

The Circumcision of Christ

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A Tradition Can Be Dangerous

We understand by some of Paul's writings to the church that he had a great fear that minds would be led away from the simplicity that is in Christ. In 2 Corinthians 12:9 God told Paul, "My grace is sufficient," and according to Paul's definition, that grace was Christ's strength and Christ's power that you receive through the Spirit of God. Grace is not something you pray down in the time of need, but God's grace is sufficient for every circumstance of life.

However, as Paul feared, the minds of men were corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. We went through a dark age, a dark and cloudy day, and today we are faced with about 1,200 different kinds of "Christian" religions that are the outgrowth of men's minds being corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. After the early morning apostasy, spiritual darkness existed for approximately 1260 years, when men lost sight of truth, the doctrines of God's Word, the very doctrines that had been made plain to the morning-time church. Little by little, men began to gain revelation, but all through the 350 years following the 1260 years of Dark Ages, there was a cloudy. time, when the truth did not shine forth in its clarity.

In one of his songs, Brother Warner wrote the words, "The mists of confusion are passing away." However, many feel, it seems, that all the mists of confusion have passed away, and they have been overcome by a sectarian spirit: "This is what we believe. This is our creed, nothing added to it, nothing taken away, because this is the way God gave it to the reformers. If you don't believe as we do, you are not a part of us."

Now, we are not studying about history, but we are studying about something that is as up to date as this very day. We know that it is something to pray about; and it is not only something to pray about, but we are going to have to do something about it. And the starting place is to go right back to God's eternal Word with honest, sincere hearts, wanting to know the truth no matter how

badly it crosses our beliefs-and trusting the Holy Spirit.

Never get to the place that you are perfectly satisfied with what truth you have. Whenever we come to the place that we are satisfied with our knowledge and understanding of truth, we will stop forward progress. Furthermore, when we lose the desire for a greater revelation of God's Word, we will lose our appreciation of the truth we already have. There is only one way to hold our position, and that is to move forward as the Spirit of God directs.

I ask you to reason together with us by God's eternal Word. I tell you in all kindness that there are still traditions hanging on that were carried out of the days of Protestantism. Traditions divide, but truth will never divide. Now, let me clarify that: There is a righteous division—truth will divide from sin and falsity, but truth will never divide people who are sold out to God, honest of heart. The truth was sent to make us one.

A religious tradition is a doctrine, word, precept, or custom not named in God's Word. There are traditions that are not wrong. Sunday school is a tradition that is good because it is a good way to teach. There are other good traditions, but we are after the traditions that lead away from Christ and divide the people of God.

Tradition will hold as warm a place and as rich a place in your life as truth does when you have been taught it and have accepted it as truth. Consider the millennium teaching. It has been mixed right in with truth, and as far as Protestantism is concerned, it is truth. They are sold out to it and are ready to live for it just as you are for truth. However, the Bible does not teach such a thing as a millennium. I use the millennium theory as an illustration to let us see what a place tradition can hold when there is no truth in it at all.

We read the reformers' books (thank God for them) and get a pattern in our minds of how the thing is, and then when we study God's Word, we study it according to that pattern and make the Bible read just like our pattern, not as it is nor as the writer inscribed it. We take the Word of God and divide it according to our own theory and

theology instead of rightly dividing the Word of truth.

This story illustrates how easy it is to take hold of and carry on tradition:

When a certain woman baked a ham, she would always cut off three inches of the shank before she put it into the pan. Someone asked her one time, "Why do you always cut off three inches before you roast a ham?"

"Well," she said, "I don't know. My mother always did it." So, she asked her mother one day, "Mom, why do you always cut off three inches when you bake a ham?"

"Well," she replied, "I don't know. I do it because my mother always did it. I'm going to ask her." So she went to the grandmother and asked her why she always cut off three inches of every ham she baked. "I used to watch you as a child, and you always did that. Now I do it, and my daughter always does it. Why did you?"

She said, "I did it because the pan I cooked it in was too little to take the whole ham." And here the daughters thought the ham was better by cutting three inches off, but it had been done originally to make the ham fit the pan.

Isn't that a lot like tradition? When you get back of it, the reason why they kept cutting things off was that the pan was not big enough—they could not comprehend that much truth in that era of time. Therefore, because we want a full message, what truth we cannot comprehend, we fill in with traditions. Now we are living in a day and time when God wants the pan big enough to take the whole ham, just as it is.

The Fulness of the Godhead

Colossians 2:1-15 reads: "For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh: That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God [read Chapter 1, verse 27], and of the Father, and of Christ; In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and

knowledge. And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words [the same thing he wrote in 2 Corinthians 11:3]. For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Beware lest any man spoil you [spoil is taken from the same Greek word as corrupt] through philosophy [philosophy is a study or a belief about God] and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

"For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: 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: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it."

Paul set forth the true philosophy of God in verses nine and ten. In verse nine he speaks of the fullness of God in Christ. By studying that verse from other translations, as well as the original Greek, we find it means, "For in him dwells the very nature and fullness of God." The Greek word *pleroma* is translated fullness, complete, and many other English words. It was translated fullness in the ninth verse, and complete in the tenth verse. In Him dwells all the fullness (completeness) of the Godhead bodily, and you are complete (full) when you are in Him.

In the cloudy day, the Godhead was taken apart. It

was taught that when you are justified, you receive the Spirit of Christ, and when you are sanctified you receive the Holy Ghost. But YOU CANNOT TAKE GOD APART. There are three distinct persons of the Godhead, but they are all three in one.

Here is a mystery that has been overlooked, but Paul saw it, and he taught it plainly. In Christ is the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and when you are in Him, you are full! Full of what? Full of God! That is not saying you cannot have more God, but you are full to the degree that you can hold and as you yield yourself to God and walk in the light of His Word.

Jesus told the disciples that the Christ who was with them would be in them; and after He went to Calvary's Cross and died, He sent the Holy Spirit, and through the Holy Spirit, the crucified Christ moves into your heart. You cannot go back of Pentecost. This was our failure in the past. We went back and likened the disciples before Pentecost to a person who repents now. Jesus looked to "that day." The prophets prophesied of "that day." What day? The day that began on the day of Pentecost. It is the last day of time. It will last till eternity. Jesus spoke of that day, and he said that He would send them another Comforter who would abide with them forever, even the Spirit of truth (John 14:16). In John 16:13-15 Jesus let us know that the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, will not glorify Himself. He will not even speak of Himself, but when He is come, "He will glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it to you." The fullness of God is in Christ, and when He is in you, you are full.

People who do not believe that when Christ is in your heart you are full are going to be ever setting forth greater experiences that one must go through, what they call "another work of grace."

There is one lasting work of grace. Grace is Christ, according to John the first chapter, Ephesians the first chapter, and Ephesians the third chapter. Grace is when you are strengthened with might in His Spirit in the inner man. So when you talk in terms of works of grace, you are talking in terms of works of Christ. Now, I know there

are many works—progress in measuring up—but I want you to understand the simplicity and the fullness of Christ. When you truly repent and open your heart's door, Christ moves in through the Holy Spirit, and that is the only way He can move in. We are in the Holy Ghost dispensation. He moves in through the Spirit of God. You do not need to seek a lot of other experiences to get a fullness of God.

People ask questions, and when they asked, "Why do we need another experience to get the fullness of God?" reformers had to come up with some reason; so sin was divided into two kinds of sin, although the Bible does not mention one thing about two kinds of sin. They taught that you are forgiven of all your transgressions in the first work, but that there is another kind of sin still in your heart. They teach that in the first work you are just like the disciples were before Pentecost--Jesus walks with you. The only way He was with the disciples was in a corporal body, and when He was not with them, they got into trouble. He did not have to be gone five minutes until they were in a mess.

However, when the day of Pentecost came, we moved into the dispensation of time that Jesus spake of, the day when He would not dwell *with* us, but He would be *in* us. This is what God ordained from the Garden of Eden. His original plan was to live in man, but when man sinned, the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin. So, through Moses, through the prophets, and through Christ in His corporal body, He dwelled with man. Why? There was sin in man's heart, and the price had not been paid to take it away; but when Jesus went to Calvary's Cross and signed our forgiveness with His own precious blood, He redeemed us, and HIS BLOOD CLEANSSES US FROM ALL SIN. Then God moves right in, as He desired to do from the very beginning.

Peter preached the same kind of Gospel. Second Peter 1:3 states that through Christ He has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness.

To back up the traditional teaching that the Godhead is divided, that you receive a certain measure in one

experience and a certain measure in another experience, men pick up types, rites, and ceremonies of the Old Testament which supposedly prove that second experience.

Get this clear right now: I am not speaking against any person. You may have read an article that is one hundred percent contrary to this one, but I am not trying to hurt the author. I love all men everywhere. I do cry out against the falseness in religion, but I do not speak disrespectfully of any person. I want to rightly divide the Word of God.

Paul warned the Colossians to beware (Chapter 2, verse 8), and we must beware today. Traditions, philosophies of men, will lead us away from Christ, just as they have the religious world. It is very easy for a traditional teaching to actually divert us and work a division among the people of God, and we will not be after Christ.

All Things Are in Christ

Let us consider the circumcision that Paul wrote about to the Colossians, for I'm afraid too many people do not understand it. Paul made it plain that this circumcision was a type, a rite, a ceremony that was fulfilled in you when you were born again. Notice verses 10 and 11: "And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power, In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hand, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ."

Let us get the setting historically first, and then we will bring it up to date. Why was it needful that Paul comfort their hearts along this line? There were false teachers among the Colossians. Colosse was a Gentile church, basically (verse 13), and they were not circumcised. There were Jews among them who admitted that the Gentiles had received Christ, but they could not accept them as being fully saved till they were fleshly circumcised. Paul wrote, in so many words, "Don't let

those fellows tell you that you need to go through any kind of rite or ceremony of fleshly circumcision, because you have already been circumcised. It happened to you when you received Christ." Let us bring it up to date. Today, good men, in confusion, are following along the same lines, taking, supposedly, a type of that circumcision and saying that after you have received Christ, you are not fully sold out to God and are not a full-blooded saint until you get the experience that circumcision is the type of another work of grace in your heart to get rid of the carnal nature and be filled with the Spirit of God. Now, what is the answer to that? You are already circumcised if you are born again! If you have received Christ, you have the fulness of God! Read verse 11 again. He took away the whole body of sin, every bit of it!

Every type in the Old Testament that had any spiritual value in it pointed to Christ. Before He went to the grave, Jesus said to the disciples, "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that were written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished" (Luke 18:3). Real circumcision is secured in Christ for all who trust Him. The Colossians did not need the rite of circumcision because they had the reality of which the rite was just a type.

Heart Circumcision

The Israelites in the wilderness murmured against God, and He let them die off and then raised up a new generation. When He was ready to take them over into Canaan, God said to stop and circumcise them. Those men had never been circumcised. They were born in the wilderness. They were rebellious.

They walked against Him. Circumcision is a sign that you come under a seal that you will obey God and keep His laws. God didn't ask the Israelites to be circumcised in the wilderness because they were rebellions. When they went over into Canaan, He said to circumcise them (Joshua 1:4-7).

What kind of circumcision does Christ give us? The Word of God lets us know that it is made without hands. It is not external, but it is internal, wrought by the Spirit. We used to teach that in the first work, Christ cleanses the outside (removes the transgressions), and in the second work, He cleanses the inside. That was one hundred percent opposite to what Jesus taught. He said to cleanse the inside first and the outside will come clean (Matthew 23:26).

"For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God"(Romans 2:28-29).

That circumcision which the Israelites went through in the flesh was merely a rite or a ceremony of the true circumcision that God wanted from the beginning—the circumcision of the heart. Fleshly circumcision was a shadow of the reality. God knew that cutting off men's foreskins would not make them any more holy or righteous. It was a ceremony, part of a schoolmaster to bring in Christ.

From the very beginning, God wanted heart circumcision, which is real circumcision. Let's go clear back of the Law to where circumcision first began. Let's understand what it is, how it worked, and what God had in mind when He gave this rite. God called Abraham to leave his people and walk by faith with Him. He said in Genesis 17:11, "And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you." By taking that rite, Abraham said, "Lord, I'll keep your commandments. I'll walk with You and You alone. I'm ready to forsake houses, land, father, and mother."

Deuteronomy 30:6 reads, "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." Heart circumcision will cause you to love the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. Old Testament Israel never did have this

A Necessary Baptism

circumcision. Jeremiah 9:26 puts everybody just the same—all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Israel was in no better shape when it came to heart circumcision than the Edomites, the Moabites, and the Egyptians.

Stephen said to the Jews (Acts 7:51), "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye." You cannot be justified and live for God and not be circumcised, because you will always resist the Holy Ghost until you have heart circumcision.

The Colossians had heart circumcision. The circumcision, which was given by man, cut off a small part of the flesh, but Christ's circumcision takes away the whole body of sin. Where is the whole body of sin? There is no sin without the heart; therefore, He takes the whole heart (not a part) out of you and puts a new one in you. That is Christ's circumcision. It changes the heart and transforms the whole man. It is called the circumcision of Christ because it is ordained and communicated by Him and He is the author and the model of it.

Colossians 2:11-12 in the Amplified Bible reads: "In Him also you were circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, but in a [spiritual] circumcision [performed by I Christ by stripping off the body of the flesh [the whole corrupt, carnal nature with its passion and lust.] Thus you were circumcised when] you were buried with Him in [your] baptism, in which you were also raised with Him [to a new life] through [your] faith in the working of God [as displayed] when He, raised Him up from the dead."

Heart circumcision is realized by thorough identification of the believer with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection (Colossians 2:11-12). Our salvation rests in our association with Christ. A sinner must forget the thought that the Jews crucified Christ and realize that he crucified Him: "He bore my sins. I sent Him to Calvary. "

Baptism in verse 12 does not mean water baptism. Every time baptism is read in the Word of God, people are ready to go to the water. However, there are many different baptisms. I believe in water baptism, but it is merely an ordinance or rite or ceremony. It does not do anything for you spiritually or inwardly, and you could get to Heaven without it if it were impossible for you to be baptized. According to Ephesians 4:5, there is just one baptism that a person has to have to be saved. You can be saved without water baptism, but you cannot be saved without Holy Ghost baptism.

"Baptism of the Holy Ghost" is not a biblical expression. Reformers used that expression to set up a certain definite work and experience. The Bible speaks in terms of being "baptized with the Holy Ghost" and baptized by the Holy Ghost."

You are baptized with the Holy Spirit when you get into the church. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body" (1 Corinthians 12:13). When you are born of the Spirit, when you are regenerated, when God puts a new heart in you, He moves in. When Christ moves in, the fulness of the Godhead moves in. Jesus said in John 14:23 that if a man love Him, he will keep His words, the Father would love him, and They (the Father and Jesus) will move in and make their home in him.

What does Paul mean in Colossians 2:12 by "buried with Him in baptism"? He says that you are raised out of this baptism by the operation of the faith of God. This couldn't mean water baptism. In water baptism are you risen with Him by the operation of God? No! You are raised by the same hands that put you down in the water. Paul is talking about another baptism, when you are submerged into Christ.

The first thing you do to get into Christ is be submerged in His death. You have to go to Calvary. There has to be some suffering, some remorse over the sin. There has to be a crucifixion. You have to be crucified with Him. You have to die with Him. When you

really die with Him, the old man, the man you used to be, dies; and by faith, the operation of God, a new man rises up. You get up from an altar of prayer a new man in Christ Jesus; old things are passed away and all has become new.

Paul, in Romans 5:20, wrote that where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. He goes on to say in Romans 6:1-4: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

You are not baptized into Jesus Christ in water baptism. You are baptized into the church, the body of Christ by one Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13). He is talking about how you get into Christ. You get into Him through an experience of salvation. You are buried with Him by baptism into His death. There must be a crucifixion. Away with this idea that you get up a new man, but the old man is still there. There can't be two men! You are one or the other. You are either an old man or a new man. There is no half and half. You are buried with Him into death. You must be made conformable unto His death, Paul said in Philippians 2:10. What kind of death did He die? A crucifixion. There cannot be any walking in new life till the old man is crucified. (Read Ephesians the fourth chapter.)

The Seal of the New Covenant

You are dead in sin, as a sinner, but when you come to Christ, you die to sin. "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses" (Colossians 2:1:3).

When did He circumcise you? When did the old man die? When were you raised to the newness of life? When you came to Christ, you were dead in your sins, as lost as

you could be, separated from God, but you heard the Gospel and you associated your life with Christ. Everything He did, He did for you and me. He didn't die for Himself, He died for you and me. You were sorry you sinned, and you asked forgiveness. You were ready, as Abraham was, to walk by His commandments and to live holy and righteously. About that time, Christ, through the Holy Spirit, circumcised you, taking out the old heart; and when the old heart went, the whole body of sin went. The man is the heart. You are what you are in your heart. And when he takes the heart out, the man you were goes and a new man with new desires takes his place. Old things have passed away; all becomes new in Christ Jesus. That is the circumcision of Christ.

Christ is the Great Physician. Man deals with indexes, but He goes to the real trouble. For instance, a person goes to a physical doctor, and the first thing he does is ask, "What is wrong with you?" The person answers, "I've been suffering pains across my chest and down my left arm. My ankles are swollen." Those are indexes. The doctor will say, "Your trouble is not in your arm or in your ankles. You have a bad heart. Those are just indexes of the real trouble." What are the indexes today? Man smokes, drinks, takes dope, lies, commits adultery, etc. Where is the real trouble? He has a bad heart. When Jesus came, He didn't deal with indexes. He taught, "Out of the heart . . ." (Matthew 12:34-35; 15:19). He came to change the heart. Thank God, when He changes the heart, He changes the issues. He changes the indexes.

Colossians 2:13 lets us know that all this took place at regeneration. You were dead in your sins, Paul wrote. What happened? When you came to Christ, He forgave you all trespasses, and then He circumcised you. You made the covenant. You made the consecration, and He gave you the seal. The seal of the new covenant is the Holy Spirit coming into your heart (Ephesians 1 :13). The seal of the old covenant was circumcision.

Our Big Endeavor

Psalm 133 is a beautiful psalm. It begins, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" Unity begins when we are all baptized by one Spirit. Our big endeavor is to keep that one Spirit, because everyone isn't going to see things just exactly alike. We never will see COMPLETE unity of the faith as long as we are here on this earth. As long as the church is here on the earth there are going to be people who have just been saved, and there are going to be some saved a certain length of time. God is going to be revealing to one minister what He hasn't to another; consequently, he is going to be teaching things that are contrary to what another sees. We are going to be under the "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit" as long as we are here.

Isaiah 52:8 states that we would see eye to eye when the Lord brings again Zion; and that is right. We are going to see eye to eye when we shut our eyes and use God's eyes. Jesus taught in Matthew 6:22 that the eye is single. Now, how can the church have one eye? What is God's eye? The seven eyes on the Lamb are the seven Spirits of God--the Holy Spirit working through the seven periods of time (Revelation 5:6). Therefore, God's eye is the Holy Spirit. Eye to eye is not getting my eyes lined up with yours, because we both might be cross-eyed. Singleness of eye is all of us using God's eye--letting the Spirit of God direct and lead.

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garment" (Psalm 133:1-2). Oil is a type of the Holy Spirit. Believers have received the divine unction that flows from the Head, our Head or High Priest, clear down over the whole body of Christ, and that baptizes (submerges) us into one body. We are brought into a unity of the Spirit. We all have one Spirit. How beautiful it is to dwell together in that, but we have to endeavor to do it.

Abounding Grace

Paul let us know in the first four verses of the sixth chapter of Romans that grace comprises not only a gracious act of pardon done by God in believers, but also an active principle of sanctification in the believer's soul. He said that where sin abounded, grace did much more abound; therefore, how can we who are dead to sin live any longer therein? If you were saved by grace and just got rid of your transgressions but still have a sin principle in your heart, grace has not abounded sin. The word *abound* means "to go far beyond." The truth of the matter is, God's grace is abounding grace. Whatever depth sin has taken in your heart, when Christ, the grace of God, comes in, it goes deeper and takes it out. It goes deeper by taking the whole heart out, by removing the whole body. Not the fleshly body. What kind of body? The body of the inner man, the old man. What is the inner man? Your heart. Your soul. All those are biblical expressions of the inner man. The grace of God does away with the whole old man completely. It takes the whole heart out and puts a new one in.

Men living in sin and supposedly preaching the Gospel, talking about grace, say, "I'm a sinner saved by grace." They disgrace grace! How can a person that is dead to sin live any longer in sin? You cannot be born again and habitually, from the heart, keep on practicing sin. No sir! Why? You are a new man!

Without the power of God there are plenty of people today who do not want to sin. They would to God they didn't do what they do, but they are under a power greater than they are. When you commit sin and your heart becomes corrupted by sin, you become a servant or a slave of sin, and as long as sin is in your heart, you will serve sin. You will add sin to sin.

I don't have to sin today. I could, but I don't have to. There are two things that hold me fast. I had one of them before I was saved. I didn't want to sin, but the devil had me by the nose, and I had to. Thank God, when I came to Jesus Christ, He circumcised me, took the sinful heart

out and gave me power to become a son of God. I hooked my "I don't want to" to the Lord's "You don't have to." When the devil tempts me and says, "Why don't you?" I say, "I have two reasons: I don't want to, and I don't have to!"

Grace is sin's enemy, not sin's covering. The people who claim they are saved by grace and yet live in sin are lepers clothed in white garments. Grace does not give you a white garment to put over your leprous condition. It heals you. You aren't a leper anymore. Grace is not beauty thrown over the deformity of some foul sickness. Grace is help. God heals you and makes you whole. Grace is life counterworking against death. There is only one thing stronger than death, and that is life. Life is what Jesus came to bring. No one can be saved by grace and continue in sin.

One Alone

In the tabernacle that God had Moses build, there were two rooms and two altars, with blood on the two altars. When the priesthood was anointed, there was blood in the oil. Why all of this?

The blood on the first altar could not take away sins. The people kept on sinning although they killed many sacrifices, day after day. The blood of bulls and goats cannot take away sin. People who went to Heaven living under the old law did not get there because of that blood they shed of the animals, but they had to have faith in the Christ who was to come. They were saved by faith. Read the eleventh chapter of Hebrews. They did not receive the promise. They died without ever having the blessedness of the Holy Spirit, but they all died in the faith, believing in Him who was to come.

The high priest was a sinner, too, so the blood on the second altar was put there for his sins and the sins of the people. The blood on the second altar ceremonially sanctified the priest so that he could go into the presence of God. Jesus shed His blood once on Calvary's Cross, and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from ALL sin.

When He died on Calvary's Cross, the veil of the temple was rent from top to bottom.

When we come to Christ, what altar do we come to? Not a brazen altar. Not some wooden altar. Christ is the altar. How many Christs are there? One. Therefore, we have only one altar. Christ is the antitype for every one of these things. Christ. One. Christ alone.

There is a golden altar. The Church of God does not have two rooms down here. It is a duplex. We live on the lower level, and when death comes, we will go upstairs. The eighth chapter of Revelation lets us know that the golden altar is before the throne of God over in Heaven.

The traditional teaching is that Jesus shed His blood here to forgive our transgressions and then took His blood over in Heaven and put it on the golden altar to remove the carnal nature. However, He did not take any blood to Heaven.

What kind of body did He resurrect with? The disciples thought He was a spirit, but He had hands and feet. Does a spirit have hands and feet? That new body is made of flesh and bones. To be a body, it has to have flesh and bones. How do we know He did not take blood to Heaven? The blood is the life of the mortal body, and blood is the corrupting part. When we get our new body, it will be flesh and bones, but blood will not be the life of it. It will be a spiritual body, and the Spirit will be the life of it. It will not know any age. There will be no corruption, no weakness, no failing. Therefore, Christ did not take the blood to Heaven. He resurrected with a spiritual body, where the Spirit was the life of it, but no blood.

After Christ rose from the dead and Mary wanted to hold His feet, He said, "Touch me not: for I am not yet ascended to my Father." He had His new body, but He had not been to Heaven yet. He had been to Paradise, where spirits rest between death and the Judgment. He rose from the death, got His new body, walked around, taught His disciples, and spent a little time with them, so they could really confirm that He was alive.

He led them to Bethany and left in a cloud. Furthermore, that same Jesus who ascended into Heaven

is going to come again in the clouds and every grave is going to give forth a body like unto His own glorious body to live in throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity.

You may be thinking, "The way you teach it, it isn't anything but Jesus." That's right! There isn't anything but Jesus. Just Him. The fulness of the Godhead.

God, the first prophet in the Bible, taught a simple message in the Garden of Eden: The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head. Through Jesus Christ, you are not only going to have forgiveness and deliverance from sin, but you are going to be able to put "old split-hoof" under your foot and put the pressure on him. Who is the seed of the woman? Jesus Christ—and you are complete in Him. Thank God for Jesus! Amen.