

THE COHERENCE OF REVELATION

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:" (2 Tim 3:16)

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The Kingdom of God in general, and the “eternal purpose” of God in particular, is made known to men by revelation. We cannot, in fact, properly perceive the Kingdom of God or discern His “eternal purpose” apart from that revelation. No individual or group of individuals can arrive at a proper understanding of what God is doing apart from Him making these things known. The framework of the revelation is found in the Scriptures, and the comprehension is realized through “the Spirit of wisdom and revelation,” which comes from God Himself (Eph 1:15-17).

An element of mystery pervades all heathen religions. This is of necessity the case, because they center in those “which by nature are no gods” (Gal. 4:8). The absence of revelation in these religions is one of the reasons for the dominance of fear in them. But it is not so with “true religion” (James 1:27).

A DEFINITION OF REVELATION

The principle element of revelation is that of opening or uncovering what is hidden. In the case of God’s Kingdom, revelation is characterized by Divine intention. It is never accidental, or even incidental. Unlike the kingdoms of this world,

there is never a “leak” of Divine information. God makes known what He wants to make known, and until He does, it is not possible for it to be known.

Revelation presumes intelligence on the part of the recipient as well as that of the Revealer. The things of God, for instance, cannot be revealed to the brute creation – they have no powers of reason. Nor, indeed, can they be opened up to infants or those incapable of thought and consideration.

In the Kingdom, certain wonderful concepts are integral to revelation. The Revealer must be perceived as having a purpose, as well as possessing a desire to communicate it. On the other hand, the ones to whom the revelation is addressed are seen as possessing abilities capable of receiving the revelation, as well as a need for it.

Revelation, in its loftiest sense, involves the communication of thought. In this capacity, it is addressed to the mind, not the physical senses. The senses are capable of being impressed with a rudimentary revelation. Such was the case with Moses and Israel at Sinai (Exod. 19:16-25; Heb. 12:21), Elijah in a cave in Horeb (I Kgs. 19:8-12), Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-8), and Daniel the prophet (Dan. 10:8). These revelations were consistently introductory in nature. They were never an end of themselves. The communication of thought – the Divine objective – followed these occurrences. It is in this sense that I am using the word “revelation.”

EXAMPLES CONFIRM ITS ASSOCIATION WITH THOUGHT

“The secret things belong unto the Lord our God,” proclaimed Moses, “but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever . . .” (Deut. 29:29). Experiences and things perceived by the physical sense cannot be passed to our children – only the thoughts concerning them. The heritage to which Moses refers was the Law – an intelligent compilation of Divine thoughts and concepts.

When Peter made an intelligent and accurate confession of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God,” Jesus said; “Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 16:16-17). Again, behold the communication of thought – the chief component in perception.

The Apostle Paul, in the presentation of His understanding of God’s objective in Christ, wrote, “Whereby, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the Gospel” (Eph. 3:4-6). The revelation resulted in Paul’s discernment of God’s objective – something that can only be accomplished by thought, and with the mind.

Often, the religion of Christ has erroneously been identified with religious mysticism, intrigue, and sensualism. One of our objectives is to expose this abuse and perversion of truth. Such traits belong more to heathenism, and betoken an ignorance of God. Grunts, groans, unintelligible babblings, erratic behavior, laughing fits, and the likes. have no place in the Kingdom of our God! Such things characterize the religion of false gods, but have no place in

the dealings of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ with humanity.

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Chapter 2

WHAT IS COHERENT REVELATION?

A coherent revelation is a harmonious one – one that contains no logical contradictions. It does not defy reason, but appeals to it. The coherency of revealed truth does not dignify mystery, but magnifies comprehension.

Properly understood, a coherent revelation will constrain men to embrace it. Its harmony is its attractiveness. The fact that its parts blend together and make sense causes thoughtful beauty to surround it. It is this condition that prompted early believers to “gladly receive the Word” (Acts. 2:41). It is what enabled the Thessalonians to receive the Word of God “in much assurance” and “with joy of the Holy Ghost” (I Thess. 1:5-6).

THE NATURE OF GOD’S KINGDOM REQUIRES REVELATION

The Kingdom of God has been identified with the reconciliation of men. If man is to be reconciled, he must be informed! He must understand the purpose of God, if God is to be glorified in His redemption! It is inconceivable that man's salvation could be accomplished without God's revelation. If union with God is to come to man, the way must be made plain – it must be revealed!

ILLUSTRATED IN THE IMPERSONAL CREATION

The truth of this is seen in the coming liberation of the impersonal creation. Although it has not sinned, it has been made “subject to vanity,” contaminated by the sin of man. It is in view of this contamination that “the creature [creation] itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God” (Rom. 8:19-21).

The whole creation is destined to experience Divine deliverance. There is a mournful note of anticipation being sounded throughout the natural order, as it groans and travails “in pain together until now” (Rom. 8:22). But no revelation has been given to it! A messenger has not been sent to the birds of the air, the beasts of the field, and the fish of the sea! They are going to be delivered without their personal involvement.

But it is not so with man! He has been made in the image of God, and cannot be delivered without the interplay of his mind and spirit. He is what God's Kingdom is all about. He is not the center of that Kingdom, but the subject deriving benefit from it. In wisdom and prudence, God is dealing with humanity, gathering out a people for His great Name (Eph. 1:8; Acts 15:14). That sort of enterprise demands revelation, and cannot possibly be implemented without it. Indeed, that is why God has revealed Himself and His will

through Christ!

GOD CANNOT CONTRADICT HIS PERSON

God delights to have men understand and know Him (Jer. 9:24). This is His nature. For Him to introduce a plan to men that remained beyond their comprehension, He would have to deny Himself. Theoretically, only two things can make God's message incomprehensible. It may be conceived of as simply being beyond the reach of man – as dealing with such high and lofty realities that man is incapable of grasping it. It would be like God speaking to us in either a strange and incomprehensible language, or in concepts that are impossible for man to grasp.

The other alternative would be for the message to be illogical, unintelligible, and unsupported by reason. This would render it inaccessible to man, a moral being in the image of God. A man cannot spiritually benefit from what he cannot, to some degree, discern.

Both of these theories contradict God's revealed purpose. God has gone to great lengths to make His purpose intelligible to man. He has brought it within the range of man's mind and understanding. He sent His only begotten Son "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom. 8:3), making Him "like unto His brethren" (Heb. 2:10-17). This arrangement was not only in order that He might be "touched with the feeling of man's infirmities" (Heb. 4:15), and be able to strengthen and succor them in the hour of their temptation (Heb. 2:18) – it was also so that we could "consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus" (Heb. 3:1). Both Christ's

Person and words are addressed to our understanding, without which, there would be no purpose for His revelation!

When God made His purpose known, speaking to men first by the prophets, and then by His son (Heb. 1:1), He did so in the language of men, not “the tongues of angels” (I Cor. 13:1). The blessing is pronounced upon those that “hear the word of God and keep it” (Luke 11:28). This promise confirms the focus of God’s word upon man, and its appeal to his understanding.

The principle is this: what God has revealed does not contradict His Person! It is consistent with His Deity, His Character, and His purpose. There is not a particle of disharmony between what God has said and Who God is!

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Chapter 3

PERCEIVED IN THE GIVING OF THE LAW

The principle of revelation’s harmony with God’s Person is exhibited in the Law. There, in tables of stone, an outline of God’s character was etched. The Law of commandments was nothing more than a moral reflection of the Living God. It was a rudimentary way of saying, “Be ye perfect as your Father in

heaven is perfect” (Matt. 5:48). An examination of the Decalogue will verify this observation.

“Thou shalt have no other gods before me,” commanded the Lord. “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow thyself down to them, nor serve them . . .” (Exod. 20:3-5). This represented God’s own nature. Several centuries later, Jehovah spoke through the prophet Isaiah, “Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God [beside me]; I know not any” (Isa. 44:8). The commandments forbidding idolatry were a summons to men to reflect the mind of the Lord. God knew no other gods because there are no other gods! The commandment, then, was consistent with His Person and perspective!

“Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord Thy God in vain . . .” (Exod. 20:7). No man is permitted to lightly use God’s Name. When God refers to Himself, He does it with the utmost sobriety. It is never a light matter, never frivolous or meaningless! “But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord” (Num. 14:21). When the Lord sought to underscore His commitments, they were often attended with this Divine oath; “As I live” (Isa. 49:18; Jer. 22:24; Ezek. 5:11; 14:16; Zeph. 2:9; Rom. 14:11). Again, the commandment to not take God’s Name in vain reflected the Divine image. God takes such usage seriously, and so must man!

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy” (Exod. 20:8). The “first covenant,” which revolved around the seen and the tangible, also reflected the Divine nature. “For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested on the

seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it” (Exod. 20:11). Even though this day has given way to the first day of the week, on which the Lord of glory rose from the dead, it still bears the image of God and His activities during the creation week.

“Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the earth which the Lord thy God giveth thee” (Exod. 20:12). The respect of God for aged men and women is seen in the special instruction provided for them (Titus 2:2-3). He considers them resources in the work of the Kingdom, and instructs them as such. It was in Christ that the attitude of Deity was perceived toward parents. It is said of Him that “He went down with them [Joseph and Mary], and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them” (Luke 2:51). This is the procedure of the Divine nature in a body of flesh. As such, it is the only proper course for those that bear the Divine image by creation.

“Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbors wife . . . manservant . . . ox . . . ass, nor anything that is thy neighbors” (Exod. 20:13-17). The apostolic synopsis of these commandments is found in Romans 13:9: “For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.”

Here is a most glorious reflection of the Lord! It is He that seeks to do good to man, and not evil (Gen. 50:20; Num. 10:19). The Lord “is good” is the frequent proclamation of holy men of God (I

Chron. 16:34; Ezra 3:11; Psa. 100:5; Lam. 3:24; Nahum 1:7). It is “every good gift” that “cometh down from the Father of lights” (James 1:17). His “goodness” is repeatedly heralded in Scripture (Rom. 2:4; Zech. 9:17; Psa. 107:8).

The Devil is the “thief” that comes “to steal, and to kill, and to destroy.” But God’s Son came that men “might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (John 10:10). That is in perfect conformity to God’s character!

The second table of the law, like the first, was a moral reflection of God. It was consistent with Him, harmonious with His nature, and a mirror of His Person! What a wonderful demonstration of this truth; that God’s revelation is consistent with, and does not contradict, His own Person!

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Chapter 4

SEEN IN JESUS CHRIST, THE SUPREME REVELATION

Jesus Christ was “God manifest in the flesh” (I Tim. 3:16), a perfect revelation of His Father. As a man, He was “the brightness of His [God’s] glory, and the express image of His Person” (Heb. 1:3). The words and deeds of Jesus were coherent reflections of

His Father. He never acted or reacted unlike God. Thus will an intelligent consideration of Him yield an acquaintance with God (Job. 22:21).

The blend of Divine attributes may be seen in Christ's ministry. No single facet of God's character was ignored. That expression of old, "mercy and truth are met together," and "righteousness and peace have kissed each other," is fulfilled in Jesus (Psa. 85:10). Many a soul has supposed that God's righteousness and man's peace with Him are irreconcilable. "Give me mercy, not justice," is the cry of the uninformed.

God, in Christ, is declared to be both "just, and the Justifier of him which believes in Jesus" (Rom. 3:26). In fact, even though the Gospel proclaims the free justification of man (Rom. 3:24), it is also an announcement of the righteousness of God. "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD revealed . . ." (Rom. 1:16-17). Again, it is witnessed, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS for the remission of sins that are past . . . to declare, I say, at this time HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS . . ." (Rom. 3:25-26). In Christ, therefore, "mercy and truth" met together, and "righteousness and peace" kissed each other!

A single demonstration of Divine cohesion as revealed in Jesus will suffice. On one occasion in Jesus' ministry, the scribes and the Pharisees "brought unto Him a woman taken in adultery." Subtly they said, "Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?" Here Divine traits were seemingly

thrown into conflict with one another. How could compassion be ministered when such a clear word from God had been given?

The Law had spoken on this issue, although not exactly as they had said. “And the man that commits adultery with another man’s wife . . . the adulterer AND the adulteress shall surely be put to death” (Lev. 20:10). Again, “If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband, then they shall BOTH of them die, BOTH the man that lay with the woman, and the woman . . .” (Deut. 22:22). It is of more than passing interest that only the woman was brought to Jesus!

Jesus ignored the question of these hypocrites. He “stooped down, and with His finger wrote on the ground, as though He heard them not.” But these men were not willing to let the matter go. Supposing that they had found a flaw in Him, they “continued asking Him” until “He lifted up Himself.” With Divine pungency He said to them, “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her!” His words pierced their hearts, “their own conscience” convicting them as they “went out one by one.”

Turning to the woman, Jesus asked, “Woman, where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee?” When she replied, “No man, Lord,” He exposed her to the God of heaven. “Neither do I condemn thee: go and sin no more” (John 8:3-11). Mercy and peace met together! Righteousness and peace kissed each other! All of the Divine attributes remained intact!

Christ had not only come to “magnify the Law and make it honorable” (Isa. 42:21), but also to “seek and save that which was

lost” (Luke 19:10). “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners . . .” (I Tim. 1:15). He had not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance (Matt. 9:13). Here, then, was a demonstration of His mission – perfectly consistent with Divine purpose!

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Chapter 5

JESUS' ONENESS WITH THE FATHER

“I know Him: for I am from Him, and He hath sent Me,” proclaimed Jesus (John 7:29). This is something of what He meant when He said, “I and my Father are one” (John 10:30). At no point did Jesus contradict God – His nature or His purpose. His compassion on the multitudes (Matt. 9:36), and indignation with the abuse of the house of God (Mark 11:17) were perfect reflections of God’s nature. The entire thrust of Christ’s ministry, as well as that of His voluntary death, was in strict keeping with the purpose of God! His oneness with the Father was a oneness of purpose.

There is a strain of theology that represents the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as being a single Person performing three different tasks – something like John the carpenter, John the plumber, and

John the electrician. Some term this view as the “Jesus only” view. I term it “a carnal view of Jesus.” Strictly speaking, it is not possible for a person to be the exact image of Himself (Heb 1:3), or be one with Himself (John 10:30), to rely upon Himself (John 17:1; Acts 2:27), or not to do His own will (Lk 22:42) – yet these are all Scriptural affirmations of the Lord Jesus Christ and His relation to the Father.

THE INCONGRUITY OF THE “ONE PERSON” VIEW

The view that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are a single Person is fraught with incongruity. The doctrine of Scripture points out their interdependence, as compared with Them all being the same person.

THE FATHER AND THE SON

The Father “sent” the Son (1 John 4:14). The Son “glorified” the Father (John 17:4). The Father delivered up the Son (Rom 8:32). The Son committed His Spirit to God (Lk 23:46). Jesus was “the Lamb of God” (John 1:29). He was “the Son of God” (Matt 16:16). God was His “Father” (Matt 10:32). The Father “loved” the Son, and “committed all things into His hands” (John 3:35). Jesus is the “only begotten of the Father” (John 1:14). The Father raised the Son from the dead (Acts 2:32; Gal 1:1), and the Son depended on Him doing so (Acts 2:27). When with His disciples, Jesus said He came forth from the Father, and was going to return to the Father (John 16:26). The Father gives us to Jesus (John 6:37). Jesus brings us to God (1 Pet 3:18). Jesus is the Way to the Father (John 14:6). Jesus intercedes for us to the Father (Heb 7:25). The Father and the Son take up their abode in the one who loves Jesus, has His words, and keeps them (John 14:21,23). The Father twice spoke from heaven acknowledging that Jesus was His Son (Matt 3:17;

17:5). The Father will show the Son in all of His splendor and majesty (1 Tim 6:15-16). After His enemies have been publicly made His footstool, the Son will deliver the Kingdom back to the Father (1 Cor 15:24-28). Presently, the Father is not subject to the Son (1 Cor 15:27). Jesus sent the Holy Spirit “from the Father, “ and He proceeded “from the Father” (John 15:26). God reconciled us to Himself “by Jesus Christ” (2 Cor 5:18). Grace, mercy, and peace are sent to us by the Father and the Son (1 Tim 1:2). God is described as “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Eph 1:3). God made Jesus both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36). Jesus is the only one who knows the Father, and He reveals Him to whomever He wills (Matt 11:27). Jesus is the “One Mediator” between God and man (1 Tim 2:5).

When Jesus declared, “I and the Father are one,” He was not referring to “one” in a numerical sense. It was rather in the sense of unity – like a husband and wife being “one flesh” (Gen 2:24; Eph 5:31), or the church being “many members,” yet “one body” (1 Cor 12:12). In fact, those in Christ are made “one” with both the Father and the Son (John 17:21-23). That certainly does not mean they are one person with Them, but that they are in accord with both the Father and the Son. Those who are joined to the Lord are declared to be “one spirit” with Him (1 Cor 6:17). That does not mean they are one person with Christ, but that they are of one accord with Him.

When Jesus entered into the world, He could not speak, or care for Himself. He was put into hands of Joseph and Mary who were directed from heaven in how they should care for Him (Matt 2:13,15). During the period prior to His manhood, the world was not without God the Father, and the Holy Spirit was still at work (Lk 1:41). When Jesus grew “in favor with God,” it certainly does not mean that God the Father was in some way deficient during

that time. During His ministry, Jesus repeatedly declared He did not come to do His own will (John 5:30; 6:38), say His own words (John 3:32-34; 8:28; 14:10), or do His own works (John 5:36; 10:37). He traced everything He said and did back to the Father.

Yet, even though He was separate from the Father in His Person, yet there was no contradiction with God in any of His expressions – whether in thought, word, or in deed. He was never at variance with God, never in competition with Him, and thus never required correction. He grew in wisdom and in favor with God, yet never had to repent, adjust his focus, or recover from a moral setback. There you have an example of congruence lived out in a perfect life!

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Chapter 6

DIVINE PURPOSE, THE REASON FOR REVELATION

The objective of Divine testimony is never novelty. God does not speak without a reason. He is not seeking a casual relationship with man where the act of communication is an end of itself. The point is WHAT is communicated, together with the objective of that communication. God speaks to men through His Word because His purpose involves men. If there were no purpose for man, there would be no revelation to him!

This is confirmed by Paul's declaration of the utility of God's Word. "And now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified" (Acts. 20:28). Observe the association of God's word with God Himself, and His objective. God has determined that those who "are sanctified" will have an "inheritance." It is an "eternal inheritance" (Heb. 9:15), and is "reserved in heaven" (I Pet. 1:4). God's revelation – His Word – being consistent with His purpose, prepares men to receive that inheritance.

"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15:4). God's revealed word – and there is no other kind – is able to make men "wise unto salvation" (2 Tim. 3:15). This result is accomplished by design. It is not simply a coincidence. The Lord has revealed His mind to men in order that they might know how to be saved – how to become involved in His eternal purpose. "Saved" does not refer to something that occurs in an instant of time, but to something that begins in that manner, then produces a spiritual wake that ripples into eternity. One of the salient statements made concerning "the city" that "has no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof" is this: "And the nations of them which ARE SAVED shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it" (Rev 21:24).

The Scriptures are not merely a moral code – although that is contained in them. They are a means by which God achieves the enterprise of redemption. That enterprise is the reason for the

revelation, and thus the things revealed are consistent with it.

THE PURPOSE IS HIDDEN WITHOUT REVELATION

The purpose of God is of such lofty nature, that it cannot be known unless it is revealed. The Word of God refers to God's objective as "the hidden wisdom of God" (I Cor. 2:7). "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory." The Apostle is not stating that he proclaimed something that could not be understood, but something that was not formerly understood. The ASV translates as follows: "But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glorification." Thus the "wisdom of God in a mystery" and "the hidden wisdom of God" are perceived as two views of the same truth. The first phrase emphasizes the former obscurement of the plan. The latter one underscores the wisdom or ingenuity of what was hidden.

The objective of God was "hidden" in Himself! It was a part of His character or Person. Because God was unknown, His purpose was unknown. No amount of intellectual inquiry could discover it. Righteous men could not find it out! Wise angels could not decipher it! It dealt with a facet of God's nature that was hidden to all created intelligences! It involved benefits so transcendent that they could not be imagined, let alone understood. "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things that God hath prepared for them that love Him" (I Cor. 2:9).

God was not simply successful in hiding His plan from men. Its obscurement was effortless, so far as Deity was concerned. That plan was so high that it was simply beyond the reach of man's

natural powers. "But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit . . ." (I Cor. 2:10). Well ought we to thank the Lord for that revelation! The centuries of time prior to the revelation of the Gospel demonstrated the inaccessibility of this Divine objective to unilluminated man.

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Chapter 7

THE HIDDEN PURPOSE IN PATRIARCHAL AND MOSAIC DISPENSATIONS

God's Kingdom has been identified with the accomplishment of His beneficent design for man. This is being achieved in a moral arena that is characterized by thought and decision. In a moral environment, a hidden purpose is an unfulfilled purpose. This is demonstrated in God's dealings during the Patriarchal and Mosaical ages.

The Patriarchal age was the period from Adam to the giving of the Law. During that time, key individuals were predominant in God's dealing with men. They were, furthermore, few and far between (Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph etc.). The purpose of God was so vague during the period, that very limited involvement was realized. The intelligence associated with devotion to God was rudimentary in comparison to that demanded

by the greater light of the Gospel.

This is graphically demonstrated in the conduct of Noah following the flood (Gen. 9:18-29). His drunkenness and nakedness was more owing to his ignorance of God's purpose than to moral weakness. The Divine accomplishments among the sons of men prior to the Law were far inferior to those achieved in this "day of salvation." This was not owing to Divine weakness, but to the lack of revelation in that age. Divine objectives that are being fulfilled in a moral environment require revelation.

The Mosaical age encompassed the time from the giving of the Law unto the coming of Christ. During that time, a nation was predominant, in distinction to key individuals. Increased revelation marked that age, and yet the revelation remained rudimentary. Men became more acquainted with themselves than with God in this age. Although He demonstrated His power in signs and wonders, as well as mighty deliverances and preservations, the key element during that time was the demonstration of the need of man!

The moral inferiority of that time was due to the obscurement of Divine purpose. The "carnal ordinances" involving "meats and drinks, and divers washings" (Heb. 9:10), being rudimentary, could not effect a moral change in men. The existence of manners unacceptable from the viewpoint of the New Covenant, was also the result of lesser revelation. Among these things were multiple wives (I Sam. 1:2; 5:13; I Kgs. 11:3), fierce bloodshed (Lev. 20:16; Num. 31:7-17; Josh. 20:6), and the involvement of great men in cursed and unacceptable idolatry (I Kgs. 11:4-10; 14:7-10).

The law was given “that every mouth might be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God” (Rom. 3:19). For this reason, God did not make known His “wisdom” during its administration. Thus did those ancients come short of the ultimate Divine objective. The chosen and faithful people “received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect” (Heb. 11:19-40).

Notwithstanding this deficiency, God in His mercy provided a way for His offspring to be accepted – even during those ages of relative darkness. In His grace He gave them a covenant that was external in nature – one that matched their condition. The sign of their identification with that first covenant was in their flesh – circumcision (Gen. 17:4-27; Lev. 12:3). In addition, the promise of a Messiah was given them (Gen. 49:10; Isa. 9:6-7; 11:1-10; 53:1-23; Hag. 2:7; Zech. 3:8; Mal. 4:2). Faith in that coming Deliverer assured them of participation in His salvation. His death, we are told, effectually dealt with the “transgressions that were under the first testament” (Heb. 9:15). How gracious is God, to make provision for the involvement of men in His ultimate objective, even though they were not advantaged by its knowledge upon the earth!

Permit me to underscore the point here. A hidden purpose cannot be implemented in a moral arena! God’s eternal purpose involves the conscious renewal of men (2 Cor. 5:17), and their participation in Divine rule (Dan. 7:18,22,27). The fullness of that undertaking was “hidden” until the coming of Christ. It was for this reason that it could not be implemented in earlier ages.

THE COHERENCE OF REVELATION

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doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:" (2 Tim 3:16)

Chapter 8

PERCEIVED IN THE DESIRE OF THE PROPHETS

Divine revelation is marked by coherency with Divine purpose – never being contradictory to it! Limited revelation, therefore, is necessarily accompanied by a limitation of the understanding of heavenly objectives. Ponder the extent to which this was true with Noah (Gen 6:22; 7:5,9), Abraham (Rom 4:19-21; Heb 11:8,17), Isaac (Gen 48:15; Heb 11:20), Jacob (Gen 32:26), Joseph (Gen 39:9-12), David (1 Kgs 15:5), and a host of other spiritually noble souls. Their hearts were not the place of their limitation, but their understanding. Their desires to follow and obey the Lord were not deficient, for, with few exceptions, they did what they were commanded to do.

Herein is a most lamentable circumstance – that in this day of an “abundance of grace” (Rom 5:17), the supply of “all things that pertain to life and godliness” (2 Pet 1:3), and “the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began” (Rom 16:25), that many of those professing to be followers of Christ have not yet arrived at the status of those earlier saints – much less superceded them. Even though it is written that God has “provided some better thing” for those who are in Christ Jesus (Heb 11:40), the blotch of disobedience, a lack of holiness, and flawed desires mark a considerable percentage of the “Christian” world. The incongruity of this circumstance is so staggering that even its

existence boggles the minds of the godly.

But let us consider the attitude of the prophets of old, who lived during the time of limited revelation. They were told of the coming era in which there would be a “new covenant” (Jer 31:31-34) in which people would receive a “new heart and a new spirit” (Ezek 36:26). They were told of a coming Messiah, when “a Man” would be established for safety and protection (Isa 32:2). God made known to them a time when a Kingdom would be established that would “have no end” (Isa 9:7). “The word of the Lord” came unto these men (Hosea 1:1), as the Lord revealed “His secret unto His servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7).

The revelation received by prophets during those earlier ages, however, was partial – thus they were unable to comprehend the real nature of salvation. This is the intent of the words of Jesus, “For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and HAVE NOT SEEN THEM; and to hear those things which ye hear, and HAVE NOT HEARD THEM” (Matt. 13:17; Luke 10:24). Even though the “Gospel of God” was “promised afore by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures” (Rom. 1:2), it was not attended by satisfactory understanding in them that heard it. With keen insight, Peter wrote, “Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ, which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the Gospel . . . (I Pet. 1:10-12).

The failure of the prophets to discern the manner and time of the promised blessing, was not owing to an arbitrary blinding by God. It was not that their hearts were hard, or that they were not separate from the world. They were not doubters, immoral, or retarded in their responses to the Lord. It was the limitation of the revelation that obscured its fullness. Because the role of the prophets was that of introducing what was for a future generation, their own understanding was limited. The “Gospel” could not benefit them in its intended fullness because it was not yet accomplished in reality. The prophets were introduced to the coming blessing, but it had not yet occurred. Consequently, the revelation of it could only be from the standpoint of Divine intention – what God was going to do. This type of revelation is necessarily attended by a lack of comprehension.

Although the message God delivered “by the prophets” (Heb 1:1) was partial, it was not antithetical to the revelation made known in the Gospel. It was not contradictory to the fuller revelation that is realized through Christ Jesus.

All revelation, whether delivered in the Garden concerning a coming “Seed” (Gen 3:15), or the word delivered to Abraham concerning a “Seed” through whom all the families of the earth would be blessed (Gen 12:3), or through Moses concerning the circumcision of the heart (Deut 30:6) – it all harmonizes perfectly with what was given through the Apostles (2 Pet 3:2). There is a coherence in Scripture that makes it one composite whole.

THE COHERENCE OF REVELATION

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Chapter 9

“Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.” (1 Pet 1:11-12)

When it comes to the proclamation of the Lord Jesus Christ, the ministry of the prophets plays a critical role. Paul reminds believers that the church is built upon “the foundation of the apostles and prophets” (Eph 2:20). The order in which these two bodies of men (“apostles and prophets”) is mentioned is not one of sequence. It is rather one of ranking – i.e. what was revealed through the apostles was superior and more thorough than what was made known to the prophets. Further, the “prophets” of reference do not refer to the gift of “prophets” that has been set in the church (1 Cor 12:28; 14:3). The church is not built upon those prophets, even though they are an essential part of the church.

Peter referred to “the prophets” of reference when he told one of those early Jewish audiences, “Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days” (Acts 3:24). Stephen referred to what was written in “the book of the prophets” (Acts 7:42). Peter spoke of Jesus to the household of Cornelius was the One to whom “all the prophets give witness” (Acts 10:43). Paul told those

meeting in the synagogue in Pisidia that the “voices of the prophets” were “read every Sabbath day” (Acts 13:27). James referred to the acceptance of the Gentiles as being in agreement with “the words of the prophets” (Acts 15:15). Paul said he preached “none other things than those which Moses and the prophets did say should come” (Acts 26:22).

These are the “prophets” whom Peter declared “inquired and searched carefully . . . searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand of Christ and the glories that would follow” 1 Pet 1:10-11, NKJV).

The things revealed to the prophets were more introductory, which by no means suggests they were not essential, or can be treated as though they were not important. In the revelation given to them there was no indication of the times or circumstances during which the glorified Christ and His ministry would be realized. In fact, it was revealed to them that the glories of which they testified were not intended for them, but rather for those who now have the Gospel preached unto them.

WITNESSED IN THE INTRIGUE OF ANGELS

The message of the Kingdom that is made known to men “by them that have preached the Gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven” stirs the curiosity of angels. Angels, of themselves “greater in power and might” than man (2 Pet. 2:11), “desire to look into” the benefits of redemption (1 Pet. 1:12a). They long to comprehend something of its magnitude, but are unable to do so on their own.

Their inability to discern redemption is owing to at least two things. First, the revealed purpose of God does not center in angels, but in man. Speaking of “the world to come,” the theme of Apostolic presentation, the Scriptures declare: “For unto the angels hath He not put into subjection the world to come, whereof we speak” (Heb. 2:5). The incarnation also confirms that God’s redemptive purpose did not center in angels (Heb. 2:16).

Secondly, the revelation has not been to angels, but to men. It was not the world of angels, but the world of men that God “loved” and “reconciled” (John 3:16-17; I John 4:14; 2 Cor. 5:18-20). That situation provides an environment of understanding for man, not for angels. In the Kingdom of God, involvement enables comprehension; a lack of involvement renders understanding impossible for men. What the angels themselves now perceive of the Gospel has been through what was revealed to men, not members of their August company.

How comely is it for men to be disinterested in a message that is designed for them, while angels have a profound desire to comprehend it?

Thus, the inability of angels to comprehend redemption. It is certainly not owing to the lack of capacity on the part of angels. They are, in fact, noted for their wisdom (2 Sam. 14:17,20) – but not in matters of redemption! Their discernment is unproductive in that domain. The involvements of the “eternal purpose” of God was revealed to men, not to angels. When it comes to this revelation, the leading man is Paul the apostle. He received insights into the glory that followed the death and resurrection of

Christ that was not vouchsafed to others (Eph 1:9-11; 3:4-12).

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Chapter 10

THE PRINCIPLE INTRODUCED BY THE PROPHETS

The principle under consideration is that the coherence of Divine Revelation requires that it not contradict the purpose of God. This requirement is produced by the nature of God, in distinction from a mere moral code. The principle was introduced by the "holy prophets."

The things revealed to the prophets were harmonious with the purpose conceived by the Lord "before the world began." No revelation was independent of that purpose. The emphasis of the prophets' message was "the grace that should come" to those in Christ. As it is written, "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you" (I Pet. 1:10). In an introductory manner, they dealt with the "sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow" (I Pet. 1:11). They did not reveal the whole of the matter, but spoke in strict harmony with it.

The prophets spoke of the death of Christ. Isaiah said He would

make His soul an offering for sin (Isa 53:10), be “cut off” without progeny (Isa 53:8), and pour out His soul unto death (Isa 53:12). Daniel also said He would be “cut off,” but not for anything He Himself had done (Dan 9:26). As compared to what has been revealed through the apostles, that was a very limited revelation of the death of Christ. In fact, the prophets directly said so little about the death of Christ, that even His closest disciples could not think of Jesus dying a supposedly premature death (Matt 16:21-23).

Ponder the extensive revelation of Christ’s death that has been given since He came down from heaven, and ministered among men.

1. He gave His life a “ransom for many” (Matt 20:27).
2. His blood was shed “for many for the remission of sins” (Matt 26:28).
3. He was commanded by the Father to lay down His life, and take it up again (John 10:17-18).
4. Through His death, He would draw all men to Himself (John 12:31-32).
5. Jesus has been set forth as a propitiation through faith in His blood (Rom 3:25).
6. He was delivered up for our offenses (Rom 4:25).
7. Christ died for the ungodly (Rom 5:6).
8. He died that He might be the Lord “both of the dead and of the living” (Rom 14:9).
9. By means of His death He is able to present us holy, and

unblameable, and unreprouvable in His sight (Col 1:22).

10. In His death He delivered us from the wrath to come (1 Thess 1:10).

11. He tasted death “for every man” (Heb 2:9).

12. Through death He “destroyed him who had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Heb 2:14).

13. Through the eternal Spirit He offered Himself without spot to God (Heb 9:14).

14. His death was for “the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament” (Heb 9:15).

15. He bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, might live unto righteousness” (1 Pet 2:24).

16. He “suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God” (1 Pet 3:18).

17. He washed us from our sins in His own blood, making us kings and priests unto God (Rev 1:6).

None of those things were clearly affirmed by the Prophets – yet what the Prophets did say about the coming Messiah was in perfect harmony with them. God spoke in times past to “the fathers by the prophets,” and “hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son” (Heb. 1:1-2). There is absolute harmony in those messages. The prophets introduced what God was going to accomplish in Christ, and Jesus proclaimed the fulfillment of the central message of the prophets (Luke 4:18).

The prophets did proclaim messages that appeared independent from the goal of man's reconciliation. Among them were the rebuilding of Jericho (I Kgs. 16:34), a drought foretold by Elijah (I Kgs. 17:14), the fall of Nineveh (Nahum), and the judgment of Moab (Jer. 48). These prophecies emphasized the rejection of the Gentile world for the implementation of man's restoration to God. Israel was the nation chosen by the Lord to accomplish His redemptive purpose. Prophecies against the Gentile nations, the nation of Israel itself, or disobedient rulers among the chosen nation were uttered in view of the "eternal purpose," not in isolation from it.

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Chapter 11

THE PRINCIPLE EXPOUNDED BY THE APOSTLES

The "Apostles' doctrine" (Acts 2:42) is the most advanced revelation ever provided to man. It interprets all previous revelation and occurrences, as well as the events constituting the Gospel. This is given within the framework of the Divine objective, concerning which the Apostles had fuller illumination. "In other ages" that objective "was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit" (Eph. 3:5). So far as the written "apostles' doctrine," the apostle Paul provides the most extensive knowledge.

The revelation did not consist in a mere rehearsal of the facts of the Gospel alone, but also in an exposition of the significance of those facts. That is, after all, what constitutes a revelation.

The Apostles took the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, and related those occurrences with the removal of sin, the abolition of the law as a means to righteousness, and the administration of the New Covenant (Heb. 1:3; Col. 2:14; Rom. 10:4; Titus 2:14; Heb. 8:10-13). They tied them to access to God (Eph 3:12; Heb 10:22), a cleansed conscience (Heb 9:14), the purpose for living (2 Cor 5:15), the power that is toward those who believe (Eph 1:19-23), the effectiveness of baptism (1 Pet 3:21), and men dying to sin (Rom 6:1-3,11).

THE DEATH OF CHRIST

An example of the apostolic elaboration of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ will suffice to confirm this truth. Here I will deal only with Christ's death. The apostles' doctrine expands on the significance of the death of Christ. There were certain God-ordained objectives realized by the death of Christ.

1. Propitiation through His blood (Rom 3:24-25).
2. He died for the ungodly (Rom 5:6).
3. In His death God commended His love toward us (Rom 5:8).
4. We were justified by His blood (Rom 5:9).
5. We were reconciled by His death (Rom 5:10).
6. We were baptized into His death (Rom 6:3).

7. In His death, sin was condemned in the flesh (Rom 8:3).
8. Christ died for our sins (1 Cor 15:3).
9. He died that we might live for Him (2 Cor 5:15).
10. He was made sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor 5:21).
11. He gave Himself to deliver us from this present evil world (Gal 1:4).
12. He redeemed us from the curse of the Law (Gal 3:13).
13. We have redemption through His blood (Eph 1:7).
14. We are made nigh unto God through His blood (Eph 2:13).
15. He made peace through the blood of the cross (Col 1:20).
16. He blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us (Col 2:14).
17. He spoiled, or plundered, principalities and powers (Col 2:15).
18. He gave Himself to redeem us and purify unto Himself a peculiar, or unique, people (Tit 2:14).
19. In His death, He destroyed the devil (Heb 2:14).
20. His blood purges the conscience from dead works (Heb 9:14).
21. We are sanctified by the offering of the body of Christ (Heb 10:10).
22. By one offering He perfected forever those who are sanctified (Heb 10:14).
23. He once suffered for sins that He might bring us to God (1 Pet 3:18).

Jesus Christ was identified with the purpose of God. He was “the Son of God” (1 John 5:5), “the Lamb of God” (John 1:29), “the Chosen of God” (Luke 23:35; 1 Pet 2:4), “His Christ” (Acts 4:26; Rev. 11:15), the “gift of God” (John 4:10), “the power of God” (1 Cor 1:24a), “the wisdom of God” (1 Cor 1:24b), “the image of God” (2 Cor 5:5), and “the Word of God” (Rev 19:13). All of these terms derive their significance from the objective of God, and it alone!

In confirmation of this truth, the Scriptures view Christ’s entrance into the world as a means to the accomplishment of the will of God. “Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God” (Heb. 10:7-10). The “will of God” was His “eternal purpose” as revealed by the New Covenant. Jesus came to provide a basis for the implementation of that covenant, promised of old time through Jeremiah (Jer. 31:31-34).

The Apostles took Christ’s appearance in this world, His ministry among men, His death and resurrection, and His exaltation to God’s right hand, and showed how these events relate to the reconciliation of man. Any inconsistency in their message – any lack of harmony – would have tended to obscure God’s design. Such a result would have rendered His aim incapable of discernment, thus frustrating His undertaking.

Tomorrow: “Coherence Required for Revelation to be Comprehended”

PRAYER POINT: Father, in the name fo Jesus I thank You for the abundance of revelation that is realized in Your Son.THE COHERENCE OF REVELATION

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Devotion 11 of 20

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Chapter 12

COHERENCE REQUIRED FOR REVELATION TO BE COMPREHENDED

A message that lacks harmony cannot be comprehended – its harmony is what makes it comprehensible. Further, without the possibility of comprehension, there has been no beneficial revelation. Revelation is consistently addressed to the understanding (Luke 24:45; Eph. 1:18; I John 5:20) – and understanding wraps itself around something that is coherent,

harmonious, or consistent.

Wherever there is a distorted emphasis, understanding – spiritual understanding – is missing. When men have an inordinate propensity of quoting other men, there is a serious lack of understanding. When undue reliance is placed on religious creeds, brotherhood slogans, etc., there probably is a lack of godly understanding. The individual may have a staggering amount of information stored in his mind, but if it is not understood, no spiritual profit can be realized from it.

A considerable percentage of flawed understanding is the direct result of a lack of familiarity with the whole of Scripture. Because of the Person and nature of God, the Scriptures address, expound, and present specific historical examples of everything that men need to know to make it safely from earth to glory. However, if the mind is not exposed to the entirety of Scripture, there will be large gaps in one's understanding of the Word of God, and of life itself.

From one perspective, the Scripture's coherence is owing to the centrality of Jesus that is found there. Jesus Himself affirmed, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me" (John 5:39). Elaborating on that fact, an angel from heaven told John, "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev 19:10). That is involved in Jesus being "the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," "the Beginning and the End" (Rev 1:11,17; 2:8,19; 22:13). Jesus Himself, His Person, His accomplishments, and His ministry are the perimeter of Scripture. That fact alone gives the Scriptures cohesion, accord, and unity.

The Apostles revealed the cohesiveness of truth in order to make it understandable. The interrelationships of the truth is what makes it discernible. Christ's death, for instance, is of no force without His resurrection. "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins" (I Cor. 15:17). Also, if He is not interceding for men, neither His death nor His resurrection will accomplish the determined result. "Wherefore He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25). And again, "'Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" (Rom 8:34). Further, if His life had not been "without sin," His sacrifice would have been unacceptable to God (Heb. 7:26; I Pet. 1:19). It is the understanding of these relationships that makes the belief of the Gospel both possible and effective.

Jesus Christ is the Key to such pivotal matters as the resurrection of the dead (Acts 4:2), the day of judgment (Acts 17:31), eternal life (1 John 1:2), eternal destiny (John 5:28-29), the church (Col 1:18), godliness (2 Tim 4:12), the resistance of the devil (1 Pet 5:7-10), and the quest for perfection (Phil 3:12-13). Remove Jesus as the center of Scripture and a spiritual implosion takes place where everything loses its significance.

Those who make the individual believer the main thing, or the family, or one's occupation, introduce confusion, for this is not what produces the indispensable harmony of Scripture. This harmony is destroyed by an emphasis being placed on the church itself, or morality, or soul winning, or personal success. Where such an approach to the Scriptures is taken, spiritual ignorance and a lack of profitability are inevitable.

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Chapter 13

MORAL PURITY AND TRUTH

It is God's will that every man "abstain from fornication," and that he "know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor" (I Thess. 4:3-4). Admittedly, the sons of men were not too successful in this area prior to "the day of salvation." But following the more complete revelation of God's purpose, and the "new creation," the absolute fulfillment of this became possible, and mandatory.

It is the understanding of the situation that makes this requirement achievable. The Apostles reasoned on this wise: "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid! "But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit" (1 Cor 6:15-17). In view of this revelation – that our bodies are the "members of Christ" – involvement in fornication is totally unreasonable!

The Apostle elaborates further. "Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body." (1 Cor 6:17). Here man's frame is perceived as a stewardship which is not to be abused. Were there no Divine purpose, sinning against the body would not be possible!

The body belongs to the Lord. It is not to be prostituted by giving it to someone that is not sanctioned by Christ – like one's spouse (1 Cor 7:3-5).

Personal purity is also reasonable in view of the presence of the Holy Spirit. "What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" (1 Cor 6:19). In the light of this situation, involvement in fornication is to be shunned! Those who indulge in such things are to be expelled from the church, and believers are not to even eat with them (1 Cor 5:1-11). They are "old leaven" that defile partaking of the Lord's Table (1 Cor 5:7-8).

The prostituting of the body is really an attempt to join the Holy Spirit to something contrary to God. It is to take his house and use it for purposes of self-gratification. Sins involved in this kind of activity are adultery, fornication, sodomy, bestiality, and other forms of fleshly impurity. The existence of this type of sin in the churches is staggering. Wife-swapping, adulterous relationships, unwed mothers, teen-age pregnancies, and people playing and experimenting with their bodies as though they belonged to them instead of the God who created and bought them. These sins have become so common there are supposed Christian ministries that specialize in dealing with them. Choosing to ignore such exhortations, one church in our area gave baby showers to unwed teenage mothers. They thought it was a ministry, but actually they were partaking of other men's sins (1 Tim 5:22).

One further aspect of truth makes this form of fleshly indulgence completely unacceptable. "For ye are bought with a price:

therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (I Cor. 6:19-20). No person has a right to use his body for illicit purposes – whether it is offering to someone other than one's spouse, injecting drugs, or making marks on it. On this latter point, the Law was very specific: "Ye shall not round the corners of your heads, neither shalt thou mar the corners of thy beard. Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you: I am the LORD" (Lev 19:27-28; 21:5). These were practices of the idol-worshippers, and this were forbidden for the people of God. In our time, the principle would be found in adorning or using the body to reflect the ways and fads of the world. In this day all manner of professing Christians have felt at liberty to adopt the appearance of the world in their bodies. Particularly in the area of, what is called, "contemporary Christian music," it is fashionable to look like the world, and to even sing after its manner. After all of the explanations have been given, the word of God still stands: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15).

Christians are not excluded from the admonition, "Learn not the way of the heathen" (Jer 10:2; Lev 18:3; 20:23; Deut 12:30-31; Ezek 20:32).

When the harmony of the truth is perceived, a moral power is imparted that will result in purity – purity that is required by the Lord (1 Tim 1:15; 3:9; 5:22; 2 Tim 2:21,22; Tit 1:15; James 4:8; 1 John 3:3). Without that perception, there is only law – Divine legislation. As was demonstrated during the rule of the first covenant, this did not provide an acceptable incentive. How different it is now – in the time of the revelation of God's purpose!

Although it may not be fashionable to say so, where immorality continually makes inroads into the church, there has been a failure to declare and believe the truth – “the whole counsel of God.” A doctrine that, when believed, does not make for moral purity, is false to the core.

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Chapter 14

MORAL PURITY AND TRUTH

It is God's will that every man “abstain from fornication,” and that he “know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor” (I Thess. 4:3-4). Admittedly, the sons of men were not too successful in this area prior to “the day of salvation.” But following the more complete revelation of God's purpose, and the “new creation,” the absolute fulfillment of this became possible, and mandatory.

It is the understanding of the situation that makes this requirement achievable. The Apostles reasoned on this wise: “Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid! "But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit” (1 Cor 6:15-15). In view of this revelation – that our bodies are the “members of Christ” – involvement in fornication is totally unreasonable!

The Apostle elaborates further. “Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.” (1 Cor 6:17). Here man’s frame is perceived as a stewardship which is not to be abused. Were there no Divine purpose, sinning against the body would not be possible! The body belongs to the Lord. It is not to be prostituted by giving it to someone that is not sanctioned by Christ – like one’s spouse (1 Cor 7:3-5).

Personal purity is also reasonable in view of the presence of the Holy Spirit. “What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?” (1 Cor 6:19). In the light of this situation, involvement in fornication is to be shunned! Those who indulge in such things are to be expelled from the church, and believers are not to even eat with them (1 Cor 5:1-11). They are “old leaven” that defile partaking of the Lord’s Table (1 Cor 5:7-8).

The prostituting of the body is really an attempt to join the Holy Spirit to something contrary to God. It is to take his house and use it for purposes of self-gratification. Sins involved in this kind of activity are adultery, fornication, sodomy, bestiality, and other forms of fleshly impurity. The existence of this type of sin in the churches is staggering. Wife-swapping, adulterous relationships, unwed mothers, teen-age pregnancies, and people playing and experimenting with their bodies as though they belonged to them instead of the God who created and bought them. These sins have become so common there are supposed Christian ministries that specialize in dealing with them. Choosing to ignore such exhortations, one church in our area gave baby showers to unwed teenage mothers. They thought it was a ministry, but actually they

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Chapter 15

THE HARMONY OF THE DISPENSATIONS OF LAW AND GRACE

The dispensations of Law and Grace are the subject of Apostolic instruction. The first testament was a “ministration of condemnation” (2 Cor. 3:9), resulting in the universal conviction of man (Rom. 3:19). By way of contrast, the new testament is the “ministration of righteousness” (2 Cor. 3:9b), accomplishing what a mere moral code was impotent to do. The first covenant was linked to “the giving of the Law” (Rom. 9:4), which contained “the words of the covenant” (Deut. 29:1), written on tablets of stone

called “the tables of the covenant” (Deut. 9:11). This covenant was made with Israel at Sinai (Heb. 8:7-9), and it was made “old” by the introduction of the “new covenant” (Heb. 8:13).

It would appear that two covenants so different could not be harmonious. The first covenant produced bondage, the second brought liberty (Gal. 4:22-26). Whereas the new covenant brought righteousness, the first wrought condemnation. The first was written on tables of stone, the second is written on the malleable heart – or inner man – of the regenerate.

While there is an obvious dissimilarity in the covenants, there is, however, a harmony in them. That harmony is found in their association with God’s will to reconcile man unto Himself.

INTRODUCTION AND ACQUAINTANCE

The Law introduced us to the purpose of God, the Gospel acquaints us with it. Intrinsic in the Law was an appeal for man to acquaint himself with his Maker. The desire of God for man’s fellowship was evident during that earlier dispensation. “If my people, which are called by My name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land” (2 Chron. 7:14). “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price” (Isa. 55:13). Such appeals have the stamp of the Divine nature upon them! God longed for man, fervently desiring his reconciliation.

The dispensation of Law introduced man to God's desire for him, as well as the separating power of sin. "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God," declared the Lord (Isa. 59:2). As men gave heed to these words, they were introduced to the purpose that was then hidden, yet which existed in the mind of God from the beginning of time. There were a few individuals that saw those implications and, as a result "looked for redemption in Jerusalem" (Luke 2:36). Those who believed during those earlier ages "died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Heb 11:13).

The Gospel acquainted men more fully with that purpose. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself" (2 Cor. 5:19), was the proclamation of Divine accomplishment. Christ "put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Heb. 9:26), and destroyed "him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil" (Heb. 2:14).

Rather than merely knowing something of what God planned, the new testament brought the knowledge of God Himself. No longer, God promised, would every man say to his brother, "Know the Lord: for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest" (Heb. 8:11). There is the achievement of Divine acquaintance to which the Old Covenant introduced men!

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Chapter 16

PREPARATION AND INVOLVEMENT

The Law prepared men for the coming of Christ. It was, in fact, a “schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Gal. 3:24). This was accomplished by convincing men of sin, for “by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Rom. 3:20). The longing of the heart of man for his Creator was marred by a defiled conscience! Man could not draw near to God because of its contamination. Thus was the coming of a Redeemer made known – One who could deal with this dilemma.

Although the Law is truly a “ministry of condemnation” (2 Cor 3:9), it is also “holy,” “just, and good” (Rom 7:12). It is also “spiritual” (Rom 7:14). Its weakness is not in itself, but in humanity, who could not keep it. As it is written, “it was weak through the flesh” (Rom 8:3). There was no weakness in the commandments that issued forth from it. Its requirements were not weak. It did not fail to project what God looked for in men, and what He insisted be found in them. It did not misrepresent God, distort His image, or present Him in a manner that contradicted His nature. Men were made to have ambitions, and the Law accurately defined what those ambitions and human accomplishments were to be.

The Law did not compromise. It told men what they should be, and what they could expect from God if they failed to do all that God commanded of them, all the time, and with all the heart. Heaven expected men to take the Law seriously, for it was given “that

every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God" (Rom 3:19).

By doing this, the Law proved to be "schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Gal 3:24). Unfortunately, this is not being passed on to the people of our time. Many are being told that their trouble is what brings them to Christ – the hour of crisis, when a person's little world implodes, falling apart all around them. It all sounds good, but whether or not that is really the truth is to be questioned. The Law teaches people that what they ARE is what necessitates Christ, not what they experience! Thus Christ is perceived as One who changes the person rather than One who delivers them from earthly dilemmas.

Is all of this nothing more than a theological technicality? Indeed not! Christ is essentially a Savior from sin. His deliverance is from sin and its consequences. He nowhere represented Himself as a resolver of human difficulties, or the means of entering into a trouble-free life. That is a representation that has been concocted by professed Christian teachers, and it is seriously wrong.

If men do not come to Jesus because of their sin, the sin-problem will never be resolved. The defiled conscience will never be addressed, and remission will never be realized. Sin is not a kind of secondary problem – it is THE problem. The Law works to establish that fact in the human conscience, convincing the person of the need of a Savior.

At some point, the individual must be convinced that the requirements of the Law are not mere suggestions. They must not

be seen as impossible, but as essential. The curses pronounced against those that fail to do them are real (Deut 28:15-88). When the commandments have been taken seriously, a conscientious effort to obey them put forth, and the firm awareness of absolute failure registers upon the conscience – then, and only then, is the individual ready for Jesus!

The Gospel enables the achievement of man's involvement, for which the law prepared him. The defiled conscience which prohibited man from drawing nigh to God is now dealt with effectually. "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb. 9:14). There is the involvement which the Law could not accomplish! It was, however, the Law that prepared us for this glorious benefit!

In salvation there is accord and fellowship with the Godhead! As it is written, "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto THE FELLOWSHIP of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord." (1 Cor 1:9). And again, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our FELLOWSHIP IS WITH the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." (1 John 1:3). And again, "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any FELLOWSHIP of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies" (Phil 2:1). And again, ""The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen" (2 Cor 13:14). Where these realities do not exist, salvation is not being experienced, and the individual has gained no advantage from Jesus Christ.

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Chapter 17

DEMONSTRATION AND ASSERTION

During the age of Law, God visibly demonstrated His desire and affection for men. This was seen in the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage (1 Sam 10:18), the parting of the Red Sea (Exod. 13-15), the overthrow of Jericho (Josh. 6), and the overcoming of mighty armies (2 Kgs. 18). After looking at God's dealing with Israel, no one could conclude that man could not be loved by God, or that God was incapable of loving those who were "made sinners" by the fall of Adam (Rom 5:19). But, in those early days, it was consistently an overt demonstration. Those were times during which men remained fundamentally unacquainted with God, even though He had made Himself known to them in a variety of ways. Because sin had not yet been taken away (John 1:29), and a reconciliation had not yet been made between God and man (2 Cor 5:18-20), men remained spiritually obtuse – hence the necessity of overt demonstrations of Divine care. Even where there was a comparatively extensive involvement with God – as in the cases of Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and David – God always initiated the contact, which was followed by a number of visible and/or sensible communications.

The Gospel introduced a different kind of demonstration and assertion. Unlike Israel, the church is told, "But ye are washed, but

ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (I Cor. 6:11). For the Corinthians, none of these accomplishments were attended by sensible manifestations – yet they were altogether true and effective. It is now proclaimed that “he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit” (I Cor. 6:17), and that even our bodies are “members of Christ” (I Cor. 6:15). Again, these affirmations appear to the carnal mind to contradict what the senses are able to grasp.

It is true that there were occasions when spiritual benefits were attended by visible and sensible manifestations – such as on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:2-4), at the house of Cornelius (Acts 10:45-46), and with the Ephesians who had been disciples of John the Baptist (Acts 19:6). That these were not standard procedures is confirmed by the glaring absence of a report of them in the letters written to the churches and to select individuals (Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Gaius, and the elect lady). There is no apostolic doctrine that states the receiving of the Holy Spirit is attended by outward signs. The occasions mentioned above were all spiritual epochs. On Pentecost, the New Covenant was inaugurated, and the first proclamation of an enthroned Jesus was spoken. At the house of Cornelius the induction of the Gentiles into the church first occurred. When the Ephesian disciples were baptized, it marked an end of John’s baptism, which, so far as the record is concerned, every again had to be addressed. Thus the tone was set for the era of the New Covenant, when all of the constituents of that covenant would “know” the Lord, independent of visible and sensible manifestations.

In Christ marvelous announcements are made.

1. “But ye are washed. But ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in

the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." (1 Cor 6:11)

2. "Ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building." (1 Cor 3:9)

3. "For all things are yours: whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come; all are yours. And you are Christ's, and Christ is God's." (1 Cor 3:21-23).

4. "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 Cor 6:20)

5. "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." (Gal 4:6)

6. "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God," (Eph 2:19)

7. "And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power." (Col 2:10)

8. "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ." (Col 2:11)

9. "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." (Col 3:3)

These assertions are addressed to faith, not to sight. While it was obvious that Israel was favored by the Lord, it is not so with the church! God's favor toward Israel was visible in the consistent subduing of her enemies. In Christ, however, the open demonstration does not exist. While there are occasional deliverances and outward confirmations of acceptance, this is the exception, not the rule. Persecution and blood baths have followed the church wherever it has taken its stand for the truth. It started shortly after the day of Pentecost (Acts 8:1-4), and it has not ceased to this day!

The reason for this situation is that our inheritance is not here, but is reserved in heaven for us (I Pet. 1:4). Notwithstanding the present separation of the inheritance from us, we have been joined to the Lord, and are "members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones" (Eph. 5:30). That language denotes a position of favor and fellowship! It proclaims that man, in Christ, is in the center of Divine purpose. For such, the future is bright! Until the new heavens and the new earth, for which we look, appear, we have the Gospel assertion – and it is far better than mere external demonstration under a regime of Law!

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TYPES AND SHADOWS

The coherence of the Law with the purpose of God is perceived, among other things, in its types and shadows. Types and shadows refer to the likeness of ultimate Divine objectives projected upon the canvas of an external covenant – the “first,” or “old covenant.”. The scriptural term for this parallel is “shadow.” Examples of its usage are, “For if He [Jesus] were on earth, He should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: Who serve unto THE EXAMPLE AND SHADOW OF HEAVENLY THINGS, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount” (Heb 8:5). The commandment for Moses to “make all things according to the pattern” was more than a demand for strict obedience – although it was that. The pattern of the tabernacle conformed to the things that would be realized in God’s great salvation, particularly as they regarded approaching to God. To distort the “pattern,” therefore, would result in future generations having a flawed understanding of coming to God through Jesus Christ. That coming would involve an altar, a sacrifice, washing (the laver), serving God (in the holy place), having illumination (the candlestick), having nourishment (the table of showbread), and a High Priest who interceded for the people. All of that was seen in the “pattern” of the Tabernacle.

And again, “For the law having A SHADOW OF GOD THINGS TO COME, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect” (Heb 10:1). A shadow has no power of itself. It is an introduction to the reality in which the power may

be found. In that shadow things are introduced that will assist a person in comprehending some of the involvements of the salvation in Christ with eternal glory (2 Tim 2:10).

These “shadows” were deliberately given by God to represent the realities of salvation. They were an appeal to the heart, not the eye. The elaborate tabernacle worship, for instance, was not intended to merely impress men with pomp and splendor. It contained prefigurements of what was to be accomplished in Christ Jesus.

The tabernacle was a portable tent employed by Israel, in the wilderness, for the service of God. The blueprint for this structure was given by God to Moses in meticulous detail. We are told that “Moses was admonished of God, when he was about to make the tabernacle: for See, saith He, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed thee in the mount.” This was required because the tabernacle was to “serve unto the example and pattern of heavenly things” (Heb. 8:5). We have in it a mirror of higher realities and relationships.

The tabernacle was divided into two sections, called by the Apostle, the “first” and the “second,” which were separated by a veil (Heb. 10:2-3; Exod. 26). The sections themselves, together with the furniture within them, typified heavenly relationships. “For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the showbread; which is called the sanctuary. And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron’s rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; and over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy seat . . .” (Heb. 9:1-5).

We have introduced here the concepts of serving God (the sanctuary – Heb. 12:28), and Divine contact (The Holiest – Heb. 10:19-22). We are also introduced to the ideas of illumination (the candlestick – I John 1:7; Eph. 5:8), participation (the table – I Cor. 10:21), and nourishment (the showbread – John 6:35,48). Think of the introduction of a separation that is not total, yet is a regular hindrance (the veil – Heb. 10:20).

In the tabernacle we also confront the thought of pleasing God (the censer – Col. 3:20; Heb. 13:21), Divine provision (the manna – Matt. 4:4), Divine guidance (Aaron's rod that budded – Rom. 8:14), and a written law (the tables of the covenant – 2 Cor. 3:3; Heb. 10:16). God's mercy, which is over all of His works, was also depicted in the tabernacle (the mercy seat – Heb. 4:16; Jude 21).

All of these concepts owe their origin to God's "eternal purpose." They were not developed under the Law, and then utilized in the New Covenant, but rather were originated in God's purpose, and mirrored in the Law. There is a cohesiveness in revelation!

THE COHERENCE OF REVELATION "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:" (2 Tim 3:16) Chapter 19 **THE SACRIFICES** Under the Law, the concept of sacrifice was introduced. The tabernacle, "which was a figure for the time then present," was one "in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices." These offerings were not an end of themselves. They prefigured a "better sacrifice" (Heb. 9:23), and thus were ineffectual to accomplish the remission of sins. "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (Heb. 10:4). They were an introduction to inner cleansing, but by no means accomplished it. Even though the sacrifice of beasts

occurred repeatedly, only a “remembrance” of sins resulted (Heb. 10:3). The worshipers, even in a fresh realization of those bloody sacrifices, maintained defiled consciences. Their sense of guilt forbade them to approach a holy God. This is the meaning of the text, “For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect” (Heb. 10:1). The “comers” were those attempting to approach God. The perfection which was not achieved was the cleansing of the conscience; the removal of the defilement of guilt. The rivers of blood that were offered on those Jewish altars never placated a single mortal conscience! Actually, God never was satisfied with those sacrifices. They were only intended to be temporal in their significance. Thus did the man of God proclaim, “Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin Thou wouldst not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law” (Heb. 10:9; Psa. 40:6). Their worth was in their prefigurement of the sacrifice to come (Heb. 9:26; I Cor. 5:7). Although obedience required their presentation, they had no salvational efficacy. It was the anticipation of Christ’s effectual sacrifice that gave meaning to those under law. Without the reality, the shadow would have served no real purpose. The sacrifice of Christ was extensive and effective. It was prefigured in the many sacrifices that were offered under the Law. Here are some considerations of those types. They are a remarkable display of the coherence of Scripture – how everything centers in Jesus Christ.

1. LAMB. “If he offer a lamb for his offering, then shall he offer it before the LORD” (Lev 3:7). Here was an offering depicting innocence and weakness. The Lord fulfilled this type in being “crucified through weakness” (2 Cor 13:4), and being led as a Lamb, dumb to the slaughter (Isa 53:7; Acts 8:32).
2. FEMALE LAMB. “And if he bring a lamb for a sin offering, he shall bring it a female without blemish” (Lev 4:32). Here the capacity to give birth was offered. The lamb forfeited the right to bring forth natural seed. Jesus fulfilled this figure in His death, being cut off

prematurely, and having no earthly generation (Isa 53:8). 3. HE LAMB. “ And the priest shall take one he lamb, and offer him for a trespass offering, and the log of oil, and wave them for a wave offering before the LORD ” (Lev 14:12). Here was a lamb that had the potential of having progeny, yet that capacity was terminated when it was offered to God. Jesus fulfilled this type by offering a life of great earthly potential to God. 4. BULLOCK. “ If the priest that is anointed do sin according to the sin of the people; then let him bring for his sin, which he hath sinned, a young bullock without blemish unto the LORD for a sin offering ” (Lev 4:3). The offering of a young bullock was the offering of strength and vitality. Jesus offered Himself a sacrifice to God in the strength of young manhood, thus fulfilling this figure. 5. HEIFER. “ This is the ordinance of the law which the LORD hath commanded, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring thee a red heifer without spot, wherein is no blemish, and upon which never came yoke ” (Num 19:2-17). The heifer was one that had never been used for other purposes. Its sole utility pertained to the Lord. Jesus fulfilled this figure in never being used to fulfill another person ’ s will, like the lost had done whom He came to save. 6. SLAIN GOAT. “ And if his offering be a goat, then he shall offer it before the LORD ” (Lev 3:12). Goats were much like sheep, except they excelled in strength, living in higher places, whereas sheep inhabited plains and valleys. Jesus fulfilled this type by sacrificing a life that was strong, and lived in the higher domains of godliness and accord with God. 7. LIVE GOAT. “ And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat: and Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: and the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness ” (Lev 16:20-22). The living goat could navigate in

uninhabitable realms more safely than a sheep. It was strong and able to move about where weaker animals would succumb. Jesus fulfilled this type by moving into a realm that could not be penetrated by any other man. There He presented His own blood, thereby making His death effective. 8. SLAIN BIRD. “ And he shall take to cleanse the house two birds, and cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop: and he shall kill the one of the birds in an earthen vessel over running water: and he shall take the cedar wood, and the hyssop, and the scarlet, and the living bird, and dip them in the blood of the slain bird, and in the running water, and sprinkle the house seven times ” (Lev 14:49-51). The bird was more noted for beauty and dexterity than strength and servitude. Jesus fulfilled this type by offering a life of unexcelled beauty before God – a life that was lived freely and with great spiritual dexterity among men. 9. LIVE BIRD. “ But he shall let go the living bird out of the city into the open fields, and make an atonement for the house: and it shall be clean. ” (Lev 14:53). The living bird could soar from an open field into the spacious heavens, moving about freely and without the restraints to which the beasts of the earth were subject. Jesus fulfilled this type by offering a life that was without guile – a life that had been lived out in the heavenly places, soaring where others could not go. 10. TURTLEDOVE. “ And if he be not able to bring a lamb, then he shall bring for his trespass, which he hath committed, two turtledoves, or two young pigeons, unto the LORD; one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering ” (Lev 5:7). The turtledove was a gentle and sensitive bird, most often domesticated. It is known for its migratory nature and timid disposition. Jesus fulfilled this type by offering a life that had been gentle and lowly – a life that often preferred lonely vigils with the Father in the higher and less agitated realms. 11. RAM. “ If a soul commit a trespass, and sin through ignorance, in the holy things of the LORD; then he shall bring for his trespass unto the LORD a ram without blemish out of the flocks, with thy estimation by shekels of silver, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for a trespass offering ”

(Lev 5:15). A ram obtained special value, being considered of greater worth than a sheep. When fattened, it was a favorite article of food. Our Lord fulfilled this type by offering a life that was noted for strength – a life that was fully capable of overcoming adversaries. He was also a source of great nourishment and encouragement, as all of the disciples could attest. 12. BURNT OFFERINGS. “ And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him ” (Lev 1:4). These were offerings that were consumed, leaving no residue – the whole of it was offered to God. The Savior fulfilled this type by being “ made a curse for us, ” tasting of death for every man, and being “ made sin for us. ”

THE COHERENCE OF REVELATION

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:" (2 Tim 3:16)

Chapter 20

THE PRIESTHOOD

The first covenant developed the concept of a High Priest – an appointed representative that assured the acceptance of the people. It was the “priests” that “went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. but into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people” (Heb. 9:6-7). It is particularly the “high priest” that is our point here (Exod. 28-30; 35; 40).

Christ is declared to be “a faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people” (Heb. 2:17). He was the Divinely-appointed Representative for fallen man. He did not take this honor upon Himself, but was placed in that necessary position by His Father: “So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but He that said unto Him, Thou art My Son, to day have I begotten Thee. As He saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec” (Heb 5:5-6). All of this is related to Jesus being the Author of eternal salvation to them that obey Him. As it is written, “And being made perfect, He became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him” (Heb 5:9).

In other words, Christ’s High Priesthood relates to what He is doing right now. It is in this capacity that He is a merciful and faithful High Priest, having been tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. Because of Him, as our Great High Priest, we can “come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb 4:16).

I do not know why there is so little teaching these days on the High Priesthood of Jesus – unless it be that it is not comprehended. However, this is one of Christ’s critical and indispensable ministries, and it is imperative that it be proclaimed to the people. It is in this capacity that He represents us before God. As it is written, “For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us” (Heb 9:24). Whatever a person may think about the effects of regeneration and being reconciled to God, it has not dispensed with the necessity of someone between us and God – the “One Mediator,” which is also related to Christ’s High Priesthood (1 Tim 2:5).

The kind of High Priesthood that is realized in Christ Jesus perfectly suits our present condition. As it is written, "For such a high priest became us," or "was fitting for us to have" (NASB), "who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens" (Heb 7:26). The unvarnished truth of the matter is that we cannot be saved without Jesus functioning as our "Great High Priest" (Heb 4:14).

As it relates to this series of devotions, this perfectly accords with both the nature and purpose of God. It blends with what God has said about Himself, humanity, and His great salvation. It accords with what Moses and the Prophets foretold of a Messiah, and what John the Baptist said of Him.

It is in the role of High Priest that Jesus is to be considered and contemplated by believers: "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus" (Heb. 3:1). That consideration is to include His representation of the redeemed in the presence of God – now, or at this time: "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:14-15).

It will not serve our purpose to elaborate at length upon the magnificent high priesthood of Christ. Suffice it to say that it is the reason why such a priesthood was instituted under the Law. The purpose of God included the Divine representation of fallen man. It is that purpose that was reflected in the Aaronic priesthood.

Further, without that reflection, we could not have comprehended the significance of Christ's current ministry in the capacity of our High Priest.

THE COHERENCE OF REVELATION

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:" (2 Tim 3:16)

Chapter 21

CONCLUSION

From Genesis through Revelation, God's word is coherent. The purpose of God is not only perceptible throughout the Scriptures; it is the reason for the Word. God's objective has saturated every aspect of His dealing with man. Every word and work of God is an expression of His Person, and consequently, is harmonious within itself. No word of God contradicts another word He has given.

No single word of God will stand by itself – it must be perceived as an expression and facet of God's "eternal purpose." This is the reason for the affirmation, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). For this reason, no word delivered to man is an end of itself. To say it another way, a doctrine cannot be built upon a single utterance of God – a practice that is common in Christendom. All doctrine and revelation is summarized in a Person – the Lord Jesus Christ. Any

valid doctrine, or teaching, must have its foundation on Christ, and relate directly to what God is doing through Him.

The message that most thoroughly communicates the mind and purpose of God is the Gospel of Jesus Christ – the record God has given of His Son (1 John 3:10-11). Thus it is appropriately called “the power of God unto salvation” (Rom. 1:16). The satisfaction of man’s curiosity and the establishment of a fruitful society upon earth is not the objective of the Scriptures, the reason for Christ, or the focus of the Gospel. The doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction, for which Scripture has utility, have to do with the reconciliation of man to God and the ultimate gathering of all things together into one (Eph 1:9-10). If those things are obviously disassociated from a message, it cannot possibly be true.

The revelation of God consists of Christ’s Person, and the Scriptures, or inspired writing. Both are a precise expression of God’s purpose, and have derived their origin from that purpose. Christ’s Person provides us a demonstration of God in the concrete, so to speak. The written Word is a Divine articulation of His objective for man, and of the appointed means whereby man may enjoy participation in it.

There is no self-contradiction in God, Christ, or the Word. No single attribute of God is set against another of His traits. No word or work of Christ contradicts another of His expressions, or any aspect of God’s nature. No word of Scripture is in variance with another word, or with the God that gave it. Revelation – all revelation – is absolutely coherent! It is to God’s glory and man’s advantage that this is the case!