

What is the Government of God in the Church? II The Foundation

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One of biggest problems in the Churches of God—in almost 90% of the ‘Christian’ professing churches; and in that I include the Catholics—they do not understand the Government of God in the Church. And one of the greatest misunderstandings that people apply is that—especially ministers who want power and control—God gave them the right to rule over the brethren; and they have created governmental doctrines based upon wrong interpretations of Scripture. Where does all authority come from? *It comes from God the Father through Jesus Christ to us!*. The truth of the matter is that God is working in everyone’s individual lives. It is God

Let’s come to John 6 and let’s review this again so that we understand it. God is the One with Jesus Christ, jointly working together, to build the Church of God as Jesus said He would build it. Granted, He uses human beings; but then if He is the One Who is building it, how are the human beings to respond? Here’s how God works in everyone’s life, and how they come to the knowledge of the Truth.

It is not how many sermons a minister may preach; how many radio stations he may be on; how many television stations he may be on—that matters not! It is what happens with the true words of God that they hear; because “faith comes from the hearing of the Word.” And it is God then, through the desire of the one who is listening, that begins to respond to those words.

The preaching of the Gospel reaches many people at many different levels; but here’s the beginning. We are going to see there are absolute limits that God has; and up to that point you can have many different counterfeits. But God has this absolute difference right here. This is how God controls it because He is in authority. Jesus said:

John 6:44: “No one can come to Me unless the Father... [God the Father Who is the Sovereign of the whole universe] ...unless the Father Who sent Me, draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.” That is

- if they answer the calling
- if they’re baptized
- if they receive the Holy Spirit and they attain to the resurrection

All those other Scriptures are there to finish it off from other places. So, what you really have here is the beginning. No one can come to Christ—

doesn’t matter if they profess Christ, it doesn’t matter if they bow down to an idol of Christ and Mary—they are not going to get to Christ *unless it comes from God the Father*. We’ll see it works the other way, too: *none can come to the Father except through Christ!* So, it works together, two-way street, or a double one-way street.

Now, here’s the key, v 45: “It is written in the prophets, ‘they shall all be taught by God.’....”

- God made us
- God created us
- God is the One Who draws us

We have God’s Word, and we have it as never before today. So, where we read and study, and we learn from it; and we learn the right way—*God’s way*—it is God, with His Spirit, that is teaching us. Whether His Spirit is with us before we’re baptized, or whether it is in us after we’re baptized, it is the Father Who is drawing, and it is the Father Who is teaching. Now, if they respond in the right way

“...Therefore, everyone who has heard from the Father, and has learned, comes to Me” (v 45).

Verse 65: “And He said, ‘For this reason, I have said to you, no one can come to Me unless it has been given to him from My Father.’” That’s a pretty important thing to understand.

Verse 63—here’s the key and the power that does it: “It is the Spirit that gives life; the flesh profits nothing....” We could also paraphrase this in a little different way:

- All carnal devices and means profit nothing.
- You cannot build spiritual character by physical means.

What I mean by that is you can’t do it unto salvation without the Spirit of God. People can improve, they can change their lives, they can do different things; because God gave us all capacity to these things. But that has nothing to do with conversion. That has to do with moving from an evil side of carnality to a good side of carnality; but *it’s still carnal!* They’re still eating off the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil!

Today, people think if they have moral values—‘I’m good!’ Most of the moral values are taken and stolen from the Ten Commandments

anyway.

Verse 63: “It is the Spirit that gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you, *they* are spirit and *they* are life.” Because they do something to your heart and your mind that nothing else can do.

You can read any other book, you can read any other thing, and unless they accurately quote Scripture, *it is the Scripture that really teaches* you if you read something out of it. The Bible, with God’s Spirit, does something that no other book can do. And that is, give you spiritual knowledge and understanding through Christ, because ‘if you seek, you shall find; if you knock, it’ll be open; if you ask, you shall receive.’ That’s all part of it.

John 14:6 is another absolute! It’s not that you feel good in your heart. It’s not that you think good thoughts, because people can think good thoughts. There’s positive thinking out there in the world. A lot of people succeed with positive thinking, that is true. But, that has nothing to do with conversion. If you are converted and have the Spirit of God, you are going to be able to see the Truth from the error; and you’re also going to be able to be spiritually positive rather than carnally positive. Let’s look at the difference:

You have a baseball team, a football team, basketball team—Rah! Rah! Rah! And I remember my first year in high school and I was playing trumpet—so they had an assembly for the football team. I couldn’t understand it: ‘Let’s have spirit.’ I thought, what is that? Everybody yelling and screaming and jumping up and down and beating the drums and so forth. That’s all carnal, boost yourself up! Cheer for your team! Root for the one to run! To hit a homerun! To throw a touchdown! To hit a last three-point basket at the end of the game and win! That’s all carnal. Same way with changing your personality. You can change your personality by learning. You can go through many courses of self-improvement. You can improve yourself, but that has nothing to do with the *spiritual character* that God wants you to develop.

Yes, you may make yourself a better human, but that does not remove the evil, because the evil has to come with a covenant baptism; which then brings the circumcision of the heart and opens the mind to receive the Spirit of God.

John 14:6: “Jesus said to him, “I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life; **no one** comes to the Father except through Me.” Those are two absolutes! The Father and Christ work together! The Father begins drawing, but they have to come through Christ as the Father draws them; and you can’t come to the Father unless you also come

through Christ—so it’s a joint operation of both of Them working to call everyone that is going to be in the Kingdom of God.

Now, let’s see something else that is important, too. This is a special calling that’s important to understand. It’s a spiritual operation of God, because God is not way off somewhere trillions of miles away from the earth. This is the center of His activity right here on earth. Though we can’t see where the third heaven is, I don’t think it’s all that far from the earth. We don’t know. But nevertheless, He is working here.

Let’s just review and it has to do with the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of Christ. John 14:15: “If you love Me, keep the commandments—namely, My commandments.” He also said, ‘You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul, with all your being.’ That’s the first and greatest commandment. The second one is like unto it, ‘you shall love your neighbor as yourself.’

Now then, if a person says, ‘I love God, comes to church on Sunday, and they have a good, warm, fuzzy feeling in their heart. ‘I love God. I celebrate Christmas all the time,’ are they keeping the commandments of God or not? *No, they’re not!* Their love is not genuine, spiritual love; because we’ll see what kind of love that this involves in the covenant relationship with God. You might feel loving toward God as you would toward a person; or as you would toward your husband or wife. But that’s not the Divine love that this is talking about here, that’s important for us to understand in our relationship with God.

For those of you who still don’t know who Jesus is, we’ll review it again so you’ll understand, because when He says, “...keep the commandments—namely, My commandments.”

John 1:1: “In *the* beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” **Christ was God!** That means He was the Lord God of the Old Testament; which means that if you come along and say: ‘You don’t have to keep any of the commandments of the Old Testament; the Old Testament has been fulfilled and done away’—***you don’t love God!*** All your profession is meaningless. It’s no different than someone coming and saying to his wife or to her husband: ‘Oh, I love you. I adore you.’ Then when they’re gone, they’re out committing adultery. It’s absolutely no different.

So, whatever the spirit of the Law, the commandments that we find in the Old Testament, ***we keep.*** That’s why you need to read in the Bible, Appendix H: *How Did Jesus Fulfill the Law and the Prophets*, without doing away with them.

John 14:16—if you do that, He says: “I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another

Comforter, that it may be with you throughout the age. *Even* the Spirit of the Truth...” (vs 16-17). This is what the Holy Spirit does that’s different than any other thing and any other religion. It gives you a hungering and thirsting for the Truth and to know the Truth from error, because it is the Truth that will save you, through Christ.

“...which the world cannot receive because it perceives it not, nor knows it; but you know it because it dwells with you, and shall be within you” (v 17).

Now, that’s why you also have to read appendix H: *Exegesis for the Translation of the Phrase “Holy Spirit”* (John 14, 15, 16) because if you believe in a trinity, you believe in a false god. So therefore, you are not in contact with the true God—because the Holy Spirit of God is the power of God, that He gives to everyone who repents and is baptized; and then they enter into a special covenant with God. This special covenant with God is the very basis of foundation of the Government of God within the Church. *God* is ruling in your life. That’s what it is!

- It’s not the minister to tell you what to do.
- It’s not a deacon to tell you what to do.
- It’s not a pope to tell you what to do.

It is the Word of God and your choice and your yielding to God, through the power of the Holy Spirit with Christ in you, which is the mind of Christ, and the seed of the Father. This is the foundation of the Government of God in the Church.

He expands on this a little more, v 21: “The one who has My commandments **and is keeping them...**” That’s present tense. Everything is in present tense. What you did yesterday you did well. Fine!

If you didn’t, repent. What you’re going to do tomorrow? *You know not, for tomorrow’s not here, yet!* It’s pretty much like every day and every minute is how you are to live.

- that doesn’t mean you don’t plan ahead
- that doesn’t mean you don’t think ahead
- that doesn’t mean you don’t learn from the lessons in the past
- it merely means in your relationship with God, you are keeping the commandments of God on a continuous, ongoing basis

“...that is the one who loves Me; and the one who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him. Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, ‘Lord, what has happened that You are about to manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?’” (vs 21-22).

How are you going to do that? He didn’t know anything about the resurrection. Or truly understanding the Spirit of God at this point; because the Holy Spirit wasn’t given until some 53 days later at the Feast of Pentecost.

Verse 23: “Jesus answered and said to him...” This becomes absolutely important because God is the One Who’s doing the calling, giving the Spirit, giving the understanding, doing the teaching—**not a man!** God is the One Who is making these decision with the absolute guidelines that we have seen that Christ said.

Verse 23: “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘If anyone loves Me, he will keep My Word...’ When it’s singular like that, “...My Word...” that means the **entire message** of Christ, because we’ll see He defines it a little further.

“...and My Father will love him, and **We** will come to him and make **Our abode** with him”—*dwelling place*. If you have the Holy Spirit of God *within* you, you have God the Father—which is the seed of begettal; and you have Jesus Christ, which is the mind of Christ. And through the power of the Holy Spirit we are to grow in grace and knowledge. They continue to teach us. That’s why when you read the Bible—and it still happens to me to this very day—I read and study the Bible and I learn things out of the Bible in ways that I never understood before. And yet, I’ve been studying the Bible for many years and have been a minister for many years.

Notice this very carefully, because here again is another dividing line. Because Jesus said that ‘not everyone who says to Me, *Lord, Lord*, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Verse 24: “The one who does not love Me...”—which is expressed by *keeping the commandments of God with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul and all your being*; and personally loving God.

“...the one who does not love Me, does not keep My words... [‘the word’ is the whole message. See the difference between *words* and *word*?] ...and the Word that you hear is not Mine, but the Father’s, Who sent Me” (v 24).

It’s very important that people understand this. People in the world don’t understand this. ‘Oh well, I see all this ‘Christianity’ out there and I reject all of it. They’re all a bunch of hypocrites and liars’—and most of them are! And the Jews look at Catholicism and they say, ‘If that’s Christianity it couldn’t have come from God.’ And they’re right, it never did. However, the **Word**—the whole message—came from the Father. Jesus did not

originate it. It wasn't what He thought up—"...but the Father's, Who sent Me."

Now, let's see how this is expressed in Rom. 8. Here is another absolute dividing line. And if we really think on this, and understand it in the right way, God is still ruling. If we understand it in the right way—since all authority is given to Christ from God the Father, and He rules in the heavens and the earth, everything is subject to God. What we have here: **God is ruling in the lives of those that He calls unto salvation**, and He is ruling, by exclusion, those who do not want to come to Him. So, they're still all under the authority of God whether they recognize it or not. But in the Church, it's important for us to understand the very first foundation of Government of God is Christ and God the Father *in* each one of us.

Romans 8:7: "Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God..."—*an enemy of God*. This doesn't necessarily mean that they're hateful and cruel and are overtly murderers and things like that. They can be an enemy of God and not necessarily have overt hostilities showing by saying: 'Oh well, I never pay any attention to that.' They're still an enemy of God, because they're carnal-minded.

"...for it is not subject to the Law of God; neither indeed can it *be*. But those who are in *the* flesh... [that is those without the Spirit of God] ...**cannot please God**" (vs 7-8).

What does this tell us? *All religion in the world*—based upon carnal precepts, Satan the devil, their own ways, their own doctrines—**cannot please God!** If God says 'remember the Sabbath Day to keep it Holy' and people insist on going to church on Sunday, can they please God? *No! They cannot!* Because that is a carnal-minded 'Christianity' of this world. They don't understand the basic relationship between God's calling, the Spirit of God in them, the Spirit of Christ in them and the covenant that is made with baptism. Once you understand that, and the commitment that is given by that, then you will come to a greater understanding of the beginning foundation of the Government of God within the Church.

Now, here's another one of those dividing lines—v 9: "However, you... [that is all *true* Christians—because there are false Christians, there are false brethren, there are false ministers] ...are not in *the* flesh, but in *the* Spirit, **if** *the* Spirit of God is indeed dwelling within you.... [we saw that Jesus said it would be *within* you] ...But if anyone does not have *the* Spirit of Christ, **he does not belong to Him**"—period! Another absolute dividing line. God is the One Who is setting out all the parameters— isn't He? God is the One Who is doing all of this.

This is no work of men. Even though Paul wrote it, these are the inspired words of God that He wanted him to write.

"...does not belong to Him. **But** if Christ *be* within you, the body *is* indeed dead because of sin... [and that is through baptism] ...however, the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness" (vs 9-10). You've been put in right standing with God. You keep His commandments. And all of that is reflected in the word *righteousness*.

Here's a promise as a result of that, v 11: "Now if the Spirit of Him Who raised Jesus from *the* dead... [from the Father] ...is dwelling within you, He Who raised Christ from *the* dead will also quicken your mortal bodies because of His Spirit **that dwells within you**. So then, brethren, we are not debtors to the flesh, to live according to *the* flesh; Because if you are living according to *the* flesh, you shall die; but if by *the* Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body... [the deeds of sin and carnality] ...you shall live. **For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God**..." (vs 11-14).

Here is the relationship that comes through the Covenant—and it is a covenant. And I'm going to explain about covenant today that's very important for us to understand. Here's what happens, v 15: "Now you have not received a spirit of bondage again unto fear..."

I want to stop right here. We're going to emphasize a little something concerning ministerial tactics to keep people in line: **fear and condemnation**. We need to fear and love God! But how many sermons have you heard where it's just nothing but fear, hellfire and brimstone, and obedience to the hierarchy? That spirit of fear is not of God! Can you develop the love of God—which 'casts out all fear'—by preaching fear and intimidation? *It's an impossibility!* It's like saying, 'Here, put out this fire, I've got a gasoline hose here; just turn it on.' Won't work!

"...but you have received *the* Spirit of sonship, whereby we call out, 'Abba, Father'" (v 15). This is the personal relationship with each one of us. God has given every one of His children the authority, the personal authority, to pray directly to the Father. That's what Jesus said, He said: 'Don't pray to Me that I will pray the Father for you. You pray to the Father because the Father Himself loves you.'

Is any minister between God the Father and that person in the sense of ministerial, governmental authority? *No!* In the Church there is proper authority. Obviously, it can't be run in chaos and confusion. But the truth of the matter is you cannot externally, by force or speech or power or

intimidation make anyone do anything they choose not to do. You've heard the old saying concerning Galileo—when he was brought before the pope, he acquiesced to the pope and turned around and walked out and said, 'Nevertheless, it's round!'

Some people think that they can preach righteousness into people by shouting and yelling and screaming at them. It doesn't work that way. They think that they can keep them in the Church—because they need the numbers and the money—by putting fear into them; by commanding them not to talk to other brethren if they belong to another Church. It doesn't work that way.

So, "...we cry 'Abba, Father.' The Spirit itself bears witness conjointly with our own spirit, *testifying* that we are *the* children of God. Now if *we* are children, *we* are also heirs—truly, heirs of God..." (vs 16-17). That's the Father—He's going to grant us the vastness and riches of this universe. But that isn't going to happen because we invent rockets to go out there.

"...and joint heirs with Christ—if indeed we suffer together with Him, so that we may also be glorified together with Him" (v 17).

Now, let's look at a covenant. Baptism is not a required ritual to join an organization. Baptism is a *covenant death*. We'll see what a *covenant death* is in just a bit.

Romans 6:1: "What then shall we say? Shall we continue in sin, so that grace may abound? MAY IT NEVER BE!.... ['me genoito'—which means *absolutely, this should not even come into being.*] ...We who died to sin... [that's part of the baptism—you die to sin, as a way of life] ...how shall we live any longer therein? Or are you ignorant that we, as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus, were baptized into His death? Therefore, we were buried with Him though the baptism into the death..." (vs 1-4).

It is *the* baptism, because it is a single, one time event in your life—*the* baptism into *the* death, which is Christ's death; and you joined that.

"...so that, just as Christ was raised from *the* dead by the glory of the Father, in the same way, we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been conjoined together in the likeness of His death, so also shall we be *in the likeness* of His resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man was co-crucified with *Him* in order that the body of sin might be destroyed... [showing a process of overcoming sin] ...so that we might no longer be enslaved to sin; because the one who has died *to sin* has been justified from sin. Now if we died together with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with

Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from *the* dead, dies no more; death no longer has any dominion over Him" (vs 4-9).

Genesis 15 is the best example of a covenant promise. Here we find the promises of the covenant given by God to Abram before he was renamed Abraham. And there was a special sacrificial ceremony that Abraham prepared for God to do. This becomes important because this is God's absolute covenantal promise to Abraham that he was going to die to fulfill His promise to Abraham. Now, if you don't have the book, *The Christian Passover*, you write for it—because we have three whole chapters dedicated to explaining this in great detail.

Genesis 15:1: "After these things the Word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, 'Fear not, Abram, I *am* your shield and your exceedingly great reward.' And Abram said, 'Lord GOD, what will You give me since I go childless, and the heir of my house *is* this Eliezer of Damascus?' And Abram said, 'Behold, You have given no seed to me; and lo, one born in my house is my heir.' And behold, the Word of the LORD *came* to him saying, 'This man shall not be your heir; but he that shall come forth out of your own loins shall be your heir'" (vs 1-4).

Here He begins to make the promise. Let's understand something: When God says something, *it will happen!* When God promises something, *it is as good as done!* Because God cannot lie, will not lie and will not go back on His covenant with Abraham.

Verse 5: "And He brought him outside and said, 'Look now toward the heavens and number the stars—if you are able to count them.' And He said to him, 'So shall your seed be.'" Isn't that something; that God would take him out and show him all these stars. This had to be at night. You can't see the stars in the daytime; so this had to be at night. He said, 'Look at My creation.' We read in other places that 'He spread out the heavens as a curtain.' And He 'calls all the stars by name' and they're 'numbered.' And He says, "Look at that! I guarantee you, by these stars, that I've created"

"...so shall your seed be. And he believed in the LORD..." (vs 5-6). Know that he couldn't count them! The greater the cameras that we've developed today and send them up in satellites to take pictures of the universe. Remember when the Hubble went up there, they saw things they never saw before. Well, they've got another one that's 50-times more powerful, or a hundred times (I forget the exact amount), greater than the Hubble; and it's going peer deeper into space because there's no end! And God says, based on this, 'I'm going to give you seed. I'm going to give you progeny.' So, we actually have two:

1. Physical seed being Isaac—from Abraham to Isaac—out of whom came Jacob, and then the 12 sons of Jacob and the 12 tribes and so forth.
2. The spiritual seed as the stars of heaven, because Jesus said, ‘Those who enter the Kingdom of God will shine as the sun in their Father’s Kingdom.’

So, we have two promises here: physical seed/spiritual seed. That’s why you need to read *The Christian Passover*.

Verse 6: “And he believed in the LORD...” because he couldn’t count it; and he believed in the Lord because he knew that unless it was a miracle from God, he wasn’t going to have any children through his own wife.

Verse 7: “And He said to him, ‘I *am* the LORD that brought you out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give you this land to inherit it.’ And he said, ‘Lord GOD, by what shall I know that I shall inherit it?’ With the seed comes an inheritance. Did we not read if we’re the children of God we have an inheritance? *Yes!* Same thing!

(go to the next track)

We are going to see the difference between a covenant and a testimony; a testimony or a testament. A will and last testament can be changed at any time before the death of the testator. A covenant, once it is made, and the sacrifices for the covenant have been performed, it cannot be broken. If you break it, you die the same death as the sacrifices that you made, and that ties in with baptism, the death of Christ and the covenant with Abraham.

So, let’s see that here because this becomes important. What is so important with this is that when we get to asking what are the responsibilities of the elders and teachers and ministers and so forth, within the Church, the first fundamental thing they need to understand is that the Church is not the building, it is not a corporation. ***The Church is the constituent people that Christ has called; they belong to Him.*** Therefore, we are all constrained by that, and by the covenant that each one has made with God; that there be the proper kind of government within the Church that is in full accord with God the Father and Jesus Christ:

- to build the Church according Christ’s way
- to up-build the brethren according to Christ’s way

so that they can attain to eternal life.

Now that tells you where we’re going with this. But what we’re covering here in Gen. 15 is very important for us to comprehend, that a covenant—once the sacrifices have been made—is irrevocable

and cannot be changed. Also, a covenant is not in force until the covenant sacrifices have been made. That’s also important to understand concerning baptism.

Genesis 15:8: “And he said, ‘Lord GOD, by what shall I know that I shall inherit it?’ And He said to him, ‘Take Me a heifer of three years old, and a she-goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon’” (vs 8-9). These are all mature animals; it’s important to understand that these are not lambs or kids, showing that the decision to make a covenant must be performed by mature people and mature sacrifices, and that also relates to baptism.

Verse 10: “And he took all these to himself, and divided them in the middle...” [He didn’t slit the throat and lay it on an altar. There’s no altar here. He slit the throat and then “...divided them in the middle...” so he would take an axe and cut them right down the spine all the way through and lay the spine parts opposite of each other. This is a very bloody sacrifice. A messy, messy sacrifice! Perhaps, in type, as close as you can get to a beaten, broken body of crucifixion.

“...and laid each piece opposite the other... [Abraham made a trail or pathway between the three animals] ...but he did not divide the birds” (v 10). He put one bird on one side and one on the other. They lay out there, and this the day portion. Started out with night, now here’s the day. When you read *The Christian Passover* book, you’re going to understand this is really the origin of the Passover, right here—not Exo. 12.

Verse 11: “And when the birds of prey came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away. And it came to pass, as the sun was going down... [it’s getting toward the end of the day portion] ...that a deep sleep fell upon Abram. And, behold, a horror of great darkness fell upon him!” (vs 11-12). This is what you might say: a death experience without dying.

Verse 13: “And He said to Abram, ‘You must surely know that your seed shall be sojourners in a land *that is* not theirs, (and they shall serve them and afflict them) four hundred years. And also I will judge that nation whom they shall serve. And afterward they shall come out with great substance.... [that was fulfilled when the children of Israel came out of Egypt] ...And you shall go to your fathers in peace. You shall be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come here again, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full’” (vs 13-16).

So, this is another promise. He starts out: ‘your seed shall be as the stars of heaven’; you’re

going to receive your own son. Then it says their descendants will inherit the land, and God told Abraham the general timeframe when they would.

Verse 17 becomes the most important part of this ceremony: “And it came to pass—when the sun went down and it was dark—behold, a smoking furnace and a burning lamp passed between those pieces.” He was in this horror of great darkness. It’s the only way that God could show and demonstrate to Abraham that he was taking the *covenant walk*. Now, the *covenant walk*, through those sacrificial parts, is called a *maledictory oath*: *You pledge that if you do not fulfill your promises you will become exactly as those sacrificial animals are—slaughtered! broken open!* So, this gives you every reason to the fulfill the covenant—correct? *Yes!*

Here’s the *smoking furnace and a burning lamp* to show that God passed between those parts. That’s something! I suppose—it doesn’t tell us—after God passed through there, I imagine that when Abraham woke and looked on the ground, that there were only ashes left of those sacrifices.

Verse 18: “In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, ‘I have given this land to your seed, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates’” (v 18)—etc., and then he lists all the Canaanites.

Hebrews 9 is very poorly translated in the *King James*, because they translate ‘diatheke’ from the Greek which should be translated *covenant*, they translate it as *testament*—similar to a last will and testament, and they do violence to the Greek in the translation that they have—and it is not correct. So, here in the new Bible, you have the correct translation; plus there is a summarized explanation of what we covered in Gen. 15 as a footnote to Heb. 9 in *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order*.

Hebrews 9:11: “But Christ Himself has become High Priest of the coming good things, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made by *human* hands (that is, not of this *present physical* creation)... [He gives us entrance into the Holy of Holies in heaven above, through prayer] ...Not by *the* blood of goats and calves, but by the means of His own blood...” (vs 11-12).

When God walked through those maledictory sacrificial animals in Gen. 15, He was pledging His own future death, to fulfill His promise to Abraham. That’s what He’s talking about here when we come to understand it properly.

“...Not by *the* blood of goats and calves, but by the means of His own blood, He entered once for all into the holiest, having *by* Himself secured everlasting redemption *for us*. For if the blood of goats and bulls, and *the* ashes of a heifer sprinkled

on those who are defiled, sanctifies to the purifying of the flesh... [he’s talking about the temple ritual in this case] ...to a far greater degree, the blood of Christ, Who through *the* eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, shall purify your conscience from dead works to serve *the* living God” (vs 12-14). And this is an operation of God’s Spirit, hence an operation of the Government of God in your life.

Verse 15: “And for this reason He is *the* Mediator of *the* New Covenant... [not testament] ...in order that through *His* death, *which* took place for the release of the transgressions *that were committed* under the first covenant, those who have been called might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.” So, the death of Jesus Christ fulfilled several things:

1. It fulfilled the commitment that He would die, that He gave to Abraham back in Gen. 15.
2. It took care of all of these sins that were under the first covenant and the physical temple where they had the sacrifices; and they were only purified in the flesh to temple.

All those people having since died except the few that were still living at the particular time that Hebrews was written—and up to that time. All those sins were set aside.

3. It also secured that those who have been called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance, which begins with *the receiving of the Holy Spirit of God*.

Verse 16: “Now, where *there is* a covenant, ***it is obligatory to bring forth a symbolic sacrifice to represent the death of the one who personally ratifies the covenant.***” That’s what Jesus did as Lord God of the Old Testament when He walked between the parts of those animals; ***it represented His death!*** Did He literally, actually die? *Yes!* Was He raised from the dead because He kept His promise and kept His word? *Yes!* So, if you enter into a covenant with someone, you have to have some token of sacrifice to verify that you intend to, and you will perform, unto death, to fulfill that covenant.

To give you another example of a blood covenant: You’ve probably seen in movies that when Indians and white men made a covenant they cut their hands and put their hands together and let the blood mingle. That was suppose to do the same thing as a covenant. Once that is done, the covenant has been established and it cannot be broken. If it is broken, you suffer the death equivalent to the sacrifice that you gave. We’ll tie this together with

baptism in just a minute.

Here's the reason: "...who personally ratifies *the* covenant..." (v 16) This is why it's different than a will and testament. Because once you write a will, if the person that you're giving the things to really doesn't do good, you say, 'Okay, I'm going to change my will.' But once there's a covenant made, *you can't change the covenant*. You must offer the sacrifice first. You must show the pledge of your commitment to the covenant to carry out your part.

Verse 17: "Because a covenant *is* ratified **only over the dead sacrificial animals** [Gen. 15], since there is no way that it is legally in force until the living ratifier *has symbolically represented his death*."

How does that apply to baptism? We've already read the Scriptures, so we'll put it together here. Go back to Rom 6, and review. This is why water baptism must be by full immersion. It is a symbolic death and burial. Sprinkling won't do it. You go completely under the water; and if you were held there you would die. This is your symbolic representation of your death in the New Covenant, through Christ! Christ died/you die! Now you understand what we're talking about in:

Romans 6:4: "Therefore, we were buried with Him though **the** baptism into **the** death..."—because *the* baptism is your covenant pledge of death into also His death. So, the two covenant pledges of death are joined. The actual death of Christ and the symbolic death of the one who is baptized.

Verse 5: "For if we have been conjoined together in the likeness of His death..." Then it talks about the likeness of the resurrection. But you aren't going to get there unless you're joined in His death. That's why those who repent must accept the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of their sins. They must accept it in a covenant pledge with God; **and that covenant pledge is unto death!** Symbolized by full immersion in the water.

Verse 6: "Knowing this, that our old man was co-crucified with *Him*..." You're telling God that 'I want to be like You. And as You were crucified, so will I bear my cross and crucify the sins within—through the process of overcoming through Your Holy Spirit.'

Verse 8: "Now if we died together with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with *Him*..." So, we have *the promise of eternal life*. That's what we are looking to.

Now then, the Government of God within the Church begins right there! All the rest is *calling* to see whether there will be repentance; whether you will follow the lead of the Father, Who draws, to

bring you to Christ. When you come to Christ you have to repent and be baptized. That baptism is entering into a irrevocable covenant. Once you are baptized, if you go against that, you are telling God, 'I will die the death and I turn my back on You.' That doesn't mean that we don't have sin to overcome, because we do! This is why it's very important that you get the two sermons out of the series in Hebrews: *What is the Unpardonable Sin*.

You may think, 'Oh, I've been baptized and I sinned; have I committed the unpardonable sin?' *No, you haven't!* The truth is, you're just starting to recognize sin within. It's when you're carnal and had no thought of it, you didn't care about it—even though the consequences may not have been good. Or you tried to ignore it and make it go away as if it didn't exist.

Now, God is cleansing with His Spirit within. Cleansing within! This is the work of God. The only reason for the Church is so that all of those who have made covenant with Christ in this manner, can come together:

- to love God
- to worship Him, to serve God
- to keep His commandments
- to be taught of Him

so that everyone is going to grow in grace and knowledge.

This is how the Church is to function. It is not to function because someone says 'I have authority, I knew this man, I was next in line to the pope, or I am important?' All of those things. Those are putting men between you and God—whether you accept it and you put it there, or they impose it upon you and you agree with it. We are to have a relationship with God.

Let's see how that is going to be. In the next sermon we will talk about: What is the function of the ministry within the Church and the Government of God? What authority do they carry? And this becomes really a tremendous thing to understand.

John 15:1 "I am the true vine... [which tells you there are *false* vines] ...and My Father is the husbandman"—or vinedresser. Now, to be a vintner and a vinedresser is quite a thing. Harry Curly gave me some very interesting things on what a vinedresser does—takes care of grapes. It's not a farmer. Some translations have it: 'My Father is the farmer.' *Husbandman* is better because that reflects that God is a father and a parent. That also goes against the corporate authority of churches today; because God is not a CEO—Chief Executive Officer—of a corporation. What does a husbandman do? *He loves and cares for the grapes and the vines!*

Jesus is the true vine. Here's what the Father does; the Father is exercising His authority within the life of every Christian:

Verse 2: "He takes away every branch in Me *that* does not bear fruit... [we've got to bear fruit, grow in grace and knowledge, overcome; etc.] ...but He cleanses each one that bears fruit, in order that it may bear more fruit." In this case the vine is the trunk of the grapevine, as it were. Jesus is the trunk.

We've done this at home. We have some grapes that we just let grow and cover the arbor. And we never get any real fruit on it because it just grows and all the energy is just dissipated into little, teeny-weeny green grapes; and maybe they may ripen a little bit. In order to produce fruit, God created grapevines in such a way you have to take care of them; you have to nurture them; you have to water them. The vines that drape down, you've got to pick up and tie up. The ones that need to be pruned so the grapes that are there will produce better grapes, better wine, etc. And another thing that is true with grapes is that the older that the trunk is, the thicker it is. And the thicker it is, the better the wine. The best!

Just as the sacrifices back there in Gen. 15 were of mature animals—showing we have to make a mature decision, so likewise with grapes on the vine. When you first start it and put it in the ground, it doesn't do anything for several years. But you still have to take care of it until it gets a big enough trunk to be able to start bringing up the nutrition out of the ground to make good grapes. Likewise, in our lives we're to be rooted and grounded in Christ; rooted and grounded in the Word; and the longer we are then the more we can drink in of the Word of God through the Spirit of God so we can produce the fruits and produce the good grapes. The older we get, we produce more grapes and more fruit until we reach the point that the trunk of the grapevine must be replaced. Then the fruit starts deteriorating off; and you could say 'old age.'

- the Father is the Husbandman
- Christ is the Vine
- we are the branches
- Christ is the Head of the Church
 - ✓ the Father is working in each one of us.
 - ✓ He called us.
 - ✓ He brought us to Christ.
 - ✓ Christ then in turn reinforced that and finished bringing us to the Father
 - ✓ we have the Holy Spirit
 - ✓ we are part of the Body of Christ and the Father is the Husbandman or Vinedresser

What does this tell us? ***The real authority in everyone's life is the personal relationship that you have with God the Father and Jesus Christ!*** It does not reside within the ministry to make that happen. That's what God Himself does.

Just like Christ said that there was a vineyard that He leased out to laborers, the ministry then are those who labor in the harvest in the crop of God. We are to make sure that whatever we do is in total accordance with the one who owns the property and the crop and the fruit to produce the most that we can for God—*it's His crop!*

Now, let's see how this works. Because we're carnal and human and we need forgiveness and cleansing, Let's understand, all of these verses were given on the night of His last Passover, after He said, 'Take eat, this is My body, which is broken for you. And drink this cup, which is the wine, symbolizing My blood of the New Covenant.' So, all of these are New Covenant teachings with our relationship with God. Just like we are co-joined to Christ in His death, and raised out of the watery grave of baptism, likewise, another parable here tells us we are part of the vine of God the Father and Christ.

Verse 4: "Dwell in Me, and I in you.... [there's the personal relationship] ...As a branch cannot bear fruit of itself, but only if it remains in the vine, neither *can* you *bear fruit* unless you are dwelling in Me." The only way you dwell in Christ is to do everything the way God the Father wants you to do it—through Christ.

John 12:37 becomes important to see how Jesus did it: "Although He had done so many miracles in their presence, they did not believe in Him... [These were the religious leaders of His time—the *corporate* religious leaders of their time.] ...So that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled who said, 'Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of *the* Lord been revealed?' For this *very* reason they could not believe because again Isaiah said, 'He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts so that they would not see with *their* eyes and understand with *their* hearts, and be converted, and I would heal them'" (vs 37-40). We won't get into all the description of that. But just to show you one thing, to summarize it: ***It had better be God's way!***

Verse 41: "Isaiah said these things when he saw His glory and spoke concerning Him. But even so, many among the rulers believed in Him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *Him*, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue... [hierarchical authority] ...For they loved the glory of men more than the glory of God. Then Jesus called out and said, 'The one who believes in Me does not

believe in Me, but in Him Who sent Me. And the one who sees Me sees Him Who sent Me. I have come *as* a light into the world so that everyone who believes in Me may not remain in darkness. But if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world.... [judgment also comes] ...The one who rejects Me and does not receive My words has one who judges him; the word which I have spoken, that shall judge him in the last day” (vs 41-48).

Many Protestant ministers better stand up and take notice of that, because too many of them say you don’t need to keep this, you don’t need to keep that, you don’t need to keep the other thing, etc., etc.

Verse 49: “For I have not spoken from Myself; but the Father, Who sent Me, gave Me commandment Himself, what I should say and what I should speak.” This fits right in with John 15 and what we are talking about. If you’re going to remain in Christ and He’s going to dwell in you—and you dwell in Him—it’s only going to be on the basis of what the Father has commanded, and only on the basis of the words of Christ, and what Christ inspired the apostles to say and preach and write.]

Verse 50: “And I know that His commandment is eternal life. Therefore, whatever I speak, I speak exactly as the Father has told Me.” The only way we’re going to dwell in Christ is on His terms—no other way!

John 15:4: “Dwell in Me, and I in you.... [that’s part of the covenant: *Christ in you, the hope of glory*] ...As a branch cannot bear fruit of itself, but only if it remains in the vine, neither *can* you bear fruit unless you are dwelling in Me. I am the vine, and you are the branches. The one who is dwelling in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; because apart from Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not dwell in Me, he is cast out as a branch, and is dried up; and men gather them and cast *them* into a fire, and they are burned” (vs 4-6). Symbolic of the Lake of Fire.

Verse 7: “If you dwell in Me, and My words dwell in you...” What is the other part of the covenant we find in Heb. 10:16: He’s going write His laws and commandments in our hearts and inscribe them in our minds? *Yes!* The living words of God *dwelling in you*. With God’s Spirit this is how God *leads* you with His Spirit.

So, the inner talking within your mind is your understanding of the Word of God. When you have to do something you’re going to make sure you do it God’s way. And then it becomes a part of you. And that comes down to: they are to up-build the

Church. They are *stewards!* A steward only bears the authority that he is given. That’s important to grasp.

Verse 7: “If you dwell in Me, and My words dwell in you, you shall ask whatever you desire, and it shall come to pass for you.” That doesn’t mean instantly. Sometimes things come to pass much later. Same way with Abraham. How long did it take for Isaac to be born after he was promised? *Fifteen years!* What is the eventual end of it going to be? *Thousands of years later—at the resurrection!* But you stop and think: If you really pray to God in faith—for *His will*—and you are persistent in it, you will find that every prayer will eventually be answered; if you are ‘dwelling in Him and His words are dwelling in you.’

Verse 8: “In this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; so shall you be My disciples.... [here is the Covenant, and this is what has to be taught and promoted in the Churches of God] ...**As the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you; live in My love**” (vs 8-9). We learn the love of God! Not only to love God, but to receive His love, to express that love. And sometimes that love has to be kind of tough if you’re dealing with a difficult problem. But nevertheless, it’s still the love of God. And in the end-run, when you come down through time, you will see it fulfilled and answered.

Verse 10: “If you keep My commandments, you shall live in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and live in His love”

This is something you grow into. It doesn’t happen overnight. It doesn’t happen just because the words are here. The way you learn love is through the difficulties and problems and stresses of life, because there are going to be those. You learn to love God by keeping His commandments and trusting in Him and having faith and all of these things combined together with the covenant that you have entered into with God.

Verse 11: “These things I have spoken to you, in order that My joy may dwell in you, and *that* your joy may be full. This is My commandment: that you love one another, as I have loved you” (vs 11-12).

This is what is to be promoted within the Churches of God: **loving the brethren, loving each other!** When you have a carnal-minded hierarchical church you find exactly the opposite. Tension, hatred, suspicion, spies—all of that in the Church of God! We have experienced that—haven’t we? *Yes!* Where they’re supposed to be teaching the love of God? Where they’re supposed to be teaching the brethren to develop and have the mind of God? To give them the tools to make their own spiritual, adult decisions concerning their own lives.

Now, we'll talk about 'corporate hirelings' and how they handle the brethren and what they do; and you will see, based upon what is the foundation of the Church, that it's *the brethren with the Spirit of God who are in covenant with God* who are put into the care of the elders to teach, to love, to help and all of this sort of thing.

Verse 13: "No one has greater love than this: that one lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends, if you do whatever I command you. No longer do I call you servants, because the servant does not know what his master is doing. But I have called you friends..." (vs 13-15).

Everyone that God has called is the ***friend of God and Christ!*** all the enemies better beware, because if you against the friends of Christ you're going to find yourself coming up against the wrong person.

"...But I have called you friends because I have made known to you all *the* things that I have heard from My Father" (v 15). How much more so in the end-time when we understand even the prophecies that the apostles, even in greater detail than they ever conceived of. How much more does that lay a responsibility upon us?

Verse 16: "You yourselves... [your own initiative] ...did not choose Me, but I have personally chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go *forth* and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain; so that whatever you shall ask the Father in My name, He may give you. These things I command you, that you love one another" (vs 16-17).

That's the foundation of the Church through Christ, concerning all the brethren, all the ministers; they all have to come this way.

Scriptural References:

- 1) John 6:44-45, 65, 63
- 2) John 14:6, 15
- 3) John 1:1
- 4) John 14:16-17, 21-24
- 5) Romans 8:7-16
- 6) Romans 6:1-9
- 7) Genesis 15:1-18
- 8) Hebrews 9:11-17
- 9) Romans 6:4-6, 8
- 10) John 15:1-2, 4
- 11) John 12:37-50
- 12) John 15:4-17

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- John 14-16

- Exodus 12
- Hebrews 10:16

Also referenced:

From the Holy Bible in Its Original Order:

- Appendix H *How Did Jesus Fulfill the Law and the Prophets*
- Appendix H: *Exegesis for the Translation of the Phrase "Holy Spirit"*

Book: *The Christian Passover* by Fred R. Coulter

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