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Eternal Purpose Transcriptions
Class 7—130929

Christ the Relationship

We spent a couple of weeks talking about how God created the church and what the church is. We saw that the church was the resurrected body of Jesus Christ. He is the Life of it, but we are the body of that life. He is the source and the substance of it. We never become that source, but we become the living body for His increase, His manifestation, and His glory.

We looked at the picture of the seed going into the ground and coming out as a tree. Before going into the ground, the seed (the life) had one form. After coming out of the ground, the life had another form. That form before it went into the ground was just one man, Jesus the Nazarene. Afterward, Jesus had a greater body. He came out of the grave as just the head, he came out of the grave as Jesus Christ, but in a form that couldn't be recognized without spiritual eyes being opened. The purpose of His coming out of the ground (as it is with everything that is planted into the earth and dies) is to have a greater increase, to have a body of glory, as it is called in Scripture.

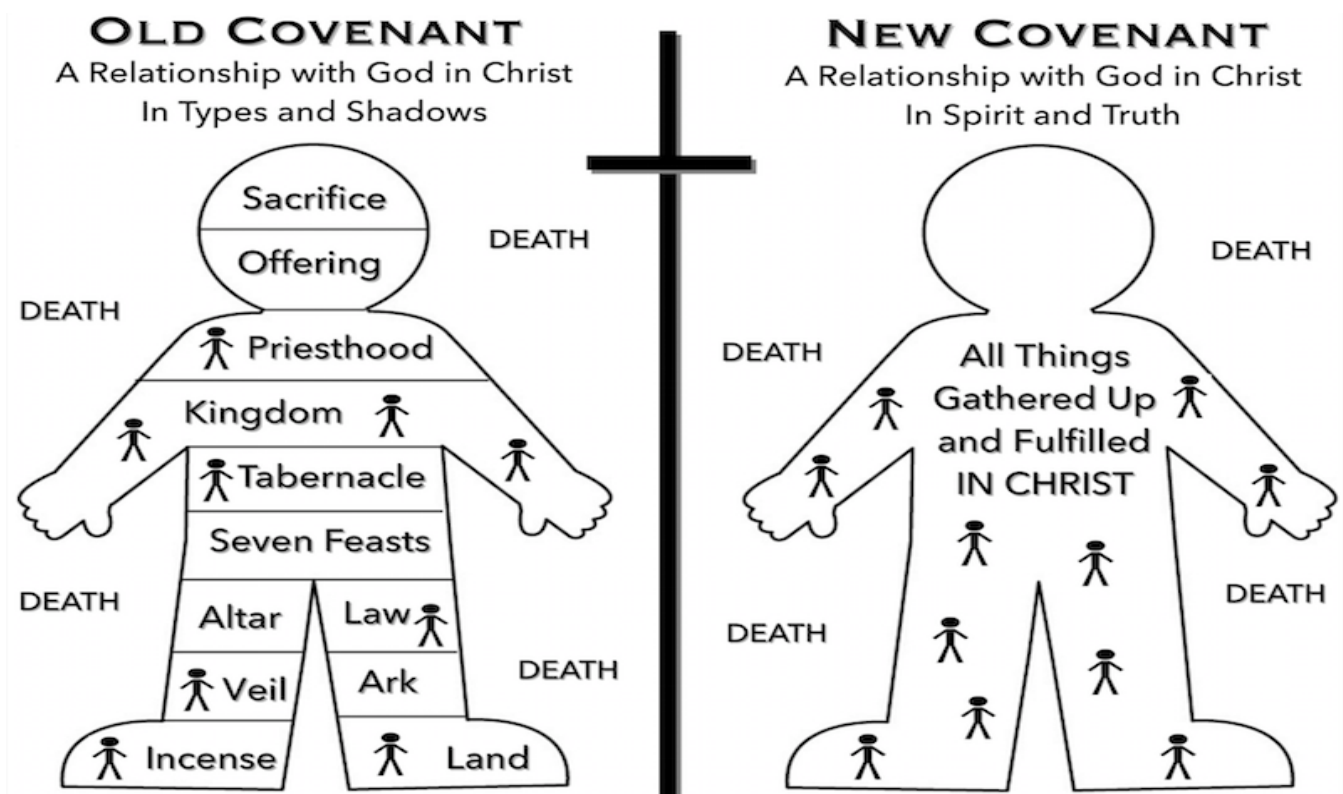
This class is about the eternal purpose of God. We've given general statements of that purpose. We've called it a "corporate thing." Call it a body, a temple, a harvest, a kingdom, a life that receives life from God, receives the love of God (which is the giving of his life) and then becomes in itself the body for the increase of what it receives. We talked about that and the fact the Israel is the way that God demonstrated that body in types and shadows. We looked at a handful of pictures of the birth of the church. The way that **God brought many into the death of one and then brought the One out of death as the life of many.**

So now, at this stage of the game, we're looking at Israel again as a picture of this corporate people, which we call the church, the kingdom, the bride or any of these things. In Jeremiah 2:3 God is speaking and he says, "Israel was holiness to the Lord, the first fruits of His increase." NKJV That is how God saw Israel coming out of Egypt. What was in God's mind? What was His perspective of this corporate thing that came out of Egypt? Here are the first fruits of my increase. Many people in the church think that the purpose of God was just to get them out. That is such a man-centered, earth-bound view. If you start to see, just a little bit of light

working in your heart, it should be enough to kill the idea that God's purpose was to get them out of Egypt. God got them out of Egypt FOR a purpose. He took them out of Egypt to bring them into a purpose, to fill them with purpose, but getting them out was not the purpose. Getting them out was a precursor necessary to moving on to purpose.

Both Israel in that day and in our day (meaning that corporate spiritual body of Christ, not a national natural thing) still think that God's purpose is centered in us, in getting us out of a bad situation, sin, hell or however we define our version of Egypt. That just is not true. That is how Adam sees. It isn't a crime to *start* thinking that way. You can't not start thinking that way. That is how Adam thinks. With a little more light there is a great view that unfolds in your heart and you see it is about His purpose about, where He is bringing this thing. We are getting there.

Now that we have this corporate body out of Egypt in the wilderness, there are two basic questions we need to ask. One is **how does God see and relate to this corporate body?** If you don't understand that, then you really don't understand anything. It is like a baby that has been born and has no idea of what life is, what its purpose is, what its body can do, what its hands are for. It is a miracle that it has been born. It is great that Israel has come out of Egypt, but then what does it exist for? What is the nature of the relationship God has with this people?



The second question is why. Where is it all going? Why is He relating to this people? We could get into a lot more depth, but I don't want it to be a class that goes on for six years. I want to keep it as a short overview. What is the nature of the relationship God has with this corporate people? **In a word, Christ. Christ is the nature of this relationship.** I know that sounds like a Sunday school answer for kids. It doesn't make a lot of sense when you first hear it, but it is still the right answer.

What do I mean when I say Christ is the nature of the relationship God has with this corporate people? When I say that Christ is the nature of God's relationship to Israel, I mean every single aspect of what God requires of them in this relationship is a picture of Christ. Every single aspect of what God is requiring of them, whether it is moral aspects of the law, sacrificial, ceremonial, or the ways they relate to each other, or to Him, or the things they do, the things God commands them to do, ALL of those things are pictures of Christ in one way or the other. That is what the whole thing is in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. That is what it is all about.

Every single aspect of what God forbids Israel to do is forbidden because it is something outside of Christ. It is something contrary to Christ. If we can see this, then the whole Old Testament and the whole old covenant begins to open up to our heart. Consider the books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. Many don't read these books because they are generally considered to be boring. They are boring if you don't see what they are pointing to. They are boring like looking at a stranger's photo album. Imagine picking up some random person's photo album. "Oh they are having a party." It doesn't mean anything to you because you don't know the people you are looking at. If it is your best friend or your relative's photo album, and there they are with their newborn baby, it is exciting because you know them. But if you don't know the life of the person, the reality, the relationship, that all of these pictures are pointing to, then it is worse than flipping through stranger's photos because you don't have a clue what it is about. What is a meal offering about? Why in the world is it talking so much about lepers' sores and white hairs that grow out of scabs? You are reading through these things and you don't know what it is a picture of. People usually just skip over it, or think "I'm so glad I'm not living in that covenant." Then, they move on.

I'm not going to attempt to try to go through all the details of Exodus, Leviticus, or Numbers. Take a deep sigh of relief. I do want us to understand that these things (referring to drawing), these different divisions of what you see in this one corporate man...these are the aspects, or the ways that the relationship works. Put it this way, there are a lot of things happening within the boundaries of this covenant. Those things are the way that God sees Christ as His relationship with you. Those things are the things being described in all the aspects of the law in

the Old Testament. God's dealings with Israel were basically the filling up of this man with the testimony of the coming man, Christ,--the fulfillment of every picture, shadow, promise, and prophecy.

What is God doing Leviticus? He is filling up this corporate body of Israel with a description, a testimony, a foreshadowing of coming attractions. He is filling it up with this gigantic testimony of all things that are going to be spiritually real in Christ for an eternal people, a people that are joined to the Spirit and truth of the matter, a people that come within the spiritual boundaries of Christ, and not the natural boundaries of the old covenant.

The whole description of the relationship if you were to put into one word, I think that word would be *priesthood*. Sometimes we aren't even familiar enough with those books of the Bible to see what holds them all together, to see what the common theme is. **The common theme is how a people are relating to God through the priesthood.** The priest is doing everything. The priest even examines those scabs. The priest is receiving from the people the offerings and sacrifices. The priest is bringing the people to God, and God to the people in every conceivable way. The priest is the one that does all these activities involved with the ceremonies, the feasts, and offerings. The priest examines everything that is impure, and deals with it according to the law. The priest is involved in everything.

This is important for us to understand. The first thing, God begins to do with Israel after bringing them out of Egypt, is to talk to them about the priesthood. What that means is the very first thing God does with you is, to the measure that you allow Him, he begins to teach you the relationship that He has with you. He has a very specific kind of relationship with you, the moment He brings you out of Adam and into Christ. That is what the priesthood represents. It represents the relationship, it shows you the nature of the relationship. All that is written about the priesthood, the actions and offices and functions of the priests, is written to describe the relationship that God establishes with a people in His Son.

Now, with Israel, God doesn't immediately start to deal with them about their increase. No, because that would have been an increase of ignorance, an increase of their imaginations and their ideas. **Before he even talks to them about any increase at all, He wants to show them what needs to increase, to teach them the relationship, and to show them in every conceivable way what and who they are.** He doesn't start talking right away about the kingdom. The kingdom comes later. Not because they are two separate things in God's mind, or two separate relationships. They aren't really, but because if God would have let them all out of Egypt and said "Just go out there and be the kingdom of God"....it would have been a big

kingdom of flesh; a kingdom of imaginations, of darkness, of man's ideas. You see many of man's ideas right away in the book of Exodus after they come out. God is dealing with one after another after another, trying to cut off man's ideas and reveal Christ.

Somebody says, "What do you mean He was trying to reveal Christ? Christ didn't come for another 2000 years." No. Christ is everything. Christ is the manna that fell from the heavens. Jesus says this Himself in John chapter 6. He is the water that comes out of the rock. Paul said that in I Corinthians 10. The water that they drank was speaking of Christ. I will just read that to you.

***I Corinthians 10:1-4** I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ."*

Just in case you missed the fact that all of that was talking about Christ, Paul is helping us out. What was the mountain? What was the covenant they entered into on the mountain? What was the blood they sprinkled on the altar at the base of the mountain? What was the staff that had a serpent on it? Jesus himself says that was Him in John 3:14. "And as Moses lifted up the serpent on the staff and all that looked to him lived." So, everything He was doing with Israel was Christ! He was revealing Christ in all of these types and shadows.

The tabernacle is just one big multi-faceted picture of Christ with the high priest the breast plate, the ark of the covenant and the veil and all these things that Christ gathers up into Himself. What God began to do with Israel is try to reveal Christ right away. I say "try" because the Lord reveals Christ to the measure that we give Him room to reveal Christ. You could say it like this, He shows you his Son to the degree that you're willing to part with another man. To the degree that you are willing to lose one life, you are able to see the life he is trying to show you. He is revealing Christ and the people are holding on to their ideas and imaginations. This is what we still see today. People are holding on to their imaginations, their ideas, in the church in a million places and a million ways. God is trying to show one Son from a multitude of different angles. A son that filled up all these pages of a testimony. A son that fills up eternity in the revealing of Him in spirit and truth.

There are these phrases that keep appearing in these story. I will be your guide. You will be my people. He says that a lot. He says I will be your God. You will be my people. For I am your God,

and you're my people. What is that except the fact of a relationship? He is trying to show them what it means for Him to be their God and them to be his people. They have no idea.

We are just like them without any idea of what it means to be in Christ. **We get saved, and then we run out and try to expand the Kingdom of God! But we have no idea what the relationship is.** We start sending out missionaries as fast as we can. Get out there and tell you're neighbor! Tell them what? Tell them you got saved. Ok, but.... what really is getting saved? What is salvation? What is the nature and purpose of it? We don't ask those questions. We don't even know they are questions. We just start trying to make an increase in the earth of our own ideas.

Everyone has a different idea of what God is like and how to relate to God. It depends what church you go to, what culture you live in, what your parents or pastor say, or what book you happen to be reading. Everyone has a different idea. Look at the kingdom of God in the earth. Someone a little more wise says, "Which part of it? It is all totally different. It contradicts itself." "Well, it is Christianity" "Which part of it? This part says this isn't Christian. That part says this part is heresy. They are all fighting." It is a big ugly mess.

The reason it is a big ugly mess is because we ran out ahead of the Lord and showed everyone our flesh. We ran out ahead of the light. We ran out and tried to make an increase of something we didn't even know. We still don't know. You can do that for 50 years and die and still not know the thing you're supposed to be bearing the image of.

It is essential to understanding the relationship. Every believer of any kind says they have a relationship with God. Believers in other religions say they have a relationship with God, but let's just stick with Christians for now. All Christians say that they have a relationship with God. But when you ask them to define that relationship....that question doesn't even usually make sense. If they do try to answer it, what they give you is a bunch of personal ideas or experiences or actions.

Can you define your relationship with God? Christians will say things that have nothing to do with these 1000 of pages of testimony (the Bible.) They will say, "I talk to Him every morning on my drive to work." That is nice, but what is the nature of the relationship? "Well, He understands my problems and forgives my sins." Yes, but what is the nature of the relationship?

In the natural realm, we have relationships and we intuitively understand that they have a particular nature to them. I don't ask Milo if I can braid his hair and tickle him. That would be completely inappropriate and absurd. But I would do that with my daughters. Or take my

relationship with my wife, it is a very specific kind of relationship. There are certain boundaries, things that are not acceptable, or appropriate in it. We understand that. We don't have to write all those rules down. We assumed with certain things, definitions, and parameters. There is an agreed understanding about how that relationship works. There are other things that would be contrary to that relationship. And some of them...If I tried to bring them into our relationship, I'd be in trouble.

That is a very small and poor illustration of the way God has established a relationship with us that is Christ. My point is that there is a VERY specific relationship that God has made with you, and that relationship is a Person. Christ is the relationship. Christ is the *way* that God sees you. The way He relates to you, and what He wants from you. Knowing Christ is knowing the specific relationship. We are going to see more about that I hope in the next couple of weeks.

I remember when I realized I had a relationship with God, but I didn't understand the relationship. I was already a pastor, and I remember the exact day. It hit me so hard, realizing I had a relationship with God, and lots of years and experiences being a Christian, but I had no idea what the relationship was. I realized I had invented my own version of it, like everyone else does. I remember that just hitting me. I was supposed to be leading people in Christianity in whatever way a pastor does, and yet, I was almost or maybe entirely ignorant to the relationship I had with God through Christ. I had enough light to realize I was ignorant, but I didn't have enough light to help my ignorance. I didn't have enough light to bring me out of ignorance.

I remember sitting there with fear and excitement about that. I was scared because I was letting go of everything, and had nothing to hold on to. I was excited in a sense because it had to be more real than the nonsense I had been doing for so long. I remember thinking at the time that this is not going to go down well with the church when I start speaking as acting as if I never knew what I meant to know Christ. And indeed, it didn't go down well with the church.

Here is a question. Where do you go to find a written description given by God of the relationship that we have with Him in His Son? The church at large would probably say the gospels. But no, not really. That isn't where you go. The Epistles? Yes, there is some truth to that. The Epistles though, more than anything else, are gathering up the pictures that God gave us and declaring them to be real in Christ. They aren't painting the pictures, they are just grabbing the pictures and saying, "This is now true in Christ in a spiritual way." Where do you actually get the pictures, and the descriptions? Where are the real nuts and bolts of how God sees the relationship? Where do you go? You go to the priesthood! I know, that sounds really

strange to a lot of believers. You go to Leviticus, Exodus, and Numbers, of all places, to understand how God relates to you in His Son.

I wrote down just a few general examples here. Next week I want to get into and summarize the relationship we see in the priesthood in three general categories. The categories being: 1) What is God looking for from us? 2) What are we receiving from God, and 3) What is God doing in us to transform us into the image He sees.

Those three categories are the main things that stand out to me right now about what the priesthood is all about. It is 1. God giving Himself to a people, 2. God receiving from the people something that is pleasing to Him, and 3. God working in the people to purify them of all that is not Him. We'll get in to that, but I just made the statement I think the priesthood is where you go to see how God see you in Christ. I just want to end up today by giving a few examples.

For instance: What do we find in the priesthood? We find that Christ lives in you. I know Paul states that a million times, but if you want to really see what that looks like, you have to turn to the pictures of God dwelling in the midst of His people. When God is about to build the tabernacle he describes it in Exodus 25:8-9, "Let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. According to all that I show you, that is, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make it."

Before they even build the tabernacle, God tells them what it is for. 'I am giving you this pattern of something you are going to build that demonstrates my dwelling place in you.' As you read through this verse, a big light should go off, "DING, DING. This is important." He is describing something. He is giving a pattern of a spiritual relationship of God dwelling in the midst of His people. That is there. All of the multitude of things that are involved in that tabernacle. God dwelling in the midst of the people. All those things are so important. They are a picture of how God is dwelling in you. How he is living in you. That is there.

A picture I love to talk about it what it means to be hidden in Christ. Paul says we have died, and our life is now hidden in Christ, or baptized in Christ, or clothed in Christ, covered in Christ. God sees Christ as the nature and perfection of the relationship, and not the flesh that we manifest in Christ. Now, this doesn't mean that sin is ok. Paul says in Romans 6 "Should we continue in sin so grace may abound? By no means." But there are awesome pictures of this reality in the priesthood.

We can see a picture of how God relates to us in our sins. The fact that forgiveness of sin is in Christ. Most people talk about forgiveness of sin as *a way to get into Christ*, but really, the way in to Christ is baptism into death. Death is how we get into Christ. Once you're in Christ, there is forgiveness of sin. Forgiveness of sin is shown to us in the priesthood. Everything contrary to this description that happens in Israel is brought to an altar. Hands are laid upon it. The thing is killed and dragged outside of the boundaries of Israel and burned there. God is constantly removing flesh from his sight. The forgiveness of sins in Christ. You can see lots of pictures of this. There is no place for flesh in this relationship. Flesh couldn't enter the tabernacle. And anything that flowed out of flesh, even if it is considered natural by the human mind, if it came out of flesh, you were unclean, and had to go through purification rights (also pictures of Christ) to cleanse you from anything that had flesh as its origin. This also includes things that grew on flesh. If it grew and spread from flesh to flesh, it was unclean. These pictures are in Leviticus, and even though, naturally speaking, they are kind of gross... spiritual speaking, they are very important. Flesh spreads. It is contagious in the corporate body of Israel. If you don't think that is important, look around the church today. Flesh is contagious in the body of Christ.

You can see the reality of our participation in the death of Christ. You can see it in the Passover, the transformation of the body of Christ, and in the feast of unleavened bread. Immediately there is a new loaf without any leaven. A new people without any leaven. You can see the fragrance of Christ. It is always what God accepted from the people and nothing else. It is what God always accepted from the people. Everything else was rejected. If you messed up the offering, there was often death involved. God is serious about what he accepts and what he offers. He offers Christ. He receives Christ.

You can see pictures of the division between flesh and spirit in Adam and Christ. The oil is specific anointing oil. You couldn't even put it on flesh. Only the priest could make it. No one could make it or touched flesh with it if it wasn't Aaron, or those that represented Christ. To do so was to be cut off from Israel.

To conclude, let me ask a question: What happens if we don't understand if the relationship? What happens if we don't let the Lord deal with our hearts according to His view of the relationship? Well the answer is right there for us too in Exodus. We immediately, naturally, create golden calves that, to some degree, allow us to maintain a god, but to control and define the relationship according to our own ideas. That is what we do.

We have millions of versions of Christ and Christianity in the church. We call them Christ. We call them Christianity. But God doesn't have a million views of His own son or of the

relationship we have with Him in the Son. Those ideas, contradictions, denominations, divisions, exist in us because we simply do not know what it means to be in Him. We don't understand the nature of the relationship. Israel made a golden calf and said, "This is the god that brought us out of Egypt. This is the god of Moses." It wasn't it, but it was as far as they understood or wanted it to be. It was a representation of their imaginations and desires and they called it by the same name. They gave it the name Yahweh. The relationship must be defined in our hearts in His light. Unless His understanding progressively becomes our understanding, then we set up some kind of a golden calf and we worship it. We call it Christ. We call it Christianity, and it is nothing but our own imaginations and our own desires.