

5. *Light on the Levitical Laws*

By John Thiel, *Seeking to Please God Series*, [mp3](#)

We are seeking to please God in reference to the light that shines on Levitical laws. Our meditation in this series continues as we search our hearts in relation to the following statement, which we have delved upon several times in the past:

We are now living in the great day of atonement. In the typical service, while the high priest was making the atonement for Israel, all were required to afflict their souls by repentance of sin and humiliation before the Lord, lest they be cut off from among the people. In like manner, all who would have their names retained in the book of life should now, in the few remaining days of their probation, afflict their souls before God by sorrow for sin and true repentance. {GC 489.3}

To search our hearts deeply in the few remaining days of our probation, that is what we need to do. How meaningful are those words to us. This searching of heart is also brought before our mind's eye in the following words.

Zechariah's Vision

We are living in the period that is here revealed below; this is a depiction of the judgment hour in which we live:

Zechariah 3:1 And he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. 2 And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: [is] not this a brand plucked out of the fire? 3 Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. 4 And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment. 5 And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the LORD stood by. 6 And the angel of the LORD protested unto Joshua, saying, 7 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou shalt also judge my

house, and shalt also keep my courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by.

In verse 7 lies the challenge. And according to the Spirit of Prophecy,

Zechariah's vision of Joshua and the Angel applies with peculiar force to the experience of God's people in the closing up of the great day of atonement. {5T 472.2}

This tells us that this scene of Zechariah is a relevant description of our life in this period of time.

The remnant church will be brought into great trial and distress. Those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus will feel the ire of the dragon and his hosts. Satan numbers the world as his subjects, he has gained control of the apostate churches; but here is a little company that are resisting his supremacy. If he could blot them from the earth, his triumph would be complete. {Ibid.}

He has the apostate churches, but here is a little company. We will come back to this thought in a little while. So Zechariah's vision applies especially to the people of God in this closing up of the great day of atonement.

The fact that the acknowledged people of God are represented as standing before the Lord in filthy garments should lead to humility and deep searching of heart on the part of all who profess His name. {5T 471.1}

What leads us to deep searching of heart? It is because this statement, that applies to us who are living in the day of atonement, tells us we are dressed in filthy garments, and this should lead us to deep searching of heart.

Our Condition Revealed

Those who are indeed purifying their souls by obeying the truth will have a most humble opinion of themselves. {Ibid.}

They are not saying what the Laodicean people say, We are rich and increased with goods. No; they have *a humble opinion of themselves*.

The more closely they view the spotless character of Christ, the stronger will be their desire to be conformed to His image, and the less will they see of purity or holiness in themselves. {Ibid.}

Can you see this amazing true-hearted people? They will not see *purity or holiness in themselves*. This is what often oppresses the true believer; he doesn't see

this, and he searches his heart. This is our occupation if we are the little company.

But while we should realize our sinful condition, we are to rely upon Christ as our righteousness, {*Ibid.*}

Here is a call for action. We will feel the terrible impurity of our life; but while we realise this, *we are to rely upon Christ as our righteousness,*

...our sanctification, and our redemption. We cannot answer the charges of Satan against us. Christ alone can make an effectual plea in our behalf. He is able to silence the accuser with arguments founded not upon our merits, but on His own. {*Ibid.*}

I want you to take this home with you, this comforting message that is contained here. As we search our hearts and we see only failure; as we examine each little statement of God's word and His expectations and we see, I've really failed there, and I'm failing here; don't go down under the feeling of condemnation. Confess to God, and rely upon Christ as our righteousness. This must be continually in our hearts as we explore to search our hearts.

Change of Raiment

Yet we should never be content with a sinful life. It is a thought that should arouse Christians to greater zeal and earnestness in overcoming evil, that every defect in character, every point in which they fail to meet the divine standard, is an open door by which Satan can enter to tempt and destroy them; and, furthermore, that every failure and defect on their part gives occasion to the tempter and his agents to reproach Christ. {5T 472.1}

That makes you feel it even deeper, doesn't it?

We are to exert every energy of the soul in the work of overcoming, and to look to Jesus for strength to do what we cannot do of ourselves. No sin can be tolerated in those who shall walk with Christ in white. The filthy garments are to be removed, and Christ's robe of righteousness is to be placed upon us. By repentance and faith we are enabled to render obedience to all the commandments of God, and are found without blame before Him. Those who shall meet the approval of God are now afflicting their souls, confessing their sins, and earnestly pleading for pardon through Jesus their Advocate. Their attention is fixed upon Him, their hopes, their faith, are centered on Him, and when the command is given, "Take away the filthy garments, and

clothe him with change of raiment, and set a fair miter upon his head," they are prepared to give Him all the glory of their salvation. {Ibid.}

These are very important words as we pursue this series on seeking to please God.

The Lord desires you to receive the gospel, and to practice it in your lives. He calls upon you to become humble seekers after Him, to receive the truth into good and honest hearts, and to reveal it in a decided change of character. Let every believer turn his attention toward seeking the Lord, that the church as a body may stand before God in true humility, the souls of the members cleansed from the defilement of sin. {19MR 233.1}

My brethren and sisters, take hold of the work of perfecting Christian character. {19MR 233.2}

Take hold of that work.

We are to live for the glory of God. {Ibid.}

Isn't that what the first angel's message says? *Fear God, and give glory to Him.*

There needs to be deep searching of heart. There is a great work to be done in cleansing the life by the truth of God's Word. When this truth is received as it should be, the life will become a power for the glory of God. {Ibid.}

This is what our attention was drawn to in our previous study, when we read from Exodus 19 that to give God the glory, and for Him to make us as His treasure, like He did with the Hebrews, we need to exert ourselves and obey His voice.

His Peculiar Treasure

Exodus 19:4 Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and [how] I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. 5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth [is] mine:

You will be a peculiar treasure above all people, said He to them; you will be doing things to My glory.

Exodus 19:6 And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These [are] the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

A kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. As we saw before, these aspirations to be God's treasure, to be God's people who will live to His glory, were lost among the Israelites; they did not have this anymore. But we today are to be those people.

1 Peter 2:9 But ye [are] a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: 10 Which in time past [were] not a people, but [are] now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

God turned His attention to those who before were not His people, those such as us who were not Jews; but by faith in Jesus Christ we are then to be this *chosen generation*, this *royal priesthood*, this *holy nation*, a *peculiar people*—His treasure. It is our privilege to be called according to the words of Deuteronomy 4, to be a people of whom the nations around will say, These are a special people; look how by obedience to all of God's commandments they are truly greater than any other nation.

The Remnant of Jacob Scattered

And because we have been reading of the nation of Israel and we are reading of a church, of a people who are meant to be a large number of people, we often think, This doesn't really apply to meagre little numbers like us; this means a *church*, an acceptable large body of people. And this is also what we may conclude from the Spirit of Prophecy as we read that *the church as a body may stand before God in true humility*. So there is this frame of mind that constantly comes across our thinking, saying, But we should be part of a church, of a denomination; we are too small; it can't apply to us.

But the fact is that this little company that Satan wants to blot off the face of the earth, this little remnant, are scattered across the globe among the nations.

Micah 5:7 And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from the LORD, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men.

How powerfully this is saying that it is a remnant, a little company, a small company of people that are scattered *in the midst of many people*. They are scattered on this planet earth among many people *as showers upon the grass*, because they are the people who are doing what God is wanting them to do. They are a people who are manifesting to the world around them something which is not in harmony with the nations, *as a dew from the Lord that tarrieth not for man*. Man

wants to feel part of a big recognised company; and when a few little people like us, who are also in other places of the world, a *small remnant, the remnant of Jacob*; stand there, they think, “Who are we?” Well, we are to be the dew from heaven, a people who tarry not for man. Interesting, important language.

A Little Remnant Left

And so it is that the Spirit of Prophecy brings this very clearly to our understanding also:

Our people have been regarded as too insignificant to be worthy of notice, {2SM 386.2}

I will never forget the words that were once spoken to me by a Seventh-day Adventist minister. He was part of a big Seventh-day Adventist congregation and a worldwide large enough church, of multiple millions, and he said to me, “What can you few little people do?” Yes, *our people have been regarded as too insignificant to be worthy of notice*,

...but a change will come; the movements are now being made. The Christian world is now making movements which will necessarily bring the commandment-keeping people to notice. There is a daily suppression of God's truth for the theories and false doctrines of human origin. There are plans and movements being set on foot to enslave the consciences of those who would be loyal to God. The law-making powers will be against God's people. Every soul will be tested. O that we would as a people be wise for ourselves and by precept and example impart that wisdom to our children! Every position of our faith will be searched into, and if we are not thorough Bible students, established, strengthened, settled, the wisdom of the world's great men will be too much for us.--Letter 12, 1886. {Ibid.}

If you know the history, you would remember that this is what happened in the 1950s when the two men, Martin and Barnhouse, came to the Seventh-day Adventist Church—they were too bright for the leaders of the church, and as a result the church wrote and printed the book *Questions on Doctrine*, in which what is just described above came to fruition. The Spirit of Prophecy had said, *Every position of our faith will be searched into*—that is exactly what Martin and Barnhouse did. Then it continues, saying that, *If we are not thorough Bible students, established, strengthened, settled, the wisdom of the world's great men will be too much for us*—and you only need to read the book *Questions on Doctrine* to see that it became too much for the leadership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church; and they ended up identifying with these worldly wise men—Donald Grey Barn-

house and Walter Martin. Thus the leaders very subtly changed their position from original Adventism to evangelical Christianity.

So as it says, the little company are *regarded as too insignificant*. Another apostate organisation leaves behind a little remnant. And it is important to note that all those statements which present this little company are only applicable to the people who are living in harmony with all of God's will. Here we are, then, examining ourselves, Am I doing this? And we learned previously that among the things that we are to examine in God's word, there is something in particular which is brought to our attention:

We are to become familiar with the Levitical law in all its bearings; for it contains rules that must be obeyed; it contains the instruction that if studied will enable us to understand better the rule of faith and practice that we are to follow in our dealings with one another. No soul has any excuse for being in darkness. Those who receive Christ by faith will receive also power to become the sons of God. {1BC 1110.4}

And all this is connected with the thought that we are to be *familiar with the Levitical law in all its bearings*. I want to ask you now, as we search our hearts, How familiar are you with the Levitical law? We need to be in harmony with that, because *it contains rules that must be obeyed, instructions that if studied will enable us to understand better the rule of faith*. And *those who receive Christ by faith will receive also power to become the sons of God* in connection with that.

Instructions in Leviticus

One of the instructions in the Levitical law is that we should not mingle linen and woollen fibres together (Leviticus 19:19). This is just one of those little things. But as we research through Leviticus, which we just want to do briefly now, there are some identification points by which we can see and ask ourselves, Am I doing this? Am I really understanding these principles? Our study in the Spirit of Prophecy shows us the eight laws of health—diet, exercise, water, sunlight, temperance, air, rest, and trust in God. And as you read the Levitical laws, it is all there. Hygiene for instance is very much rampant throughout the book of Leviticus.

If you would read Leviticus 11:24-27, you will see there the details that are given in the laws with regards to hygiene. The thirteenth and fourteenth chapters deal with leprosy, and how a person having an infectious disease, such as leprosy, has to be carefully quarantined and dealt with until he is become clean. It is all spelt out for you there. How do we deal with infectious diseases? We are counselled to do this correctly. Chapter fourteen does not just address leprosy of

the body, but also leprosy in the house. If you read it very carefully, from verses 33 to 52, it actually talks about mould in the house. This mould of a house or a building is called *leprosy* in Leviticus. When mould has affected the house, if this is spread in the house, the house needs to be pulled down. How do we deal with mould in our house? We today have understandings of dealing with it without having to burn the house down; we can deal with it and get rid of it. But don't live with mould in your house. This is the counsel given there. So don't think it's strange if someone makes a big issue of mould; you need to get rid of it, according to the law of Leviticus.

Then in chapter fifteen it talks about unclean discharges from the body that need to be dealt with according to hygiene. Chapter eighteen deals with the laws of sexual affairs; it goes into great detail there; study it. Then chapter nineteen addresses something very interesting:

Leviticus 19:16 Thou shalt not go up and down [as] a talebearer among thy people: neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbour: I [am] the LORD.

Gossiping, talebearing, is even mentioned in the law of Leviticus. And various offenses are then also mentioned in chapter twenty: adultery, incest, homosexuality, bestiality, etc. The Levitical law is, according to the Spirit of God, something we must become familiar with. How familiar are we with it?

Many people have laid aside and dismissed the Levitical laws and have not read them in detail much, because a lot of them are dealing with the symbolism of Christ and His sacrifice for us, His first advent and His death. So we believe that we have a knowledge of all that already, and we think that we don't need to go through all the Levitical laws. But it is written in the Spirit of Prophecy that we may see deep truths displayed in there that we may not know.

And Beginning at Moses

Jesus Himself was trying to show to His disciples the truths of the Levitical laws in reference to Himself, but they were just not comprehending. Had they heeded what He was sharing with them, the Levitical laws would have shown the disciples that what they were anticipating—that Jesus would become the king and they would then conquer the Roman Empire—was just not in there. Jesus would have to become a sacrifice. But they didn't want to hear that. You know how they argued with Him on that. And when it had all happened, as the disciples were walking on the road to Emmaus, they were all heart broken, and this Stranger was walking beside them. So when He asked them why they were so sad, they said to Him, Are you a stranger here? Don't you know what happened

here over the last few days? And He said, What? Tell me about it. I love the way Jesus deals with these sorts of things. I have learned from Him. So He got them to tell Him about it; and then what did Jesus do? What did He point them to?

Luke 24:25 Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: 26 Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? 27 And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

Let us see whether we can understand their predicament and Jesus calling them fools, and maybe what He is saying to us today in reference to certain things. When He afterwards appeared to the other disciples in the upper room,

Luke 24:44 ...he said unto them, These [are] the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses [which is none other than the Levitical law], and [in] the prophets, and [in] the psalms, concerning me. 45 Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, 46 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:

It is there in the book of Leviticus, *in the law of Moses*. The disciples missed what He was trying to tell them. As we examine our hearts in reference to the Levitical law, let us see what the Spirit of Prophecy brings to our attention in regards to our danger, like it was with the disciples.

After His resurrection, Christ opened the understanding of His followers, that they might understand the Scriptures. Everything had been transformed by the working of the arts of Satan. Truth was covered up by the rubbish of error, and hidden from finite sight. When Christ referred to His humiliation, rejection, and crucifixion, the disciples could not take in His meaning. It had been a part of their education to expect Christ to set up a temporal kingdom, and when He spoke of His sufferings they could not understand His words. He reproved them because of their slowness of apprehension, and promised them that when the Comforter should come, He would bring many things to their remembrance. {16MR 122.3}

Failing to Advance with the Light

Christ had many truths to give to His disciples, of which He could not speak, because they did not advance with the light that was flashed upon the Levitical laws and the sacrificial offerings. {16MR 123.1}

There it was; they were following the traditions of the Pharisees, and they missed out on what those traditions were pointing to. So *Christ had many truths to give them, but He could not speak of them because they did not advance with the light that was flashed upon the Levitical laws and the sacrificial offerings.*

They did not embrace the light, advance with the light, and follow on to still greater brightness as Providence should lead the way. {Ibid.}

This is very important because look what follows next:

And for the same reason Christ's disciples of 1897 do not comprehend important matters of truth. {16MR 123.2}

No wonder if Ellen White was here now today she would say under inspiration: “of 2018”.

So dull has been the comprehension of even those who teach the truth to others that many things cannot be opened to them until they reach heaven. {Ibid.}

This is interesting. The disciples could be saved, and some of these people here mentioned can get to heaven and learn it afterwards, but look at what the disciples went through in their agony because they did not understand. Do we want to remain in darkness on these things, when God wants us to know them?

It ought not to be so. But as men's minds become narrow, they think they know it all, and set one stake after another in points of truths of which they have only a glimpse. They close their minds as though there were no more for them to learn, and should the Lord attempt to lead them on, they would not take up with the increased light. They cling to the spot where they think they see a glimmer of light, when it is only a link in the living chain of truths and promises to be studied. They know very little of what it means to follow in the footsteps of Christ. {Ibid.}

Grasping the Living Truth

The harmonious relation of truth, like links in a chain, will, just as fast as the mind is quickened by the Spirit of God to comprehend light and in humbleness of mind appropriate it, be dispensed to others, and give the glory

back to God. The development of truth will be the reward to the humble-hearted seeker, who will fear God and walk with Him. {16MR 123.3}

So *the harmonious relation of truth* that is to be in the hands of those who are presenting it, should be such that they are able to appropriate and dispense it to others, and thus *give the glory back to God. And the development of truth will be the reward to the humble-hearted seeker, who will fear God and walk with Him.*

The truth which the mind grasps as truth is capable of constant expansion and new developments. While beholding it, the truth is seen in all its bearings in the life and character, and becomes more clear and certain and beautiful. As the mind grasps it in its preciousness, it becomes elevated, ennobled, sanctified. {16MR 123.3}

Here we see that there is something in the Levitical law that is going to expand our understanding, as it was meant to do for the disciples, but it was not until afterwards that they could see it clearer. So we today are in the same treadmill as the disciples were back then. Then the Spirit of Prophecy comes with this following powerful statement to back up the understanding of the importance of the Levitical law:

The entire system of Judaism was the gospel veiled. {16MR 124.1}

So if you want to understand the gospel clearly, go to that and then associate it with the gospel of Christ to let Him illuminate our minds; and it becomes expanded in our understanding.

Far, very far, are human minds from grasping the teachings of Christ. These are old truths in new settings. I have been shown that those who will not consider are like the Jews. It is humbling to their dignity and pride to work the mines of truth. The Light of the world is sending His divine rays back to enlighten the entire Jewish economy, and the minds that have been accepting the sayings of men as the commandments of God are now [to] look to God Himself as the Author of all truth. {Ibid.}

Here we see very clearly portrayed to us that we are in danger of doing the same thing that the Jews did. But we are to see in the Judaic system, rays that God wants us to explore in the Levitical law. And as we examine our hearts in reference to the gospel, as well as in reference to the character and the expectations of natural laws that are also contained therein, we will see expansions of understanding that will be precious to us.

Fly as the Bird

I will now conclude with one example, just to have a taste of this, just to see one of those Levitical laws and what resplendent glory comes out of that. Here it speaks of leprosy. And remember in connection with this following scripture the text which says, "*Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases*"—the cleansing from impurity and the healing that takes place.

Leviticus 14:1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 This shall be the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing: He shall be brought unto the priest: 3 And the priest shall go forth out of the camp; and the priest shall look, and, behold, [if] the plague of leprosy be healed in the leper; 4 Then shall the priest command to take for him that is to be cleansed two birds alive [and] clean, and cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop: 5 And the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel over running water: 6 As for the living bird, he shall take it, and the cedar wood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop, and shall dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird [that was] killed over the running water: 7 And he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird loose into the open field.

This is really fascinating. What is the depth in this for us today? It has to do with cleansing, with healing, with practical needs. Follow the beautiful expansion on this:

The wonderful symbol of the living bird dipped in the blood of the bird slain and then set free to its joyous life, is to us the symbol of the atonement. There were death and life blended, presenting to the searcher for truth the hidden treasure, the union of the pardoning blood with the resurrection and life of our Redeemer. The bird slain was over living water; that flowing stream was a symbol of the ever flowing, ever cleansing efficacy of the blood of Christ, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, the fountain that was open for Judah and Jerusalem, wherein they may wash and be clean from every stain of sin. We are to have free access to the atoning blood of Christ. This we must regard as the most precious privilege, the greatest blessing, ever granted to sinful man. And how little is made of this great gift! How deep, how wide and continuous is this stream! To every soul thirsting after holiness there is repose, there is rest, there is the quickening influence of the Holy Spirit, and then the holy, happy, peaceful walk and precious communion with Christ. Then, oh, then, can we intelligently say with John, "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world". {1BC 1111.4}

So there is a field of meditation, and the symbols enlarge for us the real benefit of the cross of Jesus Christ. Because this cleansing that comes through the symbols is the cleansing of being set free after death, and, like the bird, of rising above the terrible things below.

Meditate and be familiar with the Levitical law, and we will see practices that we will put into practice blended with the symbols that mean Jesus Christ and that call upon me to practice the gospel. As I search my heart according to the word of God, I will be set free, like the bird was set free.

May God bless us as we do this research to examine our hearts in the light of this, that we may see and realise that, like the disciples I have been walking in darkness here; I have yet something deeper to understand and appreciate. It is my prayer that we will do this work.

Amen.