

Many today are speaking of these times being a precursor of a Great Global Revival, but I believe God is actually preparing His Church for Revival, and that out of the Church's Revival will come a Last Harvest:

“For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God:
and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?”
1 Peter 4:17

But until the Church “Return’s to the Lord” how will the world even see God: “Strive for . . . holiness without which no one will see the Lord,” Hebrews 12:14. This “Return to the Lord” by the Church will not come without a price, and that price will be defined and refined by “Discipline”:

“⁶ For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.”
⁷ It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? ⁸ If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.⁹ Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? ¹⁰ For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. ¹¹ For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”
Hebrews 12:6-11

God describes the status of the Church today as being not relevant any more, but rather “lukewarm (spiritually sick) . . . wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked,” Revelation 3:14-22. Immediately following His rebuke of this Endtime Church, the Lord instructs them in how to “Return”, by acquiring, above anything else, His teaching and instruction, keeping His commandments, putting on discernment and obedience of His teaching and instruction, and lastly, passionately stop living life our own way and begin passionately living life God’s way, **Repentance**, allowing His Church to become relevant again, healing and refreshing, that none should perish, but that all might be restored back into right relationship and communion with God for Eternal Life.

During this time of Wilderness Wandering, or as we are seeing it today, isolation, biblically defined as “The place where God Speaks”, He has brought His Church to **Reconsider** their way, and **reestablish** themselves back as God’s **chosen race, royal priesthood, holy nation, people for his own possession, that they might, once again, proclaim the excellencies of Him who call them out of darkness into His marvelous light** (1 Peter 2:9), and become the Light of the world once again, by beginning to separate themselves from the world, to **“Reclaim”** God’s Holy Name once again in all the earth.

Unfortunately, the Church is being described as “a woman in her menstrual impurity”, which was a description of God’s people who had defiled the name of the Lord “by their ways and their deeds” (Ezekiel 36:16-38), but until we come to understand the meaning of this word picture, the Church will never see their full potential. It is in this word picture of “a woman in her menstrual impurity”, discovered in Leviticus 15, that we learn that it was required of a menstruating woman to separate herself from the community of faith for a prescribed period of time, to include water cleaning(s) and an offering, for both a physical and spiritual reunion. We learn the lesson, in this monthly cycle, that even the highest of priests must model, that **we can honor the death of lost opportunities but treasure the life that our new choices create**. Meaning, when the Church does not exercise their faith in obeying the teaching and instructions of the Lord, making a distinction between the “holy and the common” and the “clean and the unclean”, the egg, or hearing, of opportunity to see the full potential of God in our lives is missed, and we are required to remove ourselves from the activity of God. On the other hand, once the Church begins to exercise their faith, through the impregnation of the egg, or hearing and obeying, it is then, and only then that the Church will see the full potential of God birthed into their lives, with “New Beginnings” and “New Life”, which comes through the birthing process. We are cleansed when the water breaks and we must move through the conversion process, which is a separation (holiness), through the narrow path (God’s way), of the old life (Death - Our way) to the new life (Eternal Life - God’s way), which is what is celebrated. Far from being “dirty”, the woman’s cycle is of the highest purity, for it reminds us that it is the cycles, changes, and opportunities of this physical life that defines our greatest spirituality. In other words, the spiritual rebirth of separating oneself (emotionally, spiritually, physically, financially, and with all our strength) from this world, creates an opportunity to refocus on life and fresh beginnings that God purposed us for, ministers of reconciliation.

“⁸ Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. ⁹ And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him, . . .

(Warning Against Apostasy) ¹¹ About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since **you have become dull of hearing**. ¹² For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, ¹³ for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. ¹⁴ But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.
Hebrews 5:8-14

“Return to the Lord”

Our daily sacrifice of devotion and service, bringing “Our Best” to God in all facets of **our life** (emotionally, spiritually, physically, financially, and with all our strength), **in communion with God** and **restoration of communion with God** through **repentance** (by stopping to do things our own way and our starting to do things God’s way), which is given to us through our **new beginnings** or by our **setting ourselves apart for holiness**, as a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that we might proclaim the excellencies of him who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light, according to God’s ways, identified in the DNA of his **new beginnings** (as he created, from the beginning of time, in each new day, each new week, each new month, each new year, and each divine festival or renewal of faith of God’s divine appointment of *His redemption, restoration, and return* of mankind back to God’s ways and not our own); which are seen as a means of **transitioning from a time of isolation back into the community by first drawing close to God**, in our acknowledging him in all of our ways, that he might direct our paths. It is a special moment of thanksgiving, in these “new beginnings”, that both mankind and one’s faith in God survive the pain and risk of the trials and tribulations of this life.

This important juncture reminds us that **transitions matter**; as we move from one phase to the next in our lives, **we should first draw close to God with thanksgiving**, again, by daily giving “Our Best” to God in all our ways and restoring our communion with God *through repentance*, by stopping to do things our own way and our starting to do things God’s way.

Deuteronomy 30:1-6

Repentance and Forgiveness

¹ “And when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the Lord your God has driven you, ² and return to the Lord your God, you and your children, and **obey his voice in all that I command you today, with all your heart and with all your soul,** ³ then the Lord your God will restore your fortunes and have mercy on you, and he will gather you again from all the peoples where the Lord your God has scattered you. ⁴ *If your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of heaven, from there the Lord your God will gather you,* and from there he will take you. ⁵ And **the Lord your God will bring you into the land that your fathers possessed**, that you may possess it. And he will make you more prosperous and numerous than your fathers. ⁶ **And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.** ⁷ And the Lord your God will put all these curses on your foes and enemies who persecuted you.

Word to the Church Today:

Jeremiah 6:16-21

¹⁶ **Thus says the Lord: “Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls.** But they said, ‘We will not walk in it.’ ¹⁷ I set watchmen over you, saying, ‘Pay attention to the sound of the trumpet!’ But they said, ‘We will not pay attention.’

¹⁸ Therefore hear, O nations, and know, O congregation, what will happen to them. ¹⁹ Hear, O earth; behold, I am bringing disaster upon this people, the fruit of their devices, because they have not paid attention to my words; and as for my law, they have rejected it.

²⁰ What use to me is **frankincense** (“in their actions and speech” – here they had purchased a license to go on in sin, they were so far from being pleasing to God that they were deliberately angering God) that comes from Sheba, or sweet cane from a distant land? **Your burnt offerings** are not acceptable, nor **your sacrifices** pleasing to me. ²¹ Therefore thus says the Lord: ‘Behold, I will lay before this people stumbling blocks against which they shall stumble; fathers and sons together, neighbor and friend shall perish.’”

Haggai 1:3-5

³ Then the word of the Lord came by the hand of Haggai the prophet, ⁴ **‘Is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, while this house lies in ruins?’** ⁵ Now, therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts: Consider your ways.”

Ezekiel 36:16-38

The Lord's Concern for His Holy Name

¹⁶ The word of the Lord came to me: ¹⁷ Son of man, when the house of Israel lived in their own land, **they defiled it by their ways and their deeds. Their ways before me were like the uncleanness of a woman in her menstrual impurity.** ¹⁸ So I poured out my wrath upon them for the blood that they had shed in the land, for the idols with which they had defiled it. ¹⁹ I scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed through the countries. **In accordance with their ways and their deeds I judged them.** ²⁰ But when they came to the nations, wherever they came, they profaned my holy name, in that people

¹ **menstrual impurity:** (Leviticus 15) the parallel of the purpose of a woman having to **mikvah/baptize** (setting apart for the purpose of purity/holiness, regarding a spiritual state and not a physical state – not about getting clean, but rather about getting alive) and our Spiritual Rebirth: The menstruating woman honors the egg that has been shed, which will never house a human soul, as she embraces a fresh potential for life that she can now bestow unto the world. This is the magic of the woman, “mother of all life” (Genesis 3:20), as her monthly cycle represents a lesson that even the highest of priests must model - that we can honor the death of lost opportunities but treasure the life that our new choices create, and **through the birthing process, we are baptized when the water breaks and we must move through the conversion process, which is a separation, through the narrow path, of the Old life to the New life, which is what we celebrate today.**

Far from being “dirty”, the woman’s cycle is of the highest purity, for it reminds us that it is the cycles, changes, and opportunities of this physical life that defines our greatest spirituality. In other words, the spiritual rebirth of going to the **mikvah/baptism/setting apart** is one of refocusing on life and fresh beginnings.

said of them, 'These are the people of the Lord, and yet they had to go out of his land.'²¹ But **I had concern for my holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations to which they came.**

I Will Put My Spirit Within You

22 "Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord God: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that **I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came.**²³ And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them. **And the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Lord God, when through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes.**²⁴ I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. ²⁵ I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. ²⁶ And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. **And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.**²⁷ **And I will put my Spirit within you, and (I will . . .) cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.**²⁸ You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God. ²⁹ **And I will deliver you from all your uncleannesses.** And I will summon the grain and make it abundant and lay no famine upon you. ³⁰ I will make the fruit of the tree and the increase of the field abundant, that you may never again suffer the disgrace of famine among the nations. ³¹ **Then you will remember your evil ways, and your deeds that were not good, and you will loathe yourselves for your iniquities and your abominations.**³² **It is not for your sake that I will act, declares the Lord God; let that be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your ways, O house of Israel.**

33 "Thus says the Lord God: On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will cause the cities to be inhabited, and the waste places shall be rebuilt.³⁴ And the land that was desolate shall be tilled (see Jesus' Parable on the Four Conditions of the Soil/Heart), instead of being the desolation that it was in the sight of all who passed by.³⁵ And they will say, 'This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden, and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are now fortified and inhabited.'³⁶ Then the nations that are left all around you shall know that I am the Lord; I have rebuilt the ruined places and replanted that which was desolate. *I am the Lord; I have spoken, and I will do it.*

37 "Thus says the Lord God: This also I will let the house of Israel ask me to do for them: to increase their people like a flock.³⁸ Like the flock for sacrifices, like the flock at Jerusalem during her appointed feasts, so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of people. *Then they will know that I am the Lord.*"

Focus of Today:

Ezekiel 22:26-27

"²⁶ Her priests have done violence to my law and have profaned my holy things. They have made no distinction between the holy and the common, neither have they taught the difference between the unclean and the clean, and they have disregarded my Sabbaths, so that I am profaned among them.²⁷ Her princes in her midst are like wolves tearing the prey, shedding blood, destroying lives to get dishonest gain."

"Strive for . . . holiness without which no one will see the Lord."
Hebrews 12:14

"You shall be holy to me, for I the Lord am holy and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be mine."
Leviticus 20:26

"You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."
Matthew 5:48

"For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth."
Deuteronomy 7:6, 14:2, 26:18

"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."
1 Peter 2:9

Therefore, we must begin to live out those Holy Lives that God has not just spoken, but created us for. Choosing Holiness in the Mundane, not because one day is greater than another, but because God "Choose" one day to be greater than another as it pertains to every area of our lives, for example:

- Sabbath² as our day of Worship.

² ¹² And the Lord said . . . , "Above all you shall keep my Sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I, the Lord, sanctify you . . . ¹⁶ Therefore . . . keep the Sabbath, observing the Sabbath throughout (your) . . . generations, as a covenant forever.¹⁷ It is a sign forever between me and the people . . . that in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed."
Deuteronomy 31:12-18

Matthew 12:8, "For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

Hebrews 4:1-13, "Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it . . . ⁷ God again set a certain day, calling it "Today": . . . 'Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts (" . . . harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness," Hebrews 3:8)' . . . ⁹ There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; ¹⁰ for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his.

- **The Feast of the Lord³ as our annual Celebrations.**
- **The Ten Commandments⁴ and the instructions of the Lord as our standard of Living.**

¹¹ Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will perish by following their (“those who left Egypt led by Moses,” Hebrews 3:16) example of disobedience. ¹² For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. ¹³ Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.”

³ The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, These are the appointed (fixed festivals) feasts (an exact divine appointment) of the Lord that you shall proclaim (attract the attention of and detain (someone) in conversation) as holy (set apart for a most holy thing) convocations (rehearsal, assembly, reading); they are my appointed feasts.” Leviticus 23:1-2

The Eight “Feasts of the Lord”: **1. Feast One:** Shabbat (7th Day/Saturday), *Spring Feasts* - **2. Feast Two:** Pesach/Feast of Passover, **3. Feast Three:** Feast of Unleavened Bread, **4. Feast Four:** Feast of First-Fruits, **5. Feast Five:** Shavuot/Feast of Weeks (Pentecost), *Fall Feasts* - **6. Feast Six:** Rosh Hashanah/Feast of Trumpets, **7. Feast Seven:** Yom Kippur/Feast of Atonement, **8. Feast Eight:** Sukkot/Feast of Tabernacles (also includes Simchat Atzeret/Eighth Day).

“Let no one therefore judge you in eating or in drinking, or in respect of a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths which are a shadow of what is to come but the Body of the Messiah.” Colossians 2:16-17 (KJV)

Here, he is telling us that the Appointed Times (Feast Days) and the Sabbath are a shadow of things to come. A shadow is of the same image as what it is portraying. So, doesn’t this imply these will be observed in the future kingdom? And note the text says that these commands ARE a shadow of things to come, not “were a shadow” or “used to be a shadow” of things to come. He then says, ‘let no man judge you’ (in these things: new moon; Sabbath; feasts) ‘but the Body of Messiah.’ The word “is” has been added to the original text and did not appear in the Greek.

The Body of Messiah is to judge each other with regard to these things. A second witness to this can be found in the following verses:

1 Corinthians 5:11-13, “But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone called ‘a brother,’ if he is one who whores, or greedy of gain, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler – not even to eat with such a one. For what have I to do with judging outsiders? **Do you not judge*, to pick out*** by separating, to be of opinion*, to judge* those who are inside? But Elohim judges those who are outside. And put away the wicked one from among you!”

* not judge - (*krinō* (2919) to distinguish (to approve what is correct and reject what is wrong - discern).

* to pick out - choose.

* opinion - decide.

* to judge - “bringing to trial”, expressing severe disapproval of (someone or something), typically in a formal statement).

4 Exodus 19:4-8, “⁴You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. ⁵Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine;⁶ and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel.”

⁷ So Moses came and called the elders of the people and set before them all these words that the Lord had commanded him. ⁸ All the people answered together and said, ‘All that the Lord has spoken we will do.’ And Moses reported the words of the people to the Lord . . .”

Matthew 22:34-40, ³⁶ “Teacher (referring to Jesus), which is the great commandment in the Law?”

When Jesus gave His reply concerning the greatest commandment it was in two parts ... just like the two tablets on which the Ten Commandments were written.

They draw a distinction between how to love God and how to love man. The first tablet contains five commandments that demonstrate how to love God and the second tablet, with its five commandments demonstrates how to love man.

The Ten Commandments: Exodus 20:1-18, ¹ And God spoke all these words, saying . . .

³⁷ And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. ³⁸ This is the great and first commandment. Matt. 22:37-38

Commandment 1: ³“You shall have no other gods before me. (the G

Commandment 2: ⁴“You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. ⁵ You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, ⁶ but showing steadfast love to thousands^[a] of those who love me and keep my commandments.

Commandment 3: ⁷“You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain”, (*vain: using His name to commit evil, or to pretend to serve in His name while in fact, failing to do so – Isaiah 29:13*, “This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in *vain* do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.”) – Leviticus 21:6, “They shall be holy to their God and **not profane** the name of their God.”) for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in *vain*.

Commandment 4: ⁸“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, ¹⁰but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. ¹¹For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

Commandment 5: ¹²“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.

Each tablet has a commandment that is known as the greatest, and one that is known as the least. On the first tablet, which is a demonstration of how to love God, the greatest is “*You shall have no other gods before Me*” and the least is “*Honor your father and mother.*”

The key word for demonstrating love for God is expressed in the least or last of the commandments on the first tablet ... Honor. The thought behind this is that if we will not honor our parents whom God has placed over us ... then we will eventually break all the remaining commandments until we finally worship and serve other gods. Honor concerns recognizing and obeying authority.

³⁹ And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself, Matt. 22:39

Commandment 6: ¹³“You shall not murder.

Commandment 7: ¹⁴“You shall not commit adultery.

Commandment 8: ¹⁵“You shall not steal.

Commandment 9: ¹⁶“You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

Commandment 10: ¹⁷“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor’s.”

On the second tablet, which is a demonstration of how to love man, the greatest is “*You shall not murder*” and the least is “*You shall not covet anything belonging to your neighbor.*”

The key word for demonstrating love for man is also found in the least or last of the commandments on the second tablet ... Covet. The thought behind this is that if we desire to possess something that belongs to someone else ... then we will eventually break all of the commandments until we finally murder them to get what we want.

⁴⁰ **On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.**” Matt. 22:40

“If you love me, you will keep my commandments.” John 14:15

Matthew 5:17-20, “**Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets;** I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished. Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and so teaches others, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say to you, that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.”

the Law or the Prophets - Scriptures that He spoke about are what is called the Old Testament portion of the Bible.

- Putting God and Others before ourselves⁵ as our standard in Relationships.
- Giving our Best as a Tithe to the Lord⁶ as the priority of our Investments.
- The Greatest among us being a Servant⁷ as our Work Ethic.
- Being a Slave to Righteousness⁸, right living according to God’s teaching and instruction, and No longer a Slave to Sin, wrong living according to teaching and instruction that apposes God’s, as the standard of our Pledge of Allegiance, and to no other, even unto death.
- The Word of God⁹ as our Traditions (i.e. ethics, customs, conducts, behaviors, habits, way of life).
- Making Disciples¹⁰ as our Mission.

(continued) Matthew 5:17-20, “. . . I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished. Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and so teaches others, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say to you, that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.”

the Law or the Prophets - Scriptures that He spoke about are what is called the Old Testament portion of the Bible.

abolish - (*I did not*) loosen thoroughly, (*I did not*) break up, (*I did not*) overthrow, (*I did not*) destroy (both literally and metaphorically), (*I did not*) unyoke, unharness a carriage horse or pack animal. Nor did I metaphorically overthrow, render vain, deprive of success, bring to naught God’s institutions, forms of government, laws.

fulfill - to be obeyed (*walked out*) as it should.

annul (*abrogate, relaxes*) - declare invalid (an official agreement, decision, or result), to "loosen" (literally or figuratively). (**Abrogate**) repeal or do away with (a law, right, or formal agreement) or evade (a responsibility or duty).

keeps (does, to do) - to make or do (I make, manufacture, construct; I do, act, cause.). (**To Do**) to follow some method in expressing by deeds the feelings and thoughts of the mind; universally, describing the mode of action: to act rightly, to do the law, meet its demands, (to do) the things which the law commands (*commit without any delay*).

⁵ Matthew 6:33, “But seek first the **kingdom of God** and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”

The Kingdom of God: “³⁶ Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” ³⁷ And he said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ ³⁸ This is the great and first commandment. ³⁹ And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. ⁴⁰ On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets,’ ” Matthew 22:36-40

⁶ Leviticus 1:5-9, “⁵ Then he shall kill the bull before the Lord, and Aaron’s sons the priests shall bring the blood and throw the blood against the sides of the altar that is at the entrance of the tent of meeting. ⁶ Then he shall flay the burnt offering and cut it into pieces, ⁷ and the sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire on the altar and arrange wood on the fire.⁸ And Aaron’s sons the priests shall arrange the pieces, the head, and the fat, on the wood that is on the fire on the altar; ⁹ but its entrails and its legs he shall wash with water. And the priest shall burn all of it on the altar, as a burnt offering, a food offering with a pleasing aroma to the Lord.”

During the preparations for the burning, the entrails and legs - representing our innermost being: the heart from which conduct springs; the viscera, our emotions; and the legs, our walk - must be cleansed with water before all is burned on the fire. The burnt offering is cleaned on the inside and then completely consumed.

Here is pictured the standard of devotion to God; this is what God is aiming His children toward due to our access to Him through Christ. We are to be a cleansed, total sacrifice. We are to withhold nothing; we are to give our all. This is the hardest of all the offerings God calls upon us to perform because, like the rich young ruler, we want to reserve things for ourselves.

The burnt offering is painful because it is costly. It is so costly because it costs us our life. This is what we give in exchange for the forgiveness of our sins! Jesus Himself says this in Luke 14:26: “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.”

<https://www.bibletools.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/Topical.show/RTD/CGG/ID/846/Animal-Sacrifices.htm>

So it is aroma of the smoke from the offering (“olah” meaning, offering, “that which goes up in smoke”) that pleases God. It would not be incorrect to say that smoke of the sacrifice soothed God and this allowed God to have a more favorable attitude toward that man who was making the ‘olah. Yet, let’s remember, a man did NOT bring a burnt offering when he committed a sin . . . that was NOT the purpose of the burnt offering. It was brought regularly for the primary reason of maintaining a good relationship with God, by means of seeking to please Him by means of obedience to God’s ordained sacrificial rituals. The offering (“olah” meaning, offering “that which goes up in smoke”) did NOT remove sin NOR did it in any way change the worshipper. That is, the worshipper’s own sinful nature did not become transformed as the result of the burnt offering . . . only God’s attitude toward this sinner was altered.

Matthew 6:19-21, “¹⁹ Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

⁷ Psalm 138:6, “For though the Lord is high, he regards the humble, but the haughty he knows from afar.”; Proverbs 3:34, “Toward the scorners he is scornful, but to the humble he gives favor.”; Matthew 23:11, “The greatest among you shall be your servant.”

⁸ Slaves to Righteousness: “¹⁵ What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means!¹⁶ Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, **you are slaves of the one whom you obey**, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? ¹⁷ But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed,¹⁸ and, having been set free from sin, have become **slaves of righteousness**. ¹⁹ I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as **slaves to righteousness** leading to sanctification.

²⁰ For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. ²¹ But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. ²² But now that you have been set free from sin and have become **slaves of God**, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. ²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 6:12-23

⁹ Isaiah 30:1, 9-13, “¹ Ah, stubborn children,” declares the Lord, “who carry out a plan, but not mine, and who make an alliance, but not of my Spirit, that they may add sin to sin . . . ⁹ For they are a rebellious people, lying children, children unwilling to hear the instruction of the Lord; ¹⁰ who say to the seers, “Do not see,” and to the prophets, “Do not prophesy to us what is right; speak to us smooth things, prophesy illusions, ¹¹ leave the way, turn aside from the path, let us hear no more about the Holy One of Israel.” ¹² Therefore thus says the Holy One of Israel, “Because you despise this word and trust in oppression and perverseness and rely on them, ¹³ therefore this iniquity shall be to you like a breach in a high wall, bulging out and about to collapse, whose breaking comes suddenly, in an instant.”

Matthew 15:6-7, “⁶ So for the sake of your tradition you have made void the word of God. ⁷ You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah (Isaiah 29:13) prophesy of you, when he said: ⁸ “‘This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; ⁹ in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’”

¹⁰ Matthew 28:19-20, “¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you . . .”

Go – as you go about your day.

make disciples – turning a learner into a teacher. “Disciple”, is the main (and only) verb in the statement and it is an IMPERATIVE (limited usage in the NT), an actual command in the statement. The imperative tense in the Greek does not make a suggestion but a COMMAND. The emphasized command is to “teach, instruct . . . to make disciples.”

baptizing – “Baptizing” is in the present tense. The present tense participle usually refers to an action simultaneous with the main verb, indicating that the baptizing and the discipling are going on at the SAME TIME. It also indicates that the “baptizing” is going on for the same length of time as the “make disciples”. This should make it clear that the word “baptizing” (Matthew 28:19) is not referring only to the relatively instantaneous action of water baptism, but rather to the much longer process of being SPIRITUALLY BAPTIZED (word, and deed (Romans 15:18). This is done as the Word of God is written in our hearts (2 Corinthians 3:3), and we learn to “observe all things” (Matthew 28:20) that Jesus has commanded us, to obedience in thought (2 Corinthians 10:5)). “Baptize” here has a CONTINUAL action aspect to it, which begs the question, “how do you ‘continually’

And each one of these Holy “Choices”, according to God’s Choices (Ways), should be our passionate life Choices, at which time the world can SEE God, in contrast to mans “Choices” and “Ways”, in worship, celebration, living, relationships, investments, ethics, and pledges, at which God cannot be SEEN. We too, like the Israelites, have the opportunity today to quietly separate ourselves through the “Red Sea”, by victoriously separating the livelihood of this world to live the life where God speaks, and allow Him to lead us into His Promises, and promise of Eternal Life.

How to Entreat the Favor of God:

Malachi 1:6-14

The Priests' Polluted Offerings

“A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If then I am a father, where is my honor? And if I am a master, where is my fear? says the Lord of hosts to you, O priests, who despise my name. But you say, ‘How have we despised your name?’ ⁷ By offering polluted food upon my altar. But you say, ‘How have we polluted you?’ By saying that the Lord’s table may be despised. ⁸ When you offer blind animals in sacrifice, is that not evil? And when you offer those that are lame or sick, is that not evil? Present that to your governor; will he accept you or show you favor? says the Lord of hosts. ⁹ And now entreat the favor of God, that he may be gracious to us. With such a gift from your hand, will he show favor to any of you? says the Lord of hosts. ¹⁰ Oh that there were one among you who would shut the doors, that you might not kindle fire on my altar in vain! I have no pleasure in you, says the Lord of hosts, and I will not accept an offering from your hand. ¹¹ For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name will be great among the nations, and in every place incense will be offered to my name, and a pure offering. For my name will be great among the nations, says the Lord of hosts. ¹² But you profane it when you say that the Lord’s table is polluted, and its fruit, that is, its food may be despised. ¹³ But you say, ‘What a weariness this is,’ and you snort at it, says the Lord of hosts. You bring what has been taken by violence or is lame or sick, and this you bring as your offering! Shall I accept that from your hand? says the Lord.¹⁴ Cursed be the cheat who has a male in his flock, and vows it, and yet sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished. For I am a great King, says the Lord of hosts, and my name will be feared among the nations.

i.e. 2 Samuel 24 – David Builds an Alter

“²⁵ And David built there an altar to the Lord and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the Lord responded to the plea for the land, and the plague was averted from Israel.”

water baptize someone?” “Baptize” means: to immerse, this doesn’t necessarily mean “immerse in water”, you could “immerse” into something else. Therefore, “the NAME of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit” is what the believer IS BEING BAPTIZED INTO, and not that which is used to perform the act. They are being baptized INTO the Person of God, the Trinity, not IN water; INTO the teaching and instruction of the Father, Son and the HOLY Spirit, and it’s continually happening over and over, not instantaneously.

¹⁰ (continued) Matthew 28:19-20, “... teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you . . .”

teaching – “Teaching” is in the present tense. “Teach” here has a CONTINUAL action aspect to it. The present tense participle usually refers to an action simultaneous with the main verb, indicating that the teaching and the discipling are going on at the SAME TIME. It also indicates that “teaching” is going on for the same length of time as the “make disciples”.

With this we must understand that the thrust of this passage is to “make disciples,” which would make sense that Jesus here is using “teaching” and “baptizing” as support to “making disciples.” Jesus, therefore, is saying to immerse people continually into the essence of the Person of God as a way to “disciple,” rather than talking about the ordinance.

observe all – keep, guard, observe, keep watch over, continue keeping guard over, and preserve.

I have commanded – to order, command to be done, enjoin (to direct or impose by authoritative order or with urgent admonition (gentle or friendly reproof, counsel or warning against fault or oversight)); i.e. **Deuteronomy 30:1-20**, “If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God that I command you today, by loving the Lord your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his rules, then you shall live and multiply, and the Lord your God will bless you.”

statutes – Divine law was first given to us encapsulated in the Ten Commandments, which were etched by the hand of God in two tablets of stone . . . When something is written, the substance of the letters that express it – the ink – remains a separate entity from the substance upon which they have been set – the parchment. On the other hand, letters engraved in stone are forged in it: the words are stone and the stone is words . . . By the same token, there is an aspect of Torah that is “inked” on our soul; we understand it, our emotions are roused by it; it becomes our “lifestyle” or even our “personality”; but it remains something additional to ourselves. But there is a dimension of Torah that is **statutes**, engrave in our being. There is a dimension of Torah which expresses a bond with G-d that is the very essence of a believers soul (i.e. Exodus 31:18, Exodus 32:16, Jeremiah 31:33, 2 Corinthians 3:3-9).

John 14:15, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.”