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LIVING BY REVELATION



LEARNING MATERIAL

Ways to React to the Mysteries of God

“The believing man does not claim to understand. He falls to his knees and whispers, ‘God.’ The man of earth kneels also, but not to worship. He kneels to examine, to search, to find the cause and the how of things.”

What Tozer is getting at here, I think, is the correct way to respond to the mysteries of the Almighty. This is an important thing for us as Christians, because it is our great joy and our responsibility to be seeking God on a daily basis. And yet there is a certain irony to that seeking, because we are continually seeking that which we have already found.

To use an illustration, consider the ocean. The oceans of the world cover about 140 million square miles, or nearly 71% of the Earth’s surface. The average depth of the ocean is around 12,000 feet, with the deepest point being in the Mariana Trench at 36,000 feet. Through years of exploration, we know tons of things about the ocean, and yet to date scientists would say that we have only explored 5% of what’s there. Despite being the lifeblood of the planet, covering more than 70% of its surface, we know a comparatively small amount.

Now take that and multiply it by infinity.

Because of the gospel, we can know God, and yet we cannot exhaustively know God. There are mysteries of the divine that we do not have the capacity to plumb, for His thoughts are not our thoughts, and His ways are not our ways. Indeed, as far as the heaven is higher than the earth, so are His ways and thoughts higher than ours (Is. 55:8-9).

So how do we respond to these mysteries? As Tozer says, there is an inappropriate way. We can respond to the mysteries clinically, like a scientist examining a specimen on a slide, trying to pick apart every single instance and every single act. We can also respond with exasperation, like someone who sees the task before them as being so intimidating that it’s not even worth the time. Or we can respond like so many have in the past, by going too far in our attempts to understand God, and therefore distorting who He is in an attempt to bring Him down to our level.

Conversely, though, we can respond appropriately. What does that look like, to embrace the mystery of God and the fact that God has made Himself knowable to us through Christ? To honor the God who desires us to know Him and yet not reach too far beyond the knowledge He has granted? I’d suggest at least three proper ways to respond to the mysteries of God to strike this balance:

We respond with worship

Consider Paul’s explanation point on the first eleven chapters of Romans in which he delved deeply into the mysteries of God:

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“Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable His judgments and untraceable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been His counselor? Or who has ever first given to Him, and has to be repaid? For from Him, and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.”

Paul’s response to the mysteries of God is one of humble worship, and so also ours should be. When we come up against that which is too lofty for us to understand, the result should not be frustration, but humility. And it’s an opportunity to affirm through our worship just how limited we are in our human finiteness, especially when compared to who God is.

We respond with limitations

When we look to the Bible, it’s good for us to see that the Bible doesn’t seem to feel the same need to have everything of God as completely parsed out as we do. We don’t find there a theological explanation of just how God can harden Pharaoh’s heart and Pharaoh harden his own heart during the days of the Exodus. We don’t find the biblical writers feeling the need to explain how the doctrine of election exactly squares with the human responsibility of repentance and faith.

In other words, we find limitations in Scripture. And one of the ways we respond appropriately to these mysteries of God is through accepting the limitations we find in God’s own book. We tell ourselves that here is where the Bible stops, and that is also where we will stop.

We respond by looking to Jesus

How wonderful is the fact that God has sent Jesus to us that we might know Him. In John 17, we find Jesus’ disciples asking all kinds of questions about God, about where Jesus is going, and how to follow Him. And Jesus’ answer to these questions is beautifully simple:

“If you know Me, you will also know My Father. From now on you do know Him and have seen Him” (John 14:7).

When we come up against the mysteries of God, it is an opportunity to focus our gaze on Jesus, God in the flesh. It’s a chance for us to believe what Jesus told us, that He is all the fullness of God, the very Word made flesh, to reveal the Father to us. When we look to Jesus, we see God.

Which brings us back to Tozer. God invites us to seek Him, but not to seek Him with the arrogance of believing we will “figure Him out.” Instead, we are to seek God, and His mystery, to the end of humble worship of His Son.

Living by Revelation

The Lord Jesus came into the world as a man to redeem us from sin and show the world how God intended man to live and function in the earth. **Rom 6:4 states, 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.** To walk in the newness of life that the Holy Spirit imparted in our inward man must be the guiding force of our lives.

2 Corinthians 5:14 states that the love of Christ constrains us. The word constrained means to be held by, closely occupied with business. This word constrained was used to describe a cattle squeeze pushing in on each side, forcing the animal into a position where it cannot move so the farmer can administer medication. As a veterinarian I see this on my job when I work with cattle. The tight squeezing causes the animals to walk in an unnatural gait. The love of Christ is to cause us to walk the narrow tight way in a supernatural gait pleasing the Lord. Living life the “straight and narrow” is living in the spirit of wisdom and revelation.

Ephesians 1:17-18 shows how the apostle Paul is praying for the born again, spirit filled Ephesians that God would grant them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him. He then describes how the Holy Spirit opens the eyes of your heart with floods of light. The Lord wants to be so much apart of our lives that it totally changes what we think, feel, and believe. In **Ephesians 3:17-20** Paul goes on to say how this revelation causes us to know by experience God’s love resulting in prayer power. Not having the spirit of revelation in our lives puts us at a gross disadvantage to living a life pleasing the Lord.

Where there is no prophetic vision the people cast off restraint, but blessed is he who keeps the law. (Proverbs 29:18 ESV) Without the spirit of revelation active in our lives we become like the cattle I mentioned earlier that refuse the restraint to go into that shute where the way is narrow and pressured. The book of **Hosea 4:1,6;6:1-6** details how the nation of Israel suffered from a lack of the knowledge of God. This knowledge is not knowledge derived from intense study. Their knowledge of the Bible even today far exceeds our’s in the Christian church. This is a knowledge received by being in contact with someone(God). The Bible calls it “the knowledge of God.” The apostle speaks of it in the above scripture in Ephesians. The knowledge of God gives us the advantage in our daily lives. This knowledge gives us the insight and confidence to face the daily challenges of life. Knowing that the life that you are living is in His will gives you the full assurance of faith.

By faith Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death; and he was not found because God took him up; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God. (Hebrews 11:5 NASB) This text states that Enoch had a witness from God that his life was pleasing to God. The word witness means to testify to the truth of what one has seen, heard, or knows. It was communicated to Enoch that his life was pleasing to God. Our Lord is not a respecter of persons. If Enoch could obtain this witness so can any believer in the body of Christ. The spirit of revelation giving us the knowledge of God helps us in our walk constraining us to stay out of sin and darkness.

1Corinthians 15:34. The warfare of life in Christ Jesus is a life of victory. **But thanks be to God, Who in Christ always leads us in triumph [as trophies of Christ's victory] and through us spreads and makes evident the fragrance of the knowledge of God everywhere, (2 Corinthians 2:14 AMP).** **2Corinthians 10:3-6** states that the warfare is against the knowledge of God that He imparts to us by the Holy Spirit. The spirit of revelation wants to establish our lives in the truth of His will for us. **1Peter1:12** calls it present truth. Jesus in His warfare in the wilderness said to the adversary, **Not upon the basis of bread only shall the individual live, but upon the basis of every word proceeding out of God's mouth.**

Matthew 4:4 Wuest Jesus is telling us here that we are to live daily by what presently is proceeding from God's mouth to us. The Lord desires that we come to Him daily to receive fresh bread to live by like the Israelites in the wilderness. In the book of acts there are many examples of the early church living in present truth as the Holy Spirit imparted the spirit of wisdom and revelation. The apostle Paul's entire life was lived this way. Acts13:1-4 states how church leadership at Antioch entered into the Spirit and the Holy Spirit directed them to separated Paul and Barnabas to their life's work. In Acts 16:6-9 there are several examples of how the Spirit directed Paul and Barabas on where He desired them to go or not go. These words from Him imparts power to live in revelation and kingdom authority.

No word from God shall be without power or impossible of fulfillment. (Luke 1:37 AMP) Living in the will of God by the the spirit of wisdom gives us faith to face the challenges of life. Confronting those challenges by faith allows us to experince the power of God as we overcome the spirit of the world arrayed against the church. The knowledge of God that is being experienced, living in his will overcoming the challenges of life, is the life that our Father desires that all christians live. The angels of the Lord came to the shepherds in the field at His birth. The men responded saying lets go and see what has happened because of the Lord's word to us. The great lesson here is let's live life going to see the thing that the Lord has said to us. My wife and I have lived this way for over thirty years. We have learned that living by revelation is the most fulfilling exciting life that can be lived on earth. Make no major decisions without seeking the knowledge and the wisdom of God. When His will is revealed and lived, your life will take on new depths and heights in God. You will receive the witness like Enoch that your life is pleasing to God. You don't have to wait to the final judgement to receive a well done good and faithful servant. Seek Him now and live pleasing to Him in the fullness of life.

Revelation is a gift that is given to certain individuals who will have a prominent role to play in leading others. It happens very rarely and only under very special circumstances. It is meant to initiate these individuals and to confirm their Knowledge. It occurs when time is of the essence, and they must engage with a higher purpose or lose their great opportunity altogether. Revelation is an extreme exercise to initiate something that must happen now.

These demonstrations are extremely rare, and for good reasons. They can be very frightening to the mind that is not yet ready for them. And they will most certainly be disorienting, for now you are experiencing two realities that seem to have very little to do with each other. The recipient must be ready for this, must receive it graciously and must be able to interpret its meaning and patiently exercise its Wisdom. Otherwise, it will be a traumatic event that will be misinterpreted and misunderstood.

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If you could see how fragile your reality is in the world, which you would see if you were standing outside your world looking in; if you could see how easily it is upset and challenged and how weak its foundation is; if you could see how it is built upon certain assumptions that are never questioned and how it is reinforced by using past references to keep the mind stable, then you would understand how delicately the Unseen Ones must involve themselves with promising students here.

This kind of revelation is initiating. Do not demand it or expect it, for you will not know what you are demanding or expecting. People want many things, but rarely do they realize what the responsibility of having their desired experience, object or person will require. People want to have revelation because they want proof. They want to assure their personal minds that their spiritual inclinations are genuine, but this can never be proven to the personal mind. The personal mind is established in the absence of your spiritual inclinations and will generally be opposed to them until it can finally yield to them. This is not where you gain your approval. How can the personal mind, this temporary understanding, this temporary experience in the world, confirm and approve a Greater reality that has no beginning and no end?

There is, however, a greater and more complete kind of revelation that occurs as the result of many years of dedicated studenthood in The Way of Knowledge. It is a different kind of revelation. It is not sudden and dramatic. It does not burst in upon your life. It does not intrude itself upon you. It is something you will gradually be able to feel, as the veil between physical life and life beyond the physical becomes thinner and thinner and as you experience more and more communication and are able to receive the translation of insight and information coming into your mind.

Increasingly, you will have a sense that there is a presence, an intelligence, on the other side. In fact, you will have the experience that there is a great group assisting you and cheering for you. This will ease and eventually eliminate your fear of death because you will see that your Spiritual Family is waiting there. They are there for you. You can feel them. Your eyes were not created to see such things, nor were your body's ears created to hear such things. However, your inner eyes can see and your inner ears can hear because you can feel this; you can sense it.

Communication will be coming into your mind, and you will know that it is not a product of your own thinking or imagination. This is a very subtle revelation, but its impact is enormous. It comes as the result of a great deal of preparation and advancement in exercising a greater purpose in the world. Though it may be a hope and an ideal for beginning students to have this experience in order to dispel their fears, it will rarely come here and for good reason. The emphasis in your life must first be on

Knowledge and contribution. Until you are well established here, something which you yourself cannot fully determine, the presence of your Spiritual Family will remain in the background so as not to debilitate you or distract you from being able to be in the world to do your work here. The experience of your Family is so much more wonderful than the experience of trying to survive, contribute and be genuine in a harsh and difficult world.

Perhaps you think that the world is an easy and wonderful place, but it will seem barren and difficult in contrast to your Ancient home. Contact with your Spiritual Family will renew

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your memories of your Ancient home. This will make you intensely homesick and draw your attention away from the world and from all that is in the world. Should this experience happen too soon, it will be very difficult for you to generate the desire and the intention to be a participant in the world and to face the challenges which you must face. Heaven can come too soon in this regard. You may pray for it, you may want it, you may plead for it, but if it comes too soon, it will distract you. It is better that a very gradual revelation occur here. This gives you a sense of presence and an abiding experience of communication, assistance and support. Here you can maintain your focus in the world, but with the greater assurance that your Family is with you and that your destiny is assured.

Revelation is at the discretion of your Spiritual Family and the Unseen Ones who guide your Spiritual Family and represent it. Some people go for many years wanting this, urgently hoping for this, but it does not happen for them. Others have never even thought of it, and yet it occurs for them. Why is this? It has to do with a person's readiness and purpose. Some people need this experience in order to confirm their allegiance to Knowledge. For others, such an experience would be a great setback. It would frighten them, disorient them, distract them or intrigue them. Until your deeper inclinations are recognized and honored and until they become the primary experience and focus rather than having great and wonderful sensations in life, then revelation is ill advised for you and will not occur.

Revelation has to do with purpose and readiness. For some people, spirituality must be a very subtle undercurrent in their lives, something that they acknowledge but which in itself is not the central theme or focus. Intense spiritual experiences are not necessary for them and can indeed be an impediment. Yet for those whose service to the world is meant to be more of a bridge between the Divine and human life, these spiritual experiences are more likely. But again, they do not come on demand.

Expect, then, if you can advance in The Greater Community Way of Knowledge, a gradual revelation. As your eyes become clearer, as your mind becomes freer and as your experience of Knowledge becomes deeper, you will begin to feel that you have a kinship with heaven. Your kinship will not be idealistic. It will not be philosophical. It will not be theological. It will not be ambitious. It will not be a wish. It will simply be something that is there. You won't need to talk about it. It will just be there because you are close to it. It will not intrude. It will not shock you. Instead, it will abide with you quietly and deeply. And its presence will be pervasive.

Revelation is something that must happen for certain people at certain times because they cannot delay any longer. They must become engaged now. They must take a critical next step. Others are waiting for them. Even if they do not think they are ready, they must assume their role and responsibility.

The Wisdom of heaven determines this. You yourself cannot. Do not strive for revelation. Do not set it as part of your plans and your goals. Set out instead to become a student of Knowledge and to patiently proceed without claiming grand schemes, designs or abilities for yourself. Then you will come closer to heaven because you will come closer to what heaven has given you. The deeper your relationship with Knowledge, the deeper your relationship with the Divine. A relationship is not images and fantastic demonstrations. It is an abiding presence.

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You have a relationship with your Spiritual Family. This can be experienced, but you must become close to your Spiritual Family. You will become close as you come closer to Knowledge within you because Knowledge and your Spiritual Family are inextricably intertwined. One will remind you of the other.

The greater your sense of purpose, the greater will be your memory of your origin. It will not be a memory of images or events, but of the experience of relationship itself. The greater your experience of purpose, the greater your experience of destiny. The more you have a sense of where you are headed and that you are only temporarily engaged in the world, the less threatened you will be by its appearances and its tragedies.

Many people claim revelatory experiences. They say angels appear to them and they receive fantastic information. They say that all kinds of dramatic events are happening regularly as part of their experience. Be very skeptical. It is possible for you to be in contact with other minds in other dimensions. It is possible for you to be in contact with minds in other worlds. It is possible for you to be in contact with other minds in this world, without knowing who you are speaking to or what their intent or motivation is. That is why students of Knowledge do not dabble in these kinds of things. That is why students of Knowledge stay close to Knowledge and close to life and do not veer off into trying to have incredible experiences.

That is why students of Knowledge do not involve themselves in controversies or brag and boast about their grand experiences or their latest insight or how an angel or some other kind of divine entity has communicated to them. This is enchanting and intriguing, perhaps, but it leads nowhere and can indeed be a dangerous distraction, preventing people from meeting and facing the real needs and challenges of their lives which are calling to them even at this moment.

As you proceed, you will hear a great deal about spiritual experiences being described or discussed by others. Be discrete. Do not enter into these discussions. They are meaningless by and large. People who talk about these things do not know what they are talking about. Those who know have learned not to talk, except in rare situations to certain people. And even then, how can one describe a genuine experience? If the people you are talking to have not had this experience, they will either think you are deceiving them or they will be mesmerized by what you are saying. There is no benefit here, for suspicion and being mesmerized are not helpful in learning The Way of Knowledge. To the person who has had this experience, words are not necessary. A simple acknowledgment will do.

Conversation, speculation, argument and debate are wasteful engagements for the student of Knowledge. Seeking Divine contact, angelic experiences or prolonged bliss at the expense of your experience in the world is not the emphasis of the student of Knowledge. You have come here to learn to work, to give and to understand. You have not come here to dream, to fantasize or to find a way back to your Ancient home. You were sent to the world at great expense and effort, but as soon as you realize that you are in the world and that you have come from somewhere else, you devise a scheme for getting out of here! You say, "I want to get out of here. This is difficult!" however, your Spiritual Family wants you to be here. They went to great effort to bring you here. They have already provided a great deal of assistance to enable you to become a functional human being so that you could learn something greater in life. Why try to escape with the work undone?

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The work will reveal itself as you proceed. You do not need to say, “Well, I will decide what kind of work sounds good to me. I like doing this kind of work. That looks good. That doesn’t look too hard or too dangerous or too unpleasant.” You will hear much speculation about people’s self-defined purposes and callings, but the student of Knowledge is wise to avoid these conversations, for they do not represent Wisdom. Your deeper experiences can only be shared with certain people in certain ways and at certain times. The vast majority of the time you will have to keep them to yourself, even around other students of Knowledge. Do not fritter away something that is sacred and meaningful. Do not reveal something that is growing and germinating within you or it will lose its vitality and potency in your life.

All this talk, talk, talk about spirituality is for self-assurance and to gain recognition, which is also for self-assurance. And what is self-assurance for but to comfort the personal mind? Do not use what is sacred for what is temporary and weak. Let the personal mind learn restraint, discretion, discernment and forbearance. If Wisdom is ever to be a reality in your life, you must learn these things. Oh, yes, you will find many people with whom you can have very interesting spiritual conversations. There will be much bragging and much self-proclamation. There will be much comparison and much criticism. Someone will say, “Well, my Teacher is very great.” Others will say, “Oh, my Teacher is very great.” Others will say, “I have studied five different religions.” Others will say, “I have read five hundred books.” Others will say, “Oh, I know all about this theology.” And others will say, “Oh, yes, but this other spiritual path is much better.” The student of Knowledge is wise to avoid these conversations and, when in the midst of them, to remain silent and observant.

Those who know carry the presence with them. And this presence has been able to grow because they have not been indiscreet. They have not tried to use their experience for personal gain. Instead, they have let it grow stronger and more intense within themselves. This gives them a sense of presence. You will not find this in idle dabblers or in people who are like tourists in a spiritual universe. However, you will find this in those who have had to face their own thresholds, who have had to cross their own rivers and who have had to experience and face their own doubts and fears and the wasteful consequences of their mistakes. These are people who are following something inexplicable that they do not attempt to define or use. Their silence is profound and inviting. They are with the Mystery. And the Mystery is with them. Through them a greater Knowledge, a greater comfort and a Greater Power can emerge and abide. This is the abiding revelation. Someone who is with the Mystery can share the Mystery without words, without conversation, without debate and without self-glorification. They are with the Mystery and the Mystery is with them.

This, then, is what you want to look for. This is the evidence of revelation. The skies parting and the angelic host descending are things for the story books and for mythology. Real revelation happens in the innermost part of a person. It is something you can only feel, and you will feel it in the presence of those who are close to the Mystery—those who have not squandered their gift but have let it grow, those who have learned to become still, silent and observant, those whose minds are free of the past sufficiently that they do not need to judge and evaluate every new experience and encounter that they are having, those who are strong enough with Knowledge that they do not need to use their power or the admission of their weaknesses in order to gain attention or recognition.

When you think of revelation, think of this. Do not become romantic and have illusions of grandeur. These things may attract a great deal of attention, but they cannot generate

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devotion, for only Knowledge can generate devotion. These things attract attachment and ambition, but they cannot lead someone to be wholehearted, for to be wholehearted is to be with Knowledge. Being without Knowledge is being willful, ambitious, cunning, clever, manipulative, shrewd and calculating. Take heed. This is the evidence that Knowledge is lacking.

Revelation grows slowly. It grows with Knowledge because with Knowledge there comes an experience and a sense of origin and destiny that the world cannot challenge. It is something that is felt and known. Details are not important. The closer you are to your purpose, the more you will have this experience. The more you are able to gain a relationship with Knowledge without abusing this privilege, the more this experience will grow for you. The freer your mind is from past-referencing, the more space there will be within you for Grace to fill. This is revelation. This is coming close to the Divine without destroying or disabling yourself as a person. This is what enables you to become a translator, a medium for a Greater reality to express itself in the world and for great gifts to be given, even in the simplest and most mundane circumstances.

Remember, God is working behind the scenes, reclaiming the separated through Knowledge, working through inspired individuals and through meaningful relationships. God does not make a big show. God does not want people to bow down and become slaves, unwillingly, resentfully, with hostility and bitterness. This is not a worldly power we are speaking of. This is not a worldly persuasion. This is not how the personal mind works; it is something different. It is not how world governments work; it is something different. God does not threaten you. God does not tantalize you. God does not seduce you. God is present for you, and you have the opportunity to become present for God.

This relationship, however, which is so primary, can never be your sole focus, for God wants your eyes turned to the world where you have come to serve and to work. The more God abides with you as your work progresses and becomes a deeper experience and a greater commitment for you, the more God grows in your experience. Here God becomes more a context than an individual, more a greater experience of relationship than an authority. In this way, God is able to work through you without distracting you. In this way, you are able to work with God without losing your focus in the world.

How can it be that something so powerful can work through something so small and validate what is small, honor what is small and redeem what is small? This represents the great genius of Knowledge in the universe. This is God. God is great; you are small. The light works through you; it does not blind you. The presence abides with you; it does not overwhelm you. Wisdom can speak through you; it does not obliterate you. You are the emphasis; God is the source. Here your mind and your body need to become vehicles for a greater expression and purpose. To allow this to manifest in specific and mundane ways where it is intended and where it is needed—this is revelation.

Revelation, then, is a slow, growing experience of purpose, meaning and direction in life. It will emerge for you if you allow it to be present in your life and do not attempt to use it to gain advantages over other people. It will become the absolute foundation for you. Then, whatever you give in the world will be blessed with a greater experience of presence. Grace will be with you. People will experience this in your presence. Here you will give them something inexplicable that words cannot convey and that actions cannot even demonstrate.

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This is what will spark Knowledge within them, for their response to Grace will come from Knowledge within them and not from their personal minds. This is an initiation, and this is evidence of God's work in the world. For these people it will be a revelation, but no one will be glorified. No errors in evaluation will be made because no one will claim grandiose powers. There will be no avatars. There will be no saints. Something magical and wonderful will happen between you, something lasting and pervasive, not sudden and romantic.

If you think back on your life, perhaps you can recall one or two individuals with whom you had this experience, this abiding sense of presence. Recall how subtle it was but how unique. Recall how you felt in their presence, how there was something unusual about them—something they did not talk about, something they did not declare. There was something unusual about them. There was a presence abiding with them. Perhaps there are no words that can describe this experience, but it can be recalled because it stands out in stark contrast to every other encounter you have had, whether those encounters were pleasurable or not.

As God works behind the scenes, revelation occurs behind the scenes. This is done because it works. Then people give themselves. There is no slavery. Then people open themselves, and they claim the results. Then people honor themselves by holding sacred their Greater Source.

Revelation is part of your renewal. It will most likely be very slow and very gradual. You will not experience it every moment. In fact, there may be great gaps of time between your experiences, but these gaps of time will lessen as you advance. Instead of once every two years, perhaps it will be once every six months, and then once every three days. It does not matter because you will proceed. It does not have to happen every moment because you have learned to live without it. However, when it is with you, you graciously open yourself to it, and you know that the presence is with you because there is space in you for the presence to fill.

Will revelation happen for you? Become a student of Knowledge. Become close to Knowledge. Associate with those who are advanced in Knowledge. And associate with those who are beginning like you. Forget what you have learned before. Do not think you are advanced already. Be a beginner. Have an open mind. Do not claim advancement. How can you tell if you are advanced? One moment you might feel like you have come oh so far while the next day you might feel like you are back at the beginning. How can you tell? How can the personal mind understand these things? It can only go along. And as it goes along, it will be changed because a Greater Power will slowly emerge within you and will give a sense of security to your personal mind which it could never have received from anything else.

Then your personal mind will come into service to a Greater Power within you. In this way, your body will serve your mind, and your mind will serve your spirit, which represents their right relationship. Then you will escape confusion and ambivalence—a great freedom. With this freedom, Grace will abide with you. It will be revealed to you because you will have the capacity for it and will be open to it. In silence, in quiet, the Grace of God comes to you.

[Are We Living in “the Last Days”?](#)

Are We Living in “the Last Days”?

What events in our time were foretold in the Bible?

What does God's Word say people would be like in “the last days”?

Regarding “the last days,” what good things does the Bible foretell?
Where can we learn about the future?

HAVE you watched the news on television and wondered, ‘What is this world coming to?’ Tragic things happen so suddenly and unexpectedly that no human can predict what tomorrow will bring. (James 4:14) However, Jehovah knows what the future holds. (Isaiah 46:10) Long ago his Word, the Bible, foretold not only the bad things happening in our day but also the wonderful things that will occur in the near future.

What question did the disciples ask Jesus, and how did he reply?

Jesus Christ spoke about the Kingdom of God, which will bring an end to wickedness and make the earth a paradise. (Luke 4:43) People wanted to know when the Kingdom would come. In fact, Jesus’ disciples asked him: “What will be the sign of your presence and of the conclusion of the system of things?” (Matthew 24:3) In reply Jesus told them that only Jehovah God knew exactly when the end of this system of things would come. (Matthew 24:36) But Jesus did foretell things that would take place on earth just before the Kingdom would bring true peace and security to mankind. What he foretold is now taking place!

Before we examine the evidence that we are living in “the conclusion of the system of things,” let us briefly consider a war that no human could possibly have observed. It took place in the invisible spirit realm, and its outcome affects us.

A WAR IN HEAVEN

What took place in heaven soon after Jesus was enthroned as King? (b) According to Revelation 12:12, what was to be the result of the war in heaven?

The preceding chapter in this book explained that [Jesus Christ became King in heaven](#) in the year 1914. (Read [Daniel 7:13, 14](#).) Soon after he received Kingdom power, Jesus took action. “War broke out in heaven,” says the Bible. “[Michael](#) [another name for Jesus] and his angels battled with the dragon [Satan the Devil], and the dragon and its angels battled.” * Satan and his wicked angels, the demons, lost that war and were cast out of heaven to the earth. God’s faithful spirit sons rejoiced that Satan and his demons were gone. Humans, however, would experience no such joy. Instead, the Bible foretold: “Woe for the earth . . . because the Devil has come down to you, having great anger, knowing that he has a short period of time.”—[Revelation 12:7, 9, 12](#).

Please notice what would result from the war in heaven. In his fury, Satan would bring woe, or trouble, upon those on earth. As you will see, we are now living in that time of woe. But it will be relatively brief—only “a short period of time.” Even Satan realizes that. The Bible refers to this period as “the last days.” (2 Timothy 3:1) How glad we can be that God will soon do away with the Devil’s influence over the earth! Let us consider some of the things foretold in the Bible that are happening right now. These prove that we are living in the last days and that God’s Kingdom will soon bring everlasting blessings to those who love Jehovah. First, let us examine four features of the sign that Jesus said would mark the time in which we live.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS OF THE LAST DAYS

How are Jesus' words about wars and food shortages being fulfilled today?

“Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom.” (Matthew 24:7) Millions of people have been killed in wars during the past century. One British historian wrote: “The 20th century was the most murderous in recorded history. . . . It was a century of almost unbroken war, with few and brief periods without organised armed conflict somewhere.” A report from the Worldwatch Institute states: “Three times as many people fell victim to war in [the 20th] century as in all the wars from the first century AD to 1899.” More than 100 million people have died as a result of wars since 1914. Even if we know the sorrow of losing *one* loved one in warfare, we can only imagine such misery and pain multiplied *millions* of times over.

“There will be food shortages.” (Matthew 24:7) Researchers say that food production has increased greatly during the past 30 years. Nevertheless, food shortages continue because many people do not have enough money to buy food or land on which to raise crops. In developing countries, well over a billion people have to live on an income of a dollar or less a day. The majority of these suffer from chronic hunger. The World Health Organization estimates that malnutrition plays a major role in the deaths of more than five million children each year.

What shows that Jesus' prophecies about earthquakes and pestilences have come true?

“There will be great earthquakes.” (Luke 21:11) According to the U.S. Geological Survey, an average of 19 major earthquakes are expected per year. These are powerful enough to damage buildings and crack the ground. And on an average, earthquakes strong enough to cause total destruction of buildings have occurred yearly. Available records show that earthquakes have claimed over two million lives since 1900. One source states: “Improvements in technology have only slightly reduced the death toll.”

“There will be. . . pestilences.” (Luke 21:11) Despite medical advances, old and new diseases plague mankind. One report says that 20 well-known diseases—including tuberculosis, malaria, and cholera—have become more common in recent decades, and some types of disease are increasingly difficult to cure by means of drugs. In fact, at least 30 new diseases have appeared. Some of them have no known cure and are fatal.

PEOPLE OF THE LAST DAYS

What traits foretold at 2 Timothy 3:1-5 do you see in people today?

Aside from identifying certain world developments, the Bible foretold that the last days would be marked by a change in human society. The apostle Paul described what people in general would be like. We are told: “In the last days critical times hard to deal with will be here.” (Read [2 Timothy 3:1-5](#).) Paul said that people would be

Lovers of themselves
Lovers of money
Disobedient to parents
Disloyal
Having no natural affection
Without self-control
Fierce
Lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God
Having an appearance of godliness but proving false to its power

How does Psalm 92:7 describe what will happen to the wicked ones?

¹¹ Have people become like that in your community? No doubt they have. There are people everywhere who have bad traits. This shows that God will soon act, for the Bible says: “When the wicked sprout like weeds and all the wrongdoers flourish, it is that they may be annihilated forever.”—[Psalm 92:7](#).

POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS!

How has “true knowledge” become abundant in this “time of the end”?

The last days are indeed filled with woe, just as the Bible foretold. In this troubled world, however, there are positive developments among the worshippers of Jehovah.

“*The true knowledge will become abundant,*” the Bible book of Daniel foretold. When would that happen? During “the time of the end.” ([Daniel 12:4](#)) Especially since 1914, Jehovah has helped those who truly desire to serve him to grow in understanding of the Bible. They have grown in appreciation of precious truths about God’s name and purpose, the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the condition of the dead, and the resurrection. Moreover, worshippers of Jehovah have learned how to live their lives in a way that benefits them and brings praise to God. They have also gained a clearer understanding of the role of God’s Kingdom and how it will set matters straight on the earth. What do they do with this knowledge? That question brings us to yet another prophecy that is being fulfilled in these last days.

“This good news of the Kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth.”—[Matthew 24:14](#)

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How widespread is the preaching of the Kingdom good news today, and who are preaching it?

¹⁴ “*This good news of the Kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth,*” said Jesus Christ in his prophecy about “the conclusion of the system of things.” (Read **Matthew 24:3, 14.**) Throughout the earth, the good news of the Kingdom—what the Kingdom is, what it will do, and how we can receive its blessings—is being preached in over 230 lands and in hundreds of languages. Millions of Jehovah’s Witnesses zealously preach the Kingdom good news. They come from “all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues.” (Revelation 7:9) The Witnesses conduct free home Bible studies with millions of people who want to know what the Bible really teaches. What an impressive fulfillment of prophecy, especially since Jesus foretold that true Christians would be “hated by all people”!—**Luke 21:17.**

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

Do you believe that we are living in the last days, and why? (b) What will “the end” mean for those who oppose Jehovah and for those who submit to the rulership of God’s Kingdom?

¹⁵ Since so many Bible prophecies are being fulfilled today, do you not agree that we are living in the last days? After the good news is preached to Jehovah’s satisfaction, “the end” is certain to come. (Matthew 24:14) “The end” means the time when God will get rid of wickedness on earth. To destroy all who willfully oppose Him, Jehovah will use Jesus and powerful angels. (2 Thessalonians 1:6-9) Satan and his demons will no longer mislead the nations. After that, God’s Kingdom will shower blessings on all who submit to its righteous rulership.—**Revelation 20:1-3; 21:3-5.**

What would it be wise for you to do?

Since the end of Satan’s system is near, we need to ask ourselves, ‘What should I be doing?’ It is wise to continue to learn more about Jehovah and his requirements for us. (John 17:3) Be a serious student of the Bible. Make it your habit to associate regularly with others who seek to do Jehovah’s will. (Read **Hebrews 10:24, 25.**) Come to know Jehovah God through a study of his Word, and make necessary changes in your life so that you may enjoy God’s favor.—**James 4:8.**

Why will the destruction of the wicked catch most people by surprise?

Jesus foretold that most people would ignore the evidence that we are living in the last days. The destruction of the wicked will come suddenly and unexpectedly. Like a thief in the night, it will catch most people by surprise. (Read **1 Thessalonians 5:2.**) Jesus warned: “As the days of Noah were, so the presence of the Son of man will be. For as they were in those days before the Flood, eating and drinking, men marrying and women being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and they took no note until the Flood came and swept them all away, so the presence of the Son of man will be.”—**Matthew 24:37-39.**

What warning by Jesus should we take to heart?

¹⁸ Hence, Jesus told his listeners: “Pay attention to yourselves that your hearts never become weighed down with overeating and heavy drinking and anxieties of life, and suddenly that day be instantly upon you as a snare. For it will come upon all those dwelling on the face of the whole earth. Keep awake, then, all the time making supplication that you may succeed in escaping all these things that must occur and in standing [with approval] before the Son of man.” (Luke 21:34-36) It is wise to take Jesus’ words to heart. Why? Because those having the approval of Jehovah God and “the Son of man,” Jesus Christ, have the prospect of surviving the end of Satan’s system of things and of living forever in the marvelous new world that is so close at hand!—John 3:16; 2 Peter 3:13.

Revelation Knowledge

One of the most needed things among the body of Christ today is revelation knowledge of the Word of God.

To understand what revelation knowledge is and how to get it functional in your life, you have to know at least some of the basics about your spirit, soul, and body. Your spirit is the part of you that was changed at salvation. Second Corinthians 5:17 says, “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” Your body and soul didn’t become totally new. They can be changed and renewed as you grow in the Lord, but that is a continuing process. The only part of you that is completely changed at salvation is your inner man or spirit.

This born-again spirit is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him (Col. 3:10). First Corinthians 2:16 says “But we have the mind of Christ,” and 1 John 2:20 says “But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.” These scriptures show us that our spirit man is complete in Jesus (Col. 2:10). We know all things.

But even though that is true in your spirit, this knowledge will not profit your physical and soulish parts until you release it by renewing your mind. Romans 12:2 says, “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

Our minds are actually the battleground. Our spirits are complete (Eph. 4:24, Col. 2:10), and our bodies will do what they are told, but our soulish parts (which include our intellect) have the responsibility to choose or exercise our free will. So in that sense, a person’s soul is the master control over our whole person. For the born-again man, the spirit is the driving or life-giving force, but the soul has the last say-so because of the will. God will not violate our free will except in final judgment. Therefore, it is necessary that we get this “mind of Christ” (which we have received in our spiritual man) functioning in our soulish minds so we can make the right choices. This is done by studying the Word of God. God’s Word is the wisdom of God (Luke 11:49), written down so that our soulish man can read and understand it. But 2 Corinthians 3:6 shows us that the mere knowledge of God’s Word is not enough. We must have spiritual understanding because God’s Word is spirit and it is life (John 6:63).

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When the knowledge of God's Word enters our soulish minds through hearing or studying it, our spirits bear witness with the truth and impart wisdom, which is the ability to apply knowledge. This then becomes revelation knowledge, not just facts about God (you could program a computer with that), but the knowledge of God which has been divinely quickened in us by God through our born-again spirits.

This explains why the Word of God seems to work for some people and not for others. On the surface it may appear that all knew the Word, but in truth, only those who overcame had the Word of God made alive on the inside of them through revelation knowledge. God's Word works! And if we have the true revelation of God's Word in our hearts, we will overcome the world.

How do we receive the Word of God being made alive and powerful in our lives as Hebrews 4:12 talks about? One important way is by meditating God's Word. Too many times, we get so hungry to learn God's Word that we don't take sufficient time to let the mind of Christ in our spirit man give us a full disclosure of the power that is in those words. There was a time in my life when I was so busy reading every book and going to hear every preacher that the Lord told me to stop all of that and make the truth He had spoken to me a reality in my life. I am not saying that we should stop filling ourselves with the knowledge of the Word, but we need to realize that only the Word which has been mixed with faith (which comes from our spiritual man, Rom. 10:10) will profit us (Heb. 4:2). We would be better off with only a small amount of the Word in us if it was a true revelation to us from God than if we had vast amounts of Scripture with only carnal understanding. The early disciples proved this because in comparison to the completed Word of God that we have today, they did not have the majority of the New Testament scriptures. The Old Covenant scriptures were not readily available to them, and yet they still transformed their present-day world.

This revelation knowledge is what has been missing in the religious realm's presentation of God's Word. Carnal preachers have been putting out carnal knowledge to carnal people, and therefore, the true power of God's Word has not been released. But in these last days, God's revelation knowledge is beginning to flow among His people more than ever before. Believers are not responding to the titles before or behind a man's name but rather to the power of God's Word, regardless of which vessel it comes through, "For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power" (1 Cor. 4:20). You can have this revelation knowledge, for God has already given to you the "mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2:16).

God Gives Revelation

The Lord desires to speak daily revelations into your heart through the Holy Spirit. A revelation is when God reveals something to you that you did not understand before. A revelation is when God's words become your reality.

He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD. The secret things

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belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever. Do not be called teachers; for one is your Teacher, the Christ.

(Deuteronomy 8:3) “So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD.

(Deuteronomy 29:29) “The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.

(1 Samuel 3:1) Then the boy Samuel ministered to the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was rare in those days; there was no widespread revelation.

(1 Samuel 3:21) Then the LORD appeared again in Shiloh. For the LORD revealed Himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD.

(Psalms 25:8-15) Good and upright is the LORD; Therefore He teaches sinners in the way. The humble He guides in justice, and the humble He teaches His way. All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth, too such as keep His covenant and His testimonies. For Your name’s sake, O LORD, Pardon my iniquity, for it is great. Who is the man that fears the LORD? Him shall He teach in the way He chooses. He himself shall dwell in prosperity, and his descendants shall inherit the earth. The secret of the LORD is with those who fear Him, And He will show them His covenant. My eyes are ever toward the LORD, For He shall pluck my feet out of the net.

(Psalms 98:2) The LORD has made known His salvation; His righteousness He has revealed in the sight of the nations.

(Proverbs 29:18) Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; but happy is he who keeps the law.

(Isaiah 40:5) The glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

(Isaiah 55:10-11) “For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do not return there, But water the earth, And make it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower And bread to the eater, { 11 } So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

(Daniel 2:19-22) Then the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. So Daniel blessed the God of heaven. Daniel answered and said: “Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, For wisdom and might are His. And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have

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understanding. He reveals deep and secret things; He knows what is in the darkness, and light dwells with Him.

(Daniel 2:27-28) Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, “The secret which the king has demanded, the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, and the soothsayers cannot declare to the king. “But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream, and the visions of your head upon your bed, were these:

(Daniel 2:47) The king answered Daniel, and said, “Truly your God is the God of gods, the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, since you could reveal this secret.”

(Amos 3:7) Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, Unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets.

(Matthew 4:4) But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’”

(Matthew 6:11) Give us this day our daily bread.

(Matthew 10:26-28) “Therefore do not fear them. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known. “Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops. “And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

(Matthew 11:25-30) At that time Jesus answered and said, “I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes. “Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in your sight. “All things have been delivered to me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. “Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. “Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. “For My yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

(Matthew 13:11) He answered and said to them, “Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.

(Matthew 13:16-23) “But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; “for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it. “Therefore hear the parable of the sower: “When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside. “But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; “yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he

stumbles. “Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. “But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.”

(Matthew 16:15-17) He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.

(Matthew 23:8-10) “But you, do not be called ‘Rabbi’; for one is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. “Do not call anyone on earth your father; for one is your Father, He who is in heaven. “And do not be called teachers; for one is your Teacher, the Christ.

(Luke 2:26) And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ.

(Luke 2:32) A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel.”

(Luke 8:10-15) And He said, “To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is given in parables, that ‘Seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.’ {11} “Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. “Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. “But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away. “Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity. “But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience.

(Luke 8:17-18) “For nothing is secret that will not be revealed, nor anything hidden that will not be known and come to light. “Therefore take heed how you hear. For whoever has, to him more will be given; and whoever does not have, even what he seems to have will be taken from him.”

(Luke 10:21-22) In that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit and said, “I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in your sight. “All things have been delivered to me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.”

(John 6:53-58) Then Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. “Whoever eats my flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. “For My flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. “He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in Me, and I in him. “As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. “This is the bread which came down from

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heaven; not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever.”

(John 6:63) “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.

(John 9:2-3) And His disciples asked Him, saying, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.

(John 13:13) “You call me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am.

(Acts 26:15-16) “So I said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ And He said, ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. ‘But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you.

(Romans 1:16-19) For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.” For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them.

(1 Corinthians 2:9-16) But as it is written: “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.” But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, and the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one. For “who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?” But we have the mind of Christ.

(Galatians 1:11-12) But I make known to you, brethren that the Gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.

(Ephesians 1:15-19) Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the

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glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power

(Philippians 3:13-15) Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you.

(Colossians 1:26-27) the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

(1 John 2:27) But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.

(1 John 4:19) We love Him because He first loved us.

(Revelation 2:17) "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it."

Communion Bible Verses

Communion began on the annual celebration of Passover when Jesus told his disciples to remember his sacrifice as they ate the bread and drank the wine. Just as Israel was celebrated the sacrifice of the Passover lamb when the angel of death passed over their homes, so believers in Jesus celebrate and remember his sacrifice of our sins when he died on the cross.

Holy Communion uses bread as a symbol of the body of Jesus and wine as a symbol of his blood. The act of taking communion does not save us, it is an act of worship and remembrance. Many churches and denominations have different views of communion, and hopefully these Bible verses about communion will help you decide for yourself how to best observe and remember Christ's sacrifice.

The word "communion" is defined as the *act of sharing, or holding in common; participation*. What is communion in a biblical sense? The word "communion" as translated in the King James Version is the Greek word "koinonia" and it means a partnership, participation or social intercourse, fellowship, communion, communication, distribution, contribution or to communicate. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ" (1 Corinthians 10:16).

What is communion? It is a fellowship of believers by which they gather together to remember the sacrifice of the LORD Jesus Christ. On the night that Christ was betrayed, He instituted this "remembrance." "And He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you" (Luke 22:19-20). (Also see: Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25.)

The Apostle Paul also gives us the order of the Lord's Supper. "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, this cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup" (1 Corinthians 11:23-28).

We know that the Apostle Paul was not in the upper room the night that Jesus instituted His Last Supper. Therefore, Paul must have received this instruction during the time he was "caught up" (2 Corinthians 12:1-10).

What is communion? It is a remembrance of the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. He gave His life a ransom for whoever believes. The elements in themselves are not the issue, it is the fact that believers assemble together to fellowship, to remember Christ's sacrifice and to examine their own hearts as to whether they have any unconfessed sin. This is something that we are privileged to do. Taking the elements gain no merit for the participant other than one of remembrance in thanksgiving for what the Lord Jesus Christ has done for all who [trust in Him](#) as their personal Savior.

“In Remembrance of Me”: What the Bible Says About Holy Communion or The Lord’s Supper

Many refer to the special observance of Jesus’s Last Supper with His disciples as “Holy Communion,” though biblically, it has been called “The Last Supper” because it is the last evening meal Jesus shares with His disciples before He is crucified, buried, and resurrected. Baptist churches consider this to be one of the two ordinances of the Baptist denomination as a whole (the other is baptism). Holy Communion, like Baptism, was established by Jesus. Free Will Baptist churches are prone to argue that Jesus’ washing of the disciples’ feet, and the mention of the practice with regard to church enlisted widows over the age of 60 in 1 Timothy 5, is another institution that believers should observe.

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In examining Holy Communion, we learn why it is called “Holy” and how modern-day believers should respect this ordinance that Christ has established. And we also learn what happens when we disrespect and dishonor it as well (there is a divine punishment for those who do).

To look at what the Bible says about Holy Communion or The Last Supper, we'll look at the events that led up to the Last Supper, what happens at the Last Supper, and so on.

Leading up to The Last Supper: Background

The Last Supper marked a sad event for Jesus, as He was soon to be crucified and hung on the Cross. At this point, Jesus realizes that His time is drawing near. He had been teaching and preaching and inaugurating the gospel on earth by healing the sick, raising the dead, opening the eyes of the blind, helping the lame to leap, the dumb to speak, and even casting out demons. Jesus had a successful ministry, so much so that whenever the crowds heard that Jesus was nearby, they would come from miles and miles around to hear Jesus teach, preach, and heal.

Despite all of Jesus's success in ministry, and His consistent message, the Pharisees did everything they could to conspire against Jesus and trap Him in His words. When Jesus called Matthew, a tax collector, to follow Him, then went to Matthew's home and sat with other tax collectors, the Pharisees wanted to stir up trouble by asking Jesus' disciples about His actions:

As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, “Follow Me.” So he arose and followed Him.

Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. **11 And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, “Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?”**

When Jesus heard *that*, He said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. But go and learn what *this* means: ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice.’ For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.” (Matthew 9:9-13, NKJV)

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Jesus sat with the tax collectors, but the Pharisees (the name “Pharisees” means “separated ones”) inquired as to why Jesus would even do it — as though Jesus shouldn’t have entertained the tax collectors at all. Jesus responded with the words “I desire mercy and not sacrifice,” a reference to the Torah (our Old Testament Scriptures) that says, in effect, that having mercy on those who are in need of it (those who’ve sinned, which includes us all, even the Pharisees) is greater than offering animal sacrifices for sin. Sacrifices do not take the place of the sacrifice of the heart, but can add to it if one’s heart is right before God and aware of his or her sinfulness and God’s righteousness.

The Pharisees were not, so they believed that “godly” persons shouldn’t associate with ungodly ones. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 15 that “bad company corrupts good morals,” but Jesus’ mission involved everyone. If He didn’t come for tax collectors, who did He come for? And if He came for tax collectors, how could He win them if He didn’t visit them? Had Jesus come for the tax collectors but never encountered them in daily life, how could He have ever won them over? It is this same Christ that tells us to go into the hedges and highways and compel dying men and women to come into His house (Luke 14:23). We have to go seek and bring the lost to the house of God, not expect them to come on their own.

Several verses later in Matthew 9, Jesus heals a mute, demon-possessed man, and the Pharisees accuse Him of healing by way of the ruler of the demons, what they call “Beel-Zebub”:

As they went out, behold, they brought to Him a man, mute and demon-possessed. And when the demon was cast out, the mute spoke. And the multitudes marveled, saying, “It was never seen like this in Israel!”

But the Pharisees said, “He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons.” (Matthew 9:32-34)

The Pharisee claim, of course, makes no sense, but this isn’t the only place where the Pharisees will say this. They also say it to Jesus in Matthew 12 when He heals another demon-possessed man who was both blind and mute:

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Then one was brought to Him who was demon-possessed, blind and mute; and He healed him, so that the blind and mute man both spoke and saw. And all the multitudes were amazed and said, “Could this be the Son of David?”

Now when the Pharisees heard *it* they said, “This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons.”

But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them: “Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand. If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? **And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast *them* out?** Therefore they shall be your judges. **But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.** Or how can one enter a strong man’s house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house. He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad. (Matthew 12:22-30)

The Pharisee logic made zero sense. To be frank, if Jesus cast out the demons by the head of the demons, wouldn’t that be working against the demon agenda and thus, conquering and ultimately destroying the demonic kingdom? Why would the demons work against their agenda and purposes? Standing unified is how anything gets accomplished, so if one demon is working against all other demons, then the demonic kingdom is self-destructing. This was what Jesus was saying to the Pharisees when He adds the statement about putting the master of the house as a hostage and removing him as a threat to a home invasion.

Thus, if the ruler of the demons was bound, then the entire demonic kingdom was bound. If Jesus used the Spirit of God to cast out demons and defeat the ruler of the demons, then the entire demonic kingdom would be ruined as a result. But Jesus said that He wasn’t using the ruler of demons to expel the demons, but that the Kingdom of God was among them.

Earlier in Matthew 12, the Pharisees criticize Jesus and the disciples because the disciples pluck grain on the sabbath from the grain fields:

At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. And His disciples were hungry, and began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. And **when the Pharisees saw *it*, they said to Him, “Look, Your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath!”**

But He said to them, “Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God and ate the showbread which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests? Or have you not read in the law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless? Yet I say to you that in this place there is *One* greater than the temple. **But if you had known what *this* means, ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice,’ you would not have condemned the guiltless. 8 For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.**” (Matthew 12:1-8)

Jesus has to explain to the Pharisees that the disciples were plucking grain because they, like all other humans, needed sustenance. Jesus’ examples that He gives, of David eating the shewbread, reserved for the priests only, and the fact that the priests “profane the Sabbath, and are blameless” (Matthew 12:5) because they are mandated to work for the sake of the people and the cause of God. In the same way, the disciples can pluck the grain because “the sabbath was made for man” and man is superior to the Sabbath. The Sabbath is subservient to him; man was not created for just the Sabbath, or for just one day, such that he must observe it to the detriment of his well-being. The Sabbath is a gift of God given to man so that he can rest, recover, recoup, and see that his physical needs are met (which includes food and drink, rest, and relaxation). The Lord tells the Pharisees not to “condemn the guiltless,” which tells us all where He stands on the matter (the disciples are innocent). Again, “I desire mercy and not sacrifice” is a phrase the Pharisees knew little about.

In Matthew 19, the Pharisees ask Jesus about divorce and whether or not divorce could happen “for any reason”:

Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these sayings that He departed from Galilee and came to the region of Judea beyond the Jordan. And great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them there.

The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him, and saying to Him, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for *just* any reason?”

And He answered and said to them, “Have you not read that He who made *them* at the beginning ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? So then,

they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.”

They said to Him, “Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?”

He said to them, “Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. **And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery;** and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery.” (Matthew 19:1-9)

The Pharisees seek to trap Jesus up regarding the divorce question, asking Him about Moses giving the writ of divorce to say argue against Jesus’ claim that divorce was not intended by God from the beginning. In other words, “if Moses gave a writ of divorce, and he got the Law from God, then God approved of divorce.” This was the Pharisaical thought, but Jesus tells the Pharisees that God did not ordain divorce from the beginning and that a man cannot divorce his wife for any reason *except divorce* — and only that. If a man divorces his wife for any other reason outside of adultery, he commits adultery.

Again, Jesus is there to interpret the Law, since the Pharisees add their own interpretation and obligations to the Law to bind men even further.

In Matthew 22, the Pharisees attempt to catch Jesus in a trap regarding the issue of paying taxes:

Then the Pharisees went and plotted how they might entangle Him in *His* talk. And they sent to Him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, “Teacher, we know that You are true, and teach the way of God in truth; nor do You care about anyone, for You do not regard the person of men. Tell us, therefore, **what do you think? Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?**”

But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, “Why do you test Me, you hypocrites? Show Me the tax money.”

So they brought Him a denarius.

And He said to them, “Whose image and inscription *is* this?”

They said to Him, “Caesar’s.”

And He said to them, “Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.”²² When they had heard *these words*, they marveled, and left Him and went their way. (Matthew 22:15-22)

The Pharisees were wicked, and Jesus tells them that, not paying attention to their words designed to pretend they were asking an honest question and wanted an honest answer. As usual, they only wanted to trip Jesus up and catch Him in something they could use against Him. Jesus tells them that yes, they should pay taxes, that being a citizen of the kingdom of God did not exempt them from their citizenship duties on earth. And they walked away because they didn’t know how to give a good comeback.

That’s how the reader knows Jesus: as the One who could always answer and reason in such a way as to dumbfound the Pharisees. Noticed in Matthew 12:14 that they started plotting as to how they could get Jesus, so all their questions are designed to catch Jesus in some false teaching that they could use against Him, and here in Matthew 22:15, they’re doing the same, have the same agenda. So the question about taxes and Caesar is designed to trap Jesus so that He can be accused of treason. In Mark 3:6, we’re told that the Pharisees plotted with the Herodians. Luke 13:31-32 confirms as much.

The question of Caesar and taxes is recorded by Luke in Luke 20:20-26, where it says that “So they watched Him, and sent spies who pretended to be righteous, **that they might seize on His words, in order to deliver Him to the power and the authority of the governor**” (Luke 20:20). Every question the Pharisees ask Jesus is designed to catch Him in something they can use against Him in the political scene.

There was a man with a withered hand, and Jesus encounters him on the Sabbath. Now the Pharisees were there (somehow, they were always around) and wanted to see what Jesus would do, if He would profane the Sabbath:

Now it happened on another Sabbath, also, that He entered the synagogue and taught. And a man was there whose right hand was withered. **So the scribes and Pharisees watched Him**

closely, whether He would heal on the Sabbath, that they might find an accusation against Him. 8 But He knew their thoughts, and said to the man who had the withered hand, “Arise and stand here.” And he arose and stood. Then Jesus said to them, “I will ask you one thing: Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy?” And when He had looked around at them all, He said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” And he did so, and his hand was restored as whole as the other. But they were filled with rage, and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus. (Luke 6:6-11)

The purpose of the Pharisees standing around with the scribes was to catch Jesus in something heretical, treasonist, or criminal (Luke 6:7). And yet, Jesus asks a question of whether or not it is acceptable or commendable to God to do good on the Sabbath — even if it means doing what the Pharisees would call “work.” And yet, Jesus healed the man with the withered hand to show that it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath, whether or not it is deemed work or the exertion of physical energy. There’s never a limit to doing good for others, and there’s no limit to the number of days within any given week to do good for others, either. In other words, you can do good on Saturday (the Jewish Sabbath) and even Sunday (Christian Sabbath) — even if it involves not being in a church building. Helping someone across the street, buying them a bag of groceries, or simply sitting with them after the loss of a relative or friend is to be the hands and feet of Christ on earth. The Lord will not forget your labor of love for Him.

Jesus, though disagreeing with the Pharisees, was invited by some to dine with them — and He went. We read in Luke 15 that Jesus ate with tax collectors and sinners, a decision that turned some Pharisees against Him. And yet, Jesus made it clear that to eat with tax collectors and sinners was part of His mission:

Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him. And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, “This Man receives sinners and eats with them.” So He spoke this parable to them, saying:

“What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? And when he has found *it*, he lays *it* on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together *his* friends and neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have

found my sheep which was lost! I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.

(Luke 15:1-7)

This is the backdrop for the Parable of the Prodigal Son who wastes all his father's inheritance and then remembers while out in the "pig slop" that his father had everything. Yet, when he returns home after making a mess of things and his father receives him and kills a fat calf, puts a ring on his finger, and gives him a luxurious robe, the prodigal son's brother turns mean because he feels as if the prodigal son is treated too nicely while he has always been there with his father (having never left). Jesus tells this parable in the face of Pharisees because He was saying in so many words that "the Pharisees are like the begrudging brother: angry that He would receive back the prodigal sons of the tax collectors and sinners instead of rejoicing that they are coming back to the Father whom they left."

Throughout all that is happening between Jesus and the Pharisees, there is the Pharisee plot to trap Jesus. And in the midst of it all, the Pharisees find a willing participant to help trap Jesus: Judas, one of Jesus' own disciples. We read in John's Gospel that Judas often opposed any money being spent at all because he was a thief who often stole money from the treasury for himself:

But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's *son*, who would betray Him, said, "Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" **This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.** (John 12:4-6)

"He used to take what was put in it," the text says, meaning that he always stole from the money bag. It's interesting, but Judas was always watching over the money bag; he was in charge of it, according to John 13:29 :

For some thought, because Judas had the money box, that Jesus had said to him, "Buy *those things* we need for the feast," or that he should give something to the poor. (John 13:29)

Here in John 13, we see that the disciples didn't realize Judas was the one who'd betray Jesus because he held the money box. They assumed that Jesus was telling Judas to buy something with the money. He was unsuspecting because Judas was likely a quiet character within the

gathering, didn't say much, held the money box, and appeared to be a part of the group. I imagine Peter, James, and John (Jesus' inner circle) were more outspoken than Judas. Granted, Judas did have his times to speak (when money was being taken from the box and away from his grubby paws) but outside of that, we get the sense that Judas said and did very little. He was never really an outspoken voice. Tragically, it's been said that one must always watch out for the quiet ones.

In the world we live in today, there are a number of church treasurers who aren't so godly with church money. Judas wasn't the first thief, and he isn't the last. And yet, he always loved money. He was greedy for money, would do anything for money, which made him the ideal disciple to plot to betray Jesus for money.

In Matthew 26, we read that it is after Mary of Bethany anoints Jesus' feet and wipes them with her hair, that Judas goes and gives himself over to betraying Jesus:

Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, **“What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?”** And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver. **16** So from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him. (Matthew 26:14-16)

Judas asks “What are you willing to give me,” a question that shows that he was only in it for himself. The chief priests and scribes gave Judas 30 pieces of silver in order to betray Jesus. Judas takes the money and plots for a ripe time to hand Him over to them. The money, the object of his greed, drives him to do something. His response is what we'd expect of someone who doesn't have his greed under control. A drug addict, I've been told, will rob his or her family in order to get more drugs. The same can be said for Judas, a greedy man who lived for money: he would hand over his Lord for money, as if money were more important than Jesus (it isn't).

Mark 14 tells us that when Judas goes to betray Jesus or commit to it, rather, the chief priests and scribes “were glad, and promised to give him money.” Incidentally, Luke 16:14 tells us that the Pharisees themselves were lovers of money and criticized Jesus after He told the Parable of the unjust steward — so they'd have no problems giving money to Judas. Judas and the Pharisees were “birds of a feather,” to use a common statement with which many would be familiar today.

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What some may not know is that, while Judas goes to the Pharisees to volunteer himself, the Pharisees had put out a public notice for anyone to report Jesus if they saw Him:

Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him. But some of them went away to the Pharisees and told them the things Jesus did. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, “What shall we do? For this Man works many signs. If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation.”

And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all, nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish.” Now this he did not say on his own *authority*; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad.

Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death. Therefore Jesus no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there into the country near the wilderness, to a city called Ephraim, and there remained with His disciples.

And the [Passover](#) of the Jews was near, and many went from the country up to Jerusalem before the Passover, to purify themselves. Then they sought Jesus, and spoke among themselves as they stood in the temple, “What do you think—that He will not come to the feast?” **57 Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a command, that if anyone knew where He was, he should report it, that they might seize Him.** (John 11:45-57)

The events of John 11:45-57 above in their proper context refer to what happens after Jesus raised Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha, His friends, from the dead. Jesus tells Lazarus to come out the grave and he does. From what we know, some Jews believe as a result of the resurrection of Lazarus, but others escape to tell the Pharisees. Yep, the Pharisees had their “hooks” into the population such that, everywhere the people went, the Pharisees had “eyes” and “ears.” John 11:53 says that the Jews plotted to put Jesus to death, and in John 11:57 as the Jewish Passover was nearing, we read that the Pharisees had given the command “that if anyone knew where He was, he should report it, that they might seize

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Him.” They were waiting to trap Jesus, and Judas just happened to willingly offer himself up—though the Pharisees had reinforcements in place in the event that Judas couldn’t find him or “chickened” out and failed to follow through.

This deal takes place, and Judas becomes the betrayer. The disciples do not know it, but Jesus chooses to reveal His crucifixion and betrayal at what we now call “the Last Supper.”

Now on **the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread** the disciples came to Jesus, saying to Him, “Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?”

And He said, “Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, ‘The Teacher says, “My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at your house with My disciples.”’”

So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them; and they prepared the Passover.

When evening had come, He sat down with the twelve. Now as they were eating, He said, “Assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me.”

And they were exceedingly sorrowful, and each of them began to say to Him, “Lord, is it I?”

He answered and said, “He who dipped *his* hand with Me in the dish will betray Me. **The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born.**”

Then Judas, who was betraying Him, answered and said, “Rabbi, is it I?”

He said to him, “You have said it.”

And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke *it*, and gave *it* to the disciples and said, “Take, eat; this is My body.”

Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom.”

And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. (Matthew 26:17-30)

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Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they killed the Passover *lamb*, His disciples said to Him, “Where do You want us to go and prepare, that You may eat the Passover?”

And He sent out two of His disciples and said to them, “Go into the city, and a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him. Wherever he goes in, say to the master of the house, ‘The Teacher says, “Where is the guest room in which I may eat the Passover with My disciples?’” Then he will show you a large upper room, furnished *and* prepared; there make ready for us.”

So His disciples went out, and came into the city, and found it just as He had said to them; and they prepared the Passover.

In the evening He came with the twelve. Now as they sat and ate, Jesus said, “Assuredly, I say to you, one of you who eats with Me will betray Me.”

And they began to be sorrowful, and to say to Him one by one, “*Is it I?*” And another *said*, “*Is it I?*”

He answered and said to them, “*It is* one of the twelve, who dips with Me in the dish. The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had never been born.”

And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke *it*, and gave *it* to them and said, “Take, eat; this is My body.”

Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks He gave *it* to them, and they all drank from it. And He said to them, “This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many. Assuredly, I say to you, I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”

And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. (Mark 14:12-26)

When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him. **Then He said to them, “With *fervent* desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.”**

Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, “Take this and divide *it* among yourselves; for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.”

And He took bread, gave thanks and broke *it*, and gave *it* to them, saying, “This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.”

Likewise He also *took* the cup after supper, saying, “This cup *is* the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.²¹ But behold, the hand of My betrayer *is* with Me on the table. And truly the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!”

Then they began to question among themselves, which of them it was who would do this thing. (Luke 22:14-23)

Here in Matthew 26, we see that Jesus and the disciples gather to eat and celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It is at this dinner in the evening that Jesus reveals His betrayer, who will hand Him over. Jesus issues a warning to Judas, the betrayer, telling him “woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed” (Matthew 26:24). And yet, it’s at the Last Supper that we see the purpose behind the Supper: to commemorate Jesus’ Crucifixion. In Matthew 26:26-28, Jesus lifts the bread before His disciples to represent His body, and the wine as the blood. In verse 28, Jesus says that the wine represents His blood “which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” The bread was “broken” to show that Jesus’ body was broken for us.

“I do not speak concerning all of you. I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, ‘He who eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me.’ Now I tell you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe that I am *He*. Most assuredly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.”

When Jesus had said these things, He was troubled in spirit, and testified and said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me.” Then the disciples looked at one another, perplexed about whom He spoke.

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Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask who it was of whom He spoke.

Then, leaning back on Jesus' breast, he said to Him, "Lord, who is it?"

Jesus answered, "**It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped it.**" **And having dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. Now after the piece of bread, Satan entered him. Then Jesus said to him, "What you do, do quickly."** But no one at the table knew for what reason He said this to him. For some thought, because Judas had the money box, that Jesus had said to him, "Buy *those things* we need for the feast," or that he should give something to the poor.

Having received the piece of bread, he then went out immediately. And it was night. (John 13:18-30)

Jesus says that the one who is to betray Him has been prophesied in Scripture (in Psalms, if you want to know the book). Jesus said that the one dipping his hand into the bowl with Jesus is the one who would betray Him. Judas was the one who shared a morsel of bread with Jesus, pointing to his role as the betrayer. It is also at this account of the Lord's Supper that we see [Satan](#) enter into Judas Iscariot, which tells us that this act of betrayal had spiritual consequences: Judas betrays Jesus because he's given himself over to Satan, not because he made an honest mistake. In the end, Judas does feel guilty because he betrayed an innocent man, but he willingly betrayed Jesus because of the thirty pieces of silver involved. When he betrayed Jesus, he didn't think about anything but the money — the guilt or innocence of Jesus wasn't a top priority.

The Last Supper is about Jesus sharing a last meal with His disciples before He is betrayed, arrested, tried, condemned, crucified, and brought back from the dead to life. And yet, the bread and wine represent His body and His blood, broken and shed for us.

Paul mentions the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion in his letter to the Corinthians in two places, 1 Corinthians 10 and 1 Corinthians 11:

Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. I speak as to wise men; judge for yourselves what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not **the communion of the blood of Christ?**

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The bread which we break, is it not **the communion of the body of Christ**? For we, *though* many, are one bread *and* one body; for **we all partake of that one bread**.

Observe Israel after the flesh: Are not those who eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything? Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons. Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He? (1 Corinthians 10:14-22)

First, Paul says that we are “one bread and one body,” referring to our union with Christ. Paul also uses the people of God as bread analogy when he refers to the sin in the Corinthian church of the man sleeping with his stepmother that the church tolerated:

It is actually reported *that there is* sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles—that a man has his father's wife! And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged (as though I were present) him who has so done this deed. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

Your glorying *is* not good. **Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.** (1 Corinthians 5:1-8)

The word “leaven” refers to sin here, and Paul tells the Corinthians to get rid of the sin so that they can be a “new lump,” “unleavened” as unleavened bread, without sin or corruption. The “unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” shows his aim with these words: to help the Corinthians move forward in godliness by putting away the sin from among them and taking action to deal with it in a godly manner. Their toleration of the man sleeping with his stepmother was not good, was not a sign to the world that they were standing for God. Paul

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said earlier in 1 Corinthians 5 that not even the Gentiles tolerated such a thing (a statement designed to make these “Gentile” believers feel terrible because their ungodly counterparts wouldn’t live with the same incestual relationship they tolerated).

Paul’s words here involve the “bread” and the “cup,” both of which are present in the Holy Communion of the Lord’s Supper. Paul argues that he wants the Corinthian believers to flee idolatry because they belong to the Lord. “You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord’s table and of the table of demons. Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy?” Paul says (1 Corinthians 10:21-22a), reminding us that Holy Communion is no mere ritual: it is an act of union, an act that says we belong to the Lord, an observance of His disciples. Paul says here that to partake of Holy Communion and then join oneself to a table of food and drink sacrificed to idols is to provoke the Lord to jealousy because it is to join oneself to other gods. And the Lord has told His people to not have any other gods before Him (Exodus 20:3). Holy Communion involves the body and blood of our Lord, that is, the memory of His death and the shedding of His blood for our sins. To eat from the food of idols, despite our communion with Christ, is to become unfaithful to Christ and to “pledge our allegiance to another.” It is apostasy, a defection from the gospel, a defection from Christ, a turning away from the one true faith and a turning aside to lies. It is to become a spiritual “Benedict Arnold” to eat from the table of idols where food is sacrificed to idols.

Paul discusses more about the Lord’s Supper/Holy Communion in the following chapter:

Now in giving these instructions I do not praise *you*, since you come together not for the better but for the worse. For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it. For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you. **Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord’s Supper. For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of *others*; and one is hungry and another is drunk. What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in?** Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise *you*.

For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the *same* night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke *it* and said, “Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in

remembrance of Me.” In the same manner *He* also *took* the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink *it*, in remembrance of Me.”

For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes.

Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks *this* cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body. For this reason many *are* weak and sick among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.

Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. But if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, lest you come together for judgment. And the rest I will set in order when I come. (1 Corinthians 11:17-34)

Paul has heard that there are divisions among the Corinthian congregation, and he believes it. Why? In part because of their division over a sacred ordinance, the Lord’s Supper. “For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others; and one is hungry and another is drunk. Do you not have houses to eat and drink in?” These words alone tell us that instead of eating the Lord’s Supper together, instead of observing the Lord’s Supper together as a body of believers, each one partakes of the Supper by himself. Others get drunk from drinking too much wine, while others are starved because they wouldn’t arrive until after all the food had been consumed. From traditional views of this passage, it appears as though the wealthier Corinthians who didn’t have to work were eating themselves “stuffed” at the church, while others who came afterward, the poor and working-class folk, would find the Lord’s Supper finished, completely gone, with no food for themselves.

In 1 Corinthians 11:22, Paul asks: “Do you not have houses to eat and drink in?” This question is asked to shame the Corinthians. If they have houses to eat and drink in, which they do, then what need do they have to devour the Lord’s Supper and leave others hungry? They were treating the Lord’s Supper, “Holy Communion,” as an “unholy” thing, acting as if

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it were nothing more than a meal they made at home, as another meal worth eating (and only devouring). It was meant to be a sacred supper shared between believers of the Body of Christ, but it was being treated as nothing more than a common dinner.

In 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 above, Paul delivers the same doctrine, the same teaching, to the Corinthians that he received from the Lord. Here's where Paul takes us back to that very night on which Judas betrayed Jesus for money and Jesus was handed over to be crucified. The Lord told the disciples to eat the bread, which represented His body. And they were to do it "in remembrance of Me," Jesus said. The same goes for the wine: when they drank the wine of the cup, they were remembering the shedding of His blood for the remission of sins. Without the shedding of blood, sins cannot be forgiven and erased, and Jesus' shed blood, better than the blood of bulls, lambs, rams, and goats, is how salvation is made possible for humanity.

Drinking the cup and breaking the bread to eat it, are all done to "proclaim the Lord's death till He comes," Paul says in 1 Corinthians 11:26. Since Holy Communion is "holy" for a reason, then one must keep in mind the purpose for the meal and treat the meal as sacred as it is. Since the meal is about the Lord and His sacrifice, perhaps Paul was telling the Corinthians that they should make a sacrifice and exercise some self-control over their biological appetites when they come together to observe this most sacred ordinance. Those who were getting drunk, for example, lacked self-control because the wine (it must've been real wine used, otherwise they could not have been drunk) was to be used to represent the death and suffering of Jesus. The wine was not meant to be used as though some were drinking it for their own personal orgies. Orgies were also treated as terrible within Scripture:

Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, [sorcery](#), hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, **drunkenness, revelries**, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told *you* in time past, that **those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.** (Galatians 5:19-21)

For we *have spent* enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles—when we walked in lewdness, lusts, **drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties**, and abominable idolatries. In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with *them* in the same

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flood of dissipation, speaking evil of *you*. They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. (1 Peter 4:3-5)

Scripture is against drunkenness, and orgies (drinking parties). You would've thought that the people of God would never have considered getting drunk, but drunkenness was something the world impressed upon some of the Corinthians; coming to Christ didn't eliminate it right away, and we see drunkenness rear its ugly head here. Some didn't know how to limit the amount of wine they consumed (lacking self-control), and this explains why they drank too much and others ate everything in sight.

Since the meal is about the Lord who sacrificed His life, believers who follow Him and remember His suffering should also suffer and deny their appetite so that their fellow brothers and sisters in the faith can also eat and partake of the Lord's Supper. There's enough food for everyone, and everyone who believes should be allowed to partake of some portion of the Lord's Supper without starving due to the selfishness of others. What Paul wanted them to do was think about Jesus and His sacrifice, what the meal represented, and then act accordingly.

Notice Paul says in verse 26 that "as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup." The words "as often" imply that there's no set number of times in a month or year that you partake of the Lord's Supper; there are no set number of times in which the church has to offer Holy Communion on an annual basis. The church can celebrate it 5 times a year, 12 times a year (once each month), 3-4 times a year (once each quarter or third of the year), and so on. There is no prescribed number of times, as if to say that, should a church not comply with a number of times it is outside the Word of God. So, in other words, what matters is how you partake of the Lord's Supper, not the external requirement of a set number of times to do it. This means that, should your heart and mind be right before God when you partake of it, the act itself pleases God. One can partake of Holy Communion 12 times a year, have the wrong spirit when doing so, and still displease God — so offering Holy Communion more or less than someone else isn't a mark of true spirituality or godliness.

Therefore **whoever eats this bread or drinks *this* cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.** But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. **For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this**

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reason many *are* weak and sick among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world. (1 Corinthians 11:27-32)

Paul mentions “whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner,” referring to those who get drunk, eat all the food and deprive others of any, and so on. In the context, those getting drunk are not partaking of the Lord’s Supper as they ought. No one at the Lord’s Supper that night with Jesus got drunk; drunkenness was never to be a part of it. Those eating the food up from others were also being gluttons at the Lord’s table. Being a glutton is also unbiblical:

“If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, and *who*, when they have chastened him, will not heed them, then his father and his mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his city, to the gate of his city. **And they shall say to the elders of his city, ‘This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard.’** Then all the men of his city shall stone him to death with stones; so **you shall put away the evil from among you**, and all Israel shall hear and fear. (Deuteronomy 21:18-21)

Hear, my son, and be wise;

And guide your heart in the way.

Do not mix with winebibbers,

***Or* with gluttonous eaters of meat;**

For the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty,

And drowsiness will clothe *a man* with rags. (Proverbs 23:19-21)

Proverbs 23 tells us that both the drunkard and glutton “will come to poverty,” meaning that nothing good comes of being a drunkard and glutton (eating everything, overeating).

“He who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner,” someone who doesn’t treat the Lord’s Supper as it should be treated (sacred) is someone who will be “guilty of the body and blood

of the Lord” (v.27). That person will be treated as if he or she put the Lord to death, is what Paul is saying. Whether or not Paul is using exaggeration here (which I doubt), or a serious warning, there’s no playing around with the Lord’s Supper. Those who misuse and abuse Holy Communion will bear physical consequences as punishment: “For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep” (1 Corinthians 11:30). There are many that had become weak in body and experienced a general loss of strength, while others had become sick in need of medical treatment. Some had died (“sleep” in Scripture is often used to refer to the sleep of death), showing that the Lord punished those who took Holy Communion in vain. Taking Holy Communion in vain is akin to taking God’s name in vain — which brings with it terrible consequences.

Remember what happened to Uzzah, one of Abinadab’s sons who bore the Ark of God on a new cart to bring it up from Baale Judah, the house of Abinadab, to Obed-Edom? The oxen stumbled and Uzzah put his hand out to the Ark to steady it. The text says that the Lord struck him and he died as a result:

Again David gathered all *the* choice *men* of Israel, thirty thousand. And David arose and went with all the people who *were* with him from Baale Judah to bring up from there the ark of God, whose name is called by the Name, the Lord of Hosts, who dwells *between* the cherubim. So they set the ark of God on a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which *was* on the hill; and **Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drove the new cart. And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill, accompanying the ark of God; and Ahio went before the ark.** Then David and all the house of Israel played *music* before the Lord on all kinds of *instruments of* fir wood, on harps, on stringed instruments, on tambourines, on sistrums, and on cymbals.

And when they came to Nachon’s threshing floor, Uzzah put out *his hand* to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen stumbled. Then the anger of the Lord was aroused against Uzzah, and God struck him there for *his* error; and he died there by the ark of God. And David became angry because of the Lord’s outbreak against Uzzah; and he called the name of the place Perez Uzzah to this day.

David was afraid of the Lord that day; and he said, “How can the ark of the Lord come to me?” So David would not move the ark of the Lord with him into the City of David; but

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David took it aside into the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite. The ark of the Lord remained in the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite three months. And the Lord blessed Obed-Edom and all his household. (2 Samuel 6:1-11)

Uzzah was struck because no one was to touch the Ark of the Covenant, but instead, to bear it on a new cart and bring it to the place the Lord intended. Uzzah was killed because he disobeyed the commandment of the Lord (regardless of the reason, to disobey is to disobey). David was afraid to even bring the Ark of the Covenant to his home, but he changed course after seeing how it had blessed the home of Obed-Edom for some months.

The Lord's Supper is to be sacred and holy and is to be observed as such, and those consuming the food for themselves, eating alone, and then stealing food from others were not doing what was right. And some had died, become sick, and weak because of their disobedience. The Corinthians were thinking of the Lord's Supper as just any meal, but it wasn't — disobeying it brought unforeseen consequences. Paul warns them of some of them here so that other Corinthians would see and fear and not misuse and abuse Holy Communion for their own purposes.

Paul tells them these terrible consequences to deter them, those who remained alive, from doing the same. "For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged," a statement in 1 Corinthians 11:31 that tells us that if we were more careful and thought through such things before we did them, the Lord would not have to punish us. In other words, "think before you act" would've been a saying Paul would've heartily adopted. "But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord" is a statement that says the Lord judges us so that we are not "condemned with the world," we are not sentenced to Hell eternal as the rest of the world will be. God chastises those He loves, Paul writes in Hebrews 12:3-11, and those that aren't chastised by God are not "sons" but are "illegitimates" who will not receive the inheritance of eternal life:

For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin. And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons:

"My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord,

Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him;

For whom the Lord loves He chastens,

And scourges every son whom He receives.”

If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected *us*, and we paid *them* respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? For they indeed for a few days chastened *us* as seemed *best* to them, but He for *our* profit, that *we* may be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. (Hebrews 12:3-11)

God is our father, and, as every good father does, He chastises His children. In Hebrews 12:9, Paul says that we are to submit to the chastening of the Lord, the “Father of spirits” so that we can live and experience eternal life. Those who do not submit, who choose to be rebellious, choose to suffer with the world. And the Lord’s chastening is designed to prevent us from eternal damnation and an eternity outside of the “gates to the city.”

In 1 Corinthians 11:33, Paul says “Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another.” Remember, some of those gathering were eating up the food from others, with some being hungry at the Lord’s Supper because the food was being gobbled up like Thanksgiving dinner before others could arrive (see verse 21: “each one takes his own supper ahead of others”). Paul says “wait for one another,” showing that the Lord’s Supper is designed to be distributed among all who believe, not some of them.

Those who have been getting there ahead of everyone else were now told that there was no need to race to the Lord’s Supper because the meal would be for everyone, not just the early risers. “The early bird catches the worm” mindset wouldn’t apply here, because the Lord’s Supper was not something to be eaten by early risers. No “first come, first served” would apply in this case. Perhaps that was the mindset of many in their own homes, but there was to

be enough for everyone with Holy Communion. Remember what happened in the case of the early church?

And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation.” Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added *to them*. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, **in the breaking of bread**, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.

So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and **breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people**. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved. (Acts 2:40-47)

The early church in Acts 2 broke bread “from house to house,” a sign that everyone shared in the meals, that the meals were for everyone, designed to feed everyone. Sure, they had their own homes, but they shared all that God had blessed them with; there was no “my food,” but rather, “our food.” The text says that they “had all things in common...and divided them among all, as anyone had need” (Acts 2:44-45). Holy Communion was to be no different, shared among all, so that all could enjoy the “body” and “blood” of the Lord by remembering His crucifixion for the sins of the whole world.

[Spiritual Gifts of Tongues and Interpretation](#)

The spiritual gift of tongues is more accurately called the gift of languages. The Greek word for tongues is *glossa*, which literally means “tongue.” When it is used in the New Testament addressing the subject of spiritual gifts it carries the contextual meaning of “languages.” Speaking in tongues is the utterance of prayer or of a message glorifying God, typically spoken to God (1 Corinthians 14:2), in a language that is unknown to the one speaking it.

To properly understand this gift, we need to begin with a brief history of language in the human race. In the garden mankind had one language and was in direct communication with God,

having perfect communion with Him. Unfortunately, this relationship changed at the fall when Adam sinned against God and he and Eve were cursed and banished from Eden along with their descendants. Mankind continued to have one language up until Genesis 11 where God confused their language and people were dispersed throughout the earth. He did this because they had united together in one language and conspired to build a tower at Babel. Their intention was to “make a name” for themselves and thus replace God in their hearts. Pride is the birthplace of sin and regrettably fallen man has decided to use every advantage, including language, to usurp God’s authority and place himself upon a throne which is not rightfully his.

After God confused their language and scattered them across the earth, He chose one people with one language to bring Him glory and draw mankind back to Himself. Abram, later called Abraham, was the one through whom God promised to bless “all the nations.” Eventually, through the nation of Israel, the Hebrew language would be used to communicate God’s Word to the nations. However, the rest of the world did not speak or understand this language and for the most part continued to remain ignorant of God’s plan of redemption.

Fast forward to Pentecost and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on the people of God. Here we see a glimpse of God’s reversal of the curse of divided languages. In Acts 2 people from all over the world hear God’s people proclaiming His mighty works in their own languages. This is the beginning of the redemption of language for its intended purpose: to glorify God and draw all people to Himself.

In heaven an innumerable group from every nation, tribe, people and tongue will join together to praise God with one language. (See Revelation 7:9-12. This is where tongues will cease as mentioned in 1 Corinthians 13:8-10.) The intention of the spiritual gift of tongues is to glorify God now, but also to prepare ourselves as His church to glorify Him forever in heaven. The gift however is only partial, in that it is not given to all believers, and in the context of the church requires an interpreter in order for it to be edifying.

There is much more to be said about the spiritual gift of tongues, but we will summarize a few points here:

- Not every believer receives this gift. The gift of tongues is not a requirement or a necessary sign of salvation. See 1 Corinthians 12:30.

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- Tongues can be human languages such as those heard in Acts 2, but often may be languages no one understands. See 1 Corinthians 14:2.
- Tongues are not “ecstatic speech” but are always orderly and are able to be controlled by the one speaking. See 1 Corinthians 14:27-28, 33, 39-40
- No tongues should be spoken in the church gathering without interpretation. See 1 Corinthians 14:27-28.
- Tongues should not be forbidden. See 1 Corinthians 14:39.

The Holy Spirit gives some believers the spiritual gift of tongues to glorify God and, with the help of an interpreter, to edify the church. This gift is dealt with extensively in the Scriptures and its use should be encouraged. That said, it should be used properly with pure motives and intentions, of course in the power and prompting of the Holy Spirit. See also 1 Corinthians 12:10, 30, 14:4, 39, Acts 2:4, Acts 19:6.

The Spiritual Gift of Interpretation of Tongues

The spiritual gift of interpretation of tongues is found alongside the gift of speaking in tongues in 1 Corinthians 12:10. The Greek word for interpretation is *hermeneia* and simply means to interpret, explain, or expound some message that is not able to be understood in a natural way. Thus, this spiritual gift is the supernatural ability to understand and explain messages uttered in an unknown language.

This is a revelatory gift, meaning that God “reveals” the meaning of the words or message being spoken and allows the interpreter to communicate its meaning to those who need to hear it. When this happens in the church two things happen: the church is edified and God is glorified.

The spiritual gift of interpretation is given by the Holy Spirit to certain individuals to reveal messages spoken in an unknown tongue to God for the building up of the church. Like the gift of prophecy, tongues that are interpreted have the effect of encouraging and blessing the church to love and serve God more deeply and effectively. See also 1 Corinthians 12:10, 30; 14:1-28.

There is more to being filled with the Holy Spirit than speaking in tongues. Since speaking in an unknown language is the initial evidence of the infilling of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4), it is an integral part of receiving the Holy Spirit. Speaking in tongues is also an essential part of the believer's devotional prayer life. The Apostle Paul said, "I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all" (1 Cor. 14:18).

In writing to the Church at Corinth, Paul specifically encouraged Christians to follow the practice of speaking with tongues in their private prayer lives. He gave several reasons for it.

Cells in Church

Devotional Use

There is the devotional use of tongues. First Corinthians 14:2 says, "For he who speaks in a 'tongue' addresses God, not man; no one understands him; he is talking of divine secrets in the Spirit" (Moffatt). Here, Paul is talking about the individual Spirit-filled believer employing the use of tongues in his prayer life. Through speaking in tongues, you can pray out the plan of God for your life by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Spiritual Edification

Tongues are also used as a means of spiritual edification. First Corinthians 14:4 says, "He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself." The word edifieth means "to build up." Verse 14 in the Amplified Bible Classic reads, "My spirit [by the Holy Spirit within me] prays, but my mind is unproductive." Speaking in tongues isn't mental edification; it is spiritual edification.

Worshiping God

For believers who are filled with the Holy Spirit, tongues are used in their worship and devotion to God. The Bible says in Acts 10:46 concerning Cornelius and his household when they began to speak with tongues, "For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God." Speaking with tongues is a supernatural way to magnify God.

Doorway to the Supernatural

Speaking with tongues is the doorway into all the other spiritual gifts. Some people want to experience all the gifts of the Spirit at once, but you have to go through the door to get into the supernatural. Also, it is as the Spirit of God wills, not as we will (1 Cor. 12:11). In other words, you can't force or "put on" a manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit.

The Bible teaches us to desire spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 14:1). The Bible also teaches us to earnestly covet the best gifts (1 Cor. 12:31). But remember that those words were written to people who already spoke in tongues. They weren't written to people who did not speak with tongues.

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I have found in my own life over a period of more than 60 years that the more I speak in tongues—the more I pray and worship God in tongues—the more manifestation of the other gifts of the Spirit I have in my life too. And the less I speak in tongues, the less manifestation of the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit I have operating in my life.

God has given each of us a supernatural means of edifying ourselves, or building ourselves up, spiritually. God has given to us a supernatural means of communicating with and worshiping Him. Are you as a Spirit-filled believer taking full advantage of the gift of tongues?

While attending church every week is good for you – both spiritually and physically – it shouldn't be your only interaction with believers on a weekly basis. Christianity is best experienced as part of a community, and one hour a week certainly isn't enough.

Being part of a small group is tremendously beneficial for the Christian experience. Not only do you get to experience God with other believers outside of a weekly church service, but you also have the opportunity to go deeper in your studies and relationships – all while socializing and having a good time.

Reasons why you should join a small group:

In a small group, you are noticed

Although most churches try to ensure that every member feels valued, this isn't always possible when people interact once a week. Small groups make you part of a tighter community of friends – who will notice immediately if you aren't around or aren't acting like yourself. When you're part of a small group, people know your name, care about you, and are willing and able to support you when it's needed most.

In a small group, you are a leader

If you have a desire to grow in your own leadership abilities, becoming part of a small group is an excellent way to start. Because the purpose of a small group is to grow big enough to multiply, virtually everyone can become a leader. Grow your own leadership skills, while making a positive impact on your community, by joining, and maybe even starting a small group.

Small groups give you an extended family

Some of us live hundreds of miles from our families. Others have no families at all. Being part of a small group that meets weekly to eat, talk, and fellowship gives you the same loyalty and support that you would receive from family. And family is priceless.

Small groups allow you to search and ask questions

No one has all of the answers to questions about God, Christianity, and our spiritual journey – not even pastors. While church services are focused on teaching and training, a small group gives you the ability to ask these hard questions in a safe environment – and seek the answers together. Group is one of the best ways to grow your spiritual life. You can discuss challenges, praises, and questions with other earnest seekers and Jesus followers.

Small groups provide advice and support

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Small groups don't only help with spiritual questions, they can also provide support on a plethora of life matters. Ask for prayer regarding your career, relationships, and other life decisions. When we seek out the knowledge and wisdom of others before making a difficult life choice, the final outcome is almost always better.

Small groups improve your communication skills and critical thinking abilities

One of the best ways to expand your own decision making and analytical abilities is to critically evaluate and discuss challenging concepts – such as the ideas of Salvation, Heaven, the Trinity, and the Second Coming. Not only can these discussions give you a better understanding of God and his love, they can also improve your ability to think about other difficult ideas at work or school.

Small groups improve your attitude

When you have people that pray for you every week (or maybe even every day), text you periodically, and truly care about your life, it's hard not to walk around with a smile on your face. When other people care about the challenges in your life, they suddenly don't matter as much to you – and you can spend your time on life's more positive aspects. Having a positive friend in a group will inevitably make your life more positive and enjoyable.

And ultimately, small groups help the church grow

As Christians our responsibility is stated clearly at the end of Matthew – to go out and make disciples of all the earth. Unfortunately, this is often hard to do because people feel intimidated to visit churches.

Small groups, on the other hand, give you the opportunity to connect with people in less-threatening environment. Someone who wouldn't set foot in a church may still enjoy discussing spirituality over dinner with friends.

Truly, there are many benefits of small groups – for each member, the church as a whole, our community, and our world.

If you're ready to become part of a small group that's focused on becoming more like Christ – while receiving the benefits listed above – then reach out to our team at the South Bay Bible Church. We'll introduce you to one of our small groups so that you can join this exciting movement.

Importance of Tithes and Offerings: Giving:

In the Word we are told to give our **tithes and offerings**, including **firstfruits** and many specific offerings, such as peace offerings, sin offerings, **offerings for the Feasts**, and others... yet, how often do we? Time flies by, expenses come, and it is easy to lose sight of what we are supposed to give.

God readily forgives these oversights, yet, why do we make them?

After all, the Word speaks of **blessings that come with obedience**... but the frenzied pace of our lives and our stubborn flesh conflict with our spiritual desire to obey. The distraction comes in like a thief and God's Word can easily become lost in the pace of the day.

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Yet, He is our hope and glory. With Him we find rest and the ability to follow His will.

The Prophets Speak:

In both the Old and New Testaments we were instructed to give, by priests, prophets, apostles... even Jesus Himself felt it important enough to teach on. Our God-given ordinance to give, and give cheerfully, never ended with the Old Testament. Yet, God also never asks us to give more than we have. He is the lightening of our load, not our burden.

Interestingly, **Malachi, the final prophet of the Old Testament**, gives perhaps one of the most famous **prophetic** words on tithes and offerings—aside from those of Jesus—**his words of robbing God in tithes and offerings still being vital today**. Surprisingly so, when we look at a few statistics...

According to the most indulgent sources, we find that only 1 out of 4 regular churchgoers actually tithe at all, and of those only 1 out of 10 on a regular basis. Most do not even tithe 10% of their income; tithing irregularly. Further still, **many sources claim as few as 2% of those identifying as Christians may actually tithe at all**—often not giving to God’s house, but instead, to secular charities.

So, is it because church goers are broke? Barely scraping by? Some yes, but remarkably those who make more are less likely to give that 10%. Someone who is scraping by might give 15% despite the strain on their finances, while someone who makes more than enough might feel disinclined to give even half of that percentage. ‘The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak,’ is the only answer that readily springs to mind—the more you have to give, the more your flesh perhaps balks at **giving?**

So, while in the days of Malachi the tithes and offerings given to God were polluted, as His people gave Him leftovers and stolen goods, **today we rarely give to God at all**—even rarer at the Feasts God has ordained—making Malachi’s words timelier than ever...

*“Will a man rob God?
Yet you have robbed Me!
But you say,
“In what way have we robbed You?”
In tithes and offerings...
Bring all the tithes into the storehouse,
that there may be food in My house,
and try Me now in this’*

Says the Lord of hosts,

*‘If I will not open for you the windows of heaven
and pour out for you such blessing
that there will not be room enough to receive it.’*

*“And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes,
so that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground,
nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field...*

*and all nations will call you blessed,
for you will be a delightful land,’*

Says the Lord of hosts.”

—Malachi 3:8-12

Why do we fail to tithe?

As a nation we are more apt to give offerings, those little donations made as we watch an ad featuring some poor child in Africa crying, emaciated, and needing our help... our donations based on pulled heartstrings.

Those acts of charity, those “benefactions,” are easy when we find our hearts crying out for the poor and needy. We gladly listen if all they require is a five dollar bill... after all, it is easy to feel good about ourselves when we give then.

Yet, what about our tithes, and non-emotionally based offerings?

Those are not so easily justified in our minds. After all, say you go to a beautiful church with hundreds of filled seats, having—at least to the naked eye—no needs. Why should you give to them? They don’t need your tithes, right?

If we believe the Church does not require our money then we can be part of the 95% or more who fail to tithe, right?

It doesn’t matter that if we all gave our tithes... the Word of God could be spread all around the world.

It doesn’t matter that if we all gave our tithes... we could change our nation.

It doesn’t matter that if we all gave our tithes... we could prepare for the second coming of Messiah.

Of course, it does matter. Yet, it is not just about what our churches could do with the money. It is about obedience. **It is about changing our hearts!**

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Jesus said it best, *“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also”* (see Matthew 6:21 & Luke 12:34 (emphasis added)). If we give of ourselves, of our time and money, that is one less soul-tie to the world.

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” —Matthew 6:19-21

Still, giving tithes is not only about changing our hearts. And it is not even merely about obedience—though that is an important part. No...

When we choose not to give our tithes and offerings, we are failing to put our trust in God. When we fail to put our trust in God, we are not allowing Him to help us—to bless us! Yes, He will still look after us, but we are, by not trusting Him, literally building walls around ourselves! Walls to keep Him out, for God does not trespass the free-will He gave us; He wants an invitation... our love.

When we fail to trust Him we are saying to God, “I’ve got this. I made this money. It’s mine. I don’t need anyone’s help... I am self-made!” We are pushing Him away when He wants to bless us beyond our wildest imaginations. We are refusing the gifts of our Father that the prophet Malachi prophesied...

*“Bring all the tithes into the storehouse,
that there may be food in My house,
and try Me now in this,
Says the Lord of hosts,
‘If I will not open for you the windows of heaven
and pour out for you such blessing
that there will not be room enough to receive it.’”*

—Malachi 3:10

How can we change how we approach giving?

“Now Jesus sat opposite the treasury and saw how the people put money into the treasury. And many who were rich put in much. Then one poor widow came and threw in two mites... So He called His disciples to Himself and said to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury; for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood.’” —Mark 12:41-44

The widow in Jesus’ story gave of all she had, yet, she did not have to. Those who had much were giving much, so her pennies did not matter, right? Yet, they meant more to God than all

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of the thousands of coins given by those who had much. They made a difference to Him, to others, and likely, even to the widow herself.

It was a heart thing. She—like we must—had her **heart in the right place**. She had her heart firmly embedded in God's love!

“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon (riches).” —Matthew 6:24

What we, each as individuals, must do is assess our hearts. This might sound easy, but without asking God to be the one to assess it, the enemy can easily fool us. The enemy can fool us into regretting giving. The enemy can fool us into thinking that our contributions have no value. The enemy can even fool us into thinking that if we tithe to God we will not have enough left... that in some way God lied and will fail to provide for His children if they obey Him.

We have to learn to put God first! Yes, giving our tithes can be difficult. There are times when we can barely find the money to eat, to pay our rent, to clothe our children. Yet, sometimes, that **small act of faith**, listening to God and giving what He asks—which will never be beyond what we have—is the catalyst which propels us into our next season, our next job, our next raise, our next God-thing!

It takes a little faith, but with each time we obey God and give our tithes and offerings, we not only find ourselves being further blessed... we find that the giving, the obeying, is easier, and far more rewarding.

At *Curt Landry Ministries*, we are working toward that goal, while also making sure that every **tithe*** and offering keeps on giving. Through people like you, giving to **Holocaust survivors, needy children, young people without a home**, etc., we are showing the least of these God's love.

Through our **Covenant Partners** we are spreading God's Word all around the world; we are consistently giving hope, love, and help to those who need it most. From the youngest to the oldest your support heals... **blessing you** in turn as you answer God's call.

We pray that as you bless those around you, as you give what God requires, you will be blessed beyond earthly imagining. That God's good measure will be pressed down, shaken together, and running over into the very fibers of your life. Let us join together and learn the beauty of giving!*

*Remember, your tithes should go to the Church that you consider to be your spiritual home. Offerings, such as the **sponsorship of a tree** or **helping Holocaust survivors**, can be made where God leads...

Conclusion

What we've learned from this study of Holy Communion/the Lord's Supper is that the ordinance was commanded by the Lord Jesus to be observed until He comes, that it shouldn't be entered into lightly, and that every believer should examine his or her own heart and mind before partaking of it.

Jesus referred to eating His flesh and drinking His blood earlier in His ministry:

I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. **If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.**"

The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, "How can this Man give us *His* flesh to eat?"

Then Jesus said to them, **"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me.** This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever." (John 6:48-58)

John 6 is the context for the Lord's Supper (Holy Communion): those who "eat His flesh," that is, the bread, and "drink My blood," that is, the cup of wine, are those who believe in Him. One is not cannibalist — no one is consuming Christ's actual flesh in Holy Communion — but by consuming representations of His body and blood, believers are identifying and remembering what their Lord and Savior has done for them at the Cross. And those who partake of this do so not only to look back, reflect, and remember, but to anticipate His coming again.

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The Lord's Supper is memorable, reflective, doctrinal, spiritual, and futuristic and anticipatory, all in one. Let us keep this ordinance until our Lord comes again and we enter into the great Marriage Supper of the Lamb!