

Faithbuilders Fellowship

Proclaiming Christ's Parousia
and the coming Millennial Kingdom
July, August 2009

Revelation

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John, Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw" (Revelation 1:1,2).

John, beloved of our Lord, was the last apostle living when Jesus appeared to him on the Isle of Patmos (Revelation 1:9) and delivered the closing book of sacred testimony — Revelation. This completed the record of the New Testament.

Eusebius of Caesarea records some early testimony about when John composed Revelation. Eusebius, sometimes called the Father of Church History, lived from ca. 263-339 AD. His work *Ecclesiastical History* has the following.

"Many were the victims of Domitian's appalling cruelty. At Rome great numbers of men distinguished by birth and attainments were executed without a fair trial, and countless other eminent men were for no reason at all banished from the country and their property confiscated. Finally he showed himself the successor of Nero in enmity and hostility to God. He was, in fact, the second to organize persecutions against us, though his father Vespasian had had no mischievous designs against us" (*Ecclesiastical History* 3:17).

Vespasian, the reader may recall, was the Roman general whom Emperor Nero had sent to quell the revolt of the Jews, after their initial successes against the Roman legate Cestius Gallus in 66 AD. Vespasian arrived in northern Israel in April 67 AD. As he progressed methodically toward Jerusalem, he heard the news of the death of Nero. His successor Galba was killed after a few months, followed by Otho, Emperor from 15 January to 16 April, 69 AD. He was replaced by Vitellius, who was deposed on December 20, 69 AD. Thereafter Vespasian, who had earlier been acclaimed emperor by troops in Egypt and Judea, was declared emperor by the Roman Senate. He was the fourth emperor to come to power in that famous "year of the four emperors."

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Upon Vespasian's death on June 23, 79 AD, he was succeeded by his eldest son Titus until his death of fever September 13, 81 AD. Next to the throne was the younger brother of Titus, Domitian, also son of Vespasian. Domitian ruled until assassinated 18 September, 96 AD.

Eusebius continues, "There is ample evidence that at that time the apostle and evangelist John was still alive, and because of his testimony to the word of God was sentenced to confinement on the island of Patmos. Writing about the number of the name given to antichrist in what is called the Revelation of John, Irenaeus has this to say about John in Book V of his *Heresies Answered* —

'Had there been any need for his name to be openly announced at the present time, it would have been stated by the one who saw the actual revelation. For it was seen not a long time back, but almost in my own lifetime, at the end of Domitian's reign.'

"Indeed, so brightly shone at that time the teaching of our faith that even historians who accepted none of our beliefs unhesitatingly recorded in their pages both the persecution and the martyrdoms to which it led. They also indicated the precise date, noting that in the fifteenth year of Domitian, Flavia Domitilla, who was a niece of Flavius Clemens, one of the consuls at Rome that year, was with many others, because of their testimony to Christ, taken to the island of Pontia as a punishment. ... Tertullian, again, has this to say about Domitian:

'A similar attempt had once been made by Domitian, who almost equalled Nero in cruelty; but — I suppose because he had some common sense — he very soon stopped, even recalling those he had banished.'

“After fifteen years of Domitian’s rule, Nerva succeeded to the throne. By vote of the Roman senate Domitian’s honours were removed, and those unjustly banished returned to their homes and had their property restored to them. This is noted by the chroniclers of the period. At that time too the apostle John, after his exile on the island, resumed residence at Ephesus, as early Christian tradition records” (*Ecclesiastical History*, 3:18-20).

This testimony of Eusebius indicates that Revelation was written near the end of the reign of Domitian, perhaps 95 or 96 AD. This was about 2½ decades after the fall of Jerusalem to the armies of Titus in 70 AD.

This is a valuable observation, for it means that the prophecies of Revelation stretch well beyond the close of the Jewish Age, contra the suggestions of the Preterist view that Revelation was fulfilled in the first century of the Christian era.

Blessings Attached

It was customary in the early Church to have readings of Scriptures in a public fashion, for not all were literate, and hearing the words of life was a valuable part of Christian instruction. This is reflected in Paul’s advice to Timothy, serving the Church at Ephesus — “Till I come, give attendance to **reading**, to exhortation, to doctrine” (1 Timothy 4:13).

John knew that the message he saw from our Lord Jesus on the isle of Patmos was sacred instruction. “What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia” (Revelation 1:11). So John commends attention to the message, and assures us a blessing would attend.

“Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of the prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand” (Revelation 1:3). There is a great deal of advice and counsel to the Church throughout the book, specially in the messages Jesus gives to each of the Churches. Close attention and circumspect obedience to Jesus’ advice brings many blessings. “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit [of God] saith unto the churches” is an oft repeated refrain (Revelation 1:7 and elsewhere).

Revelation contains a wealth of information, in signs and symbols, which discloses in advance the experiences of saints throughout the Gospel Age, from first to last. It has engaged the minds of brethren for centuries, and the greater light on the scriptures open to saints today augments the privileges **we** have respecting this book. Are we interested to search the details of the plans and purposes of our Creator — even the deeper things? We are warmly invited to do so.

Daniel the prophet was a “man greatly beloved,” to whom God granted the privilege of writing down prophecies intended for later times. It was similar with John, the

“disciple whom Jesus loved” (Daniel 10:19, John 21:7). But God told Daniel the book was sealed up — whereas Jesus told John, “the time is at hand.” In other words, it was time for the visions of Revelation to apply, and Christians from John’s day forward could read, understand, and benefit from a thoughtful study of its messages — even though it would not yield all its mysteries at once.

Every Christian person today may look into the prophecies of this book with advantage and spiritual profit. Is there any reasonable cause to neglect its promised blessings?

Introduction

John saw the prophetic vision on one occasion, on one day. Twelve times he was instructed to “write” what he saw and heard, and John did this as he received the vision (see Revelation 10:4). But assembling his writings into the cohesive book we have as “Revelation,” he would do after the vision closed. Then he would add an introduction, a closing, augment his notes from his memory of the visions, and organize it into the form we have now.

Thus, John’s introductory comments reflect things about the vision which are not formally introduced until later in the book — things John had seen before he penned the introduction.

This point comes to us front and center with **verse four**. “John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne.”

This clearly refers to the “throne scene,” which we encounter in chapter four. That scene depicts God as sovereign over all, attended by four “living creatures”¹ which address Him as “Lord God Almighty, which was,

FAITHBUILDERS FELLOWSHIP is a publication of Millennial Morning, a recognized religious, non-profit organization for the dissemination of Christian teaching. It is part of the worldwide “Bible Student Movement.” Address all communications to ...

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and is, and is to come” (Revelation 4:8). This refers to God as the self-existent one, who had no beginning.² “Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God” (Psalms 90:2).

Before the throne of God, in chapter four, appear seven lamps of fire. These symbolize the holy Spirit of God active during the seven stages of the Church — seven **periods of time** during the Gospel Age. The seven spirits are not independent beings or persons, but a seven-fold representation of the Spirit of God, which express the purpose, power, mind, and personality of God. “Grace ... and peace” which we have from God is exerted through His Spirit.

The unfortunate and incorrect view, so prevalent among Christendom, that the holy Spirit of God (Ephesians 4:30) is some independent person of a mysterious triune deity, does not agree with the symbols used here. Individuals are never expressed as seven-fold beings. Neither God, nor Jesus, are ever represented as “seven” somethings. But the power and influence of God for our blessing, help, “grace and peace,” is expressed as a seven-fold help because it extends to the Church which is depicted as seven branches (as in the candlestick of the holy), or seven churches (Revelation chapters 2, 3), or seven kings (Micah 5:5).

In chapter five of Revelation Jesus, who is a single being (as all beings are), is pictured as a lamb that had been slain and lived again. This lamb has seven horns, representing the power of Jesus to stand on behalf of the Church through the age, and seven eyes, showing his discerning and protecting care for the Church through the age (Revelation 5:6). Both the seven horns, and the seven eyes, are a parallel to representing the Spirit of God as sevenfold, in seven lamps of fire.

The terms “grace and peace” refer to the blessings we have from God and His son, our Lord Jesus. Paul nearly always uses these words in the greetings opening his epistles. For example, Galatians 1:3, “**Grace** be to you and **peace** from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ.” Peter used a similar greeting, “**Grace** and **peace** be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord” (2 Peter 1:2).

Paul never mentions the holy Spirit in these opening greetings. He limits his reference to God and Jesus, for they are persons and the holy Spirit is not. However, inasmuch as grace and peace are ministered to us through the Spirit of God, the inclusion of the “seven spirits” before the throne of God as agents in bringing us “grace and peace” is not inappropriate.

Verse 5 — “And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first born of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth.”

Jesus is the “first born from the dead,”³ because he was the first ever to receive a resurrection to life out of



John, on the Isle of Patmos, on the “Lord’s Day.”

death. Lazarus, and others who were raised by Jesus (or by the prophets in the Old Testament) were brought from the dead back to the condition they had before — namely the same dying condition all humans have now. But resurrection in the full sense, to everlasting life — Jesus was the first for this. All the saints in glory, and restored humanity on earth, receive this ultimately. But Jesus was the first.

“The faithful witness” — John heard this description of Jesus in the message to Laodicea, and presumably this mention is a reflection of that (Revelation 3:14). The statement also reminds us of 1 Timothy 6:13, “Christ Jesus ... before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession.” The concept is similar, though Revelation’s expression is more comprehensive.

“The Prince of the kings of the earth” reflects Revelation 19:16, “King of Kings and Lord of Lords.”

Verse 5 — “... Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.” Love for others is expressed by service, and of this Jesus is our example. “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends” (John 15:13, 14).

Verse 6 — “And hath made us kings and priests unto his God and Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”

We are kings and priests presently, even before we enter upon the grandeur of our heavenly reward. For this reason are the words “hath made,” rather than “shall make.” We are kings, of royal pedigree, because we are sons of the most high. To us apply the privileges of Proverbs 25:2, “It is the glory of God to conceal a thing; but the honour of kings is to search out a matter.”

We are priests in the sense that we call others to be reconciled to God. “We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God” (2 Corinthians 5:20).

As kings and priests in this sense, we constitute a “royal priesthood ... an holy nation ... that ye should shew

Irenaeus

“... by the one who saw the actual revelation. For it was seen not a long time back, but almost in my own lifetime, at the end of Domitian’s reign.”

(Irenaeus, overseer in Lyons, France, died ca. 202 AD. He had been a disciple of Polycarp, who was a disciple of John.)

forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9). As the saints pass into glory, they are then enthroned with Christ, with royal honors. During the Millennium they will exercise their priesthood in **full** measure to draw the entire world back to God (Revelation 3:21, 20:6).

The metaphor that Peter uses, and that Revelation 1:6 uses, comes originally from God’s calling to Israel at Mount Sinai. He made a wonderful offer to the nation gathered there, through Moses their mediator. “If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people ... And ye shall be unto me a **kingdom of priests** and an holy nation” (Exodus 19:5, 6).

We enter upon an even grander opportunity, only somewhat foreshadowed by God’s offer to natural Israel. We can be God’s heavenly Kings and Priests, reigning with our Lord Jesus from heaven above to reclaim the entire world in due time. But there are conditions. We must agree to be a covenant people with God. Have we heard the call to follow Christ? Have we agreed to do so? Have we agreed to obey his voice, and do his commandments? Even unto death? (Revelation 2:10). Have we consecrated our lives to serve God, as the Old Testament priests were consecrated to serve God? (Leviticus Chapter 8). Have we been baptized in order to display to others our agreement to be immersed into Christ, to do the will of God as he did? (Romans 12:1-2, 6:1-3).

Verse 7 — “Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.”

These last words recall those of Revelation 22:20 at the close of the book, “Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.” The forepart of verse seven reflects the words of Jesus in Matthew 26:64, and the prophecy of Zechariah 12:10.

- “Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven” (Matthew 26:64).

The words of this text were spoken to the council that condemned Jesus. Many among them lived to see the judgment of God against Jerusalem in 70 AD when the

Romans stormed the city, burned the temple, pillaged the city, massacred many of its citizens, and took away many captives. By this means they “saw” the power of the Son of Man. The “clouds” of trouble that attended that visitation were dreadful indeed. The Pharisees “saw” in dramatic fashion the power of the son of man, who had “sat down on the right hand of God” (Hebrews 10:12, 1:3).

When the Judgment fell in 70 AD, the Jews did not see Jesus visibly, directly, as a person, because by then Jesus was exalted to heavenly glory in the spirit realm. People do not see spirit beings, and Jesus did not choose to work a miracle to materialize a physical body for displaying to them. They “saw” Jesus through the glory and majesty of the judgments they witnessed.

In this it is like Isaiah 40:5, “And the glory of Jehovah shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.” The world never sees Jehovah personally. They “see” his glory revealed in His work, in His judgments.

- “They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn” (Zechariah 12:10).

This is from the common version. The expression “look upon me” may as well be rendered “look **unto** me” — as it is in the American Standard Version. That is the real meaning of the text. It does not tell us people will physically see Jesus — rather that people will look **unto** Jesus as their Lord, Master, King, and Redeemer, as the Kingdom unfolds.

This meaning is apparent when John cites the passage from Zechariah in his Gospel. “They shall look **unto** him whom they pierced” (John 19:37, Rotherham). The word “unto” is from the Greek *eis*, which means unto, or into. They will not look upon Jesus, as though to see him visibly, but they will look **unto** Jesus for help, instruction, leadership.

This will be the case with Israel when they are informed by the Ancient Worthies that Jesus is their Messiah, and that he has delivered them from the nations gathered around them.

Already Returned

In fact our Lord Jesus has already returned at his Second Advent, at the time appointed by prophetic testimony — 1874. With that year commenced his *parousia*, or presence. His revealing to the world through the judgments incident to Armageddon has not yet come. The scriptures use the word *apokalupsis* to refer to that time. Thus brethren of the Bible Student fellowship frequently refer to the **parousia** of Christ since 1874, and his **apokalupsis** still future, at the close of the present Harvest period of the Gospel Age.

Verse 8 — “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.”



The Isle of Patmos in modern times, off the west coast of Turkey.

This is from the common version and contains some imperfections which have confused the meaning, even among Bible Students. Here it is again from the NASB, which follows the better Greek manuscripts. “I am the Alpha and the Omega, says the Lord **God**, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

This text refers to Jehovah, our Heavenly Father. The word “God” was omitted in the common version, but is part of the text. The speaker is “the Lord God ... the Almighty” — “who is and who was and who is to come.” These are the expressions from Revelation 4:8 which refer to Almighty God himself.

This declaration by God tells us the vision comes from Him, with His authority. This book truly is part of the “Word of God” for our edification. As John said in verse one, it is the Revelation of Jesus Christ, “which God gave unto him.”

In **Verse 9** John identifies himself again and tells us he received this vision while banished to the isle of Patmos — which ties the composition of the book to the historical notices by Eusebius, that is, to the closing years of Emperor Domitian, who died in 96 AD. If Revelation was given in that closing year, and if John was a young man of perhaps 25 (just a guess) when he became a disciple of Jesus late in 29 AD, then John would have been about 92 when he received this vision.

Verses 10, 11 — “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia” — Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea.

The “Lord’s day” is Sunday, in memory of Jesus’ resurrection on that day. Early in the Christian age it became a day of worship among Christians, and this practice induced John to be “in the Spirit” specially on this day. The “voice” John heard was the voice of Jesus, majestic, clear, vibrant, strong, as a trumpet. John turned to see the speaker (**verse 12**), and saw Jesus walking among seven golden candlesticks — attired as one might consider a priest.

The vision calls to mind the Tabernacle, in which an officiating priest tends the burning lamps in the holy. The lampstand in the holy had seven branches all attached, indicating the unity of the Church.

Here the picture has seven separate lampstands, emphasizing the distinctions between each phase of the Church through history — Ephesus the early Church, Laodicea the church of the present Harvest period.

Verses 13-15. The golden girdle represents the divine service of Jesus as our great “high priest ... in the heavens” (Hebrews 8:1). His hair was white like wool, suggesting the wisdom of age. His eyes were as lamps of fire, discerning and insightful. His feet were like burnished brass, expressing his righteous standing. His voice was majestic as the sound of many waters, indicating his commanding authority.

Verses 16, 17. In his right hand were seven stars, representing the seven messengers to the Churches, one star or messenger for each. Spiritual leaders are sometimes referred to as messengers, or angels, of God (Malachi 2:7, 1 Corinthians 11:10). Stars represent individual spiritual teachers — as the 12 apostles in the crown of the Church (Revelation 12:1).

Presumably John did send the message he received from Christ to the seven churches of Asia Minor, as he was instructed (Revelation 1:11). But to whom in particular would he send it, for the benefit of the Church in each location? Presumably to the leader of the Church, the “angel” of that Church — for it was the custom of the time for the Church in each city to recognize an overseer among them, such as James “the Lord’s brother” (cousin) had been for the Church at Jerusalem before his martyrdom in about 62 AD (Galatians 1:19, Acts 15:13).

But as the seven churches also represent the seven periods of the one “Church of Christ” through the age, so the seven stars have a broader meaning as well. The seven stars are seven individuals who have been used by Jesus to provide a special message of Truth at seven special times through the age. These point the way forward for the Church in her changing circumstances.

The mention of the seven stars is followed immediately with mention of the sharp two-edged sword of truth from our Lord’s mouth — his Word fitting to each stage.

“His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not” (Revelation 1:16, 17). This is very similar to Daniel 10:5-10 — the sun-like brilliance of the angel, the weakness of Daniel, his strengthening by a hand.

Daniel, as we observed in the series on his book, represented the Church through the Gospel Age. John, as many think, also represents the Church — in this case the Church at the close of the Gospel Age. Remember that John “turned” to see Jesus and receive the messages to the seven Churches, as we, the Laodicean

church, “turn” to see the history of the Gospel Age mostly behind us.

John was in the spirit “on the Lord’s day” — as we are in this “day of the Lord” (2 Peter 3:10), the day of Jesus’ *parousia*.

John saw a remarkable vision of Truth from the heavenly courts. So have we seen the unfolding of God’s Plan of the Ages, the “faith once delivered unto the saints” restored after its loss through the dark ages — replete with prophetic understanding that even the early Church could not see so clearly.

The “Divine Plan of the Ages” is from God, it comes to us through our returned Lord Jesus (Luke 12:35-36), and is communicated to us through the “angel” or messenger of the Laodicea church — a position evidently filled by Pastor Charles Russell, renowned among Bible Students everywhere.

Identifying each of the seven messengers, by name, is more challenging. There is wide agreement on most. Our best judgment is that the seven messengers were Paul, John, Arius, Waldo, Luther, Penn, and Russell.

Among those frequently named, this list misses only Wycliffe, but him we see included at the close of the fourth church, “I will give ... the morning star” (Revelation 2:28). That refers overtly to our Lord Jesus (Revelation 22:16). But secondarily, covertly, it refers to the ministry of John Wycliffe as a special blessing late in the fourth period of the Church. Wycliffe is known in history as the “morning star” of the Reformation.⁴

Brief Overview

Revelation covers three time periods — The Gospel Age, the Harvest, and the Millennium — with some overlapping of periods.

- Gospel Age — chapters 1 through 13
- Harvest — chapters 14 through 19
- Millennium — chapters 20 through 22

The first section is the longest, and includes three “waves” of history — the Seven Churches, Seven Seals, and Seven Trumpets. Each series takes us through the age from beginning to end, each with a different focus — namely, the Church, the nominal Church, and Religious government and society. Each main section can be subdivided into four parts.

Gospel Age

- Introduction (1)
- Seven Churches, Seals, Trumpets (2-11)
- True woman, the Church (12)
- Rise of nominal Church, Babylon (13)

Harvest

- Introduction (14)
- Seven Plagues (15,16)
- False woman, Papacy (17)
- Judgment of Babylon (18,19)

Millennium

- First Resurrection (20:1-10)
- General Resurrection (20:11-21:1)
- Heavenly woman, Bride class (21-22:5)
- Closing (22:6-21)

This listing is brief. It is not precise. But it is helpful for keeping in mind the various parts of the book — 12 in all. Thus the New Testament closes with 12 portions of prophecy, just as the Old Testament closes with the 12 “minor” prophets.

(1) These four living creatures represent the four attributes of God — Wisdom, Justice, Love, Power — by which qualities God rules creation. More on this when we come to the fourth chapter in sequence.

(2) Distinct from God’s son, Jesus, whose beginning is specifically identified in scripture — Revelation 3:14, Colossians 1:15, Proverbs 8:22,23

(3) The common version says first begotten, but the sense is evidently that Jesus was “born” on the spirit plane after his death, not merely “begotten.” The NASB, NIV, Rotherham, Kingdom Interlinear, and others have “firstborn.”

(4) There were 12 tribes of Israel — but in a sense 13, including Levi, Ephraim, and Manasseh. The moon represents Israel, and the 12 lunations of the moon per year perhaps represent the 12 tribes of Israel composing that nation. But in some years there are 13 lunations. Perhaps this is a parallel to the 12 / 13 tribes, depending on how they are counted.

In spiritual Israel the same concept appears. There were 12 apostles of the lamb from the day of Pentecost forward if one includes Matthias among the number — as it appears was so, from the Book of Acts written two decades after Pentecost, by Luke, a close associate of Paul. Yet Paul also received a special apostolic charge, making a 13th.

So with the seven “stars” or messengers, one to each church — we have an additional one in Wycliffe, appended to the 4th church toward its close, as a special luminary to guide the Church out of the bleak darkness of that 4th period of the Church.

Of special note is that Wycliffe died in 1384, and the Bible he worked to translate into English was published posthumously in 1388. Seventy weeks of years later take us to 1874 and 1878 respectively, the two dates Bible Students have long seen opened the harvest initiated by the advent of the true “bright and morning star,” our Lord Jesus.

“The Greatest ... is Love”

“Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity” (1 Corinthians 13:13).

This is one of the most famous texts in the Bible. This rendition comes from the common English version, that is, the King James Version, where the word for love is often translated “charity” — not in the sense of giving to the poor, but in the sense of a “benevolent feeling, especially toward those in need or in disfavor ... leniency in judging others; forbearance ... Christian love; *agape*.”

The English “charity” has as its root “char” or “car,” meaning dear, akin to caress, cherish (Dictionary.com).

The underlying Greek word is *agape*, famously known as the word expressing a high and esoteric form of love. Sometimes it is referred to as a “disinterested love” — there is a good thought here, but it is susceptible of misunderstanding. The “disinterest” means it is not a selfish love, but an altruistic love. It is concern for the other without being rooted in self-interest. Love for others is manifest in a charitable spirit.

Love is a frame of mind toward others which expresses itself in kindly ways. Courtesy is said to be love in trifles, in small things, expressing by our words and interactions a kindly feeling toward another. The opposite of this might be expressed in many ways, chiefly in selfishness, where we are so interested in ourselves, our comforts, our interests, that we reflect little or no concern for the interests of others.

Love includes courtesy, but it goes deeper and reaches further. It considers the greater good of another person. Thus the love of parents for their children is expressed by guidance, direction, education, and above all, training their characters. This necessarily involves a measure of discipline, correction, even chastisements — for weeds grow naturally, but sweet fruits are cultivated with labor and attention.

So with our heavenly father, as Paul explains in Hebrews 12:9-11. “We have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he [God] for **our** profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.”

The Opposite Spirit

Against the spirit of love, in a passive sense, is **indifference**. With this there is a deficiency, a lack of engagement. If we are indifferent to others they will sense this, and there will be no cultivation of charity or goodwill. Simple courtesies convey a basic sense of care — and open the way for deeper interaction. If we care, if we are attentive, we will “consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works” (Hebrews 10:24).

This is not so much by directing and commanding, but by stimulating and encouraging. If we commend the good deeds of another, we encourage their own initiative. By this we tell them we have observed the good they did, we appreciate both their good motive and their good deed, and nourish their interest in continuing, even excelling, in the same thereafter.

More deeply antagonistic to love is **bitterness**. This usually arises from either personal affronts (real or imagined), or jealousies. People of shallow character are most

prone to bitterness. People of experience, breadth of mind and character, have learned to beware of such feelings — to have as generous a spirit as the facts will allow.

The antidote for bitterness is sweetness. “Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you ... be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another” (Ephesians 4:31, 32). People of character apply this counsel — others tend not to.

How Expressed

Love expresses itself in support and encouragement. The opposite of this is opposition and accusation. Our adversary, the devil, is the master of accusation. The very word “devil” means “accuser,” and the same for the Greek word underlying this, *diabolos*. The devil at first wished to exterminate the fledgling Church of Christ, and tried this by stirring accusation against Christian leaders early on — thus the martyrdom of Stephen by the Jewish council, and the death of James because it “pleased the Jews” (Acts 12:3). Nevertheless Christianity, the religion of love, spread rapidly.

The devil thus raised various persecutions against them by the Roman authorities — under Nero, Domitian, Trajan, Aurelius, Severus, Decius, Valerian, Aurelian, and the great persecution begun under Diocletian (spawned by his colleague Galerius). At last the cycle was broken by God’s intervention, paganism was displaced as the spiritual ruling authority, and the religion of love, cooperation, and peace, expanded free of the devil’s pagan onslaught.

“Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the **accuser** of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night” (Revelation 12:10). More troubles would follow, but for the moment the accusations against Christians were abated.

Do we ever mimic this spirit of the adversary? Do we display the taciturn spirit of raising dust, accusation, mistrust, to undermine the work, service, ministry of others? The six, “yea seven” things the Lord hates include a lying tongue, a heart devising false things, feet swift to mischief, capped off with sowing discord among brethren (Proverbs 6:16-19).

Or do we, rather, build up, encourage, and edify? That is the spirit of *agape* — of love.

Cast Out Fear

A famous text in the first epistle of John says “There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment.”

John is the most philosophic writer of the New Testament, and sometimes it can be difficult to grasp the essence of what he intends. This allows the abuse of what he says on occasion. This text could be used to justify abandoning proper restraints of civility — as though

we need not fear to lose our natural inhibitions, and give utterance to cavi, complaint, and disdain. This is a mistake. It is not the fruit of charity. Railing is from another source. However sweet the bitter fruit appears at the moment, it will in the end bring disappointment — and regret.

Godly love does give firmness, and it does replace fear. The three Hebrews of Daniel chapter three showed this fruit when they stood firm against idolatry at the peril of their lives, but did not rail against either Nebuchadnezzar or their plight. When Jesus stood before Pilate he answered meekly, honestly, without fear, yet respectfully, calmly, deliberately. “Before Pontius Pilate [Jesus] witnessed a good confession” (1 Timothy 6:13).

John’s intent in 1 John 4:18 is clearer when introduced with verse 17. “Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.”

The boldness John refers to is our confidence in the day of judgment. If we develop love, charity, from “a pure heart fervently,” then we need not fear to stand before God who reads the heart (1 Peter 1:22, 1 Timothy 1:5).

“Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. Put away from thee a froward mouth ... let all thy ways be established” (Proverbs 4:23, 24, 26).

If We Love One Another

“If we love one another, God dwells in us, and His love is perfected in us” (1 John 4:12).

Whether I am something or nothing in God’s estimation is to be measured by my love for Him, for His brethren, for His cause, for the world in general, and even for my enemies — rather than by my knowledge or fame or oratory. In the measurement of character, therefore, we are to put love first, and to consider it the chief test of our nearness and acceptance to the Lord.

Those begotten of the holy Spirit should all be good tempered. In no way can we better show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light than by the exhibition of the spirit of love in the daily affairs of life. (*Daily Heavenly Manna*, March 7).¹

(1) This book contains a devotional text and comment for each day of the year. Used by Bible Students for perhaps a century, we highly recommend it. It can be obtained at nominal cost from the Dawn Bible Students Association, DawnBible@aol.com. Those who are poor in purse, but wish to have this book, may request a copy at the charity of the publisher.

The Law of the Offerings

“The is the law of the burnt offering, of the meal offering, and of the sin offering, and of the trespass offering, and of the consecrations, and of the sacrifice of the peace offerings.” (Leviticus 7:37).

The book of Exodus closes with a record of building the Tabernacle, almost a year after the Israelites left Egypt. “In the first month, in the second year, on the first day of the month, the tabernacle was reared up” (Exodus 40:17). On this day also the priests were washed, clothed in their official garments, and anointed with oil, to initiate their priestly duties (Exodus 40:12-17).

The opening day of a new year was an appropriate time to initiate the Tabernacle service. In symbol, the Tabernacle and its offerings represent the Gospel Age and its offerings. This began with our Lord’s baptism at the River Jordan and his 3½ year ministry until his death on Calvary’s cross. Then the way was open for the saints of the Gospel Age to sacrifice with Christ.

Thus this first day of a new year represents the opening of a new age — the Gospel Age. This is doubly engaging when we note that the first day of a new year was also used to represent the opening of the Millennial Age. At the very day opening the new year — in fact a new century, the seventh century of Noah — the flood was ended. They saw the dry ground and the covering of the ark was removed, formally introducing a new era for the world (Genesis 8:13).

In like manner, the beginning of the seventh millennium introduces a new era for the world, the Thousand Year Reign of Christ. Then the curse will be lifted from mankind, and redemption in the “ark” of Christ will be exhibited to the world. (See previous issue, May-June 2009, article titled “Top of the Mountains.”)

Leviticus

The erection of the Tabernacle closes the book of Exodus, and brings us to Leviticus. This book contains instructions for how the priesthood, drawn from the tribe of Levi (thus the book name, Leviticus), are to perform the various offerings which the Israelites bring to God thereafter. The first seven chapters are devoted to the details of those offerings.

There are five kinds of offerings. The summary text heading this article mentions “consecration” and “peace offerings” separately, but in fact the consecration offering was a kind of peace offering.

The five basic offerings are presented in Leviticus in one chapter each, except for the trespass offering, whose description consumes chapter five and spills over into chapter six. Those five, in consecutive order, are — Burnt Offering, Meal Offering, Peace Offering, Sin Offering, and Trespass Offering.

Five Offerings of Leviticus

- **Burnt Offering** — Chapter 1
- **Meal Offering** — Chapter 2
- **Peace Offering** — Chapter 3
- **Sin Offering** — Chapter 4
- **Trespass Offering** — Chapter 5 (to 6:7)

From Leviticus 6:8 through the end of chapter seven we have another pass through these offerings, with a variety of details that apply specially to the priests. (For some reason, in that second pass through the offerings, the peace offering is removed from the third position and put in the last position.)

The kinds of sacrifices one might bring, and incidental regulations about them, varied under each category. Each type varied according to different factors. In those different factors lies a key to the meaning of each type of offering, and how they relate to each other. Here is a summary list of those factors in each case.

- Burnt Offering — Ability
- Meal Offering — Preference
- Peace Offering — Purpose
- Sin Offering — Status
- Trespass Offering — Deed

In other words, the kind of sacrifice one brings for each type of offering depended, respectively, upon one's **ability**, their **preference**, the **purpose** of the offerer, their **status** or position in Israel, or the **deed** done. We will comment on this further as we proceed.

Burnt Offering

Leviticus 1:2 says “you shall bring your offering of the cattle, even of the herd, and of the flock.” The word “cattle” is from the Hebrew *behemah*, according to Young’s Concordance. Strong’s Concordance defines *behemah* as “properly a dumb beast; especially any large quadruped or animal.”¹

The two options, “herd” and “flock,” define the kinds of animals. The herd refers to beef cattle, the flock refers to either sheep or goats.²

The offerer would bring this “of his own voluntary will,” suggesting an act of appreciation for what God had done for him and others. He presented the animal “at the door of the tabernacle,” which means in the court (verse 3), on the north side of the altar (verse 11). North in scripture is the direction of heaven, specially of God, whereas the direction south represents earth (compare Zechariah 14:4, Ezekiel 47:1). So the north side of the altar suggests we present this offering to God.

The offerer would place his hands upon the head of the animal “and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him” (verse 4). Atonement — here is a key word. This animal represents the atonement made on behalf of the offerer. Placing his hands on the head of the animal indicates that this animal is for him.

Atonement, in God’s Plan, is made for us by the ransom sacrifice of our Lord Jesus. What we have in this offering, the burnt offering, is a recognition of this grace by the offerer. His giving something precious to God, namely the sacrifice, is to express his appreciation. One could offer a bullock, the highest form of offering in the tabernacle services. Or one could offer a lamb or goat, or even a pair of doves or pigeons (verse 14), as the poor might do because it was all they could afford to bring.

The various kinds of animals, and their relative value, suggests the ability of the worshipper to appreciate what God had done for them. In our case, it represents our ability to appreciate the atonement we have in Christ.

As we come to Christ early in our walk, we have not much growth of character perhaps, not much capacity for expressing our appreciation for the remarkable gift of atonement. Later, as we grow — and as the world during the Millennium progresses — we can offer higher forms of service in token of our appreciation. “Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar” (Psalms 51:19).

But whether one brought something of the herd or of the flock, it must be a male. Males, in respect to livestock, are considered more valuable, perhaps because of their breeding potential. (We will see that relative rank later, in the law of the sin offering.)

A male was not required in all types of sacrifices, but in this case, for the burnt offering, it was. This suggests the inherent worth and value of the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus, who gave his perfect life — his perfect manhood — as a ransom for us.

Most Common Type

The burnt offering was the most common kind of offering used in Israel. Every day of the year the priests offered a burnt offering lamb in the morning, and again in the afternoon.³ In this offering brethren customarily see a picture of the atonement which Christ gave at Calvary.

True to the type — which required a lamb every morning and ever afternoon — Jesus was put on the cross in the morning and died at mid-afternoon — the third and ninth hours, respectively (Mark 15:25, 34-37).

The two offerings probably suggest that the ransom provided by Christ covers two classes — Jews and Gentiles. The third hour of the day the blessing of Pentecost came upon the Jews, and the ninth hour of the day an angel appeared to Cornelius to open the call to Gentiles (Acts 2:15, 10:3). Jesus was put on the cross the third

hour for the Jews, to accept the deepest burden of the Law (Galatians 3:10). He died the ninth hour to pay the ransom for Adam and all his race (Romans 5:18).

These two beneficiaries of Jesus' sacrifice — Jews and Gentiles — are mentioned by Paul in Ephesians. He says Jesus has "made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of partition between us ... to make in himself of twain one new man ... that he might reconcile **both** unto God ... you which were afar off [Gentiles], and to them that were nigh [Jews]" (Ephesians 2:14-17).

Probably the two loaves presented to God on the Day of Pentecost represent the same two classes — Jews and Gentiles — as two parts of the body of Christ (Leviticus 23:16, 17).

Sweet Savour

In Leviticus 1:9, 13, 17, the burnt offering is described as a "sweet savour unto Jehovah." Exodus 29:41, referring to the daily sacrifice, uses this expression also. Paul comments on this expression and applies it to the sacrifice of Christ in Ephesians 5:2. "Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour."

Wood

Leviticus 1:7 says "the sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire upon the altar, and lay the wood in order upon the fire" or coals. The wood ignited from the coals, and "the priests, Aaron's sons, shall lay the parts, the head, and the fat, in order upon the wood that is on the fire which is upon the altar" (verse 8). The legs and inward parts were washed to remove unclean elements, and then these were placed on the altar with the other parts (verse 9).

Wood is mentioned four times in this chapter, each with the same intent — the burnt offering is placed on the wood, as a means of burning it. It might have passed without mention, but instead the record specifies — wood. Does this have a meaning in the antitype?

Probably it does. Probably it represents the cross upon which our Saviour died for our sins, thoroughly and wholly consumed to redeem us. Wood is specified again in Genesis 22:6, which speaks of the offering of Isaac, which represents the offering of Jesus for us. "Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together." The wood borne by Isaac reminds us of the wooden cross borne by Jesus on the way to Calvary (John 19:17).

Leviticus 6:12 specially associates the wood with the burnt offering. "The fire upon the altar ... shall not be put out: and the priest shall burn wood on it every morning, and lay the burnt offering in order upon it."

Wood appears in two other places respecting the offerings of the Law. Leviticus 4:12, "The whole bullock shall he carry forth without the camp unto a clean place,

where the ashes are poured out, and burn him on the wood with fire." This passage is about the sin-offering. Here the bullock represents our Lord Jesus who suffered on the cross for our sins.

The other place is Leviticus 3:5, "Aaron's sons shall burn [the peace offering] on the altar upon the burnt sacrifice, which is upon the wood that is on the fire." This again associates wood with the burnt offering — the cross with the ransom.

Meal Offering

This is termed "meat offering" in the common version — but it refers to grain, or meal. It could be offered as raw flour (Leviticus 2:2), or cooked in any of a variety of ways (verses 4-8), or even "green ears of corn dried by the fire ... beaten out of full ears" (verse 14).

Israel was an agrarian society, and much of the population raised crops of grain. The meal offering was an opportunity for them to devote a token of their crops to God. Part of the offering was burned to "ascend" to God, and the remainder was used by the priests.

This offering was a way for Israelites to recognize God's blessing upon them and give back some of the good they received of Him, in appreciation.

The lesson to us is that we should also make some return to God of the bounties we have from him. We have any number of choices how we do this, what service we will offer — represented by the array of choices open to Israelites on how to prepare the grain they would offer. Whatever our natural talents or interests may be, we can give something in that direction to the Lord's cause.

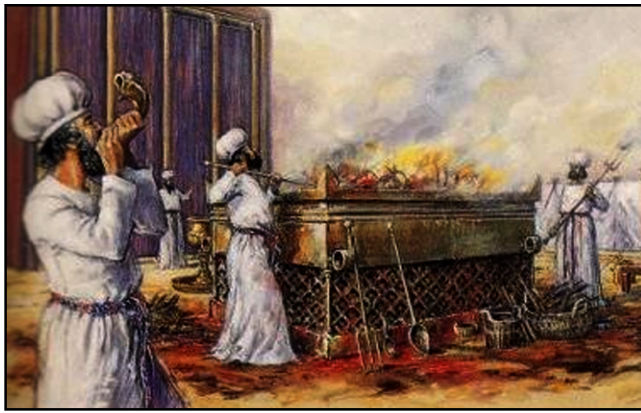
Two Things

There were but two stipulations — (1) it must be accompanied by oil, and (2) whatever was burned should be accompanied by frankincense (Leviticus 2:1).

(1) Oil represents the holy Spirit. Whatever we offer to God in return for his blessings, it should be accompanied by a rich measure of the spirit of God as our motivation. (2) Frankincense is the aromatic substance that represents the sweet scent of devoted service. These both should characterize what we yield to God.

There were also two items that Israel was never to offer on the altar — leaven and honey. "Ye shall burn no leaven, nor any honey, in any offering of Jehovah made by fire" (Leviticus 2:11).

Leaven is a picture of sin, which corrupts and infests so readily. We all have sin within us because we inherit a tendency toward it as part of Adam's race. This is shown by the two loaves waved before God on the day of Pentecost, which we baked with leaven. But we never send leaven — sin — up to God, represented by burning it on the altar. Sin is unacceptable to God. We are accepted by Him because we are justified — but sin itself it unacceptable.



Honey represents the richness of our heavenly calling and its spiritual privileges (Exodus 16:31, Judges 14:14, 1 Samuel 14:27, Psalms 119:103, Revelation 10:9). This we do not offer in sacrifice, because it is the blessing of God to us. We sacrifice earthly things, human things, but not spiritual things.

Peace Offering

Because we have been redeemed — that is the burnt offering — if we accept the sacrifice of Christ on our behalf, we have justification. This brings us peace with God. “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1).

But peace with God is only the beginning. During the Millennium the entire world will secure peace with God when the blood of Christ is applied for them, and they repent of their sins and accept redemption.

More than peace, we have an additional opportunity to aspire to the “high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:14). Some who do not recognize the special and unique nature of the high calling — the heavenly calling — may blandly suppose that being redeemed means a person naturally is on the way to heavenly glory. But there is a distinction between the two.

In Romans 5:2 Paul speaks of the second part of our blessing — the heavenly call to glory. “By whom [Jesus] also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” In other words, being at peace with God through the redemption, we are able to go further — to accept the wonderful invitation of the high calling. This blessing we have as a consequence of “peace” with God.

The peace offerings express such additional privileges. The various kinds of peace offerings are itemized in the instructions to the priests, starting with Leviticus 7:12. It might be a thank offering (Leviticus 17:12), a vow offering (Leviticus 17:16), or an offering in token of one’s consecration to God, as when priests were consecrated to God’s service (Leviticus 17:37, Exodus 29:22, 26, 27, 31, 34, Leviticus 8:22, 28, 29, 31).

The **thank offering** is referred to by Paul in Hebrews 13:15, “By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of

praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.”

A **vow offering** applied if one took the vow of the Nazarite (Numbers chapter six), representing our solemn agreement to God to be devoted to His service.

The **consecration offerings** for the priests apply spiritually to our consecration to God, by which we become prospective members of the royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9). Thus the peace offering depends upon the intent, the purpose at hand.

Romans 5:1,2 connects our heavenly call to our justification. Leviticus 3:5 makes a similar connection, for it says the **peace offering** is laid upon the **burnt offering**. “Aaron’s sons shall burn it on the altar upon the burnt sacrifice, which is upon the wood that is on the fire.”

For the peace offering, the fat and cleansing organs (kidneys and liver) were burned on the altar. Fat, which from its oil content would burn well, represents our zeal in the service of God. The cleansing organs represent our sanctification — our effort to cleanse ourselves and seek spiritual values.

The muscle tissue of the offering — the “meat” of the offering — was to be eaten by the priests partly, and the remainder by the offerer, and presumably his family and associates (Leviticus 7:15, 16, 31, 32). So the offerings we make are received by our high priest Jesus, but we share in the blessings incident to our praise and service.

During the Millennium the offerings of the world will be received by Jesus and the Church, the priesthood of the next age, and the world will share in the blessings incident to their praise and service.

The priest’s portions were the choice parts — the breast and right shoulder (Leviticus 89:31, 32). So we wish that the choice parts of our praise and service be acceptable to our high priest who sits on the right hand of God in glory.

Waved Before God

To further show that Peace Offerings express what we render to God in praise, thanks, and devotion, part of the offering was waved before God. This was sometimes called a “heave” offering because it was lifted high and waved to heaven (Leviticus 7:14). On this part were included three items — an unleavened cake, an unleavened wafer, and a fried cake.

These were to be mingled or anointed with oil, as with other meal offerings (Leviticus 7:12). But there was an additional item also, specified in verse 13. “Beside the cakes, he shall offer for his offering leavened bread with the sacrifice of thanksgiving of his peace offerings.”

This seems to show that while we are here below, offering praise or service to God in appreciation of our redemption, we still recognize the presence of sin within us. “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is

faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:8, 9).

Sin Offering

Though we have been redeemed, still we have the propensity for sin within us. The sin offering recognizes this propensity and our need for cleansing. In the fourth chapter of Leviticus, four examples are considered — four persons or groups who need sin atonement — a priest, congregation, ruler, and common person.

In the first two cases a bullock for a sin offering was offered — in the latter two a goat.⁴

Brethren have learned from *Tabernacle Shadows* that in the big picture of the Day of Atonement offerings (Leviticus 16), the priests who were atoned for first represent the Church, and the people atoned for second represent the world during the Millennium. For the first a bullock was offered, for the second a goat.

Here, in chapter four, the priest and congregation apparently are separate pictures of the Church class during the Gospel Age, and both require the sacrifice of a bullock. The ruler and the common person take us into the Millennium, representing the Ancient Worthies and the people of the world. These require a goat.

These instructions applied to Israel in the wilderness. Numbers 15:17-24 indicates that when Israel would enter the land of promise, the law respecting the congregation would be revised a little — for then, rather than a bullock for a sin of the congregation, they would offer a goat. Probably coming into the land represents a change into the Millennial age, so the “congregation” changes from an ecclesia of the Lord’s people to a group of people during the Millennium.

Thus the change from a bullock to a goat for this offering is consistent with the general understanding of Leviticus 16 — a bullock for the Church, a goat for the world.⁵

Where the Blood was Used

In the case of a priest or a congregation — referring to members of the Church during the Gospel Age — the blood of the offering is taken into the holy and sprinkled before the vail. Whereas for the ruler or a common person, the blood of the offering is used in the court only, sprinkled against the side of the altar.

The Church during this age is represented in the holy — so the blood of the offering is used for them in the holy. Whereas the world during the Millennium, not called to heaven, are represented in the Court — so the blood of that offering is used in the court.

There is a difference also in how the meat of the offering is used. In the first two cases (priest, congregation, Gospel Age) the body of the sin offering was burned. Whereas in the next two cases (ruler, common person, Millennial Age) the meat of the offering was to be eaten by the priests.

Perhaps this shows that during the present time the offering is “sent up” to God — whereas in the Millennium, the offerings of the world are accepted by the “Royal priesthood,” the church in glory.

Trespass Offering

The trespass offering was tendered by an offending party based upon the trespass he had done. For normal transgressions, without malice and forethought, the offerer was to bring a “female from the flock” (Leviticus 5:6), either a lamb or goat — or, if he was unable, then a pair of doves or pigeons (verse 7).

Leviticus 5:15 and forward says that transgressions in sacred things pertaining to God, which are more serious offenses, required a ram — that is, a male from the flock — along with a 20% penalty in money according to the judgment of the priest.

Leviticus 6:1-7 shows that deliberate fraud perpetrated upon a neighbor also merited the more decisive punishment — again a ram, that is, a male from the flock — and the fraud was to be reimbursed. In addition, there was to be a 20% penalty.

So with us now, and with the world in the Millennium — when we realize a trespass, we should recognize it, express our regret for it, and make amends as far as possible. In dire cases there may be a penalty as well, stripes or punishments as the Lord sees best, appropriate for our correction. This is in the interest of justice, and in the interest of reforming the offender.

(1) *Behemah* is actually Strong’s number 929, which he indicates is translated either “beast” or “cattle” in the common version. When one looks under the word “beast” in Strong’s main concordance one finds many cases of word “929” listed. But when one looks under the word “cattle” in his main concordance, for some reason one finds word “930” where presumably word “929” is intended. It seems to be a mistake in the listing. Word number “930” in Strong’s Concordance is *behemoth*, the same spelling in English, “behemoth.” That English word appears but once in the scriptures, namely Job 40:15 — as Young’s Concordance agrees.

(2) Even at passover, when we usually think of a lamb, the Israelites could use a goat, as Exodus 12:5 allows.

(3) The afternoon was styled “between the two evenings,” for the Hebrews considered two evenings, the lesser evening from noon to three, and the greater evening from three to sundown, about six pm. Numbers 28:4 stipulates that the first daily offering was in the morning, and the second later one, “between the two evenings” (margin). 1 Kings 18:29, and Acts 3:1, where the ninth hour is mid-afternoon, both agree with this timing.

(4) A male goat was required for a ruler, a female goat allowed for a common person. This distinction makes it apparent that male offerings were considered of higher rank. This explains why the burnt offering should be a male, to recognize the dignity and value of our Lord Jesus who gave himself our ransom, even if the offerer could not always afford the most costly kind of animal.

(5) The treatment of these subject in Hebrews does not make this distinction. The reason for this is engaging, but we will not treat it here.