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# The Remnant of Christ's Ecclesia

in opposition to the Dogmas of  
Papal and Protestant Christendom

A WITNESS TO THE TRUTH

and a warning against the deception in the last days  
foretold by Christ

**"Take heed that ye be not deceived"**

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**All Communications**

M. C. Steiger  
836 King Road, Forestville  
New York 14062  
U.S.A.

**PSALM 108**

We are able to share in the heart and mind of David as expressed in Psalm 108 as we read:

“O GOD, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise, even with my glory.”  
Psalm 108:1

The prime root of the word “fixed” is to be erect, to set up or establish, to be prepared. In this psalm, David implies there should be such a feeling for God’s truth and mercy by those that seek to follow in His path. It takes time and effort to erect or prepare anything - and likewise must be the experience of all called to God’s Truth.

David’s life began as a shepherd boy, called from among Jesse’s Sons and anointed by the prophet Samuel, to be King of Israel:

“Again, Jesse made seven of his sons to pass before Samuel. And Samuel said unto Jesse, The LORD hath not chosen these. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither.  
And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the LORD said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he.” I Samuel 16:10-12

We know that Samuel visited Jesse at God’s direction, in order to anoint one of his sons as the next King of Israel. It was done under the guise of offering a sacrifice to the Lord so as not to make Saul suspicious of Samuel the prophets true motive.

“...I am come to sacrifice unto the LORD: sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice. And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice.” I Samuel 16:5

As Jesse’s sons passed before Samuel, many were strong and handsome, surely worthy candidates in Samuel’s perspective - yet God spoke to him saying:

“...Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.” I Samuel 16:7

Samuel was guided by God to choose David because He alone could look within his heart, thus David was anointed by Samuel to one day be king after Saul. Not long after, David became King Saul's armor bearer and played the harp to ease Saul's troubled mind and spirit in an effort to calm him:

“And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Let David, I pray thee, stand before me; for he hath found favour in my sight.  
And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.”  
I Samuel 16:22-23

It was at this time that the Philistines gathered to battle against Israel and sent out their champion Goliath, - a giant whose height measured “six cubits and a span”. The length of a cubit varied between the early Egyptians, Sumerians, Greeks and Romans but was thought to be about twenty inches. Therefore if Goliath's height was six cubits and a handspan we can estimate he was about ten foot high or more! What an imposing sight he would have made on the battlefield clothed in his brass helmet, a coat of mail and carrying a spear “like a weaver's beam” (vs.7). He would be a formidable sight - a seasoned man of war, meant to cause fear in the sight of his enemies. What one man could possibly be brave enough to fight him in single combat?

He called upon Israel to send out their champion to meet him and thus decide the fate of their two armies:

“And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day: give me a man that we may fight together.  
When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid.”  
I Samuel 17:10-11

The three eldest of Jesse's sons were in Saul's army - Eliab, Abinadab and Shammah. Yet none of these men volunteered to meet the Philistine in battle. David as the youngest, was not old enough to be a soldier and remained as a shepherd caring for his father's sheep. He was sent by his father Jesse to the encampment to deliver provisions for his three brothers and in doing so was there to hear Goliath's challenge to Israel's army. His reaction was very different from the older men of war in Saul's army, for his response was based on faith and trust that God would protect and deliver him:

“...Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine.”  
I Samuel 17:32

He recounted to Saul of how a lion and a bear had taken a lamb out of the flock, yet David armed with faith in God's help had delivered them out of the jaws of these predators:

“Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God.

David said moreover, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the LORD be with thee.” I Samuel 17:36-37

These experiences while a shepherd, prepared David to trust in God's protection and care - establishing and fixing his heart upon the Lord.

His experiences in life were not always positive - yet all worked to teach of God -blessings and care for faithfulness and a just punishment when one strayed from righteousness.

Later in his life when he was pursued relentlessly by Saul, David knew great fear, yet still trusted in God to deliver him from the king. He penned Psalm 57 during this experience - the title of which translates as:

“To the One who overcomes, pray do not destroy the pure gold-like faith of David, when he fled from Saul in the cave.”

Saul for years pursued David, attempting to kill him out of jealousy, yet David fixed his heart on God for deliverance instead of taking matters into his own hands:

“My soul is among lions: and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword.

They have prepared a net for my steps: my soul is bowed down: they have digged a pit before me, into the midst whereof they are fallen themselves. Selah.

My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise.” Psalm 57:4, 6-7

God delivered him many times from enemies like Saul and from his own fleshly thinking that led him astray when tempted.

In Psalm 112 David reflects upon the path a man of God must seek in order to be found pleasing to the Almighty - and the rewards he may reap because of God's mercy:

“Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness: he is gracious and full of compassion, and righteous.

A good man sheweth favour, and lendeth: he will guide his affairs with discretion.

Surely he shall not be moved for ever: the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.

He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the LORD.

His heart is established, he shall not be afraid, until he sees his desire upon his enemies.

He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth for ever; his horn shall be exalted with honour.”

Psalm 112:4-9

We have enemies likewise - the main one being our own fleshly thinking, but if we look back, as David did, upon our past blessings and deliverances, it will help to fix our heart upon Him, that we may grow in faith and trust.

Psalm 108 verse 1 allows us to see the bigger picture:

“O GOD, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise, even with my glory”.

How can the flesh glory? Only by reflecting God’s mercy and goodness in our living and being ever mindful of His deliverance can such a mind show forth glory through praise of Him.

“Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.

My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.”

Psalm 73:25-26

In conclusion, David reminds us once more of where our heart should be fixed - on God - our only source of help and strength.

M.C.S.

## GOD'S COVENANT WITH DAVID

In the eighty-ninth Psalm, we are shown how God chose David and made a covenant with him. It tells how God would protect him from his enemies, bless him in his ways, and chastise him when he failed. God promised that the covenant would be everlasting, and would be established through David's seed:

“I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations. Selah.”  
Psalm 89:3-4

God blessed David greatly, but promised even greater blessings for his son, as seen in the words of God through Nathan the prophet:

“... Also the LORD telleth thee that he will make thee an house. And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.”  
II Samuel 7:11-16

God chose David and promised that his enemies would not triumph over him:

“Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people. I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him. With whom my hand shall be established: mine arm also shall strengthen him. The enemy shall not exact upon him; nor the son of wickedness afflict him. And I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him.”  
Psalm 89:19-23

God promised to be merciful to David, with the understanding that David would acknowledge God as his Father and Saviour:

“But my faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him: and in my name shall his horn be exalted.

I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers. He shall cry unto me, Thou art my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation.

Also I will make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth. My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him.

His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven.”  
Psalm 89:24-29

Like any children of God, David’s would be admonished and chastised for their transgressions, but God promised not to break His covenant with David’s seed:

“If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes.

Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.

My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven. Selah.”  
Psalm 89:30-37

We of this time know that the ultimate fulfilment of God’s covenant is in the Lord Jesus. He is the greater Son of David, through whom the promises to David will be established eternally, as is confirmed by the words of Isaiah:

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.  
Isaiah 9:6-7

The words of Daniel also speak of the Lord Jesus and the kingdom that God will establish for Him:

“I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, brought him near before him.

And there was given him dominion, and glory, and kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.” Daniel 7:13-14

The completion of the covenant to David is possible through the Lord Jesus. God will set up a kingdom, with Jesus as the King; and, we have hope of attaining that kingdom, even though we may not be of Israel. Our part in that kingdom is possible because of the new covenant established by the Lord Jesus, giving His life and spilling His blood to God to cover our sins. If we seek the Lord, hear His words, and come to Him through the Lord Jesus, we can have a part in that new covenant, as seen in the words of Isaiah:

“Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.” Isaiah 55:3

We might not be of the lineage of David, but God has given us a hope of an everlasting covenant also. David was not born into royalty, but was chosen of God to be King over His people. Likewise, we are not born of the children of Israel, but we are called and given hope as spiritual Israelites. We have been given an opportunity to share in the everlasting covenant through the greater Son of David — the Lord Jesus. We have the hope of being of His royal seed and ruling at His side, in His kingdom, as kings and priests, who will judge and teach the world with God’s authority. Likewise, it is our task to call on the Lord and keep His commandments, as it was for David and his seed, so that we might continue in the merciful hope that God has provided for His people.

E.J.M.



## GODLY FEAR AND REVERENCE

We have recently read in Exodus of the Ten Commandments given by God to Israel. They were the condensation of His laws given to guide His people in their relationship with Him and their fellow man. When those commandments written by the finger of God on the tables of stone were given to Moses on Mt. Sinai, it would be long remembered by those witnessing this event:

“And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off.

And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.

And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not.”  
Exodus 20:18-20

And as they were ready to enter into the promised land 40 years later, the law was again rehearsed in their ears by Moses, so that this new generation might hear and fear as well:

“Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons’ sons;

Specially the day that thou stoodest before the LORD thy God in Horeb, when the LORD said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children.

And ye came near and stood under the mountain; and the mountain burned with fire unto the midst of heaven, with darkness, clouds and thick darkness.

and the LORD spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice. and he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone.

And the LORD commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go over to possess it.”  
Deuteronomy 4:9-14

They were teach their children and their grandchildren of this experience so that they might learn to fear the awesome power of God

Almighty and remember to revere His name. After the death of Moses, Joshua was given his place to lead the people into their promised inheritance. We know that because of the fearful and wondrous sights they had witnessed upon entering the land, they faithfully served the Lord while Joshua and the elders of his time lived:

“And Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the LORD, that he had done for Israel.”

Joshua 24:31

However, once these leaders were gone, their vision faded and they forgot the fear instilled that, “they sin not”.

There is a great difference between spiritual and fleshly fear. Their initial fear at Horeb was a fleshly fear for the thunderings and lightning and the sound of God’s voice as loud as a trumpet made them tremble! However, that fleshly fear was to work in them a knowledge and wisdom to learn what He required of them, in order to build a spiritual fear and reverence, that they might walk in His ways out of love:

“My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee;  
So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding;  
Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding;  
If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures;  
Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.”

Proverbs 2:1-5

If we knew there was treasure hidden somewhere, how diligently we would seek to discover it. It must be the same with God’s knowledge in our living - that we hunger after it above all else.

David reflected God’s wisdom in his living with this same intensity as he wrote:

“Come, ye children, hearken unto me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD.  
What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good?  
Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.  
Depart from evil, and do good: seek peace, and pursue it.

The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.”  
Psalm 34:11-15

The teaching of the fear of the Lord is revealed in his life for he was called “a man after God’s own heart”. Even so, he also failed grievously, but when in error was quick to repent out of godly fear and to seek atonement and be at peace once again with God.

Those ten commandments given through Moses, allowed the faithful to perceive what God looks for in His people and how to keep His word in a reverence and fear of Him. However, hundreds of years before these commandments were given at Horeb, Noah knew what was required to walk faithfully before God, for it was written of him:

“By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.”  
Hebrews 11:7

He feared God and so was blessed with a knowledge of the flood that was to come to destroy all in its path. With faith and belief in God’s message, he built an ark on dry land, no doubt becoming an object of ridicule to his neighbors, who did not heed his warning message of what was to come and were therefore condemned to death while he and his household were saved.

Obedience to God requires a reverence of Him and those that do so like Noah, will be remembered at the end of God’s purpose, at the judgment seat of His Son:

“Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.  
And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.  
Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.”  
Malachi 3:16-18

How vital is the application of godly fear in our living - not a fear based on the rules and regulations devised by man, but by the spirit of love, which is hid as a costly jewel throughout all of His law.

**A BIBLE CLASS**  
**“...HE SHALL ADD THE FIFTH”**

The Law - holy, just and good - made merciful provision to atone for one's failures and offense to God. The adding of a fifth to an offering appears to be a unique arrangement whereby special lack or offense to the Almighty, or to a brother or sister, might be recognized and made right.

First, it may be helpful to understand trespass. Our brother, Robert Roberts, has written: "All trespass is sin, but all sin is not trespass." When certain wrongs were done, such as mentioned in Leviticus 5 and 6, there was damage done to another. When this was perceived, a trespass offering had to be brought to take away guilt. Then restitution had to be made to the brother for that which was taken away, harmed, misrepresented, etc., and finally a fifth of the estimated value had to be added in order to recognize and remove the injury which had been done to another. The trespass would not be forgiven unless these steps were followed.

In the case of something vowed or sanctified to God, or a right of the Levites (tithes), which could not be kept for some valid reason and had to be redeemed, it was required that a fifth be added to the estimated value of that redeemed (Lev. 27). Once anything was vowed to the Lord, or given to the Levites, to alter this would cause harm, guilt or damage. The fifth was therefore added in humble recognition that merely paying the estimation was not enough to heal the hurt done, nor to gain forgiveness - divine or human.

What is the wonderful facet in this teaching which can shine forth to touch our hearts today, and to draw us closer to the godly pattern? When there is a recognition of a wrong which causes hurt, our faith is tried; will we put away pride, totally humble self in confessing, repent from the heart and make full restitution? This is much more than saying, "I'm sorry". We must pay back fully - yes; but how then can the fifth be added? Could it not be a determined, continued effort to make amends - to be exemplary in going beyond in voluntary actions - to increase what might be felt was sufficient sacrifice - additional thought and care which would make up that extra added effort required?

Perhaps an example or two may help. We know the mind of Paul following his conversion. He was ever after ready to "spend and be spent" for those whom he had injured, who later became his brethren - to make up for the devastating persecution he had instigated. And then we have the example of Peter, who having safeguarded his own life by denying the Lord Jesus, was totally desolated in recognition of his actions, ever watchful for opportunities to make up, giving his whole living to the feeding of Jesus' sheep, and finally giving it in death.

As we then are helped to perceive this wisdom and great kindness of our Father in this one small aspect of His Law, are we not brought to a truly humble mind - more aware and moved to genuine sorrow at our tendencies to give injury to God and to others? How blessed to be allowed to add “the fifth” during our time of weakness and failure - in gratitude, rejoicing in the opportunity to make up for our human lacks towards others.

## GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE

ARE reminded by Paul in the 12th chapter of Hebrews of the sure hope of the Kingdom of God to come. He also emphasizes the need to “serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire” (verses 28-29). To consider God as a consuming fire or as that word consume means to eat or take in, speaks of the fire of the Spirit which dwells in God - the vehicle through which His will is accomplished, and which will ultimately end this present era and usher in the Kingdom age to be ruled in peace and righteousness by the Lord Jesus Christ. Striving to attain unto this hope, it is critical that we are mindful of this consuming power of God. It was important for Moses as we read in Deuteronomy 4:22-24 where he instructs Israel:

“But I must die in this land, I must not go over Jordan; but ye shall go over, and possess that good land.

Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the LORD your God, which he made with you, and make you a graven image, or the likeness of any thing, which the LORD thy God hath forbidden thee.

For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God.”

This was a final message to Israel from Moses, who was not allowed to go with them into that promised land because of his own personal failure. Yet, his desire was for Israel to remember the singleness of purpose embodied in the covenant— that they would be the children of God, if they looked to Him as a Father, in all reverence and fear - keeping God foremost in their living.

The fire of the Spirit also brings judgment, for God is constantly assessing His people to see if there is a reflection of that fire in their work, and in their walk, as they strive to carry out His word. Moses and the children of Israel had seen that fire in a literal sense on Mount Sinai, as we read in Exodus 24:17:

“And the sight of the glory of the LORD was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel.”

We know that in that mount God communed with Moses and gave him the statutes of law and a pattern of things to come, clarifying the covenant relationship between Him and His people. This would impress Moses, and how he would work to reflect that power and fire of the Spirit in his own living as he was appointed God’s representative to Israel. This was a great responsibility, given only to one who could show proper reverence and fear. In Deuteronomy 5:9 Moses rehearses the words of God to the people as he says:

“Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them (idols), nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.”

Those of Israel who recognized that God looked for singleness of heart and purpose in His children would not ‘be tempted to let idols creep into their living - would not put ‘anything before God, always keeping Him foremost. Paul was trying to convey this same diligence to his Hebrew brethren and to communicate to them a zealously to do the work of God with singleness of mind.

There are other examples of those in the Scriptures with that zeal, primarily of course the Lord Jesus, whose only intent was to please and glorify His Father and accomplish the purpose given Him. The fire of the Spirit completely consumed His living. When He dispersed the money changers from the temple, His actions caused the disciples to think of the words recorded in Psalm 69:9:

“For the zeal of thine house hath eaten (consumed) me up;..”

Another example is Phinehas, who also carried out the word of God with zeal and singleness of purpose. The situation as it is recorded in Numbers 25 reveals that Israel was dwelling in Shittim where the people began to mingle with the Moabites, breaking down that separation of fellowship which protected them against the evils of the world around them. Verses 2 and 3 describe their infidelity:

“And they (Moab) called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods. And Israel joined himself unto Baelpeor: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel.”

However, the fierce anger of God was stayed from Israel because of the actions of Phinehas, who took a javelin and killed both the Midianitish woman and the man of Israel who had brought her into the camp. God spoke through. His servant Moses in verses 11-13 as He said:

“Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy.

Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace: And he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel.”

Here we see how God’s mercy and grace was evoked by the zealous actions of one man, Phinehas. This should speak to us as well of the work set before us, that It is to be done with zeal and a singleness of heart, not for our own glory, but His.

Zeal is again spoken of in the message to the ecclesias in Revelation 3:19, primarily to the ecclesia at Laodicea:

“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.”

Again, the message is given to be zealous for the things which bring spiritual strength and well-being, which can only be accomplished as all else which can distract or hinder is removed.

How helpful Paul’s words of encouragement to his Hebrew brethren can be to us today, as we recognize that the return of the Lord Jesus must surely be near, but only those who have sought to serve Him acceptably, reflecting in measure the fire of His Father’s Spirit, will be allowed a place in that purpose. II Peter 3:10-11 warns of the coming of that day:

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,” and verse 14:

“Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.”

Only the Spirit can consume the flesh, and we then, striving to submit to it under God's hand, allowing its work, can have hope of finding the peace promised to Phinehas - that peace of God which the Lord Jesus the Prince of Peace will make possible when He returns.

### THE BLIND MAN

As we study John chapter 9, we are given insight into the hardness of the flesh which can develop within all of us. This lack of understanding is revealed through the Pharisees' questioning of the blind man whom Jesus had healed. There are many other examples in the scriptures of the relationship between the Lord Jesus and the Pharisees, a group who largely refused to accept His role as the Son of God, their Messiah.

After being healed, there was no doubt in the blind man's heart that this man Jesus, possessed the power of God. He was aware of the edict given by the Jews that if any confessed that Jesus was the Christ, he would be expelled from the synagogue (verse 22). Yet he spoke out in confidence, defending the Lord Jesus as he said to the Pharisees in verses 30-33:

“...Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes. Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.  
Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind.  
If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.”

However, the Pharisees' hearts were not as easily touched by this wonder, for their answer to this man was proud and defensive:

“...Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us?”

They resented the simple child-like faith exhibited by the blind man, and because they were so stiff-necked, continued to keep the law in their own way, not in a spirit of love and compassion, but in the letter of rules and edicts.

How true it is that when the flesh dominates, it overlooks the wonderful simplicity found in God's Truth. How obvious it was here for



all who witnessed this marvellous event that God was working through the Lord Jesus. A definite miracle, yet the Pharisees could not perceive it because their minds were steeped in the letter of the law. They replied:

“...This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man who is a sinner do such miracles? And there was division among them.” (Verse 16).

We know that the Lord Jesus was not a sinner. Why did the Pharisees think so? Because He applied the law of God in a spirit of love, healing on the sabbath day.

Perhaps we are helped as Jesus points out their lack to them in verse 41 of our chapter:

“...If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.”

The Pharisees were so sure of their own righteousness, that they felt they had everything under control and so could not perceive the error of their ways, nor recognize this man who stood before them as the One promised from the law and the prophets. What a lesson this should be to us, for in order to please Him we must recognize that we are in great need of help because of the infirmities of our flesh nature.

In John chapter 3 we read of Nicodemus, a Pharisee who had a different understanding from the rest. He came by night to be taught, no doubt afraid to be seen with the Lord Jesus. His mind was not like the others, for he could perceive that the miracles done by Jesus were the work of God. Yet he needed to be taught further because his understanding of the gospel was not complete, for he asked in verse 4:

“...How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb and be born?”

The Lord Jesus opened the spirit of the Word of God unto him as He said:

“...Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit is spirit.” (Verses 5-6).

How essential it is to look beyond the surface - delving deep into the Word in order to find the spirit of love which is there, and endeavor to apply it in our living, if we are to be known as His brethren and sisters.

Like that blind man, we need to recognize we are blind - full of infirmities because of our flesh natures, and in need of healing in order to see the true light granted by God through His Son. David realized the need to come and be taught in that same spirit as he said in Psalm 25:4-5:

“Show me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths.  
Lead me in thy truth, and teach me; for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.”

Our hearts should be touched by this example of the blind man’s staunch courage and child-like trust in the Lord Jesus. Jesus sought him out later as verse 35 states:

“Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe in the Son of God?  
He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?”

Perhaps we may ask ourselves how could this man not know Jesus as the Saviour and Son of God after what had happened? Jesus did not deride him, but answered simply in kindness and understanding:

“..Thou has both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.”

And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.” The blind man was able to learn because he had no pride in his own righteousness as did the Pharisees, but as a little child submitted and accepted the Word of God presented to him. If this too is our mind and spirit during our time of probation, we will not be left without answer to any question we may ask. We can see how important it is to guard against the attitude of “we see”, but rely instead on the simplicity of the Word of God to help us to grow in a spirit of obedience and submission - ever learning His Truth.

## THE TEMPLE TO COME

In our portions in Zechariah and Revelation, we are told of I the promised return of the Lord Jesus Christ. In Zechariah we read of the promised one called the Branch and the hope that those who believe on Him have. Zechariah 6:12,13 and 15 says:

“... Behold the man whose name is The BANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord: Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel peace shall be between them both.

And they that are far off shall come and build in the temple of the LORD, and ye shall know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you. And this shall come to pass, if ye will diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God.”

At the time of Zechariah there was the hope of rebuilding in Jerusalem the temple of God, yet Zechariah here is foretelling also of the temple which is yet to come in the outworking of God’s purpose. During the time of probation, there is a house of God in formation. Each of us hope, with the faithful of all ages, to become stones of which that future temple will formed. Therefore now these figurative stones must be smoothed by trial and tribulation until all the rough edges are removed. Only by this process can these stones be fitted into place when the time is right for the spiritual habitation of God to be assembled. Revelation chapter 11 speaks of the completed temple in verse 19 in all its power and glory:

“And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.”

This is our hope, to be part of that completed temple of God, therefore we struggle now to align ourselves to that perfect cornerstone, the Lord Jesus, endeavoring to follow His example in our living.

When we think of this promised inheritance, our mind goes back to the time of the children of Israel and the covenant they made with the Almighty as they prepared to enter into the land promised them. Joshua then an old man gave a last warning prior to his death as he said in Joshua 23:14-16;

“And behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath

failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof.

Therefore it shall come to pass, that as all good things are come upon you, which the LORD your God promised you: so shall the LORD bring upon you all evil things, until he have destroyed you from off the good land which the LORD your God hath given you.

When ye have transgressed the covenant of the LORD your God, which he commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed yourselves to them; then shall the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which he hath given unto you.”

Here was a promise given - it they would follow God’s word then blessing and goodness would be bestowed upon them. But if they turned their backs on Him, they would suffer hardship and severity from His hand. The same message was given by Paul to his Roman brethren as he reminded them, as well as us today, in Romans 11:22:

“Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.”

In a similar vein, Paul beseeches his brethren at Corinth to more fully value the fellowship they had with God and His Son and not walk in the darkness of error, as he says in II Corinthians 6:14-18:

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the Living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”

These words of Paul instruct in the importance of keeping God's Truth pure and single in view by those who have been called to be part of this great house. His Truth is the means by which we may be built up, growing in stability and firmness. This same soundness must be in each of us as we face daily struggles and temptations, resolving to put down the natural inclinations of our flesh. The cornerstone of God's house is firm and true - the Lord Jesus - He who withstood perfectly the temptations of His own flesh to become a mediator and high priest for any who would follow Him. We cannot be part of this house unless we are aligned with the cornerstone, for we must be of the same design and shape in order to be pleasing to the Father. Paul speaks of this spiritual house in Ephesians 2:20-22:

“And (ye) are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:

In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”

Peter confirms this thought as he says in I Peter 2:8-7:

“Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner.”

It is not without purpose that God's word comes to help focus attention upon being prepared for this 'building and upon the place of Christ in that work. Must we not then during the time which remains before His promised return, endeavor to value the covenant God in His goodness has made known unto us, in order to show forth that right spirit which can glorify God both now and eternally. This can be our hope, but only as we submit and yield to the hand of the Master Builder upon us.

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