

WHICH LAWS SHOULD CHRISTIANS OBSERVE TODAY?

The Modern Covenant - What Is It?

Discussing the covenant of God for modern mankind seems to be such a worn-out and confusing issue. Many papers written by theologians, trained or untrained in religious institutions, have been published in recent years, offering a dizzying array of ideas and viewpoints on this most critical issue of “covenants” ... in particular, what is the true character of the covenant that Almighty Elohim has designed for modern man. Does the covenant Yahweh gave to Israel at Mt. Sinai constitute the fullness of the requirements for people to guide their lives in this age? Are the animal sacrifices still in force? If not, why not? Where does one draw the line between what is proper conduct in God’s eyes and what is not?

What is a Covenant?

After all, a covenant is an agreement or a set of rules [laws] that guide one’s thoughts, words, and deeds ... by which a person amplifies his conduct. The Hebrew word for *covenant* is *berit*, meaning “covenant, league, or confederacy.”¹ I will oftentimes use the words *Elohim* and *Yahweh* throughout this paper rather than *God*, primarily because these words are more descriptive of the true nature of the spiritual deities referred to in Scripture. In the King James Version of the Bible, “God” normally refers to “Elohim”, or the “plurality of Gods” in the heavenly realm, whereas “Lord” refers to “Yahweh” [YHWH], the specific God Being within the family of God [Elohim]. Thus, the Lord God means that spiritual Son of the God family that was [is] the specific Elohim of Israel. Note Deuteronomy 6:4-5: “Hear, O Israel: YHWH is our Elohim, YHWH alone; and you shall love YHWH your Elohim with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.” For a thorough discussion on the topic of the meanings of God’s names, see “God, Gods, and the Sons of God” by David Sielaff, *Truth Seeker, The Journal of Independent Thought*, San Diego, California: telephone, (619) 676-0430; FAX, (619) 676-0433.

The word *covenant* is used over 280 times in all parts of the Old Testament, and is translated as “league” fifteen times in the King James Version (as in Joshua 9:6; II Samuel 3:12-13, 21; 5:3, I Kings 5:19). More recent translations use the words “covenant”, “treaty”, or “compact” for *berit*. The word is used to indicate agreements between men, or between Yahweh and men, such as the following.²

A. A mutual agreement confirmed by an oath in the name of Yahweh

- *Abraham and Abimelech*. “There they made a covenant at Beer-Sheba ...” (Genesis 21:32).
- *David and Jonathan*. They made a covenant of mutual protection that would be binding on David’s descendants forever (I Samuel 18:3, 20:8, 16-18, 42)

B. Terms imposed by a superior military power (not mutual agreements)

- *Ahab and the Syrians*. “So he made a covenant with [Ben-hadad], and sent him away” (I Kings 20:34).
- *Nebuchadnezzar and Zedekiah*. The King of Babylon “... took of the king’s seed, and made a covenant with him, and has taken an oath of him ...” (Ezekiel 17:13).

C. The exercise of kingship over a nation

- *David and the tribes of Israel*. “... David made a covenant [“league” in the King James Version] with them [the elders of Israel] in Hebron before the Lord ...” (II Samuel 5:3). In this case the covenant was based on the knowledge that God had appointed David, so they became David’s subjects (II Samuel 5:2; II Kings 11:4, 17).

D. Agreements made between God and men, initiated and fulfilled by Yahweh Himself

- *Yahweh and Noah*. “But with you I will establish [cause to stand, confirm] My covenant“ Genesis 6:18).
- *Yahweh and Abram*. “And I will make My covenant between Me and you [Abram], and multiply you exceedingly” (Genesis 17:2).
- *Yahweh and Israel (the nation)*. “And He declared unto you His covenant, which He commanded you to perform, even the ten commandments; and He wrote them upon two tablets of stone” (Deuteronomy 4:13).
- *Yahweh and Israel (the nation)*. “... I have remembered My covenant. Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgements (Exodus 6:5-6).
- *Yahweh and Israel (the nation)*. “... when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break My covenant with them; for I am the Lord their God” (Leviticus 26:44).
- *Yahweh and Israel (the nation)*. “... if you will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then you shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people ... a kingdom of priests and a holy nation ...” (Exodus 19:5-6).

Other Hebrew words are parallel to *berit*, including *dabar* (“word”), *hoq* (“statute”), *piqqud* (“precepts”), *edah* (“testimony”), *torah* (“law”), and *hesed* (“lovingkindness”). As Vine et al.² point

out, these words emphasize the authority and grace of Yahweh in making and keeping the covenant, and the specific responsibility of man under the covenant ... the words of which were written in a book (Exodus 24:4, 7; Deuteronomy 31:24-26) and on tablets of stone (Exodus 34:28).

“Men ‘enter into’ (Deuteronomy 29:12) or ‘join’ (Jeremiah 50:5) God’s ‘covenant’. They also are to obey (Genesis 12:4) and ‘observe carefully’ all the commandments of the ‘covenant’ (Deuteronomy 4:6). But above all, the covenant calls Israel to ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might’ (Deuteronomy 6:5). God’s ‘covenant’ is a relationship of love and loyalty between the Lord and His chosen people In the ‘covenant’, man’s response contributes to covenant fulfillment; yet man’s action is not causative. God’s grace always goes before and produces man’s response.”²

The very use of the words “Old Testament” and “New Testament” to describe the two sections of our Bible indicates that Yahweh’s covenant is central to the entire book. Mankind is enjoined to obey the Eternal and fulfill His central purpose of mankind’s existence, and in lovingkindness serve Elohim and one’s fellow man to achieve, through His calling, eternal fellowship in the heavenly realm through Jesus Christ.

There are five basic items which may be explored to ascertain the nature of Yahweh’s covenant with Israel ... and ultimately with all of mankind. These five items will be dealt with in turn, but care should be taken to understand that they are in no way mutually exclusive. The Father’s nature is totally unified, and although we as human beings might find it convenient for discussion’s sake to compartmentalize knowledge, the Father and Elohim — who are totally at one in their knowledge and approach (John 5:19) — in truth remain a unified part of the whole.

In a very real sense, when striving to discover the nature of the true covenantal relationship of Elohim with mankind, one is forced to decipher that original relationship He had with Adam in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2 and 3). Recall that it was the quest of Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, and other patriarchs to “... desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared for them a city” (Hebrews 11:16). That “city” is surely the heavenly Jerusalem which Adam and Eve tended, in part, which appeared to them while the creation was still perfect, but from which they were thrust out upon sinning ... which Garden was then guarded by cherubim, and a flaming sword, to protect the way to the immortality-engendering tree of life (Genesis 2:15; 3:22-24). Paul also spoke of viewing that unspeakably beautiful Eden [Paradise] of God (II Corinthians 12:1-4). “Paradise” in verse 4 is from the Greek *paradeisos*, meaning “a park or an Eden”. It surely must be identified with the New Jerusalem of Revelation 21 and 22 where the saints constitute that “great and high mountain” (Revelation 21:9-10), where an awesome garden-like paradise is described:

“And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, there was the tree of life, which bore twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations” (Revelation 22: 1-2).

I. The Eternal Laws and Commandments of Yahweh and the Father

If one can discover commands of the Creator which span all time, then one can understand the nature of His unchanging character.

“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Hebrews 13:8).

“And as vesture shall You fold them [the heaven and earth] up, and they shall be changed; but You are the same, and Your years shall not fail” (Hebrews 1:12).

“For I am the Lord, and change not ...” (Malachi 3:6).

We know that Jesus Christ was the Yahweh [son of Elohim over Israel] of the Old Testament period, for He was that “... spiritual Rock that followed them [Israel] ...” when the Israelites crossed the Red Sea and wandered forty years in the wilderness (I Corinthians 10:4). Yahweh “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God All things were made by Him And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among men, and finally returned to the Father (John 1:1, 3, 14). Yahweh was in heaven [the spirit realm] with the Father, He dwelt among men, and then He returned to the Father (John 17:5).

Knowing these things — that He does not change, and that He existed at the recreation of the earth, for 33 years walked the earth, and now exists as spirit in the heavenly realm (He is the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last: Revelation 22:13) — then one can see that His eternal laws, summarized by the Ten Commandments, have always existed and will always exist. They are, simply put, the very essence of God’s personality and being, the epitome of selflessness, love, and serving, the endless essence of all things within Creation, the basis of wisdom by which the creation was patterned and consummated (Proverbs 3:19; 8:22-29).

The existence and authority in mankind’s affairs of the Ten Commandments can easily be shown long before their codified form was given on tablets of stone to Israel at Mt. Sinai (Exodus 20:2-17). One or two examples for each commandment should suffice to illustrate this fact.

Commandment 1: *You shall have no other Elohim before me.*

Genesis 10:8-9. Nimrod was a mighty hunter before [instead of] Yahweh, supplanting the reign of Elohim for the people.

Commandment 2: *You shall not make unto you any graven image.*

Genesis 31:19, 22-34. Rachel stole Laban’s idols (“gods”), which righteous Jacob would never have approved. She died in childbirth, and was buried along the roadway to Ephrath, at Bethlehem (Genesis 35:19), whereas her sister Leah, who stole no idols and apparently had a different view of them, was buried alongside Jacob in the Cave of Machpelah (Genesis 49:31).

Commandment 3: *You shall not take the name of Yahweh your Elohim in vain.*

Genesis 25:29-34. Esau thought so little of the integrity of Elohim's word that he sold his birthright to his brother Jacob for a bowl of lentil soup.

Commandment 4: *Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.*

Genesis 2:2-3. After six days of creation, Elohim blessed and sanctified the seventh day by resting.

Commandment 5: *Honor your father and your mother.*

Genesis 25:34-35; 27:46; 28:1-9; 29:1-30. Esau took wives of the Hittites and Ishmaelites, which were a great dishonor and grief to Isaac and Rebekah, while Jacob went to Laban at his parent's direction and got a wife (wives) within his own family.

Commandment 6: *You shall not kill [murder].*

Genesis 4:8-12. Cain slew Abel, and was severely punished by Yahweh.

Commandment 7: *You shall not commit adultery.*

Genesis 12:14-20. Even Pharaoh, a pagan Egyptian leader, recognized that having another man's wife was evil. Fornication by Joseph would also have been a great sin, a "... sin against God" (Genesis 39:9).

Commandment 8: *You shall not steal.*

Genesis 31:26-30, 43. Laban understood the principle of stealing well, even if he did not rightly apply it to worthless idols and Jacob's family and goods.

Commandment 9: *You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.*

Genesis 21:22-32. Abimelech implored Abraham not to deal falsely with him or his descendants, and Abraham agreed to so do.

Commandment 10: *You shall not covet anything of your neighbor.*

Genesis 3:6:24. Both Adam and Eve coveted and ate of the forbidden fruit, which resulted in their being castigated by Yahweh for that mistake, having to face death, and being cast out of Eden.

It is important to understand that there were other aspect of God's eternal laws which were

given as a covenant to Adam and Eve, and also to Noah, before Abraham appeared on earth. For instance:

1) *Man is to have dominion over the fish, fowl, cattle, and all creatures on earth.* He is to be a leader, guide, and servant for the creation, as plainly stated in Genesis 1:26-28. The Hebrew word for *dominion* is *radah* (Strong 7287), meaning “to tread down, subjugate, or crumble off.” Rather than rule in harshness and severity, however, Yahweh’s commands were designed to show mankind how to “tend and keep” the earth (Genesis 2:15) as Elohim tends and keeps the heavenly realm ... in an attitude of gentle service and lovingkindness. What is seen on earth is a type and reflection of the heavenly reality. The creatures and vegetation, the minerals and the very elements themselves are fabricated after the pattern of what is at this moment in the unseen spirit realm (see Hebrews 8:4-5). *Tend* is the Hebrew *abad*, meaning “to work, by implication to serve and till.” *Keep* is the Hebrew *shamar*, “to hedge about, i.e. guard, protect, or attend to.” The man and woman, sequestered within the idyllic green, agrarian, Edenic garden paradise as husband and wife to rear a family, were to serve, protect, and attend to the environment that sustained them in love and selflessness. Never was mankind meant to subsist within cities (Isaiah 5:8).

2) *Man is to reproduce and fill the earth with his progeny,* a covenant made with both Adam and Noah (Genesis 1:28; 9:1).

3) *Food was to include herbs and fruits that bore seeds* — chlorophyll-containing plants — from Eden to the Flood (Genesis 1:29), and then *clean meats as well after the Flood* as long as the blood was not eaten (Genesis 9:3-4).

4) *People were to live forever by partaking of the Tree of Life and avoiding the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil* (Genesis 2:16-17). This part of Elohim’s provision for His creation, however, was never able to be completed due to sin.

5) *Marriage was ordained to establish families for conceiving and rearing children in the protection and education of the home.* Husband and wife were to be one, in body and mind and will, never to separate (Matthew 19:5-6), the husband heading the wife (Ephesians 5:22-23), and the two of them patterning Elohim’s very heavenly government of love and service.

It is clear from Galatians 3:17 that the covenant which Yahweh made with Abraham was in no way annulled by the covenant God made with many, but not all, of Abraham’s descendants (just Israel) at Mt. Sinai.

“... the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was 430 years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.”

Christians today, therefore, are under the Abrahamic covenant! This does not mean that the covenant at Mt. Sinai is not of value in some respects today, since Paul clearly indicated a few

versus later that the law is our "... schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Galations 3:24). That law given at Mt. Sinai had many eternal precepts embedded in it. We know that Abraham's righteousness was imputed because of *belief* [faith that Yahweh would carry out His promises to him]. We also know that implicit within that faith or belief was the understanding that obedience to Yahweh, the Creator of both Abraham and ourselves, will lead us to perform good and lawful works of feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick, and entertaining strangers and prisoners (Matthew 25:34-40), of serving one's brother to achieve true greatness (Matthew 20:25-28), and exercising the "fruits of the spirit" such as kindness, gentleness, patience, love, moderation, goodness, joy, and faith itself (Galations 5:22-23) ... realizing that "... faith without works is dead" (James 2:20). While righteousness was imparted by faith, Abraham was justified (*dikaioo*, "to render just or innocent") by works when he offered Isaac upon the alter, so that in verse 22 of James 2, James was able to say,

"See how faith wrought with his [Abraham's] works, and by works was faith made perfect?"

It is not the purpose of this paper to explore in-depth the "works and faith" issue, but only at this juncture to illustrate that **Abraham kept the laws of Yahweh**, and that works and faith must work together, just as Scripture teaches. Implicit within the Father's and Christ's (Yahweh's) characters are perfectly righteous standards of behavior, of the spirit operating fully within them — so if we are to presume that Abraham will be in the first resurrection, then he had to possess that spirit within himself. That spirit is the codified law of God, the ten commandments in the spirit and intent, for as both Jeremiah and Paul stated,

"For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord; I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their heart: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: and they shall not teach every man his neighbors, and every man his brothers, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more" (Hebrews 8:10-12).

Paul then acknowledged that the "old covenant" Yahweh had made with Israel at Mt. Sinai is "... waxing old and is ready to vanish away" (Hebrews 8:13) ... which leaves a "new covenant" that in reality is the oldest covenant of all: the agreement Yahweh made with Abraham, and before that made with Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden ... to eat of the Tree of Life (God's perfect instructions meant for their good) and avoid the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (man deciding for himself what is good and evil — placing himself in God's position — and thus becoming only partially accurate in his conduct).

The bulk of the laws given to Israel at Mt. Sinai were due to that rebellious nation's sins. With rampant sin — the lack of a serving attitude towards one's brother — came laws which are intended to confront those evils and subdue them for the safety of others. A truly loving, selfless, serving nation would require no such codification. Witness the United States government and its myriad of laws and regulations that govern virtually every action in commerce, industry, education, and social life. They have been added due to rampant lack of respect and concern for one's fel-

low man, a hedonistic, self-centered approach in which the government attempts to protect the citizens ... but even it falls victim to self-aggrandizement of its officials. The whole system is self-seeking.

“Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus says the Lord God unto the shepherds [political and religious leaders]; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? You eat the fat, and you clothe yourselves with wool, you kill them that are fed, but you feed not the flock. The diseased have you not strengthened, neither have you healed that which was sick, neither have you bound up that which was broken, neither have you brought again that which was driven away, neither have you sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have you ruled them” (Ezekiel 34:20-4).

Codified laws are necessary only when God’s spiritual ways of love (doing to others as you would have others do to you) are not practiced from the heart.

The issue of what parts of the Levitical law constitute the “new covenant,” and are a part of the eternal laws that have never passed away, will be discussed particularly in section five. Truly, for spirit-filled Christians the codified Levitical laws of the Pentateuch apply only in part because that spirit motivates one to do good, not harm, towards one’s fellow man. In a deeper sense, however, they need not exist in outward, codified tablets of stone or writing *at all*, because the proper conduct for a person is now codified internally, within one’s heart and mind by the spirit the Father has placed there at baptism and the laying on of hands (Acts 2:38; 19:6). Against the fruits of God’s spirit there is no law (Galations 5:23). Before receiving God’s spirit the Levitical laws had value as a “schoolmaster” (*paidagogos*, “a boy-leader, a servant whose office it was to take the children to school; a tutor”), but now, as the converted mind takes over, the “old covenant” decays and waxes old, and “is ready to vanish away” (Galations 3:24; Hebrews 8:13).

II. The Life and Teachings of Jesus Christ

A. Yahweh (Jesus Christ) is Unchanging

Jesus Christ, the Yahweh of the Old Testament, is “... the first and the last ...” (Revelation 22:13), the “... Word that became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14), the Spiritual Rock that led the Israelites out of Egypt (I Corinthians 10:4). An exploration of His life will show Christians today which laws and commandments to keep *in the spirit*, for He performed the express purposes of the heavenly Father here on earth when He walked among men for 33 years (John 5:19-20). This was the same Jesus (Yahweh) who does not change, but is “... the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Hebrews 13:8). We can be certain that what He said and did will lead us to the truth of the nature of the “new covenant”, ... and which portions of the “old covenant” still apply today.

B. We Must Return to Eden's Perfection

Jesus Christ made it plain that we are to live as Christians in the manner set out **at the beginning**, or at the time Adam was created and placed in the Garden of Eden. He admonished the Pharisees to examine this issue.

“Have you not read, that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder. They said to Him, why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He said to them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives, but from the beginning it was not so” (Matthew 19:8).

Divorce had not been intended, or even allowed, much less thought of at the creation of man in his perfect, blissful Edenic existence. Only because of selfish desires did that perfect, God-plane oneness within marriage become polluted, to the point that today fewer than half of all marriages survive in America. In ancient Israel only fraud on the part of a supposed virgin was grounds for divorce; i.e., the woman claimed to be a virgin but after marriage was found not to be (Deuteronomy 24:1-4). This fraud was not simply the impurity of fornication, but it was the further sin of bearing false witness, denying the truth, and covering up sin within that most intimate of all relationships.

John pointed to the truth of our need to seek Edenic perfection when he stated:

“Brethren, I write no *new* commandment unto you, but an old commandment which you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you have heard from the beginning. Again, a *new* commandment I write unto you ... ” (I John 2:7-8).

The Greek word here for *new* is *kainos*, meaning “new, especially in freshness.” John is pointing toward the refreshed condition of the new covenant being in reality a reinstatement of the pre-Israelite covenant. The “new covenant” is really a “refreshed covenant”! The new commandment is to love your brother (I John 2:10; 4:7-21) ... not a “new” commandment at all! This refreshing of the covenant by Elohim far predated the giving of the law at Mt. Sinai. It was, is, and will be the central core of human and God-plane existence. Love toward one's brother means boosting him up in spirit, helping him overcome in his daily battles, and assisting him in tangible ways as opportunity permits (Galatians 6:9-10; Romans 12; 15:1-3), thinking of others as better than oneself ... for this is the attitude Jesus Christ possessed and lived (Philippians 2:1-5).

C. Yahweh's Desire Is a Contrite Heart, Not Sacrifices

Clearly, Jesus looked towards the beginning of man's creation on the earth when instructing others about the true way ... not just in marital relationships, but in all areas of life. His imposition

of offerings, oblations, washings, and other detailed, laborious, and meticulous duties to the Israelites was due to their sins in hopes of teaching them lessons of obedience, and of the consequences of sin. Jeremiah clearly pinpointed the situation:

“For I spoke not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices: but this thing commanded I them saying, Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people: and walk in all the ways I have commanded you, that it may be well into you. But they hearkened not, nor inclined their evil heart, and went backward, not forward” (Jeremiah 7:22-24).

Yahweh indeed made it plain that sacrifices and burnt offerings were not His desire, but rather He wanted an obedient, law-abiding people.

“Has Yahweh as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifice as in obeying the voice of Yahweh? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams” (1 Samuel 15:22).

D. The Timeless Ten Commandments

Jesus Christ made plain that His basic laws of selfless conduct towards others are always to be in force. Below is a sampling of His statements.

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfill [*pleroo*, “to make replete, cram, level up, furnish, imbue, execute, finish”]. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the *law* [*nomos*, “law, regulation”] till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven [or, *he shall not be in the kingdom* by some translations]: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:17-19).

In Matthew 19, Jesus told the rich young ruler to “... keep the commandments” to enter into life. When the young man asked Jesus which commandments, He immediately spelled out those which primarily relate to the welfare of one’s neighbor.

“You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not bear false witness, Honor your father and your mother, and You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 19:18-19).

Solomon acknowledged the centrality of Yahweh’s core commandments when He admonished his readers, “Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man” (Ecclesiastes 12:13). All things done for selfish gain are unimportant, pointless, and futile since they are all secondary to what must be the primary focus in life.

E. The All-Encompassing “Golden Rule” of Humility

Jesus made it plain that the entire meaning of the law and the prophets was summed up in one cardinal “golden rule”:

“Therefore all things whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you even so to them ...” (Matthew 7:12).

The entire Sermon on the Mount, already quoted twice in the above verses, illustrates the very essence of Yahweh’s and the Father’s approach to life. That is to be totally humble and selfless, which is the correct form of sacrifice and burnt offering:

“For you desire not sacrifice, else would I give it you: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, you will not despise” (Psalm 51:17).

“... to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembles at My word” (Isaiah 66:2).

Notice the following text:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit [or, *blessed in spirit are the poor*: Concordant Version] ...,” verse 3.

“Blessed are they that mourn ...,” verse 3.

“Blessed are the meek ...,” verse 4.

“Blessed are they which hunger and thirst after righteousness ...,” verse 6.

“Blessed are the merciful ...,” verse 7.

“Blessed are the pure in heart ...,” verse 8.

“Blessed are the peacemakers ...,” verse 9.

“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake ...,” verse 10.

This is the nature of Almighty God. Although He owns all that exists, yet He is perfectly humble, in no way lifted up in pride ... while men unwisely compare themselves with one another and, in their insecurity and perceived lack of acceptance by the Father, become lifted up in pride. Value of life and one’s person becomes equated with material possessions, not with one’s Creator who cares deeply for each son made in his image ... thus the admonition,

“Take heed, and beware of covetousness, for a man’s life consists not in the abundance of the things he possesses” (Luke 12:15).

Now, the reason for the fruits of the spirit holding reign within the spirit-possessing chosen sons of God becomes clear: **these fruits represent the inner motivation and personality of the Father and the Son.** It is these positive qualities that constitute the essence of the very atoms and their subparts, the molecules, the animals, trees, grass, fish, fowl, and man himself ... as far as they retain the order conceived by Elohim at the creation. Satan has done considerable

damage to bespoil perfection in the creation.

F. The New Covenant: Christ in You!

Pulling all of these facts together, it is apparent that **the “new covenant” boils down to Christ living within the brethren.** This fact is so stated in Scripture:

“... I will preserve You [Christ], **and give You for a covenant of the people**, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritage ...” (Isaiah 49:8).

“... [I] will keep You [Christ], **and give You for a covenant of the people**, for a light of the Gentiles ...” (Isaiah 42:6).

“... by so much was **Jesus made a surety of a better testament**” (Hebrews 7:22).

The “new covenant” now takes on clear and unambiguous meaning. With Christ living in the saints, then that “new covenant” implies living by every word of the Father (and thus Jesus Christ: Luke 4:4; Deuteronomy 8:3), understanding one’s spiritual gifts and exercising them for the uplift of the brethren (I Corinthians 12), suffering for righteousness’ sake (I Peter 2:21; 3:13-14; Romans 8:17), serving as lights to the world by a righteous example (Matthew 5:14-16), rendering good for evil (Matthew 5:38-48), praying, meditating, studying the word, fasting, and fellowshiping constantly, and in every way serving the Eternal by walking in Christ’s footsteps (I John 2:6). The “new covenant” implies an abundant life for the inheritor of the spirit (John 10:10), but not without manifold temptations and pitched battles with evil (Psalm 34:19; I Peter 5:8-10).

This “new covenant”, as equated to the Edenic covenant with Adam and the Abrahamic covenant, must then be an agreement based on faith (belief) in the Father and Jesus Christ to carry out their plan of redemption. The covenant with Abraham was indeed built upon faith, for he “... believed in Yahweh, and He counted it to him for righteousness” (Genesis 15:6). God’s plan of salvation can therefore be viewed as consistent throughout the entire history of mankind on earth. As Zodiates³ explained, this covenant with Abraham illustrates “... the unity of believers in both dispensations. Abraham’s faith was accounted to him for righteousness before he was circumcised and more than 400 years before the law was given to his descendants Paul proved that Abraham’s faith was not merely a general confidence in God nor simple obedience to God’s command, but that it was indeed faith in the promise of redemption through Christ (Romans 3:21, 22; 4:18-25; Galations 3:14).”

One might ask the question, how is it possible for Yahweh’s Spirit to code for the seventh day sabbath? Cannot that law be known only by the revelation of His word? Yet, the Spirit encompasses knowledge of all things.

“... for the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knows no man, but the spirit of god. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God” (I Corinthians 2:10-12).

While the saints of today may not be able to “read” the Sabbath command from the spirit realm, this does not mean that the knowledge of the Sabbath does not exist in the spirit. Indeed it does, so that a person possessing that spirit knows the loving applications of all ten commandments. Also with that spirit comes the knowledge of clean and unclean foods. Sin, however, covers up access to that spiritual knowledge (Isaiah 59:2), inhibiting the reading of that code which is “eternally read and comprehended.” “... I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts ... for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest” (Hebrews 8:10-11).

III. Nature and What It Teaches

Paul wrote a profound statement in Romans 1, the gravity of which few mortals have grasped:

“... that which may be known of God is manifest to them [unrighteous men: verses 18], for God has shown it unto them. For the invisible things of Him from the *creation*¹ of the *world*² are clearly seen, being *understood*³ by the things that are made, even His *eternal*⁴ power and *Godhead*⁵, so that they are without excuse ...” (Romans 1:19-20).

¹*creation, ktisis*, “original formation (the act or thing).”

²*world, kosmos*, “orderly arrangement, the world.”

³*being understood, noieo*, “to exercise the mind (observe), i.e. to comprehend, heed.”

⁴*eternal, aidios*, “ever-during (forward and backward, or forward only).”

⁵*Godhead, theiotes*, “diversity.”

This profound Scripture reveals that the very nature and character of God can be determined by the visible creation in the earth ... the animals, insects, birds, trees, flowers, microorganisms, water, elements, minerals, atmosphere, landforms, biological and elemental cycles, sun, moon, planets, stars, energy, and all other things He has created ... and of course man himself, made in Elohim’s express image (Genesis 1:26). Paul in I Corinthians 11:14, in reference to proper hair length, stated,

“Does not nature teach you, that if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?”

In a marvelous, illustrated book by F.A. Pouchet, written perhaps around 1900 (though it has no copyright date) entitled *The Architecture of God, the Wonders of Creation, the Infinitely Great and the Infinitely Little*,⁴ the author elucidated the magnificence of the creation by covering the world of microscopic creatures, the sea and its flora and fauna, insects, forests, birds and migrations, animals and migrations, plants and their anatomy, physiology, seeds and germination, plant migration, formation of the earth, fossils, volcanoes, mountains, glaciers, caves, deserts, air, stars, the solar system, and other aspects of the natural universe.

More than simply expound on their appearance, Dr. Pouchet unveiled the mind of God working through them. Notice, for instance, portions of the Table of Contents:

Book III

INSECTS

- Chapter
1. Marvels of Insect Organization
 2. Metamorphoses
 3. The Intelligence of Insects
 4. Hunting Insects
 5. Slave Makers and Warlike Tribes
 6. Architects and Devourers of Towns
 7. Grave Diggers and Miners
 8. Upholsterers and Carpenters
 9. Cloth Cutters and Lead Eater
 10. Hydraulic Engineers and Masons

THE ARCHITECTURE OF BIRDS

- Chapter
1. Giants and Pygmies
 2. The Instinct of Chemistry - Mountain Builders
 3. Work and the Family
 4. Idlers and Assassins
 5. Architecture Intended for Enjoyment
 6. Novel Architecture
 7. Miners and Masons
 8. Weavers

Dr. Pouchet must have had Romans 1:20 in mind when he introduced the book:

“Our imagination ... is equally confounded by what is infinitely great as by what is infinitely small. In fact, the phenomena of creation astound us, whether we raise our eyes to investigate the mechanism of the heavens, or bend them downward to examine the tiniest creatures to this lower realm. Immensity is everywhere. It stands revealed in the azure dome of heaven, where glows a perfect dust of stars, and in the living atom too minute to display to us the marvels of its organization But although it is true that, in presence of the immensity of space and the eternal duration of time, a feeling of humility overpowers us ... yet the mind within, that divine emanation, supports him on his journey by showing him both his power and his lofty origin.”

Dissecting Genesis 1:26, we see the very God-likeness of man:

“And Elohim said, Let us [Elohim] *make*¹ man in our *image*², after our *likeness*³....”

¹*make, asah*, “to do or make, in the broadest sense and widest application.”

²*image, tselem*, “to shade, a phantom, an illusion, resemblance, hence a representative figure.”

³*likeness, demut*, “likeness, shape, figure, form, pattern.”

It is clear that the creative power of Elohim fabricated man to be just like Him in every way, except he was made material, fleshly. According to Vine, et al.², the Hebrew word for *likeness, demut*, means “pattern” in the sense of the specifications from which an actual item is made, such as in II Kings 16:10:

“Now King Ahaz went to Damascus ... and saw the altar which was at Damascus, and King Ahaz sent Urijah the priest the pattern of the altar and its model, according to all its workmanship.”

Also, the *likeness* means “shape” or “form”, the thing(s) made after a given pattern. In II Chronicles 4:3 the word represents the “shape” of a bronze statue, and in Ezekiel 1:10 the word represents the “form” or “likeness” of the faces of the living creatures. Thirdly, the Hebrew *demut* indicates “... the original after which a thing is patterned”.² This use of the word appears in Genesis 1:26, but elsewhere as well:

“To whom then will you liken God? or what likeness will you compare unto Him?” (Isaiah 40:18).

Thus, we see the very nature of Elohim revealed precisely in the human body: external appearance, trillions of cells, internal cellular structure, skin, eyes, feet, toenails, internal organs, bodily systems, and above all its capacity of mind and intellect, memory and imagination and inventiveness, its proclivity to rear families and organize societies and cultures ... and its possession of a “human spirit” as well, analogous to the spirit which Elohim possesses (I Corinthians 2:11; Proverbs 20:27; Ecclesiastes 12:7). By extension, all of the creation, including all creatures, things, and processes on earth, as well as the heavenly bodies and their functions, have been patterned according to entities in the spirit realm ... meaning we can view a close likeness of the invisible realm by merely seeing the visible material realm. This is the same principle as discussed in Hebrews 8:5:

“... who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, said He, that you make all things according to the *pattern*¹ shown to you in the mount.”

¹*pattern, tupos*, “a die (as struck), i.e. a stamp or scar, by analogy a shape (statue, style, or resemblance).”

The tabernacle in the wilderness constructed by Israel was an exact likeness of the Father’s heavenly tabernacle in Mt. Zion, not in its total glory and magnificence, but certainly in the propor-

tions and typology of the rooms, construction of the ark, the various gold and bronze articles, curtains, and ceremonies. Yet, that heavenly-constructed tabernacle could not possibly match the magnificent perfection of Elohim's holy city. On the other hand, all that God has made *can* match that magnificence ... the only deterrent to that exactness being Satan's incursions within the creation to bespoil it. Satan's injection of death and perversion into Elohim's designs can be viewed all around us, but even so the essential character of the heavenly reality impressed upon the physical creation remains. It cannot be hidden, as Romans 1:20 so clearly states.

Take, for instance, the Canada goose, a large and vocal bird that normally inhabits northern climes in the summer, raises its brood of goslings, and migrates southward in the fall. What can a goose, one of Elohim's perfect creations, know about the nature of God? When a goose falls out of formation due to illness or being shot, two other geese fall out with the ailing bird. They follow it down to the ground for help and protection, remaining close by it until it is able to fly or dies. Only then will they launch out again to catch up with their flock or fly to their winter respite on their own. The birds also retain the same mates throughout their lifespan.

Does not this clean bird (according to Leviticus 11) illustrate the selfless attitude of laying down one's life for one's friends (John 15:13)? Do not many female animals, birds, and fish of all sorts risk their lives to protect their young? What greater show of love can one find ... a mother protecting her progeny, like our spiritual mother, the Church — the ecclesia (Galatians 4:26) — reaches out to protect and uplift the weak, the orphaned, the sickly, and the homeless (Matthew 25:35-36; Isaiah 58:6-7).

What higher inspiration meets the senses than the deft curves of azalea flowers, or the delectable scent of lilac blossoms? The health science of aromatherapy has built itself around such awesome gifts of nature. Millions of urban-weary travelers each year fly countless miles to sequester themselves amongst trees and thickets, streams and valleys, mountains and open prairies to drink in of a spirit of peace, joy, hope, patience, moderation, kindness, and humility that the natural world imparts. It is spiritual renewal they seek ... and which the Eternal gives to those whose hearts are open. View the shimmering aspen leaves and sighing pines of a mountain valley, hear the rushing, ice-cold waters of a cascading mountain stream, and the warbler's deft melody ... and God's mind and character are shed upon your heart. Mountains picture in the mind's-eye the heavenly Zion with its impressive heights and towering ramparts. Butterflies typify the human life as a larvae, then "death" in the waiting chrysalis as a new creature is rearranged within the "grave", only to rise in brilliant color and vitality to glide effortlessly across a meadow of flowers. On and on the pictures go of God's parallel creation of His spirit world in this material world, showing the nature of the spirit, unseen realm: male and female, shimmering colors, the miracle of photosynthesis, crystallization of minerals, clouds, thunderstorms, and rain watering the earth. The list is endless.

God reveals Himself through what He has made, for the template of that creation is in the heavenly realm. It is thought that even the perfect language is written within Elohim's creation, and if we could read it the entire plan of salvation for mankind would be laid out vividly amongst the plants and animals, and within man himself. Some Arab linguists have supposedly cut open vegetables like eggplants and read, in Arabic, phrases like "God is great!" in the swirls and lines of the flesh.

While Elohim's character of life is revealed throughout nature, so is Satan's character of death. Our present world is a strange intermingling of aggradation versus degradation — the

forces and processes of good versus evil, of service and love versus predation and selfishness. Life is regenerated out of the decomposing, organic remains of previous dying generations; the living are literally cycled from the dead.

While it may be impossible to decipher the exact day for Sabbath through observing nature — that knowledge has not been revealed — it is possible to infer every other commandment. It is also possible to determine the beginnings of months by observing solar and lunar patterns. Moreover, Elohim's plan of the ages is written in the heavens through a proper interpretation of the twelve major constellations of the stars and the 36 minor constellations that accompany them. Elohim has indeed revealed Himself by the things that He has made.

IV. The Contents of the Ark of the Covenant

The Ark of the Covenant constructed by Israel in the wilderness, according to the exact pattern that Yahweh showed Moses on the mountain, was a type of the heavenly tabernacle:

“For if He were on earth, He should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law; who serve unto the example¹ and shadow² of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, ‘See’, said He, ‘that you make all things according to the pattern shown to you in the mount [Sinai]’” (Hebrew 8:5; see also Hebrews 9:23; Exodus 25:40; 26:30; 27:8; Numbers 8:4; Acts 7:44).

¹*example, hupodeigma*, “an exhibit for imitation or warning, figuratively a specimen”.

²*shadow, skia*, “shade, or a shadow”.

The tabernacle in the wilderness, with the priest's garb, ark, utensils, altar, curtains, and other details (Exodus 25 to 30, and 35 to 40) was obviously not equal to the heavenly reality, as shown in Revelation 21:3-25, but merely a small representation — a “shadow” — of the spiritual reality. Each dimension, material, item, and position had meaning that related directly and accurately to the spirit realm of Elohim. What is in heaven was given in accurate scale to Moses, and is available for us to read today in God's Word. Of course, we have not seen [Hebrews *rach*, “to see” in Exodus 27:8] the actual vision of the Ark and the Tabernacle as it was shown to Moses directly by Yahweh, so none of us could construct the items exactly as prescribed.

However, we can read in detail of the items within the Ark of the Covenant. Recall that the Ark represented Yahweh's very throne in heaven, being overshadowed by the two cherubim. In Exodus 25:10-22 some salient points concerning the Ark are revealed:

- Dimensions: 2.5 x 1.5 x 1.5 cubits (about 62 x 37 x 37 inches, at 25 inches per cubit, the cubit length embedded in the Pyramid of Cheops in Egypt)
- Constructed of Shittim wood
- Overlain with pure gold, both inside and outside

- A “crown of gold” all around it
- Four gold rings on the corners
- Two “staves” of Shittim wood, covered with gold, to place in the rings and transport it
- A “mercy seat” of pure gold on top of it, 2 x 1.5 cubits (about 50 x 37 inches)
- Two cherubim of “beaten work” at the two ends of the mercy seat, and their faces looking at each other toward the mercy seat

Inside the Ark was to be placed the *testimony* [Hebrew *eduwth*, the feminine of *ed*, “a witness or testimony”]. It was here that Yahweh would place Himself, on the mercy seat above the rectangular, gold-overlain wooden box, between the cherubim:

“And there I will meet you, and I *will commune* [Hebrew *dabar*, ‘to arrange or to speak’] with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give you *in commandment* [Hebrew *tsavah*, ‘to constitute, enjoin’] onto the children of Israel.” (Exodus 25:22).

Once Moses finished the construction and setting up of the Tabernacle, Yahweh Himself came to dwell on the mercy seat:

“Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of Yahweh filled the tabernacle And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys; but if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up. For the cloud of Yahweh was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys” (Exodus 40:34-38).

Inside the Ark of the Covenant (or better put, the chest which contained Yahweh’s agreement with Israel) were contained three items (Hebrews 9:4):

- (1) **The ten commandments on tablets of stone** (actually the second set of the two Yahweh wrote with His own finger; the first set of tablets Yahweh had made but the second set of tablets Moses prepared: Exodus 31:18; 34:1)
- (2) **Aaron’s rod that budded** (Numbers 17)
- (3) **A jar of manna** (Exodus 16:32-34)

These Items within the Ark — typifying the throne of the Father and His express character — are profoundly revealing of Elohim’s personality, a personality revealed equally from the same personage in both Testaments. To Moses, Yahweh stated,

“Yahweh, Yahweh Elohim, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in good-

ness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty ..." (Exodus 34:6-7).

Compare these qualities to those in the list of Elohim's spiritual qualities in Galatians 5:22-23: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and moderation. Those qualities are the same represented in both Testaments, both ancient and modern. Elohim does not change (Hebrews 13:8). Moreover, as will become obvious in the following discussion, the truly central and "weightier matters of the law" are judgement, mercy, and faith (Matthew 23:23) ... which these three items within the Ark pictured.

The Ten Commandments

The original agreement that Yahweh made with Abram was based upon *faith*, the same central concept of the New Covenant:

Old Covenant: "And He [Abram] *believed in* [Hebrew *aman*, 'to build up or support, firm or faithful, trust or believe] Yahweh, and He counted it to him for righteousness" (Genesis 15:6).

New Covenant: "Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness But that no man is *justified* [Hebrews *dikaioo*, to render just or innocent] by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith" (Galatians 3:6, 11).

Genesis 15:6 is viewed by some as the key verse in the entire Old Testament, for it reveals that man is justified to God by faith, not by works as the New Testament emphatically states. Of course, the son of God living by faith will be doing the works that the law requires because of the sincere desire to please the One who made him; so states James 2:14-26. The Law of God for the saints is, in the New Covenant relationship, *within* them, an integral part of their makeup (Hebrews 8:10-12). Abraham's faith was accounted to him for righteousness before he was circumcised and more than 400 years before the law was given to his descendants. Of course, not all of this "law" given to Israel was the sum of the "law" given to Adam, Noah, and Abraham. It is this very issue that will be addressed in the next section.

The ten commandments form the core of life lived in faith to Yahweh and the Father. David called the commandments "righteousness" (Psalms 119:172). Sin is defined as "transgression of the laws of God" (I John 3:4), and all unrighteousness is sin (I John 5:17). Paul also confirmed that sin is defined by law (Romans 5:13): "... where there is not law there is no transgression" (Romans 4:15). These statements together confirm that the cardinal ten commandments form the heart of Elohim's law-abiding personality, the character inherent now within the hearts and minds of the saints whose lives have been purchased by Him. This makes sense, for the tablets of stone containing the commandments of Exodus 20 were placed directly into the Ark, at His dwelling place in Israel as symbolizing His heavenly throne. Now that the saints have the law internalized — an integral part of their very beings — there is no need of a "schoolmaster" in the sense of an external set of laws to guide and direct (Galatians 3:24).

We know these commandments picture outgoing concern and selflessness towards Elohim and one's fellow man, the real meaning surrounding everything He is attempting to teach us in His word:

“This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like unto it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself [quoted in Leviticus 19:18]. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” (Matthew 22:37-40).

We may conclude that the first four commandments direct our conduct to an all-encompassing, loving God who really cares for us (I Peter 5:7), and the last six commandments summarize our ideal conduct toward other people. When the rich young man asked Jesus what good things he ought to do to inherit eternal life, he was told five of the last six commandments, followed by “... you shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 19:16-19).

Aaron’s Rod That Budded

Numbers 17 reveals how Yahweh told Moses to show the Israelites through whom He was working amongst the elders. Recall that Korah and his company and their families had just been swallowed by the earth and destroyed (Numbers 16:1-35). Then 250 men that offered incense were killed (Numbers 16:35). The next day many in Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron, accusing them (not Yahweh!) of killing His people. Yahweh was about to destroy these rebels with a plague, but Moses and Aaron interceded on their behalf. Aaron carried burning incense in a censer through the camp and stopped the plague after 14,700 Israelites had been killed (Numbers 16:41-50).

At this point Yahweh instructed Moses to have all twelve princes of the tribes write each man’s name on his rod, and lay them in the tabernacle of the congregation. He would then cause one of the twelve rods to blossom. Of course, we know that Aaron’s rod budded, but none of the others. It brought forth buds, blossomed, and yielded almonds apparently within a few hours ... a true miracle of Yahweh. Then Yahweh instructed Moses,

“Bring Aaron’s rod again before the testimony, to be kept for a token against the rebels; and you shall quite take away their murmurings from Me, that they die not. And Moses did so: as Yahweh commanded him, saying, Behold, we die, we perish, we all perish. Whosoever comes near unto the tabernacle of Yahweh shall die; shall we be consumed with dying? (Numbers 17:10-13).

Aaron’s rod was first placed before the Ark, and later within the Ark (Hebrews 9:4). By choosing Aaron’s rod to grow, Yahweh showed His approval of the tribe of Levi to be His chosen administrators of the priesthood, and His selection in particular of Moses and Aaron as His spokesmen. He also used the budded rod as a sign to those who would rebel and complain against God for His selection ... for His perfect judgement in issues too great for men. Recall Yahweh’s message through Samuel:

“Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry” (I Samuel 15:22-23).

Thus, Yahweh revealed His perfect judgement and sovereignty in this display of mastery over His creation ... in being able to bring life to the dead, even as He raised up the dead, walked on water, calmed storms, and caused a fig tree to wither and die. He does as He wills, having perfect knowledge and consideration for all. None can fault Him. He is the high and mighty Elohim. Being a perfect judge, the Father has perfect discernment to select and place anyone He calls in positions of responsibility:

“But now has God set the members every one of them in the body, as it has pleased Him” (I Corinthians 12:18).

He gives them the responsibility best fit for them:

In my Father’s house [Greek *oikia*, “abode or residence”] are many mansions [Greek *monē*, “a staying or residence (the act or the place)”]: if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.”

Ultimately this “house” in which the “mansion” exists is the beautiful Kingdom of God and its heavenly Jerusalem, “... the bride, the Lamb’s wife” (Revelation 21:9-22).

The Jar of Manna

Also within the Ark of the Covenant was a jar of manna, the perfect food sent by Yahweh to sustain Israel during their wilderness wanderings. An omer of the food was placed before the Testimony, and later placed within the Ark itself (Exodus 16:33-34).

Manna was no normal food. It was white and granular, like coriander seeds, and tasted like wafers made with honey (Exodus 16:31). It apparently formed when the dew condensed on vegetation or other objects, for “... when the dew that lay was gone up, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoarfrost on the ground” (Exodus 16:14). It melted and disappeared once the air warmed and the sun shone. Only the amount needed to sustain each person (about an homer) was gathered, and none was to be left until the next day, for it would spoil and stink by the next morning. However, what was gathered in preparation for the Sabbath day did not spoil (Exodus 16:23-24) ... again a vivid proof that Yahweh was abiding with them.

Manna proved to be the awesome sustaining force of the Israelites during 40 years of wandering. Without it in the desert area in which they found themselves they undoubtedly would have perished. The fact that this food would not last more than a day once gathered illustrated how Yahweh was using His provision to each day build *faith* in His chosen people. Without such daily replenishment of the manna, Israel would very quickly cease to exist. They were forced to rely on Yahweh’s sustaining power, a fact all people must acknowledge daily whether their food is provided miraculously as manna, or miraculously through the conversion of sunlight energy to plant substances. He desperately wanted these rebellious people to view Him as the loving, kind, patient Provider of His creation that He really was (and *is*), but hard-headed, unthankful Israel seemed continually bent upon serving their own lusts. Unbelieving Israel was required to eat of the Bread of Life to “get the point” of the true source and power of their exis-

tence ... and to hopefully draw out of their hearts the terrible injustice of lawless living. As Jesus Christ succinctly pointed out,

“I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world” (John 6:48-51).

Manna was indeed the *Bread of Life* to Israel, food from Elohim that possessed symbolic meaning far beyond its perfect complements of vitamins, minerals, protein, carbohydrates, lipids, and other life-essential components. The scriptures quoted by Christ to put down Satan’s temptation (Matthew 4:4; Luke 4:4) came directly from this Old Testament reference to manna:

“And He humbled you, and suffered you to hunger, and fed you with manna, which you know not, neither did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of Yahweh does man live” (Deuteronomy 8:3).

Jesus Christ chose unleavened bread as the symbol for his body, which was sacrificed in order that His saints might have eternal life ... the death of the Perfect One for the sins of the imperfect. This physical manna picked from the wilderness in the morning was the picture of the eternal life which every sane person craves, made possible by the Savior of us all: “To him that overcomes will I give to eat of the hidden manna ...” (Revelation 2:17). We pick it in the morning of our lives in order that we might live for eternity the remainder of our eternal days.

We see therefore, in summary, that the contents of the Ark were (are) symbolic of the personality of Elohim, and in particular of Yahweh (Jesus Christ). Although all three items overlap considerably in their symbolism, they display the primary attributes of our eternal Savior:

- **The ten commandments on tablets of stone**

Elohim’s love and undying care for us
The inherent law-abiding nature of Elohim

- **Aaron’s rod that budded**

Elohim’s perfect sovereignty
His exquisite and lasting judgement
Undying mercy

- **The jar of manna**

Faithfulness of Elohim to grant life on both the physical and spiritual planes
The assuredness of the resurrection to save condemned mankind from certain death

One can see from these symbols of Elohim’s personality that “... judgement, mercy, and faith”

are indeed "... the weightier matters of the law" (Matthew 23:23), for they were represented by the Ark of the Covenant and its contents. These weightier matters also correlate directly and precisely with the covenant God made with Abraham, Adam, Noah, and the other patriarchs ... the covenant we as Christians must seek to fulfill.

V. The Melchisedec Order

A major indicator of which laws apply to mankind today — to point the way to Edenic perfection — is the nature of the Melchisedec Order, or Priesthood. This indicator confirms what was expounded upon earlier, that the manner of life revealed to Abraham, long before the giving of the laws at Mt. Sinai, originated in part through the eternal God-priest named Melchisedec. The reason a knowledge of the nature of this priesthood is so important is introduced in Hebrews 7:11-12:

"If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should arise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law".

The priesthood was changed alright, with the priest of that law coming not from Levi but from Judah, "... of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood" (Hebrews 7:14). After the *similitude* (Greek *homoiotes*, "resemblance") of Melchisedec arose another priest "... Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life" (Hebrews 7:16).

Who was this Melchisedec?? We know that he was priest of the Most High God, the God whom this individual confirmed possessed heaven and earth (Genesis 14:18-19). He was also a great *servant*, in the image of Elohim, as shown by his preparing bread and wine for Abram — and likely his small "army" as well — at their meeting. Melchisedec also noted the omnipotent power of the Most High God by indicating that it was He who gave the victory to Abram over his enemies (Genesis 14:20).

Zodhiates³ has reviewed the various ideas men have come up with regarding the identity of Melchisedec:

(1) The preincarnate Christ. Yet, the language of Hebrews 7:3 indicates both He and Christ were separate beings.

(2) The patriarch Shem. However, Shem's parentage is known and he could not fulfill the conditions of eternal existence spelled out in Hebrews 7:3.

(3) A Canaanite priest-king. Yet, how many Canaanite kings, known to worship pagan deities, worship the true God?

Point 1 has great difficulty in trying to explain how one made "like the Son of God" can at the same time *be* the Son of God [Christ] (Hebrews 7:3). Also, Hebrews 7:15 speaks of Jesus Christ

being “in the likeness of Melchisedec,” which reiterates that Melchisedec and Christ were two different individuals. This is the conclusion of the *Book of Jasher*⁵ (Jasher 16:11-12).

We can therefore understand the declarations of Hebrews 7:2 and 3 as being idiomatic.

- without father or mother
- without genealogy
- having neither beginning nor end of days
- remaining a priest continually

Shem, the son of Noah, transcended the Great Flood, having no parent but Noah and Noah's wife who survived the Flood — and they were dead by the time Abram met Melchisedec — all other humans having drowned in the Flood. Thus, at the time that Abram met Melchisedec, he would have had no father or mother or other predecessors living; it would appear that he had no “beginning or end of days,” having come from an unperceived previous age in the sight of all people living on earth at the time, the only patriarch who survived into the new age. At the time Abram met him after the battle of the kings (Genesis 14:8-10), which was around 1920 B.C., Shem was about 526 years old.⁶ Shem died in 1846 B.C. at the age of 600. Shem would have been the oldest living person on earth at that time by a long way, giving rise to the metaphor, “having neither beginning nor end of days.” Moreover, he was indeed a priest of the Most High God, in the lineage of patriarchs extending back to Adam, “remaining a priest continually” during his centuries-old life.

Paul went on in Hebrews 7:5-11 to state that Levi, being the genetic descendant of Abraham (a great-grandson), while receiving tithes through the Levitical priesthood also *paid tithes* to Melchisedec through Abraham, “For he [Levi] was yet in the *loins* [Greek *osphus*, “the loin, hip, or procreative power”] of his father when Melchisedec met him” (Hebrews 7:10). Then, in verses 11 and 12, Paul makes clear that perfection was not possible by the Levitical priesthood, by which Israel received the law ... but conversely *perfection was possible* by another priest — Jesus Christ — that would rise after the order of Melchisedec, the personage of Shem brought across the Flood! With a change in the priesthood came of necessity a change in the law. What change? That is the issue of this paper, an issue very important if we are to conduct ourselves in the manner that Jesus Christ and, as we have seen, Melchisedec prescribe.

This “new way” [new covenant] is the law within you! Which law? The law which Shem and the patriarchs championed, a law that is changeless (Hebrews 13:8) ... the way of love as expressed by Jesus Christ, the Father, Melchisedec, and the heavenly hosts who are all on the side of righteousness. This is the more excellent way:

“But now has He obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also He is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second” (Hebrews 8:6-7).

Paul then went right into a description of the nature of that new covenant — not the one given to Israel when they were being led out of Egypt (Hebrews 8:9) — by pointing to the placing of God's [Elohim] laws into Israel's mind, and writing them in their hearts! The true Israel spoken of

here is not just the descendants of Jacob, but all others on earth as well who have descended from Adam who have been called and chosen by Christ and the Father:

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for you are all one in Jesus Christ. And if you be Christ’s then are you Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Galatians 3:28-29).

What Laws Were Put into Israel’s Minds and Hearts?

What, then, was the point of the Levitical priesthood and the added laws and ceremonies which Yahweh prescribed for them to administer to Israel? The offering, oblations, and other ceremonies were designed to point a carnal nation, sold under sin, to the endless Melchisedec priesthood, which was essentially the same priesthood of Yahweh (who became Jesus Christ), Melchisedec’s “brother”, as it were, in the Elohim family. The Levitical priesthood will end when all of mankind has been purchased by the Father — called and chosen, are given His Spirit, and thus have the eternal laws of Elohim within them — or, as Paul stated in Hebrews 8:13,

“In that He said, A new covenant, He has made the first old. Now that which decays and waxes old is ready to vanish away.”

This same is elaborated upon in *The Eerdmans’ Bible Dictionary*.⁷

“Abraham’s acknowledgement of the legitimacy of Melchisedec’s priesthood becomes an argument for the priority of that priesthood over the ‘descendants of Levi’ (Hebrews 7:4-10). The messianic rules of Psalm 110 is, therefore, a priest of the line prior to the levitical priesthood ... The legitimacy of the Levitical priesthood depends on its descent from Levi; as it has a beginning, so it has an end in the understanding of the author of Hebrews.”

That old covenant under which the Levites administered is not yet “vanished away” because not everyone has been given the spirit through the Father’s calling ... and only He can call (John 6:44). The entire plan is in the Father’s hands. Because the Father is calling relatively few at this time to the first resurrection, the Levitical priesthood and its “external law” system cannot be envisioned to cease totally until in the Kingdom the calling of all men is achieved, when Satan is bound and his deceptions along with him (Revelation 20:1-6). We see a second resurrection, mentioned in Revelation 20:5, to occur after the thousand years. Well before that time the Levitical priesthood will have ceased, for all will have been granted access to His spirit. It is the Father’s will that none of the sons made in His image be lost (I Timothy 2:4).

Having now used a five-fold approach to ascertain the nature of the New Covenant — the eternal ten commandments, the nature of Christ’s own life, nature’s lessons, the contents of the Ark of the Covenant, and the nature of the Melchisedec priesthood — what can be ascertained to be the eternal laws which Elohim has placed in the minds and hearts of His called-out ones? This highly critical question points at the heart and core of acceptable conduct from God’s point of view. The synopsis that follows is by no means complete, but a guide for anyone interested in sorting through these laws.

One must be careful to make a distinction between which commands are designed for this present evil age, in which Satan wields power, and which are supplied for the Edenic

reign during which Satan is bound. (We are referring to the saints in either case). In many cases the execution of the laws is the same in both this age and the coming one, but not always. For example, the directions regarding marriage are forever: no divorce, and unity until death of one of the parties. However, once the water canopy is reinstated at the beginning of the millennium (Acts 3:21) and Edenic environmental conditions are restored, dietary laws will revert back to the instructions given for Eden (Genesis 1:29). Notes are provided in the following list for millennial applications of particular laws.

Those We Keep

Elohim's spiritual mind and view of other people and all of creation: Do unto others as you would have others do unto you, the meaning of the writings, and the prophets (Matthew 7:12). All of the other ways of Elohim we must keep flow from this central precept.

It is understood that while breaking some of these laws meant death for the offender (usually by stoning), the new covenant offers that one who commits some infraction worthy of death, but repents (changes his ways), is no longer under the death penalty, but is forgiven and given a new lease of life.

- The way of love and service, continually uplifting those who have no way to help themselves (Matthew 22:37-40; 20:25-28; 25:34-40)
- Looking upon others as better than oneself, which is Christ's mind (Philippians 2:1-5)
- The way of sinlessness (I John 3:4)
- Personality expressions of peace, joy, moderation, thanksgiving, kindness, righteous judgement, hope, patience, faithfulness, humility, and goodness (Galations 5:22-23)
- Exercising pure and uplifting thoughts (Philippians 4:8)
- Condemnation of evil (Psalm 97:10)

The ten commandments. The necessity of keeping the royal ten has been shown earlier in this paper, for all were in force before the law was given at Mt. Sinai. All are to be kept in a spirit of love.

- To hate your brother is to murder (I John 3:15; Matthew 5:21-22; Leviticus 19:7).
 - To covet (desire what is forbidden) is essentially equivalent to stealing (Luke 12:15).
 - To desire one of the opposite sex (outside of marriage) is adultery (Matthew 5:27-28).
- [All of the commandments can be treated in a similar fashion.]

The Sabbath and the Holy Days. The perpetual observance of the weekly Sabbath has been shown earlier in this paper, but the annual Holy Convocations also are a perpetual covenant for all Israel (now spiritual Israel). For instance, the Days of Unleavened Bread are "... a statute *for ever* [Hebrew *olam*, "the vanishing point, time out of mind (past or future), eternity, always"] throughout your *generations* [Hebrew *dor*, "a revolution of time, i.e. an age or generation"] in all your dwellings" (Leviticus 23:14). The fact the Elohim has prophesied that descendants of the

tribes of Israel will exist at the beginning of the upcoming millennial age (Jeremiah 32:37-44; Ezekiel 37:21-28; Revelation 7:3-8) proves that the Holy Days, beside the Sabbath, are to be kept at this time. Note also that the Sabbath command is nested along with the annual Holy Convocations of Leviticus 23, and that Jesus Christ and the disciples also kept the Holy Days, as did all of Israel in their day (Luke 22:15; I Corinthians 5:8; Acts 2:1-42; 18:21; etc.). Note especially that in Genesis 1:14—at the very creation—Elohim created the sun and moon and their periodic circuits to be for *seasons* [Hebrew *mowed*, “appointment, i.e. a fixed time or season; specifically a festival; conventionally a year; by implication an assembly (as convened for a specific purpose); technically the congregation; by extension the place of meeting; also a signal (as appointed beforehand)].

Eating only “clean meats” along with unheated, fresh vegetables, fruits, and grains. Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14 spell out which birds, animals, and fish may be consumed for food, and which cannot. These restriction were not ceremonial, but a guide set by Elohim to indicate what flesh foods were acceptable for proper nourishment of the human temple of Elohim after the Flood. Until the Flood only herbs and fruits with seeds in them were acceptable fare (Genesis 1:29). After the Flood, Noah was told he could eat flesh without blood in it (Genesis 9:3), but not just *any* creature, for surely He revealed to Noah’s family which were proper for bodily nourishment in the more highly stressed post-Flood environment. Added stresses from harmful radiation, poorer soils, and less nutritious food crops, leaching of minerals, more severe climate, pest and pathogen attacks, lower oxygen pressure, etc., would encourage more diseases and debilities of people, animals, and all creatures on earth, accelerating aging as is evidenced by the progressive decrease in longevity of the patriarchs after the Flood. “Nature has taught us” that Elohim’s principles of eating fresh fruits, vegetables, herbs, and other green, chlorophyll-containing plants (not saprophytes like mushrooms) did not change after the flood, for people whose diets are replete with such fresh foods tend to be more active and healthy ... especially when these foods are grown by natural methods on fertile, organic matter rich soils. In fact, “unclean” foods and those that have been heated above about 195° F will elicit a “leucocytosis: response in body: white blood cells increase in the bloodstream, indicating the body’s battle to detoxify harmful invaders into the body. Eating green vegetables with such heated or unclean foods will reverse the leucocytosis. Science investigating nature has taught us this and many other facts about God.

Millennial Application. With a change of environmental conditions to mimic the Adamic Eden (reconstitution of the water canopy, filtered sunlight, renewed and remineralized soils, restored plant species, higher air and oxygen pressure, etc. — many fewer stresses: Acts 3:21) — then plants bearing seeds will again be the fare of man.

Marriage. Elohim ordained at the recreation of the earth that man should have one wife (Genesis 2:24). Jesus Christ confirmed this permanent marriage covenant in Matthew 19:4-9, which was put in place *from the beginning*. Only fraud before marriage (the wife-to-be claiming she was a

virgin but was discovered not to be) was grounds for divorce (Deuteronomy 22:13-21; 24:1-5).

- Multiple marriages were not forbidden but also were not Elohim's ideal. Solomon's heart was misled by multiple wives (I Kings 11:4), and other patriarchs did not particularly profit by such associations. More than one wife generally led to jealousy and contention in the household. Paul confirmed the one man-one woman ideal when he wrote to Timothy, saying an overseer must be the husband of *one wife* (I Timothy 3:2).
- Foreign women were acceptable to marry only if they were willing to be a wife (Deuteronomy 21:10-14).

Millennial Application. Since Adam was given one wife, the implication is that the Edenic millennium will involve one man-one wife within marital associations.

Sexual propriety. All of these laws were given to insure the health and well-being of families and individuals. While close kin apparently were allowed to marry after Adam's creation, Elohim later imposed restrictions on consanguineous marriages, due largely to the accumulation of genetic errors before and after the Flood caused by imperfect diets, increased harmful radiation, and a host of other negative effects of sin and separation from the Tree of Life. We know that the marriage of next-of-kin will allow the expression of recessive, harmful traits like hemophilia or muscular dystrophy. Not all restriction in marriage or sexual relations, however, dealt only with genetic defect issues. They dealt with issues of proper decorum among family members and neighbors to squelch lust and encourage serving and uplifting within the community.

- Marriages and sexual relations between closely-related family members are prohibited (Leviticus 18:6-8; 20:11-12, 14, 17, 19-21; Deuteronomy 22:30).
- Rape. If a man raped an unbetrothed virgin he had to marry her (Deuteronomy 22:28-29; Exodus 22:16-17); if a man raped a married or betrothed woman who resisted and cried out, he was to be killed (Deuteronomy 22:25:27); if the married or betrothed woman was in the city and did not cry out, then both were to be killed (Deuteronomy 22:23-24).
- Adultery with one's neighbor is prohibited (Leviticus 18:20; 20:10; Deuteronomy 22).
- Sexual relations during menstruation are prohibited (Leviticus 15:19-33; 18:19; 20:18).
- Homosexuality and bestiality are both banned (Leviticus 18:22-23; 20:13, 15-16).
- Transvestitism is prohibited (Deuteronomy 22:5).
- Prostitution is forbidden (Leviticus 19:29; Deuteronomy 23:17-18).

Millennial Application. Consanguineous marriages could conceivably be instituted with a removal of genetic defects and with a reinstatement of proper moral principles within families. This issue is highly unclear. Rape, adultery, homosexuality, and other perversions will not occur in a *God-fearing society*, so penalties regarding them will not apply.

Children treating their parents. A person who *cursed* [Hebrew *galal*, “to be light, small, easy, trifling, vile:”] his father or mother was to be put to death (Leviticus 20:9; Exodus 21:15-17; Deuteronomy 21:18-21).

Millennial Application. With children having the proper loving association with their parents from the time they are born, the millennial period should create families having no internal discord. Thus, no penalties will need to be leveled against delinquent children.

Slavery and servant-master relationships. While a servant is to ideally gain his freedom if at all possible (I Corinthians 7:21), while working under a master a servant is to deal justly before God and man. In a real sense, the Scriptures encourage us to become private businessmen — whether farmers, carpenters, shoemakers, or teachers — so we may interface directly with the individual being served.

- A servant is to work as to please God, not men, for in reality the “servant” is working for God in *everything* he does (I Corinthians 7:22; Ephesians 6:5-6).
- Selling people as slaves was forbidden (Deuteronomy 24:7; Exodus 21:16).

Millennial Application. Slavery as we know it will not occur within an Edenic world, but rather support of every person by others to create a free and prosperous culture, people serving others as they wish to be served.

False witnessing. A false witness was to be treated as he thought to have done to his brother against whom he testified (Deuteronomy 19:15-21).

Millennial Application. Without breaking Elohim’s laws regarding false witnessing, there will be no need for penalties.

Talebearing. Being a “busybody” or talebearer is condemned throughout Scripture (I Peter 4:15; II Thessalonians 3:11; I Timothy 5:13; Leviticus 19:16; Exodus 23:1).

Millennial Application. Talebearing is not in conformity with God’s laws of love, and should have no application in Millennial culture.

Marking or tattooing the body, or having specialized hair cuts. Such marks or hair styles are forbidden, since they can be associated with worshipping false gods (Leviticus 19:27-28; 21:5;

Deuteronomy 14:1).

Millennial Application. Without cutting or marking the body, this ordinance should not apply.

Dealing with contagious diseases. Scripture deals strongly with highly contagious bacterial, fungal, and other infections passed from person to person, or from objects to a person. Limiting contact of the infected person with others is the essential ingredient for isolating a plague and removing its potentially lethal consequences for a population. Elohim is not so concerned about quarantining people for chronic but uncommunicable diseases such as cancer, emphysema, and arthritis, though He certainly implies that following His laws of health and behavior will drastically limit diseases of all types.

“If you will diligently hearken to the voice of Yahweh your Elohim, and will do that which is right in His sight, and will give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon you which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am Yahweh who heals you”

- Venereal diseases are prevented by abstinence before marriage (I Corinthians 6:18).
- Any disease diagnosed as contagious and dangerous to others — such as the “leprosy” or “running issue” of ancient Israel—resulted in the affected individual being isolated outside the camp until the body had put down the disease (Leviticus 13:1-46; 14:1-32).
- Any clothes of an infected person, or objects he touched, must be cleansed or destroyed (Leviticus 13:47-59; 14:33-57; 15:4-27).

While the principle of isolation and cleansing to rid one of a contagious disease is critical for the welfare of a society, the associated offerings of animals and birds performed by the priesthood no longer applies. Jesus Christ suffered once for all. What applies is the meaning of those offerings: the love and concern we show to others by helping them stay healthy.

Millennial Application. Total ecosphere upheaval to simulate Edenic conditions worldwide (optimum quality soils and climate, renewed food crop species, etc.), with high oxygen pressure to suppress pathogens, and proper hygiene, lifestyles, and methods of growing and preparing foods — along with obedience to Yahweh (Leviticus 26, Deuteronomy 28) — will remove disease from all of society.

Weights and measures. All means of weighing and measuring for trade were to be standardized and accurately maintained in commerce. The economic implications of this fairness practice to the Israelites are obvious. One really is speaking of the eighth commandment here (Leviticus 19:36; Deuteronomy 25:13-15; Proverbs 11:1; 16:11; 20:10).

Millennial Application. If commerce is ordered in any way as it is today, all business people will desire to use proper weights and measures; no laws will need to be in force regarding them.

Dealing with witches, false prophets, mediums, and worshippers of false Elohim. All such evil individuals were to be killed (Leviticus 20:1-6, 27; 19:26, 31; Exodus 22:18; Deuteronomy 4:15-31; 12:29-32; 13:1-18; 18:9-22).

Millennial application. Since no such individuals will operate within Yahweh's culture, this law will not apply.

Respect for the aged. Elohim makes plain that we should "rise up before the hoary head" (Leviticus 19:32), and treat wise and aged people with great respect for their accumulated knowledge, wisdom, and understanding over the years (I Timothy 5:1; Proverbs 16:31).

Millennial application. All of the aged will be well cared for by their families, hence no need to remind people.

Death, accidental or intentional, or injury. Appropriate penalties are levied, with death to the perpetrator for intentional harm (Deuteronomy 19:1-13; Exodus 21:12-14, 18-27). Yet, upon repentance Jesus Christ made it plain that, referring to Exodus 21 and "eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth" philosophy,

"But I say unto you, that you resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also ..." (Matthew 5:38-39).

The principle Jesus Christ was expounding is not a show of weakness, but considerable character strength on the part of the saints in resisting taking vengeance into one's own hands ... for He knew the saints would be few in number among the heartless masses. Not only that, they would not always exercise righteous judgement in controversies. Christ therefore made the plan simple: keep doing good in spite of whatever happens.

Millennial application. The accent of the millennium will be life — long life, brim-full, and running over (John 10:10) — and harming others will be foreign to this way of thinking. Rather, love towards others will be the norm, and esteeming others better than oneself (Philippians 2:3).

Relieving animal suffering. An animal of another owner which has collapsed under a load should be assisted (Deuteronomy 22:4).

Millennial application. Animal power may indeed be employed in the coming age, but so will concern for all beasts, wherein all will be tame and harmless as in Eden see Isaiah 11:6-9).

Returning lost items. Tools, livestock, or other items belonging to another person should be speedily returned to their rightful owner (Deuteronomy 22:1-3). One should allow this that wish to borrow from you to do so (Deuteronomy 15:8, 10; Matthew 5:42).

Millennial application. No thievery will occur within a society bent on giving and serving, and the thrust in life will be to help one's neighbor in any way possible.

Ecological principles:

- Preserving wild creatures. If a nest with eggs or young birds is discovered, the eggs or young may be taken but not the mother, thus insuring another generation of young (Deuteronomy 22:6-7).
- “*Diverse seeds*” [*kilayim*, “separation, two heterogeneities”; *zera*, “seed”] were not to be sown in fields or vineyards, for the cross produced would be inferior and bring a negative impact on the body (Deuteronomy 22:9).
- Any excrement must be covered with soil (Deuteronomy 23:12-13).

Millennial application. Hunting for animals will be a thing of the past, with such sports or need for flesh foods supplanted by kindness to animals and eating of plant foods. Mostly perennial crops will be grown, free for the taking, available all year long (Revelation 22:2) and perfectly nutritious. The ecosphere will be incredibly tame and productive.

No usury was to be charged to fellow Israelites, only to foreigners. (Deuteronomy 23:21-23; Numbers 30:1-16)

Millennial application. Without banking as we know it, usury will be nearly impossible to exact. As stealing, it will be a thing of the past.

All vows and promises must be kept. (Deuteronomy 23:21-23; Numbers 30:1-16)

Millennial application. It will be understood that words must count for what they mean under a “perfect language” (Zephaniah 3:9) from a perfect Teacher of Righteousness.

Eating from a farmer's field. A person may eat grapes or grain from another farmer's field to satisfy one's hunger, but none can be carried along with you when you leave (Deuteronomy

23:24-25). Grain, fruit, or other produce accidentally left in a field, orchard, or vineyard after harvesting must be left for the needy (Deuteronomy 24:19-21), nor are the corners of fields to be harvested (Leviticus 19:9-10).

Millennial application. Food crops will be available all year long throughout the landscape. Elohim gives the increase, and sustenance for an infinitely valuable humankind — made in Elohim’s image — will be likewise without price.

Treatment of the disadvantaged. The blind were not to be tripped not the deaf cursed (Leviticus 19:9-10).

Millennial application. All blind, dumb, maimed, ill, and demon-possessed will be healed, so no threat to these people will exist (Isaiah 29:18; Christ’s healings; etc.).

Paying for stolen items. Restitution is to be made proportional to the offense committed (Exodus 22:1-4).

Millennial application. Without stealing there will be no laws regarding stealing.

Those We Do Not Keep

The offerings such as the burnt offerings, meat offerings, peace offerings, and sin offerings, trespass offerings, and grain offerings (Leviticus 1 to 7). Also, other animal and grain and oil offerings given on the Sabbaths (see Leviticus 23:8, 11-13, 16-20, 27, 36-37, for one example). These offerings were all added after the basic giving of the core laws at Mt. Sinai, after Israel’s sins had mounted up and additional measures had to be instituted by Yahweh to bring these rebellious people into remembrance of their evils. “For I spoke not unto you fathers, not commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices ...” (Jeremiah 7:22). There were the “... meats and drinks, and diverse washings, and carnal rites or ceremonies imposed on them [Israel] until the time of *reformation* [Greek *diorthosis*, ‘to straighten thoroughly, rectification, specifically the Messianic restoration’]” (Hebrews 9:10). Concerning these sacrifices, which pointed towards the coming Messiah, Paul wrote, “For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin In burnt offerings and sacrifices for us You have had no pleasure ... which are offered by the law By the which will we are sanctified through the *offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all*.... Now where remission of the [sins] is, there is no more offering for sin” (Hebrews 10:4, 6, 8, 10, 18).

A strictly vegetation diet. While Elohim provided fruits and herbs that bore seed to be food for newly created man (Genesis 1:29), He provided flesh for food as well after the Flood (Genesis

9:3-4) due to the harsher environmental conditions after the collapse of the water canopy, reduced oxygen pressure, and an enhanced proliferation of diseases and aging from lower-quality food, increased harmful radiation, and other post-Flood effects. This flesh would of necessity include only clean meats that are specified in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14, for these laws were given to protect Elohim's creation from undue toxic effects of unclean meats to the body He designed.

Traditions of men imposed beyond the intent of eternal laws. These traditions can take any number of forms, and were roundly criticized by Jesus Christ. He castigated the scribes and Pharisees of his day, saying ...

“...This people draws near unto Me with their mouth, and honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. But *in vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men*” (Matthew 15:8-9).

“Full well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your own traditions .Making the word of God of no effect through your traditions ...” (Mark 7:9, 13).

Some evil traditions of the Pharisees mentioned in Scripture include the following:

- Washing pots and cups ceremoniously, and many similar things (Mark 7:8)
- Delivering funds for use at the temple that should be used to help care for one's parents (Mark 7:10-13)
- Making *broad* [Greek *platuno*, “to widen”] *phylacteries* [Greek *phylakterion*, “a guard-case for wearing slips of Scripture texts”] to be seen and praised of men (Matthew 23:5)
- Enlarging the *borders* [Greek *kraspedon*, “a fringe or tassel”] of their garments (Matthew 23:5), again to be seen of men. While the wearing of tassels of fringes was a part of the law that Yahweh gave to Israel, in order that they would look at the fringes and remember to perform the commandments (Numbers 15:37-40), it makes no sense that, once the core laws of Elohim are placed within one's mind and heart, one would need an external reminder to perform these laws. Such tassels were designed to build righteous habits among unconverted people, in the hope that they would “... remember, and do all My commandments...” (Numbers 15:40).
- Sitting in the most important seats at feasts and Sabbath services (Matthew 23:7).
- Desiring to be called by special titles, such as “Rabbi” (Matthew 23:7). An equivalent title today might be Father, Preacher, or even Minister to set one apart in some official capacity.
- Making long prayers (Matthew 23:14), to be seen of men
- Creating proselytes for their organization, and teaching them to be evil like themselves (Matthew 23:15)
- Elevating the value of gold (money) above people, God, and His temple (Matthew 23:16-22)
- Tithing carefully on agricultural production—which is a proper practice—but omitting

- weightier matters of the law like judgement, mercy, and faith (Matthew 23:23)
- Making an outward appearance of righteousness while remaining full of extortion, uncleanness, excess, and hypocrisy within (Matthew 23:25-29)
- Not picking grains of wheat to eat on the Sabbath Day (Matthew 12:1-2)
- Not carrying one's bed on the Sabbath Day (John 5:8-10)
- Not healing on the Sabbath Day (Matthew 12:9-14)

Many other "traditions of men" are promulgated by various ecclesiastical groups, such as these:

- **Roman Catholicism**

- Not eating fish on Friday
- Worshipping Mary as a sinless virgin, alongside or even above Jesus Christ
- Saying the "rosary" over and over, in vain repetition
- Making confession of sins to a priest rather than to the Father directly
- Eating the "communion wafer", the supposed literal flesh of Jesus Christ
- Conducting "masses" of worship, patterned after Babylonian symbolism
- Women wearing head scarfs during worship services
- The priests wearing small hats and other garb during worship services
- Celibacy of priests and nuns (on the surface, anyway)
- Walking on one's knees to the alter of a church building (as in some Latin areas)
- Harboring numerous idols in church buildings, or in homes and automobiles

- **Judaism.** It should be noted that those who call themselves Jews today are following more-or-less in the footsteps of the Pharisees, with a prescribed culture and way that effectively retains their identity apart from the rest of society.

- Bobbing the upper body while saying memorized prayers
- Wearing particular types of clothing
- Women wearing scarfs during worship services
- Men wearing small hats and prayer shawls during worship services
- Conducting Sabbath services, Feast events, and other events by a liturgy
- Considering Jesus Christ to be merely a prophet, not the Son of God

Circumcision. Circumcision of all males was a sign of membership in Israel, Yahweh's select nation, a sign of the covenant God made with Abram (Genesis 17:10-14). The procedure itself was a sign of removing the stony heart to expose the tender heartedness which Elohim desires amongst His people. A circumcised people represents a people tender of heart ... in Yahweh's own likeness.

"Circumcise therefore the foreskin of you heart, and be no more stiffnecked" (Deuteronomy 10:16; see also Jeremiah 4:4).

In the new covenant, Paul made it clear that circumcision was not necessary to prove oneself a member of the ecclesia. Rather, he said,

“Is any man called being circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? Let him not be circumcised. Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God” (I Corinthians 7:18-19). “For he is not a Judean who is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Judean [a spiritual Israelite, of Abraham’s seed: Galations 3:27-29] who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God” (Romans 2:28-29).

Circumcision still has value as a hygienic procedure, for science (nature) has proven that wives of circumcised men experience far fewer cases of cervical cancer than do wives of uncircumcised men.

Millennial application. Since Elohim made the male with a foreskin, and that was “good” under Edenic conditions (Genesis 1:31), there is not logical reason for the millennial Eden to reinstate circumcision, nor to identify a special people during that period by circumcision since all — Israelite and Gentile — will be special to Yahweh.

Purification of woman after childbirth. The period of “impurity” after childbirth—40 days for a male and 80 days for a female—is not deemed obligatory in the new covenant, not are the offerings at the fulfillment of those days or the circumcision on the eighth day for a male child (Leviticus 12:1-8). It makes no sense that a spirit-filled woman should “... touch no hallowed thing, not come into the sanctuary ...” (Leviticus 12:4) during 40 to 80 days after childbirth, since a converted woman, whether delivered of a child or not, is still given full access to the Father’s throne in heaven.

Waging war. Elohim’s people, except to protect one’s family and person, ought not be involved in military conquests unless He directly instructs one to so fight, as Yahweh did with Israel. Normally battles are waged to perpetuate and enlarge the kingdoms of self-centered human leaders, not to glorify the Creator and Sustainer of life. Jesus Christ never confronted men with physical force, but rather committed His protection to His Father continually (Matthew 26:53; John 18:36). When violence did erupt he showed care for the victims, as when he healed the severed ear of the high priest’s servant (Luke 22:51). Thus, instructions concerning war, as in Deuteronomy 20, ought not apply to the saints.

Millennial application. With no war during millennial times (Micah 4:3), there certainly will be no need to institute laws relating to war.

The listing covered above is by no means complete. However, it serves to illustrate that while

Elohim's eternal commandments are woven throughout the Mosaic laws, the covenant given at Mt. Sinai was not totally Edenic, not did it totally originate within the Order of Melchisedec. One cannot pick and choose what he wants to follow, but rather he must rely on a thorough examination of Scripture to reveal which laws are in force to guide Christians today.

This paper has revealed that by examining the eternal laws and commandments of Yahweh and the Father, the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, nature and what it teaches, the contents of the Ark of the Covenant, and the Melchisedec Order it is possible to decipher which precepts of Elohim are eternal, placed within the minds and hearts of His ecclesia. We *can* know the substance of the new covenant ... which has been shown to pre-date the so-called "old covenant" and was given to Adam and the patriarchs. It can also be proven that there was an Old Testament Church, entirely parallel to the New Testament Church ... and those saints had the same "new covenant agenda" as do the saints today. Elohim does not change. There is nothing new under the sun. Only because of disobedience are regulations heaped upon mankind's soiled plate.

The new covenant is Christ and the Father living in you, their desire to reside there, and your acceptance of their presence. What a marvelous covenantal relationship that is! Are you prepared to accept these facts?

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