been born again, and that the old (unregenerated) man is no longer with us, having been nailed to the Cross with Christ. This is how we discern the Lord's Blood.

When we eat the bread we are to rejoice in faith that healing is now ours - that by His stripes we are healed, and we are one with Him. What He has, we have, for we are bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh and body of His Body. In this we rejoice that in addition to sin, sickness no longer has any power over us. This is how we discern the Lord's Body.

EPHESIANS 5:30 For we are members of His Body, of His flesh, and of His bones.

The key is that after the Israelites made a Covenant, they “*journeyed*” (Exodus 12:37) under God's direction given through Moses, God's saviour for Israel, a type-pattern of the Christ Who was to come. If they had not “*journeyed,*” they would have remained in Egypt. If they had stayed in or turned back to Egypt, they would have removed themselves from the Covenant, for the blessings that came with it were conditional upon them following God's directions. When the Israelites did follow God's directions, sicknesses and infirmities left them.

If we do not “journey” hand in hand with God in our walk on the earth, then the blessings of the Covenant will be denied us because we are not seeking or allowing the Lord to show us the path for our life. In this New Testament Age, we do not live under the Law of Moses as the Israelites did to obtain God’s blessings. Rather we live under the law of grace. In this the only requirements are that we abide in Christ, are led of the Spirit, and have faith in God’s Word.

Today not law but faith releases the Covenant’s promises. By obeying the Law and following Moses, the Israelites found that sickness and disease were no longer in the camp. Today we as Christians could go to church faithfully every Sunday, but this would not necessarily bring to us any of the Covenant blessings beyond salvation. Indeed unless faith accompanies our actions, we cannot appropriate the promises of our New Testament Covenant. This, of course, includes healing.

HEBREWS 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he who comes to God must believe that He is (that He exists), and that He is a rewarder of them who diligently seek Him.

Discerning The Lord’s Body

Faith recognizes the truth of God’s Covenant and holds fast to the promised benefits of Christ’s Atonement. At communion we, by this faith, are saying that when we partake of the bread, we are one with the Lamb of God and He is one with us. With this faith we can profess that *“by His stripes we are healed.”*

“. . . Today not law but faith releases the Covenant’s promises. . . ”

Eating in faith means becoming one with Christ through faith in the Atonement, which then affords us the physical benefits of our Covenant with God. In communion we are to remember the applied Blood. We are also to remember that by faith, we have eaten His flesh through identifying with Him on the Cross as our substitute, and, in His strength, embracing all that He commands us to do.

He was beaten so that we can be made whole, free from all sickness and disease. He suffered pain so we don’t have to suffer the pain of sickness. Remember all this when you partake of the bread of communion.

MATTHEW 8:17 And thus He fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah, He Himself took [in order to carry away] our weaknesses and infirmities and bore away our diseases. (Amp.)

In the church at Corinth many were sick, showing that surely something was lacking - as it is in many churches today. As we have said, and let us never forget, God is the same yesterday, today and forever. He is the God Who heals all our diseases. By faith we must accept this. In the power of the Divine Nature we must take up our cross of self denial, and

by faith we must “journey” so as to follow the same Spirit Who led the Israelites finally, when all unbelief was gone, into the land of promise.

To the Believer who would trust in His Covenant, God has proven Himself over the many centuries to be the Healer of sickness as well as the Forgiver of sins. Both have been taken care of in the Atonement. So we need to “arise” from our bed of sickness - if we have one - in the power of the Spirit of Truth. Jesus’ Blood was shed at Calvary not only for the remission of sins, but to seal the promise by which we can be healed. This was paid for by His stripes, the terrible beating and the punishment that He endured, while still believing and trusting in the Father. Jesus maintaining His faith in the Father at this time was essential for the benefits of the Atonement to come to us - for it meant He did not sin. Faith prevailed in His life, proving that no matter what the world or the devil did, He was going to remain righteous to the end. He was crushed for our guilt, the punishment needed for us to obtain peace was upon Him and by His stripes we are (have been) healed (Isaiah 53:4-5). Surely He has borne our griefs (sicknesses) and carried our sorrows (pains). We are made whole through this great Atonement, spirit, soul and body. He took away our infirmities, every last one - feebleness of mind and body, and all weaknesses. Infirmity and sickness should have no more power over us than sin does. Again, if we don’t accept sin in our lives, then we should not accept infirmity and sickness. Christ paid the price so that we do not have to be shackled by sin and sickness.

“ . . . Jesus’ Blood was shed at Calvary not only for the remission of sins, but to seal the promise by which we can be healed. . . ”

By taking the red liquid at communion, we are remembering the shed Blood that saved us from our sin and washed us clean, giving us spiritual healing.

By eating the bread at communion, we are bringing into remembrance the sacrifice of the broken Body so that we might have physical healing by having faith in the Atonement that makes us one with Christ.

LUKE 22:19 And He took bread, and gave thanks, and broke it, and gave unto them, saying, “This is (represents) My Body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me.”

LUKE 22:20 Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is (represents) the New Testament (New Covenant) in My Blood, which is shed for you.”

1 CORINTHIANS 11:24 And when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, “Take, eat: this is My Body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me.”

1 CORINTHIANS 11:25 After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, “This cup is the New Testament in My Blood: this do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”

1 CORINTHIANS 10:16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the Blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the Body of Christ?

We need to discern with proper focus in order to appropriate, by faith, the Lord's Body for our healing. When we discern the Lord's Body properly, we will not do as many in the church at Corinth did - take the Lord's supper unworthily.

We need to understand our Covenant with God - that it is a Blood and Body of Christ Covenant.

The power of the Blood was such that it was able to ratify the Covenant between man and God. In the Old Testament spiritual economy, because of the state of man and the worth of the animal sacrifices, these sacrifices had to be performed on a yearly basis.

The offering of a perfect sacrifice fulfilled all the requirements of the Law, and introduced the New Testament economy of grace. Because of the worth of this sacrifice, no further offering or sacrifice is needed. The Covenant has been ratified by the Blood shed at Calvary on our behalf. The price for our sin, for our health and for our future has been paid in full. *"It is finished,"* Jesus said. The price was paid and accepted by the courts of heaven. So because the Blood has ratified the Covenant of Divine healing, we can now say, "By His stripes I am healed."

The Blood is the answer to the problem of sin. The wounded Body of the Saviour was needed to answer the problem of sickness and disease.

As the old hymn proclaims:

*"There is power, power, wonder working power in the Blood of the Lamb.
There is power, power, wonder working power in the precious Blood of the Lamb."*

“. . .The price for our sin, for our health and for our future has been paid in full. . .”

Jesus' Stripes

The healing power of God is available today because Jesus maintained His faith in His Father's Word during His time of terrible physical and mental suffering on and before the cross. He maintained His faith in the Father, having complete trust that He would not ask anything of His Son that wasn't necessary. This testing proved Him to be the perfect sacrifice to atone for our sin. Note that the word *"stripes"* in Isaiah 53:5 is properly translated from the original Hebrew as "wound."

JOHN 19:1 Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged (whipped) Him.

ISAIAH 53:4 Surely He (Jesus) has borne (taken) our griefs (sickness, weakness and disease), and carried our sorrows: yet we did (ignorantly) esteem (consider) Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

ISAIAH 53:5 But He was wounded (pierced) for our transgressions (rebellion), He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace (the punishment that brought us peace) was upon Him (and Him alone); and with (by) His stripes (wounds) we are healed (and made whole).

Wuest writes concerning the “*stripes*” of 1 Peter 2:24, which Peter wrote about in reference to Isaiah 53:5:

*“The Roman scourge was a lash usually made of leather thongs loaded at intervals with bone or metal. Peter, in his first epistle (2:24), in the words, “with whose **stripes** ye were healed,” gives us a vivid picture of his recollection of how our Lord’s back looked after the scourging. The word “**stripes**” in the Greek text is in the singular number. The word refers to a bloody wale trickling with blood that arises under a blow. Our Lord’s back was so lacerated by the scourge that it was one mass of open, raw, quivering flesh trickling with blood, not a series of stripes or cuts, but one mass of torn flesh.”²*

(underlines added)

In this physical state, our Lord would have suffered incredible physical pain that would also have produced enormous mental suffering. The stripes, mentioned in Isaiah 53:5, caused much pain and suffering to our Saviour. The injustice, betrayal and abandonment He experienced were added to increase His soulish suffering (mental anguish) so that we may have peace and wholeness in our minds. In the suffering and ultimate death of the Lamb of God on the cross, holy justice was satisfied, the curse upon man (spirit, soul and body) being taken care of at the Atonement.

“. . .Our Lord’s back was so lacerated by the scourge that it was one mass of open, raw, quivering flesh trickling with blood, not a series of stripes or cuts, but one mass of torn flesh. . .”

The “*stripes*” (wound) relates to the physical suffering Jesus endured - so that we may be healed. As we have said, the Atonement consists of the suffering, death and Resurrection of Jesus. The suffering aspect of the Atonement included the physical suffering of Jesus, the mental suffering of Jesus and the spiritual suffering of Jesus - throughout the crucifixion and the lead up to it. After this time of terrible testing was finished, Jesus’ death and then His Resurrection completed the Atonement process.

However it is not just by the stripes which Jesus bore that we are able to be healed. It is because He maintained His faith through this whole time of testing that we, today, can obtain the healing power of God when we need it. It was by His shed Blood that the promise was then sealed, and healing became available to us.

Our debt for salvation, as well as the debt for the healing of our soul and body, have been “paid in full” through the Atonement. Let us never forget that Jesus bore the punishment due to us through this whole process.

1 PETER 2:24 Who His own self bore our sins in His own Body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by Whose stripes you were (past tense) healed (body and soul).

HEBREWS 5:9 And (through His completed experience) being made perfect, He became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them who obey Him

Our Saviour’s sufferings in relation to the Atonement were vicarious, “borne” by Him on behalf of man to save him from the consequences of sin (Romans 8:17). We could then see Isaiah 53:4 in this same light, “*Surely He has borne* (paid the price through vicarious suffering for) *our griefs* (sicknesses).”

Yes sin was “borne” by Christ, but so was all sickness and disease that sin had brought into the world. However, He did not bear our sins and sicknesses in His Body as such. He bore the penalty for our sins and our sicknesses, the penalty being the debt we could never pay. He bore the penalty for the curse of sickness to be lifted.

MATTHEW 8:17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet Isaiah, saying, “Himself took our infirmities, and bore our sicknesses.”

*“The word “infirmities” in this 17th verse speaks of feebleness of mind and body, malady, frailty, disease, sickness and weakness. All this Christ bore on the Cross fulfilling Isaiah 53.”*³

“. . .The suffering aspect of the Atonement included the physical suffering of Jesus, the mental suffering of Jesus and the spiritual suffering of Jesus - throughout the crucifixion and the lead up to it. . .”

Therefore we can see that Jesus has already paid the price for us to obtain healing and wholeness in every area of our lives. Our healing was paid for approximately 2,000 years ago. God waits for us to meet the conditions so that His power can make this truth a reality in each of our lives, for we can know from the promises in scripture that God wants His people to be fit and well, and to live in good health. Jack Hayford speaks accordingly of the provision of the Cross:

“HEALING, DIVINE, THE MINISTRY OF: *The dynamic ministry of Jesus not only revealed God’s heart of love for mankind’s need of a Redeemer, but unveiled God’s compassionate heart of mercy for mankind’s need of a Healer. The will of God was perfectly disclosed in His Son; we are to seek ways to fully convey that perfect revelation. Just as the Fall of man introduced sickness as a part of the curse, the Cross of Christ has opened a door to healing as part of salvation’s provision. Healing encompasses God’s power to restore broken hearts, broken homes, broken lives, and broken bodies. Suffering*

*assumes a multiplicity of forms, but Christ's blood not only covers our sin with redemptive love; His stripes release a resource of healing at every dimension of our need."*⁴
(underlines added)

True Divine healing always begins in the heart of man by the grace of God (Matthew 12:34-35). Our wealth is in God, or should we say, "God in us" (John 14:23). The riches we seek should not be those belonging to the temporal world, but rather those of the heavenly kind. The desire of our heart should be to seek God and His will, not earthly riches, glory and the favour of man. The riches of Divine love will far outweigh and outlast the love of things. Let our focus be therefore, "Lord, heal my heart, soften it, so that I can know and respond to Your will and no other." This is the prayer of a humble Saint whom God will hear, and to whom He will respond (James 4:6). And this will result in true healing of the heart, which, before the Cross, was dead to the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God. Such a heart had no energy to do right, only evil - but the Cross changes everything. Only God can heal the heart so that we become new creations in Christ, with a loving Father and a new heart (Jeremiah 31:33-34; Hebrews 8:10).

“. . .Healing encompasses God's power to restore broken hearts, broken homes, broken lives, and broken bodies. . .”

Let's read Colossians 1:12-14:

COLOSSIANS 1:12 Giving thanks unto the Father, Who has (qualified and) made us meet (fit) to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light:

COLOSSIANS 1:13 Who has delivered us from the power (authority) of darkness, and has translated us into the Kingdom of His dear Son:

COLOSSIANS 1:14 In Whom we have redemption through His Blood, even the forgiveness of sins

In Christ we have been redeemed - we have been delivered from the authority of darkness and placed into the Kingdom of God. This deliverance encompasses every area of our lives, for this is our inheritance. The healing of our bodies is very much a part of this wonderful provision. As Dake wrote concerning Isaiah 53:10:

“Complete sacrifice (Isaiah 53:10). Himself - His entire self, not His personal soul only. It took His body, soul, and spirit to make a complete offering for sin and sickness. He was a complete substitute for man. Since the body, soul, and spirit of man had sinned and were under the sentence of death, it took the whole being of the Messiah to take man's place. The word soul is sometimes used of an individual (Genesis 12:5; 41:26). There is no such thing as sinning with the flesh and not with the soul and the spirit, as taught by some. The flesh cannot be filthy and the soul and spirit holy. The body became sinful, depraved and diseased by sin in the fall, and the body must be redeemed from these things if redemption is to be complete.”

“Why God was pleased with the death of Christ (Isaiah 53 verse 10). The only reason it pleased Jehovah to permit Him to be crucified was to bring about the redemption of the whole creation so that His eternal program could be carried out with man on earth (v10). He could not have been pleased with the mutilation of His beloved Son because He punished men for this (Acts 2:22-24; 1 Thessalonians 2:16). Both the Father and the Son volunteered to suffer such indignities for the salvation of men (John 3:16; 10:18). Such a sacrifice on the part of God showed His divine perfection, justice, mercy, and boundless benevolence. The law was upheld, sin was judged, and a basis of pardon and eternal reconciliation was made possible.”⁵

Jesus Himself, spirit, soul and body, had to receive the punishment due to us for sin. He had to suffer in these three areas of man’s makeup in order to pay the price for man to be made whole in each of these areas. Therefore He suffered mental torment so that we can have peace (“*the chastisement of our peace was upon Him*” (Isaiah 53:5). See also Luke 22:44). He suffered physical torment so that we can be healed in our body (“*and with His stripes we are healed*” (Isaiah 53:5). See also Isaiah 52:14, Luke 22:63-64). His spirit suffered in that the Father turned away from Jesus as He became the “Sin Bearer” (Matthew 27:46). Ultimately the price paid for wholeness in our spirit was death - for without the shedding of Christ’s Blood (bringing about death) there can be no forgiveness.

“ . . . Since the body, soul, and spirit of man had sinned and were under the sentence of death, it took the whole being of the Messiah to take man’s place. . . ”

In suffering in His righteous spirit, soul and body, Jesus became a complete sacrifice for our spirit, soul and body. He suffered to the full extent, spiritually, mentally and physically. This suffering constituted, before death, as much pain and suffering as any man could endure while remaining alive and sinless. This mental and physical suffering was necessary for the healing of our mind and body. Then for our spirit, He shed His Blood and laid His life down so that He could die in our place. He took this, our penalty, so that we could be cleansed (healed) in our spirit, and brought back into proper relationship with the Father.

The Atonement has completely addressed all of man’s problems both in a legal sense and a conditional sense. It has not only dealt with sin and satisfied justice but has made the way for the grace of God to empower us to live in God’s abundant blessings. Indeed the Atonement has opened heaven’s gates so that now in Christ we are blessed with “*all spiritual blessings*” (Ephesians 1:3). Because Jesus suffered on our behalf in His body, soul and spirit, the Atonement is complete in addressing the entire need of man, body, soul and spirit.

Before coming around the communion table, Christians should be prepared, through such teaching as we have just studied, in order to have a proper spiritual focus at this time of appreciation and celebration. In this way, we will be able to discern the Lord’s Body

and Blood properly, as we are meant to do. Then we will not have “Corinthian” churches, but rather, Holy Spirit taught, led and empowered churches, which can and will make a difference in the land. Amen.

THE NEED TO EXAMINE OURSELVES

Many Christians forget the commandment to examine themselves before they come to the communion table, and it is important that we do not do so. If our minds are on what we are going to do after church, what we did last week or what we are going to eat for lunch, etc., we will not be focusing on what communion represents and so will not be able to enter into the deeper level of fellowship with God which this part of the service offers. In fact we will be denying both ourselves and God the pleasure of this deeper interaction at this special time. And while we should focus on the Lord and His Word, and be listening for the voice of the Spirit throughout the whole service, we should be particularly reminded of the commandment to examine ourselves before we partake of communion, the special time in which we remember the Lord’s Body and Blood.

“. . . Many Christians forget the commandment to examine themselves before they come to the communion table, and it is important that we do not do so. . .”

As we have said, it is important to repent of sin before coming to the communion table (1 Corinthians 11:27-29). Sometimes there may be blatant sin in our lives which we have not dealt with. At other times there may be sin which we have forgotten about or pushed aside. As we open up at this time, the Spirit may quicken to us the knowledge of this sin, giving us opportunity to repent. So for the many who come to church in an unrepentant state, thinking they are right with God when in fact this is not the case, the answer is repentance. In this way, if we come worthily to the communion table, we avoid giving the enemy legal ground to attack us. The Lord would also have us participate fully in His Supper and not be hindered in any way from joining with Him and enjoying the pleasure of His fellowship at this time on a corporate level, with fellow Believers. As scripture tells us:

1 JOHN 1:9 If we confess (and repent of) **our sins** (acknowledge we have done wrong), **He** (the Lord) **is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness** (the consequences of sin).

If, when at church or teaching meetings, we have our mind on other things, this can block the Lord from speaking to us, and we may miss what He is trying to tell us.

The Lord wants our full attention because that is what is needed to receive revelation (heart) knowledge from the Spirit of God, and to enter into a relational depth in the spiritual waters into which we have been placed.

Therefore we always need to be open to God and willingly obeying His directions. This will involve giving up our own ideas, and taking on His ideas as our own. In this way we

can goal to become more Christlike and to enter into greater unity with the Holy Spirit through the empowerment of the Divine Nature.

VERTICAL AND HORIZONTAL FELLOWSHIP

Background Reading: John Chapter 17

Let's turn to Matthew 26:26-28:

MATTHEW 26:26 And as they were eating, **Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and broke it, and gave it to the Disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is My Body (a symbol of His Body and what would happen to it)."**

MATTHEW 26:27 And **He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink ye all of it;**

MATTHEW 26:28 For **this is My Blood** (the cup represents His shed Blood) **of the New Testament** (Covenant) **which is shed** for many for the remission (forgiveness) of sins."

In Christ, we have complete communion with God, for our regenerated spirit is surrounded by God's saving presence and is washed clean of sin. Jesus also told us, however, to have communion together corporately on a natural level, bringing into remembrance His broken Body and shed Blood. As we focus on this time and its significance, an inward and spiritual interaction between us and God can take place. Believers can also be bonded together at communion in a spirit of unity on a spiritual plane, through the Anointing of God.

“. . .The Lord would also have us participate fully in His Supper and not be hindered in any way from joining with Him and enjoying the pleasure of His fellowship. . .”

The Lord's Supper is designed to constantly remind us of God's greatest act of love - that of delivering us from sin through the death and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus. It is also designed to remind us that the second member of the Trinity took on flesh and became a man for the purpose of death for us. The Supper itself should involve more than a mere recollection of these events - it should include a response from the heart of gratitude and thankfulness for the great love that has been shown to us. This should incorporate both vertical and horizontal aspects of fellowship.

Let's look at this a little more closely.

The vertical aspect of fellowship describes our fellowship with the Lord.

The horizontal aspect of fellowship refers to our fellowship with our fellow Believers.

While both aspects of fellowship are absolutely essential to our Christian walk, the latter is dependent upon the former (1 John 1:7).

We need to prepare ourselves before the service so that our vertical fellowship with God is ongoing and vital. In other words we should spend time with God on a daily basis, worshipping Him and allowing Him to speak to us. Sometimes He may show us that we need to change areas of our lives. At other times He may simply share His love with us. Whatever God and His sons and daughters do in these times, however, will help develop the vertical fellowship that exists between He and His children.

*“. . . We need to prepare ourselves before the service
so that our vertical fellowship with God is
ongoing and vital. . . ”*

We gain a legal positional relationship with the Father upon salvation, but then we need also to fellowship daily with our Heavenly Father in order to develop this relationship and expand our fellowship. This will help us when we come to the communion table as a corporate group of Believers. Then we will be in a position to join together with other Believers in “*the faith*” as one in love and truth. This is called **the unity of the Spirit**. When our vertical fellowship with God is right, this will help in promoting our horizontal fellowship with one another in the Spirit. This unity will then command a blessing:

PSALM 133:1 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! (*There are two types of unity: the man-made variety, and that which can only be given by God, which will always have the Cross as its foundation*) (E.S.B.)

PSALM 133:3 . . . for there the Lord commanded (and still commands) **the blessing, even life for evermore.**

This blessing will mean that there is an Anointing on the service. The principle of holy unity applies to communion, holy unity which commands a blessing that brings pleasure to God and His family. So we can see why it is so important to have this unity in our corporate meetings. We do need to remember, however, that before this horizontal unity can be realized, our vertical fellowship with our God must be sound and unbroken.

God Disciplines Us For Our Benefit

Background Reading: John 15:1-8

The Lord tells us that we should listen to and meditate on the instruction His Word provides because as we obey it, we will walk in peace and fruitfulness, and develop in character. He tells us this for our own benefit. In a similar way we give our children instructions which are for their own benefit. And if children are not doing what they are told, how do parents normally react? They rebuke and discipline their children to show them the right way, to keep them safe and to help them live productive lives. Our Heavenly Father treats us in the same way. Therefore:

HEBREWS 12:5 . . . My son, despise not (do not make light of) **the chastening** (discipline) **of the Lord, nor faint** (lose heart) **when you are rebuked** (corrected) **of (by) Him:**

HEBREWS 12:6 For whom the Lord loves He chastens (disciplines), **and scourges** (continually disciplines for the purpose of experiential righteousness) **every son whom He receives** (as His own, accepted and cherished).

HEBREWS 12:7 If you endure chastening (discipline, correction), **God deals with you as with sons** (is treating you as sons); **for what son is he whom the father chastens not** (is not disciplined by his father)?

HEBREWS 12:8 But if you be without chastisement (discipline), **whereof all are partakers** (all true Believers undergo discipline), **then are you illegitimate** (children) **and not** (true) **sons.**

HEBREWS 12:10 . . . but He (God disciplines us) **for our profit** (benefit), **that we might be partakers of** (may share in) **His holiness.**

HEBREWS 12:11 Now no chastening (discipline) **for the present** (at the time) **seems to be joyous** (pleasant), **but grievous** (painful, hard to bear); **nevertheless afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them who are exercised thereby** (trained by it: John 15:1-9).

Note: “*Chastening*” in this context does not mean “punishment” but rather describes God’s corrective measures that are designed to help eliminate anything that is against the will of God in our lives. The word “*scouges*” refers to His continual correction for the purpose of experiential righteousness. For example, if there be a test needed to develop our character as a Christian, and we fail to pass it, that trial will be re-visited upon us, even in different ways and through different circumstances. God as our Father would be irresponsible in not addressing this particular issue again (and again), if needed, so that we may grow and develop. Therefore He will take opportunity through various circumstances to do so for our benefit. Verse 11 describes the situation whereby God allows us at times to be exposed to trials and even tribulations for our faith’s sake. This involves being corrected for the purpose of righteousness - so that we may develop in character, understanding and Christlikeness.

“. . .Note: “Chastening” in this context does not mean “punishment” but rather describes God’s corrective measures that are designed to help eliminate anything that is against the will of God in our lives. . .”

If parents do not discipline their children, they are taking no real care for their lives. As such they are irresponsible parents with no love for their children.

God is not irresponsible at all. Rather He is a very responsible Father Who loves His children and so desires to correct and discipline them in His love and truth. What prevents

God from disciplining His children is sin - in particular self-rule - which hinders God from being a Father in our lives. Self-rule will frustrate God's grace because He respects His creation's free will to choose - life or death, sin or righteousness, self-rule or God-rule. If His children have yielded hearts, and God has His way in a Believer's life, then all He gives or allows is for one purpose - for faith and love to be growing in the heart of the Believer, ever deeper and wider.

God corrects sometimes by allowing certain situations to occur or continue to occur. Many times in the midst of difficult circumstances, man has only one means of escape, and that is to call on the Lord to empower and deliver him, e.g. look at the experiences of Joseph, Moses and the Apostles. The story of the prodigal son also certainly highlights God's use of circumstances to bring about humbling, yieldedness and change.

Any correction from God is always for the purpose of bringing about His will in our lives. Primarily this involves becoming more Christ-like in our minds and hearts. Indeed this is the greatest blessing we could ever receive - the development of our character! Be aware however that sometimes what may seem like a correction from God may be nothing of the sort. For example, when John the Baptist's head was cut off, God did not intervene as He later did when Paul and Silas were in jail. God allowed John to die in this way for other reasons. It was not so that John could grow but was for a reason beyond John. Remember that we have in this life certain "plug ins" and external influences which will steer us into the rocks of life if we allow them to. Such influences can do nothing for us except cause us grief and heartache. But God is there, and if we allow him to "chasten" us, He will do so. He will correct our thoughts and emotional dictates so that we don't come aground on the rocks of life.

“. . . God allows us at times to be exposed to trials and even tribulations for our faith's sake. This involves being corrected for the purpose of righteousness - so that we may develop in character, understanding and Christlikeness. . .”

To grow in faith can be likened to the growth of muscle tissue in the human body where resistance is needed for that muscle to grow and increase in size and effectiveness. Such resistance is provided by weights which are lifted consistently over periods of time. This we call practise! For our faith to grow, we sometimes need trials and circumstances to push against us and challenge us in terms of how we will respond. In this process if we do what we are supposed to do in God, we will be trained to come under God's discipline and therefore His power. As a result, faith in God will grow.

Note: There is a difference between discipline through circumstances and persecution which is definitely not from God. Persecution at its various levels comes not for discipline's sake but because of the Gospel's sake. The Bible tells us that *“all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution”* (2 Timothy 3:12). This involves people, of their own free will, persecuting Believers who stand up for the Name of Jesus, at times even to the point of death. If God does not intervene, He is in a secondary sense, allowing

such to take place. However God's sovereign intervention in the affairs of men is the exception to the rule rather than the rule. Persecution is not God testing His people but the enemy coming against God via His people. This brings glory to God for the Gospel's sake as His people refuse to bow to evil (Acts 6:40-41).

When the Lord disciplines or corrects us, He is making us aware of our wrongdoing, and indicating that He is displeased with our actions or our thinking, etc. This correction can come through an inner witness - an inner knowing. We can also hear His voice in a spiritual sense, or be convicted of sin as we read or hear the Word of God. When people are not open to these avenues of correction, the Lord often uses another person to work through, so that they may be led back to living according to His will. Such correction can come through your Pastor, or another person God has placed in a position of authority in your church (Hebrews 13:17). No matter how we experience it, as we respond willingly to God's discipline, we will receive the victory God's Word promises.

“ . . . There is a difference between discipline through circumstances and persecution which is definitely not from God . . . Persecution is not God testing His people but the enemy coming against God via His people. . . ”

The benefits of obedience (submission to His Word) are blessings such as peace, joy, strength and having His protection surrounding us. So let us be teachable and open to receiving correction so that we may grow in the Lord and be more effective in His service.

As God instructed Joshua in the way of obedience which brings true prosperity and success, so too He instructs us today:

JOSHUA 1:7 Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the Law, which Moses My servant commanded you: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper whithersoever you go. (*To deviate from the Word of God is to deviate from prosperity. To adhere to the Word of God is to prosper, and to prosper in all things : E.S.B.*)

JOSHUA 1:8 This Book of the Law (God's Word) shall not depart out of your mouth (you shall speak about God's Word constantly); but you shall meditate therein (think on God's Word) day and night (all the time), that you may observe (be watchful) to do (act) according to all that is written therein: (and this is the promise) **for then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall have good success.**

JOSHUA 1:9 Have not I commanded you? Be strong and of a good courage (go forward and trust the Lord); be not afraid, neither be dismayed: for the Lord your God is with you wheresoever you go.

For the Christian, “the law” constitutes the principles of God by which we are to live our lives. We do this as we take up our cross daily (denying self-rule and self-desire), and rely on the grace of the new nature within us to give us the desire and empowerment to do

God's will. So "the Law" to the Believer is "the will of God." Unlike the Old Testament Saints, we are not under "law" to obtain righteousness. Indeed Christ has put an end to that struggle for all those who are "in Him." Rather we are under grace - not to excuse sin in our lives but to give us the power to say "Yes" to God and so "No" to sin. Therefore it is God's grace working in and through us via the Divine Nature that empowers us to obey all the law - which was summed up by Jesus as follows: ". . . *You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind . . .*" (Matthew 22:37). And also ". . . *You shall love your neighbour as yourself.*" (Matthew 22:39).

"LAW" OR "GRACE"

God's Law as such is good, but if it is obeyed without grace, in other words in our own strength, it becomes a false means by which one tries to obtain righteousness or live according to a righteous standard. This then brings in the question for the Christian of law or grace. Which is the Christian seeking to live under and by?

If a Christian wants to please God (this being their true heart intent) and doesn't properly understand the truths of the message of the Cross (the Atonement), they will ultimately and inevitably seek to function under "law."

If a Christian does not understand the Cross, then their foundation for doing anything for God will be based on a false premise. Indeed only through an understanding of the Cross, which is found in Romans Ch. 6, can a Christian begin to live in "grace" experientially. Then if we obey by grace and continually rely on God, the very desire to do wrong diminishes.

The faith needed for the Christian to draw on the graces afforded to us through the Cross, can only come to us if we understand and rely on the way faith is developed in us. Therefore:

1. We must know that faith is God-given and that only through the Divine Nature energizing our human nature can we really believe and trust.
2. We must know that faith comes by hearing God's Word and digesting it. The grace of the Divine Nature gives us the Divine energy to believe and trust in this Word - which constitutes faith.

***“. . .if we obey by grace and continually rely on God,
the very desire to do wrong diminishes. . .”***

We speak here in regard to God's Word, repentance, the Blood, God's forgiveness, and the "*newness of life*" by which we walk. The prescribed order by which we are to live our lives comes through the Cross. Anything outside of this will result in "law" which will frustrate the grace of God in this New Testament Age of Grace (Galatians 2:21). To frustrate the grace of God is to stop Him from empowering us with His grace because of our intent to self-rule and be self-reliant.

The intent of many Christians is to please God, but sadly, as we have said, they attempt to do this under “law” and not grace. Anything done under law is done by and through the power of self. Not to understand the Cross, with the Holy Spirit’s help of course, means that the Christian cannot draw on God’s graces so as to do His will. This can only result in the Christian living his life by self-effort and therefore self-rule, no matter how noble his intentions. This is to frustrate the grace of God - to keep Him and the blessing of His grace at bay.

The proper object of one’s faith must be the Cross. Every other object, no matter how seemingly good, if it does not encompass the Cross will frustrate (stop) God’s grace, which is to prevent this grace being received in one’s life. There is no other road or way. Good works, intellectual study, prayer alone, water baptism, fasting, the sacrificing of time and goods, all if used alone as objects to attract God’s attention and favour will cause one to come under law and so to fail in one’s most noble ambition.

The Christian whose intention is to please God, will, without grace, always operate under the laws of religion. This must lead the Christian, of course, to an experientially dead life, at best, in Him. Yes, saved if in Christ, but dead to the experiential side of grace and so the outworking of “*newness of life*” (Romans 6:3-4).

“ . . . To frustrate the grace of God is to stop Him from empowering us with His grace because of our intent to self-rule and be self-reliant. . . ”

Indeed concerning our spiritual affairs, we either function under “law” or “grace.” If we are functioning under “law” then, in those areas, we will come under condemnation (judgement) (Romans 4:15).

The result of this condemnation will be that in these areas of law in our self-empowered world of religion, we will frustrate the grace of God - that is, we will block Him from doing what He wants to do as our loving Heavenly Father (Galatians 2:21).

You see where there is “law,” there is no room for anything else, for the Christian is “full up” in that area of their life. We, with God’s help, must be emptied of self and allow God to fill us with His graces, including the power that comes through His Divine Nature and His Word. However if we have religion, or have turned our faith into formulas, thereby making it a religion, then a position of “law” results. This is because religion always works in “law,” otherwise known as self-effort.

Further commentary on this subject is as follows: “*Whereas the effect of law is condemnation, the action of grace is “justification.”*”

The doctrine of justification by works generates religious pride - that of Justification by Faith produces contrition and humility. In the matter of Justification, Faith and works are opposite and irreconcilable - as opposed as Grace and Debt. Since God declares ungodly men righteous, works cannot in any sense furnish a ground for Justification, and hence the first step toward Salvation on the part of a sinner is to humble himself and accept the Divine pronouncement that he is “ungodly.”

Regrettably, the vast majority of mankind accepts the human doctrine of salvation by merit; a very small minority believes the Divine Doctrine of Salvation by Grace. As the Lord Jesus Himself said, few tread that narrow way. It is abhorrent to human pride.”⁶

(underlines added)

This same principle applies in regard to works. Because the Cross is not involved, those works done in the power of self alone will never please God or bring victory into our lives. Therefore man's works, no matter how good or well intentioned these may be, cannot be deemed "good" or "acceptable" in a spiritual sense.

When man looks for God's favour in the doing of good works alone, even though it is "good" to do them, it does not gain approval from God. This is because man is seeking credit for his self-effort, and is not giving credit to anyone else for he has done it himself. This in fact is self-reliance and comes under the "law of works," for while these works are "good" they are not "Godly," and so are of no eternal value.

To the natural mind such works may appear altruistic, certainly good, for example to help one's fellow man in need. However, God's Word tells us that we are first to love our fellow man (Matthew 22:37-39), not just meet his natural need. This love, if we are to follow God's prescribed order, must be a Godly love, "agape love," and we can only love like this if we:

1. Are in Christ
2. Understand the Cross
3. Come to faith in the Cross (the Atonement) and what it has afforded
4. Receive the empowerment of the Divine Nature to love as God loves.

All the "doing" in the world to try and help our fellowman will not replace our responsibility to love him. God has said in His Word that we must love both Him and our fellowman. Only when we do this can we please God. Of course God would not ask us to do something we cannot do. We are able to love in the way God wants us to love only in Christ as we yield to the Holy Spirit and allow Him to fill us and energize us with His graces.

“. . .When man looks for God's favour in the doing of good works alone, even though it is "good" to do them, it does not gain approval from God. . ."

Returning to the distinction between law and grace, another example can be seen in the Saint who has sin in their life. After realizing they are doing wrong, they manage to stop sinning, after much struggle, by willpower.

However while to cease doing this wrong is good, it does not deal with the spiritual side of the sin. In order for any sin in a Saint's life to be dealt with in accordance with God's Word, the Blood must first be applied (through repentance) so that grace can then be received.

If this is not done, the Saint will live under "law" and its penalty. Just stopping the sin is not the end of law. The arm of the flesh (willpower) cannot deal with a spiritual problem, for only God's grace can deal with it completely. Only the Blood of the Cross can afford us this grace that deals with sin completely and brings us under "grace," even the forgiveness of sins.

The process begins when we allow ourselves to be humbled under the mighty hand of God (James 4:10; 1 Peter 5:6). Then through His Anointing, we encounter the power of truth that not only brings conviction to the heart but also the knowledge of this forgiveness. As we respond to God's conviction power, we will repent and put our sin under the Blood of the Cross to be forever obliterated (1 John 1:9; Ephesians 1:7; Psalm 103:12).

God's grace orders our life or comes into our life through God-given faith. Only in Christ, as we absorb the graces of the Divine Nature with a proper focus in regard to God's truth, wisdom and will, can we live in this higher order to which Christ has given the Saint access through the Cross.

To understand what the Cross has done for us and what it has afforded us, we must, with the help of the Holy Spirit:

1. Seek God's Word and will in regard to the Cross
2. Find God's Word and will in regard to the Cross
3. Embrace God's Word and will in regard to the Cross, e.g. Romans 6:11.

However we must know that in order to partake fully of the graces of the Divine Nature:

1. The Saint's intentions must be God-created
2. The Saint's motive must be God-given (pure)
3. The Saint's steps must be God-directed.

In other words, everything that is good or holy or righteous within we who are in Christ has already been placed there by the Lord Himself. Our responsibility is to yield - His is to supply us with grace and empowerment. Then the glory goes to Him and Him alone. Amen.

Ways of operating in "law" therefore involve:

- (a) Using willpower alone to do right. This is to do things, to try to please God, in our own strength.
- (b) Formularizing God's do's and don'ts - in other words His principles or His Word - so that our faith is turned into a religion in these areas. This is to use religious works to try to please God.

The Saint, to please God and reach his potential, must not only identify with Christ, but in all that he does he must identify in Christ. Positional salvation is not the goal but it is the gateway to conditional (experiential) salvation. The first is salvation from hell; the second is salvation from self. Only by experientially being in Christ can we know the joy and power of God's strength which enables us to say "yes" to His way, will and Word. All this amounts to us living our life not by obedience to "law" but by God's "grace" afforded to us through the Cross. And to live under grace will cause us not to break God's laws.

“. . .The Saint, to please God and reach his potential, must not only identify with Christ, but in all that he does he must identify in Christ. . .”

On a practical level, to live under grace is to acknowledge God in all our ways (Proverbs 3:5-6), so that we can order our lives by His direction and through His empowerment. In this we must serve God first, not man, for outside His empowering grace we cannot obtain merit. This is, in fact, to live by law, seeking to please God by our own efforts. In fact we sin when we don't submit to God first, for then self-rule gains ascendancy. And remember that we cannot serve two masters, the Lord and ourselves.

The Lord desires that we seek Him continually, desiring His direction and His will to be done in our lives. We also seek Him to ask for His enablement at a holy level so that we will not frustrate the grace of God (Galatians 2:21). As we have said, this means that we stop God from doing what He wants to do in our lives by preventing Him from bestowing His grace upon us.

“. . .On a practical level, to live under grace is to acknowledge God in all our ways (Proverbs 3:5-6), so that we can order our lives by His direction and through His empowerment. . .”

As we acknowledge the Lord in all our ways and seek to put Him first in everything we do, we develop our relationship with Him and learn greater levels of trust. This is to function under grace not law, not seeking to please Him through works but according to His direction and empowerment. As a result we can then give God the glory for whatever fruit is manifested in and through our lives. This is the way of the Cross, this is the harvest and the outcome of the Spirit-led life (Romans 8:1). Amen and amen!

WHAT SHOULD OUR PRIORITY BE ?

Background Reading: John 15:9-14

Our priority should be to do whatever the Lord commands. And what does the Lord command? He commands us to take up the cross of self-denial and follow Him. It is clear from Jesus' statement that discipleship entails the carrying of one's cross:

LUKE 14:27 **And whosoever does not bear (carry) his cross, and come after Me, cannot be My Disciple.**

This cross is not one of suffering, but rather a cross of self-denial - a cross of putting other people's needs before our own, and the Lord's will before the desires of our flesh.

LUKE 9:23 **And He said to them all, “If any man will come after Me (Jesus presents the conditions for discipleship), let him deny himself (by the power of the Spirit), and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.”**

If one is to “deny himself” and “take up his cross,” then one must “*forget one's self, lose sight of one's self and one's interests*” (Wuest). This means that for the Saint, the

interest of Christ must be the greatest priority in his daily life. Self must be hidden in Christ positionally and experientially if the Saint is to begin to walk in victory. To “*take up his cross daily*,” the Christian must continually look towards the Cross of Calvary, understanding what the Cross has accomplished and afforded them, and knowing that this could have only come by this means and this means alone.

In order to “*deny himself*” properly, the Saint must, by faith, understand what it is to identify with Christ, in His death, at the cross. By the grace of the Holy Spirit he must also understand that, in a spiritual sense, he has been raised with Christ, thus becoming a partaker of “*newness of life*” - the Divine Nature (2 Peter 1:4). Indeed if the Saint is to completely identify with Christ, they must deny their own strengths and abilities, even including their own thoughts, desires and emotions. Indeed our thoughts, desires and emotions must be God-inspired, and then owned by us.

“. . .Self must be hidden in Christ positionally and experientially if the Saint is to begin to walk in victory. . .”

It is interesting to note that at the time when the Gospels were written, the “cross” was a means by which death was administered. Therefore the metaphor which Jesus uses of the Disciple “*taking up his cross*” illustrates in a vivid way what is required of the Disciple, i.e. death to self - the denial of self-wants, self-rule and self-gratification.

Unless there is a continuing “crucifixion of self,” we will not walk in righteousness - for every day we must go through the Cross to obtain the grace we need for that day, knowing and appreciating through personal experiential relationship Jesus as Lord. In all we do, we must rely on God, seek His will and embrace it in the power afforded to us through the Cross. So we must lose our life (of self) in order to gain experientially a new life in Christ, full of the joy of the Lord and the power of the Spirit. Only by taking up our cross and denying self can we receive empowerment to both will and then do of God’s good pleasure. Then our relationship with Him will also deepen and develop.

JOHN 8:12 Then Jesus spoke again unto them, saying, “**I am the light of the world** (the only source of spiritual Light and Life): **he who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life** (and the power to walk in righteousness as they yield, believe and receive the grace needed).”

1 THESSALONIANS 1:5 For our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power . . .

There are two aspects of this power. The first describes God’s power at work within us so that we are able to do His will, being empowered to resist the destructive urges of the world, the flesh (the sin nature) and the devil. This power comes through the Divine Nature which energizes us to do God’s will as we submit to the Holy Spirit. The other aspect of this power is demonstrated through God supplying us with the provisions we need to run the race of faith. (And faith to receive these provisions comes through the Divine Nature enmeshing with man’s human nature.) These provisions include our daily physical needs, from finances to the healing of our body. Both aspects of the power of God

are only available on God's terms, and only through Calvary can the terms and conditions be met.

Through taking up the cross of self-denial, continuing in faith in God's Word and fellowshiping with the Lord daily, we will have the power of God operating in our lives.

Another way of looking at it is to say that this power is the power of the Gospel, which is the power of truth - and the truth (discovered and applied according to God's prescribed order) will always set people free. The condition for knowing the truth is that people will to receive and act on God's truths. Jesus stated in John Ch.8:

JOHN 8:31 Then said Jesus to those Jews who believed on Him, "If you continue in My Word, then are you My Disciples indeed;

JOHN 8:32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Therefore if you will to receive and act on God's truths, and seek the Lord diligently, you will come to know the truth in your heart and this, when yielded to, will set you free. We yield by accepting truth, and walking in it by God's grace. The truth that liberates, empowers and sets free is found only at Calvary through Christ's finished work. Every promise that would meet man's need is directed through Calvary, for there is no other road which leads to heaven's power.

“. . .every day we must go through the Cross to obtain the grace we need for that day. . .”

The Cross is the fuse - it bridges the gap to carry both the signal of need to the throneroom, and then receive the current of power from heaven to meet that need on earth. This spiritual connection is both sensitive enough to convey the need to the Father, yet strong enough to carry heaven's power to deliver the oppressed - and turn on the Light of truth in the darkness of a dead and dying world. **All spiritual truth must start, finish and be routed through the Cross of Calvary, for there is no other way to access heaven's power.**

Christianity Is Real

Are you a Christian in name only? Or are you a Christian of substance and character, having works of faith and love? (James 2:17-24). If so, let us acknowledge that these works are done only by God's grace at work through us. Praise His Name.

Stagnant Christians can be likened to those who worship God with their lips, but their hearts are far from desiring to do all that God wills. Such Christians, by not seeking the Lord and His Word, or His power within them to do His will, choose to remain ignorant of God's will in many areas of their lives. It is to their own detriment that they do so.

Many Christians are merely “playing church” today, by using church as a social club to meet their need for fellowship. If these Christians would yield fully to the Holy Spirit,

Who could then empower them to take up the cross of self-denial, they could then help other people both enter God's Kingdom and then grow in the knowledge of God and His Word. Alternatively, if Christians do not take up the cross of self-denial, those whom they could have reached may remain either unsaved or else in physical or mental bondage. The potential of the soldier of the Cross is enormous - but only as they flow in unity with the Spirit. It is only by His grace that we can be more than conquerors - in ourselves and on behalf of others (Romans 8:37).

Are you one of these Christians who is "playing church," or do you really want to accomplish something for God? Do you want the power of God operating in your life? Well you cannot receive it from the Lord if you are not really committed.

You will not have the power of God operating in your life, in a full sense, unless you become sincere, and dedicate yourself to God willingly and fully. This is done by allowing Jesus to be Lord of your whole life, then fellowshiping with Him daily and actively seeking His direction. How can you get to know someone unless you spend time with them, in this case via prayer, praise and worship, and the study of the Word? Involvement in each of these disciplines will help us commune with the living God and grow in understanding of His nature and ways. To the dedicated Christian, the Word of God and fellowship with God are of primary importance. The Word itself is holy, and we should live by it - with His empowerment. We should not treat it with contempt by having disregard for the Lord and His commandments. Indeed reverence is a major quality lacking in the lives of many Christians today, reverence meaning "respect unto obedience."

“. . . Many Christians are merely “playing church” today, by using church as a social club to meet their need for fellowship. . . ”

We should treat God's Word with the respect it deserves. Then, with a humble open heart, we will obey what it says. The Word itself tells us that our obedience is the measure of our love for the Lord (John 14:21). If we respect His Word then yield to the Spirit, Godly fruits will follow, being manifested in our lives. The world will then know to Whom we belong - by our fruits they will know (Matthew 7:20). Our reverence for the Word is vital to our identity as Christians and the fulfillment of our lives in Him, in Whom we live and move and have our being (Acts 17:28). Also, as we have said, if we are to grow in our relationship with the Lord, we need to refresh and sustain ourselves through fellowshipping with Him in the many areas that give us this opportunity.

The Communion Table represents one such special time of opportunity to commune with Him. Here as a group of Believers come together, being obedient to God's Word to bring to remembrance the wonderful love of the Saviour, the presence and heart of the Lord are revealed by the ministry of the Spirit.

If we are not living in full commitment to the Lord, we should not be condemned, but rather convicted so that we may repent. If God has told you to do something and you have not obeyed Him, you should admit it, acknowledge it, and repent in the Name of Jesus.

Then you need to accept God's forgiveness, receive your cleansing according to 1 John 1:9, and go on in God.

1 JOHN 1:9 If we confess (and repent of) **our sins, He** (the Lord) **is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness** (the results of that sin).

The Lord has promised that as we truly repent of our sins, He will forgive us and then forget them - so we should forget them too. So do not allow the devil to try to condemn you by reminding you of past sins, for once you have repented, they are forgiven and forgotten as far as God is concerned.

Remember:

Condemnation is the devil's weapon to cause us to be downtrodden and ineffective.

Conviction is God's tool to bring us to repentance.

JEREMIAH 31:34 . . . for I (God) **will** (if they repent) **forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.**

PSALM 103:11 For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is His (God's) mercy toward them who fear (reverence) **Him.**

PSALM 103:12 As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. *(This is the equivalent to "blotting out our sins" [Acts 3:19; Isaiah 43:25; 44:22]. It is impossible to bring the east and the west together, so it is impossible to bring the forgiven sinner and his forgiven sins together. This Divine fact gives to those who believe it a peace which nothing can destroy.)* (E.S.B.)

As we act on God's promises in **1 John 1:9**, the devil's schemes are brought to nothing, for he cannot place any condemnation on us. Indeed there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ and walk after the Spirit, according to His Word (Romans 8:1). Hallelujah!

Christian Disciples

Background Reading: John 13:34-35

All it takes to allow God to manifest His power in our lives is for us to live as Disciples and not mere Christians. You see there is the ordinary Christian life, and there is the disciplined life, and these can be worlds apart. One is exemplified by the Christian who is happy to stay in the family of God, doing enough to remain positionally a Christian, but never really allowing much ongoing sanctification to take place in their life. The other is exemplified by the Disciple who is always seeking to bring their condition into line with their position - in all areas.

“. . .there is the ordinary Christian life, and there is the disciplined life, and these can be worlds apart. . .”

The Disciple believes and reckons to their account that the old man is dead, having been nailed to the Cross, and that the sin nature is dethroned, disengaged and decommissioned on a conditional level as they yield to the Spirit. They also believe and reckon that, by the grace of God, they are now again partakers of the Divine Nature, as it was before the Fall. God's Divine Nature, as they yield, brings to them the desire and power to do God's will, therefore enabling the work of progressive and ongoing sanctification to take place in their life. This work gradually brings the Saint's condition to his position (of righteousness) in Christ.

Therefore, although both terms should be the same, just being "Christians" does not automatically make us "Disciples of Christ." A Christian who will not take up the cross of self-denial cannot live as a Disciple of Christ. This type of Christian is often concerned only for their own welfare and the welfare of their inner circle of friends and relatives. Disciples, on the other hand, care for the eternal welfare of all concerned - even the "unlovely." There are thus many Christians, but unfortunately, Disciples of Christ make up only a small minority of the Body of Christ. These are Christians who show no partiality or favouritism in respect to other people (James 2:1-9). Instead they reverence God and His Word, treating the downtrodden in the same way as the wealthy or influential, knowing that each is as important in the Lord's eyes.

“. . . A Christian who will not take up the cross of self-denial cannot live as a Disciple of Christ. . . ”

God is calling His people to live the disciplined life, the Spirit-led life - in other words, to be His Disciples. Then His desires become ours, and ours will be His, and we will be united with Him and with each other in desire and purpose. Then through us, God will be able to set many people free.

This then should be our goal and desire as Christians - to live as Disciples of Christ so that God's Word can be exalted, His Name glorified and as many people as possible rescued from the Kingdom of Darkness and the ravages of Satan.

Summary

When we come around the communion table, we need to have reverence, remembering, as we prepare to celebrate the Lord's Supper, in Whose presence we are gathered. As Paul reminded the Corinthians:

1 CORINTHIANS 11:23 . . . the Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed took bread:

1 CORINTHIANS 11:24 And when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, "Take, eat: this is My Body, which is broken for you: do this in remembrance of Me." (*This pertains to the Believer actually partaking of that Sacrifice by Faith. In brief, this is the meaning of the New Covenant : E.S.B.*)

1 CORINTHIANS 11:25 After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, “**This cup is the New Testament in My Blood** (*the New Covenant would be ratified by the shedding of Jesus’ Own Blood, which forever satisfied the sin debt*): **this do you, as oft as you drink it, in remembrance of Me** (*never forgetting what He has done for us, speaking of the Cross*). (E.S.B.)

1 CORINTHIANS 11:26 For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you do show the Lord’s death till He comes.”

There are many Christians who partake of the bread and the cup without considering the importance and the implications of their actions. Many take communion merely out of habit or because of tradition. Participating in communion, however, is a serious and precious thing. We should thus take account of ourselves before partaking of the emblems, and so fully live up to our responsibility as Christians in this area.

“ . . .When we come around the communion table, we need to have reverence, remembering, as we prepare to celebrate the Lord’s Supper, in Whose presence we are gathered. . . ”

So let us examine ourselves before we come around the communion table of the Lord. Let us also remember that communion is a time of celebration for all that the Lord has done for us. It is a memorial feast which we share together with our Saviour, a time when we can fellowship with each other and with Him in a special, privileged way. So let us rejoice with our resurrected Lord, and show to all that indeed Christ lives in and through us. Amen.

May you have the victory in Christ Jesus.

TIME LIMIT - Due on or before

*This time limit is based on a minimum of hours of study per week.
You should allow as a general guideline, hours to answer the questions.*

TOTAL ALLOWANCE hours.

If you are having problems completing this study within these guidelines, you may need to seek assistance from those in charge of distribution.

STUDY QUESTIONS

The following questions are designed to assess how much you have understood and retained from your studies.

Answer and number all questions on line-ruled paper, giving two or three scriptures with each answer whenever possible. Also give an explanation, whenever possible, of how you arrived at your answer.

Answer these questions according to the instructions given regarding the grade you have chosen to work at, i.e. either Intermediate Grade or Ordinary Grade.

If you do not understand a particular question, contact those responsible for distribution.

*For ease of correction **write the actual question down on your answer sheet before answering each question, and please print all answers to the questions.***

Note: If you do not agree with any particular viewpoint expressed in the studies and you have another viewpoint, answer questions relating to this area in the following manner:

The view that the studies teach is

*But I believe
(and state the reasons why you do so)*

Note: Remember the time limit and complete the study and your answers within the allotted period.

If you are studying at Intermediate Grade, you will later be eligible to do the Advanced Questions if you so desire. You will not be able to use your study books or notes to help you answer these questions. In fact all you will be able to use are Bibles and Concordances. So prepare for this by studying properly and answering these questions according to the instructions given.

(See letters concerning how to study.)

COMMUNION Study Questions

- 1 (a) What does the word “communion” mean and how does a person have communion with another?

(b) How does this apply to Christian communion - the Lord’s Supper?
2. What is communion a time of, and why is this so?
- 3 (a) Through Christ’s finished work, what nature has been imparted to us, and what does it help us do?

(b) What is necessary before we can gain this help?
4. Upon salvation, which part of us is clean, and which part still needs renewing?
5. What takes place during the work of “ongoing sanctification”?
6. What should be a main focus point of church on Sundays, and why?
7. What does the word “Deity” mean? Using scripture, show how this word applies to Jesus.
8. What did God the Word leave behind when He took on human form?
9. How do we know that Jesus was sinless, and what did this make Him eligible to do?
10. How was the ransom price for mankind’s redemption paid?
11. Explain what Isaiah 52:14 is describing.
12. “Jesus broke sin’s deathly grip on our lives.”

(a) What does this mean?

(b) How do we appropriate His victory personally, i.e. how is the sin nature defeated in our lives?
13. Look at Psalm 22, and indicate briefly which major verses relate directly to the crucifixion of Jesus, and what these verses are describing.
14. What was significant about Jesus’ words “*It is finished*” (John 19:30) ?
15. What is one view of the actual physical cause of Jesus’ death? Give scriptural and medical support with your answer.

16. What had to happen before Jesus could die physically? Give scriptural support for your answer.
17. To whose will did Jesus submit (yield Himself) at the crucifixion, and what attitude did Jesus have towards those who crucified Him?
18. Was Jesus' death on the cross an accident or a mistake? Explain your answer.
- 19 (a) What symbolic gesture did Pilate perform to absolve himself from the responsibility of Jesus' death?
 (b) Who then, in their own words, took on the responsibility of Jesus' death?
20. What is the Atonement, and what did it achieve for mankind?
21. In the context of the Atonement, what part did Jesus' "*stripes*" play?
22. Jesus maintained His faith in the Father's words during the whole crucifixion period. What was important about this?
23. What did the centurion and the people watching say about Jesus when they saw the earthquake after He died?
24. Was Jesus aware beforehand of what would happen to Him at the hands of the Jewish leaders and Roman authorities? Give scriptural support for your answer.
25. Why did the Disciples not understand that Jesus was going to die, even after He told them?
26. What was the greatest sign which showed Jesus was from God, and what else did this sign prove?
27. Who, the Bible tells us, saw Jesus after the Resurrection?
- 28 (a) When Jesus was raised from the dead, what happened to His physical body?
 (b) With this new body, what is Jesus able to do?
 (c) When will we receive a new body, like that of Jesus?
- 29 (a) Today, what physical signs confirm the fact that God's Word is alive?
 (b) What is the greatest sign which confirms this fact?
30. According to 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, what does "*you are not your own*" mean and what implications does this have for our lives?

31. In Acts 20:28, what does the word “*purchased*” mean and with what have we been purchased?
32. What is our “*reasonable service*” (Rom.12:1) ?
33. What is a covenant and what is a blood covenant?
34. What did Jesus mean when He said “. . . *this is My Blood of the New Testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins*” (Matt.26:28) ?
35. How do we enter into the Covenant of Redemption?
36. What does Christ’s finished work at Calvary mean in regard to:
 - (a) Sin and death?
 - (b) Salvation?
 - (c) The Divine Nature, and its influence upon the human nature?
37. In communion:
 - (a) What does the bread symbolize (represent)?
 - (b) What does the drink symbolize?
38. When we have communion, what are we bringing into remembrance and what are we declaring about Christ’s finished work?
39. What are the two major requirements for participating in the Lord’s Supper?
- 40 (a) What does 1 Corinthians 11:28 tell us we should do before we take part in communion, and what does this mean?
 - (b) In Old Testament times, what was required of the High Priest before he came into the presence of God and what can we learn from this type-pattern in regard to communion?
 - (c) Place the scriptures 1 Corinthians 11:28-31 in the context of what was occurring in the Corinthian Church.
 - (d) What may happen if we do not do as 1 Corinthians 11:28 instructs?
- 41 (a) If you have sinned in attitude or deed, what must you do to be made right with God, and what scripture should you use in this case?

- (b) What are the two promises in this scripture and what are the conditions for receiving these promises?
42. What will unconfessed sin (e.g. unforgiveness) cause in a Christian's life?
- 43 (a) What does God's Word tell us about forgiving those who have wronged us, and when Christians find it difficult to forgive, what is usually the reason?
- (b) How may such people secure God's empowerment to forgive, and what should they then continue to do?
44. How do we properly discern and identify with:
- (a) The Blood of Christ at communion?
- (b) The Body of Christ at communion?
- 45 (a) If we identify with Christ in His death and Resurrection, what are we saying we have been legally set free from?
- (b) What obligation do we then have to sin and the sin nature?
46. If we do not properly discern (understand the meaning of) the Body and the Blood of Christ, what may result?
47. What does the second part of Psa.105:37 tell us about the Israelites who left Egypt, and what does this tell us about God's Covenant with His people?
48. What two requirements did the Israelites have to fulfill in order for good health to be theirs?
49. How do these type-patterns apply to us spiritually today?
- 50 (a) Describe briefly what took place in the story of the brass serpent.
- (b) What did the serpent on the pole represent (of what was it a type-pattern) and what attitude did the Israelites need in order to be healed?
51. Explain how God was given legal ground to heal the Israelites in the story of the brass serpent.
52. What were the people of Israel doing in a spiritual sense when they made blood sacrifices for sin according to the Law of Moses?
53. If we properly understand the Atonement, what benefits are made available to us?

54. What must be done to all sin if we are to develop faith and enjoy all the benefits of the Atonement?
55. How can we apply the story of the brass serpent to our lives in order to obtain healing today?
- 56 (a) How are we able to nail both our sin and our sickness to the Cross?
 (b) Why should we do this and what will be the result when we do?
57. How do we know the Lord is our Healer?
58. Explain how we need to eat by faith of the Passover Lamb so that healing may be ours today.
- 59 (a) "Sickness should have no more power over us than sin." Why?
 (b) What is our responsibility in this?
- 60 (a) When the Israelites "*journeyed*," what took place and why?
 (b) How can this type-pattern be applied to our lives spiritually today?
61. What released the promises of the Covenant in Old Testament times, and what releases the promises of the New Covenant today?
62. What had to accompany the physical suffering of Jesus in order for the price to be paid for our healing?
63. What was the difference between that which was needed to ratify the Covenant between God and man in the Old and New Testaments?
64. What does the Hebrew word for "*wound*" ("*stripes*") in Isaiah 53:5 tell us about Jesus' condition at this time?
65. Christ's sufferings in relation to the Atonement were "vicarious." What does this mean?
66. Where does true healing always begin? Explain.
- 67 (a) The suffering aspect of the Atonement was made up of what three aspects?
 (b) What did each of these aspects pay the price for?
68. How do we avoid having a "Corinthian-church" approach to communion, and what can be the benefit of doing so?

69. Why should we give the Lord our full attention when we are in church or teaching meetings, and what may result if we are inattentive?
70. As we participate in communion and remember what the Lord has done for us, what should our heart response be?
- 71 (a) What are the vertical and horizontal aspects of fellowship?
- (b) Which one of these aspects must be ongoing and vital before unity in the other can be realized?
72. How do we develop our vertical relationship?
73. What is “the unity of the Spirit,” how is it achieved and what blessing results from it?
- 74 (a) Why does God discipline us?
- (b) What are some of the ways in which God can bring His discipline (correction) to us?
- (c) What attitude should we have towards God’s discipline?
- 75 (a) According to Joshua 1:7 and 8, what are the conditions for a successful life in Christ?
- (b) What is “*the Law*” today for the Christian, how do we obey the Law of God, and what two verses of scripture still sum up the whole Law of God?
76. How is faith developed in us?
77. Many Christians desire to please God but try to do so by “law.” What does this mean?
78. How do we frustrate the grace of God?
79. If we are operating in religion, or have turned our faith into religion, what will we be doing?
80. Discuss the doctrine of salvation by works, where it comes from and where it leads to.
81. What is the difference between good works and Godly works?
- 82 (a) Just, by willpower, ceasing to commit a certain sin, may not be the end of it. Why not?

- (b) What is the true answer to sin?
83. How do we understand and then live in the higher order that we have access to through the Cross?
84. What are two ways of operating under “Law” ?
85. In very simple terms, what is positional salvation and what is conditional salvation?
- 86 (a) On a practical level, how do we live under grace and not law?
- (b) How is this then seeking to please Him, and where is the glory directed?
87. As Christians, what should our priority be?
88. Explain fully what it means for the Christian to “*deny himself and take up his cross daily*” : Luke 9:23.
89. What are the two aspects of God’s power as it operates in our life?
90. According to John 8:32, what is the power that will set people free, and what is needed from people to allow this power to set them free?
91. Explain how the Cross operates as the fuse for God’s power to flow.
92. What is meant by the term “playing church,” and what will be the result when people do this?
93. How do we respect God’s Word and what fruits can result from this?
94. If God has told you to do something and you have not obeyed Him, what should you do?
- 95 (a) If we truly repent, what does God promise concerning our sin?
- (b) Once we have been forgiven of any sin, what should we then do about it?
96. What is the difference between condemnation and conviction, and what are the sources of both?
- 97 (a) Explain the difference between just being a Christian and being a Disciple of Christ.
- (b) Relate this difference to the process of ongoing sanctification.
- (c) What are some of the main responsibilities of the disciplined life?
98. Explain fully what the communion table means to you.

99. At what grade did you study this booklet and answer the questions, Ordinary Grade or Intermediate Grade?
100. Do you wish to commit yourself to studying at 7 hours a week or 4 hours a week in regard to your next study?

Note: Please send \$..... with these answers for your next study.

Note: Under certain circumstances, you may not feel you can commit 7 hours a week to the next study. You can then opt to study at 4 hours a week. The time limits will be adjusted accordingly. Should your situation change, you can increase your time to 7 hours a week - just notify the college or those in charge of distribution.

WE BELIEVE:

1. The Bible is the inspired, infallible and authoritative written Word of God.
2. There is one true triune God, eternally co-existent in three persons Who form the Holy Trinity: God the Father, God the Word and God the Holy Spirit. These three dwell together in perfect unity, forming one heavenly government called God, and each of the three divine persons we recognize to be God.
3. God the Word stripped Himself of His rightful godly privileges and became flesh, a human being called Jesus Christ. Nevertheless He remained God the Word, being both truly God and truly man.
4. Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of a virgin. He was crucified, buried, and then raised from the dead by the power of God. He now sits at the right hand of the Father, and is the only Mediator between God and man.
5. In the spiritually lost condition of men - for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (are deprived of God's saving presence).
6. Salvation is found in no one else except Jesus, and there is no other name under heaven which is given to men whereby mankind can be saved.
7. In the essential need of the new birth by faith in Jesus Christ. The only means of being cleansed from sin is through repentance and faith in the precious blood of Christ.
8. Spiritual regeneration (the new birth) is brought about by making Jesus Christ Lord and Saviour, and by believing that Jesus' precious shed blood was the price needed to redeem man from sin.
9. In the Person and work of the Holy Spirit with His gifts and fruit abiding in the Church.
10. In the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues, as the Spirit gives utterance.
11. That believers should be water-baptized, as the Lord commands, by full immersion, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
12. That divine healing is provided in the New Covenant through Jesus Christ, by applying faith to God's Word of promise.
13. In the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit by Whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a holy life.
14. Jesus Himself shall descend from heaven to resurrect the righteous dead and to catch away the living saints to meet with Him in the air. This event is known as the Rapture of the Church.
15. In the second coming of Jesus Christ to the earth along with His glorified saints. This event will take place after the Rapture (the snatching away).
16. That all who accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour will enjoy everlasting life with Him.
17. That all who do not accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour will spend eternity in everlasting torment in the lake of fire, along with Satan and his forces of evil.

- 1 S.B.C. Exodus pg.171.
- 2 Wuest, K. S., Word Studies in the Greek New Testament, Mark 15:13.
- 3 S.B.C. Matthew, pg.136.
- 4 Hayford, J. W., Hayford's Bible Handbook.
- 5 F.J.Dake., Dake's Annotated Reference Bible.
- 6 S.B.C. Daniel, pg.332.